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China's popular TV dramas & their role in the party's political communication since 2001

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**CHINA'S POPULAR TV DRAMAS & THEIR ROLE IN THE PARTY'S
POLITICAL COMMUNICATION SINCE 2001**

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the requirements of the University of Westminster
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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ABSTRACT

This thesis is one of the very few studies that have examined how Chinese Communist Party (or the Party) used its media to appropriate traditional Chinese cultural values for political purposes. It focuses on the TV dramas that have won the top Feitian Awards (China's top official TV drama awards) from 2002 to 2011, a total of 35 TV dramas. Drawing on the insights offered by framing theory and Lévi-Strauss's binary opposition theory in their study of media content/messages and based on framing theory, the thesis proposes and elaborates a theoretical framework—network framing—to explain the cultural appropriation in the selected TV dramas. It has proposed that traditional Chinese cultural values have been woven into network patterned TV dramas as the central organizing ideas to promote the Party-desired messages/agendas. The thesis adopts mainly a qualitative methodology, combining textual narrative analysis and contextual secondary data analysis with the former as the major research method. The results of the narrative analyses of five case-studied dramas largely confirm the relevance of the proposed network framing: all five dramas are network patterned and are organized /framed around traditional Chinese cultural values, most of which are Confucianism-based, to promote the Party-desired messages/agendas; the traditional Chinese cultural values used as the central organizing ideas and the messages/agendas promoted by the Party vary with different dramas depending on the issues/ problems covered. These network-patterned traditional-Chinese-culture-framed stories contrast sharply with the binary-oppositionally-structured class-based stories of the cultural works of the pre-reform Maoist era. Comparing the former with the latter and discussing the transition from the latter to the former, the thesis argues that the Party's political communication since 2001 has undergone significant changes: once as the dominant concepts in the Party's ideology in the Maoist era, class and class struggle have now been dropped out of the Party's ideology while traditional Chinese cultural values particularly Confucianism-based ones, which for long have been rejected and condemned by the Party, have now become part of the Party's ideology; the way the Party communicates its messages/agendas has changed from crudity and oversimplicity in pre-reform Maoist era towards refinement, subtlety and sophistication in the current post-reform era. The thesis also argues with the results of the secondary data analysis that the production of TV dramas in the current post-reform era involves various political actors such as the Party-state, its representatives such as the former SARFT, and the commercial market (or the Chinese audience) and that the textual subtlety and sophistication in communicating the Party's messages/agendas result from the combined sophisticated influences from these different political actors. In conclusion, the Party's cultural appropriation through TV dramas for political purposes demonstrates that the Party's political communication has developed toward sophistication.

CONTENTS

Abstract	1
List of Abbreviations	6
List of Diagrams	7
Acknowledgements	8
Author's Declaration	10
CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION	11
1.1 Research Background	11
1.2 Research Aims and Objectives	18
1.3 Research Questions	20
1.4 Theoretical Framework	20
1.5 Research Methods	23
1.6 Thesis Outline	25
1.7 Defining Traditional Chinese Cultural Values	29
CHAPTER 2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK	40
2.1 Introduction	40
2.2 Brief Overview of Theoretical Perspectives in Political Communication	40
2.3 Framing Research, Frames and Framing	41
2.4 Preliminary Application of Framing Theory to China's Feitian TV Award-winning TV Dramas	46
2.4.1 Framing Traditional Chinese Cultural Values in China's TV Dramas—Culture as Part of the Frames	46
2.4.2 Framing Traditional Chinese Cultural Values as a Process	49
2.4.3 Macro-frames vs Functioning Frames	51
2.5 Binary Oppositional Theory	56
2.5.1 Overview of Previous Literature on TV Drama	56
2.5.2 Theoretical Perspectives on TV Drama	59
2.5.3 Binary Structural Theory on Meaning or Message of TV Drama	60
2.5.4 Limitations of Binary Theory and Revision of Framing Theory into Network Framing	63
2.6 Application of Network Framing to Feitian TV Award Winning Dramas	69
2.7 Summary	70

CHAPTER 3 METHODOLOGY	72
3.1 Introduction	72
3.2 Philosophical Considerations	72
3.3 Selection of Research Methods	74
3.4 Narrative Analysis	76
3.4.1 Brief Overview of Narratology	77
3.4.2 Propp's Narrative Model	78
3.4.3 Greimas's Narrative Theory	80
3.4.4 Prospective Narrative Analysis to be Employed	83
3.4.4a Plot Summary of the Selected TV Dramas	85
3.4.4b Summary of Narrative Functions	85
3.4.4c Morphological Analysis of the Selected Dramas' Narrative	86
3.4.4d Narrative Structure Analysis and Meanings Represented	86
3.5 Semi-structured Interview	87
3.6 Secondary Data Analysis	94
3.7 Ethical Considerations	96
3.8 Summary	102
CHAPTER 4 TV DRAMA LANDSCAPE IN CHINA	103
4.1 Introduction	103
4.2 Regulation of China's TV Drama Industry	103
4.2.1 Formal State Regulation from SARFT	103
4.2.2 Informal State Regulation from ANTV DPCs	105
4.2.3 Informal State Regulation from TV Awards	109
4.3 History of China's TV Drama Industry	109
4.3.1 Overview	109
4.3.2 The Experimental/Formative Period (1958—1966)	110
4.3.3 The Cultural Revolution Period (1966—1976)	111
4.3.4 The Recovery Period (1976—mid 1980s)	111
4.3.5 The Period of Rapid Expansion (mid-1980s-1989)	113
4.3.6 The Prosperous Period (1990—2000)	114
4.3.7 The Era of Diversification (Since 2000)	115

4.4 The Feitian Awards	117
4.4.1 Introduction	117
4.4.2 Main Categories of the Feitian Awards	117
4.4.3 Qualifications and Procedures of the Feitian Awards	118
4.4.4 The Panel of the Feitian Awards Judges and Criteria for Awards	118
4.4.5 The Feitian Awards and its Associated Activities	119
4.4.6 General Features of the Feitian Awards	119
4.4.7 Main Features of the Top Feitian Awards since 2001	120
4.5 Summary	125
CHAPTER 5 FROM BINARY STRUCTURE TO NETWORK PATTERN	127
5.1 Introduction	127
5.2 Binary Structure in the Stories of the Maoist Era	129
5.3 Network Pattern in the Stories of the Post-reform Era	134
5.4 From Binary Structure to Network Pattern	150
5.5 Summary	164
CHAPTER 6 FROM CLASS-DEFINED TO CULTURALLY-FRAMED	168
6. 1 Introduction	168
6.2 Class-defined Stories of the Maoist Era	169
6.2.1 Overview	169
6.2.2 Class-defined Relations, Problems & Solutions	170
6.3 Culturally-framed Stories of the Current Post-reform Era	173
6.3.1 Culturally Defined Problems	175
6.3.2 Culturally Defined Interpersonal Relations	177
6.3.3 Culturally Defined Solutions	182
6.4 From Class-defined Stories to Culturally-framed Stories	189
6.5 Concluding Remarks	202
CHAPTER 7 SOPHISTICATED MESSAGES AND BEYOND	204
7.1 Introduction	204
7.2 Textual Sophisticated Messages	205

7.3 Beyond Textual Sophisticated Messages	213
7.3.1 Influence from the Party-state	214
7.3.2 Influence from TV Drama Practitioners	219
7.3.3 Influence from Chinese Audience	231
7.4 Concluding Remarks	236
CHAPTER 8 CONCLUSION	238
8.1 Introduction	238
8.2 Sophistication in the Party's Political Communication	239
8.3 Contributions of the Thesis	249
8.4. Limitations of the Thesis	253
8.5 Issues to be Explored in the Future	258
BIBLIOGRAPHY	259
APPENDICES	354

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ANTVDPC(s)	Annual National TV Drama Programing Conference(s)
CCP/CPC	Chinese Communist Party/Communist Party of China
CTVAC	China TV Art Committee
FEI (dramas)	Familial and Ethical Issues (dramas)
MRMHT (dramas)	Major Revolutionary and Major Historical Themed (dramas)
NWCPT	National Working Conference on Propaganda Thought
NWCRFT	National Working Conference on Radio, Film and Television
RFTBs	Radio, Film and Television Bureaux
SARFT	State Administration of Radio, Film and Television
SAPPRFT	State Administration of Press, Publication, Radio, Film and Television
WTO	The World Trade Organization

LIST OF DIAGRAMS

Diagram 1	Trial and Test Appropriation Model
Diagram 2	Macro-frames Vs Functioning Frames
Diagram 3	Different Phases of Concentric-circular Frames
Diagram 4	Phase 1 of Appropriation of Traditional Chinese Cultural Values
Diagram 5	Phase 2 of Appropriation of Traditional Chinese Cultural Values
Diagram 6	Network Narrative Organized around a Core Narrative
Diagram 7	Network Relationships within an episode
Diagram 8	Network Narrative of Xi Gengtian's Story (Episode 1)
Diagram 9	Network Narrative of Xi Gengtian's Story (Episode 2)
Diagram 10	Network Narrative of Xi Gengtian's Story (Episode 3)
Diagram 11	Network Narrative of Xi Gengtian's Story (Episode 4)

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AUTHOR'S DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this thesis has been written by me. Any help that I have received in the course of my research and in the preparation of this thesis itself has been acknowledged. All information sources and literature used are indicated in the thesis. The thesis has not been presented to any other university for examination either in the United Kingdom or overseas.

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Chapter 1 Introduction

1.1 Research Background

Propaganda, as defined by scholars like Kenez as the efforts to spread social and political values with a view to influencing people's thinking, emotions and thereby behavior, has always been an essential element of the Chinese Communist Party's (the CCP or the Party) hold on power (Brady, 2008; Brady & Wang, 2009). Since the very founding of the Party itself, the CCP has been stressing the importance of and concentrating a lot of energy on propaganda. When the CCP was still in opposition, it used whatever means available including such popular media as newspapers, oral dramas, stage plays and novels to spread the Party-desired messages/agendas so as to create a favorable public opinion, a positive public image and thus to build support for the CCP among the widest majority of the Chinese people. It is no exaggeration to say that it is the Party's propaganda that has contributed greatly to the Party's very success in its seizure of political power away from its powerful rival party (i.e. the Nationalist Party or the KMT which was then much more powerful than the CCP both in terms of military and of economic strength), in its subsequent founding of the P.R. China in 1949 and in its eventual governance of the country. Since the Party took power in 1949, it has established perhaps the most sophisticated national propaganda system around the world to consolidate its efforts to influence and mould the public opinion so as to strengthen the Party's hold on power. Today—well over six decades after its ascendance to power as the sole governing party in the country, the Party continues to make great efforts (in fact much more efforts than ever before) to enhance its propaganda (Ai , 1986, 1987, 1990 & 1994; Chinese TV, 1999a, 2003a; Brady, 2008; Brady & Wang, 2008; Gao & Wu, 2002; Z.-F. Hu, 2004, 2005 & 2006; Ji, 2000 & 2001a; Jing, 1984; Liu, 1994, 1995 & 1996b; Ruan, 1987 & 1988; Sun, 1995 & 1996; Tian, 2000; T.-H. Wang, 2008 & 2011; Xu, 2002b, 2003b & 2004a; Xu, 1995; Xu, 2002c, 2003a & 2004b; Yang, 1995, 1996 & 1999; Zhao, 1984a; Zhongguo dianying bao, 2010). Propaganda, as some scholars like Annie-Marie Brady and Wang Juntao have rightly suggested, has become very much the life blood of the Party-State—one of the key means for maintaining the Party's ongoing legitimacy and thus its continuous rule in the country (ibid).

From the Mao Zedong era to the ensuing Deng Xiaoping reform era and further on to Jiang Zemin, Hu Jintao and now the Xi Jinping post-reform era, there has been a significant change in the Party's propaganda. In the Maoist era the Party focused on the creation of various forms of propaganda

such as the bulk of revolutionary or historical themed novels and the similarly-themed model plays (i.e. stories about the CCP-led revolutionary history and the subsequent socialist construction under the Party's leadership) to propagate the class-struggle-based communist ideology and used such ideology to indoctrinate and govern Chinese people (Barme, 1999; Brady, 2008; Brady & Wang, 2009; Q. Gong, 2011; Kraus, 2012; Y. Li, 2006; Wang & Connery, 2006; X. L. Zhang, c2011). In the reform and post-reform era, however, the Party has relinquished the very ideology that has pushed the Party to its current political status as the sole governing party in the country (ibid). The Party no longer uses communism to govern China. Rather communism appears to be more symbolic rituals than convictions in the Party's propaganda. In recent years, the Party has been increasingly resorting to Confucianism-based traditional Chinese cultural traditions and values to help solve the various widespread social problems to maintain the legitimacy of the Party's leadership in the country. Former president Jiang Zemin called for a return to the Confucian notion of Chinese virtue by formally endorsing the strategy of ruling the country by virtue at the 16th party congress (Q. Li, 2009; People Daily Online, 2002; D.-S. Yang, People Daily Online; Y. Zhu, 2008). Jiang's successor Hu Jintao formalized the link between Confucianism and modernity with his theory of scientific outlook on development and his campaign of building a harmonious society in China (Brady & Wang, 2009; Feng, 2007; Lam, 2006; Xinhua, 2005; Xinhua News Agency, 2007; Zhu, 2008). Such values as pragmatism, patriotism, respect for authority, priority of collective community over individual person, self-discipline, stability, harmony, and family values have been absorbed into the Party's socialist core values and have been highlighted in its propaganda (CPC.people.com.cn; Yan, 2006). Since China's entry to the World Trade Organization (WTO) in 2001 when China further deepened its reform policy, the Party has been using every form of media particularly such popular media as TV dramas to dig up the potential of Chinese history and the traditional Chinese cultural values for political purposes, guiding media to select and highlight different traditional Chinese cultural practices/values it deems important and to weave them into different media programs particularly such popular programs as TV dramas to promote the Party's various political agendas.

Take for one example Chinese news media's coverage. China's central news media like CCTV and the Xinhua News agency adopt western journalistic news values like objective and balanced reporting to cover international affairs, selecting war, conflict, famine, terrorism, accidents and natural disasters as the topics of coverage and giving ample factual details of and highlighting human sufferings like the death toll, the wounded and other types of damages done to people's life

(P.-P. Zhang, 2009; Q.-A. Zhou, 2011). Such focus on the reporting of problems contrasts sharply with the positive reportage of domestic news and current affairs in the country, for example, the reporting of economic achievements (Bi, 2003; L. Li, 2012; S.-H. Ren, 2010; W. Zhang, 1999; A.-J. Zhang, 2009; Zhu, 2002; Y. Yang, 2012) and the reporting of the wonderful performance of Chinese athletes in the 2008 Olympic Games (H.-Y. Liu, 2013; Z.-X. Liu, 2011; Wu, 2013). This does not mean that Chinese media do not do objective reportage of news and current affairs within the country. Chinese journalists in fact apply the same western news values to their coverage of domestic natural disasters like earthquakes, seasonal droughts and floods. When covering the devastating Sichuan Earthquake that started on May 12, 2008, Chinese journalists gave ample factual details of the death toll, people's great suffering and material damages made to the area (Dong & Cai, 2009). China also has a very popular investigative journalism exposing corruption of officials and covering various serious social problems (Huang, 2010; Wen, 2013; Y. Zhou, 2001). The way Chinese media deal with them however is different from that of the western journalists and varies with different topics. Besides giving detailed facts of people's suffering in the natural disasters, Chinese journalists also report the Chinese government's efforts to rescue and help people in the suffering (Dong & Cai, 2009). While exposing the corrupt officials, Chinese journalists also report the government's efforts to tackle the corruption such as the arrest, trial and imprisonment of the corrupt officials and confiscation of their property (Huang, 2010; Wen, 2013; Y. Zhou, 2001). The overall configuration of negative reportage of the problems of other countries is thus in sharp contrast with the positive coverage of China's achievements in different fields and the country's stability and government's painstaking efforts to solve social problems. Underlying these journalistic practices are such traditional Chinese cultural values as cherishing of stability and development, benevolent governance and the respect for the benign authority. This aims to arouse the respect of Chinese people for the sincerity shown by the government and their confidence in the government.

China's TV drama industry, for another example, has produced and shown a lot of military TV dramas which are set in the context of the civil war between the KMT and the CPC and/or of the country's anti-Japanese invasion. These dramas are packaged elaborately around the theme of patriotism and national unification of Mainland and Taiwan. Such works as *Draw Your Sword (Liang jian)*, *Red Sun (Hong ri)* and *Brothers (Lishi de tiankong)* create life-like CPC high-ranking military officials with both strengths and weakness. They also give an objective description of the KMT's role in the anti-Japanese invasion war. In these dramas, the main characters i.e. the leading CPC

characters and the KMT counterparts, are presented as partners as they fight together against the Japanese invaders and as rivals when the civil war between the two parties broke out. The CPC characters are presented as ordinary heroes with both strengths and weaknesses just like ordinary persons and the series focus on the gradual development of the CPC officials from an ordinary person with some eccentricities to a CPC member with a communist consciousness. The main KMT characters are no longer demonized but are presented objectively as brave, talented, patriotic and compassionate. Underlying the humanization of both CPC high-ranking military officials and the KMT counterparts and the objective handling of both parties' role in the history are such traditional Chinese cultural values as brotherhood/fraternity, patriotism and national unification. Beside these military-themed TV dramas, China's TV drama industry also offers Chinese audience a great many TV drama on famous historical emperors or empresses, almost all of which depict the emperors or empresses covered as talented, hardworking, competent and compassionate. These dramas arouse audience's awe and sympathy for those hardworking, competent and great emperors especially when they make sacrifices for the sake of the country and thus promote people's respect for the benevolent and great emperors and indirectly promote sage leadership in the current governance.

Underlying these aforementioned media products and various many others (both factual news and current affairs programs and the fictional media productions) is the Party's utilization of traditional Chinese cultural values/practices, particularly Confucianism-based ones to communicate the Party-desired messages/agendas so as to help the Party to govern the country.

Using history and cultural traditions and values to help govern a country—a practice of cultural governance—is certainly not novel in China's governance history. China in fact has had a long tradition of cultural governance (Huang, 1994; Jin & Dai, 2005; Zhou, 2007; Zhou, 2000). Ancient rulers in almost every dynasty in China constantly turned to history and cultural traditions and values to govern the country (ibid). Since "Hanwu Emperor in Han Dynasty institutionalized Confucian principles in the civil service and in governing" (Zhu, 2008: p.56-59), Confucianism has become an essential part of cultural governance and this Confucian cultural governance has become the established norm for the rulers of the succeeding dynasties (Huang, 1994; Jin & Dai, 2005; Zhou, 2007; Zhou, 2000). This long tradition was interrupted in 1911 by the revolution led by Sun Yet-sun. It was later replaced first by Sun's Three People Principles i.e. nationalism, democracy and people's livelihood under the Nationalist Party between 1927 and 1949, and later by Chinese Communist

Party's Marxism-Leninism-Mao Zedong thought under the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) between 1949 when the CCP established the P.R. China and 1979 when the CPC adopted an open door economy policy (Lynch, 1999a & 1999b; Won, 1989; J.-T. Wang, 2003; Zhu, 2008).

The Party's recent attempt to utilize Confucian teachings to help govern the country is thus more a revival of the cultural governance tradition than a novel practice in the country. Since this cultural revival is not a wholesale revival, I call it appropriation of traditional cultural values for political purpose. This cultural appropriation, though not new in China's history, is a very interesting phenomenon in the political world considering the fact that the Party itself had been brainwashing Chinese people with its communist ideology for well over half a century (between the very founding of the Party in 1921 and the beginning of the Party-initiated reform and open door policy in 1979) and at the same time had been making tremendous efforts to destroy traditional Chinese cultural values and practices particularly Confucianism-based ones (Mittler, 2008; Guo, 2004; Z. He, 2000 & 2009; Hong, 2007; Rainey, 2010; Miller, 2010; Kraus, 2012; T. Tang, 1993; J.-T. Wang, 2003). There is, however, very little research about this interesting phenomenon.

Although political communication research has now incorporated a vast research scope and diverse research perspectives, the current research literature in the field is a bit too journalism-centered, too effects-oriented, too campaign-based and too western-dominated (Bartle & Griffiths, 2001; Bennett & Entman, 2001; Clayman et al, 2010; Chaffee, c1975; Curran & Park, 2000; Denton, 2000; Kaid, 2004; Kluver et al., 2007; McNair, 1995 & 2007; Negrine et al, 2007; Negrine 2008; Nimmo & Sanders, 1981; Sanders, 2009; Street, 2001; Trent & Frieddenberg, 2000). It focuses overwhelmingly on news, especially news during election campaigns, be it the agenda setting studies, framing studies, issue ownership studies, the political socialization studies or the dumb-down-infotainment research (Avraham & First, 2010; Castelló, 2010; Dai & Hyun, 2010; Handley, 2010; Hänggli & Kriesi, 2010; Hayes & Guardino, 2010; O'Keefe, c1975; McCombs, 1981; McLeod & Shah, 2009; Papacharissi & Fatima, 2008; Porto, 2007; Street, 2001; Schuck, & Vreese, 2009; Vreese, 2005; Walgrave et al., 2009). Non-news media seem to have no role to play in political communication. Also, the current research literature focuses too much on effects, examining effects of one kind or another: minimal effects research studies effects on voter's decision making, political socialization research examines effects of news on audience's knowledge, the agenda setting research investigates the effects of news emphasis of some issues on the salience of issues in the voter's

mind, and the dumb-down-infotainment research examines the effects of news' entertainment tendency on the quality of political news(Davis, 2007; Nimmo & Sanders,1981; McNair, 1995 & 2007; Scheufele & Tewksbury,2007; Street, 2001; Walgrave, 2008). This effects research tradition has long dominated the political communication research and is still very much present today. The current research literature is also too campaign-based with almost every research perspective studying different aspect of election campaigns (Trent & Frieddenberg, 2000; Bennett & Entman, 2001; Kluver et al., 2007). Finally, the current research is too western-based, concentrating too much on western developed countries esp. the US and UK (Bartle & Griffiths, 2001; Kaid, 2004; Sanders, 2009; Curran & Park, 2000).

The narrow focus in political communication research is changing of course since in recent years there has been a de-westernizing trend in the research field. More and more research studies have been done on the political communication in other countries as evidenced by *De-westernizing Media Studies* (Curran & Park, 2000), *Mass Media and Political Communication in New Democracies* (Votmer, 2006), *Media Reform: Democratizing the Media, Democratizing the State* (Price et al., 2002), *The Internet and National Elections: a Comparative Study of Web Campaigning* (Kluver et al., 2007) and some other works.

China has increasingly been one of the focuses in this de-westernizing trend and there have been quite a few research studies on the political communication in the country due to its economic achievements and the increasingly important role it has been playing in the world since its reform in 1979. Most of the research literature, however, focuses either on the changes brought to the Chinese media by such socio-economic factors as the commercialization of the media system and the globalizing force brought about by China's entry to the WTO or on how Chinese media practitioners cope with the relative freedom resulting from these changes within the broad and general framework set out by the CPC (Chan & Qiu, 2002; He ,2000 & 2009; Huang, 2000; Lee et al., 2006; X. Li, 2005; Zhou ,2001).

Very little research has been done on how the CPC uses traditional Chinese cultural values to communicate political messages through its media. Two articles in Rawnsleys' (2003) edited book *Political Communications in Greater China* and Zhu's (2008) TV dramas studies are some of the few exceptions.

Huang and Lee (2003) discuss how Chinese authorities use nationalism for political purposes while Renwick and Cao (2003) discuss how CPC employs the collective identity of Chinese people as victims of foreign aggressive forces in its political communication.

In her study of politically charged dynastic dramas, Zhu (2008) considers TV dramas as political discourse and she argues that TV practitioners have selectively recovered the historical events and figures of bygone eras to promote political objectives. For example, Yong Zheng Emperor in *Yong Zheng Dynasty* has been revised to promote the anti-corruption and economic reform in the 1990s , important historical figures like Cixi, Li Hongzhang, Kang Youwei, Sun Yet-sen and Yuan Shikai in *Marching Towards the Republic* rehabilitated to explore the political reform and a viable form of democracy in the early 2000s , and Emperor Hanwu in *The Great Emperor Hanwu* to promote the sage leadership and the return to Chinese cultural traditions in the early 2000s(ibid).

In her study of domestic themed TV dramas, Zhu (2008) also covers though not focuses on the appropriation of traditional cultural values by the TV dramas. When analyzing one of the pink dramas, *Falling In Love (haoxiang haoxiang tan lianai)*, she argues that Confucian model of femininity is adopted in the drama (ibid). An ideal woman, Mao Na the heroine, is presented as wealthy, modern , successful yet obedient to traditional family values' e.g. commitment to family and marriage. When covering *Grand Mansion Gate*, one of the family saga dramas, she argues that the masculine ideal is portrayed as conforming to and updating the Confucian ideal of manhood. Bai Jingqi, the hero, is presented both as a 'daring and rebellious young man' and 'a filial son [trying] to fulfill the wishes of his mother and the needs of the collective family' (2008, p.83).

Zhu has obviously given some revealing insights of the appropriation of traditional Chinese culture and history in TV dramas for political purposes. Her works, however, can only partly cover the complexity of this interesting phenomenon which is forever changing. Just as she herself has pointed out, Chinese serial TV drama 'has undergone a massive expansion and a rapid series of swings between and additions to genre types and thematic interests' (2008, p.17). Moreover, the cultural elements appropriated, the appropriation methods and aims may shift as the Party's political agendas change.

Zhu's (2008) research focuses more on the macro-aspects of China's TV dramas' cultural appropriation i.e. the domestic and international factors that have led to the emergence and

popularity of TV dramas in general and politically charged dynasty dramas and domestic themed dramas in particular.

Dynasty dramas and domestic themed dramas are just some of many subgenres on Chinese TV screen which have been appropriating the potential of the huge stock of traditional Chinese culture. What are the other subgenres appropriating traditional Chinese culture? Which elements of traditional Chinese culture have been appropriated? What TV dramas have been highly received by the Chinese authorities for the values appropriated and for the political messages communicated? Which methods of appropriation are highly accepted and endorsed by the authorities? These micro aspects of TV drama's cultural appropriation are largely left unstudied.

1.2 Research Aims and Objectives

Against the previously discussed research background, my research examines how Chinese authorities used TV dramas to appropriate traditional Chinese cultural values for political communication purposes.

I have selected TV dramas among all the media programmes in the country as the focus of my research project since TV dramas have from the early 1990s become one of the dominant forms of entertainment programmes for the majority of the Chinese populace and Chinese authorities have been increasingly relying on this popular form of media programmes for political communication (L. Li, 2011; Lu, 2000; Peng, 2009; X.-P. Zhong, c2010; Zhao & Zhang, 2013; Zhu, 2008; Zhu et al., 2008; Liu, 1994, 1995, 1996b; Sun, 1995, 1996; Tian, 1998, 2000; Xu, 2002a, 2002b, 2002c, 2003a, 2003b, 2004a, 2004b; T.-H. Wang, 2008; Yang, 1995, 1996, 1997b, 1997c). My analysis focuses on the TV dramas which have won the Feitian Awards from 2002 to 2011 i.e. the TV dramas winning the 23rd to the 28th Feitian Awards. A total of 35 TV dramas have been selected for my research.

I have chosen the Feitian awards because these TV Awards are China's top official TV dramas awards (Sohu.com, 2009b; TV1958.com, 2013a; Wan, 2009; Wang, 2009 & 2011). Through the Feitian awards, the government aims to select and highlight those TV dramas that best appropriate Chinese traditional cultural values and best communicate the party message (Chinese TV, 2004c; China Television, 2005c; Da, 2006a & 2006b; China TV Art Committee Columnist, 2009a, 2009c, 2010, 2011; J. Li, 2009; Peng, 2009; Wang, 2009 & 2011; J.-Q. Wang, 2007; T. Wang, 2010).

The top TV dramas are chosen for analysis because they are considered the best among those awarded; the themes or issues covered in TV dramas are also considered to best reflect or represent the top-priority political agendas of the authorities; they are thought to have best appropriated Chinese traditional cultural values and to best communicate the authorities' messages.

I have selected the TV dramas that have been shown between 2002 and 2010 because 2002 is a new beginning for China. Towards the end of 2001 i.e. on Dec. 11th, 2001, China entered the WTO (Xinhua.net, 2001). Its WTO entry confronts China with challenges. With the entry, China needs to further open itself to the world and this means China had to cope with the effects of globalization resulting from this entry. This has led to a lot of pressure to its governance. By 2002, China had also been confronted with numerous social problems caused by its unchecked market economic development such as widening gap between rich and poor, uneven economic development between the east and other parts of China, rising unemployment, corruption and the loss of moral grounding etc. (People Daily Online, 2002a,2002b & 2002c). 2002 is also the time for the formation of a new generation party leadership. Jiang's successor i.e. the former president Hu Jintao assumed power in late 2002 (People Daily Online, 2002d; Zhu, 2008). Since 2002, the party leadership has been confronted with both domestic issues and global pressures and the wide spread social malaise have threatened to undermine the legitimacy of the Party leadership. The party leadership tried to tap Confucian teachings to help curb rampant corruption and counter widespread social problems.

Though it was former president Jiang Zemin who formally initiated the revival of Chinese traditional cultural values by his strategy of ruling China by moral virtue, it was Hu who has formalized the link between Confucianism and modernity and has carried out intense and strenuous attempts to revive Confucianism-based traditional cultural values (Feng, 2007; Lam, 2006; People Daily Online, 2002; Q. Li, 2009; Xinhua, 2005; Xinhua News Agency, 2007; D.-S. Yang, People Daily Online; Zhu, 2008). The selected TV dramas have received the highest governmental recognition and won government appraisal for the values appropriated and the political messages correctly communicated(Chinese TV, 2004c; China Television, 2005c; Da, 2006a & 2006b; China TV Art Committee Columnist, 2009a, 2009c,2010, 2011; J. Li, 2009; Peng, 2009; Wang, 2009 & 2011; J.-Q. Wang, 2007; T. Wang, 2010). They are supposed to parallel Hu's attempts to use traditional values through media to communicate and highlight his political agendas since his presidency and to have best reflected the priority of the political agendas under Hu's leadership.

Through the analysis of these TV dramas, I expect to find what Chinese traditional values are appropriated, how these values are appropriated and what political agendas/messages are promoted /embedded in the TV dramas during Hu's presidency.

1.3 Research Questions

To examine Chinese authorities' use of TV dramas to appropriate traditional Chinese cultural values for political purposes, I have designed the following questions with the last two being the focus of the research.

- ✚ What are the genres of the selected TV dramas?
- ✚ What subject matters do these genres of TV dramas cover?
- ✚ In what contexts are the selected TV dramas set? In the context of ancient China as shown in Zhu Ying's dynasty TV dramas or in other context such as contemporary China?
- ✚ Have the selected TV dramas appropriated the traditional Chinese cultural values for political purposes?
- ✚ What kinds of traditional Chinese cultural elements have been used by the selected TV dramas?
- ✚ How have the traditional Chinese cultural values been used for promoting what kinds of political agendas/messages?

My hypotheses for these questions are:

- ✚ Far more diverse genres of TV dramas other than dynasty dramas have appropriated traditional Chinese cultural values for political purposes;
- ✚ Not just Confucianism is being appropriated for political purposes; other traditional cultural values like Daoism and Buddhism are standing side by side with Confucianism on the TV screen.
- ✚ Appropriation strategy tends to integrate traditional Chinese cultural elements into more real and more contemporary China's settings rather than appropriating historical events or historical figures of such by-gone eras as Qing Dynasty or Han Dynasty in dynasty TV dramas.

Based on the research finding with regard to the abovementioned questions especially the last two, I shall move on to discuss the implications of the Party's use of traditional Chinese cultural values through the selected TV dramas for political purposes.

1.4 Theoretical Framework

Since my research spans both political communication and TV dramas studies in particular, I have turned to the theoretical perspectives in both fields for theoretical solutions. I have singled out two main theoretical approaches for discussion—framing theory and binary opposition theory. The former

is used by political communication scholars to analyse how different political actors, ranging from politicians, political parties, news media, to social movement activists select and highlight certain aspects of a social reality to present certain interpretation of the reality and thus to promote certain messages to the public concerned (Avraham & First, 2010; Auerbach & Bloch-Elkon, 2005; Castelló, 2010; Chong & Druckman, 2007; Correa, 2010; Dai & Hyun, 2010; D'Angelo, 2002; Edy & Meirick, 2007; Entman, 1993, 2004, 2007, 2008 & 2010; Gamson & Modigliani, 1989; Gavriely-Nuri & Balas, 2010; Handley, 2010; Hänggli & Kriesi, 2010; Hertog & McLeod, 2001; Noakes & Johnston, 2005; Papacharissi & Fatima, 2008; Porto, 2007; Reese etc., 2001; Schuck & Vreese, 2009; Vreese, 2005). The latter was first put forward by Lévi-Strauss (1955) in his study of the myth and has since been frequently used to analyse content or messages of different forms of narratives including TV drama or its close relative, film (Silverstone, 1981; Swanson, 1981; Wright, 1975). I have argued that the Lévi-Strauss's binary oppositionary theory is not adequate to explain the selected Feitian Award-winning Chinese TV dramas. Though it has been used convincingly by scholars such as Wright (1975), Silverstone (1981) and Swanson (1981) to analyse the narrative structures and meanings of films and TV dramas through the exposition of the oppositional relationships between the characters in the film and TV dramas, the binary oppositionary theory falls short of the various other relationships presented by the selected Chinese TV drama such as cooperative relationship, neutral relationship, supportive, hierarchical relationship. I have adopted framing theory for its flexibility to accommodate the variety of relationships presented in the selected Chinese TV dramas, the complexity of these relationships and the meaning thus conveyed. The flexibility of the framing theory however is also its weakness. Framing theory appears to be too vague and too general. It seems applicable to all media phenomena and thus loses its uniqueness as a theory. Considering the theory's vagueness and its over generality and based on my initial viewing of the most of the selected Feitian-award winning TV dramas and my pilot of study of one of these TV dramas—*Xi Gengtian's Story*, I have revised the vague and general framing theory into a more specific one—network framing to overcome its inherent vagueness and generality. With the network framing thus revised, the framing theory is now able to explain the diverse relationships presented by the selected TV dramas and the meaning conveyed by such relationships i.e. the diversity of relationships presented both at the micro-episodic event level and at macro-inter-narrative level and the meaning conveyed by these diversity of relationships.

In my research the notion of frames combines Gamson and Modigliani's (1989) definition and Gorp's (2007) cultural dimension. Here, frames refer to the central organizing ideas or principles that structure, organize and provide coherence to a set of idea elements or interpretations. Also frames are cultural frames since frames used in Chinese TV dramas draw heavily from the traditional Chinese culture. What's more, frames operate at different levels with different generalities.

I have integrated Entman's cascading activation model (2007; 2010), Gorp's cultural dimension (2007) to framing and Handley's notion of macro-framework vs. functioning frames (2010) to explain Chinese TV dramas' cultural appropriation for political purposes.

The proposed network framing alone, however, cannot fulfil the whole purpose of my research project. It can help examine and explain the Party's cultural appropriation through TV dramas for political purposes within the texts of the selected TV dramas through the framing analysis of these texts. To understand the implications of the Party's cultural appropriation through TV dramas it is necessary to go beyond the textual framing analysis of these selected TV dramas. While quite a few framing scholars have gone beyond the textual framing analysis of some news stories to examine how textual framing of some issues in these news stories affects the audience's perception of these issues (Chong & Druckman, 2007; Edy & Meirick, 2007; Porto, 2007; Schuck & de Vreese, 2009), I have for my current purpose ventured beyond the selected TV dramas over to the cultural works of the pre-reform Maoist eras which, as the current research literature has shown, were binary oppositionally structured and were overwhelmingly dominated by class/class-struggle concepts and anti-traditionalism discourse (Chi, 1963; Q. Gong, 2011; Y. Li, 2006; Su, 2000; D. D.-W. Wang, 2000). These binary oppositionally-structured and class-based cultural works of the Maoist era are in a stark contrast with the selected TV dramas of the current post-reform era which, as my research findings will later show, are structured by a network pattern, play down class/class struggle concepts and are overwhelmingly organized around traditional Chinese cultural values. By comparing the network patterned traditional-Chinese-culture-framed TV dramas with the binary oppositionally structured and class-based cultural works of the Maoist era and tracing the development from the latter to the former, I shall argue later in the thesis that the Party's use of traditional Chinese cultural values in the selected TV dramas of the current post-reform era has brought about significant implications to the Party's current political communication—not only a change in the Party's ideology

but also a change in the way the Party communicates its messages/agendas to the Chinese populace.

Hence, my proposed network framing is also supplemented with some sort of comparative approach.

1.5 Research Methods

The methods adopted for the research are a combination of narrative analysis and secondary data analysis.

I have selected as my major research method narrative analysis among the available qualitative content analysis methods for its devotion to stories as its object of study. Under study are the Top Feitian TV Award-winning TV dramas since 2001, a total of 35 dramas. The accessibility of these selected TV dramas is made in two main ways: pirated DVD versions of some more recent Feitian Award-winning TV dramas (i.e. the 26th, 27th and 28th Feitian Award-winning TV dramas) have been bought from the DVD stands outside the North Campus of the Guangdong University of Foreign Studies in Guangzhou where I have been teaching since 1996 while some other Feitian Award winning TV dramas (i.e. those from the 23rd to 25th Feitian TV Awards) are accessible from the online Chinese video websites including www.baidu.com, www.youku.com, www.tudou.com, and www.iqiyi.com. The selected TV dramas are grouped into two main categories—the historical dramas and contemporary dramas and then each category is divided into different subgenres. The historical category consists of Major Revolutionary and Major Historical Themed dramas (MRMHT dramas, zhongda geming lishiticaiju), red classics and ordinary folk dramas while the contemporary category consists of reform dramas of different kind and ordinary folk dramas. The general features of the dramas are briefly summarized and described in one of the subsequent background chapters—Feitian TV Awards. MRMTH dramas and red classics take up a large proportion of the historical category while ordinary folk dramas and reform dramas take up a large proportion of the contemporary category. From each of these subgenres I have singled out one representative for detailed narrative analysis and a total of 5 have been chosen for this purpose: one MRMHT drama, one red classic, one drama on familial and ethical issues (FEI drama), one rural drama and one contemporary soldier drama.

The narrative analysis I have come up with draws heavily from Propp's narrative model (1965), Wright's narrative analysis model (1975), Greimas' narrative model and his notions of narrative test, and Roger Silverstone's narrative analysis model. It consists of several procedures for analyzing the selected TV dramas: a plot summary of the selected TV dramas on an episodic basis, description of the narrative functions of the characters in the events covered by the TV dramas, morphological analysis of the TV drama's narrative at the macro-story level as a whole and at the micro-event level, and the narrative structure analysis and the meaning represented by such a narrative structure. The final step of the narrative analysis—the narrative structure analysis and the meaning conveyed by such a structure—is explained using the framing theory I have designed by integrating Entman's cascading framing model (2017; 2010), Corp's cultural dimension (2007) to framing and Handley's notion of macro-framework Vs. functioning frames.

Secondary data were collected during my field trip in Guangzhou, China between June 1st, 2011 and March 13th, 2012. Before my field work in China, which started from June 2011, I had originally planned to supplement the narrative analysis by the semi-structured interviews with the directors/producers/script writers of some of the selected TV dramas with a view to giving a relatively in-depth understanding of the messages/meaning intended by the TV dramas as well as by those directly involved in the production of these TV dramas.

As my actual field experience has shown, the semi-structured interviews have not been done successfully and as a result I have not attained the data as I had expected from the interview. Nevertheless, the amounts of secondary data I have acquired during my field trip in China have turned out to be quite helpful in understanding both Chinese TV dramas in general and the selected TV dramas in particular. For this reason, I intend to use these secondary data as an alternative to the preplanned but not very successful interviews.

These secondary data are mostly the newspaper and journal accounts of the production of the selected TV drama by the interviewed directors/producers/script writers. They have been mainly collected via my library account at Guangdong University of Foreign Studies from the largest Chinese academic online database at www.cnki.net which has incorporated almost all the Chinese journals including China Television (also known as Chinese TV before 2005), Contemporary Television, Contemporary Cinema, and a lot of Chinese newspapers. These secondary data also include the commentary on the selected TV dramas by the TV drama experts or TV drama regulatory

authorities on different occasions: in the course of the dramas' screening, after the drama's screening and on the conferences on these TV dramas after their popularity. Some of the secondary data are also collected from sina.com, from sohu.com as well as from SARFT.com. The secondary data thus collected and the data resulting from the not so satisfactorily conducted semi-interviews form the supplementary data I have originally intended to cross-check the result of my narrative analysis to see whether the textual messages conveyed by the TV dramas correspond to those intended by the TV drama producers.

Qualitative content analysis will be carried out for the secondary data collected. This analysis will be related to the narrative analysis of TV dramas' appropriation of Chinese traditional cultural values and the messages embedded in the TV dramas. This secondary data analysis aims to overcome the possible misperception and misunderstanding of the TV Dramas' appropriation of Chinese traditional cultural values and the embedded messages through the mere textual analysis of TV dramas and to find out whether the messages embedded in the TV dramas correspond to those intended by the directors and to the political agendas of the party.

The combination of the textual analysis of the selected TV dramas with the supplementary data analysis (from the secondary data sources as well as the interview results) aims to give a relatively all-round picture of TV dramas' cultural appropriation for political purposes i.e. to find out:

- ✚ what cultural values and political messages have been shown in TV dramas;
- ✚ what cultural values and political messages TV drama producers/directors try to put into TV dramas;
- ✚ what cultural values and political messages the awarding judges/the experts/the authorities see in these TV dramas.

1.6 Thesis Outline

This thesis consists of 8 chapters. The first four give the background and context of the thesis, and the next 4 concentrate on different aspects of the research.

This introductory chapter provides the research background and an overview of the research. The second chapter discusses the theoretical framework of the thesis. Chapter 3 discusses and describes the actual methodology used for the research including its initial choice and the changes made after the end of my field trip in China. Chapter 4 is a background chapter for a better understanding of the research. It consists of three sections. The first focuses on the different forms of regulating the TV drama industry in China, the second on the historical development of TV drama

industry in the country, and the third on one of the informal ways of regulating TV drama industry in the country—the Feitian TV Awards with regard to the awards' brief history, the main categories of the awards, the qualifications and procedures of the awards, the panel of judges and criteria for the awards, the awards ceremony, the awards-associated activities, the general features of the awards, and the main features of the top Feitian awards since 2001.

Chapter 5, 6, and 7 present the major findings of the research on the five selected representative TV dramas. In the theoretical framework section I have proposed and elaborated a theoretical framework –network framing to explain the top Feitian Award TV dramas under study: characters and their actions representing certain aspects of social reality in China, either historical or contemporary, are selected and highlighted to produce different genres of TV dramas; in the stories presented by these different TV dramas, the characters through their interactive actions with each other in different events are connected by a network pattern and are organized/framed around traditional Chinese cultural values so as to promote a certain interpretation of the selected reality—the messages or agendas desired by the CCP (or the Party). What I have found through my narrative analyses of the five case-studied TV dramas largely corresponds to what I have proposed and elaborated: all of the five case-studied TV dramas are network patterned and are organized /framed around traditional Chinese cultural values, most of which are Confucianism-based, to promote the political messages/agendas desired by the Party; the traditional Chinese cultural values used as the central organizing ideas and the messages/agendas promoted by the Party vary with different dramas depending on the different issues or the problems covered by these dramas. These network-patterned traditional-Chinese-culture-framed stories presented by the top Feitian Award winning TV dramas contrast sharply with the binary-oppositionally-structured class-based stories presented by the cultural works of the Maoist era.

Comparing the network-patterned traditional-Chinese-culture-framed TV dramas with the binary-oppositionally-structured class-based cultural works of the Maoist era and tracing the development from the latter to the former, I argue in chapter 5 to 7 that China's political communication since 2001 has undergone significant changes and thus has demonstrated some sophistication. Although the use of network pattern and the use of traditional Chinese cultural frames in the top Feitian Award winning dramas are inseparable and interwoven parts which together result in the subtlety and sophistication in the Party's political communication of the current

post-reform era and thus should be studied together—so are and should be the use of binary oppositional structure and the use of class frames which result in the crudity and over-simplicity in the Party's political communication of the Maoist era, I have separated them temporarily in the discussion for the sake of clarity and of depth in discussion. Chapter 5 elaborates how the five case-studied TV dramas are structured by a network pattern. I have argued and demonstrated that these network-patterned Feitian award-winning dramas communicate the Party's messages/agendas in a more interesting and subtle way than the binary oppositionally-structured genre of stories then popular during the Maoist era—the revolutionary themed literary and artistic works. The binary oppositional structure presents explicitly politicized messages/agendas by concentrating solely on the political life or activities of the characters at the expense of their secularized personal life concerns and by putting the characters in direct opposition against one another in the course of their political life or activities (endowing the heroes with exemplary behaviours and virtues and filling the villains with the deplorable wicked behaviours and traits). The network pattern, however, packages stories with the Party's messages/agendas as stories about love, fraternity, familial kinship, marriage, friendship, and or about other personal relations by weaving these political messages/agendas into the network of different secularized rather than politicized interpersonal relationships established among the characters particularly those established between the core character and other characters so as to soften the political messages/agendas and thus to make the stories more appealing and engaging to the increasingly politics-cynic sophisticated Chinese audience of the current post-reform era; and also gives a humanized depiction of the characters, showing them with love, friendship, marriage, kinship or other personal relations and endowing them with both shortcomings and virtues. The subtlety and sophistication thus demonstrated from the transformation of the binary oppositional structure into the network pattern is only one aspect of the sophistication of the Party's political communication.

My research on the top Feitian award-winning TV dramas shows that these highly popular TV dramas in the current post-reform era are not only connected by a network pattern but also organized around the traditional Chinese cultural values to the direct contrast of the stories of the Maoist era which are organized around class and class-consciousness. The transformation from being class-organized into traditional Chinese cultural values-organized demonstrates other aspect of sophistication in the Party's political communication. Chapter 6 covers this aspect of sophistication in the Party's political communication. It starts with an examination of how the stories presented by

revolutionary themed literary and artistic works during the Maoist era are organized around the notion of class and class consciousness, followed by an examination of how the stories presented by the Party-endorsed top Feitian award-winning TV dramas in the current post-reform era are organized around the traditional Chinese cultural values/practices and subsequently a discussion of the sophistication shown by the change from class-organized stories to the culturally-organized ones. From the class-defined stories to culturally-framed stories, the Party's political communication has experienced significant change—not only the change of content in the Party's ideology but also the change in the way the Party communicates its messages or agendas. The downplaying if not the total erasure of class discourse in the current top Feitian Award winning TV dramas and the prominence of the traditional Chinese cultural frames in the same dramas signal the demise of the once-dominant class-based ideology and the re-articulation or reorientation of the Party's ideology by incorporating into the Party's ideology traditional Chinese cultural values particularly Confucianism-based ones, which the Party had been severely criticizing as the feudalistic remnants and responsible for China's backwardness from the inception of the Party's founding up to the late 1980s. The downplaying of the class discourse and the incorporation of traditional Chinese cultural values into the TV dramas under study as the underlying organizing principles also bring about significant change in the way the Party communicates its messages or agendas. The Party's messages/agendas are no longer expressed in a highly politicized way through the highly polarized characterization whereby characters are shown to be engaged solely in politicized activities at the expense of their secularized life concerns and to be engaged solely in politicized relationships with other characters at the expense of secularized social relationships. Rather, the communication of the Party's messages/agendas has changed toward subtlety and sophistication whereby characters are shown to be engaged in both political activities and secularized life concerns such as marriage, familial life and friendship and to be engaged in political and secularized relationships; the characters' political activities and secularized life concerns as well as the characters' political and secularized relationships are interwoven and overlapped without a clear-cut boundary between them. In this way, political messages intended by the Party are embedded, wrapped up in and naturalized into the characters' secularized life concerns; as a result, the political messages/agendas are communicated in a roundabout depoliticized secularised way.

As a result of their use of a network pattern as the organizing structure and their use of Confucianism-based traditional Chinese cultural values as the central organizing ideas, the top

Feitian Award winning TV dramas communicate the messages/agendas desired by the Party in a sophisticated way. What are these messages/agendas that have been communicated in a sophisticated way? How come these messages/agendas have been communicated in a sophisticated way? Although Chapter 5 & 6 have also covered these two questions, they have focused more on how the Party's messages/agendas are communicated in a sophisticated way through the use of a network pattern as the organizing structure and through the use of Confucianism-based traditional Chinese cultural values as the central organizing ideas. Following Chapter 5 and 6's discussion of sophistication in the Party's political communication through the textual narrative analysis of how the selected top Feitian award winning TV dramas are network patterned and culturally framed to communicate the Party desired messages/agendas, Chapter 7 brings a bit further the discussion of sophistication in the Party's political communication by giving a more detailed discussion of the aforementioned two questions. Chapter 7's first section covers the first question by summarizing the Party desired messages/agendas that have been communicated in a sophisticated way by the top Feitian Award winning TV dramas under study while the second section deals with the second question by discussing the various forces in China whose influences on China's TV drama industry have combined to result in these TV dramas' communicating the Party desired messages/agendas in a sophisticated way.

In Chapter 8, I provide an overall summary of the whole thesis with regard to its key findings, its strengths and weaknesses. I also discuss briefly in this final chapter the issues to be further explored for me and for prospective researchers.

1.7 Defining Traditional Chinese Cultural Values

The term "traditional Chinese Cultural values" is the English equivalent of a Chinese term—zhongguo chuantongwenhua jiazhi guan. To understand the meaning of traditional Chinese cultural values, let's first look at the key words in the phrase—traditional, Chinese, cultural, values—and their meanings. The word 'values' is in the centre of the phrase while the other three adjectives, are modifiers of this word. Various English dictionaries ranging from Collins to Longman give more or less the same definition of 'values' as the accepted ideas or beliefs or standards or principles of what is right and wrong or what is important (Anderson, c2005; Hornby, 2005; Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English, 2003; Soanes & Hawker, c2006). With regard to the meaning of 'traditional',

the same dictionaries also give very similar definition—being part of or following the beliefs, customs, or way of life of a particular group of people that have either existed or have not changed for a long time. ‘Chinese’ as an adjective means relating to or connected with China, its people or its language. ‘Cultural’ means ‘connected with the culture of a particular society or group’ with culture meaning different things, ranging from its broad sense of being the beliefs, way of life, art, and customs which are shared by and accepted by people in a particular society to its narrow sense of being activities which are related to art, music, literature etc (ibid). With the word ‘values’ being at the centre of the phrase, the meaning of ‘culture’ can be narrowed down to ideas, beliefs, customs or principles shared by a society.

Taken together, traditional Chinese cultural values literally mean ideas, beliefs, customs or practices which have been adopted and practiced by Chinese people for a long time. In fact this literal meaning corresponds very much to what native Chinese scholars mean by traditional Chinese cultural values when they refer to the term albeit without giving it any exact or specific definition (probably because they have taken for granted the meaning of the term without bothering giving it any specific definition) (Hui & Shen, 2001; Pan, 1999; Q. Yang, 1997; L.-P. Wang,2006).

What exactly are these ideas, beliefs, customs and practices then? To a non-Chinese (or even a native contemporary Chinese) who is not familiar with Chinese history and culture, traditional Chinese cultural values may mean Confucianism or Confucian principles or practices (Hucker, 1975). Such understanding is seemingly affirmed by the recent fact that mainland Chinese authorities have been establishing one after another Confucius Institute to promote Confucian ideas (Hanban.org.cn). Undeniably, Confucianism is an essential part of traditional Chinese cultural values. Traditional Chinese cultural values, however, comprise more than Confucian principles. As early as the late Chou dynasty (between around 520 and 221 BC) i.e. between the late Spring and Autumn Period (720-476 BC) and the subsequent Warring State Periods (475 BC-221 BC), there emerged a proliferation of different schools of philosophical thoughts, the diversity of which was such that later Chinese referred to them as ‘hundreds schools’ or ‘hundred schools of thoughts or Learning’ (Fung & Bodde, c1976; Hucker, 1975; Lai, 2008; J.-L. Liu, 2006). These diverse schools of thoughts were put forward by the then scholar-officials to solve the various political, social and economic upheavals caused by the constant bitter warfare between the numerous independent states which had previously been loosely connected “through the common ties of allegiance to the Chou royal [court]

in a feudal system roughly analogous to that of medieval Europe” (Bodde, c1976: p. xv). Sima Tan, a historian, classified these diverse schools of thoughts into six major schools. Confucianism (or the School of Literati) is one of these schools with the other five being the Yin-yang School, the Mohist School, the School of Names, the Legalist School, and the Taoist School (or Daoism in the West) (Fung & Bodde, c1976; Hucker, 1975; Lai, 2008; J.-L. Liu, 2006). These ancient philosophical schools of thoughts focused their discussion mainly on morality, political society and good governance (ibid). In other words, they mainly covered “such issues as how to rule the state, how to conduct oneself and how to do the right thing so that one does not disturb the cosmic order or deviate from Dao” (J.-L. Liu, 2006: p. 8). The ancient scholar-official philosophers of these various schools of thoughts “had an intense desire to find the best way to make the right political decisions, to alleviate social problems, and to properly conduct themselves” (ibid). While most of these ancient philosophical thoughts share some commonalities such as emphasizing agriculture and slighting commerce, concern for social order, stability and peace, concern for the well-being of the populace, harmony between human and nature, self-cultivation, and reverse movement, they each have their own distinctive ideas (Fung & Bodde, c1976; Hucker, 1975; Lai, 2008; J.-L. Liu, 2006).

Founded by Kong Qiu (or Confucius) and further developed by his followers especially Mencius and Xun Zi, Confucianism is a morality-based top-down social reform theory which aims to rectify the society through the moral transformation of the rulers and the common people (ibid). The theory holds that “if a ruler could set a good example to his people in his personal behaviour and in his family relationship and if people could be morally transformed to preserve good personal conduct and to maintain good family relationships, then all societal problems, large or small, will dissolve” (J.-L. Liu, 2006: p.16).

To be specific, a ruler is supposed to constantly practice self-examination and self-improvement to cultivate, in himself and through his example in his people, such moral principles as zhong or loyalty (being loyal to one’s social roles), shu or empathy (not imposing on others what they themselves do not desire), li or propriety (observing propriety in all situations), yi or righteousness (doing what one is ought to do), wisdom (knowing what to do and how to behave in different situations), ren or human-heartedness (helping others to establish their moral characters or obtain their goals), so that, through the moral transformation of the whole nation, the ruler can eventually cure all the social ills (Fung & Bodde, c1976; Hucker, 1975; Lai, 2008; J.-L. Liu, 2006).

Depending on the different social roles which one takes, these abovementioned moral principles take different specific forms of virtues (ibid). Loyalty, for example, could mean the ruler's practice of people-orientedness toward the common people, the ministers' practice of people-orientedness toward the common people & their obedience toward the ruler, the common people' obedience toward the superiors in the political sphere (ibid). It could also mean parental affection toward their children, children's filial piety toward their parents, siblings' love toward one another, the younger siblings' respect and obedience toward the elder ones within the social-familial sphere as well as respect for the elderly and caring for the young outside family members, the practice of trust, honesty and sincerity between friends within the social-non-familial sphere (ibid). Also expected of a person are various other virtues such as diligence, generosity, humility, perseverance, persistence. Likewise, when applied to one's different social roles, righteousness means doing what one ought to do in different situations depending on one's different social roles. Similarly, Li or propriety means conducting oneself in different situations in accordance with the codes of proper conduct relevant to different interpersonal relations and social contexts. Shu or empathy means not imposing on others what they themselves do not desire in different situations depending on one's different social roles. Wisdom means knowing what to do and how to behave oneself and actually doing so in different social situations. Ren, however, is not a specific virtue but virtue in its entirety (ibid). When a person has not only cultivated in himself/herself but also helps others to cultivate all the moral principles (such as loyalty, empathy, righteousness, propriety, wisdom), he/she becomes a man of ren i.e. he/she has acquired the virtue of ren (ibid). In a word, a person, according to Confucian doctrine, is expected to cultivate and practice all the virtues expected of a perfect person.

Since Confucianism views family units as basic social units in a society and stresses natural familial relations, it naturally advocates love with distinctions—one always love one's family first or foremost (Fung & Bodde, c1976; Hucker, 1975; Lai, 2008; J.-L. Liu, 2006). This advocacy of love with distinctions, however, does not mean that Confucians prioritize moral virtues associated with families (e.g. filial piety or brotherhood) over the virtues associated with the emperor or the nation in which he represents (e.g. obedience to the emperor or its extended meaning obedience to the state interest—love for one's country or patriotism) (ibid). Since Confucians consider a state (or the society as a whole) as a magnified big family, within which the ruler is the supreme head with others being his subjects (i.e. his quasi-sons-and-daughters), and demands obedience from his assisting ministers and, through his assisting ministers, obedience from all his subjects. Thus above the

familial moral values are those moral values associated with the ruler or the state which the ruler represents (ibid). In this way, the moral values Confucians advocate are hierarchical ones with those associated with the ruler or the state at the top followed by familial moral values and then values associated with non-family members (ibid).

Confucians advocate teaching, learning and self-cultivation especially self-cultivation of the above-discussed moral principles/virtues mainly through two cultural enhancements (i.e. rites and music) to accomplish the moral transformation of the rulers and the common people and, through this accomplishment, to eventually rectify the society (ibid). For them, rites can transform people's external behaviour while music has a power of transforming the people from the inside (ibid).

The Mohist School (or Mohism), whose founder was Mozi, advocates universal love or love without distinctions (i.e. love everyone equally, family members and strangers alike), the idea that people should act in accordance with the principle of mutual benefit, and a pragmatic political philosophy which is characterized by the authoritarian form of government, the unification of opinion, the prohibition of music, thrift in funerals, moderation of expenditure, the practice of meritocracy, and the renunciation of offensive warfare (J.-L. Liu, 2006).

Daoism or the Daoist School is mainly a theory of individual deliverance concerned with one's own spiritual elevation in a corrupt, chaotic and thus dangerous human world (J.-L. Liu, 2006). For Daoists, the most important thing in life is one's survival (ibid). To survive in a difficult tough human world, the best way is to avoid such a world by running away from it (ibid). For those who cannot escape from but have to live in the tough human world, Taoists prescribe three pieces of advice. They need to "[to hide their knowledge, virtues and abilities] so as to avoid drawing attention from others, to avoid being called into service for the rulers, and to avoid attracting followers" (J.-L. Liu, 2006: p.172). They also need to see their limitations in realizing their dreams and ideals, accept whatever they are given, and resign themselves to the inevitable (J.-L. Liu, 2006). They need at the same time elevate themselves spiritually by embracing Dao's perspective which "exemplifies absolute impartiality toward everyone and everything" (ibid: p.173). As for the rulers, Daoists suggest that they should practice non-action (i.e. doing nothing or less and letting the people do what they can do themselves) (J.-L. Liu, 2006). Daoists also promote ignorance and rejects the pursuit of knowledge including the moral knowledge which Confucians and other moralists teach (ibid). Daoists' anti-social, anti-knowledge and inactive political theory thus contrasts sharply with

Confucian's political theory which advocates rulers' active involvement in rectifying the society through moral transformation of the whole nation. Daoism also put forward a very distinctive philosophy of life which treats life and death as a natural course of life and advises people to take death calmly when it comes (ibid).

The Legalist School (or Legalism), whose teachings are mainly synthesized by Han Feizi, is mainly concerned with establishing political order and administrative efficiency (Fung & Bodde, c1976; Hucker, 1975; Lai, 2008; J.-L. Liu, 2006). In stark contrast with Confucianism which considers morality to be essential to politics, Legalism separates politics from morality. Legalists maintain that politics is not about the moral transformation of the people but about the governance of the people. Considering human nature as being self-interested, Legalists advocate the practice of strict laws and punishments in the ruler's governance of the people (ibid).

The Yin-Yang school derived its name from the two Chinese characters—yin and yang which represent two cosmic principles or forces respectively (Fung & Bodde, 1952; c1976; Chan, 1967). Yang stands for masculinity, activity, heat, brightness, dryness, hardness etc while Ying stands for femininity, passivity, cold, darkness, wetness, softness etc (ibid). The Yin-Yang school tried to interpret natural events in terms solely of natural forces (ibid). It maintained that all universal phenomena are produced through the combination and interaction of the yin and yang principles/forces (ibid). It also maintained that the human and natural worlds are closely interrelated and that bad conduct on the part of the sovereign results in the appearance of abnormal phenomena in the world of nature (ibid). The sovereign as well as the common people, therefore, should act in accordance with the way of nature i.e. in accordance with the yin and yang principles. Such theory of yin and yang not only largely conditioned the Chinese outlook toward reality, but also provided the common ground for the intermingling of the divergent philosophical schools (ibid).

School of Names, founded by Hui Shi and Gong-sun Long, were among the comparatively few systems of thought in China which offered purely theoretical interest and which was founded wholly on logical basis (Fung & Bodde, c1976 & 1952). "Followers of this school were interested in the distinction between, and relation of, what they called 'names' and 'actualities'" (Fung & Bodde, c1976: p.31). Hui Shi and Gong-sun Long represented two tendencies in this school. Hui Shi emphasized the relativity of actual things while Gong-sun Long emphasized the absoluteness of names (Fung & Bodde, c1976 & 1952). Since what the school covered represented an interest in knowledge for its

own sake and had no obvious relevance to the solution of the pressing social problems confronting the times, School of Names was attacked by Confucianism, Daoism, Mohism and other philosophical schools (ibid). Probably for the same reason, the school has been ignored by later intellectuals in China who are more concerned with solving social problems. Nevertheless, the school's influence can still be indirectly felt through other philosophical thoughts such as Daoism which have absorbed the school's abstract metaphysical concept—that "which lies beyond shapes and features" (Chan, 1967; Fung & Bodde, 1952 & c1976; J.-L. Liu, 2006).

These above-described six categories of ancient philosophical schools of thoughts especially Confucianism, Daoism and Legalism have formed the basis or the soul of Chinese culture (Fung & Bodde, c1976; Hucker, 1975; Lai, 2008; J.-L. Liu, 2006). They and/or the ideas affected by or derived from them, ranging from Neo-Confucianism and Neo-Confucianism to Chanism, influenced not only the political, social, economic and cultural life of the people during the Spring and Autumn period and the Warring State period but also those in the succeeding dynasties (ibid).

Confucianism, Daoism, and Legalism were three main currents during the Spring and Autumn period and the Warring States periods (ibid). Equally influential during the period were Mohism (ibid). Among these schools in the period, the school that had produced the most immediate and most consequential impact was undoubtedly Legalism (ibid). Legalism were practiced with utmost fervour by rulers of the Qin state so that with Legalism the Qin eventually established a really unified Chinese empire for the first time in China's history although the unified Qin Empire collapsed in 15 years due to Qin's excessive and rigid practice of Legalism (ibid). Although Legalism was not officially promoted and was thus ostensibly ignored due to its negative association with the excesses of the Legalist Chin Empire, Legalism, as a philosophy of pragmatic rulership, had been tacitly practised by Chinese emperors of the succeeding dynasties from the Han dynasty up to the collapse of the last dynasty (i.e. Qing dynasty) in 1911 and had underlain the Chinese political structure and helped maintain political stability in Chinese history (ibid).

During the politically powerful Han dynasty (206 B.C.-A.D. 220) which immediately succeeded the Qin, Confucianism and Taoism especially the former became dominant. Confucianism, which was amalgamated with the Yin-Yang School and which also absorbed many ideas from other rival schools, became the orthodox belief of the Han dynasty (Fung & Bodde, c1976).

In the subsequent four-century-long period of disunity (A.D. 221-589), Confucianism was in temporary decline (Bodde, c1976; Fung & Bodde, c1976; Hucker, 1975; J.-L. Liu, 2006). Dominating this long period were Neo-Taoism and Chinese Buddhism (ibid). Neo-Daoism took two forms—revisionist Daoism and hedonistic Daoism. The former, which integrates the Taoist spirit with Confucian moral and social doctrines, enabled the Chinese of subsequent centuries to undertake normal social responsibilities while maintaining spiritual detachment and a measure of individualism (Hucker, 1975). The latter was “an outburst of hedonistic nihilism in the third and fourth centuries” (ibid: p.202). Unlike their revisionist contemporaries who accepted social responsibilities and governmental appointments, the hedonist Daoists “[evaded] every duty, [flouted] every convention and indulged in every whim, be it sensual or intellectual,” so as to preserve their moral integrity (ibid).

Chinese Buddhism is a non-native Chinese theory of personal salvation from their worldly sufferings (Fung & Bodde, 1953 & c1976; Hucker, 1975; J.-L. Liu, 2006; Wright, 1991). It evolved from and absorbed the basic tenets of, Indian Buddhism which had entered China as early as the first century AD (ibid). Like its Indian counterpart, Chinese Buddhism preaches that the essence of people’s life is suffering, that the cause of this suffering is people’s ignorantly craving for and cleaving to worldly things (including their existence and self) which are impermanent in nature, that such worldly cravings and cleavings perpetuate people’s sufferings through an endless process of reincarnation, and that people can gain eternal salvation from this endless reincarnation by practising such Buddhist universalistic ethic as compassion and respect for life until they become enlightened about the impermanency of, and subsequently forfeit, all their worldly cravings and cleavings (ibid). By reinterpreting and giving different emphasis of some of the major concepts in Indian Buddhism, Chinese Buddhism (as represented by Chanism), however, had its own distinctive characteristics (ibid). Unlike the other-worldly Indian Buddhism which stressed that people should renounce all aspects of their worldly life including their families so as to be free from their worldly suffering and enter an other-worldly eternal state of peace and quietude, Chinese Buddhism, which was strongly influenced by its native Chinese this-worldly philosophical tradition, did not shun the worldly life and stressed that everyone (not just those renouncing worldly attachments) has the potential to achieve enlightenment and thus end their worldly suffering, right in the very course of conducting worldly affairs, and, upon enlightenment, continue their normal worldly life with an enlightened mind (ibid). Chinese Buddhism also advocated the notion of actively practicing good deeds and accumulating virtues in this worldly life so as to get a better worldly life, if not eternal happiness, in the future,

further emphasizing the original Indian Buddhist theory of karmic effect and retribution whereby one's good deeds in this worldly life will produce better results in the future (ibid).

The ensuing Sui (590-617) and especially Tang (618-906) dynasties brought renewed unity and political strength to China (Fung & Bodde, 1953 & c1976; Hucker, 1975; J.-L. Liu, 2006; Wright, 1991). Under the Tang, Chinese Buddhism reached its zenith in a form of Chanism and afterwards witnessed its gradual decline (ibid). Accompanying Chinese Buddhism's decline during the Tang is the revival of Confucianism in the same period (ibid). At the beginning of the Tang, Confucianism was reaffirmed as the official teaching of the state, but as Confucianism had by then already lost the vitality which it had once manifested in the form of such men as Mencius, Xun Zi and Dong Zhongshu, it had since then undergone a long process of reinterpretation by the official scholars in order to meet the problems of the new age (ibid). It was not until the latter part of the Tang dynasty that Confucianism, under the strenuous reinterpretation efforts by Han Yu and Li Ao, began to take a new form—Neo-Confucianism. Being a synthesis of three lines of thought—Confucianism, Chanism and the Yin-Yang-based Taoist cosmology, this new system of thought has dominated Chinese thought for almost nine hundred years from the height of Song dynasty (960—1279) in the 11th century, through Ming dynasty (1368-1644), to the collapse of the last dynasty Qing (1644-1911) in 1911 (Bodde, c1976; Fung & Bodde, c1976; Chan, 1967).

What I call traditional Chinese cultural values in the current thesis date back to the “hundred schools of thoughts” in the Spring and Autumn period and the Warring State period and evolved through Chinese history from then up to the demise of China's last dynasty around 1911. In other words, traditional Chinese cultural values in my thesis comprise not only ancient philosophical schools of thoughts ranging from Confucianism and Daoism to Legalism but also those derived from or influenced by them such as neo-Confucianism, neo-Daoism and Chinese Buddhism. They include not just the shared notions by these thoughts such as harmony between human and nature, self-cultivation, idea of reverse change, but also the distinctive ideas advocated by these different schools ranging from Confucianism's social reformation through moral transformation and Daoism's non-action governance to Legalism's governance through strict rules and punishment. For thousands of years, Chinese emperors, through their scholar-officials, had been turning to this diverse stock of philosophical schools of thoughts for better governance of the country and the people (Fung & Bodde, 1953 & c1976; Hucker, 1975; J.-L. Liu, 2006; Wright, 1991). The CCP, as the current

governing party in China, is no exception albeit with some sort of irony since the Party has been condemning these traditional Chinese cultural values from its founding in 1921 up to the Party-initiated reform and open-door policy in 1979 (Mittler, 2008; Guo, 2004; Z. He, 2000 & 2009; Hong, 2007; Rainey, 2010; Miller, 2010; Kraus, 2012; Tang, 1993; J.-T. Wang, 2003).

My research findings show that different aspects of traditional Chinese cultural values have been appropriated by the Party through different genres of top Feitian award-winning TV dramas.

Lao Tzu's notion of taking death as a natural course is reflected in *My Youth Who Calls the Shot* when Old Yang, upon his brief recovery from his heart attack, tells his wife to take his death calmly and tells her not to use modern medical techniques to prolong his life. Lao Tzu's notion of non-pursuit of fame and wealth is reflected in the main character Yang Dashui in *Story in Karamay Oilfields*. Chinese Buddhism's doctrine of forgiving is reflected in *Journey to the Northeast*. Mohism's notion of unification of opinion is shown in Yan'an Rectification Movement in *Yan'an Song* where Mao used criticism and self-criticism to unify the different thoughts within the Party into Maoism.

Also shown in the top Feitian award-winning dramas are the aforementioned Confucian moral principles (loyalty, empathy, propriety, righteousness, wisdom, and human-heartedness) and various specific forms of virtues derived from them. Loyalty to the ruler has been appropriated into patriotism in such dramas as revolutionary-themed dramas, MRMTH dramas, contemporary soldiers dramas. Filial piety has been shown in such FEI dramas as *Beautiful Daughter-in-laws* and such red-classics as *the Road We Have Taken*. Generosity, respect for the elderly and taking care of the young, benevolent governance, etc, are shown in such rural dramas as *Xi Gengtian's Story*.

Overall, Confucianism-based traditional Chinese cultural values have taken a large proportion among all the appropriated traditional Chinese values. Such being the case, the thesis will mainly describe how Confucianism-based traditional Chinese cultural values have been appropriated by the Party through five selected case studies.

But not all Confucianism-based traditional Chinese cultural values have been appropriated. For example, the notion of filial piety toward the parents/the elderly by the children/younger generation at the expense of the latter's happiness have not been shown or shown to be negative in the dramas. Parents are shown to show understanding of and get on well with their children who have different beliefs and practices from them. The traditional notion of noble men base women whereby women

had been considered as inferior to men has been updated. Women are now shown to be men's equals. Also updated is the tradition nan-zhu-wai-nu-zhu-nei practice whereby men are supposed work outside to support the family while women stay home to manage the household affairs. Women are now shown not only to work outside to help support the family but also to manage household affairs after work. They are shown to be independent. The excess of parental love toward their children is either not shown or shown to be negative.

Chapter 2 Theoretical Framework

2.1 Introduction

Situating my research in the field of political communication as well as in the field of TV dramas studies, I have turned to the theoretical perspectives that have been used to analyze content/messages and presentation of content/messages in both fields for theoretical solutions. Of particular relevance are the framing theory and the Levi-Strauss's binary oppositionary theory. The former is widely used to analyze news content/message while the latter is used to analyze the narrative structure of and the meanings / messages of TV drama and its close relative film. I have drawn heavily on these two approaches for the insights they have offered with regard to the analysis of media content/messages. Based on the discussion of these two theories, I put forward and elaborate my theoretical framework—network framing.

2.2 Brief Overview of Theoretical Perspectives in Political Communication

Political communication research originated from and has been dominated by the western democracies especially the US and the UK (Nimmo & Sanders, 1981; Sanders, 2009; Stoker & Marsh, 2002; Swanson, 2007). Within this western-dominated political communication research landscape, many theoretical perspectives/approaches have been developed. As one type of communication process, political communication consists of political actors, political content, media, citizens/audiences, and effects, the basic elements contained in Lasswell's classic definition of a communication process as “ ‘who says what to whom through what channel with what effect’ ” (Fiske, 1990: p.30; McQuail, 2005: p.69). The study of political communication revolves around these basic elements, sometimes dealing with relationships between one another and sometimes concentrating on one particular element. The perspectives within the political communication research can be divided into six main categories: effects perspective, media-centred perspective, content-oriented perspective, audience-oriented perspective, political-actor-centred perspective as well as interactional perspective.

Effects perspectives ranging from magic-bullet/hypodermic needle theory to agenda-setting theory have been employed to examine effects of media messages on audiences. Audience-oriented perspectives like cultural studies are used to study how audience receives media messages differently. Media dependency/determinism and critical studies are media-centred perspectives. The

former examines media's impact on politics while the latter looks at how media industry is organized or structured and how media messages or meanings are produced at the media industry. Framing, a content-oriented perspective, is used to examine how politicians and news media select and present some events or issues to promote certain interpretation of the events or issues and thus to convey certain kind of meaning or messages through such presentation. Professionalization theory focuses on the modernization and professionalization taking place within the arenas of the political actors including politician, political parties and political organizations. The interactional approach such as that adopted by researchers such as Katrin Voltmer (2006) deals with the interaction between the main elements of political communication.

All the above mentioned perspectives have contributed to some unique and insightful understanding of political communication. However, the theoretical perspective of direct relevance to my research is the framing theory for the insights the theory has offered to the analysis of news coverage of some social events or issues and thus the meaning or message intended by such news coverage. It is for this reason that I have turned to framing theory for possible theoretical solutions.

2.3 Framing Research, Frames and Framing

The use of framing theory can be traced back to Gregory Bateson's essay 'A Theory of Play and Fantasy' in 1955 (Tannen,1993; Noakes & Johnston,2005). In this essay, he introduced the notion of frame "to explain how individuals exchange signals that allow them to agree upon the level of abstraction at which any message is intended" (Tannen,1993:p.18). Since then, the concept of framing has been taken up by scholars from different areas of social inquiry including communication, psychology, sociology, linguistics, media studies and policy studies (Tannen,1993; Noakes & Johnston,2005; Reese etc.,2001). Today, framing theory has been frequently or overwhelmingly used by political communication researchers to analyze news coverage esp. news coverage during elections (Avraham & First,2010; Auerbach & Bloch-Elkon, 2005; Castelló, 2010; Chong & Druckman, 2007; Correa, 2010; Dai & Hyun,2010; D'Angelo, 2002; Edy & Meirick, 2007; Entman,1993,2004, 2007 & 2008; Gamson & Modigliani,1989; Gavriely-Nuri & Balas,2010; Handley,2010; Hänggli & Kriesi, 2010; Hertog & McLeod, 2001; Papacharissi & Fatima, 2008; Porto, 2007; Schuck & Vreese, 2009; Vreese, 2005). It has also been adopted by sociologists and political scientists to study social movements (Johnston & Noakes, 2005). To date, there has been produced a large amount of

research literature on framing and there has been an increasing tendency within the academic world to apply the framing theory to their research.

Within this increasingly voluminous framing literature, there seems to be and has been little consensus on key concepts related to framing theory—frames and framing (Vreese, 2005). Definition of frame(s) and framing especially that of frames varies with different scholars. Gregory Bateson who first introduced the term considered frame as a psychological concept and, to describe it, he used “the physical analogy of a picture frame and a more abstract...analogy of mathematical set” (c1987: p.186). Hymes and Frake adopted more or less the same notion of frame as “a culturally determined, familiar activity” (Tannen, 1993:p.18). Goffman seemed to apply the notion of frame to mean both the principles of organization which govern events, and the notion of frame adopted by Hymes and Frake (Goffman, 1974; Tannen, 1993). Minsky, a scholar on artificial intelligence, defines frame as the all-inclusive term for “a data-structure for representing a stereotyped situation” (Tannen, 1993:p.19). Fillmore, a linguist defines frame as “any system of linguistic choices...that can get associated with prototypical instances of scenes [with scenes meaning] any kind of coherent segment of human beliefs, actions, experiences or imaginings’ ” (Tannen, 1993:p.20). Reese (2007) regards frames as organizing structural principles that “draw boundaries, set up categories, define some ideas as out and others in, and generally operate to snag related ideas in their net in an active process” (p.150). For Gorp (2007), frames are “conceptual tools that media and individuals use to convey, interpret and evaluate information” (p.61) and are a central part of the culture which is itself “an organized set of beliefs, codes, myths, values, norms...that are shared in the collective memory of a group or society” (p.62-64). For the political communication scholar Entman, the term frame means the text itself (Entman, 2004). Upon discussion of the framing concept by Bateson, Goffman and Fillmore, Tannen (1993) defines frame as structures of expectations i.e. the prior experience or organized knowledge which is stored in people’s memory and is used by people to perceive and interpret events and objects in the world. For social movement scholars, some adopt Gamson and Modigliani’s (1989) definition of the term—the internal structure in media packages and the central organizing principles or ideas for making sense of events and suggesting what is in the issue while others adopt Snow and Benford’s definition—an interpretative schema that simplifies and condenses the world out there by selectively punctuating and encoding objects, situations, events, experiences and sequences of action (Noakes & Johnston, 2005).

Despite disagreement over the definition of frames or framing, the framing literature landscape is loosely unified by more or less the same essence of framing as well as the application of more or less the same essence of framing analysis (Avraham & First, 2010; Auerbach & Bloch-Elkon, 2005; Castelló, 2010; Chong & Druckman, 2007; Correa, 2010; Dai & Hyun, 2010; D'Angelo, 2002; Edy & Meirick, 2007; Entman, 1993, 2004, 2007 & 2008; Gamson & Modigliani, 1989; Gavriely-Nuri & Balas, 2010; Handley, 2010; Hänggli & Kriesi, 2010; Hertog & McLeod, 2001; Papacharissi & Fatima, 2008; Porto, 2007; Schuck & Vreese, 2009; Vreese, 2005). The essence of framing can be shown by Entman's (2004:p.5) standard definition of framing upon his review and synthesis of framing literature: 'selecting and highlighting of some facets of [social reality], and making connections among them so as to promote a certain interpretation, evaluation and/or solution'. The framed social reality may take different forms ranging from every day social interactions as discussed by Goffman, specific speech events/activities as discussed by Tannen (1993), various social movement mobilizations as shown by social movement scholars, to the specific social events or issues as covered by news media organizations. Framing often includes three main components: framing devices, reasoning devices (or framing functions) and the framed package itself for example in the form of news article, TV program etc. To make a certain framing effective, one must carefully select strong frames; and framing is a dynamic process (Entman, 1993 & 2004; Gamson & Modigliani, 1989; Hänggli & Kriesi, 2010).

The essence of framing analysis involves identifying the constitutive parts of the framed social reality, analyzing the organization of these parts, and interpreting the message/meaning conveyed by such organization. In other words, framing analysis is to deconstruct the framing process –to find out what facets of social reality have been selected and highlighted, how these facets have been organized or connected and what kind of interpretation or meaning or message such organization/connection intends to convey.

Scholars from different disciplines have applied essence of framing and essence of framing analysis to their framing research. Within sociology, Goffman has elaborated in his Frame Analysis that participants present at different social situations/occasions subconsciously or consciously identify, select and follow the prototypical behavioral features/patterns in these situations/occasions so as to signal to one another their certain interpretation of these social interactions—a clear sense of what

they are doing then —and in this way frame the certain engaging social situations as play, joking, teasing, lecturing, watching live theatrical performance or other specific type of activity (Tannen, 1993; Bateson, c1987; Goffman, 1974 & 1975; Noakes & Johnston, 20005). Tannen and other linguists (1993) have applied framing theory to their discourse analysis of one particular type of social situation—speech activities/events of different type. Their discourse analyses have demonstrated that participants in a certain speech activity/event select and follow certain routine features typifying the particular speech activity/event to frame it as of certain type depending on different types of speech activities/events they are engaged in (Ribeiro; 1993; Schiffrin, 1993; Tannen & Wallat, 1993; Watanabe, 1993). In a conversation analysis by Tannen (1993), certain linguistic cues such as parody, laughter and pronouns are repeatedly used by three participants in the conversation to frame their aggressive and antagonistic talk not as serious insults but as nonserious play or teasing. In the field of political communication, framing scholars have argued that political actors ranging from politicians, political parties, news media to the social movement activists select and highlight some facets of a social issue or event to advance a certain interpretation of this issue or event(Avraham & First, 2010; Auerbach & Bloch-Elkon, 2005; Castelló, 2010; Chong & Druckman, 2007; Correa, 2010; Dai & Hyun, 2010; D'Angelo, 2002; Edy & Meirick, 2007; Entman, 1993, 2004, 2007 & 2008 ; Gamson & Modigliani,1989; Gavriely-Nuri & Balas,2010; Handley, 2010; Hänggli & Kriesi, 2010; Hertog & McLeod, 2001; Noakes & Johnston, 2005; Papacharissi & Fatima, 2008;Porto, 2007; Schuck & Vreese, 2009; Vreese, 2005). Immediately after the attack of 9/11, the devastating and destructive effects of 9/11 i.e. thousands of civilian deaths from the attack, are selected and highlighted by George Bush and other officials to advance a particular interpretation of this event—condemnation of the attack as evil and the suggestion of war against Afghanistan to remove the evil agents which have been identified as the Taliban government of Afghanistan, its de facto leaders, Mullah Mohammed Omar and Osama bin Laden, and the latter's al-Qaeda terrorist network (Entman, 2004).

Both the essence of framing and the essence of framing analysis fit well with my research project. The selected Chinese TV dramas cover different aspects of social reality, both historical reality and contemporary social reality in China, including the CPC-led revolutionary history in contemporary China, rural form, medical reform, educational problem, contemporary soldiers' military life. Chinese authorities' attempt to use TV dramas to appropriate traditional Chinese cultural elements and to

weave them into various stories presented by TV dramas to promote certain political messages or agendas is, in fact, an act of framing. Underlying my research questions is the essence of framing analysis.

Although framing theory has been frequently and to some extent overwhelmingly used to study news coverage esp. news coverage during election campaigns (Avraham & First, 2010; Auerbach & Bloch-Elkon, 2005; Castelló, 2010; Chong & Druckman, 2007; Correa, 2010; Dai & Hyun, 2010; D'Angelo, 2002; Edy & Meirick, 2007; Entman, 1993, 2004, 2007 & 2008; Gamson & Modigliani, 1989; Gavriely-Nuri & Balas, 2010; Handley, 2010; Hänggli & Kriesi, 2010; Hertog & McLeod, 2001; Papacharissi & Fatima, 2008; Porto, 2007; Schuck & Vreese, 2009; Vreese, 2005), this does not mean framing is only fit or predisposed to study news or the act of framing just exists in news or election campaigns. Framing, as Entman has suggested, exists where there is communication. It exists in people's every day social interactions including speech events/activities, as has shown by Goffman's *Frame Analysis* (1974) and by Tannen's edited *Framing in Discourse* (1993). It also exists in politicians' interpretation of social events or issues, in news media's coverage of social events or issues and in social movement activists' mobilization, as shown by political communication scholars and by social movement scholars. In Entman's words, framing exists in at least four places in a communication process: the communicator, the text, the receiver and the culture (1993). Simply put, where there is communicative intention there is framing—in people's social experiences, in people's interpretation, in news programs, and in non-news programs including TV Dramas.

The above brief overview of framing research literature actually shows that framing theory has been applied to different areas of social inquiry rather than having been exclusively used by political communication scholars to study either news coverage of or politician's interpretation of social issues/events. In fact, in the current news-dominated framing research landscape, framing theory has been successfully imported into social movement research by social movement scholars and has now become one of the central theoretical approaches to understanding social movements (Noakes & Johnston, 2005). This implies and justifies the potential prospective use of the framing theory by other scholars to study non-news content including TV dramas.

The very fact of framing's existence in Chinese TV dramas justifies the suitability of framing theory

as an analytical tool to work out what aspects have been selected and highlighted, how these aspects are connected and what interpretations have been promoted in the TV dramas.

To sum up, the essence of framing theory fits well with my research aim to study the appropriation of traditional Chinese cultural values by the Chinese authorities through TV dramas to promote their political agendas or messages i.e. the interpretation of social issues preferred by the authorities. Next, I will apply the essence of framing theory to Chinese TV dramas' appropriation of Chinese traditional culture values for political purposes.

2.4 Preliminary Application of Framing Theory to China's Feitian TV Award-winning TV Dramas

In my research the notion of frames combines Gamson and Modigliani's (1989) definition and Gorp's (2007) cultural dimension. Here, frames refer to the central organizing ideas or principles that structure, organize and provide coherence to a set of idea elements or interpretations. Also frames are cultural frames since frames used in Chinese TV dramas draw heavily from the traditional Chinese culture. What's more, frames operate at different levels with different generalities.

I have drawn on Entman's cascading framing model (2007;2010), Gorp's cultural dimension (2007) to framing and Handley's notion of macro-framework vs. functioning frames (2010) to explain Chinese TV dramas' cultural appropriation for political purposes.

2.4.1 Framing Traditional Chinese Cultural Values in China's TV Dramas: Culture as Part of the Frames

As has been suggested by many framing scholars' particularly political communication scholars and social movement scholars, frames should be carefully selected so that the interpretations promoted by these frames can be taken easily by the audience (Chong & Druckman, 2007; Entman, 2004; Gorp, 2007; Hanggli & Kriesi, 2010; Noakes & Johnston, 2005; Reese, 2001). Framing researchers especially social movement researchers employing the framing perspective have found that various political actors especially social movement activists have made frequent use of frames that have cultural resonance, cultural congruence or cultural consensus and that the very use of these cultural frames are supposed to and have been proved to increase the strengths and appeals of the frames and thus the messages/meanings advanced by such frames (ibid).

What makes the selected Chinese TV dramas special is their selective use of traditional cultural elements. As briefly mentioned, these TV dramas are stories about different aspects of social reality in China ranging from the CPC-led revolutionary history to different social problems/issues in contemporary China. Some aspects of this social reality are selected and highlighted and connected in a certain way to promote a certain interpretation, evaluation and /or solution. The cultural elements selected, appropriated and woven into these dramas are the frames of these TV dramas and serve as the central ideas organizing and structuring the setting, the actions and viewpoints of the characters, story plot and other elements of these TV dramas, suggesting the essence of the social issues/problems covered by the TV dramas (Gamson & Modigliani, 1989; Vreese, 2005). Some of these frames are either explicitly or implicitly expressed. When they are explicit, they are expressed through the characters' words in the TV dramas. When they are implicit, they are reflected or implied through the experiences, the characteristics, the actions and the viewpoints of the various characters in the TV dramas. Where the frames are implied, the words, actions and viewpoints of these characters are the framing devices and are supposed to awaken within Chinese people's mind the selected cultural values they represent. Quite a few cultural elements are also used as framing devices to evoke the cultural values represented by them. The political messages which get embedded with the cultural values are thus accepted by the Chinese audience without much resistance.

Take for example the red classics genre dramas which are set in the context of the anti-Japanese invasion and of the civil war between Guangmintang (KMT) and the CPC. Such works as *Draw Your Sword* and *Red Sun* create life-like CPC high-ranking military officials with both strengths and weakness. The serials focus on the gradual development of the CPC officials from an ordinary person with some eccentricities to a CPC member with a communist consciousness. The TV serials also give an objective description of KMT's role in the anti-Japanese invasion war. The leading CPC characters and the KMT counterparts are presented as partners fighting together against the Japanese invaders and as rivals when the civil war broke out. The main KMT characters were no longer demonized but presented objectively as brave, talented, patriotic and compassionate. The CPC military officials and the KMT counterparts are humanized and both parties' role in the history is objectively portrayed.

In these military TV dramas, brotherhood, stability, patriotism and national unification are the frames i.e. the central ideas that organize and structure the different elements of the TV dramas including the setting, the main characters, their words and actions. Sometimes, these central organizing ideas are expressed explicitly through the characters' words but most of the time they are implicitly woven into the TV dramas and are loosely implied through the experience, characteristics and viewpoints of different characters. The depiction of the main CPC military officers and their KMT counterparts fighting together against Japanese invaders reflects brotherhood, patriotism, stability and unification i.e. the cultural values long embraced by Chinese people. The scene of the destruction caused by the war implies the importance of stability. With the help of activation of these cultural values, the TV dramas are supposed to communicate to Chinese audience and guide them to arrive at the political message embedded within the dramas i.e. the unification of the mainland and Taiwan and the stability and prosperity of the country.

Using cultural elements as the framing devices to evoke traditional Chinese cultural notions are quite common in MRMHT dramas and red classic genres. In one red classic *The Road We Have Taken* (*Renjian zhengdao shi cangshang*), the characters make use of a lot of ancient Chinese historical stories to express their different political beliefs and their comments on different matters. A typical example is the meeting between the three former Whampoa Military Academy (WMA) classmates—Liqing (CPC), Tang Muyu (the KMT) and Wu Rong (the KMT) prior to the Chongqing Negotiation between the KMT and the CPC for joint governance of China immediately after the victory of the anti-Japanese war. In the meeting, Wu Rong refers to the first part of a conversation between an ancient Chinese King Xiang and the famous philosopher, politician and educator Mencius during the Warring States period to discuss with Liqing about the necessity of the CPC's giving up prospective fighting against the KMT-led government and incorporating the CPC-led one-million army into the KMT-led government for the sake of the stability and the unification of China. Liqing uses the second part of the same conversation citing Mencius' suggestion of unifying China by benevolent means—peaceful and democratic means—to condemn the then KMT leadership's dictatorial attempt to govern China by cracking down the tolerant and cooperative CPC party. Liqing also cites the story of Monkey King's being forced to rebel against the Heavenly King from the ancient classic novel *Journey to the West* to explain to his WMA peers that the CPC's fighting guerrilla warfare with the KMT is an act of *bishang liangshan*—an act of rebellion imposed on

the CPC by the KMT's anti-CPC campaigns, implicitly condemning KMT leadership's unbenevolent and dictatorial act towards the CPC and justifying the CPC's fighting back as just act. The conversation the three former classmates use is the framing device and the cultural meaning evoked by the conversation is benevolent governance—a notion advocated by such ancient sages as Confucius and Mencius. Also structuring the former classmate's discussion is their use of the ancient stories to discuss the current situation—*jie gu yu jin*, a practice handed down from ancient China.

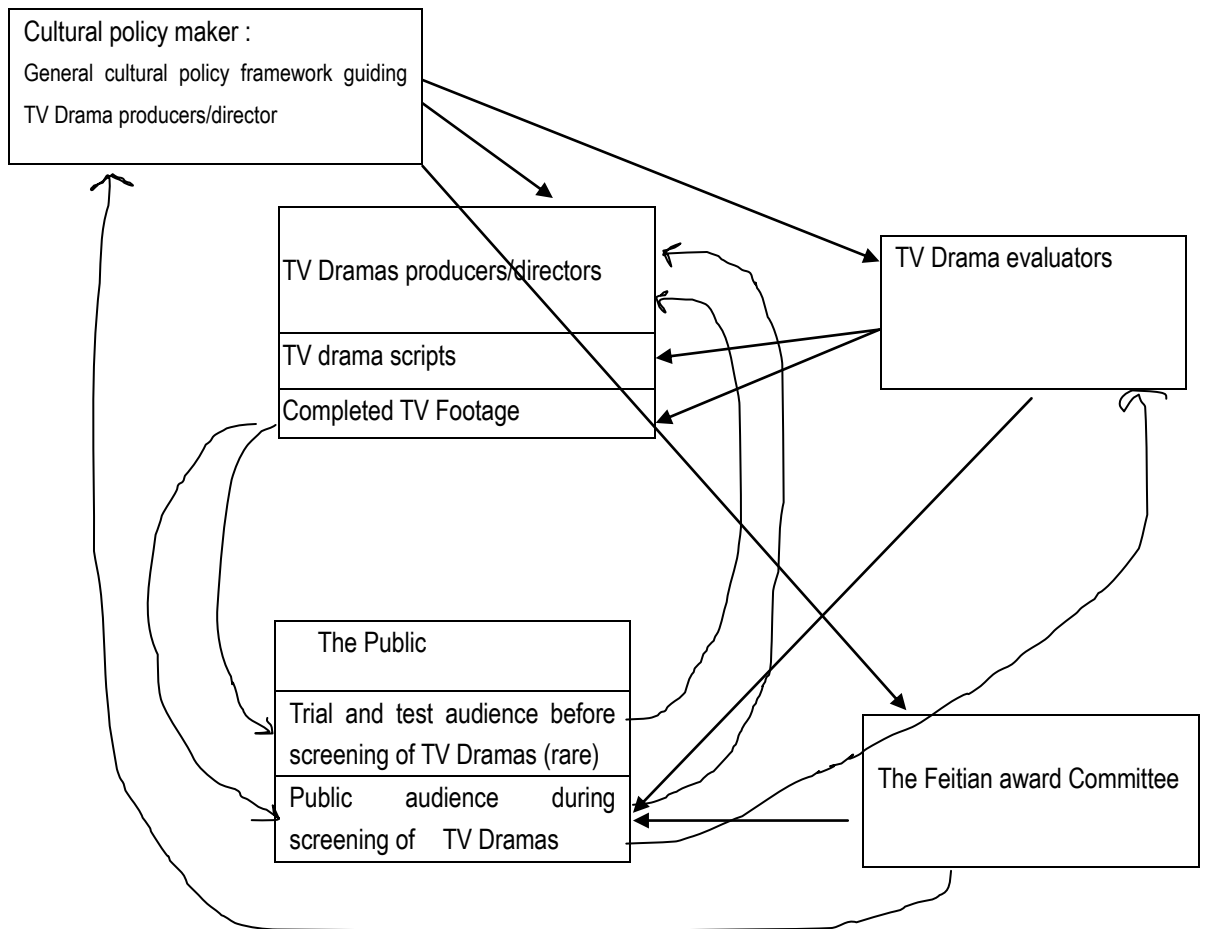
Frames selected and woven into TV dramas by TV dramas practitioners vary with different themes ranging from self-discipline, tolerance, perseverance, family solidarity, filial piety, community, hardworkingness, harmony, state benevolence to care of the elderly. This framing of traditional Chinese cultural values involves different levels of actors including not only TV dramas directors/producers but also TV drama script and footage evaluators and TV drama awarding committee. Because of these actors, the framing process is not a static but a dynamic process.

2.4.2 Framing Traditional Chinese Cultural Values as a Process

Entman's cascading network activation model can be used to help illustrate this dynamic framing process. His model shows that the ability to spread frames is hierarchical and is stratified across different levels of political actors (Entman, 2004 & 2008; Handley, 2010). The top level actor like the administration has the most power to spread frames. Other actors immediately below this level like elites in Congress and think tanks have the power to spread frames both to the news media and to other officials. In other words, officials at the higher levels like the president, have greater power to spread frames to lower-level officials, reporters, and the public (ibid). The framing process of traditional cultural elements in TV dramas also involves different levels of political actors and works in a similar but slightly different way.

I call the process of selecting and appropriating traditional Chinese cultural values Trial and Test appropriation model.

Diagram 1: Trial and Test Appropriation Model
 (Levels of appropriation Process and Actors involved in the Appropriation)



At the top level, the CPC does not specify what TV producers/directors should do when producing TV dramas. The party establishes a very general cultural framework. This cultural framework is then passed down to the next level of political actors: TV drama script evaluators, TV drama footage evaluators and TV drama awarding committee. The third level of political actors is TV drama producers/directors. It is this level of actors who are actually selecting, trying and testing different cultural values from the huge stock of Chinese culture, adjusting and making some changes and weaving them into different TV dramas. The general cultural framework serves as a macro-framework for TV dramas producers/directors for their selection and appropriation of the traditional Chinese cultural values; for TV drama evaluators to evaluate TV drama scripts and the first version TV drama footage; for the awarding committee when choosing and awarding TV dramas. Next, TV dramas are examined by SARFT or RFTB for the issuing of TV drama distribution permit and re-examined by the broadcasting TV stations before being shown to the audience; after proper revision based on the feedback from SARFT or RFTB or the broadcasting TV stations, then shown to

the general public¹. During screening, TV dramas may be required to make some revisions if some parts are considered inappropriate by the evaluators. Finally, the awarding committee awards TV drama Awards to those that best integrate cultural values and political messages and that are well-received by the public (China TV Art Committee Columnist, 2010; Z.-F. Hu, 2009; D.-Y. Wang, 2009). These different levels of political actors make sure that TV dramas producers/directors produce TV dramas with relative independence and the TV dramas produced will always be kept within the loosely established official framework and that those doing the best mix of appropriating traditional cultural values and promoting party's political messages will be rewarded, be made to become a model for other practitioners and thus become part of the macro-framework for the next round of TV drama productions. Thus the cultural appropriation process or cultural framing is hierarchical, dynamic and interactional.

2.4.3 Macro-frames vs. Functioning Frames

Entman and Handley suggest two types of frames: macro frames and functioning frames. Both have very similar framing functions i.e. define problems, diagnose causes, make moral judgments and suggest remedies, but they work in a slightly different way. The former, also named ideological frames, have a status closer to ideology and function as the overall organizing principle for other frames while the latter work within the organizing limits drawn by the macro frames (Handley, 2010).

This notion of macro-frame vs. functioning frames can be transferred to the framing of Chinese traditional cultural values in TV dramas for political purposes.

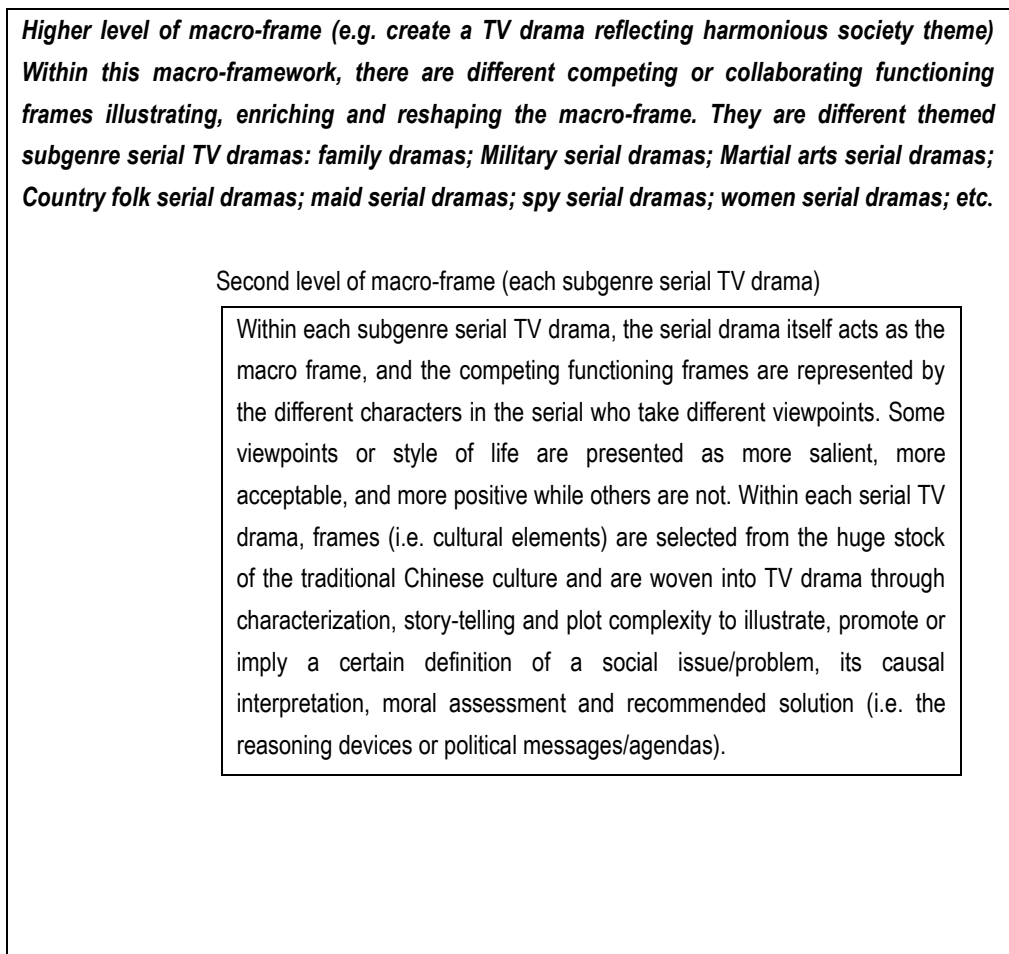
The general cultural framework set up by the CPC serves as macro-framework for the serial TV dramas producers for their selection and appropriation of the traditional Chinese cultural values. The different types of serial TV dramas produced can be considered as functional frames appropriating different cultural elements and promoting different political messages.

Within each serial TV drama, there is also a macro-framework which is the serial TV drama itself. This is the cultural frame i.e. the central organizing idea(s) represented by the cultural elements

¹ I had originally thought that TV dramas are shown first to the test audience for a trial effect and, after proper revision based on the feedback from the test audience, and then shown to the general public. One of the three directors I interviewed during my field trip in China told me that the use of trial audience is almost an impossible task because it is costly to get back actors/actresses to shoot the scenes again, Therefore it is a very rare practice to use trial audience to get initial public feedback to make some revisions of TV dramas before their public screening.

selected by the TV producer and director. This macro-framework within a serial TV drama is theme-based (thematic macro-framework) and the different characters representing different viewpoints are the functioning frames. Different TV dramas compete with each other and similarly different characters representing different standpoints within a serial compete with each other for their positions. In this way, both are competing functioning frames, but they compete with each other within the organizing limits set up by the macro-frame.

Diagram 2: Macro-frames Vs. Functioning Frames



After the TV dramas are shot, they will be sent to the party for evaluation and approval and, with some revisions and changes made based on the evaluation feedback, will then be shown on the screen to the public. At this level, some interpretations within the frames (with some standpoints not acceptable by the party) may be revised, changed or removed. The drama screening will be monitored carefully by the party through different means including ratings and direct feedback from online discussion forums to find out the public's response and feedback, i.e. the public opinion of the programs. Based on the public opinion thus gathered, the general framework will be enriched and adjusted for the incoming TV drama practitioners to try and test some other traditional values. At this

stage, we can see the macro-framework defines the competing functioning frames and is at the same time reshaped by the functioning frames. In terms of clarity and generality, a metaphor of concentric-circular frames can be used to describe the relationship between this general cultural macro framework and the frames adopted by the TV dramas (Please see the following diagram of different phase of concentric-circular frames). As the metaphoric diagram shows, each phase is made up of one single circle and several concentric circles. The single circle is the general cultural policy framework established by the party while the concentric circle is the macro-framework adopted by the TV dramas. At Phase 1 of TV's dramas' cultural appropriation, the inner circle i.e. the general cultural framework, is small because the policy is vague and not specific; at the end of Phase 1 or the beginning of Phase 2 of cultural appropriation, the inner circle becomes bigger because the cultural framework is enriched by the award-winning TV dramas' cultural appropriation practice and thus has relatively specific guidelines for cultural appropriation. Similarly, at the end of Phase 2 or the beginning of Phase 3, the inner circle is bigger than the single circle in Phase 2 because the general cultural policy framework is further enriched and further defined by the TV drama's cultural appropriation practice. The single circle becomes even bigger as the cultural appropriation practice moves on.

Diagram 3: Different Phases of Concentric- circular frames

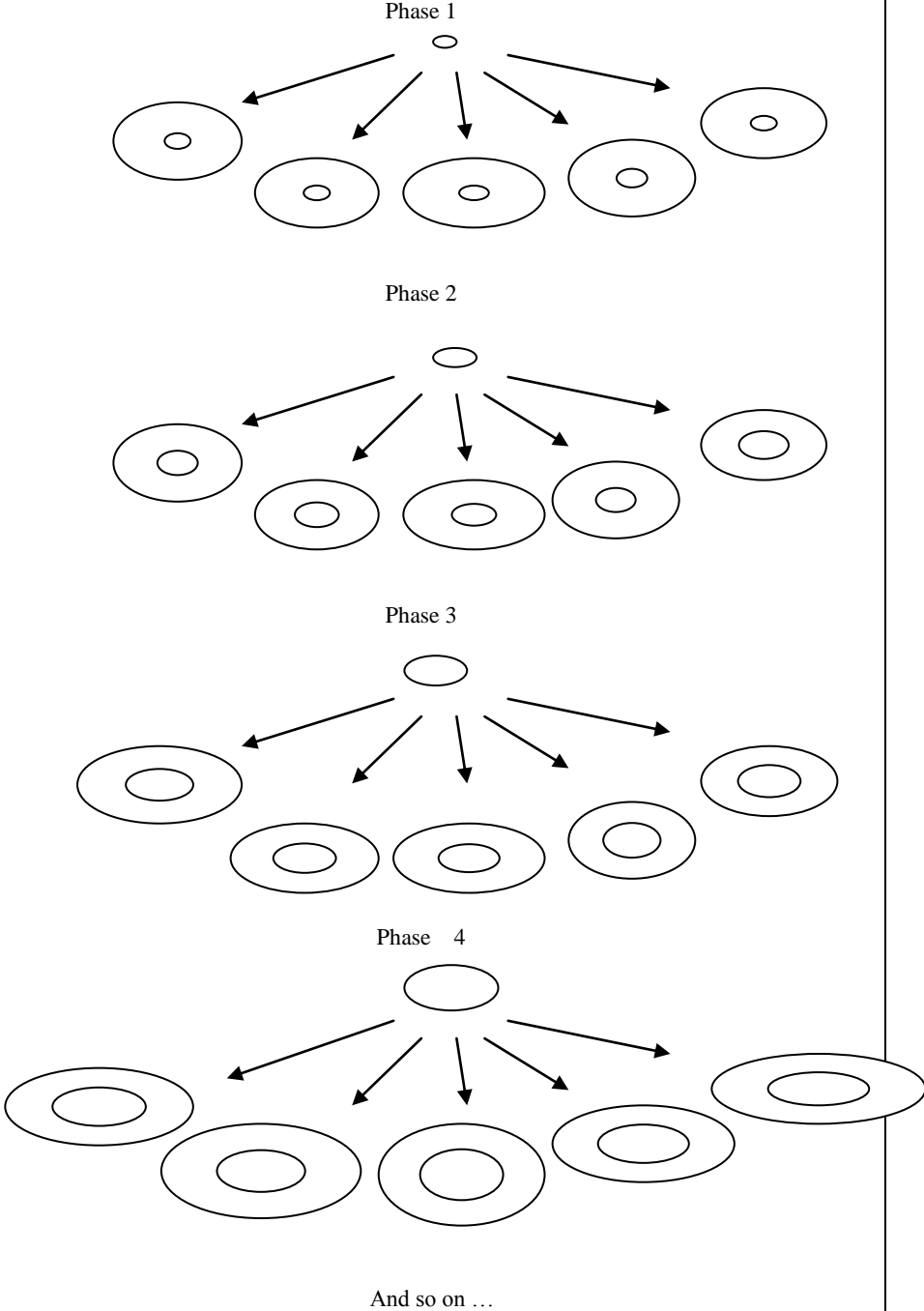


Diagram 4: Phase 1 of appropriation of traditional Chinese cultural values:

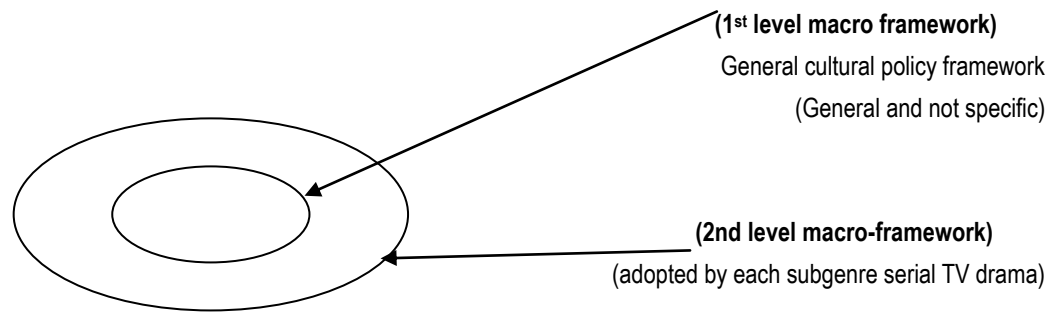
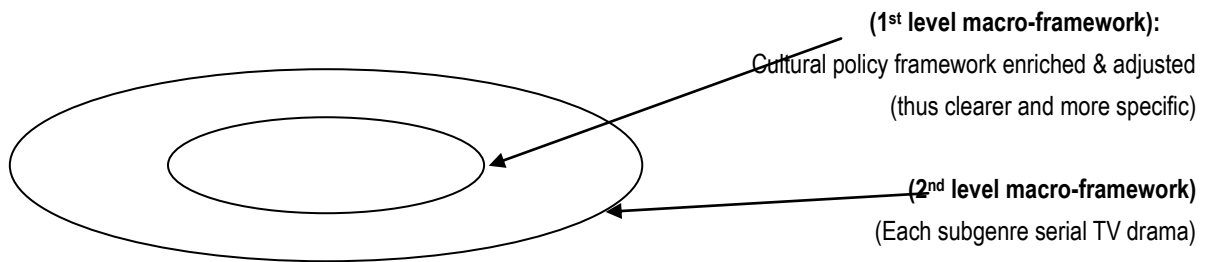


Diagram 5: Phase 2 of appropriation of traditional Chinese cultural values:



What has been briefly explained above is the overall framing process by which Chinese authorities select and highlight some traditional cultural elements indirectly through TV dramas to communicate certain political messages or agendas to the public. As the cultural appropriation diagram has shown, the whole framing process involves different levels of framing—top level of framing by the party, next level of framing by different formal TV drama evaluators (script evaluators, TV drama footage evaluators, TV drama screening evaluators), and by informal TV drama evaluators i.e. Feitian TV Award committee, followed by next level of framing by TV drama practitioners, and finally the level of framing by the public. The relationship between these levels of framing is both hierarchical and interactive and this makes the whole cultural framing process a dynamic one.

The Feitian TV Award-winning TV dramas are the dramas that have gone through this whole dynamic framing process. By analyzing the framing in these TV dramas—i.e. by concentrating on the level of textual framing by TV drama practitioners, I expect to find out what cultural elements have been selected and highlighted and how are they woven into the TV drama stories to communicate what kind of political messages or agendas. What is the framing like in these selected TV dramas? My above brief discussion has already elaborated some features of the framing in TV dramas: cultural elements have been selected and highlighted as the organizing frames of the TV dramas and therefore cultural frames are employed by the TV dramas; some frames serve as macro-frames

of the whole TV drama, structuring or organizing all the events presented in the TV drama into a coherent story while other frames serve as competing functioning frames, organizing the characters' actions and viewpoints in a certain event into a coherent event. How do these frames organize the whole story or the various events that make up the story? What is the exact relationship between these frames? How are they organized exactly? Are there any specific organizing patterns? The essence of framing as selecting and highlighting some aspects of a social reality and connecting them in a certain way to promote a certain interpretation, evaluation and /or solution appears to be a bit vague in the sense that it does not specify how the selected and highlighted aspects of the certain social reality can or may be organized and thus to promote the kind of interpretation, evaluation and /or solution desired or intended. In other words, the essence of framing theory does not point to any specific pattern of connecting the selected and highlighted aspects so as to promote the certain kind of interpretation, evaluation and or solution desired or intended. Framing appears to be able to select and highlight any aspects of the certain social reality and to connect them in any way possible to promote whatever interpretation, evaluation and/or solution desired. In this sense, framing is flexible and at the same time a bit too flexible. Framing theory's flexibility turns out also to be its weakness. I am a bit puzzled with framing's flexibility and vagueness or over-flexibility, but I am determined to work out a way to overcome this vagueness of framing theory since framing theory does show powerful insight in recognizing how a certain interpretation or, evaluation, and/ solution comes about though in a vague way. I am not going to give up the potential use of framing theory merely because of its inherent vague shortcoming. With such puzzlement and determination, I turn to the TV dramas studies for possible solutions and I find inspirations in Levi-Strauss's binary oppositionary theory (1955) in the course of reading among TV dramas studies and film studies. Subsequent section discusses this inspiring theory and my revision of framing theory into a relatively specific one—network framing.

2.5 Binary Oppositional Theory

2.5.1 Overview of Previous Literature on TV Drama

Media studies originated from and was dominated by the western developed countries, especially the US and the UK. This situation is also true of TV drama studies, which is part of media studies (Silj etc., 1988). Scholars in the west, in particular those based in the UK and the US have been concentrating on the TV dramas mainly produced by and screened on the two countries (probably) because TV drama production had an early start in the countries and the countries have the

expertise and resources to produce a lot of TV dramas and have exported a lot of TV dramas produced to other countries in the world (Akass & McCabe, 2004; Brandt, 1981; Cassata & Skill, 1983; Caughie, 2000; Cooke, 2003; Lavery, 2006; Millington & Nelson, 1986; Rollins & O' Connor, 2003; Siji etc, 1988; Sutton, 1982; Zhu, 2008).

In the US, the TV drama study can date back to 1940s and began to develop in 1970s (Caughie, 2000). In Britain, TV drama studies started more or less at the same time as in the US (ibid). With the de-westernizing trend in western academic research in recent years, TV dramas from other countries have gradually been receiving the attention of Western scholars. Chinese TV dramas did not receive the attention of Western scholars until the mid-1990s (Zhu, 2008)

At the early stage of TV drama's development, academics did not bother to cast their eyes on TV dramas. They did not even take them seriously and averted their eyes from them (Brandt, 1981; Miller, 1987). Some earlier researchers such as George W. Brandt attempted to initiate a tradition of serious criticism comparable with that of the theatre play or cinema (Brandt, 1981; Cooke, 2003). Brandt had to use a strategy of authorship to establish the quality or seriousness of TV drama similar to that of its well-established relatives, theatre and cinema (ibid).

Most of the early researchers on TV drama were either TV drama practitioners or researchers from the academic background of film studies. The former group has produced quite a few works on production process, giving detailed account of how a TV drama is made. Production process research literature includes *Boys from the Blackstuff: the Making of a Television Drama* (Millington & Nelson, 1986) and *The Largest Theatre in the world: 30 Years of Television Drama* (Sutton, 1982). The latter group of researchers tended to apply the then well-established film theory to TV dramas, some with success but most with frustrations. Their attempts to apply forms of analysis appropriated from film studies such as semiotics, structuralism and psychoanalysis to the text of TV dramas turned out to be not successful (Caughie, 2000). Frustrated, researchers turned to a more general cultural and institutional analysis or to the new object of fascination i.e. the audience. Hence there was a predominance of audience reception of TV dramas (ibid). Most early researchers tended to use cinema as a referential point, just as cinema scholars used theatre as its point of reference, and most of them tended to give generalizations just as John Ellis (1982) did with his writing of *Visible*

Fictions: Cinema, Television, and Video in 1982 when there was still very little literature available on TV not to mention research literature on TV drama.

Things started to change with the screening of one American serial TV drama *Dallas*, which was considered as the myth in the history of TV drama. It had “won a devoted following in more than seventy countries, reaching even the remotest African villages” (Silj etc., 1988: p.11). The serial's success has drawn a lot of debate from TV critics as well as academic scholars. A lot of academic articles have been written on the serial using different perspectives ranging from content analysis of values, audience-oriented approach such as uses and gratification approach to comparative approach comparing how audience in different countries receive the program (Ang, 1985; Liebes & Katz, 1993; Silj etc., 1988;). Since then, TV drama has been witnessing a blooming academic interest in the field, unlike the lack of interest in the field at the early stage of TV drama's development. No sooner has a TV drama become a commercial hit than scholars follow their academic eyes closely on the TV drama, studying different aspects of the TV drama ranging from the meaning of the TV drama, the audience reception of the TV drama, the impact of TV drama on the development of other related industry such as fashion industry, the techniques of TV dramas, aesthetics of the TV drama, character development to narrative analysis of the TV drama etc. Such HBO TV serial hits as *the West Wing*, *Sex and the City*, *Six Feet Under* and etc. have produced a series of academic books devoted to the serials as evidenced by *Reading the Sex and City* (Akass & McCabe eds., 2004), *Reading Six Feet Under* (ibid, 2005), *Reading the Sopranos* (Lavery, 2006), *The West Wing: the American Presidency as Television Drama* (Rollins & O'Connor eds., 2003) etc.

Today, study of TV dramas has not yet achieved the status enjoyed by its nearest relation—cinema, and the amount of TV drama research literature cannot rival the proliferation of cinema research literature, but TV drama research literature is immense and the scope of research is vast. The key areas of TV drama enquiry have now encompassed production process of making a TV drama, role or function of TV drama in society, effects of TV drama on people, history of TV drama, sexuality in TV drama, politics of TV drama, identity of TV drama, feminism, audience reception of TV drama, messages of TV drama, structure of TV drama, style and form of TV drama, character analysis, femininity, masculinity, quality of TV drama, TV drama's impact on other industries like fashion industry and cosmetic industry, life and death in TV drama, music in TV drama, almost any aspect of

TV drama you can think of (Brandt, 1981; Cassata & Skill, 1983; Caughie, 2000; Cooke, 2003; Miller, 1987; Millington & Nelson, 1986; Nelson, 1997; Silj etc., 1988; Sutton, 1982)

2.5.2 Theoretical Perspectives on TV Drama

Within the research literature on TV drama, a lot of theoretical perspectives have been employed: auteur theory, genre theory, encoding/decoding theory, binary structural oppositional approach, Marxist-type theory of cultural imperialism, liberal-type theory of modernization, McLuhan-type theory of homogenization of television programs, feminist approach etc. These varieties of theoretical approaches can be grouped into several categories similar to the ones I have previously used to categorize political communication research literature. In fact some of theoretical perspectives overlap with those within the political communication research. There are effects perspectives like spectatorship theory (Nelson, 1997). There is the category of audience-centred theories like audience reception theory and Stuart Hall's encoding/decoding approach. There is content-centred category: genre theory, binary structural theory and semiotic approach that cover TV drama message or meaning.

Since my project deals with the content and messages of TV dramas, I will concentrate on the research which is of direct relevance to my research—research that deals with the analysis of meanings or messages of TV dramas and research on analysis of messages or meanings of cinema, television drama's nearest relation. I have singled out Lévi-Strauss' (1955) binary oppositional structural theory for discussion. I concentrate on two main works with some details i.e. Roger Silverstone's (1981) *The Message of Television: Myth and Narrative in Contemporary Culture* and Will Wright's (1975) *Six Guns and Society: A Structural Study of the Western*. Both Silverstone and Wright have employed Lévi-Strauss's binary structural theory to analyse the meaning represented by the characters' actions and the relationships established through the characters' interactive actions in the story.

Though I have not chosen the binary structural theory as the theoretical framework for my project, I am very impressed by Silverstone's and Wright's application of the theory to analyze the meanings in the stories shown in TV dramas and in films, and have got a lot of inspirations for the formation of my theoretical framework. I have used binary structural oppositional theory as the referential point for my main theoretical framework i.e. the framing theory I have appropriated from the framing notions by

Gorp (2007), Gamson and Modigliani (1989), and Entman (2004; 2007; 2010), and with this reference revise the vague framing theory into a more specific one—network framing.

2.5.3 Binary Structural Theory on Meaning or Message of TV Drama

Binary oppositional theory was first proposed by Lévi-Strauss in his study of myths in *the Structural Study of Myth* (1955). Lévi-Strauss (1955) proposes that myth is made up of gross constituent units which are bundles of relations and that these units are combined in oppositional relationships and that the meaning of a myth derives from these oppositional relationships formed by the constituents units, not from the isolated constituent units. He proposes that a myth i.e. the collection of all its variants, is organized by a binary oppositional structure and the meaning of the myth should be read and interpreted by the oppositional relationships thus established. He first used the Oedipus myth and later all the then known versions of the Zuni origin and emergence myth to test this proposed theory, elaborating how the myth is organized by oppositional relationships and how the meaning of myth derives out of these oppositional relationships.

He lists 4 columns of events with regard to Oedipus myth. The first column includes the following events: “Kadmos seeks his sister Europa ravished by Zeus”; “Oedipus marries his mother Jocasta”; “Antigone buries her brother Polynices despite prohibition” (Lévi-Strauss, 1955: p.433). The second column includes: “The Spartoi kill each other”; “Oedipus kills his father Laios”; “Eteocles kills his brother Polynices” (ibid). The third column includes: “Kadmos kills the dragon”; “Oedipus kills the Sphinx”. The fourth column includes: “Labdacos (Laios’ father) =lame”; “Laios (Oedipus’s father) =left-sided”; “Oedipus=swollen foot” (ibid).

Lévi-Strauss (1955) suggests that all the above listed events represent some relations and that all the relations belonging to the same column share one common feature. All the listed events in the first column for example “have something to do with blood relations which are over-emphasized, i.e. are subject to a more intimate treatment than they should be”(ibid, p.433). He calls the common feature of the first column “overrating of blood relations” (ibid). The second column shows the same feature of over-emphasized blood relations but of the inverted kind and he calls it “underrating of blood relations”(ibid). Thus the relations of the first column are in opposition with those of the second column. Lévi-Strauss goes on his elaboration saying the relations of the third column are also in opposition with the fourth column. “The third column refers to monsters being slain” (ibid). The fourth

column shares the common feature i.e. “difficulties to walk and to behave straight” (1955:p.434). How can the relations of these two columns be oppositional one? Lévi-Strauss goes on with his explanation. “Column three refers to monsters. The dragon is a chthonian being which has to be killed in order that mankind be born from the earth; the Sphinx is a monster unwilling to permit men to live. The [second] unit of this column reproduces the first one which has to do with the autochthonous origin of mankind. Since the monsters are overcome by men, [he suggests] that the common feature of the third column is the denial of autochthonous origin of man” (ibid). He uses the universal character of men born from the earth in mythology to explain the common feature of the fourth column. In mythology, “at the moment [men] emerge from the depth, they either cannot walk or do it clumsily. This is the case of the chthonian being in the mythology of the Pueblo; Masauwu, who leads the emergence, and the chthonian Shumaikoli are lame. The same happens to the Koshimo of the Kwakiutl after they have been swallowed by the chthonian monster, Tsiakish; when they returned to the surface of the earth, ‘they limped forward or tripped sideways’. Then the common feature of the fourth column is thus the persistence of the autochthonous origin of man” (ibid). In this way, relationship between column three and column four is contradictory. This relationship is identical to that between column one and column two. Therefore Oedipus myth is organized by the oppositional relationships between the constituent units and its meaning has to be interpreted from this contradictory relationship (ibid).

Lévi-Strauss suggests that the binary oppositional structure is the structural law of the myth i.e. the binary opposition structure is the basic logical organizing principle of the mythical thought or basic logic organizing the mythical thought. The exhaustive analysis of all the known versions of the Zuni origin and emergence myth attempted in 1953-54 and other attempts at comparing myths confirm his binary structural theory. Lévi-Strauss suggests that “mythical thought always works from the awareness of oppositions towards their progressive mediation” (1955, p.440). He suggests three main processes which are at the root of the mythical thought. He assumes that “two opposite terms with no intermediary always tend to be replaced by two equivalent terms which allow a third one as mediator; then one of the polar terms and the mediator becomes replaced by a new triad and so on” (ibid). With such main processes, the myth can create one opposition after another accompanied by a mediator between the two oppositional terms.

Lévi-Strauss' (1955) binary theory is very interesting and his elaboration is impressive. The theory has been used to analyze narratives of different forms ranging from novels, films to TV dramas (Larsen, 1991; Silverstone, 1981; Wright, 1975; Radway, 1987). It has been used to analyze the narrative structures and meanings of TV dramas by some scholars such as Janet Mary Miller (1987), Gillian Swanson (1981) and Roger Silverstone (Larsen, 1991). Mary Jane Miller (1987) has mentioned the usefulness of binary structural theory for analysis of meaning in TV dramas. Swanson has used Levi-Strauss' binary oppositional structure to analyze meaning of Dallas. It has also been used by Will Wright to analyze the western films, the nearest relative of TV drama.

Wright (1975) has used Lévi-Strauss' binary opposition structural theory to discuss four types of oppositions between different characters i.e. inside society/outside society; good/bad; strong/weak; and wilderness/civilization and the conceptual or classificatory meanings represented by these two types of oppositions.

Wright (1975) considers the westerns to be myths. He agrees with Kenneth Burke that characters of a narrative myth including Westerns represent social types acting out a drama of social order. The interaction between the characters in a narrative is "never simply interaction between individuals but always involves the social principles that characters represent" (Wright, 1975: p.19). In other words, different characters in the westerns represent different social principles in a certain era. "The image of a character (...) does not come to represent a concept (culture) because of any inherent properties of the image, but only because of the differences between it and the image or character (...) it is opposed to" (ibid, p.21). Thus, the meaning of a character derives from its opposition with another character. Of course, more than two characters can appear in a myth. But when three or more characters do appear, they appear as contrasting pairs, not as coequal representatives of alternative positions. In the classical westerns (Wright, 1975), a typical cast would include a wandering gunfighter, a group of homesteaders, and a rancher. Instead of representing equally valid, conflicting-styles, these characters would be presented as pairs of oppositions with each pair having a different meaning. The gunfighter is opposed to the homesteaders, a contrast representing individual independence versus social domesticity. The rancher, who is settled and domestic like the farmers, is opposed to them, but at another level or axis: the farmers represent progress and

communal values in opposition to the rancher's selfish, monetary values—a contrast between good and bad.

Silverstone (1981) has similarly used the binary structural theory to discuss four types of relationships existent in the fictional world created in TV drama *Intimate Strangers* in terms of geographical code, physical codes, social code and techno-economic codes. Geographically, the action of the two main characters Harry and Joan is placed significantly in three areas—home, the garden and the city—with home and garden being opposed to city in terms of proximity (ibid). Socially, the relationships among the characters in the drama including those between Harry and Joan are presented in female-versus-male oppositions (ibid).

Both Wright's and Silverstone's application of the binary oppositionary theory to the analyses of oppositional relationships between different characters in the narratives are very impressive and very insightful. Indeed, binary oppositionary structure is found not only in the previously mentioned western works of narratives but in many other western works of narratives as well—in the cold war Hollywood films (Shaw, 2007), in the 1960s American films of the black people (Guerrero, 1993) and in the soviet novels of the 1930s (Lenoe, 2004). Binary oppositional structure is, of course, by no means unique to the western works of narratives. It is also found in the Chinese works of narratives produced in the Maoist era from 1940s to the 1970s (Q. Gong, 2011; Y. Li, 2006; D. D-W, Wang, 2000). The fact that binary oppositionary structure seems to have a ubiquitous presence in the narratives demonstrates the applicability of the binary oppositional theory to the analyses of narratives.

2.5.4 Limitations of Binary Theory and Revision of Framing Theory into Network Framing

Both Wright's and Silverstone's analyses of oppositional relationships between different characters are very impressive and very insightful. After all, TV drama covers and presents conflicts of different kinds and binary structural theory highlights the conflicts represented by different characters in the TV drama. What Wright has argued may be true of the westerns and what Silverstone has argued may be equally true of the television series since in both most of the relationships between different characters are in sharp contrast. The oppositional structures, which are valid in Wright's westerns and in Silverstone's analysis of *Intimate Strangers*, are not necessarily valid in the novels or TV

dramas where complex and realistic characters are created, just as Wright himself has pointed out (1975).

The meaning of a character does not necessarily derive from its opposition with other characters. However, the meaning of a character does inevitably derive from its relation with others including not only one character but usually more than one since one character is always connected somehow with a lot of other characters in different ways. One character is like one of the numerous nodes within the internet, connecting itself with and being connected with a lot of other characters (nodes) around it. Sometimes its relationship with others may be in direct opposition and thus oppositional; sometimes the relationship may be in cooperation and thus a collaborative one; sometimes it may be above or below and thus a hierarchical one. There are still other kinds of relationship: neutral, reversal and converging. The relationships between characters tend to be interwoven and are shifting in different situations just like they are in real life in the real social world. The relationships created by the different characters in the selected Chinese TV dramas are of such a type. My preliminary analysis of one of the selected TV dramas *Xi Gengtian's Story* (*Xi Gengtian de gushi*) has demonstrated the complexity of such relationships in Chinese TV dramas.

At the beginning of the TV drama, Sangui and Xi Gengtian (called Xi hereafter), two fellow farmers in Xijia village, are of equal relationship with each intending to contract some village land. This equal relationship is later transformed into an oppositional one when county head Niu comes to stop Sangui's sand-digging project and Sangui suspects that Xi has reported his sand-digging in the land to Niu and thus argues and fights with Xi. Sangui and Xi later reconcile with each other under the persuasion and mediation of Mr. Li, head of Longwan town. This relationship then develops into a supportive relationship by which Xi first helps Sangui to organize a village gong-and-drum performance team to perform in the nearby city, and by which Sangui later helps Xi to find an expert to help treat Xiulan's (Xi's wife) lame leg though without success and Sangui helps Xi to negotiate compensation for Shuanzi's mother from the fodder company which has used Shuanzi's mother paper pattern illegally. This supportive relationship eventually develops into a relationship of mutual support whereby Xi and Sangui jointly establish an economic cooperative project with Xi being responsible for the growth and production of food crops and Sangui being responsible for the marketing and the sale of the grown products. The selected Chinese TV dramas cover a lot of

contemporary social issues /events and presents and emphasize different relationships between different characters and their gradual transition and transformation of one kind of relationship into another. Such a complex relationship cannot be explained by Lévi-Strauss' simple binary oppositional structure.

A more accommodating theory is needed to explain the complex relationships presented by the selected Chinese TV dramas. How accommodating should this theory be? This question sends me back to my previous discussion of framing theory. The result is my comparison of the two theories. Both theories can select and highlight some aspects of a social reality (in the case of TV dramas the selected and highlighted aspects are the real or fictional characters representing different social types in either historical or current reality and their actions or narrative functions), and connect them or combine them in a certain way to form a story to advance a certain interpretation, evaluation and /or solution. When used to analyze the meanings of the created story, both aim to identify the constituent parts of the created story (i.e. the selected characters and their narrative actions/functions), the connection of these parts (i.e. the relationships between these parts) and the meaning/interpretation conveyed by such connection. What distinguished the two theories is the connection made among the constituent parts. Binary oppositionary theory points to a very specific connection pattern—combining the constituent parts of a story in oppositions while framing theory does not specify the type of connection possible and thus implies any type of connection. A closer examination of the binary oppositionary theory and framing theory shows the two theories to be on the two extremes of a same continuum—the former too confining while the latter too vague or general. The theory adopted to analyze the selected TV dramas should lie somewhere in between, neither too confining nor too general.

To some extent, binary oppositionary theory can be understood as one type framing. To define it in framing terms, binary oppositionary theory selects and highlights some aspects of social reality and connects them in oppositions to form a story to promote a certain interpretation of the reality. Though binary oppositionary theory is too confining to account for the complex relationship presented by the selected Chinese TV dramas, it points to one possible type of connection pattern for framing theory—oppositional connection. What needs to be done is work out a specific connection pattern and revise the vague framing theory into a relatively specific one so that it can accommodate but go

beyond binary theory and at the same time is not as vague as the framing theory itself. The best way is to turn back to the selected Chinese TV dramas and see how the constituent parts of the TV dramas are connected. My viewing of the selected TV dramas shows them to be organized by a network pattern. Here, I would like to borrow Manuel Castells' (2010) concept of a network to help explain the organizing network pattern in the selected TV dramas. Castells (2010: p.501) defines a network as "a set of interconnected nodes" with "a node being the point at which a curve intersects itself". The network pattern in the selected TV drama is similar to but slightly different from Castells' concept of a network. Similar to Castells' defined network, the network pattern is also a set of interconnected nodes. Different from Castells' definition, the set of interconnected nodes within the network pattern tends to be organized around a certain node with this node being the centre of this network pattern, as can be shown by my pilot study of *Xi Gengtian's Story*.

As my subsequent methodology chapter has shown, the basic constituent parts of a story are the narrative functions of the characters in the story. With Levi-Strauss's binary oppositionary, these narrative functions are combined in oppositions and meaning should be interpreted by such oppositions. Chinese TV dramas, as has been previously argued, present various other kinds of relationships besides the oppositional ones. These relationships are in fact a network of relationships organized around a centre, as the following diagram has shown. It is such a network pattern that organizes the narrative functions of the characters in the TV dramas in individual events within an episode, across episodes and throughout the whole story. The centre is the core character of the TV drama while other main characters and minor ones in the TV series are organized around and closely related to the core character. Within one specific episode, across episodes and throughout the TV series as a whole, the core character form different kinds of relationships with other characters through his/her interaction with them depending on the events presented.

Such network relationship also applies to a higher level of TV series, the story level or narrative level. As my pilot study of *Xi Gengtian's story* has shown, Chinese TV dramas are not about the story of one single character but the story of a group of characters. In other words, the narrative of Chinese TV dramas is not a single narrative but a multi-narrative. Within this multi-narrative, there is a major/core narrative while other narratives are organized around and revolve around this core narrative. As *Xi Gengtian's Story* has shown, the story seems to talk about Xi's story. To some extent,

it is true because the story focuses on Xi's life and farming experience in Xijia village. To some extent, it is not since the story also shows the life and experiences of other countrymen besides Xi's. In fact, this multi-narrative is a network narrative. This multi-narrative has one major narrative i.e. Xi's narrative and the other narratives revolve around and are closely related to this major narrative. This major narrative runs through the whole story while other narratives may appear and disappear from time to time depending on the interaction of different characters with the main hero in different events. Some of these narratives may end earlier but when appearing in the story they are always related to the major narrative. The major narrative presents and highlights the difficulties or problems Xi has encountered during the course of his farming career in the village while other narratives present and highlight the difficulties or problem(s) other villagers have experienced and Xi has helped to solve. Xi's major narrative is interwoven and interlocked with the narratives of other villagers. It is through such a network narrative that different characters appear and perform their narrative functions and different events are presented naturally and in a life-like manner.

Through such a network narrative, the selected Chinese TV dramas highlight different types of relationships established between the core character and other characters at the micro-event level and the meaning represented by these relationships as well as the relationships between the major narrative and other narratives presented and the meaning conveyed by such relationships at the macro-narrative level.

On the basis of the above discussed network pattern, I have revised the framing theory into a relatively specific one—network framing. Unlike Lévi-Strauss's binary structural theory which aims for oppositional relationships presented by TV dramas, the resultant network framing aims to account for network of relationships both at the micro event level within an episode, across episodes and throughout the whole story, and at the macro-narrative level. In other words, the network framing can select and emphasize the various relationships established between characters to promote certain social conceptions or principles or meanings represented by these relationships depending on the specific actions of these characters in various particular situations or events. The relationships thus described and analyzed are no longer restricted to but go beyond the binary oppositional ones including oppositional ones, cooperative ones, oppositional-and-cooperative ones, hierarchical ones as well as interconnecting ones. In a word, network framing allows a lot more freedom to

accommodate different kinds of relationships between characters created in the TV dramas and is therefore more flexible than the binary oppositionary theory in accounting for the complex relationships between characters in the TV dramas.

Network Relationships at the Macro-inter-narrative-level

Network Relationships at the Micro-event level

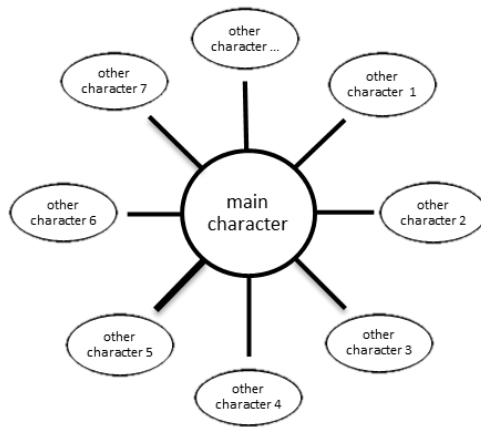


Diagram 6

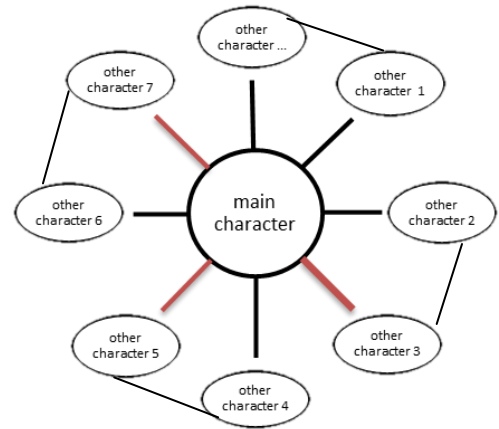


Diagram 7

Diagram 6 presents the network relationships at the macro-inter-narrative level. The diagram shows that the narrative of the Feitian TV award-winning TV dramas is not a single narrative but a multi-narrative. Within this multi-narrative, there is a major/core narrative (i.e. the narrative of the core character) while other narratives (of other characters) are organized around this core narrative.

Diagram 7 shows the network of relationships at an event level. The centre is the core character while other main characters and minor ones are organized around and closely related to the core character. Within each individual event, the core character forms different kinds of relationships with other characters through his/her interaction with them depending on the events covered. The bold colour lines show the highlighted relationships between the core character and other main characters within an event. The bold black lines show the presence of the other but less important relationships formed between the core character and minor characters within the event. The subtle/slim black lines show the relationships among other characters in the event.

Diagrams of Network Narrative of Xi Gengtian's Story

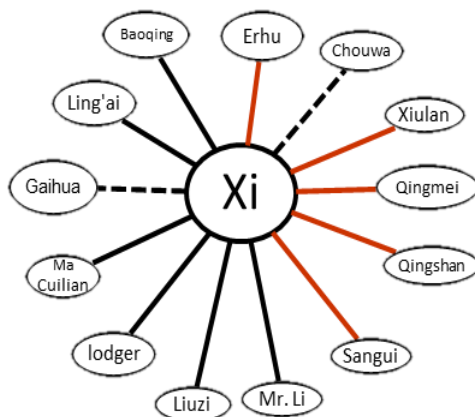


Diagram 8 (Episode 1)

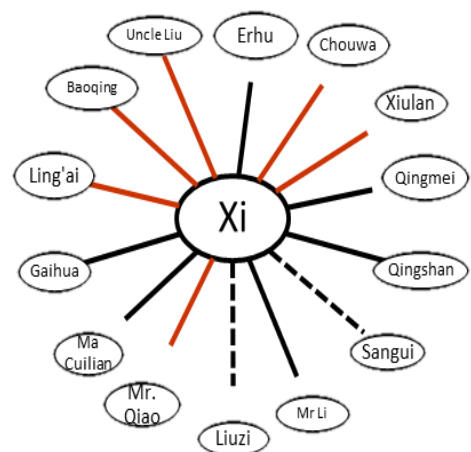


Diagram 9 (Episode 2)

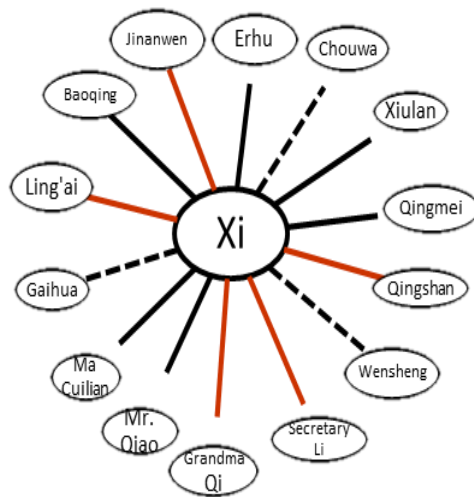


Diagram 10 (Episode 3)



Diagram 11 (Episode 4)

Xi is at the center of every episode. The color line indicates the main characters in an episode. The black bold line indicates the characters that appear in the episode. The broken line indicates the implied but not actual presence of the characters in the episode.

2.6 Application of Network Framing to Feitian TV Award Winning Dramas

This part briefly updates the preliminary application of framing theory to Feitian TV award winning dramas with the newly-arrived-at network framing. What has been previously discussed with regard to the overall appropriation of traditional Chinese cultural elements for political purposes remains largely unchanged: Chinese authorities select and highlight traditional cultural elements indirectly through TV dramas and weave them into the stories covered by TV dramas to promote their political messages; the selected cultural elements are the frames of TV dramas—the central ideas that organize, structure and bring coherence to a set of idea elements or interpretations presented by the TV dramas; the cultural framing process involved different levels—the top general level of framing by the party, next level of framing by TV drama evaluators and by Feitian TV Awards, the third specific level of framing by TV drama practitioners and the level of framing by the public; the relationship between these levels is hierarchical and interactive and thus a dynamic one; frames operate at different levels with different generalities. The level of framing by TV drama practitioners is part of the framing process and takes a specific form. Since the textual framing of the Feitian TV award winning TV dramas have gone through the whole framing process, analyzing this level of framing is supposed to find out what frames have been selected by Chinese authorities and how they are woven into TV dramas and to promote what kind of interpretation or messages to the public.

What has been added or updated is this level of cultural framing by TV dramas practitioners: TV drama practitioners (script writers, producers, and directors) select a certain social reality in China, either historical reality or contemporary reality, to produce stories of different types. Real historical events and historical figures in the CPC-led revolutionary history are selected to produce MRMHT dramas. Fictional characters representing various social types in contemporary reality ranging from rural reform, family enterprise to family life are selected to produce other TV drama genres such as rural dramas, dramas on contemporary soldiers, dramas on family and ethics issues. In these different genres of TV dramas, the characters, either real or fictional, and their narrative functions, are presented around a network pattern, as has just been briefly explained above. Underlying and woven into the network pattern of different TV dramas are some traditional cultural notions such as patriotism, nationalism, commitment to family values, fraternity etc. The traditional cultural elements thus woven into the TV dramas organize, structure and bring a coherence to the characters' actions, their beliefs and their interpretation at the micro-event level within an episode, across episodes and throughout the story, and at the macro-narrative-level as a whole, as has been shown in discussion of network framing. Embedded within these cultural frames are the meaning/messages desired by the party.

Through such network framing, the Feitian Award-winning TV dramas highlight the network relationships established among the characters both at the micro-event level and at the macro-narrative level and the cultural frames woven into these network relationships so as to promote the meaning/messages embedded within these cultural frames and thus indirectly convey the political messages or agendas desired by the party.

2.7 Summary

Since my research spans both political communication and TV dramas studies in particular, I have turned to the theoretical perspectives in both fields for theoretical solutions. I have singled out two main theoretical approaches for discussion—framing theory and binary opposition theory. The former is used by political communication scholars to analyse how different political actors ranging from politicians, political parties, news media, to social movement activists select and highlight certain aspects of a social reality to present certain interpretation of the reality and thus to promote

certain messages to the public concerned. The latter was first put forward by Levi-Strauss in his study of the myth and has since been frequently used to analyse content or messages of different forms of narratives including TV drama or its close relative film. I have argued that the Lévi-Strauss's binary oppositionary theory is not adequate to explain the selected Feitian Award-winning Chinese TV dramas. Though it has been used convincingly by scholars such as Will Wright, Silverstone and Gillian Swanson to analyse the narrative structures and meanings of films and TV dramas through the exposition of the oppositional relationships between the characters in the film and TV dramas, the binary oppositionary theory falls short of the various other relationships presented by the selected Chinese TV drama such as cooperative relationship, neutral relationship, supportive, hierarchical relationship. I have adopted framing theory for its flexibility to accommodate the variety of relationships presented in the selected Chinese TV dramas, the complexity of these relationships and the meaning thus conveyed. The flexibility of the framing theory however is also its weakness. Framing theory appears to be too vague and too general. It seems applicable to all media phenomenon and thus loses its uniqueness as a theory. Considering the theory's vagueness and its over generality and based on my initial viewing of the most of the selected Feitian-award winning TV dramas and my pilot of study of one of these TV dramas—Xi Gengtian's Story, I have revised the vague and general framing theory into a more specific one—network framing to overcome its inherent vagueness and generality. With the network framing thus revised, the framing theory is now able to explain the diverse relationships presented by the selected TV dramas and the meaning conveyed by such relationships i.e. the diversity of relationships presented both at the micro-episodic event level and at macro-inter-narrative level and the meaning conveyed by these diversity of relationship.

Chapter 3 Methodology

3.1 Introduction

Research methodology is the structured set of procedures or methods for conducting a research. The methodology adopted by a research project usually contains two main types: data-collection methods and data-analysis methods (Wimmer and Dominick, 2003; Jensen, 1991). The writing of research methodology involves justification of the methods selected, the elaboration of the methods selected, the ethical concerns related to the use of methodology as well as the limitations of the methods. This part consists of the following parts: the philosophical considerations with regard to the choice of the overall methodology for the research, selection of research methods; detailed description of the adopted research methods—narrative analysis, semi-structured interviews and secondary data analysis; ethical concerns and finally a brief summary.

3.2 Philosophical Considerations

Within social science research, there is considerable disagreement with regard to appropriate methodologies. There are two main distinct approaches to social science research: positivism (or objectivism) and interpretive (Neuman, 2006; Blaikie, 1993; Wimmer & Dominick, c2003 & 2011). Each of these represents a distinct model or paradigm for research, adopting a different set of theories, procedures, and assumptions about how researchers look at the world.

The positivist paradigm is the oldest and still the most widely practised in social science research (ibid). Positivist researchers consider the world as an objective reality which exists in isolation from researchers and which can be viewed by all (ibid). To them, the reality can be divided into constituent parts and knowledge of the whole is obtained by examining the parts. All human beings are considered to be basically similar and the researcher's aim is to search for general categories to summarize their behaviours or feelings (ibid). The positivist paradigm employs quantification, hypothesis and objective measures (ibid). Positivist researchers often use surveys and experiments to collect the necessary data, and content analysis to analyze the collected data (ibid). Positivist researchers aim for breadth (ibid).

The interpretive paradigm, attempts to understand how people in everyday natural settings produce meaning and interpret the events of their world (Denzin & Lincoln, 1998 & 2008; Neuman, 2006;

Blaikie, 1993; Wimmer & Dominick, c2003 & 2011). It is thus mainly concerned with meaning and interpretation (ibid). Unlike positivists, interpretive social scientists have a very different view of reality and individuals. They posit that “there is no single reality” (Wimmer & Dominick, 2011:p.116). In their mind, “[each] observer creates reality as part of the research process. [The reality] is subjective and exists only in reference to the observer” (ibid). The interpretive researchers “examine the entire process believing that reality is holistic and cannot be subdivided” (ibid). They hold the view that “human beings are fundamentally different and cannot be pigeonholed” (ibid). They aim to “produce a unique explanation about a given situation or individual” (ibid). They often employ focus groups, in-depth interviews, and participant observation to collect research data, and use narrative analysis, genre analysis and discourse analysis as their analytical methods (Denzin & Lincoln, 1998 & 2008; Neuman, 2006; Blaikie, 1993; Wimmer & Dominick, c2003 & 2011). Interpretive researchers aim for depth (ibid).

Research methods used by positivist researchers are usually called quantitative methods while those by interpretive researchers are called qualitative methods (ibid). Both quantitative and qualitative methods have their own advantages and disadvantages. Qualitative methods for example “allow a researcher to view behaviour of the research object in a natural setting without the artificiality that sometimes surrounds experimental or survey research” (Wimmer & Dominick, 2011: p.48). They can also “increase a researcher’s depth of understanding of the phenomenon under investigation” (ibid). Moreover, they “are flexible and allow the researcher to pursue new areas of interest. A questionnaire is unlikely to provide data about questions that are not asked , but a person conducting a field observation or focus group might discover facets of a subject that were not considered before the study began” (ibid)

Quantitative methods used to be associated with the methods used by positivist empirical social researchers and qualitative methods with those by interpretive researchers (Denzin & Lincoln, 1998 & 2008; Neuman, 2006; Blaikie, 1993; Wimmer & Dominick, c2003 & 2011). Nowadays, a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods has been proposed or adopted by some positivist and interpretive researchers to combine the merits offered by and to overcome the limitations posed by the two methods respectively (ibid). Known as triangulation, such attempt aims to understand the research problem as fully as possible (ibid).

What research methods are relevant to a research project? What research methods should be used by a research project? Quantitative, qualitative or triangulation? The relevance and the choice depend on the particular purpose of the research project and the specific research questions that need to be answered.

3.3 Selection of Research Methods

My research intends to answer two key research questions: what kinds of traditional Chinese cultural values have been used by the selected TV dramas? How are these cultural values used for promoting what kinds of political messages/agendas to the Chinese audience? As my research questions suggest, my research mainly deals with the meanings/messages intended by TV dramas and involves interpretation of textual meanings. Given such interpretive purpose of my project, I have adopted a qualitative methodology to conduct a qualitative content analysis of the selected Chinese TV dramas. While agreeing with the post-structuralists on their argument that meaning production is a dynamic process and should be studied within the context where it is produced and received rather than being studied alone within the text (Bertrand & Hughes, 2005; Gunter, 2000; Hijmans, 1996; Jensen, 2002), I situate my project as part of this dynamic process by concentrating it mainly on the textual meaning for practical reasons: a sheer size of one PhD project is not spacious enough to account for this dynamic process and to conduct a project on the dynamic process will inevitably involve years of research efforts more than a PhD project can afford. I have selected as my major research method narrative analysis among the available qualitative content analysis methods for its devotion to stories as its object of study.

Narrative analysis is employed to give a qualitative content analysis of the selected Chinese TV dramas. The TV dramas under study are the First Prize award-winning TV dramas in the 23rd, 24th, 25th, 26th, 27th and 28th Feitian Awards as shown in the attached table. The first-prize awards are chosen for analysis for these reasons: they are considered the best among those awarded; the themes or issues covered in TV dramas are also considered to best reflect or represent the top-priority political agendas of the authorities; they are thought to have best appropriated Chinese traditional cultural values and to have best communicated the authorities' messages (China Television Art, 2009; Li, 2009; Wang, 2010). A total of 35 TV dramas are included.

Before the actual narrative analysis, these selected TV dramas are collected or accessed in two main ways. Pirated DVD versions of some more recent Feitian Award-winning TV dramas (i.e. the 26th, 27th and 28th Feitian Award-winning TV dramas) have been bought from the DVD stands outside the North Campus of the Guangdong University of Foreign Studies in Guangzhou where I have been teaching since 1996 while some other Feitian Award winning TV dramas (i.e. those from the 23rd to 25th Feitian TV Awards) are accessible from the online Chinese video websites including www.daidu.com, www.youku.com, www.tudou.com, and www.iqiyi.com.

I have grouped these TV dramas into two main categories—the historical dramas and contemporary dramas and then divide each category into different subgenres. The historical category consists of MRMHT dramas, red classics and ordinary folk dramas while the contemporary category consists of reform dramas of different kind and ordinary folk dramas. The general features of the dramas are briefly summarized and described in one of the subsequent background chapters—Feitian TV Awards. MRMHT dramas and red classics take up a large proportion of the historical category while rural dramas, contemporary soldier dramas and FEI dramas take up a large proportion of the contemporary category. From each of these subgenres I have singled out one representative for detailed narrative analysis in the subsequent chapters and a total of 5 have been chosen for this purpose: one MRMHT drama, one red classic, one FEI drama, one rural drama, and one contemporary soldier drama.

Before my field work, I had originally planned to supplement the narrative analysis by the semi-structured interviews with the directors/producers/script writers of some of the selected TV dramas with a view to giving a relatively in-depth understanding of the messages/meaning intended by the TV dramas as well as by those directly involved in the production of these TV dramas. As the subsequent reports of my field experience have shown, the semi-structured interviews have not been done successfully and as a result I have not attained the data as I have expected from the interview. Nevertheless, the amounts of secondary data I have acquired during my field trip in China have turned out to be quite helpful in understanding both Chinese TV dramas in general and the selected TV dramas in particular. For this reason, I intend to use these secondary data as an alternative to my pre-empted but not very successful interviews. These secondary data are mostly the newspaper and journal accounts of the production of the selected TV drama by the interviewed

directors/producers/script writers. They have been mainly collected via my library account at Guangdong University of Foreign Studies from the largest Chinese academic online database at www.cnki.net which has incorporated almost all the Chinese journals including China Television (or Chinese TV before 2005), Contemporary Television, Contemporary Cinema, and a lot of Chinese newspapers. These secondary data also include the commentary on the selected TV dramas by the TV drama experts or TV drama regulatory authorities on different occasions: on the course of the dramas' screening, after the drama's screening and on the conferences on these TV dramas after their popularity. Some of the secondary data are also collected from sina.com, from sohu.com as well as from SARFT.com. The secondary data thus collected and the data resulting from the not so satisfactorily conducted semi-interviews form the supplementary data I have originally intended to cross-check the result of my narrative analysis to see whether the textual messages conveyed by the TV dramas correspond to those intended by the TV drama producers.

Qualitative content analysis will be carried out for the secondary data collected. This analysis will be related to the narrative analysis of TV dramas' appropriation of Chinese traditional cultural values and the messages embedded in the TV dramas. This secondary data analysis aims to overcome the possible misperception and misunderstanding of the TV Dramas' appropriation of Chinese traditional cultural values and the embedded messages through the mere textual analysis of TV dramas and to find out whether the messages embedded in the TV dramas correspond to those intended by the directors and to the political agendas of the party

The combination of the textual analysis of the selected TV dramas with the supplementary data analysis (from the secondary data sources as well as the interview results) aims to give a relatively all-round picture of TV dramas' cultural appropriation for political purposes i.e. to find out:

- ✚ what cultural values and political messages have been shown in TV dramas;
- ✚ what cultural values and political messages TV drama producers/directors try to put into TV dramas;
- ✚ what cultural values and political messages the TV dramas the awarding judges/the experts/the authorities see in these TV dramas.

3.4 Narrative Analysis

Narrative analysis is the major research method adopted to collect the necessary data for my research. Being one of the qualitative content analysis methods, narrative analysis has been widely used to study stories of different forms such as novels, films, television series, strip cartoons, myths

etc. (Lothe, 2000). Its adoption aims to give a relatively holistic objective picture of the meaning conveyed by the selected Chinese TV dramas since any research method inevitably involves the subjectivity of the researcher however objective the researcher intends his research to be.

The designed research methodology and the specific research methods adopted should maximize the ability of the employed theoretical framework to explain the research phenomenon. In my case, the selection of research methodology should maximize the framing theory's flexibility to accommodate and highlight different kinds of relationships within the selected Chinese TV dramas, thus highlighting the meanings or messages conveyed by these relationships. Therefore, a clear-cut and well-designed research method needs to be developed. Let's see whether the current research methods used for TV drama analysis can do this job or not and if not, whether the research methods can be improved to do the job. Since television drama is one of the many forms of narrative, there is a necessity to look at narratology—the theory and systematic study of narrative.

3.4.1 Brief Overview of Narratology

Narratology is primarily a set of approaches to the different forms of narratives such as folktale, myths, novels, painting, music videos, films and television dramas (Bal, 2009; Currie, 1998; Fludernik, 2005 & 2008; Herman, 2005& 2008; Lothe, 2000).

The origin of narratology can date back to Plato on representation and Aristotle on plot, but its formal development began when novel became the predominant literary genre in the first half of the twentieth century (ibid). Narratology was developed first as a way to account for the wide appeal of the novel (ibid). Since then, narratology has been the central theory in literary studies and has mainly been used to analyze literary narratives (ibid). During the heyday of narrative theory i.e. the 1970s and 1980s, there developed narrative theories for the analysis of plot, style, mood as well as description (ibid). Before 1980s narratology was greatly influenced by formalism and structuralism and was thus called formalist or structuralist narratology (ibid). Starting from mid-1980s, narratology has experienced a transition from formal/structuralist narratologists to new narratologies or poststructuralist narratologies (ibid). Now narratology is divided into two main strands: structuralist narratology and poststructuralist narratology. Structuralist narratology is text-centred and is mainly confined to literary narratives (ibid). Structuralist narratologists consider narratology as an objective science and they aim to discover inherent formal and universal structural properties of all narrative

texts (ibid). Poststructuralist narratology is context-oriented and mainly focuses on open and dynamic processes during which textual meanings are produced and interpreted (ibid). With poststructuralist narratology, narratology has been extended to narrative in history, to the operations of legal systems, scientific analysis and philosophy and other narratives instead of being confined to literature (ibid).

Structuralist narratology has been attacked by poststructuralists for its scientific orientation and its over-emphasis on textual structures and properties (ibid). Despite this, structuralist narratology still provides an important analytical tool. Any analysis of the meaning of a narrative text inevitably involves the description of narrative content i.e. plot, and the analysis of the narrative structure since it is not possible to analyze the meaning of the narrative text without first knowing and being familiar with the textual content and its structure. The relevance of structural narratology is also confirmed by that fact that the expertise and skills developed by structuralist narratology have been applied to research field beyond literary narratives. It is precisely for this reason that I turn to structural narratology particularly those focusing on plot and structure for methodological tools. I will concentrate on Propp's narrative model, Greimas' narrative theory and Roger Silverstone's narrative analysis which has incorporated Propp's model and Greimas' notion of tests.

3.4.2 Propp's Narrative Model

Propp (1968) has put forward a classical model of narrative analysis in his *Morphology of Folktales*. He proposed narrative functions as a basic unit for doing narrative analysis. His model consists of description of three main parts: the narrative functions of the main characters, the relationship between these functions and the relationship of these functions to the story as a whole. Propp has produced a morphology which consists of 31 basic narrative functions and nine preparatory ones. "The preparatory functions are of uncertain status and they are not involved in the rigorous chronology of the main functions; they exist primarily to set the scene and there are no rules determining their necessary presence or absence" (Silverstone, 1981:p. 87). The basic narrative functions are relatively stable and are chronologically organized (Propp, 1968; Silverstone, 1981).

Though Propp's model of narrative analysis has been frequently criticized especially for his strict chronological ordering of the narrative functions of the characters(Radway, 1984; Silverstone, 1981;

Wright, 1975), the value of Propp's model can be illustrated by the fact that his model has been adopted and appropriated by scholars of narrative analysis (ibid). His model has in fact provided a fundamental starting point for a narrative analysis i.e. his idea of dividing a story into component parts (i.e. narrative functions) followed by the analysis of the relationship between these components and the relationship between these components and the story as a whole. To analyze the meaning of a story, one needs first to be familiar with the narrative structure of the story: the narrative functions of the characters in the story, the organization of these narrative functions into events and the events into a story. And this inevitably involves some sort of morphological analysis of the story, as proposed by Propp's classical narrative model.

Propp's model has also provided a good reference for researchers employing narrative analysis. Propp's model has demonstrated the general universal features of all narratives: whatever form it takes, the narrative has a beginning, a middle and an end. In other words the narrative is organized around the beginning-middle-ending logic. His narrative model has also presented one possible ordering of the events covered by the story i.e. linear chronological ordering of the events. My pilot study of one of the selected Chinese TV dramas, Xi Gengtian's Story has confirmed the validity of Propp's model in this regard.

Although Xi Gengtian's story has a relatively sophisticated network narrative, the general narrative structure of the story still roughly corresponds with the classical narrative model proposed by Propp (1968). Episode 1 establishes an initial situation which includes: the introduction of the drama's main characters including Xi Gengtian and his family members and other households in Xijia village, and the definition of Xi's desire to return to Xijia village to do farming. This initial situation is then followed by Xi's subsequent series of attempts to realize his desire which involves gaining help or support prior to Xi's ultimate realization of his major desire—to successfully establish his farming career with the establishment of an economic cooperative in the village (part of episode 1 to episode 18). Xi has finally fulfilled his desire and has become a successful farmer in the village. To sum up, the story roughly follows a chronological order and is organized around the usual beginning-middle-ending story logic.

Therefore, narrative analysis researchers can still use Propp's narrative model as a referential point

against which they conduct their narrative analysis. They can work out the similarities and differences between Propp's narrative model and narrative models of the selected stories and work out the meanings conveyed by the similarities and the differences.

Propp's model alone, however, is not enough to account for Chinese TV dramas' network narrative. As Greimas suggested, the narrative functions listed by Propp, are a bit too unwieldy. Propp's model thus cannot adequately account for and may even further complicate the analysis of Chinese TV drama's network narrative structure. Greimas understanding of and analysis of narrative can help to explain Chinese TV dramas' network narrative structure.

3.4.3 Greimas's Narrative Theory

Derived from Propp's classical model of narrative analysis, Greimas's narrative analysis further systematized Propp's narrative analysis (Silverstone, 1981). Greimas has transformed Propp's classificatory schema of functions into a narrative model of equilibrium, according to which narrative's achievement lies in the resolution of disequilibrium.

As just mentioned, Greimas considered Propp's narrative functions as unwieldy. He identified interdependence and balance among the various functions listed by Propp. Where there exist interdependence and balance among the functions, Greimas has reformulated them into pairs. The initial eight functions of Propp are thus reformulated into four pairs: interdiction (γ) is paired with violation (δ), reconnaissance (ϵ) with information received (ζ), deceit (η) with submission to deceit (θ), and villainy (A) with lack (α). Greimas suggests that each of the pairs indicates a particular dimension of the narrative, the thread of which are broken and then retied as the narrative moves forward: interdiction and violation announces the breaking of a contract; reconnaissance and information received suggest the denial of information or knowledge to the hero to the advantage of the villain; deceit and submission to deceit give rise to an equivalent denial of power or ability to act; villainy and lack preserve the active/passive dichotomy and do so in terms of a denial of an object which becomes therefore an object of desire (Silverstone, 1981).

Each of these dichotomies defines the rupture with which the narrative opens and underlies the further rearrangement of Propp's functions. Greimas considers as most crucial the fact of rupture and the dimensions of rupture. He incorporated the notion of contract-broken-then-mended and the

conception of the narrative as a system of exchange to establish the essential balance in the narrative. To Greimas, the narrative's task is to remedy the various dimension of rupture which has been established initially. Once the hero has accepted the task, a new contract is agreed and the hero, in order to fulfil it, seeks and finds helpers or magical agents, confronts the villain and gains the object of desire, and finally proves himself the true hero, thereby establishing his authenticity; power, desire and knowledge are reaffirmed and satisfied. At last each narrative restates the new contract.

What Greimas has presented is a model of narrative's equilibrium of contract-ruptured-and-remedied and of the points along the way that defines the various aspects of the contract. The narrative balances in the communication of information, strength and goods, but this equilibrium is a not static one, and its dynamic is provided by test. Greimas identifies three symmetrical tests within Propp's inventory of functions and terms them the qualifying test, the main test, and the glorifying test respectively. In each of the tests, the hero is challenged by some difficulty or problem, accepts the challenge, engages in some combat and finally succeeds in or fails the test. In each test, the hero seeks and finds helpers or magical agents to help overcome the challenge.

Greimas's introduction of logic of balance-ruptured-then-remedied and his notion of tests help simplify the narrative structure of a lengthy story such as the Chinese TV dramas and thus facilitate the analysis of the lengthy narrative structure. With Greimas's narrative theory, the narrative of a story consists of three parts: breaking of a balance (the beginning), the hero's attempts to establish the broken balance (the middle) and the ultimate reestablishment of balance (the ending). The beginning corresponds to the initial situation proposed by Propp's model. The middle, also the main part of the story, is played out around the hero's series of attempts to reestablish balance and is organized around Greimas's notion of the qualifying test, the main test and the glorifying test. Avoiding the unwieldiness of Propp's detailed narrative functions, the notion of tests brings coherence to the various attempts by grouping them into just one category—tests and thus the whole story is about the tests the hero has to undergo in order to realize his desire. With this notion, the director/producer of the story can provide as many tests as he wants and then organize these tests in a similarly repeated pattern with some distinct variations—for example the hero comes across different problems, meet different helpers and opponents, and forms different relationship with these helpers and opponents.

Greimas's notion of tests not only brings coherence to the story as a whole but to a particular problem/event presented within an episode or across episodes as well. In Xi Gengtian's story, Xi has come across different problems and he has tried his best to solve these problems with the help and support from others. The attempts he has taken to solve these problems make up the tests of the whole story. In this sense, the test notion brings coherence to the story as whole.

A closer look at the solution to each of these problems shows that most of the problems take at least three attempts or even more to be ultimately solved. Xi gets full support for his farming from his family after three attempts: the first attempt involves his resistance to Sangui's attractive offer to contract his land and his rejection of his wife and his son's suggestion of taking Sangui's offer; the second involves his resistance to his wife and his son's suggestion of starting a profitable sand-digging project similar to Sangui's; the third attempt involves the halting of Sangui's sand-digging project by Niu and thus proves his correct choice of farming. Chouwa's problem is solved after three attempts: Xi's getting Chouwa back from the police station; Xi's getting Chouwa back from the hospital; Chouwa's getting back to school. Xi's establishment of an economic cooperative also involves three attempts: the first attempt is initiated by him and fails; the second attempt, initiated by the villagers, also fails; the third attempt is mainly initiated by him, Sangui and the village committee and it succeeds. The relationship between Qingshan and Gaihua succeeds only after several frustrations and their devotion to and perseverance in love. The solution to each problem echoes and repeats Greimas's notion of the qualifying test, the main test and the glorifying test. Though spread across different episodes, the problems are brought together into a coherent whole around Greimas' notion of test. In this sense, Greimas's test notion brings coherence to the presentation of problems/events which are spread across episodes.

Greimas's notion of tests also highlights some similar recurring combinatory patterns of narrative functions such as DEF(-) , HIK(-) and MNQ(-) since in each test the hero seeks and gets helpers or some magical agents to overcome the encountered challenge or he himself engages in some sort of combat which he either succeeds or fails. The main part of Xi Gengtian's story is about the series of attempts Xi has taken to realize his desire to farm successfully in Xijia village. These attempts are in fact the tests in Greimas's terms: the qualifying test, the main test and the glorifying test. In each of

the tests, Xi either receives help from other to solve his problem or offers to help other villagers to solve their problem. Thus each test entails and highlights the recurring combinatory patterns of functions DEF.

In brief, Greimas's narrative theory particularly his notion of test is helpful in understanding the narrative structure of Chinese TV dramas. Hence, I will incorporate Greimas's notion of the qualifying test, the main test and the glorifying test to help analyze the narrative structure of the selected Chinese TV dramas i.e. to explain how the narrative functions resulting from Propp's narrative model are organized to form a coherent lengthy story.

3.4.4 Prospective Narrative Analysis to be Employed

So far I have discussed Propp and Greimas's narrative model with a view to finding a methodological solution for my project. I have argued that Propp's narrative model has provided a starting point as well as a good reference for any narrative analysis. I have also pointed out that Propp's narrative functions are a bit unwieldy to adequately account for the sophisticated network narrative structure of Chinese TV dramas. To overcome this unwieldiness, I have turned to Greimas' narrative theory for help and have adopted his notion of the qualifying test, the main test and the glorifying test to help explain how narrative functions are organized into a coherent whole. The integration of Propp's narrative model and Greimas's notion of tests aims to give a relatively clear picture of the network narrative structure of Chinese TV dramas.

Since my project aims to analyze the meaning of the selected Chinese TV dramas, it is not enough to give a mere description of the narrative structure of Chinese TV dramas. As previously argued, meaning of a text including a TV drama derives from the relationships between its constituent parts. Hence it is necessary to analyze the relationships existent within the narrative structure and the meanings represented by these relationships. There are different levels of relationships within a TV drama. At the very basic level are the relationships established between different characters through their narrative functions in a certain event within an episode or across episodes. At a higher level are the relationships between narrative functions and the story as a whole. At the highest level are the relationships between different narratives if the story contains more than one narrative.

Besides the relationships within the TV drama, it is necessary to take into account the prominent

features of narrative structure at the micro-level as well as at the macro-level and analyze the meaning represented by such features. It is necessary to analyze the meaning of the application of Greimas' notion of tests to Chinese TV dramas. It is also necessary to discuss the meaning of the recurring combinatory patterns of DEF in the TV dramas.

Finally, it is necessary to work out the central organizing ideas that structure, organize and bring coherence to the actions of the characters involved in the drama, the relationships established between different characters at different events, the events and the whole drama. These central organizing ideas or frames in an academic term play an important part in meaning creation because they define the nature or essence of and thus the meaning of the actions of the characters involved, the relationships established among the characters, the events and the whole drama.

In conclusion, the well-designed narrative analysis should be able to explain the features of Chinese TV drama's syn-chronological network narrative. It should also develop some suitable categories to accommodate three levels of the narrative structure. In this way, narrative analysis can overcome the weakness of the framing theory. With the help of the narrative analysis, the framing theory is able to identify different kinds of relationships presented by the TV dramas and the degree of importance or emphasis assigned to these relationships and thus able to explain what relationships have been highlighted within different episodes and throughout the story as a whole and what values have been highlighted through these different relationships.

My narrative analysis has been greatly inspired by Propp's classical narrative model, Greimas's model of narrative and in particular his notion of tests, Will Wright's (1975) narrative analysis appropriated from Propp's narrative model in his analysis of the Westerns in *Six Guns and Society* as well as Roger Silverstone's (1981) narrative analysis appropriated from Propp's and Greimas' narrative models in his pioneering analysis of a television drama *Intimate Strangers*, in *The Message of Television: Myth and Narrative in Contemporary Culture*. It integrates quite a few elements from these scholars' narrative models and follow more or the same analytical procedures used by these scholars: a plot summary of the selected TV dramas by episodes; a description of the narrative functions of the main characters in the drama; the morphological analysis of the drama's narrative; narrative structural analysis of the drama and the meaning represented by such a structure.

3.4.4a Plot Summary of the Selected TV Dramas

Like Wright and Silverstone, I first give plot summaries of the selected Chinese TV dramas. Since Silverstone's object of narrative analysis is on TV series and thus is more relevant to my analysis, I will mainly adopt his way of plot summary. Like Silverstone, I will give relatively simple and undetailed plot summaries of all the episodes of the selected TV dramas but I will summarize it in a slightly different way. When giving plot summary of each episode, I will summarize the total number of segments or sequences covered by the episode and then summarize each segment in a relatively simple and undetailed way in order to give a general picture of what each episode is about: how many events take place within each episode and what these events are. By segment or sequence, I mean the units of events that make up each episode.

3.4.4b Summary of Narrative Functions

Like Wright and Silverstone, I use the summary plots as a basis to describe the narrative functions of the characters. Wright has derived his method of narrative analysis from Propp's analysis of folktales. Propp reduces the stories of folktales to the list of shared functions of characters and restricted his functions to descriptions of actions. Wright appropriates Propp's model to include both actions and attributes of characters but Wright's descriptions of functions will be one-single sentence statements that describe either a single action or a single attribute of a character. Like the functions in Propp's model, these functions in Wright's model are generic functions, not specific ones i.e. the functions do not refer to particular heroes, but to the role of hero as a character in all the stories. Also the character referred to by the functions need not be only one individual. The generalized character in a function can be, and often is, a group of characters in a film, all of whom share a single meaning in an opposition. This way of the description is a bit abstract.

I adopt Silverstone's way of describing the narrative functions of a specific character in a short brief sentence followed by a rough correspondence of these narrative functions to those offered by Propp and Greimas—briefly describing the main actions of the characters in each event and corresponding these actions with the terms proposed by Propp and Greimas such as D, E, F. I summarize and list in a table all the events covered by each episode, and the narrative functions of the characters in the events covered (Based on the table, I work out the features or patterns of the narrative functions in each event within each episode, across episodes and throughout the series as a whole).

3.4.4c Morphological Analysis of the Selected Dramas' Narrative

Next, I follow Silverstone's way to give a morphological analysis of the drama's narrative at the event level and at the story level as a whole, using Propp's morphological structure of narrative and Greimas' structural model of the narrative as reference points. Both levels of morphological analyses use Propp's narrative model and Greimas' narrative model as referential points in particular Greimas' notion of tests. The basis units for the morphological analysis at the event level are the narrative functions of the characters involved in each event while those for the morphological analysis at the story level as a whole are the episodes.

The morphological analysis at the story level works out the drama's general narrative structure. It describes the general nature of the narrative structure of the whole drama as to whether the drama is a single narrative, a multi-narrative or a network narrative, whether the narrative follows the chronological order, reverse order or the syn-chronological order. It also briefly describes the main parts of the story (i.e. the beginning, the middle and the ending) and the connection of these parts to form a story by answering these questions: Which episode(s) establish (es) the initial situation of the drama and what is this initial situation like? Which episodes make up the main body—middle part of the story and how many tests does this middle part consist of, what are these tests about? How does the drama end?

The morphological analysis at the event level works out the narrative structure of the events that make up the main part of the drama—the middle part. Based on the aforementioned summarized narrative functions, this analysis follows more or less the same procedures adopted by the morphological analysis of the narrative structure of the drama as a whole: description of the initial situation, description of the relationships between the narrative functions of the characters involved in the event, description of the relationship between these narrative functions and the event as a whole, description of the narrative patterns in each event, and the description of the ending of each event.

3.4.4d Narrative Structure Analysis and Meanings Represented

Both Wright and Silverstone have used Lévi-Strauss' binary opposition structure to discuss the relationships between different characters and they have given a very impressive and convincing explanation of the relationships between the characters with the theory. As previously elaborated in

the theoretical framework, the binary structure fits well with the explanation of the contrasting and oppositional relationships between characters but falls short of the complex life-like subtle relationships between characters. I had employed a more accommodating framing theory to explain the different kinds of relationships presented in the selected TV dramas. Besides, I go beyond Wright and Silverstone by extending the analysis of the interpersonal relationships among characters to a higher level of inter-narrative relationships since the selected Chinese TV dramas have a sophisticated network narrative structure rather than a single narrative structure. In addition, the meaning of the dramas derive from the narrative patterns and the narratives tests which are integral parts of the narrative structure and thus the narrative patterns and the narratives tests are also analyzed for the meaning they carry. Last but not least, also analyzed are the central organizing ideas which underlie the actions of the characters, the interpersonal relationships established among the characters, the events and the whole drama because these organizing ideas define the very essence of the latter.

Presented in the thesis detail are this final part of the narrative analysis which includes three parts: analysis of the interpersonal relationships among the characters at the micro-event level, the central organizing ideas underlying these relationships, and the meaning represented by these relationships; analysis of the inter-narrative relationships at the macro-story level, the central organizing ideas underlying these relationships and the meaning represented by these inter-narrative relationships; as well as the analysis of the features of the narrative patterns and narrative tests, the central organizing ideas underlying these narrative features, and the meaning represented by such features.

3.5 Semi-structured Interview

“The interview is one of the main data collection tools in qualitative research. It is a very good way of accessing people’s perceptions, meanings, definitions of situations and constructions of reality” (Punch, 2005: p.168). It yields “rich insights into people’s biographic, experiences, opinions, values, aspirations, attitudes and feelings” (May, 2001: p. 121). There are three main categories of interviews: structured interviews, semi-structured interviews and unstructured interviews (May, 2001; Punch, 2005). Each has its own strengths and limits.

Structured interviews are highly structured and standardized (Punch, 2005; Patton, 2002). “Here, the respondent is asked a series of pre-established questions with preset response categories. There is

little room for variation in response though open-ended questions may sometimes be used. All respondents receive the same questions in the same order, delivered in a standardized manner. Flexibility and variation are minimized while standardization is maximized. It does not allow the interviewer to pursue topics or issues that are not anticipated when the interview is written. In this sort of interview, the interviewer attempts to play a neutral role, and a neutral manner and demeanour are encouraged in executing that role. The stimulus-response nature of this type of interview stresses rational rather than emotional responses” (Punch, 2005, p.170). “The interview itself does not attempt to go to any great depth” (ibid).

Contrary to the structured interviews, unstructured interviews are unstructured and open-ended (Patton, 2002; Punch, 2005). In these interviews, interview questions are neither preplanned nor standardized. Instead, general questions are employed to get the interview going and to keep it moving. “Specific questions will then emerge as the interview unfolds, and the wording of those questions depends upon the interview takes. There are no pre-established categories for responding” (Punch, 2005, p.170). The unstructured interview is an ideal way of “understanding the complex behaviour of people without imposing any a priori categorization which might limit the field of enquiry” (ibid, p.172). It is a powerful data collecting tool, “widely used in social science and other fields and capable of producing rich and valuable data. A successful in-depth interview has many of characteristics of a prolonged and intimate conversation” (ibid). However, this sort of interview is difficult to manage. It requires the interviewer to have a very good conversational skill to conduct such an interview and it could take a long time to conduct such an interview (Patton, 2002; Punch, 2005).

Semi-structured interview lies between structured interview and unstructured interview. It avoids the strict and rigid standardization of standardized interview and the extreme-freedom of the unstructured interview. The interview guide that characterizes such an interview helps create a relatively openly designed interview situation in which interviewees are more likely to express their viewpoints than in standardized interviews (Flick, 1998, 2002, 2009; Patton, 2002; Punch, 2005). The interview guide lists the questions or issues that are to be explored in the course of the interview. It ensures the pursuit of the same lines of inquiry with each person interviewed. It “provides a framework within which the interviewer [can] develop questions, sequence those questions and

make decisions about which information to pursue in greater depth” during an interview (Patton, 2002, p.344). It “provides topics or subject areas within which the interviewer is free to explore, probe and ask questions that will elucidate and illuminate that particular subject” (ibid, 343). As such, the interviewer is free to “build a conversation within a particular subject area, to word questions spontaneously, and to establish a conversation style but with a focus on a particular subject that has been predetermined” (ibid). The interviewee is allowed to have more opportunity to express viewpoints on the topic under discussion. The interview guide makes sure that “the interviewer has carefully decided how best to use the limited available in an interview situation” (ibid). The guide also helps to “make interviewing a number of different people more systematic and comprehensive by delimiting in advance the issues to be explored” (ibid). Compared with unstructured interviews which follow the interviewee during the interview, the semi-structured interview has a stable focus with the help of the interview guide drafted in advance. Compared with the standardized interviews, the semi-structured interview allows greater flexibility in asking interview questions.

I have adopted the semi-structured interview for its flexibility and its potential. The realization of the flexibility and the potential, however, is contingent on such important factors as accessibility of the interviewee sources, the interviewer’s preparation for the interview and the cooperation of the interviewee during the actual interview. The supplementary semi-structured interview which I had intended to do to cross-check the results of my narrative analysis turned out to be an arduous task.

To begin with, it is really very difficult for me to establish any contact with anyone involved with the production of TV dramas of any kind including producers, directors or script writers for my lack of working experience in the media industry, lack of friends working in same field and lack of any contact with TV drama production industry. It is even more difficult to contact those whom I have intended to interview for they have become famous for winning the Feitian TV Awards for the TV dramas they have produced and, tired of having been interviewed by the journalists for their being famous, they easily declined an interview request from a stranger like me. And the fact that I am doing a research project in a foreign university also makes my interview a bit sensitive to the interviewee directors concerned. I planned to get help and support from my friends, from my colleagues and from the friends of my friends and of my colleagues to establish contact for me. Immediately after my arrival back at my home at Guangzhou, I told my friends and my colleagues

about my plan to interview some TV drama directors and tried to get their help to establish possible contact and thus interview some of the directors of the selected TV dramas for my project. I gave them the list of the directors of the selected TV dramas and see whether they and their friends know some of them and if possible help me to contact them. I spent almost 5 months getting friends and colleagues to help me contact some of the directors, producers or script writers of the TV dramas I have selected. With the generous help of one of my colleagues who used to work in Chinese media industry, I managed to contact and interview three TV drama directors via my colleague's former student, alumna and alumnus—one MRMHT director, one contemporary solid TV drama director and one red classic TV drama director. I also contacted the personal assistant of one producer of two Feitian-TV Award-winning dramas and planned to interview the producer but had to cancel the interview due to the unexpected passing away of one of the producer's family members.

Second, the pre-interview preparation is also very important. To make my coming interviews successful, I am supposed to be well-prepared before the interviews, as suggested by the past researchers with interviewing experiences.

In my case, I would have finished watching all the selected TV dramas and completed a rough narrative analysis of these TV dramas using the previously-spelled-out narrative methods and would have summed up my textual findings of the meaning manifested by the TV dramas themselves by the time I started the interview. Besides, I would have familiarized myself to some degree with all the TV dramas each of my targeted interviewee producers have so far produced, the information about his achievements with regard to his/her works including the awards he/she has won related to his TV dramas, as well as other information related to his production of TV dramas. The purpose of this latter preparation is twofold: have a comprehensive picture of the target TV drama producer's works so as to help create a rapport with the producer during the interview and to be able and flexible to cover any topic related to the producer's work so as to steer the conversation back to the questions related to the project. With this preparation, I would have had a general picture of my targeted interviewee TV drama producers and their works. In addition, I would have drafted some general open questions related to TV drama producers and their works and the specific questions oriented to my project which are similar to the theory-driven or hypothesis-directed questions Flick has discussed. The general open questions serve the purpose of starting the interview in a relatively

informal way while the specific questions serve the main purpose of the interview i.e. to find out the values and messages TV drama directors/producers intend to communicate the audience and how they communicate these values and messages in the TV dramas. Such a preparation should have been done prior to my interview.

My pre-interview preparation, however, was far from adequate. Since I am not sure who exactly I could eventually succeed in contacting, I planned to interview any director I could contact and this made my pre-interview preparation very challenging. I have a total of 35 top Feitian Award-winning TV dramas for my project with each drama consisting of at least 18 episodes and each episode lasting for at least 40 minutes. It has taken me 3 days to watch the pilot-study drama –the 19-episode Xi Gengtian’s Story and two months to conduct the narrative analysis of this drama. Regardless of the more time spent on the pilot study, an 18-episode TV drama will take a researcher at least 20 days to get ready for the interview including watching the TV drama, content analysing the dramas, preparing interview questions for the drama and reading all possible available secondary information about the drama and the director/producer/scriptwriter of the drama. For me to get well-prepared for the 24 among the 35 dramas (the 28th Feitian Award result was not known until August, 2011), I would need to spend two years getting ready for the interviewing of these directors. And this proves too challenging a task for me. Even if I could manage the preparation within a short time, I could not afford the time and energy and cost to interview all directors. I would definitely need to narrow down my interviewing directors. While I use whatever time available to me watching as many TV dramas as I could , (since I need to do my teaching since my return to GDUFS, I need to allocate some time for my project) I rack my brains to work out a feasible way of narrowing down my interviewing directors. Eventually I managed to narrow down my interviewing directors according to their current residence and their relative likely availability or accessibility. Following the suggestion of my colleague, I categorized all the directors of the selected TV dramas according to the company they work for or their work unit and their current residence. Given the fact that most of the directors/producers/screenwriters work in Beijing, my colleague’s likely contact sources are in Beijing and I am staying in my home city Guangzhou, I decided to focus my interview on Beijing and Guangzhou to narrow down my target directors and to reduce the cost of travelling. Once I have narrowed down my interview target to directors working in Beijing and in Guangzhou,

my colleague made her strenuous efforts to contact the directors in these two cities while I concentrated my interview preparation for the dramas by these directors which are shown as follows:

- ✚ *Zhou Enlai in Chongqing, The Eight Route Army, and Yan'an Song* (directed by Dong Yachun from the August the First Production Company in Beijing and script written by Wang Chaozhu from Beijing).
- ✚ *Wu kui cangsheng* (directed by Sang Hua and Xiao Jiang from August the First Production Company);
- ✚ *Proof of Memory and Norman Bethune* (directed by Yang Yang from CCTV);
- ✚ *Gebi Mother and The Provincial Party Secretary (Shengwei shuji)* (produced by Dongfang Wenyin in CCTV in Beijing);
- ✚ *Lurk (Qianfu)* (directed by Jiang Wei from Beijing);
- ✚ *Shi wan Shiwan renjia* (directed by Cheng Guoxing from Beijing);
- ✚ *Soldiers Sortie (Shibin tuji)* (directed by Kang Honglei from the Inner Mongolia Region and script written by Lang Xiao long from Beijing);
- ✚ *When We Were Young (Qia tongxue shaonian)* (co-directed by Gong Ruofei from Hunan and Jia na sha ha ti from Beijing and script written by Huang Hui from Changsha, Hunan)
- ✚ *Golden Wedding or Golden Marriage (Jin hun)* (produced by Zheng Xiaolong and script written by Wang Wanping from Beijing).
- ✚ *Bing feng* (directed by Liu Yan in Guangzhou).

With regard to the directors of other dramas, who work in cities other than Beijing and Guangzhou and some of whom I had planned to interview, I plan to conduct a telephone interview with them whenever possible. With the interview plan rearranged as shown above, I could get myself better prepared for the interview.

Finally, getting oneself prepared for the interview does not necessarily guarantee that a researcher could successfully conduct the interview as he/she has planned. The success of an interview depends on how well a researcher can control the interview and how the interviewees cooperate with the researcher. My interview experience turns out to be far from what I have expected. My first interview was with the MRMHT drama director. This interview, supposed to be most well-prepared among all prepared ones, turns out to be unsatisfactory. First of all, due to my nervousness and my inexperience in interview caused by my first interview experience ever in my life, the interview was not managed quite as I had planned. Though I have generally followed my planned way of conducting the interview, beginning the interview by briefly telling him my project, then discussing with him the very general questions about the China's TV drama industry and, trying to steer the interview in the way for me to ask him the specific questions related to the Feitian award-winning TV drama(s) he has directed, he was in actual control of the interview. Though I started some general questions, he controlled the interview course once he picked up the discussion, expressing his ideas on the general questions, talking about the new ideas he came up with during his discussion of the

general questions I have started, and diverting the interview away from what I have planned since I was too nervous, too embarrassed and sometimes too involved with his discussion and thus forgetting my interview questions. To make matters worse, the digital recorder failed to record the interview process and I found it out only after the interview. I had hoped to make good use of the digital recorder to record the interview and I had not taken any notes during the interview so that I could save time to ask more questions. I was frustrated by the failed recording and tried my best to summarize the main points of the interview as far as my memory could. Despite this, I got some very helpful information which contributed to my better understanding of the China's TV dramas industry: TV drama industry now mainly follows marketization principles and TV drama producers/directors generally enjoy a lot of freedom during the course of the TV drama production; Chinese authorities have been encouraging the TV drama practitioners to produce TV dramas which convey the traditional Chinese cultural virtues but not many TV drama practitioners have been doing so. The frustration of the first interview experience got me better prepared for the second interview—the telephone interview with the director of a contemporary soldier TV drama. Before the telephone interview, I have practiced recording my own voice with the digital recorder until I am very skilful with the recording and I got my paper and pen ready and took notes during the half-an-hour interview in case the recording failed again. And I followed my interview guide closely and asked most of the pre-prepared interview questions despite the limited half-an-hour interview. With regard to the interview with the director of one red classic drama, the interview was fairly ok in that I was not as nervous as I was in the first interview. However, I found the interviewed red classic drama director a bit cautious during the interview. He did not like the interview to be recorded so I took notes and this slowed down the interview. I asked him some questions related to the TV drama production in general and some specific questions related to his Feitian-TV award-winning red classic. My planned follow-up interview attempt intended to thank the TV drama directors and to check and confirm some facts with them was not carried out.

Due to the aforementioned contingent factors in the actual fieldwork, the supposed advantages of the semi-structured interviews are compromised and my planned semi-structured interviews have not turned out results as I have planned. However, the interview efforts are still worthwhile. I have got some general information helpful to the understanding of the TV drama production in China. Moreover, in the course of my preparation for the interview, I have come across and collected a lot of

helpful secondary data which can sufficiently serve as a good alternative to my planned but not so satisfactorily carried out semi-structured interviews.

The Interview Guide

- ✚ How and why did they choose certain themes and settings for these TV dramas they have directed?
- ✚ What values and messages they intend to show to the audience through the TV dramas?
- ✚ How do they show these values and messages in the TV dramas?
- ✚ Have they encountered any difficulties during their directing and production, and the screening of the TV dramas? What are these difficulties and how did they overcome them?
- ✚ Why do they think their TV dramas are awarded the first prize?

3.6 Secondary Data Analysis

There are two kinds of data that searchers can use for their research projects—primary data and secondary data. The former are the data collected in a contrived or a natural environment in which the research participants are aware of being studied and in which the researcher either collects the data personally or has the data collected by the trained observers or interviewers (Frankfort-Nachmias & Nachmias, 1996; Hakim, 1982; Pienta, O'Rourke and Franks, 2011). The latter are the data that have been collected by other investigators and have been made available for use by people rather than these original investigators (*ibid*).

Most researchers tend to use primary data to make their research original. Increasingly, researchers resort to the secondary data for purposes that usually differ from those of the original investigators (*ibid*). Social scientists for example have been using national census data collected by governments for administrative and public policy purposes to investigate the structures of households, income distribution and redistribution, immigration and migration patterns, characteristics of racial and ethnic groups, changes in family composition, occupational structures, to name just a few (Frankfort-Nachmias and Nachmias, 1996). Political scientists have been using data collected by Gallup and other national survey research organizations to study a variety of issues such as changes in public opinion, political attitudes and voting patterns and their determinants (*ibid*). These and various other research findings based on the data collected by others are referred to as secondary data analysis.

Secondary data analysis has a long tradition in disciplines such as sociology, economics and political science (Frankfort-Nachmias & Nachmias; 1996; Hakim, 1982; Pienta, O'Rourke and Franks, 2011). It has also been extended to other disciplines that have not traditionally used secondary data,

including psychology, family science, and various health science disciplines (ibid). It has become an important research method in almost every discipline (ibid).

The rationale for the secondary data analysis is largely due to the potential and the advantages it has offered (ibid). Secondary data may be the only sources available to study certain research problems such as the sociology of the labour market, of health and of poverty, as shown by many of the studies based on secondary analysis of census data and much of the demographic research based on the secondary analysis of administrative records, population censuses and national surveys (ibid). Secondary data may also be used for comparative purposes. Within and between nations and societies, comparisons may enlarge the scope of generalizations and provide insights. Secondary data analysis also has several methodological advantages: providing opportunity for replication, permitting longitudinal research designs, improving measurement of certain variables, and allowing for an increased sample size (ibid). Secondary data analysis can also be used as an adjunct to new research, either in the earlier stages of research development, or as a complement to new research (Hakim, 1982, p.2). It can also offer an alternative to, and substitute for the primary research, as Hakim has shown. And secondary data analysis offers economies of time and money: it is considerably cheaper to obtain than primary data (ibid).

My initial use of secondary data about the selected TV dramas (from the CNKI.net, especially articles from China Television, Contemporary Television) is to get myself well-prepared for the semi-structured interviews with some of the directors/producers/scriptwriters of the selected TV dramas (similar to Hakim's suggested adjunct function): to familiarize myself with what the directors/producers/scriptwriters have already said about the TV dramas, revise my interview questions to avoid asking the same questions they have been asked during their previous interview experiences and to establish rapport with the interviewees during the interview to facilitate the interview process (Hakim, 1982). At the very beginning of my field work, the secondary data sources were mainly the online Chinese websites particularly the sina.com and sohu.com, the two largest commercial websites in China. When I typed in the names of the selected TV dramas in Baidu.com—the largest and most convenient search engine in China, the resultant relevant links often directed me to the entertainment sections of either Sina.com or sohu.com where are cited newspaper articles on the selected TV dramas. These articles provide different kinds of information

about the TV dramas concerned including the account by people directly involved in the production of the TV drama such as the interviewed directors, producers, script writers, the actors and the actresses, and the commentary on the TV dramas by some TV drama experts or TV drama regulatory authorities. The information from such articles helped me to get to know more about the TV dramas. It did not occur to me that I could and might use the secondary analysis as an alternative or a complement to the semi-structured interview. I simply used the secondary data to prepare my interview questions and my secondary data sources were mostly confined to the articles in the entertainment sections of the above two websites—sina.com and sohu.com.

Later when I was advised indirectly by my colleague's friend Mr. Liu via her forwarded email to read all the articles on China Television (a journal devoted to Chinese TV dramas) to get some information about the TV dramas of my interest, I began to use my library account at GDUFS, Guangzhou, the P.R. China to search the CNKI.net, the largest and most comprehensive full-text Chinese database for the information about the selected TV dramas. From this database I have found a lot of articles on the selected TV dramas. Some articles are academic ones, some are newspaper accounts of the TV dramas by the interviewed directors, producers or scriptwriters, and others are commentary on the TV dramas by the TV drama experts or the TV drama regulatory authorities. As I came across and read more and more of such secondary data, I realized the value of the secondary data and began to think of using them as an alternative to my prospective interview in case my interview plan failed since these data have to a great extent already covered most of the interviewing questions I had originally intended as shown in the interview guide. Now that only three directors have been interviewed, the secondary data collected at the field work should be made good use of as an alternative to and a compliment to my unsatisfactory semi-structured interviews.

I collected the relevant articles from the CNKI.net and abstracted the needed information following the interview guide designed for the semi-structured interviews since my secondary analysis is intended to serve the same purpose as the planned semi-interviews.

3.7 Ethical Considerations

Ethics can be defined in different terms. In the grand and abstract term, it is a philosophical discipline of human conduct, a normative science that judges human conduct to be right or wrong, good or bad, or in some other similar ways (Bayles, 1989; Hennink, Hutter & Bailey, 2011; Homan, 1991; Lillie,

1957; May, 1997, 2001 & 2011; Singer, 1994; Thiroux, 1995; Wueste, 1994). Normative science on ethics aims to discover and state the valid human moral standards in different countries and ages or examine the validity of these standards by placing their place in the universe as a whole (ibid).

In the narrow, concrete and practical term, ethics means the set of rules, values, principles, norms (or standards) or ways of thinking that guide human conduct in general or the professional human conduct in particular (Bayles, 1989; Hammersley and Traianou, 2012; Homan, 1991; Lillie, 1957; Singer, 1994; Thiroux, 1995; Wueste, 1994). Ethics in this sense can be divided into two main categories: general private ethics, and specific professional ones. The general ethics are those that apply to the behaviour of people in general in their daily activities while the specific ones relate to those specific situations when people take up some activities pertaining to some specific occupational roles such as teachers, doctors and researchers. Most people make use of these two types of ethics either intuitively or consciously to guide their general private behaviour or their professional conducts respectively (ibid).

As a student engaged on a specific social research project, I naturally adopt the narrow specific definition of ethics—professional ethics—but I turn to ethics literature on both general personal ethics and professional ethics, especially that of the social research ethics for ethical guidance of my research conduct.

As a lot of researchers have shown, ethical considerations pervade throughout the whole research process, from the research design, through the collection of data, incorporation of the collected data into the writing of the thesis by processing and analyzing the data, up to the final publication of the research findings concerned (Hennink, Hutter & Bailey, 2011; Hammersley & Traianou, 2012).

Social research ethical considerations have drawn heavily from the medical research ethics and revolve around such ethical issues as minimization of harm, respect for autonomy (e.g. informed consent), the protection of privacy (confidentiality and anonymity) and accuracy (Berg, 2009; Hammersley & Traianou, 2012; Hennink, Hutter & Bailey, 2011; Homan, 1991). With regard to these ethical issues, there have been different philosophical views including deontology, consequentialism, and situationism (ibid).

Deontological approach requires that research actions a researcher takes should be ethical themselves (ibid). A researcher should be committed to such principles as the informed consent, privacy, confidentiality, anonymity and accuracy. It requires a researcher to inform the research subjects of the purpose, the likely benefits and harms of the research and to get a signed consent from the subjects for them to take part in the research at their own will. It requires a researcher respect the freedom of the research subjects to take part in or withdraw from the research at any time. It also requires a research to keep secret the subjects' identities and use anonymity principle to protect their privacy, not revealing the identities of the subjects in presentation of the collected data concerned in the research findings. Consequentialism, however, rejects the strict following of the ethical principles proposed by the deontological approach. It advises a researcher to base his/her decision of taking a course of action mainly on the desirability of the prospective outcomes of the action. This implies that the course of action to be taken need not necessarily be ethical so long as the action's outcome is desirable. Consequentialists require a researcher to maximize the benefits of the research actions and minimize the likely or actual harm brought about the research actions whenever possible. Situationism understands ethics in a way different from both deontology and consequentialism. Rejecting the notion of following the established general ethical principles on the basis of the intentions of the research action as advocated by deontologists or of the research action's consequences as proposed by consequentialists, situationists argue that what research action to be taken depends upon the particular situations/cases of a research project (Hammersley & Traianou, 2012). Relational ethics also labelled as ethics of care prioritizes the fostering of caring relationships between a researcher and the research participants and expects the researcher to attend to the researched with emotional sensitivity, with compassion and empathy, with trust and intimacy (ibid). With the mutual caring relationship established, research participants were more likely to give their true information needed by a researcher.

I have adopted an eclectic approach to ethical consideration striving to integrate the wisdom offered by each of the above mentioned philosophical positions on ethics. I take the ethical principles proposed by the deontological positions as my general basic ethical guidelines for my research to aspire for high ethical standards required of a research project. I follow the general ethical principles proposed and practiced widely by the social researchers including the informed consent,

minimization of harm, anonymity, confidentiality (Berg, 2009; Hennink, Hutter & Bailey, 2011; Homan, 1991; May, 1997, 2001 & 2011). I respect the autonomy of the research participants by following the informed consent principle. I have got the prior acceptance of my interview from the directors concerned. Long before each of the interviews, I had sent to my colleague Ms Qian all my interview questions with the brief explanation of my PhD project and the prospective use of the data collected, and Qian then forwarded these interview questions to her friends (her former alumnae, alumnus or her close friend) who then forwarded the questions to the directors concerned. Upon the knowledge of my project and upon reading the interview questions, the directors to be interviewed gave their acceptance of my interview to Qian who then informed me of the directors' acceptance. I also respect the requirements of the interviewee directors, recording the interview process only after gaining their permission to do so. Among the three directors interviewed, I have got the permission from two of them to record the interview. The MRMHT drama director gave his permission for me to record the interview process although I failed to record the interview due to a technical failure. The second interview, which was conducted by phone, was recorded also with the director's permission. In the third interview, the interviewee director politely declined my request to record the interview and I took notes of the interview. The fourth interview with a producer was cancelled at the request of the producer's personal assistant due to the passing away of one of the producer's family members.

I abide by the minimization of harm principle, which is mainly derived from the consequentialist approach to ethics (Hammersley & Traianou, 2012). Though what the interviewed directors have said is more or less the same as what they have told to the previous reporters in their previous interviews and thus is not very likely to constitute any harm to them, I plan to be very cautious about their identity in my thesis, making use of the anonymity principle as applied in most social researches. I will use the interviewed directors as a group rather than mentioning their name or the director of certain particular TV drama because mere mentioning certain individual dramas makes it easy to identify the directors concerned. I will associate the interviewed directors with the TV drama genres. For example, I have interviewed all together three directors, one MRMTH drama director, one contemporary soldier TV drama director and one red classic TV drama director. Instead of referring exactly to the directors of certain MRMTH drama, certain contemporary TV drama, or certain red class TV drama, I will refer to them as the interviewed MRMTH TV drama director, the interviewed red classic director, and the interviewed contemporary soldier TV drama director respectively to

avoid these directors being identified. The adoption of such vague identity in the thesis aims to protect these interview sources and thus to prevent any possible prospective form of harm to them. Secondary data rather than the interview data will be used in the analysis of the selected TV dramas to serve the same purpose of protecting the interview sources.

I also take into account the unpredictable factors in the actual research process and take what I think the most appropriate action accordingly, as suggested by situationists. Though I have got the informed consent for each of my interview, the informed consent in the case of my research is not the explicit signed informed consent but one type of the implied consent whereby the interviewee directors accepted my interview request upon being informed of my research and upon reading the interview questions forwarded to them by my colleague without signing the written informed consent form (Berg, 2009). I have sensed the cautiousness of the interviewee directors: before they accepted my interview, they did not give me any form of contact; they gave their consent to my interview through my colleague; they gave me only their mobile phone number not any other way of contact, for example, email. I somehow felt that the interview directors did not want to leave any existence of written record on the interview and I felt it very likely that they would withdraw from the interview if they were requested to sign a written informed consent form because the very existence of written record would make them uneasy and nervous about the potential risk to their life and their work. My adoption of the implied consent rather than the advocated formal signed informed consent thus is a strategic need arising out of the situational consideration, as suggested and practiced by situationists. The previously mentioned cancellation of the 4th interview is also a situational consideration.

In addition, I make use of the relational strategy advocated by relational ethics—attempting to foster a friendly relationship with the interviewee directors in the hope that the directors are willing to give a true account of how they have produced the TV dramas and what they have intended to convey through the TV dramas. My initial use of the secondary data prior to the planned semi-structured interview about the prospective interviewee directors/producers/script writers and the TV dramas they have produced aims to establish a rapport with the interviewee directors /producers/script writers so that it is more likely for them to give me a true account of the production of the TV dramas concerned and the meanings/messages intended by them. With such use of secondary data, I have actually applied the elements of relational ethics subconsciously although I do not know what

relational ethics is until I came back from my field trip to revise and update my research methodology with my reflections upon the field work. My experience with the fourth but cancelled interview is also an intuitive application of the relational ethics. The fourth interview, an interview with a TV drama producer (Ms Dongfang Wenying), who has produced two top Feitian TV Award-winning TV dramas, was cancelled because one of her family members passed away and she was in no mood to be interviewed. Instead of insisting on the planned interview, I readily accepted and expressed my complete understanding of her personal assistant's interview-cancellation request and I sent my condolences to her via her personal assistant. My readiness to respect the interviewee's needs to some extent is the practice of the relational ethics that require more subjects—here me as researcher—to attend to others—here the interviewee producer—with emotional sensitivity, with compassion and empathy, with trust and intimacy (Hammersley & Traianou, 2012).

Whenever possible, ethical actions are taken during the whole research process. When absolute ethical actions are not possible, alternatives are considered. When alternatives are out of the question, consequentialism is adopted. Also taken into account are situational considerations and the relational ethics. My eclectic strategy is to conduct my research in a way as ethical-and-practical as possible.

The above mentioned ethical considerations with regards to respect of autonomy, respect of privacy and minimization of harm are concerned with how human subjects studied should be treated. These ethical considerations have been the main focus of most research ethics (Berg, 2009; Hammersley & Traianou, 2012; Hennink, Hutter & Bailey, 2001; Homan, 1991). They are the ethical considerations extrinsic to a research project and Hammersley and Traianou have called them extrinsic values (Hammersley & Traianou, 2012; Homan, 1991). They are the proper constraints on a research project (Hammersley and Traianou, 2012). The ethical considerations of a research project, however, go beyond these extrinsic values. As suggested by Hammersley and Traianou (2012) and by Homan (1991), there are principles or values intrinsic to any research project, those “that actually constitute the goal of research as an activity, or relate to how this goal can best be pursued” (Hammersley & Traianou, 2012: p. 55). These intrinsic principles or values are a must for every researcher and include such moral principles as dedication, objectivity and independence (Hammersley & Traianou,

2012). As a researcher myself, I am no exception to these moral principles and I strive to follow these principles as best as I could.

3.8 Summary

This chapter gives a detailed account of the research methodology adopted for my research project. The Philosophical Considerations section briefly discusses the three main categories of research methods practised by social researchers—quantitative methods, qualitative methods, and the integration of quantitative and qualitative methods—also known as triangulation. Due to the qualitative nature of my research, I have adopted and designed mainly a qualitative methodology which consists of narrative analysis, semi-structured interviews and secondary data. The Selection of Research Methods section gives a brief account of how each of the three methods has come to be selected: narrative analysis has been selected for its devotion to the study of different forms of stories ranging from novels to TV dramas; semi-structured-interview for its supposed flexibility in getting data from interviewees; secondary data for its relative easy accessibility to prepare myself for the designed semi-structured interviews. The subsequent sessions—Narrative Analysis, Semi-structured Interview and Secondary Data Analysis—give detailed account of each of these methods with regard to its initial design and its actual practice in the course of the research. Narrative Analysis is carried out mostly in accordance with my initial design. Due to various difficulties ranging from great difficulty in establishing contact with my targeted interviewees to my inexperience in actual interviews, semi-structured interviews were not done satisfactorily. The secondary data collected during my field trip to prepare myself for the planned semi-structured interview, turned out to be helpful blessing and thus has come to replace the semi-instructed interviews to become the bulk of the complementary data to complement my narrative analysis. The Ethical Considerations section details a reflective account of how the ethical rules proposed and practised by research scholars so far have been applied to my research. Together, these aforementioned different sections give a detailed picture of my research methodology— as initially designed, as actually practised and as subsequently reflected.

Chapter 4 TV Drama Landscape in China

4.1 Introduction

This chapter provides background information about China's popular TV dramas. It includes three main parts. The first two parts cover China's TV drama industry with regard to its regulation and its historical development. The third part covers one informal means of regulating the country's TV drama industry—the Feitian Awards.

4.2 Regulation of China's TV Drama Industry

All the media in China are state-regulated. As part of the media system, the TV drama industry is subject to the systematic state regulation system which is made up of both formal written rules and regulations, and different forms of informal state regulation.

4.2.1 Formal State Regulation from SARFT

In the past—before it is commercialized, China's TV drama industry was heavily regulated by the government (Q. Gong, 2011; Keane, 2000; 2005, 2007; Yin, 2002a & 2002b). State regulation existed before, during, and after the production of TV dramas. TV drama practitioners did not have too much freedom in producing TV dramas themselves. They frequently received formulaic instructions from the state telling them how to produce TV dramas and the completed TV drama footage was subject to strict state examination prior to their final screening on TV stations.

Today China's TV drama industry is still subject to state regulation (China Copy Right and Media, 1995, 2010a, 2010b, 2011 & 2013; field trip interview; Q. Gong, 2011; Keane, 2000, 2005, 2007; SAPPFT, 2013; SARFT, 2006, 2007a, 2007b, 2007c & 2010; Yin, 2002a & 2002b; Zhu, 2008). However, the country's TV drama industry has been increasingly operated more by market principles since the industry's commercialization in the late 1980s (ibid). The state regulation from the State Administration of Radio, Film and Television (SARFT) at the central level or from the Radio, Film and Television Bureaux (RFTBs) at the provincial/municipal level concentrates more on the macro aspects and on the final stage of screening with TV drama practitioners enjoying a lot of freedom in the production process. TV drama practitioners normally don't receive any formulaic instructions as they used to (ibid). They nevertheless need to go through several formal procedures (ibid).

First, TV dramas producers have to file their TV drama production applications to get TV drama production licence (ibid). TV drama companies directly under the supervision of the Party-state's Central Committee such as CCTV's China TV Drama Production Centre submit their production applications to the SARFT and others to the provincial/municipal RFTBs respectively to get their production licences(ibid). Upon approval, TV drama companies' production plans will be announced online on the SARFT website and production licences will be issued (ibid). The SARFT and its provincial/ municipal RFTBs are quite loose with the issuing of TV drama production licences (ibid). Most TV drama companies get their production licences (ibid). The production licence for MRMHT dramas is an exception (ibid). TV drama companies producing such dramas need to send their production plan to the MRMHT Dramas Office for examination, for guidance and for written approval before submitting their licence application to either the SARFT or the provincial RFTBs (ibid).

With the production licences, TV drama companies can start producing their TV dramas. After the TV dramas are shot, the TV drama footage needs to be sent to the SARFT or the provincial/municipal RFTBs for content examination. The MRMHT dramas need to be submitted to the MRMHT Dramas Office to have their content examined and to get written approval from this office for the issuing of the subsequent distribution permit from the SARFT or the provincial/municipal RFTBs. This stage and the subsequent distribution stage are the main focus of today's state regulation of TV dramas. Upon content examination, distribution permits are given to the TV drama companies producing the TV dramas concerned. The TV dramas are then sent to TV stations to be broadcast. Before screening TV dramas concerned, TV stations are obliged to first check whether the TV dramas have got distribution permits from either the SARFT or the provincial/municipal RFTBs, and then to conduct pre-broadcast examination and re-examination of the content of the TV dramas according to the content examination standards of TV Drama Content Management Regulations of the SARFT Decree (No.63). Whenever problems are discovered (such as content inciting ethnic hatred, content propagating obscenity, or content endangering the physical or mental health of minors), they shall be timely reported to the State Council Administrative Radio, Film and Television Entity for resolution through the provincial, autonomous region and municipal People's Government administrative radio, film and television entity of their locality (China Copy Right and Media, 2010a; SARFT, 2010).

The administrative rules and regulations established by the SARFT and the provincial/municipal RFTBs are the formal and direct ways of state regulation of China's TV drama industry. Besides

these formal and direct ways, there are informal and indirect/direct ways of state regulation of the country's TV drama industry including the various conferences/symposiums on TV dramas and the various TV awards in the country.

4.2.2 Informal State Regulation from ANTVDPCs

Annual National TV Drama Programming Conferences (ANTVDPCs) are very important part of the state regulation system. They are the informal but direct and concrete state regulation of China's TV drama industry. Rules and regulations by the SARFT are usually procedural, general and abstract. With ANTVDPCs, TV drama authorities at different levels get more specific guidelines or suggestions with regard to the regulation of the country's TV drama industry, and TV drama practitioners get more specific guidelines or suggestions with regard to the TV drama production. When examining the TV drama companies' TV drama production plan and their application for TV drama production licences and when examining the content of the finished TV drama footage before the issuing of distribution permits, TV drama authorities can refer to the ANTVDPCs for more specific guidances. Similarly, TV stations can turn to the ANTVDPCs for suggestions when conducting pre-broadcast content examination of TV dramas to be broadcast. TV drama practitioners can likewise turn to the ANTVDPCs for more specific guidelines they need to follow while producing TV dramas.

ANTVDPCs have been held since 1984 (Ai, 1986, 1987, 1990 & 1994; Chinese TV, 1999a, 2003a; Gao & Wu, 2002; Z.-F. Hu, 2004, 2005 & 2006; Ji, 2000 & 2001a; Jing, 1984; Liu, 1994, 1995 & 1996b; Ruan, 1987 & 1988; Xu, 2002b, 2003b & 2004a; Z.-H. Xu, 1995; W.-G. Yang, 1995, 1996 & 1999; Zhao, 1984a). They concentrate on two main issues: what TV dramas to produce and how to produce the planned TV dramas, and what TV dramas to broadcast and how to broadcast the produced TV dramas (ibid). The routine activities in the ANTVDPCs include: to study the latest documents issued by the central government with regard to the production of artistic work in the country including TV dramas, to summarize the TV drama production of the previous year with regard to its achievements and problems, and to discuss the current year's TV drama production in relation to the content and spirit of the latest documents (ibid).

The highlight of the ANTVCPs is the keynote speeches which are usually made by the then director or deputy director of the SARFT and sometimes by both (Liu, 1994, 1995, 1996b; Ruan, 1987, 1988; Sun, 1995, 1996; Tian, 1998, 2000; Xu, 2002a, 2002b, 2002c, 2003a, 2003b, 2004a, 2004b; T.-H. Wang, 2008; Yang, 1995, 1996, 1997b, 1997c). These keynote speeches elaborate the content and

spirit of the latest documents with regard to TV drama production and establish the general political or ideological direction the TV drama industry needs to follow when producing TV dramas (ibid). The keynote speeches also cover the SARFT's concrete opinions or suggestions to different levels of TV drama authorities as to how to coordinate and allocate the production of TV dramas with regard to its subject matters and the proportion of TV dramas of different subject matters. The keynote speeches very often also cover the SARFT's general suggestions with regard to the production of TV dramas of some subject matters (ibid).

All ANTVDPCs have some common features. All ANTVDPCs highlight TV drama quality (Ai, 1986, 1987, 1990 & 1994; Chinese TV, 1999a, 2003a; Gao & Wu, 2002; Z.-F. Hu, 2004, 2005 & 2006; Ji, 2000 & 2001a; Jing, 1984; Liu, 1994, 1995 & 1996b; Ruan, 1987 & 1988; Xu, 2002b, 2003b & 2004a; Z.-H. Xu, 1995; W.-G. Yang, 1995, 1996 & 1999; Zhao, 1984a). By quality it means TV dramas produced should integrate three values—ideological value, artistic value and entertainment value. To be more specific, TV dramas produced are supposed to embody the official ideological values, to present these values in an artistic way, and to be well received by the audience.

All ANTVDPCs highlight the implementation of the Double Serving policy (*erwei fangzhen*) in TV drama production, which means China's TV dramas should be serving the people and serving socialism (ibid). With this Double Serving policy, ideological value is prioritized over the other two values, hence the promotion of main melody in the TV drama production. The official ideological values or called main melody since the late 1980s, mean the positive values endorsed and promoted by the Party-state, mainly socialism and Party guidelines and policies such as the reform and open door policy. The ANTVDPCs between 1984 and 1990 highlighted such official ideological values as the persistence in the four cardinal principles², the persistence in reform and open door policy, and the combating of the bourgeois liberation (Ai, 1986c, 1987, 1990; Jing, 1984; Ruan, 1988). Since 1994, the ANTVDPCs have emphasized the official ideological values or the main melody as "four types of ideas and spirits" defined by Jiang Zemin in the 1994 National Working Conference on Propaganda Thought (NWCPT) (Ai, 1994; Ji, 2000). They are ideas and spirits that promote and are conducive to patriotism, collective spirit and socialism; ideas and spirits that promote and are conducive to China's reform and modernization; ideas and spirits that promote and are conducive to

²The four cardinal principles, stated by Deng Xiaoping in 1979, include the principle of upholding the socialist path, the principle of upholding the people's democratic dictatorship, the principle of upholding the leadership of the Communist Party of China (CPC), and the principle of upholding Mao Tse-Tung thought and Marxism-Leninism.

national solidarity, social progress and the wellbeing of the people; and ideas and spirits that promote and are conducive to the practice of earning happy life through honest hard work (ibid). Since Hu's presidency in late 2002, the main melody has become more inclusive and has come to mean socialist core value system which increasingly blends the Party ideology with the traditional Chinese cultural values and practices such as patriotism, stability, family values, respect for the elderly, benevolence, and harmony (Chinese TV, 2003a; Z.-F. Hu, 2005, 2006; Xu, 2003b, 2004a).

With the promotion of main melody, realist TV dramas which better reflect the Party guidelines and policy have always been promoted as the top priority and take a majority percentage of the overall annual TV drama output (Ai, 1986c, 1987 & 1990; Z.-F. Hu, 2006; Ji, 2000& 2001a; Ruan, 1987; Xu, 2002b; W.-G.Yang, 1996). Since the late 1990s ANTVDPCs have urged TV drama authorities nationwide to produce more realist TV dramas that reflect the outstanding traditional Chinese cultural values (Hu, 2004; Ji, 2000; Liu, 1995; Xu, 2004a). Also promoted are TV dramas about the Party-led contemporary revolution and TV dramas about the Party-led army. Whenever there are important political memorial occasions in the year when the ANTVDPC is held or in the following year, such as the anniversary celebrations of the founding of the P. R. China, of the founding of the CPC, etc, ANTVDPCs urge the TV drama authorities of different levels to produce some TV dramas to celebrate such occasions (Z.-F. Hu, 2005; Ji, 2000 & 2001a; Jing, 1984; Liu, 1995; Xu, 2004a).

All ANTVDPCs also highlight diversification in TV drama production (Ai, 1986, 1987, 1990 & 1994; Chinese TV, 1999a, 2003a; Gao & Wu, 2002; Z.-F. Hu, 2004, 2005 & 2006; Ji, 2000 & 2001a; Jing, 1984; Liu, 1994, 1995 & 1996b; Ruan, 1987 & 1988; Xu, 2002b, 2003b & 2004a; Z.-H. Xu, 1995; W.-G. Yang, 1995, 1996 & 1999; Zhao, 1984a). The policy of 'letting a hundred flowers bloom and letting a hundred schools of thought contend' or the Double Hundred Flowers Policy have always been quoted in the ANTVDPCs to emphasize the need to diversify the production of TV dramas in the country (ibid). Almost all ANTVDPCs highlight the importance of producing TV drama of different subject matters and allocate certain proportion to TV dramas of different subject matters (ibid). All conferences emphasize the importance of producing children's dramas, rural dramas, dramas on minority nationalities, and opera dramas, especially when few such dramas are produced, and suggest that such dramas take up certain proportion of the overall annual output (Z.-F. Hu, 2006; Ji, 2000; Ruan, 1987; Xu, 2004a).

Besides the above-mentioned common features, different ANTVDPCs may have different emphases (Ai, 1986, 1987, 1990, 1994; Chinese TV, 1999a; Z.-F. Hu, 2006; Ji, 2000; Liu, 1995; Ruan, 1988; Xu, 2004a; W.-G. Yang, 1999). The ANTVDPCs between 1984 and 1990, for one example, prioritized the rectification of political orientation in TV drama production and TV drama quality, regarding correct political orientation as the guarantee of TV drama quality (Ai, 1986, 1987 & 1990). The political direction at that time meant the persistence in four cardinal principles, persistence in reform, and the combating of bourgeois liberation (ibid). The 1994 ANTVDPC, for another example, highlighted the then President Jiang Zemin's definition of main melody as the previously-mentioned "4 types of ideas and spirits" and urged the TV drama industry to produce more main melody dramas as defined by Jiang (Ai, 1994). Before Jiang's definition, the TV drama industry considered main melody TV dramas as TV dramas of certain subject areas such as reform dramas, revolutionary-themed dramas, and military-themed dramas. The 1994 ANTVDPC also highlighted the screening of the domestically-produced TV dramas in the prime time (i.e. 7:00-10:00 pm) of CCTV and other TV stations across the nation, as first proposed in 1994 NWCPT. With regard to the 1995 ANTVDPC and the ANTVDPCs thereafter, they all highlighted the production of outstanding TV dramas which integrate three values, the screening of domestically-produced outstanding TV dramas especially realist main melody TV dramas in the prime time of both CCTV and the main channels of provincial TV stations across the country, as well as the publicity and rewarding of these outstanding TV dramas, as was first proposed by the 1995 National Work Conference on Radio, Film and Television (NWCRFT) (Z.-F. Hu, 2006; Ji, 2000; Liu, 1995), first to compete with the possible spilt-over international satellite TV drama programmes from mid-1990s and later with the international TV dramas of different sources since China's entry to WTO.

Since the cancellation of "Television Drama Material Planning Project Listing Examination" administrative examination and approval management practice, and the implementation of the "Provisional Rules on Television Drama Filming and Production Filing Announcement Management" on May 1st, 2006, no ANTVDPCs seem to have been held (Z.-F. Hu, 2006; SARFT, 2006).

Besides the ANTVDPCs, there are other conferences such as NWCPT and NWCRFT (Sun, 1995 & 1996; Tian, 2000; Xu, 2002c, 2003a & 2004b; T.-H. Wang, 2008 & 2011; Zhongguo dianying bao, 2010). The aim of all these conferences is to ensure that China's TV drama industry is diversified within the general political or ideological guideline set up by the state through its different levels of

TV drama regulatory authorities, and that high-quality TV dramas are produced that can enlighten and educate Chinese audience while entertaining them (*yu jiao yule*).

4.2.3 Informal State Regulation from TV Awards

Various TV Awards and their related activities like accompanying symposiums are also an important part of state regulation. They are informal and indirect. They endorse and award the TV dramas which have done well in integrating into the TV dramas the general ideological direction established by the TV drama authorities and which are popular among the audiences (China TV Art Committee Columnist, 2009b and 2010; CNTV, 2011c; Meng, 2009; D.-Y. Wang, 2009 and 2011).

China has established quite a few TV awards which offer awards to TV dramas including the *Star Light Award (Xingguang jiang)*, the *Golden Eagle Award*, the *Feitian Awards* etc (Zeng, 2008). With the Feitian Awards being the focus of this thesis, a detailed description of the awards is given later.

The SARFT, the ANTVDPs and the TV awards complement each other in the regulation of China's TV drama industry. The SARFT, on behalf of the Party-state, establishes general procedures, rules and regulations for different levels of TV drama regulatory authorities and for TV drama practitioners in the country. The ANTVDPs work out concrete and specific guidances to TV drama authorities and to TV drama practitioners. The TV awards, through the award-winning dramas, set an example to TV drama practitioners, giving guidance and direction with regard to selection of subject matters, presentation of TV dramas, aesthetics, etc. While giving TV drama practitioners ample freedom in the course of their production, such a regulatory system ensures that the TV dramas produced and eventually screened in the country are still within the ideological limits established by the Party-state and that only those TV dramas which have best embodied the Party-state's ideological values and at the same time have been well-received by the Chinese populace get promoted.

4.3 History of China's TV Drama Industry

4.3.1 Overview

The development of China's TV drama industry follows more or less the same route as its US or UK counterparts but lagged behind them for about 20 years. It has developed from the live broadcasting stage into the recorded broadcasting stage; from the initial single plays into the later longer TV series or serial dramas, and then into today's coexistence of single plays, seemingly never-ending

open-ended TV series, and serial dramas with a certain sense of narrative closure. Unlike the western counterparts which were mostly and are still considered as a form of entertainment, China's TV dramas since its inception have been serving propaganda and pedagogic purposes, undertaking the role of educating the public through the role models presented in the dramas (Q. Gong, 2011; Keane, 2005; P.-S. Li, 2008; L.-S. Liu, 2011; Yin, 2002a & 2002b; Zhu, 2008). It is only when China's TV drama industry was commercialized in late 1980s that TV dramas' entertaining function was acknowledged by the country's authorities (ibid). Even when their entertaining role is recognized today, Chinese people in general and Chinese authorities in particular still expect TV dramas to take on some more role rather than mere entertaining value. China's TV dramas are not just mere entertainment. They are supposed to educate and enlighten people while entertaining them.

China's TV drama industry's development, according to some native Chinese scholars, can be roughly divided into three main stages, as proposed by Wu Baohe (2011) or into more clear-cut specific developmental periods, as suggested by Gao and Wu (2002). These two divisions overlap with each other. Wu's three main stages (2011) include the earlier experimental formative stage (1958-1977), the recovery-developing stage (1978-1989), and the mature-prosperous stage (since 1990). The suggested periods by Gao and Wu (2002) can be seen as the subdivisions of Wu's three main stages. Wu's earlier stage is down to the beginning period (1958-1966), and the subsequent Cultural Revolution period (1966-1976); Wu's recovery-developing stage down to the recovery period (1978-1983), and the developing period (since mid-1980s); Wu's mature-prosperous stage to the mature period (in 1990s) and the prosperous period (since 2000). Whatever the division, TV dramas in each of these periods are closely related to and have distinct features depending on the then political, economic and cultural development in the country. To give a clearer picture of China's TV drama development, I have adopted the more clear-cut specific six developmental periods.

4.3.2 The Experimental/Formative Period (1958—1966)

During the experimental/formative period, China's TV dramas were broadcast live (Gao & Wu, 2002; Y.-S. Li, 2008; L.-S. Liu, 2011; Q.-Y. Wu, 2008; Zheng, 2008). Beijing TV (the precursor of China Central TV, CCTV) played a key role in the development of China's TV dramas (ibid). Beijing TV's live broadcasting of its first, twenty-minute-long, TV drama *A Bite of Vegetable Pancake* (*Yikou caibingzi*) on June 15, 1958 marked the beginning of China's TV drama development (ibid). During the experimental/formative period, Beijing TV broadcast a total of 90 TV dramas (ibid). Due to the

primitivity of the broadcasting technique during the experimental/formative period, Beijing TV was unable to transmit its TV dramas to provinces outside Beijing (Feng, 1982a). For this reason, cities like Shanghai, Guangzhou etc subsequently established their own TV stations (ibid). Shanghai TV broadcast its first TV drama in 1958 and broadcast a total of 35 TV dramas during the experimental/formative period (Cheng, 2005). Guangzhou TV broadcast its first TV drama in 1959 and broadcast a total of 30 TV dramas during the same period (Cheng, 2005; Feng, 1982a).

During the experimental/formative period, China produced and live broadcast up to 200 TV dramas (Gao & Wu, 2002; J.-S. Li, 2008). “[These dramas] were more accurately described as televised stage dramas. Most of [them] sought to explain the [CPC’s] political, economic and cultural policies...*A Bite of Vegetable Pancake* used character flashbacks to relate how bitter and painful life was in the ‘old society’, that is, before the founding of the [P.R. China]. In this single-episode drama a sister persuades her younger brother not to waste food by giving it to a dog. The narrative flashes back to difficult times when food was scarce and dogs belonged to the landlord class. This drama was made to promote the [CPC’s ideological position of] ‘contrasting past misery with present happiness’, and...to educate people to be frugal with their grain” (Yin, 2002a: p. 28-29).

4.3.3 The Cultural Revolution Period (1966—1976)

Ten-year-long Cultural Revolution almost paralyzed China’s TV drama production since almost all production units were obliged to participate in intensive political campaigns (Feng, 1982a & 1982b; Gao & Wu, 2002; Q. Gong, 2011; Y.-S. Li, 2008; L.-S. Liu, 2011; Q.-Y. Wu, 2008; Yin, 2002a & 2002b; Zheng, 2008). During this period, only three TV dramas were produced – *The Struggle at the Examination Centre* (*Kaochangshang de douzheng*), *The Daughter of the Party Secretary of the People’s Commune* (*Gongshe dangweishuji de nüer*), and *Sacred Obligation* (*Shensheng de zhize*) (ibid). All three dramas were still solely for the Party’s propaganda and pedagogic purposes (ibid).

4.3.4 The Recovery Period (1976—mid 1980s)

During this period the Chinese government made various efforts to boost the recovery of the country’s TV drama industry from its near paralysis caused by the Cultural Revolution (Gao & Wu, 2002; Q.-Y. Wu, 2008). It organized several important conferences including the 1st National TV Programmes Conference in August, 1979 (ibid). It also established two TV awards—the Feitian Awards and the Golden Eagle TV Award (ibid). In addition, it set up such important organizations as

China TV Art Committee (CTVAC) and China TV Drama Production Centre (Cheng, 2005; english.cctv.com, 2010; Gao & Wu, 2002; Jing, 1984; Q.-Y. Wu, 2008; Yin, 2002a, 2002b).

With the above governmental efforts, China's TV drama production recovered rapidly (Feng, 1982a, 1982b; Gao & Wu, 2002; Q.Y. Wu, 2008). 1980 witnessed China's TV drama industry's first bumper harvest since its recovery. In this year, CCTV screened 131 TV dramas in total (Gao & Wu, 2002; Yin, 2002a & 2002b). 1980 also witnessed the production and broadcast of China's first serial drama—a nine-episode *Eighteen Years in the Enemy Camp* (Cheng, 2005; Gao & Wu, 2002; S.-M. Zheng, 2008; Zhu, 2008). In 1981 CCTV broadcast a total of 128 TV dramas (Gao & Wu, 2002; Yin, 2002a & 2002b). In 1982 China produced a total of 227 TV dramas (ibid). In 1983, China's annual TV drama output reached 428 (Yin, 2002a & 2002b).

By the mid-1980s China's TV drama industry had recovered from the shock of the Cultural Revolution and has since entered a new stage (Cheng, 2005; Gao & Wu, 2002; Jing, 1984; Q.-Y. Wu, 2008). Before the recovery period, most TV drama practitioners came from the background of either stage plays or film making (ibid). By 1984, China has gradually established its professional though not yet mature TV drama production system with its own professional TV drama production practitioners, its own professional TV drama production companies, a professional TV drama journal as well as a professional TV drama committee (ibid).

China's TV dramas during the recovery period were different from those in the previous two periods (Cheng, 2005; Gao & Wu, 2002; K.-X. Jing, Online; L.-S. Liu, 2011; Y.-X. Wang, 2009; Yin, 2002a, 2002b; Zheng, 2008; Zhu, 2008). Influenced by the scar literature and introspection literature movements occurring immediately after the end of the Cultural Revolution, which depicted the traumas and hard lives of people during the Cultural Revolution, TV drama practitioners produced quite a few similarly-themed popular scar dramas and introspection dramas such as *Times Wasted* (*Cuotuo suiyue*) and *Snow Storm Tonight* (*Jinye you baofengxue*) (ibid). These dramas soon gave way to the subsequent reform dramas which describe the political and personal conflicts occurring during China's reform (ibid). The most popular reform dramas include *Qiao changzhang shangren*, *New Star* (*Xin xing*), etc (ibid). In a word, TV dramas of this period began to focus more on social changes of the time rather than on propaganda and pedagogic purposes although propaganda and pedagogy still remained the main function of television (ibid).

4.3.5 The Period of Rapid Expansion (mid-1980s-1989)

By mid-1980's, China's TV drama industry had entered a phase of rapid expansion (Cheng, 2005; Gao & Wu, 2002; Q.-Y. Wu, 2008; Yin, 2002a & 2002b). The annual TV drama output rose from about 1500 episodes by mid-1980s to 2035 episodes in 1989 (Ai, 1986b & 1990; Yin, 2002a & 2002b; Gao & Wu, 2002).

During this period, the Chinese government strove to improve TV drama quality (Gao & Wu, 2002). Several conferences were organized for this purpose including 1985 & 1986 ANTVDPs (Ai, 1986a, 1986b & 1986c; Cheng, 2005; Gao & Wu, 2002; JPRS, 1985). The practice of permit system starting from 1986 also served the same purpose (Cheng, 2005; Gao & Wu, 2002; Guo, 2003; Yin, 2002a, 2002b; Zheng, 2008; Zhu, 2008). Such efforts helped to improve the TV drama quality in the following years. In the two national TV drama exhibitions in 1986, many outstanding TV dramas were shown, including *The Dream of the Red Chamber (Honglou meng)* (ibid). The ensuing years witnessed the production of more outstanding works such as *Journey to the West (Xiyouji)* (ibid).

During this period two genres became popular: realistic dramas and adaptations. Influenced by the reportage literature during the time, TV drama practitioners produced many realistic dramas, which are based on the real people and the real events of the time and are presented in a realistic manner (Gao & Wu, 2002; Lu, 1993; Q.-Y. Wu, 2008). Realistic dramas became extremely popular in and after mid-1980s because of the numerous outstanding realistic dramas produced by the provincial level Shanxi TV and some city-level TV Stations in Shanxi province from early 1980s (ibid). Within ten years these TV stations produced over 90 realistic dramas including such popular ones as *Xingjing duizhang*, *Gouli ren*, etc (ibid).

Another popular TV drama genre during this period—adaptations from classical and modern literary works—was represented by *Four Generations under the Same Roof (Sishi tongtang)*, *The Dream of the Red Chamber*, and *Journey to the West* etc (Cheng, 2005; Gao & Wu, 2002; Z.-Z. Guo, 2003; L.-S. Liu, 2011; Yin, 2002a, 2002b; Zheng, 2008; Zhu, 2008).

TV dramas during the rapid expansion period began to make a breakthrough with regard to their subject matters and their presentation (ibid). They were based on the real life, the real events and the real people of the time and were presented in a life-like manner. They had also developed into a form of popular entertainment rather than mere expression of political and cultural tendencies so as

to cater to the change in audience taste (ibid). They began to acquire its own features as a distinctive art form, gradually breaking its tie with stage dramas and feature-style films (ibid).

4.3.6 The Prosperous Period (1990—2000)

China's TV drama industry's prosperity in the 1990s was due to the commercialization of the TV drama industry and can be seen in two main aspects (J.-Z. Chen, 2010; Cheng, 2005; Gao & Wu, 2002; P.-S. Li, 2008; Y.-S. Li, 2008; L.-S. Liu, 2011; Q.-Y. Wu, 2008; Yin, 2002a & 2002b; Zheng, 2008; Zhu, 2008).

First, TV drama production experienced further expansion. The annual output rose from 2306 episodes in 1990 (Cheng, 2005), to 5304 episodes in 1991 (Gao & Wu, 2002), to 9780 episodes in 1998 (J.-Z. Chen, 2010; Yin, 2002a, 2002b), and to over 20,000 episodes in 2000 (ibid).

Second, TV dramas during this period had become a mass popular entertainment rather than mere expression of political and cultural tendencies and there developed various types of genres to cater to the demanding audience (Cheng, 2005; Gao & Wu, 2002; P.-S. Li, 2008; Y.-S. Li, 2008; L.-S. Liu, 2011; Q.-Y. Wu, 2008; Yin, 2002a & 2002b; Zheng, 2008; Zhu, 2008; Zhu et al., 2008). Main melody TV dramas such as revolutionary-themed dramas continued to be promoted by the state to promote the official ideology. There also developed popular TV drama genres with the trend toward genres starting from the screening of *Yearnings (Kewang)* in 1990 (ibid). This period thus witnessed the co-existence of state-promoted main melody dramas and audience-loved popular dramas.

"The dominant genre was undoubtedly costume dramas in which characters are dressed in pre-modern costumes and tell stories that purportedly occurred in pre-1911 China" (Zhu et al., 2008, p.7). The most popular costume drama during this period was *Princess Huanzhu (Huanzhu gege)* in 1998 (Gao & Wu, 2002; L.-S. Liu, 2011; Q.-Y. Wu, 2008; Zhu et al., 2008). Next to the popularity of costume dramas are anti-corruption dramas (Zhu et al., 2008). Other popular TV dramas genres include FEI dramas, martial arts dramas, romantic dramas, urban business dramas, military dramas, police dramas, historical dramas as well as adaptations (Cheng, 2005; Gao & Wu, 2002; P.-S. Li, 2008; Y.-S. Li, 2008; L.-S. Liu, 2011; Q.-Y. Wu, 2008; Yin, 2002a & 2002b; Zheng, 2008; Zhu, 2008, Zhu, et al., 2008). All these genres employ a standardized formula to depict social contradictions, power struggles, and the strategies that people use to survive and learn through experience (ibid).

And they usually end with good people getting rewarded and bad ones getting punished (ibid). From this period on, serial dramas began to dominate Chinese TV screen (ibid).

4.3.7 The Era of Diversification (Since 2000)

The first decade of the new millennium witnessed further commercialization of China's TV drama industry (Cheng, 2005; Gao & Wu, 2002; P.-S. Li, 2008; Y.-S. Li, 2008; L-S. Liu, 2011; Q.-Y. Wu, 2008; Yin, 2002a & 2002b; Zheng, 2008; Zhu, 2008; Zhu et al., 2008). By then, TV drama production has mainly followed the market principles with audience taste playing an essential role in the production system (ibid). By then, TV drama genres have been well established and subject matters of different areas have been well explored (ibid). Given this, TV drama producers since 2000 have either explored new subject matters or innovated within the established genres to cater for the increasingly demanding Chinese audience (ibid). Hence, more popular dramas of different subject matters or of different genres have been produced during the first decade of the new millennium.

Costume dramas continue to be popular (Y. Zhu, 2008). Revisionist Qing dramas which appeared in late 1990s continued to be popular in early and mid-2000s. They were soon replaced by other costume dramas such as *The Great Emperor Hanwu (Hanwu dadi)*, which portray the earlier era such as Han and Tang, two most prosperous dynasties in China's history (ibid).

Dramas about the mundane life of ordinary people, as represented by *Elder Brother (Dage)*, and *Love Tree (Qinqing shu)*, also became very popular during the decade (Cheng, 2005; Gao & Wu, 2002; P.-S. Li, 2008; Y.-S. Li, 2008; L-S. Liu, 2011; Q.-Y. Wu, 2008; Yin, 2002a & 2002b; Zheng, 2008; Zhu, 2008; Zhu et al., 2008). Another popular genre during the decade was crime dramas, which became popular after 2002 (ibid).

Also popular during this period were "red classics" (or legendary style revolutionary-themed dramas)—dramas about the army officers of the People's Liberation Army (ibid). *Those Days of Passion (Jiqing ranshao de suiyue)*, a story about a retired army officer and his family life, became a hit in 2001. This was quickly followed by other similarly-themed dramas including *Draw Your Sword* and *The Road We Have Taken* (ibid). These dramas differ from the earlier conventional revolutionary-themed dramas. Their depiction of military heroes "[combines] spectacles of war with the hero's personal life and interpersonal relationships" whereas the earlier dramas avoid the hero's personal life and interpersonal relationships (Zhu et al., 2008:p.9).

Dramas on contemporary soldiers also became popular during the decade (Gao and Wu, 20002; Y.-S. Li, 2008; L.-S. Liu, 2011; Q.-Y. Wu, 2008). Represented by *Soldiers Sortie*, these dramas were popular because of their populist attempt to heroize common soldiers (ibid). This decade also witnessed the popularity of spy serials, which culminated in the success of the spy drama *Lurk* in 2009 (Gao, 2010; Gao and Luo, 2010; Nan, 2009; Yin and Ma, 2010). Dramas about farmers and dramas about workers also became popular during this decade (Gao, 2010; Gao & Luo, 2010; Gao & Wu, 20002; Y.-S. Li, 2008; L.-S. Liu, 2011; Q.-Y. Wu, 2008). The former are represented by *Xi Gengtian's Story* while the latter are represented by *Xi Shengdi* (ibid).

This period also witnessed the development of pink dramas (Huang, 2008; Keane, 2005). They are represented by *Pink Ladies* (*fenhong nülang*) and *Falling in Love* (ibid). There are striking similarities between these two pink dramas and HBO's serial, *Sex and City* (ibid). There are four young, single, independent and well-paid heroines in the serials (ibid). They all focused on topics like love at the first sight, marriage, and life as a single woman (ibid).

Dramas of new subject areas include *Five-Star Red Flag Flying in the Wind* (*Wuxing hongqi yingfeng piaoyang*) and *The Doctors* (*Yizhe renxin*). The former is the first serial about the Chinese scientists who made China's first atomic bomb, first hydrogen bomb and first satellite (R.-Y. Zhao, 2011). The latter is the first serial on the life and work of professional doctors in China (M. Xu, 2011).

This decade also witnessed the popularity of main melody dramas (China TV Art Committee Columnist, 2010; Peng, 2009; D.-Y. Wang, 2009). Unlike their previous counterparts, the main melody dramas since the new millennium such as *Draw Your Sword* have attracted tremendous audience due to their use of the formula adopted by popular TV dramas: true-to-life characters with varied and interesting personalities, the characters' personal life as well as their interpersonal relationships with others (Nan Shan Culture Net, 2009; Yin, 2002a & 2002b; Fan, 2009).

To sum up, the era of diversification witnessed a new TV drama landscape in China: development of new genres, exploration of new subject matters, popularity of main melody dramas, and convergence between main melody dramas and popular dramas.

4.4 The Feitian Awards

4.4.1 Introduction

The Feitian Awards is the only and top governmental award devoted to TV dramas (TV1958.com, 2013a; Wan, 2009; D.-Y. Wang, 2011). It is sponsored by the SARFT and is organized by the CTVAC, an organization directly under the SARFT's supervision (SARFT, 2007b; TV1958.com, 2009). It was founded in 1981 to evaluate the TV dramas which were screened on CCTV between January 1st, 1980 and March 31st, 1981 (TV1958.com; Sohu.com, 2009b). Before 2005, the Feitian Awards was held every year (ibid). Thereafter it has become a biennial award (ibid).

What follows is a more detailed account of different aspects of the Feitian Awards ranging from its categories of awards and its panel of judges to its general features.

4.4.2 Main Categories of the Feitian Awards

The Feitian Awards offer two main types of awards—the awards for TV dramas and the individual awards for TV drama practitioners and for different artistic aspects of TV dramas.

Originally, there were few categories of the first type (China TV Art Committee, 2006). The 1st Feitian Awards³ set up only two main categories: TV Dramas and Children's TV Dramas; the 1st, 2nd and 3rd Prize were given for both categories (ibid). The 3rd Feitian offered four main categories of awards: Serial Dramas, Short-form Dramas, Short TV Series and Children's Dramas (ibid). Since the 10th Feitian, the main categories of the first type have been relatively stable (China TV Art Committee, 2006; F.-Z. Zhang, 2002). They include Serial TV dramas, Medium-length TV Dramas, Short-form TV Dramas, Short TV Series, Children's Show, Opera Series and Dubbed Foreign TV Dramas; the 1st, 2nd and 3rd Prize are given for each category except for Dubbed Foreign TV dramas (ibid).

Individual awards were not offered until the 3rd Feitian at which four categories were established—Best Director, Best Actress, Special Director and Special Actress (China TV Art Committee, 2006). The 4th Feitian offered eight categories of individual awards—Honorary Director, Best Director, Best Actress, Best Actor, Best Supporting Actress, Best Music, Best Photography, and Best lighting (ibid). From the 5th to the 17th Feitian, the main categories of individual awards remained relatively stable including the last seven categories of the 4th Feitian and five other categories—Best Screenwriter, Best Supporting Actor, Best Editing, Best Sound, and Best Art

³ Hereafter, the 1st, 2nd, 3rd Feitian Awards will be abbreviated as the 1st, 2nd, 3rd Feitian etc.

(China TV Art Committee, 2006; Chinese TV, 1986, 1988b, 1990c, 1992, 1993c, 1998b). Since the 25th Feitian the individual awards have been reduced to 4 main categories—Best Screenwriter, Best Director, Best Actor and Best Actress (China Television, 2005b, 2007b, 2009c & 2011b; CNTV, 2013; News.cn, 2009; Tudou.com, 2009a & 2009b).

4.4.3 Qualifications and Procedures of the Feitian Awards

Before the 19th Feitian in 1999, candidacy for the Feitian Awards was confined to TV dramas screened on CCTV and thereafter has been extended to TV dramas screened on provincial satellite TV stations (China TV Art Committee Columnist, 2009b; People's Daily Online, 1999). Since 1995, candidacy has also been extended to the-Five-One-Project-Award-winning TV dramas (Liu, 1995 and 1996a; Sina.com.cn, 2004; Xu, 1995).

TV stations or TV drama production units from different municipalities/provinces nominate some TV dramas for award competition and submit their competition applications to the municipal/provincial RFTBs respectively for preliminary examination and for approval; those directly under the CCTV and the Art Bureau of the People's Liberation Army General Political Department (ABPLAGPD) submit their competition applications to the CCTV and to the ABPLABPD respectively for the same purpose (Sina.com.cn, 2009a; TV1958.com, 2009a & 2011a; SARFT.com, 2007b & 2007c; Zhao, 1984b). Upon preliminary examination and approval, the nominated TV dramas are then sent to the CTVAC (ibid). Afterwards, these TV dramas are sent to the panel of judges for primary assessment, reassessment and final assessment (Ruan, 1990). The judges' final decisions, which are made by voting anonymously, are formally announced in the subsequent award ceremony (Zhao, 1984b).

4.4.4 The Panel of the Feitian Awards Judges and Criteria for Awards

The Feitian Awards jury panel is usually headed by the SARFT's director and sometimes by the CTVAC's director or deputy director (Chinese TV, 1989c, 1990a, 1991, 1993b, 1996b, 1998a, 1999b, 2001a, 2002b, 2003b, 2004a; China Television, 2005a, 2007a, 2009b, 2011a; TV Research, 1994a; Wang, 1998). The panel is made up of representatives from different walks of life. It includes director or deputy directors of the CPC Central Committee's Publicity Department, of the SARFT, of the CTVAC, and of the CCTV (ibid). It also includes experts from cultural and art circle, editors-in-chiefs or directors from prestigious Party newspapers or journals, TV and film experts from academic circle, and accomplished TV drama artists (ibid). Also included in the panel are representatives from the Agricultural Ministry, All-China Federation of Trade Union, and the China Youth League, etc (ibid).

In their assessment of the competing TV dramas, the panel of judges follow strictly ‘three excellence principles’—excellence in the depth of ideas or values presented, excellence in artistic presentation, and excellence in the making of dramas (China TV Art Committee Columnist, 2010; Z.-F. Hu, 2009; D.-Y. Wang, 2009). Only TV dramas meeting three excellence principles would be awarded. On several occasions such as the 10th Feitian in 1990, no top awards were given because no competing TV dramas had met these principles (China Television, 1990; Xin, 1990). The judges also take into consideration audience’s reception of the competing dramas when assessing them (China TV Art Committee Columnist, 2010; Z.-F. Hu, 2009; D.-Y. Wang, 2009; Ruan, 1990; Xin, 1990).

4.4.5 The Feitian Awards and its Associated Activities

The biggest event of the Feitian Awards is its awards ceremony. It is usually held by the local authorities whose TV production unit has got the majority of the awards for that year. Most Feitian awards ceremonies have been held in Beijing (Chinese TV, 1989d; CNTV, 2011b, 2011d, 2013; Gong, 1998; Hao, 1986; Liu, 1996a; People’s Daily Online, 1999; Tian, 1998; TV1958.com, 2013b; Wan, 2009; Xin, 1990; Yang, 1994).

The Feitian Awards ceremony is usually accompanied by the Feitian symposiums either on TV drama production in general or on the award-winning dramas in particular (Gong, 1998; Zhao, 1984b). Since the 27th Feitian, the CTVAC has made continuous attempts to publicize the awards. In 2009 alone, for example, the CTVAC made at least eight attempts to popularize the Feitian Awards, including the launch of the Feitian Awards online platform, the production of a 30-episode documentary *Legend of the Feitian Awards, etc* (China TV Art Committee Columnist, 2010; Z.-F. Hu, 2009; Sina.com.cn, 2009; Y.-L. Wu, 2009).

4.4.6 General Features of the Feitian Awards

The Feitian Awards have the following characteristics.

Firstly, the Feitian Awards aims to diversify China’s TV drama production (China TV Art Committee Columnist, 2009b, 2009c & 2010; CNTV, 2011c, 2011d & 2011e; D.-Y. Wang, 2009 & 2011). With regard to the diversification of forms, there establish awards for various forms of dramas including long-form serial dramas and series (nine or over nine episode in length), medium-length dramas and series (three to eight episode in length), short-form dramas and series (between one and two episode in length) (ibid). With regard to the diversification of subject matters, dramas of different

subject matters including realist dramas, historical-themed dramas, opera dramas and children's dramas are encouraged (ibid).

Secondly, the Feitian Awards and its related activities aim to promote quality as well as innovation in TV drama production (China TV Art Committee Columnist, 2009b and 2010; CNTV, 2011c; Meng, 2009; D.-Y. Wang, 2009 and 2011). The award-winning dramas are among the best of its contemporaries (ibid). They were well-received among the TV drama critics, among the government and among the audience (ibid). All of them involve some degree of innovation with regard to their subject matters or presentation, exploring dramas of new subject matters or going beyond the dramas of the same subject matters of the same period (ibid).

Finally, the Feitian awards promotes main melody dramas (Ai, 1990; China TV Art Committee, 2006; China TV Art Committee Columnist, 2009a, 2009b, 2009c, 2009d & 2010; CNTV, 2011c; Contemporary Television, 1988; Fan, 2009; Ruan, 1992; D.-Y. Wang, 2009 & 2011; Y.-B. Zhong, 1988). The main categories of main melody dramas including realist dramas, MRMHT dramas and military-themed dramas, etc, occupy a large proportion of the awards (ibid).

4.4.7 Main Features of the Top Feitian Awards since 2001

All the top Feitian awards since 2001 have some features in common.

Firstly, these top Feitian Award-winning dramas mostly deal with Chinese history. But unlike the dynasty dramas studied by Ying Zhu (2008), these dramas cover the more recent Chinese history with the narratives of these dramas taking place in the more recent historical settings. These dramas fall into three broad categories: historical dramas, contemporary/realist dramas, and hybrid dramas. Historical dramas, including *Yan'an song*, *The Road We Have Taken*, etc, cover the historical events or figures before China's reform in 1979. Contemporary/Realist dramas, including *Soldiers Sortie*, *Beautiful Daughter-in-laws (Xifu de meihao shidai)*, etc. cover issues, events or people in contemporary China starting from China's reform and open door policy in 1979. Hybrid dramas including *Stories in Karamay Oil Fields (Xi shengdi)* and *Golden Wedding* cover a long period spanning from the historical past to the present contemporary China (see appendix 3 for details).

Secondly, although they themselves can be further divided into different subgenres under the previous three broad categories, these award-winning dramas are generally of three main types

—Party-oriented dramas, ordinary-folk-oriented dramas, and hybrid dramas blending the elements of the first two types.

The historical category includes MRMHT dramas, red classics, spy serial, and the genre of ordinary folk dramas. Most MRMHT dramas including *Yan'an song* are Party-oriented dramas since they mostly cover the CPC-led revolutionary history before the founding of the P. R. China except for some MRMHT dramas which deal with other historical events in China. Red classics and spy serials are also Party-oriented. Red classics including *The Road We Have Taken* depict the Party's revolution history before the founding of the P. R. China. Spy serials such as *Lurk* portray either the Party's undercover intelligence work during the anti-Japanese invasion war and during the civil war or the Party's intelligence work after the founding of the P. R. China in 1949.

Other historical category dramas such as *Qiao's Grand Courtyard* and *Journey to the Northeast* are ordinary-folk-oriented dramas. These two can be subcategorized into the genre of family sagas.

The contemporary realist dramas range from reform dramas of various types to FEI dramas. *The Provincial Party Secretary* is a drama about the CPC leadership in the reforming China. Rural dramas such as *Xi-Gentian's Story* cover the life of farmers in the reforming countryside. *The Doctors* is a hospital drama on the life and work of Chinese professional doctors in the course of medical reform. *Soldiers Sortie*, *Bing feng* and *I am A special Soldier* are dramas on contemporary Chinese soldiers. *My family Tree* and *Beautiful Daughter-in-laws* are ordinary folk dramas centring on family ethical issues and family values. Most contemporary dramas except *The Provincial Party Secretary* are ordinary-folk-oriented dramas since they are mostly about the ordinary people in different walks of life ranging from farmers to doctors.

Hybrid dramas are also of three types—either Party-oriented, ordinary-folk-oriented or the hybrid of these two. Increasingly across all categories of dramas, there is a tendency towards the integration of the grand narratives of national development and the personal narratives of ordinary individuals with the grand narratives as the background of the story where the personal narratives take place.

Thirdly, all the selected top Feitian Awards deal with conflicts or problems of one kind or another. The dramas about the Party's revolutionary history mostly cover the conflict between Chinese nation and the Japanese aggressors during the Chinese People's Resistance War against Japanese Aggression and the conflict between the CPC and the KMT during the civil war. Some other dramas

such as *The Provincial Party Secretary*, *Shi wan Renjia*, *The Doctors*, and *Xi Gengtian's Story* cover problems encountered in the course of China's reform. Some other dramas such as *Golden Marriage* and *Beautiful Daughter-in-laws* cover problems within families.

Fourthly, almost every drama deals with a certain group of people in the Chinese society. In the category of historical dramas, most MRMHT dramas such as *Yan'an Song* are about the CPC leadership during the CPC-led revolution. Red classics such as *The Road We Have Taken* are about revolutionary officers and soldiers. Spy serials are about intelligence workers. *Qiao's Grand Courtyard* is about businessmen in Shanxi province. Within the category of contemporary realist dramas, different social groups in contemporary Chinese society are portrayed. *The Provincial Party Secretary* is about senior CPC leaders. Rural dramas such as *Xi Gengtian's Story* are about farmers. *The Doctors* is about professional doctors. Military serials such as *Soldiers Sortie* are about contemporary Chinese soldiers. In a word, each drama revolves around a certain social group in Chinese society.

In addition, all these TV dramas are presented in a life-like manner, creating life-like characters and giving a realistic portrayal of the experiences of different social groups in different historical settings. Similar to the British or American documentary dramas (Corner, 2001), MRMHT dramas are based on the actual significant historical figures, their activities and the related historical events in the CPC-led revolution or construction (L.-S. Liu, 2009; Wen, 1992). All the battles presented in *Yan'an Song* were actual and the major characters such as Mao Zedong, Zhou Enlai, and et al were actual figures in the modern revolutionary China. Following the historical materialist principle⁴ established by the Party—the depiction of the significant historical figures (mostly the revolutionary leaders) and the eventful events must be true to their historical reality while that of the minor events or other characters can be flexible (the principle of *dashi bu xu xiaoshi bu ju*)—MRMHT dramas have given a fairly objective depiction of the KMT's substantial contribution to the China's war of resistance against Japanese invasion, of the mistakes made by the CPC, and of the internal conflict within the CPC during its revolutionary history, in sharp contrast with the previous idealized depiction of the CPC leaders and the demonized depiction of the KMT counterparts (Dong, 2007; C.-Z. Wang, 2003, 2004, 2005 & 2007; W.-G. Yang, 1997a, 1997b, 1997c, 2002; Zhong & Tao, 2010).

⁴ As a type of realism, this principle is different from the socialist realism prevalent before the country's reform whereby only the positive aspects of the Party especially its achievements are represented.

The major characters in red classics may be fictional but the events presented in these narratives did happen in contemporary Chinese revolutionary history. Like MRMHT dramas, red classics give a fairly objective portrayal of the KMT's significant role during the anti-Japanese resistance war and of the mistakes made by the CPC. And the CPC officers and soldiers are portrayed not as perfect heroes but as ordinary human heroes with both merits and defects.

The contemporary realist dramas incorporate and combine the important elements of two types of realist dramas: the macro-social realist dramas and the micro-social realist dramas. The former (also termed traditional social realist dramas by Creeber) refer to the British social realist dramas of the 1960s and 1970s and are concerned with the grand political issues/problems and wider socio-economic debates which apply to the majority of the people within the whole society in a certain social period (Creeber, 2004). The latter refer to what Creeber (2004) term "soap dramas"—dramas of a widening social realism, the extension of the British social realism, and are concerned with the personal and private concerns of the everyday life.

The macro-social realist dramas have such characteristics as described by Marion Jordan (1981: p. 28): "...life should be presented in the form of a narrative of personal events, each with a beginning, a middle and an end, important to the central characters concerned but affecting others in only minor ways...though these events are ostensibly about social problems they should have as one of their central concerns the settling of people in life...the resolution of these events should always be in terms of the effect of personal interventions...characters should be either working-class or of the classes immediately visible to the working classes (...) and should be credibility accounted for in terms of their 'ordinariness' of their homes, families and their friends...the locale should be urban and provincial (...); the setting should be commonplace and recognizable...the time should be 'the present'...the style should... suggest an unmediated, unprejudiced and complete view of the reality".

Such generic features of the social realist dramas fit well with the contemporary Chinese realist dramas. The world created by these dramas is told in a form of narrative of personal events. The events are structured around some social problems/issues such as educational problems, medical problems and marriage problems, and are presented to be easily recognizable as happening in contemporary Chinese society or as related to the audience's life. The settings in these dramas vary ranging from the rural areas, the city, the hospital, to the home, all of which are easily recognized by the audience to be part of the social places in contemporary China where different social groups in

China are expected to live. The characters, though mostly fictional, are easily recognized by the audience to be ordinary people either like themselves or like someone they know. Such features of the social realist dramas emphasize verisimilitude or empirical reality and the empirical resemblance to social reality makes the dramas look real to the audience.

More than that, the contemporary realist dramas, as is also the case with the historical dramas and hybrid dramas, incorporate soap opera characteristics especially its emphasis on the characters' personal relationships and the different minutiae aspects of these characters, including their marriage, friendship, and careers. These features make the audience feel that the characters in the dramas are like the audience themselves who have different kinds of inter-personal relationships and different kinds of emotional needs. These soap-like features create what western scholars refer to as the psychological/emotional realism whereby viewers feel easier to identify with the characters in the dramas and feel the happenings in the dramas as real (Ang, 1985; Creeber, 2004; McCarthy, 2001).

Hence, the selected Feitian award-winning dramas blend the verisimilitude/ empirical reality of social realist dramas and the psychological/emotional realism of soap operas. Such a blending gives the realistic portrayal of the events and of the characters in these dramas.

Finally, the top Feitian award-winning dramas are organized around traditional Chinese cultural values/practises or integration of traditional Chinese cultural values/practices and modern values/practices.

These dramas share more or less the same narrative pattern. Heroes/heroines offer help and support to people they meet, and because of this, get rewarded, getting respect, appreciation, help or support from people they have helped, from people they have not helped and from people who have been opposing them. Such a narrative pattern—the combination of D, E, F narrative functions proposed by Propp (1968)—is repeated in the events presented by the top Feitian award-winning dramas. In the course of such patterned events, heroes/heroines come to meet other people and establish different kinds of relationships with them. Some relationships are oppositional, unfriendly or hostile while other relationships are supportive and friendly. The story very often start with the oppositional relationships due to the misunderstanding or disagreement between the heroes and other people, but these relationships usually last briefly and soon transform into relationships of understanding, appreciation, help and support. The transformation of the relationships from the oppositional ones into the supportive ones is made possible because of the heroes' good

virtues/qualities such as generosity, respect for the elderly, industry, commitment to family values, etc, and the gradual and eventual understanding or appreciation of these virtues by the people who meet the heroes or who have received help and support from the heroes. Heroes/heroines in the stories are not perfect: they may be bad-tempered, poorly-educated, having low social status, stubborn etc. These shortcomings are very often taken advantage of by the heroes' opponents to frame or wrong them. Thus, the heroes may be misunderstood or opposed by other people and even their friends and relatives in the course of the stories. As the events unfold, this misunderstanding or opposition will be cleared with gradual recognition and appreciation of the heroes' good virtues by the people who have gained help or support from the heroes, by the people who come to know the heroes through those people the heroes have helped or supported, and by the people who have been opposing the heroes. One event presents one virtue of the heroes/heroines, another presents another virtue of the heroes/heroines, some other events may present other virtues of the heroes/heroines or reinforce the virtues presented by other events.

Although the top Feitian award-winning dramas present a comprehensive picture of the heroes/heroines with both good virtues and weaknesses, what these dramas have highlighted are the good virtues embodied by the heroes/heroines—either traditional cultural values/practices or the integration of the traditional Chinese cultural values/practices and the modern values/practices. *Those Innocent Years*, for example, is organized around such traditional values as loyalty to friendship. *Golden Marriage* is organized around such traditional cultural practices as commitment to family values and marriage. *Chuang guandong* is organized around such traditional values as commitment to family values, tolerance, industry, propriety, benevolence, wisdom, loyalty to friendship, perseverance and patriotism. In a word, all the selected top Feitian award-winning dramas are framed around traditional Chinese good virtues. And the DEF patterns themselves embody the traditional Chinese practice of returning help and support to those who offer help and support and the belief or practice that kind-hearted men end up well-treated.

4.5 Summary

This chapter consist of three main sections. The first section covers China's TV drama regulatory system. It discusses formal regulation from the SARFT and the provincial/municipal RFTBs, and informal regulation from the ANTVDPs and the TV awards. The second section covers the

historical development of China's TV drama industry by dividing it into six periods—the experimental and formative period, the Cultural Revolution period, the recovery period, the rapid expansion period, the prosperous period and the diversification period. The final section discusses different aspects of the Feitian awards including the categories of awards, the award procedures, the panel of judges, the award criteria, the award-associated activities, the general features of the Feitian Awards, and the main features of the top Feitian Awards since 2001. The three sections combine to give an overall picture of China's TV drama landscape.

Chapter 5 From Binary Structure to Network Pattern

5.1 Introduction

In chapter 2 I have proposed and elaborated a theoretical framework—network framing—to explain the top Feitian Award TV dramas under study: characters and their actions representing certain aspects of social reality in China, either historical or contemporary, are selected and highlighted to produce different genres of TV dramas; in the stories presented by these different TV dramas, the characters through their interactive actions with each other in different events are connected by a network pattern and are organized/framed around traditional Chinese cultural values so as to promote a certain interpretation of the selected reality—the messages or agendas desired by the Chinese Communist Party (the CCP or the Party). What I have found through my narrative analyses of the five case-studied TV dramas largely correspond to what I have proposed and elaborated: all of the five case-studied TV dramas are network patterned and are organized /framed around traditional Chinese cultural values, most of which are Confucianism-based, to promote the political messages/agendas desired by the Party; the traditional Chinese cultural values used as the central organizing ideas and the messages/agendas promoted by the Party vary with different dramas depending on the different issues or the problems covered by these dramas. The two revolutionary themed TV dramas—*Yan'an Song* and *The Road We Have Taken*—convey the message that the Party's ascendance to power, its subsequent founding of and its governance of the P.R. C. were the result of Chinese people's choice and thus the result of the historical choice. Underlying the rural drama *Xi Gengtian's Story* is the Party's five-year project of building a new socialist countryside to develop agriculture in the rural areas and to improve the life of rural population. Behind the FEI drama *Beautiful Daughter-in-laws* is the Party's attempt to restore the traditional Chinese good virtues in general and the familial values and ethics in particular to help rectify the loss of moral grounding in the country. Embedded in the contemporary soldier drama *Soldier Sortie* is the Party's agenda to educate the country's populace particularly the younger generation about patriotism, collectivism, heroism and idealism, part of which have been embodied by the good qualities the core character Xu Sanduo embraces and practices such as good-naturedness, persistence, perseverance, fraternity.

These network-patterned traditional-Chinese-culture-framed stories presented by the top Feitian Award winning TV dramas contrast sharply with the binary-oppositionally-structured class-based

stories presented by the cultural works of the Maoist era. Comparing the former with the latter and discussing the transformation from the latter to the former, I am going to argue in the rest of this thesis that China's political communication since 2001 has undergone significant changes and thus has demonstrated some sophistication.

Although the network pattern and traditional Chinese culture frames in the top Feitian Award winning dramas are inseparable and interwoven parts which together result in the subtlety and sophistication in the Party's political communication of the current post-reform era and thus should be studied together—so are and should be the binary oppositional structure and class frames which result in the crudity and over-simplicity in the Party's political communication of the Maoist era, I am going to separate them temporarily in the subsequent discussion for the sake of clarity and of depth in discussion.

The CCP, as I have briefly mentioned in the research background section, has been attaching great importance to its propaganda work ever since its establishment. Considering media as important and powerful propaganda tools, the CCP has been using whatever media available, particularly those popular ones, to tell stories to propagate/communicate the Party's message or agenda to the widest majority of the Chinese people. During the Maoist-era—the CPC-led revolutionary era and the immediate subsequent socialist era—novels, oral dramas, stage plays and other artistic works had been used to tell stories for the purpose of communicating the Party's agendas or messages. During the Cultural Revolution, model plays replaced the novels, oral dramas and other artistic works to become the dominant story-telling media to communicate the Party's messages/agendas. During the reform-era, such media as films and TV dramas were increasingly used to tell stories for political purposes. In the current post-reform era, diverse media ranging from internet and films to TV dramas have been used by the Party to tell stories for political communication purpose with TV dramas being one of the most popular and dominant form of story-telling media.

From the Maoist era to the current post-reform era, the Party's political communication through story-telling has undergone some changes. More and more media have been used to tell stories to communicate the messages/agendas desired by the Party. Besides, the ways stories are told have also changed. In the Maoist era, stories were told in a straightforward, simplified and formulaic way whereby characters are connected in binary oppositions—the heroes are glorified while the villains are demonised—in more or less the same way as many narrative scholars have found the

characters in the various narratives to be connected. Today, stories are told in a more sophisticated subtle way whereby characters are not necessarily connected in binary oppositions. This and the subsequent chapters are going to explore this sophistication in the Party's use of stories for political communication. This chapter covers one aspect of this sophistication—how stories are structured or organized. To better understand this sophistication, it is necessary to see first what the stories were like and how the stories were structured before the reform era. I will focus on the literary and artistic works created from 1940s to the 1970s—the most influential genre of stories which provided the main leisure and entertainment for Chinese people's cultural life during the Maoist era.

5.2 Binary Structure in the Stories of the Maoist Era

Binary oppositionary structure, which Levi-Strauss and many other western scholars have argued to be the underlying organizing structure for various narrative forms ranging from myths, novels, and films to TV dramas, is not peculiar to the stories presented by the western cultural works. It also finds expression in the stories covered by the Chinese cultural works. In fact, it had dominated the literary and artistic works of the whole Maoist era as the sole and dominant organizing structure.

Referred to today as the Red Classics, these highly politicized literary and artistic works of the Maoist era include mainly the revolutionary or historical themed novels as well as the similarly-themed model plays during the Cultural Revolution period.

These literary and artistic works include *Tracks in the Snowy Mountains* [*Linhai xueyuan*], *The Red Detachment of Women* [*Hongse nianjizun*], *Shajiang* [*Shajiang*], *Struggles in the Old City* [*Yehuo chunfeng dou gucheng*], *The Red Crag* [*Hong yan*] to name just a few influential ones. Produced with an aim to develop a historiography of the CCP and to articulate the Party's policies, these works cover the origins of the Party-led revolution and how the revolution achieved victory after an arduous journey; they also depicted the social transformation such as the land reform in the rural areas under the CPC leadership (Q. Gong 2011; Y. Li, 2006; W. Su, 2000; Tang, 1993; D.D.-W. Wang, 2000).

During the Maoist era, the Party exerted strict ideological and political control over the creation of literary and artistic works with literature and art practitioners having very limited autonomy (ibid). Writers and artists were urged and requested to follow the principles set up by Mao Zedong in his

talks at the Symposium of Literary and Art Circles held in Yan'an in 1942 (ibid). The two fundamental rules put forward by Mao for literature and arts are: first, literature and art is to serve the common people namely the workers, peasants and soldiers; second, literature and art is to be in service of politics—to serve the dictatorship of the proletariat (ibid). Out of these two main rules came the socialist realism—the officially sanctified representational style which has dominated the production of literary and artistic work during the whole Maoist era from the 1940s to the 1970s. This socialist realism, which was initially modelled from the Soviet socialist realism and which later evolved into the combination of revolutionary realism and revolutionary romanticism, is characterised by a set of rigid and formulaic norms prescribing the literature and art's function and purpose, their content—the subject and theme, and the presentation of their content (ibid). Writers and artists were urged to produce literature and art for the majority of the Chinese population i.e. the workers, peasants and soldiers and to take it as their task to reaffirm the positive socialist reality (i.e. the Party-led revolutionary success and the subsequent successful socialist transformation under the Party's leadership) and transform the population into conforming and contributing socialist subjects desired by the Party. To fulfil this function and task of literature and art, writers and artists were requested to construct positive heroes with behaviours and thoughts for people to emulate by concentrating mainly on the theme of class and class struggle and the efforts and sacrifices made by the Chinese workers, peasants and soldiers during the course of the Party-led socialist revolution and socialist construction (ibid). The instrumental nature of art and literature as a political tool requires the writers and artists to depict heroes in an idealized state and to thus apply the sublime aesthetic style to their depiction of the heroic characters (ibid). The revolutionary and historical themed literary and artistic works during the Maoist era were the end products of the writers and artists' dogmatic adherence to these rigid formulaic rules (ibid). The result of the dogmatic adherence to these rigid formulaic rules, especially the sublimity aesthetics, is the typification of heroes and villains in the stories of these revolutionary and historical themed literary and artistic works produced during the Maoist era (ibid).

The typification involves the application of the perfect hero principle to the construction of heroes. Two figures, first Zhou Yang and later Yao Wenyan, have contributed to the formation of this perfect hero principle. Zhou Yang, the paramount literary arbiter in socialist China, consistently called for the writers and artists to create typical positive heroic characters in their works. Zhou's core view of typical characters contains two main rules (Q. Gong, 2011; W. Su, 2000; D. D.-W. Wang, 2000). The first rule relates to the character development. The backward-to-advanced narrative pattern was

ruled out as being atypical. Instead, heroes should be born perfect and should not go through a growth stage. The second rule relates to the weakness of the heroes which, according to Zhou, can be and should be left out. The typical heroic image proposed by Zhou was advanced to an even higher level of perfection with Yao Wenyuan's formulation of the three prominences theory in November, 1969 as the most important guiding principle for literary and artistic creation during the Cultural Revolution. According to Yao, then chief propagandist, the central heroic characters should possess 'loftiness, greatness and perfection' (*gao da quan*) (Gao & Wu, 2002; Berry, 2004; Q. Gong, 2011). This three prominences principle was applied to a number of theatrical works that later served as the model for artistic works of all different genres. A number of preferred qualities are found to be in the heroes in the novels created during the Cultural Revolution—"In terms of personal background, heroes tend to be young, single, of heroic descent or orphaned, and have military experience; in terms of physical qualities, heroes are normally of 'strong constitution', with 'big and piercing eyes, a vigorous air and an unaffected expression' (...); in terms of ideological qualities, they are conscious of line struggles between socialist roaders and capitalist roaders and display altruism and collectivism; in terms of temperamental and behavioural qualities, they show kindness and magnanimity, honesty, politeness and rebelliousness" (Q. Gong, 2011: p.129). A typical hero created following the three prominences principle is the protagonist Gao Daquan in the novel *Golden Road* [*Jin guang dadao*] written by Hao Ran with the protagonist's name itself literally meaning loftiness, greatness and perfection.

While the heroes in the revolutionary and historical-themed literary and artistic works are depicted as pure perfect born heroes with virtuous qualities, the villains are depicted as the direct extreme opposite of the heroes—ugly, deceitful, ruthless, desperate, and terrified (Q. Gong, 2011; Y. Li, 2006). One typical example is the female bandit leader, Butterfly (*hudie*), in *Tracks in the Snowy Mountain*—one of the popular revolutionary-themed novels created during the 17 year-period after the CPC's founding of the P.R. China in 1949 (*ibid*). She is presented as the bastard child of prostitute, extremely ugly and lascivious (*ibid*).

As a result of the typification requirement, heroes and villains in the revolutionary and historical themed literary and artistic works during the Maoist era were portrayed very much in black-and-white terms—heroes are glorified endowed with exemplary noble virtues and behaviours while villains are demonised endowed with deplorable, evil and hateful traits or behaviours—in more or less the same

way as the main characters are portrayed in such western stories as Ian Fleming's 007 novel series (Eco, 1979) and Hollywood's cold war movies (Shaw, 2007). Such typification puts the characters and their actions in binary oppositions. With characters and their actions being components of these stories, the binary oppositional structure is thus highlighted as the organizing structure for these stories. Most of the similarly-structured stories of the Hollywood cold war movies highlight the oppositional relationships between heroes and villains, and relate these oppositional relationships to the characters' life both in the political/public domain and in the private personal secularized domain (very often with their life in both domains interwoven with each other). Unlike these binary-structured western stories, the binary oppositionally structured literary and artistic works of the Maoist era concentrated overwhelmingly on the oppositional relationships between the main characters in their political/public life along the axis of class and class consciousness—various forms of class struggle including confrontation, conflict and fight, both verbal and physical—to the near exclusion of the characters' life in the private personal secularized domain such as love, familial relations and marriage (Q. Gong 2011; Y. Li, 2006; W. Su, 2000; Tang, 1993; D.D.W. Wang, 2000). These class-based oppositional relationships permeate the whole story. The story starts with class conflicts and ends with class struggle. Class struggle is both the theme of the story and the means of resolving the conflict resulting from class differences. The message intended by such binary-structured revolutionary themed literary and artistic works of Maoist is not difficult to recognize. Heroes deserve to fight against and kill the villains for their just and noble cause of liberating the proletarians from the cruel and inhuman oppression by the villains while the villains deserved to be destroyed for their cruelty and inhumanity committed toward the proletarians. The Communists who have led the heroic fights against the villains should be praised and supported by the Chinese populace while the cruel and inhumane villains including the Nationalists, the bandits and landlords should be condemned and annihilated by the Chinese populace.

Binary structure, as has been applied to the literary and artistic works of the Maoist era, gives an over-simplified depiction of the characters presented in the stories with its clear-cut polarized characterization of the perfect heroes on the one hand and the devilish villains on the other hand. People in actual reality, however, whether those in the past or in the current era, whether those in China or beyond China, are more often than not far more complicated than the black-and-white images depicted by the binary oppositionary structured fictional world. No one in actuality could be judged in black-and-white terms either as totally perfect or as completely bad. Therefore, while it

could help and has the tendency to evoke identification from the audience with the idealized heroes and to instigate strong hatred and condemnation towards the demonized villains from the same audience, oppositional structure may run the risk of failure in such purposes. The idealized heroes may appear too good to be true or realistic and thus fail to attract the identification or emulation from the audience while the demonized villains may likewise appear too devilish to be credible and thus fail to ignite condemnation or strong hatred from the audience. The stories structured by binary oppositions may thus fail to achieve its intended agendas/messages if there are any such agendas/messages.

Binary oppositionary structure, as has been described above, dominated the literary and artistic works of the whole Maoist era as the sole and dominant organizing structure. Its legacy can still be felt well after the Party-initiated reform and open door policy in China since many of the stories covered by cultural works as novels, films and TV dramas up to the late 1980s and mid-1990s still carried traces of binary oppositionary structure with the cultural workers' application of the typification characterization principle—glorification of heroes on the one hand and demonization of villains on the other hand—in the course of their creation of cultural works although reform-related issues and other subjects like familial and ethical issues have come to replace class-struggle of the Maoist era as the main theme and content (Ruan, 1988; L. Shen, 2005; L. Wang et al., 2012; Xu, 2002b).

The Party continues to use stories to communicate messages or agendas desired by the Party in today's post-reform era, but the stories used by the Party at the current post-reform era are different from those in the Maoist era. Themes or subject matters are much more diverse. Take for example the dominant popular form of stories which are now used by the Party for political purposes—TV dramas. There are still revolutionary and historical-themed stories such as MRMHT dramas, red classic adaptations, legendary-style revolutionary dramas and spy serials, but these stories constitute only some part of the bulk of stories highly endorsed by the Party. The Party-endorsed TV dramas are not confined to the revolutionary and historical themed subjects. Other subject matters covered by the Party-endorsed TV dramas include the various Party-initiated social reforms in contemporary China (medical reforms in the city by *the Doctors*, rural reforms by *Xi Gengtian's Story*, and family business upgrading and transformation by *Shiwan renjia*), familial history (covered by family sagas such as the *Qiao the Courtyard* and *Journey to the Northeast*), familial life (by FEI

dramas such as *My family Tree*, *Golden Wedding* and *Beautiful Daughter-in-laws*) and personal growth of the young people (by *Soldier Sortie* and *My Youth Who Calls the Shot*).

Not only have the subject matters of the stories used today by the Party changed but the way today's stories are organized has also changed. Today's stories are no longer organized by binary oppositional structure, as were their counterparts in the Maoist era. They are organized rather differently—by what I call a network pattern. The subsequent section describes how today's stories are connected by such a network pattern by focusing on one of the most popular forms of stories used by the Party for political purposes—TV dramas.

5.3 Network Pattern in the Stories of the Post-reform Era

With the characters and their narrative actions in the stories being connected by binary oppositional structure, the revolutionary and historical themed literary and artistic works of the Maoist era highlight the oppositional relationships between the main characters—between heroes and the villains. My case study of the five top Feitian Award-winning TV dramas in the current post-reform era has demonstrated a very different picture with regard to the relationships among the characters involved in the stories presented by the dramas. Though conflicts of one kind or another still constitute part of the stories and thus oppositions in one form or another among the characters inevitably exist in the stories, far more diverse relationships, including but not confining to oppositional relationships among the characters are presented by these case-studied top Feitian Award-winning dramas.

Take for example the case-studied legendary style revolutionary themed drama—the Road We Have Taken. The 50-episode drama is a story mainly about the different roads taken by the three children of the Yang family during the 25-year-long revolutionary history in China between 1925 and 1949—Yang Liren, Yang Lihua and Yang Liqing. Liren, the eldest son of Yang Tinghe, is the right wing senior officer in the Nationalist Party (or the KMT). Lihua, Yang's elder daughter, is a left wing democrat in the KMT. Liqing, Yang's youngest son, first joins the Whampoa Military Academy (WMA) but later becomes a CPC member after his disillusion with the KMT. Besides the three children of the Yang family, the drama also presents other characters including the two children of Qu family—Qu En and Qu Xia; Dong Jianchang (Lihua's lover and Liqing's quasi-brother-in-law); Chu Cai (Liren's friend and classmate); Liqing's Whampoa classmates Fan Xiliang, Wu Rong and Tang Muyu; Liqing's CPC colleague and WMA classmate Mu Zhengfang; Liqing's wife Lin Er (also Qu En's

former wife). Liqing, Liren, Lihua, Qu En, Qu Xia, Dong Jianchang, Fan Xiliang and Lin Er are the main characters of the drama with Liqing being the core character among them.

The drama consists of four main parts: the 1st KMT-CPC cooperation between 1924 and 1927, the subsequent 10-year civil war between the KMT-CPC, the 2nd KMT-CPC cooperation during 8-year anti-Japanese war between 1937 and 1945, and the 3-year civil war between the two parties between 1946 and 1949. The experience of these fictional characters is carried out against the backdrop of some actual historical events depicted by each of these four main parts. Highlighted in the events throughout the drama are the narrative actions/functions of these fictional characters and the interpersonal relationships among these characters established through their interaction with one another. Through the depiction of these historical events and the interpersonal relationships in these events, the drama integrates the grand narrative of China's national historical development and the micro-narratives of individual development, pushing the national narrative to the background and foregrounding the individual narratives. While the back-grounded national narrative is structured around the bipartisan cooperation (in the establishment of the WMA, in the Eastern and Northern Campaign against the different warlords, and in the war of resistance against the Japanese aggression) and the bipartisan confrontation (the civil wars between the two parties), the foregrounded individual narratives are structured around a network pattern, presenting a network of interweaving and interlocking interpersonal relationships among the above mentioned characters. As conflicts still constitute an important part of this revolutionary-themed drama, oppositions of different forms such as, fighting, confrontation and hostility inevitably exist among the characters involved (e.g. the confrontation between the communist Liqing and his Nationalist brother Liren in Shanghai during the first KMT-CPC civil war, the confrontation between Liqing and his Nationalist WMA alumni Fan Xiliang during the first KMT-CPC civil war). The opposition among the characters, however, is more than pure opposition alone, involving love, appreciation, fraternity, kinship, gratitude or other forms of non-oppositional relationships. Also presented by the drama are other non-oppositional relationships. They include Fan Yan's supportive relationship toward Qu Mother shown through her efforts to help protect Lin Er's premature baby from being discovered in the hospital by the searching Nationalists and through her efforts to ask Lihua to protect the baby at Qu Mother's request. Also included is Old Yang's benevolent relationship toward the communist Qu En by sheltering him from the KMT's exhaustive pursuit of him during the anti-CPC coup, Old Yang's affectionate love toward his three children and the latter's filial respect for him. Then comes Li Hua's friendship toward Qu Xia despite

their political differences by trying to stop the latter from being extradited to the KMT regime after the latter's arrest in the British foreign concession and, when she fails to do so because of her brother Liren's intervention, by continuing to help Qu Xia by reducing Qu Xia's death sentence into life imprisonment. There are still other types of non-oppositional relationships such as Li Er's grateful relationship toward Lihua for the latter's adopting and raising her son-Feiming by not taking Feiming back from the latter. In this drama, the characters are connected with one another in various ways depending on their different social roles (ranging from colleagues, classmates, friends, familial members, partners to opponents). With revolutionary work relations interwoven with love, familial relation, friendship, fraternity and other types of personal relations, the drama presents a network of sophisticated interweaving relationships.

An event typifying such a network of interlocking and interweaving relationship is Liqing's assignment to Chongqing City by the CPC leadership towards the end of the Anti-Japanese War (i.e. also upon the imminent second civil war between the KMT and CPC) to get married and work with Lin Er. Liqing's main job in Chongqing is to protect from being discovered by Liren-headed KMT Intelligence Agency the CPC's undercover intelligence source which has infiltrated into the KMT's Xi'an senior intelligence agency and with whose timely intelligence service the CPC leadership has halted the KMT's plan to raid the CPC's headquarters in Yan'an. This event covers Liqing, Lin Er, Liren, Lihua, Old Yang, Aunt Mei, Feiming (Lin Er and Qu En's son), and Qiuqiu (old Yang's youngest daughter) and presents a network of sophisticated or complex relationships among them. A glance at what has happened among these characters by and until the time Liqing marries Lin Er will help to work out this network of sophisticated relationships among them.

Before Lin Er's marrying into the Yang family, the relationship between Lin Er and the Yang family is already a sophisticated one. When Lin Er was young, she had been severely wounded by Liqing on the neck by accident during her brief stay in Yang's family when Liqing played with a gun without his knowledge of the gun being loaded. It was Liren who immediately rushed her to the hospital and thus saved her life. During the first KMT-CPC civil war, Lin Er worked underground in Shanghai as Qu En's assistant after Qu Xia's arrest by Liren and later got married to Qu En. At the same time, Lin Er worked as Liren's subordinate without the latter's knowledge of her CPC identity. Liren was attracted to Lin Er and was kind to and trustful of her especially after knowing Lin Er is the girl whom Liqing had accidentally wounded and whom he himself had saved. Upon her premature delivery, Liren

rushed Lin Er to the hospital and saved her for the second time. But immediately after the exposure of Lin Er's CPC identity due to one senior CPC leader Gu Shunzhang's turning renegade to the KMT, Liren ordered the arrest of Lin Er right away. For the sake of their safety, Lin Er and Qu En had to leave Shanghai for the Jiangxi Soviet revolutionary base, leaving their premature baby behind. Lihua later adopted the baby, Feiming and raised the baby as her own son. The Yang family all treat Feiming well, with Old Yang and Aunt Mei treating Feiming as their own grandson while Liren treating Feiming as his own nephew. During the KMT's fifth anti-CPC encirclement campaign, the CPC suffered great losses and consequently the CPC central forces and the Central Committee had to retreat westward to the Northwest of China for survival. Qu En, who was left behind to fight a guerrilla war against the massive pursuing KMT forces to provide cover for the CPC's westward movement, was captured by the KMT forces and executed by Liren under the KMT supreme leader Jiang Kai-shek's command not long after his capture due to Qu En's refusal to submit himself to the KMT. Since the outbreak of China's anti-Japanese war, the KMT and the CPC cooperated with each other to fight against the Japanese invasion. With this second KMT-CPC cooperation, the Nationalists and the communists, who had been fighting with each other for almost 10 years, have to work together. Lin Er and Liren belonging to two political parties respectively are no exception. With Lin Er's marriage with Liqing, Lin Er becomes a member of the Yang family, further complicating her relationship with the Yang family and complicating the relationships presented in the event of Liqing and Lin Er's marriage ceremony at Old Yang's home.

In this event, the relationship between Liqing and Liren is a complicated one. It is oppositional since they are working against each other for two different political parties. Liqing's getting married with Lin Er at Chongqing is to provide cover for his main job of working with Lin Er to prevent Liren-headed KMT Intelligence system from finding out the undercover CPC intelligence source within the KMT senior intelligence system in Xi'an while Liren's main job is to dig out this undercover CPC intelligence source within the KMT intelligence system. Besides their political differences, emotional relations pit the two brothers against one another. Liren's arrest of Qu Xia whom Liqing deeply loves has destroyed Liqing's personal happiness while Liqing's marrying Lin Er whom Liren loves makes Liqing his own brother's rival in love. Thus the two brothers are opponents both politically and emotionally. Moreover, the relationship between Liqing and Liren is also a cooperative one as the two brothers are still working together against the Japanese invasion. In addition, the two brothers are connected by kinship, showing genuine brotherhood toward each other. Although Liren feels

frustrated for Liqing's marrying Lin Er whom Li Ren loves, he bears no grudge toward Liqing and wishes his brother genuine happiness with his marriage. Knowing Liqing and Lin Er being among the top list monitored by the KMT Intelligence Agency, Liren stays at Old Yang's home on the night of Liqing's marriage with Lin Er to prevent the monitoring KMT agents from disturbing the newly-married couple so as for them to have an undisturbed happy evening together while Liqing himself talks sincerely to his brother Liren about his complex feeling towards Lin Er with their marriage. With Liqing and Liren being brothers, partners working together against the Japanese invasion as well as opponents working for the CPC and the KMT respectively, Liqing and Liren's relationship is a mixture of kinship, partnership and opposition and thus they are connected by kinship, cooperation and opposition.

Liqing and Lin Er's relationship is also a sophisticated one. As CPC colleagues, the relationship between Liqing and Lin Er is a cooperative one with both working together to divert Liren's attention away from Xi'an's undercover CPC intelligence source so as to protect this intelligence source from being discovered. As colleagues, Liqing and Lin Er are also connected by camaraderie for their mutual trust and friendship. As the student of Lin Er's deceased husband Qu En who Liqing himself greatly respects, Liqing holds a respectful and sincere relationship toward Lin Er, asking for Lin Er's consent to hold a formal marriage ceremony at his father Old Yang's Chongqing home and being frank with Lin Er about his motivation for marrying her—which is to take care of her for the rest of her life after Qu En's death. Liqing's relationship toward Lin Er also involves compassion since his marriage with Lin Er is not out of love but out of compassion for at the moment of his marrying Lin Er he still loves Lin Er's sister-in-law Qu Xia who has then married Mu Zhenfang his former WMA classmate and also his senior. Upon Lin Er's revealing herself to be the little girl who he had seriously wounded accidentally during her brief stay at the Yang family, Liqing feels guilty. As a result, Liqing's relationship towards Lin Er is a complex one involving a mixture of cooperation, respect, sincerity, compassion and guilt.

Lin Er's relationship towards Liqing is also a complex one. As Liqing's CPC colleague, Li Er trusts, is friendly to and cooperates with Liqing and thus her relationship toward him is one that involves cooperation and camaraderie. When Liqing tells her sincerely about his marrying her not out of love but out of a desire to take care of her, Lin Er feels pain and hurt although she bears no grudge towards Liqing for his doing so and upon marriage with Liqing, Lin Er holds kinship love towards

Liqing for Lin Er herself still loves Qu En. Thus Lin Er's relationship towards Liqing is one involving camaraderie, cooperation and kinship love.

The relationship between Lin Er and Liren is also sophisticated. Lin Er holds a mixture of gratitude, hostility, cooperation, respect and appreciation towards Liren for the latter's saving her twice, killing her husband Qu En, arresting her sister-in-law Qu Xia, being partners in fighting against the Japanese invasion, treating her son Feiming well as his own nephew and for the latter's being her brother-in-law. Liren's relationship toward Lin Er is that of love, opposition, cooperation and appreciation for his love for the latter, for the latter's working for the CPC, for his cooperating with the latter to fight against the Japanese invaders, and for his appreciating the latter's extraordinary ability in intelligence work.

The relationship between Lin Er and Lihua is also a sophisticated one especially after Lin Er's marriage with Liqing. Lin Er is the ex-wife of Qu En whom Lihua deeply loves, the mother of her adopted son Feiming, and her sister-in-law. Though Lihua holds no grudge towards Lin Er for Qu En's marrying the latter, she still feels pain, unease and embarrassment with the latter being Qu En's wife. While Lihua is grateful to the latter for leaving Feiming into her care and appreciates Lin Er's courage for agreeing to hold the marriage ceremony at Old Yang's home, she is extremely anxious that the latter will take back Feiming who has become so dear to her. For Lin Er's part, though she herself holds no grudge towards Lihua for the latter's brother Liren's killing her husband and arresting her sister-in-law Qu Xia and is grateful to the latter for adopting and raising her son Feiming, the mere fact of Lihua being Liren's sister reminds her of Liren who has killed her husband Qu En and arouses within herself the eternal pain of losing Qu En.

The relationship between Lin Er and Old Yang and Aunt Mei is also sophisticated. Lin Er holds a mixture of gratitude and respect toward Old Yang and Aunt Mei for their treating Feiming as their own grandson and for their accepting her as Liqing's wife. Old Yang and Aunt Mei holds a mixture of appreciation, understanding and kinship love toward Lin Er for the latter's being Liqing's wife despite the latter's traumatic experience resulting first from Liqing's accidental but almost fatal physical injury to her and later from Liren's killing her ex-husband Qu En.

The relationship between Lihua and Liren is also sophisticated. Lihua holds a kinship love for her brother Liren but at the same shows dislike, contempt and hostility towards him for his cruelty towards the CPC members, especially his killing her beloved communist Qu En and his arrest of her

best friend communist Qu Xia. Liren always shows brotherly love for Lihua though sometimes in a way Lihua finds unacceptable.

The relationship between Old Yang, his wife Mei and his three children is that of kinship love—with Lihua, Liren and Liqing showing filial respect for Old Yang and his wife while Old Yang and his wife showing affectionate parental love for the three children. Upon knowledge of Liqing's coming to Chongqing to get married with Lin Er, Liren requests Liqing to hold a formal wedding ceremony at Old Yang's home to make Old Yang happy despite the fact that Liren himself also loves Lin Er. To show filial respect for his father whom he has not seen for almost ten years, Liqing accepts his brother's request. At the family dinner for the wedding ceremony, Liqing urges his father to continue and listens attentively to his retelling of his experience in Japan by which he attempts to unite his three children and his daughter-in-law with his national-familial solidarity theory, although Liren and Lihua, too familiar with their father's Japanese experience, impatiently ask him to stop his retelling. Lin Er for her part gives her consent to Liqing to hold a formal wedding ceremony at Old Yang's home to show her respect for Old Yang who has been kind to her ex-husband Qu En and has been treating her son Feiming as his own grandson despite the fact that she needs to meet Liren who has killed Qu En. At dinner, Liqing, Liren, and Lihua put aside their political differences while Lin Er holds back her hostility toward Liren for his killing Qu En and affirms Liren's remark that he and she have been cooperating well with each other in the intelligence work against the Japanese invasion.

To sum up, the event in which Liqing gets married and works in Chongqing presents the following relationships:

- ✚ the oppositional-cooperative-kinship relationship between Liren and Liqing,
- ✚ Liqing's respectful, sincere, compassionate, guilty relationship toward Lin Er;
- ✚ Lin Er's grateful, sincere and understanding relationship toward Liqing;
- ✚ the respectful relationship by Liqing, Liren and Lihua toward their father;
- ✚ Li Er's respectful and grateful relationship toward Old Yang,
- ✚ Lin Er's respectful and grateful relationship toward Lihua,
- ✚ Liqing's kinship love toward Lihua,
- ✚ Lihua's kinship love toward her two brothers,
- ✚ Li Er's oppositional-cooperative-grateful relationship toward Liren;
- ✚ Liren's oppositional-cooperative-appreciative relationship toward Lin Er.

As can be seen, these relationships are far more complex and diverse than the oppositional relationships presented by the binary opposition-structured revolutionary and historical themed literary and artistic works of the Maoist era, including but going beyond oppositional relationships. With these relationships interwoven and interlocked with one another, the event demonstrates a

network of sophisticated interlocking relationships among the characters which involve opposition, cooperation, kinship, compassion, gratitude, appreciation. As such, the characters involved in the event are connected by a network pattern whereby the relationships among the characters involve but are not necessarily confined to opposition. In other words, the characters are connected by a network pattern rather than a binary oppositional structure. Other events in the drama are also structured by a network pattern with the network of relationships presented varied depending on the events covered. With Liqing being the core character throughout most of the drama, the network pattern highlights the relationships Liqing establishes with other characters at different events though it also covers the relationships other characters establish with one another. Overall, *The Road We Have Taken* presents through a network pattern a network of relationships centred around Liqing: his relationships with his natal family including his father Old Yang, his step-mother-and-aunt Mei, his brother Liren, his sister Lihua, with his WMA classmates, with Qu family including Qu En, Qu Xia and Mother Qu, with his quasi-brother-in-law Dong Jianchang, with Bai Fenglan who heads the militia of farmers in Qinghua Mountain Village, with his CPC leadership, with his CPC colleagues, with the Soviet Red Army Captain Kawolov at Manchuria (Northeast of China), and with the Japanese ammunition technicians.

Other top Feitian Award-winning TV dramas are also connected by a network pattern and presents a network of relationships more or less sophisticated than those presented by *The Road We Have Taken*.

Yan'an Song presents a network of relationship centred on Mao Zedong, including

- ✚ Mao's initially oppositional and subsequently oppositional-cooperative relationship with his opponent, Generalissimo Chiang Kaishek (the KMT's supreme leader)
- ✚ Mao's initially oppositional but subsequently cooperative relationship with such KMT's generals as Zhang Xueliang, Yang Hucheng and Wei Lihuang,
- ✚ Mao's cooperative, respectful and fraternal relationship with his closest CPC associates including Zhou Enlai, Liu Shaoqi, and Zhu De;
- ✚ Mao's respectful and tolerant relationship with his dissenting fellow CPC colleagues such as Zhang Guotao and Wang Ming and with his subordinate commanders such as Lin Biao, Xu Shiyong and Wang Kegong;
- ✚ Mao's compassionate and supportive relationship toward ordinary people such as Liu Zhidan's sworn mother;
- ✚ Mao's affectionate relationship toward his second wife He Zizhen;
- ✚ Mao's supportive and friendly relationship towards foreign journalists including Edgar Snow, Agnes Smedley and Snow's wife Helen Snow;
- ✚ Mao's humble, friendly and supportive relationship with the enlightened gentry Mr Li Ding Ming;
- ✚ Mao's humble, friendly and respectful relationship toward with the overseas Chinese such as Mr Cheng Jiageng;

- ✦ Mao's supportive relationship toward the intelligentsia including Ding Ling etc.

The Beautiful Daughter-in-laws presents a network of relationships around Doudou, including

- ✦ Doudou's sincere, honest and supportive relationship towards her husband Yu Wei who is equally sincere and supportive toward her,
- ✦ Doudou's unilateral understanding, compassionate and tolerant relationship towards her fault-finding mother-in-law Cao Xinmei,
- ✦ Doudou's respectful relationship towards her parents who affectionately love and support her,
- ✦ Doudou's sincere and protective relationship toward her sister-in-law Meili, who holds a sincere and trustful relationship toward her,
- ✦ Doudou's oppositional-affectionate relationship toward her brother Mao Feng,
- ✦ Doudou's respectful relationship toward Yu Wei's step-parents-in-laws,
- ✦ Doudou's mostly unilateral understanding, compassionate, considerate and tolerant relationship towards her sister-in-law Yu Hao who most of the time is hostile toward her.

The Soldier Sortie presents a network of relationships around Xu Sanduo, including

- ✦ Xu's overwhelmingly positive relationship toward his fellow soldiers and his commanders despite the latter's initial hostility and contempt toward him (e.g. Xu's appreciative relationship toward Cheng Cai, Xu's brotherly, fraternal, respectful and grateful relationship toward Shi Jin, Xu's fraternal relationship toward Wu Liuyi during the last moment of the qualification test for A Squad, and Xu's respectful and grateful relationship toward Yuan Lang);
- ✦ the positive relationship toward Xu by Lao Ma, Shi Jin, Gao Cheng and Yuan Lang (e.g. Shi Jin's compassionate and self-sacrificing supportive relationship toward Xu; Yuan Lang's appreciative and supportive relationship toward Xu; Lao Ma's compassionate, appreciative and supportive relationship toward Xu);
- ✦ the initially brief negative but later positive relationship toward Xu by most of his fellow soldiers (e.g. Wu Liuyi and Gao Cheng's hostile, contemptuous and rejective relationship toward Xu before their eventual acceptance of Xu and their eventual appreciative and supportive relationship toward Xu);
- ✦ the seemingly negative but actually fraternal relationship toward Xu by some of his fellow soldiers and commanders (e.g. Yuan Lang's ostensibly abusive but actually fraternal relationship toward Xu and other trainee soldiers during the tough inhumane A Squad training; Shi Jin's angry but fraternal relationship toward Xu during one tank maintenance task);
- ✦ Xu's occasional negative relationship toward his hometown fellow and friend Cheng Cai (e.g. Xu's scolding relationship toward Cheng Cai for the latter's abandoning the severely wounded Wu Liuyi during the last moment of the qualification test for A Squad and Xu's scolding relationship toward Cheng Cai for the latter's reluctance to stop Tuo Yonggang from challenging Yuan Lang to shoot within poor visibility).

Xi Gengtian's Story presents a network of relationship around Xi Gengtian, including

- ✦ Xi's various relationships with his family (his wife Xiulan, his son Qingshan, his daughter Qingmei, his brother Erhu , Qingmei's first boyfriend Technician Liu and second boyfriend Wensheng),
- ✦ Xi's relationship with people outside his family in the village (including Sangui, Qingshan's girlfriend Gaihua, Gaihua's mother Mai Cuilian, Mother Wang, Ling'ai, Chouwa)
- ✦ Xi's various relationships with party leaders from outside the village such as Country head Mr Niu.

In the above mentioned five case-studied top Feitian award-winning TV dramas, as in other top Feitian Award-winning TV dramas, the network of relationships presented include but are not confined to oppositional relationships. When there are oppositional relationships in such revolutionary themed dramas as *Yan'an Song and The Road We Have Taken*, very often these relationships are not pure oppositional ones but rather are interwoven with other relationships such as love, friendship, and fraternity. In some TV dramas such as *Solider Sortie and Beautiful Daughter-in-laws*, the oppositional relationship is most often not of mutual one between two characters but of one direction with one character holding oppositional relationship toward the other while the other showing non-oppositional relationship such as tolerant relationship in return. Also, the relationship among characters is not fixed but in a process of changing. In addition, the relationships among the characters tend to centre on a core character.

As a result, network-patterned stories present far more diverse, complex and subtle relationships than binary oppositionally structured stories. If we categorize the aforementioned various relationships other than oppositional relationships as non-oppositional relationships, we find that a network pattern can present at least four main categories of relationships:

- ✚ **mutually oppositional relationships between the characters** (such as the confrontation between Xi Gengtian and his fellow villager Sangui in the Sand-digging Episode in *Xi Gengtian's Story*. In this episode Sangui argues and fights with Xi upon the former's false suspicion that the latter has reported the former's misuse of the contracted arable land for a sand-digging project to the county government and that the latter's reporting act has brought country head Mr Niu to stop his sand-digging project);
- ✚ **uni-dimensional oppositional relationship from one character toward another and non-oppositional relationship from the latter to the former or vice versa**(such as Doudou's mother-in-law Cao Xinmei's fault-finding relationship toward Doudou and Doudou's understanding, compassionate and tolerant relationship toward Cao in *Beautiful Daughter-in-laws*, and Xu Sanduo's good-naturedness toward his fellow soldiers and his commanders despite the latter's hostility and contempt toward him at the beginning of his experience in the army in *Soldier Sortie*);
- ✚ **mutually non-oppositional relationships between characters** (such as the cooperative relationships between Xi Gengtian and Sangui in their efforts to establish an economic cooperative in Xijia village, and the cooperative relationship among Doudou, Yu Wei and Yu Hao in their efforts to make Yu Wei and Yu Hao's step-father Yang Shu happy during his remaining days upon their knowledge of Yang's getting a terminal cancer and without telling Yang Shu his illness);
- ✚ **interwoven or mixture category relationships**—the first category relationship interwoven with the second category; the second category interwoven with the third category; the third category interwoven with the first; or the interweaving of all three category relationships— (such as those shown those shown in the episode of Liqing's-Coming-to-Work-&-Get-married-at-Chongqing in *The Road We Have Taken*).

These above four relationships especially the last category of interwoven or mixture-typed interpersonal relationships among the characters contrast sharply with the one and sole main

category of interpersonal relationships which binary oppositionally-structured stories highlight—various mutually oppositional interpersonal relationships between characters (such as fighting, argument, and confrontation) which at some time relate to the characters' political /public life, at some other time relate to the characters' private personal secularized life concerns (such as love, marriage and familial relationships) and very often relate to both with the characters' political/public life interwoven with their private personal life concerns. Whatever aspect of the characters' life was covered by the binary oppositionally structured stories, whether their political/public life, their personal private life or the public life interwoven with the private life, the binary oppositional structure inevitably dehumanizes both heroes and villains because heroes were idealized to such an extent that they appear as larger-than-life figures while villains were demonized to such an extent that they appear as paper-thin monsters—both heroes and villains end up being not like human beings at all but like cartoonish figures. The literary and artistic works of the Maoist era were highly politicized (and to some extent extreme cases of) binary oppositionally structured stories in that these stories concentrated solely on the characters' political life by organizing this life into direct opposition along the axis of class and class consciousness to the exclusion of their normal secularized concerns such as love, familial relations, marriage and other personal concerns. The network patterned top Feitian Award winning TV dramas with its presentation of a minimum of the aforementioned four categories of relationships cover not only the public/political life but the also the private personal secularized life concerns of both heroes and of villains giving a realistic lifelike picture of both heroes and villains as ordinary human beings.

Thus, unlike the binary oppositionary structure in the highly politicized literary and artistic works of the Maoist era which highlight the binary oppositional relationships between the characters in the political/public domain, the network pattern in the top Feitian Award winning TV dramas with its presentation of a minimum of the aforementioned four main categories of interpersonal relationships, particularly the last category of interwoven/mixture-typed relationships, not only helps to bring and brings about diversity, complexity and subtlety of interpersonal relationships established among the characters but also helps to bring and brings about diversity, complexity and subtlety of the characters' life.

Not only does a network pattern help bring about diversity, complexity and subtlety of the relationships among the characters covered and of the characters' life but it also contributes to the

diversity, complexity and subtlety of characterization in network-patterned stories. The diverse and complex relationships presented by a network pattern have changed the traditional sense of heroes and of villains created by binary-oppositionally-structured stories. In the binary-oppositionally structured stories, characters are posed against one another into two extremes. They are depicted in black-and-white terms either as perfect heroes or devilish villains, as has been shown by the binary-oppositionally-structured literary and artistic works of the Maoist era. This is not necessarily the case with the characters covered by network-patterned top Feitian Award-winning TV dramas under study. Totally perfect or totally devilish characters are very rare.

On the one hand, heroes in these network-patterned stories are no longer portrayed as born perfect heroes but are like ordinary human beings, either having weaknesses/flaws or having problems which they cannot solve. In *The Road We Have Taken*, Liren's contemptuous relationship toward his brother Liqing and Old Yang's abusive relationship toward his son Liqing (by beating him with his military stick) due to the latter's being idle and naughty shows that Liqing is not a perfect hero but with weaknesses—idleness and naughtiness. Liqing's defying and challenging relationship toward his brother and his father by his subsequent entering the WMA also shows that Liqing is not a born hero since his joining the WMA is not motivated by communist-consciousness to work for the majority of Chinese people and to fight for the liberation of China but by his personal desire to prove to his brother and his father that he is also a man of ability. Liqing's imperfection is also shown by his being emotional—by his hostile relationship toward his CPC senior and his former WMA classmate Mu Zhengfang upon his accidental knowledge of Mu's marriage with Qu Xia whom he loves deeply. The transformation of the initial contemptuous relationship by Liren and Old Yang into their later appreciative relationship toward Liqing after Liqing's joining the CPC shows that Liqing's development from an idle naughty youth into a hero is not straightforward but has undergone a developmental process. This reaffirms that Liqing is not a born hero.

Mao Zedong in *Yan'an Song* is shown to be stubborn with his indifferent and threatening relationship toward his personal life secretary Xiao Li when Mao insists on writing the Protracted War, ignores Xiao Li's request of him to eat the food which has been reheated for him several times, and even threatens to dismiss Xiao Li when urged by the anxious Xiao Li to eat the food. Mao's gradually estranged and worsening relationship with his second wife, He Zizhen, which eventually results in Mao's breakup with He and the end of their marriage, shows Mao to be an ordinary man who has a

family problem which he himself cannot solve. Besides showing his readiness to admit the mistakes incurred by him, Mao's apologizing relationship toward those wrongly persecuted in the excesses of Mao-initiated Yan'an Rectification Campaign suggests that Mao, as the competent CPC top leadership, is not perfect but like ordinary human beings who make mistakes.

The indifferent and contemptuous relationship toward Xu Sanduo by his fellow soldiers during Xu's recruit training, the indifferent and contemptuous relationship towards Xu Sanduo by his fellow soldiers at the very beginning of his stay at the 5th squad of the 2nd platoon of the 3rd company, the contemptuous relationship towards Xu Sanduo by most of Xu's fellow soldiers at the very beginning of Xu Sanduo's arrival at the 7th Steel Company, Shi Jin's and Lao Ma's compassionate and supportive relationship toward Xu Sanduo in *Solider Sortie* all demonstrate that the hero Xu Sanduo is not a born perfect but an ordinary hero with such weaknesses as clumsiness, slowness in learning and lack of worldliness. These relationships result from Xu's being clumsy, slow and clueless.

Xi Gengtian in *Xi Gengtian's Story* is shown to be a man of imperfection. Xi is shown as a cunning man by his deceptive relationship toward Jiu Xian in tricking the latter to be reluctantly kind to her mother-in-law and by his mischievous relationship toward the fodder company representative in tricking the latter with a false bracelet into paying the promised compensation. Xi is also shown as a domineering patriarchal father by his critical and disapproving relationship toward his son Qingshan with regard to the latter's relation with Gaihua because of his dislike of Gaihua's annoying and meddling mother Ma Cuilian.

On the other hand, villains are no longer presented as unpardonable devilish demons but as ordinary human beings imbued with such human virtues as having filial piety for the elderly or having kinship love for his/her siblings. The oppositional-cooperative-brotherly relationship between Nationalist Liren and communist Liqing in *The Road We Have Taken* shows Liren to be a man who is loyal to his political belief, is patriotic and holds deep affection toward his brother Liqing. Liren's respectful relationship toward his father Old Yang and his affectionate relationship toward his brother Liqing, his sister Lihua and his youngest sister Liqiu show that Liren is a man who holds filial respect for his father and who loves his brother and sisters although he has helped kill a lot of communists including communist Qu En whom his sister Lihua deeply loves and whom he himself appreciates, and has arrested communist Qu Xia whom he himself loves and whom his brother Liqing deeply loves. Also when the villain characters are doing something villainous, they are given a sympathetic portrayal.

Cao Xinmei's eccentrically picky relationship toward her daughter-in-law Mao Doudou in *Beautiful Daughter-in-laws* is depicted as understandable for her picky behaviour towards Doudou results from her two unpleasant marriages. First was with Yu Wei's father and later with her current husband Yang Shu. Yu Wei's sister Yu Hao's (Mao Doudou's sister-in-law) hostile relationship toward Doudou is depicted as understandable and sympathetic, partly due to the misunderstanding resulting from the first unpleasant meeting between them and partly due to Yu Hao's having not yet recovered from her traumatic suffering from losing her husband immediately after her marriage.

In other words, the network of diverse and complex relationships presented by a network pattern has endowed the supposed villains with various human virtues and the supposed heroes with various weakness or villainous acts. As a result, characters in network-patterned stories including both heroes and villains are portrayed in a more complex and subtle way which contrasts sharply with the back-and-white-mode depiction of characters in the binary-structured stories such as the previously discussed stories of the literary and artistic works of the Maoist era. Hence, a network pattern results in a diverse, complex and subtle characterization in network-patterned stories.

Due to the diversity, complexity and subtlety of relationships among the characters covered by the network-patterned stories and the diversity, complexity and subtlety of characterization in the stories, the meanings intended by the network-patterned stories are conveyed /constructed in a way different from those by binary-oppositionally-structured stories. The meanings/messages of the binary-structured stories are conveyed in a rather crude, explicit and straight-forward way through the glorification of heroes on the one side and the demonization of villains on the other. With such polarized characterization, it is not difficult to recognize or work out the meaning or message intended by binary-oppositionally-structured stories. One simply needs to examine the polarized characters, their actions, the consequences of these actions and how these actions are depicted, say positively or negatively. With regard to network-patterned stories, it is a more challenging job to figure out the meaning/message intended by such stories since characters in network-patterned stories are connected in a way more complex than those in binary-oppositionally-structured ones. Characters in network-patterned stories, as my case-studied Feitian-award winning TV dramas have shown, can be connected with one another in at least four different ways— binary-opposition, uni-dimensionally-opposition-and-non-opposition, mutually non-opposition, and a mixture of or among all the preceding three types. Each of the four types of relationships among the characters

highlights different things and thus represents different meanings. The confrontation between Nationalist Liren and communist Liqing in Shanghai during the first KMT-CPC civil war, for example, shows that the two brothers are working for and fighting against each other for their different political beliefs—with Liren for the KMT's Three-People-Principles and Liqing for the CCP's communism. In the previously discussed episode of Liqing's Coming to Chongqing to Work and to Get Married, the network of complex relationships among the characters involved tells really complex meanings. Highlighted between Liqing and Liren is a mixture of many things, including their fighting with each other for their different political beliefs, their cooperation with each other for the sake of safeguarding their country, their mutual genuine brotherhood and their filial respect for their father Old Yang. Between Liqing and Lin Er is also a mixture of many things—Liqing's cooperation, sincerity, respect, compassion, and a sense of guilt toward Lin Er and Lin Er's camaraderie, cooperation and kinship love toward Liqing. Between Lin Er and Liqing's father and step-mother is also a mixture of meanings—Lin Er's gratitude and filial piety toward the latter and the latter's appreciation and kinship love toward Lin Er. The more complex the interpersonal relationships among the characters, the more complex the meanings these relationships represent.

Unlike the binary oppositional structure, which highlights the oppositional relationships between the characters in the stories and thus the meaning represented by such oppositional relationships, the network pattern highlights a network of far more diverse and far more complex relationships among the characters, particularly those the core character establishes with other characters and the complexity of meaning conveyed by such relationships (i.e. the various qualities or virtues embodied by the various characters, especially those by the core character, which will be explained in detail in the next chapter which covers the cultural frames underlying the network of relationships presented).

Given such complex relationships resulting from the network pattern being the organizing structure for the characters and their actions and the equally complex meanings resulting from such complex relationships, the network pattern thus also brings about diversity, complexity and subtlety of meanings/messages in the network-patterned stories.

The network pattern, which structures each of the individual events presented by the drama, also applies to the whole drama beyond the micro-event level. At the story level as a whole, each of the top Feitian award-winning TV drama is a multi-narrative organized around a core narrative. Take *Soldier Sortie* for example. First of all, the drama presents a story of more than one character,

including Xu Sandou, Cheng Cai, Shi Jin, Gao Cheng, Lao Ma, Yuan Lang and Wu Zhe etc. In this sense the story is a multi-narrative. Second, this multi-narrative is organized around a centre. Among all the narratives presented by the drama, Xu Sanduo's experience in the army stands out as the core narrative while experiences of other characters in the army are presented as closely related to and revolving around Xu's experience. Xu Sanduo's narrative runs from the very beginning to the very end of the drama. Other narratives appear in the story from time to time. Some narratives such as Lao Ma's, Lao Wei's, Xue Ling, Liu Meng's end earlier while some narratives such as Yuan Lang's and Wu Zhe's mainly appear in the later part of the drama—the events taking place in the A Squad. Whenever these narratives appear, they are closely related to Xu Sanduo's. As a result of this network pattern, the whole drama is a network narrative organized around Xu Sanduo. Similarly, the other four case-studied TV dramas are also of a network narrative: *The Road We Have Taken* is a network narrative organized around Liqing; *Beautiful Daughter-in-laws* is a network narrative organized around Mao Doudou; *Yan'an Song* is a network narrative organized around Mao Zedong; and *Xi Gengtian's Story* is a network narrative organized around Xi Gengtian. The other Feitian Award winning TV dramas are also of a network narrative. Through such a network narrative, the stories of these award winning TV dramas highlight the core character's narrative (e.g. Xu Sanduo in the *Soldier Sortie*) as the core narrative and thus the qualities/virtues/meanings embodied by this core narrative (e.g. Xu Sanduo's narrative) while other narratives and the qualities embodied through these narratives are presented to reinforce, run parallel to, be neutral to or be in contrast with the core narrative (e.g. Sanduo's narrative) and the qualities/meanings embodied by the core narrative (e.g. Xu Sanduo's narrative). Similar to the network pattern which has brought about diversity, complexity and subtlety to the relationships among the characters covered by network-patterned stories, to characterization and thus meanings in such stories at the event level, the network pattern also brings about diversity, complexity and subtlety to the relationships among the network of narratives presented at the story level as a whole.

Through the network pattern, the stories presented by the award winning TV dramas highlight the network of diverse, complex and subtle relationships the core character established with other characters at both micro-event level and macro-inter-narrative level, and the diverse, complex and subtle meanings conveyed by such network of relationships. While the network pattern at the micro-event level highlights the specific qualities/meanings of the core character through the different kinds of relationships he/she established at different events through the elaboration of the core

character's interactive narrative action toward other characters at these events, the network pattern at the macro-inter-narrative level highlights the overall qualities/meanings of the core character through the overall relationships he/she established throughout the story as a whole, and through the equally diverse, complex and subtle relationships between the core narrative and other narratives. In this way, the network pattern at both levels complements and reinforces each other with regard to diversity, complexity and subtlety of relationships among the characters covered by the stories, of characterization in the stories and of meanings in the stories.

In summary, the network-patterned top Feitian Award-winning TV dramas under study tell stories and thus convey meanings /messages in a way more complex and subtler than those binary-oppositionally-structured stories covered by the literary and artistic works of the Maoist era.

5.4 From Binary Oppositional Structure to Network Pattern

From binary-oppositionally-structured stories of the literary and artistic works of the Maoist era to the network-patterned stories of the top Feitian Award winning TV dramas of the current post-reform era, the Party's political communication has demonstrated significant changes.

First of all is the change from the domination of binary oppositionary structure as the sole organising structure in the stories of the literary and artistic works of the Maoist era to the waning or the fading away of the binary oppositional structure as the sole dominant organising structure in the top Feitian Award winning TV dramas in the post-reform era.

In the Maoist era, the Party was in tight control over all cultural activities and all cultural products, including the literary and artistic works, were produced strictly under the Party's supervision to serve the Party's political purposes (Q. Gong 2011; Y. Li, 2006; W. Su, 2000; Tang, 1993; D.D.-W. Wang, 2000). Cultural workers such as writers and artists were given formulaic instructions to follow in their production of literary and artistic works (ibid). The binary oppositional structure, which resulted directly from the cultural workers' rigid following of socialist realism—the only officially endorsed representation style—was the dominant organizing structure for all cultural products during the whole Maoist era and well served the Party's practical political purpose of both convincing the Chinese populace to identify with the Party's communist ideology and to engage in the Party-led modernization efforts and of proving its own legitimacy by re-narrating the Party-led revolutionary

history in its immediate ascendancy to power by glorifying the workers, peasants and soldiers who have contributed greatly to the Party's success in overthrowing and taking the power from the Nationalist regime and by demonizing their defeated Nationalist enemies. Such glorification and demonization through binary oppositional structure was then convincing for it had been substantiated by the Party-led victory in the civil war in 1949 over the then corrupt and demoralized nationalists and the populace could feel this immediate victorious reality. Such glorification and demonization was also made possible by the fact that the Party was in a tight control over ideological and cultural production and that China was then 'culturally sealed off from the outside world' (X.-L. Zhang, 2011: p, 2) and this made available to the populace only those cultural products produced strictly under the Party's supervision.

Things have changed dramatically since China's reform and open-door policy in the late 1970s. Among the many drastic changes are the marketization of the country's economy since the early 1980s, the Party's change in its propaganda policy toward Taiwan, the rise and domination of consumerism and popular culture since the early 1990s, the country's integration into the global community since its economic reform particularly since its entry to the WTO in 2001, and the Chinese public's political cynicism, to name just a few. All of these changes have had significant impact on the county's cultural industry in general and the TV drama industry in particular, both of which have been an essential part of the Party's propaganda system. Take for example the Party's shift of propaganda policy toward Taiwan. In the Maoist era, the CCP's propaganda policy toward the Nationalist authorities in Taiwan were hostile, aiming to "divide and demoralise, incite rebellion and get them over to the Communist side" (Brady, 2008, p. 165). Accompanying such policy were the various cultural products in the Mainland during the entire Maoist era such as those previously mentioned revolutionary and historical themed literary and artistic works where, except for some pro-CPC Nationalist generals like General Zhang Xueliang and Yang Hucheng, the Nationalists including Generalissimo Chiang Kaishek were overwhelmingly demonized as inhumane villains and the significant role they have played in the anti-Japanese war was deliberately ignored or downplayed. Since the early 1980s, there has been a considerable change in the Party's propaganda policy toward the Nationalist authorities in Taiwan. The Party's previous hostile policy shifted to that of a conciliatory one. The Party's propaganda focus has since been to "build emotional connections, create positive propaganda, emphasize unity, friendship, politeness, persuasion, making friends and being fair and reasonable. [The Party] won't attempt to sow discord, deceive or

slander, nor will [the Party] ridicule or speak sarcastically” (ibid). The Party’s main goal since then has been national unity between the CPC-governed mainland China and the KMT-governed Taiwan. To fully realise its reconciliation with Taiwan and to realize its political agenda of national unification with Taiwan, the Party needs urgently to establish common ground with the Nationalist authorities in Taiwan. One important common ground between the CCP and the KMT is their 8-year-long cooperation in anti-Japanese war in which the Nationalists have made great contribution. Coupled with the change of the Party’s propaganda policy toward Taiwan is Mainland Chinese public’s relative ease to access varieties of information, including information about Nationalists’ tremendous contribution during the anti-Japanese war (which the Party had deliberately withheld from the Chinese populace in the Mainland during the whole Maoist era for propaganda purpose). China’s growing integration to the global community resulting from the country’s reform and open door policy has facilitated the various forms of information flow (such as cultural exchange) from Mainland China to the world outside the Mainland including Taiwan and vice versa. This has inevitably made more easily accessible to the Mainland Chinese the information about the Nationalists’ significant contribution during the anti-Japanese war. With the Party’s propaganda policy toward Taiwan having been changed since the early 1980s and the Mainlander’s easier accessibility of the information about Nationalists’ contribution during the anti-Japanese war, it is neither practical nor wise to continue the practise of the binary oppositional structure as the organizing structure in such revolutionary and historically themed cultural products as similarly-themed TV dramas (e.g. MRMHT dramas , legendary style revolutionary dramas and spy series) whereby the CCP will inevitably be glorified while the Nationalists will inevitably be demonized. Doing so will not only compromise the Party’s reconciliatory attempt toward Taiwan and the Party’s agenda of national unification with Taiwan but will also discredit the Party itself among the Chinese populace who have come to know more and more about the truth of the Nationalist contribution during the anti-Japanese war and who have been valuing and to some extent have been very particular about the truthful and realistic representation of Chinese history in such cultural works as TV dramas in the country.⁵

Another drastic change is Chinese public’s growing political cynicism since the early 1990s. 1980s China witnessed double-digit economic growth since the Deng Xiaoping- initiated reform and open

⁵ In fact, one of the important criteria which attracts Chinese audience to such cultural products as TV dramas and with which they judge such cultural products is whether these cultural products are realistic or not.

door policy in the late 1970s. This profit-oriented market economy also produced a lot of unwanted by-products—serious social problems such as growing social disparity, corruption and rising living costs. The public's mounting call for political reform to solve such problems was met with the Party's reluctance, the culmination of which was the Tiananmen Incident in June 1989. After the Tiananmen Incident, Chinese public's political passion dissipated and in the place of the public's passion for political participation was the public's growing political cynicism (Barme, 1999; Q. Gong, 2011). Disillusioned with the Party's reluctance to reform the political system, the public turned to embrace consumerism and commercial popular culture, which since the early 1990s have begun to play a dominant role in the Chinese public daily life. Chinese public's political cynicism has been such that the public shuns any political project to indoctrinate it, particularly the mainstream cultural products, which the Party has been promoting since the late 1980s and the majority of which up to the late 1990s had been presenting heavily politicized messages/agendas in more or less the same way as the revolutionary and historical themed literary and artistic works of the Maoist era—their use of the binary-oppositional structure as the dominant organising structure—although reform-related issues had by then replaced class-struggle to become the main theme and content .

Then come other two significant changes—the commercialisation of China's cultural industry and the country's growing integration to the global economy since the country's reform and open door policy in the late 1970s, particularly since its 2001 entry to the WTO. During the Maoist era, cultural products in China were solely for political purposes while their entertainment and information functions were suppressed (Feng, 1982a, 1982b; Q. Gong, 2011; Keane, 2005; P.-S. Li, 2008; L.-S. Liu, 2011; Yin, 2002a & 2002b; Zhu, 2008). As a result, the only cultural products available to the Chinese public in the country were those highly politicized ones such as the aforementioned revolutionary and historical themed literary and artistic works. After the Party-initiated reform and open door policy in the late 1970s, cultural products' entertainment and information function were recognized by the Party although they continued to be produced for political purposes (ibid). As such, cultural products in the country have since also been produced for entertainment and information purposes besides the political ones. Since the mid-and-late 1980s, the production of cultural products in the country such as TV dramas, as an essential part of and like other sectors of the country's economy, has been in a process of commercialisation albeit in a relatively slower pace than that of other sectors of the country's economy. Since the commercialisation of the country's TV drama industry in the mid and late-1980s, there have developed two main categories of domestically

produced TV dramas—main melody TV dramas and diversified (or commercial) TV dramas (*ibid*). The main melody category dramas such as MRMHT dramas and reform dramas have higher ideological requirements. They have been mainly produced to communicate the Party-desired messages/agendas such as pro-reform agendas in the 1980s or anti-corruption agendas in the 1990s. The diversified/commercial category dramas without the obligation of conveying the Party-desired messages/agendas are mainly for entertainment purpose and thus have much lower or no ideological requirements although they also have to satisfy the Party's bottom line ideological threshold requirements such as no violation of the four-cardinal principles within the dramas. Beside these two types of domestically-produced dramas, there have been available to the Chinese populace since the early 1980s quite a few entertainment-oriented TV dramas which China has since been importing from Hong Kong, Taiwan, Japan and other regions and countries (Barme, 1999; Gao & Wu, 2002; Huang, 2006; Wu & Han, 2009; P.-S. Li, 2008; Q-Y. Wu, 2008; Z.-H. Zhang, 2008; Zhu, 2008; Zhu et al., 2008; Yin, 2002a & 2002b). Since the inception of China's TV drama industry's commercialisation, the main melody dramas have had to compete with both their domestic commercial counterparts and the imported dramas and very often have lost ground to the latter two because the former's continuous use of binary oppositional structure as the organizing structure have presented very heavily politicized messages/agendas while the latter two, particularly the imported ones (albeit maybe binary-structured), provided good entertainment for Chinese audience. Although the Party had tried such measures as prioritizing the production of main melody dramas in the country's annual TV drama programming conferences and screening of main melody dramas in the prime time of both CCTV channels and the main channels of provincial TV stations to promote the development of main melody dramas (Z.-F. Hu, 2006; Ji, 2000; Liu, 1995), such measures had to some extent boosted the development of but hardly the popularity of main melody dramas because the Chinese public, who have become increasingly politic-cynic since the early 1990s, simply did not buy the Party's efforts. The public shunned the main melody dramas by shifting from channels showing melody ones to those showing entertainment-oriented ones. If they could not find what they wanted on TV channels, they could always turn to other sources. Since China's reform and open door policy in the late 1970s particularly since the deepening of the country's market economy in 1992, Chinese public have diverse cultural products available for their entertainment not only those domestically produced but international ones as well. These variety of cultural products (such as films, TV dramas, music to name just a few) can be accessed through various sources ranging from

cable TV, satellite TV, DVD, internet to the pirated market (L. Shen, 2005; R. Cai, 2008; X.-L. Zhang, 2011). What is not available to the public from the Party-controlled cable TV and satellite TV can be accessible from the not-so-easily-controlled internet, and from the pirated market which has been providing the Chinese populace with numerous cheap pirated versions of different popular entertainment programmes (whether domestic or international ones) and which the Party has been trying so hard to crack down on but in vain (ibid).

The unpopularity of the main melody cultural products such as main melody TV dramas in the country has presented a great challenge for the Party which has been relying on them, particularly such popular cultural products as TV dramas to promote the Party's messages/agendas to exert its ideological influence on the Chinese populace. Hence since the country's reform and open door policy, particularly since the deepening of the country's market economy and the country's further opening-up to the outside world in 1992, there has been a growing sense of urgency by the Party to update its propaganda techniques (Barme, 1999; Brady, 2008; Brady & Wang, 2009; Q. Gong, 2011). The Party's sense of urgency was such that the Party-state has been urging cultural workers, through the directors of various propaganda sectors such as the former SARFT directors/deputy directors, to do away with the binary oppositional structure which has resulted in the monotonous stereotypical characterization in the cultural products and to innovate new ways to produce mass-appeal main melody cultural products so as to compete with the commercially-oriented cultural products, both domestically produced and the imported counterparts (Ai, 1986a, 1986b & 1986c; L. Li, 2011; Ruan, 1988; Xiong, 2011; Xu, 2002b; Zhong, 1986).

All the aforementioned significant changes since China's reform and open door policy point to the impracticability in the continuous practice of binary oppositional structure as the dominant organising structure and calls for a new organising structure for the cultural products, particularly the mainstream ones, if the Party still wants to exert its ideological influence on the Chinese populace so as to maintain its legitimacy to rule the country. As a result, China has since its reform and open door policy in the late 1970s witnessed a gradual moving away among the cultural workers from the use of the binary oppositionary structure as the dominant organising structure in their production of such main melody cultural products as main melody TV dramas (L. Wang etc., 2012; Tian & Gong, 2011). Since the beginning of the 21st century, most of the main melody cultural products such as the main melody TV dramas have already rid themselves of the rigid binary oppositionary structure as the sole

dominant organizing structure. Take for example the top Feitian award winning TV dramas under study—the group of main melody dramas highly thought of by the Party. As has been previously shown in the five case-studied top Feitian Award winning TV dramas, there are still binary oppositional relationships between the characters within these TV dramas but binary oppositional structure is no longer the sole or the dominant organizing structure. Besides the oppositional relationships these TV dramas also present various other relationships between the characters such as cooperative, appreciative, supportive, compassionate, tolerant, and fraternal relationships to name just a few. Very often, these other relationships are interwoven with one another and with the oppositional ones as well. Also there has been a change in the sphere where binary oppositional relationships take place. In the Maoist era, the binary oppositional relationships take place in the characters' public and politicized sphere as the characters' activities were overwhelmingly related either to the Party-led revolutionary work or to the Party-led socialist construction after the Party's success in its revolution. The binary oppositional relationships presented in current post-reform mainstream cultural products, such as the main melody TV dramas, are no longer confined to but go beyond the characters' public politicized sphere to include the characters' private secularized sphere. The characters' activities are now related either to their public work, to their private secularized concerns such as love, marriage, familial life, friendship and other personal relations or to both the public and private spheres with these spheres often interwoven with one another.

The change from the domination of the binary oppositional structure as the sole organizing structure in the cultural products in the Maoist era to the waning if not the disappearance of the binary oppositional structure as the sole dominant organizing structure for such main melody cultural products as main melody TV dramas is significant. The change signifies the irrelevance of the continuous use of the binary oppositional structure as the sole and dominant organizing structure, if not for all cultural products then at least for the Party-promoted main melody cultural products in the reforming and opening China. The dramatic changes that have taken place since China's reform and open door policy in the late 1970s, such as those previously mentioned ones, have disqualified the continuous use of the binary oppositional structure. The change also signifies the Party's urgency and its actual pragmatic attempt to do away with the use of the binary oppositional structure as the sole dominant organizing structure to update its propaganda techniques so as to better communicate the Party-desired messages/agendas, to retain the Party's ideological

control and thus help maintain the Party's continuous legitimacy among the increasingly politic-cynic Chinese populace in the fast changing China.

Although binary oppositionary structure is no longer the sole dominant organising structure in today's main melody cultural products, it has not completely died down yet. The binary oppositionary relationships which the binary oppositional structure has intrinsically highlighted continue to be present in today's main melody cultural products, such as main melody TV dramas (i.e. the top Feitian award winning TV dramas under study) and at some moments are still highlighted. Their presence, however, is no longer the essence of today's main melody cultural products, as was the case with the cultural products of the Maoist era. Where their presence is still an important part of today's main melody cultural products, such as the top Feitian Award-winning revolutionary and historically themed TV dramas under study, it is not a pure presence because the binary oppositional relationships are often interwoven with other non-binary-oppositional relationships such as love, friendship and fraternity. Where their presence is sporadic and brief—which is often the case with many non-revolutionary-themed TV dramas—its presence is to introduce and/or to help present other various kinds of non-oppositional relationships. In a word, binary oppositional structure, which used to be highlighted as the sole dominant organizing structure in the cultural products of the Maoist era, has now been moved to the background—becoming very much as part of a more inclusive organizing structure which can accommodate both binary oppositionary and non-binary-oppositional relationships. What is this more inclusive and more accommodating organizing structure? What implications has this organising structure brought to the Party's political communication? This leads to the discussion of the second significant change—the overwhelming presence of a network pattern in the top Feitian Award winning dramas to the direct contrast of the waning of the binary oppositional structure as the sole dominant organising structure in the same dramas.

The previously discussed impracticability in the continuous use of the binary oppositionary structure as the sole dominant organizing structure in such mainstream cultural products as melody TV dramas has created a strong sense of urgency by the Party to update its propaganda technique. The Party's sense of urgency was such that it has tried various measures to encourage cultural workers, including TV drama practitioners, to practice innovation with regard to content, subject matter and representation of content and subject matter in their production of cultural works so as to make the

cultural products produced appealing and interesting to the Chinese populace. First of all are the Party's (gradual) incorporation of entertainment value (guanshang xing, meaning to make cultural products appealing and interesting) as one of the three essential principles⁶ guiding the cultural workers' creation of cultural products such as TV dramas and the various keynote speeches made by Party authorities in charge of the propaganda and thought work on various occasions where the imperative of practising innovation in the cultural production has been repeatedly stressed and where cultural workers have been repeatedly urged to do so in order to produce mass-appeal main melody cultural products (Ai, 1986a, 1986b & 1986c; L. Li, 2011; Ruan, 1988; Xiong, 2011; Xu, 2002b; Zhong, 1986). In the 1988 ANTVDP, for example, the then deputy director of the China TV Art Committee Ruan Ruolin urged the cultural workers present at the conference to practice innovations to overcome the problems confronting the production of reform dramas such as the binary stereotypical characterization of heroes on the one hand and of villains on the other (Ruan, 1988). In the 1991 seminar organized by the Party-state among cultural workers to learn from the country's first domestically produced, commercially successful TV drama *Yearnings*, the then propaganda chief Li Ruihuan urged the cultural workers present to learn to use the forms that the populace favours, referring to *Yearnings* as a good model for them to follow, so that socialist principles and moral values can be made more easily acceptable to the majority of the Chinese populace (L. Li, 2011; Xiong, 2011). At the 2002 ANTVDP, the then SARFT's director Xu Guangchun (2002b, p.8), similarly highlighted the imperative of practicing innovation in the production of melody cultural products by urging the cultural workers present at the conference to move out of the old fashioned 'loftiness, greatness and perfection' stereotypical characterization principle and to situate the characters in their natural and normal life circumstances so as to make the melody dramas more interesting. The second measure to boost cultural workers to practice innovation in their creation of cultural products so as to produce mass-appeal mainstream cultural products was the reservation of better financial resources and better screening platforms for the mainstream cultural products, particularly those mass-appeal ones. Although the Party-state has gradually withdrawn subsidies for the production of most of the TV dramas ever since the beginning of the commercialization of the TV drama production in the mid-and-late 1980s, the Party-state has through its flagship TV station CCTV continued to promote the production of melody dramas by investing in the production of

⁶ The other two guiding principles in the cultural workers' production of mainstream cultural products are ideological value and artistic value.

melody TV dramas and by singling out as their target of investment those melody dramas that have integrated the three values—ideological value, artistic value and entertainment value. Accompanying this financial sponsorship is the Party's provision of best screening platforms for such melody dramas by obliging both the CCTV channels and the main channels (i.e. satellite channels) of the provincial TV stations across the country to screen such melody dramas during the prime time slots (Z.-F. Hu, 2006; Ji, 2000; Liu, 1995). The third measure to boost cultural workers to practice innovation in their cultural production so as to produce mass-appeal mains melody cultural products was the establishment of various cultural awards where audience reception of the cultural products becomes the sole criterion or one of the important criteria whereby candidate cultural products are nominated and awarded (China Television Committee Columnist, 2010, & 2011; D.-Y. Wang, 2011; Xiong, 2011). In some cultural awards such as the Hundred Flowers Awards (the most prestigious film award in China) and the Chinese Television Golden Eagle Award (the main national award of the Chinese television industry), audience reception of the cultural products becomes the sole criterion whereby voting by a national audience determines the winners of the awards. In the Feitian Awards—the top governmental awards for TV dramas—audience reception has become one of the Three Excellences criteria whereby potential candidate TV dramas are nominated and awarded⁷. Almost all the top Feitian Award winning TV dramas including the top Feitian Awards under study were very well received among the Chinese populace at the time when they were first screened and when they were rescreened (China Television, 2005c; China TV Art Committee Columnist, 2009a; D.-Y. Wang, 2011; J.-Q. Wang, 2007). The fourth measure to boost cultural workers' innovation in their production of mainstream cultural products so as to attract audience's attention back to the mainstream cultural products is to offer tremendous financial reward to those that have won the above mentioned cultural awards. Starting from 1995, for example, CCTV has been offering considerable bonuses to reward those Feitian-award-winning TV dramas that had had their premieres on CCTV—a bonus of 18,000 yuan per episode and a maximum bonus of 20-episode-in-worth (i.e. a maximum of 360,000 yuan) to each top Feitian Award-winning drama; 9,000 yuan per episode and a maximum bonus of 20-episode-in-worth (i.e. a maximum of 180,000 yuan) to each second prize winner; a bonus of 5,000 yuan per episode and a maximum bonus of 20-episode-in-worth (i.e. a maximum bonus of 100,000 yuan) to those third prize winners (W.-G.

⁷ The Three Excellences are Excellence in ideological values presented in the TV dramas, Excellence in entertainment value, and Excellence in artistic value—Excellence in the making of TV dramas.

Yang, 1995). In addition, CCTV would help market these Feitian Award-winning dramas in both domestic and international markets and 80% of the resulting revenues would be returned to TV drama production companies that have made these dramas (ibid).

Encouraged by the Party-state's various efforts to boost the production of mass-appeal main melody cultural products, cultural workers such as TV drama practitioners increasingly draw inspirations from TV dramas that have been popular among the Chinese populace—including both TV dramas imported from such countries and regions such as Hong Kong, Taiwan, Korea and Japan and those domestically produced ones. They racked their brains to weave into the main melody dramas and to give a new look to whatever popular elements that have been resonating well with the Chinese populace such as love, friendship, marriage and familial life—almost all the secularized concerns of ordinary people which all the characters presented in all cultural works of Maoist era have been deprived of due to cultural workers' dogmatic following of the rigid formulaic representational rules prescribed by the Party and which most of the main melody cultural products such as main melody films and main melody TV dramas up to the late 1980s had still been failing to cover (L.-L. Ding, 2004). As a result of the Party-state's strenuous efforts to boost the cultural workers' innovation in their cultural production so as to produce mass-appeal main melody cultural products and the actual innovations made by the cultural workers to produce mass-appeal main melody cultural products, China since the mid-and-late 1990s has witnessed a gradual and increasing popularity of such main melody cultural products as main melody TV dramas among the Chinese populace (X.-Z. Shen, 2002; Xiong, 2011). Among the popular hits in the 1995 were such main melody TV dramas as *Kong Fansen*, *Heaven Above (Cangtian zai shang)*, *Mao Zedong in his Youth (Qingnian Mao Zedong)*, *Deng Yingchao and her Mother (Deng Yingchao he ta de mama)*, all of which had the audience viewing rate of over 15% with the highest being 50% (Liu, 1996b). Although there had been produced more and more mass-appeal main melody TV dramas since the mid-1990, up till the late 1990s the majority of the main melody cultural products such as main melody TV dramas remained fairly unpopular among the Chinese populace due to their continuous use of the binary-structured stereotypical characterization which inevitably results in the heavily politicized messages/agendas in the these dramas and due to the Chinese populace's being fed up with and their avoidance of such politicized messages/agendas (Fu, 2013; L. Shen, 2005; L. Wang etc., 2012). The beginning of the 21st century, however, witnessed the tables turned toward such main melody cultural products as main melody TV dramas. Since the screening of and the sweeping popularity of melody TV drama

Those Days of Passion (Jiqing ranshao de suiyue) in 2001 in the country, one after another main melody dramas have become popular hits. For the first time in the country's TV drama production, main melody dramas in general were on equal ground with their commercial counterparts with regard to audience reception. With the advent of the new millennium has come the popularity of perhaps as well as the golden age of the main melody cultural products particularly main melody TV dramas in the country, reversing the main melody cultural products' previous unpopular image among the Chinese populace (Y.-S. Li, 2008; Peng & Li, 2009; L. Wang etc., 2012; Xiong, 2011). Numerous main melody TV dramas such as those top Feitian Award winning TV dramas under study have enjoyed such high popularity among Chinese populace that the latter have now reversed their previous negative opinion of and have even come to appreciate main melody TV dramas.

The Party-state's efforts to encourage cultural workers to practice innovation so as to produce mass-appeal main melody cultural products and the cultural workers' actual innovative attempts in their production of such main melody cultural products as main melody TV dramas not only resulted in the popularity of such main melody cultural products as main melody TV dramas in the country but also resulted in the actual waning of the binary oppositional structure as the sole dominant organizing structure for main melody cultural products and the rise of a new organizing structure. This new organizing structure accommodates both the Party-desired agenda/messages and such secularized concerns of ordinary people as love, marriage, friendship, familial relationships, fraternity and other kinds of personal relationships—almost all the popular elements in the commercially successful TV dramas which many cultural workers have been gradually incorporating into the main melody dramas produced by them. This is the network pattern that I have previously discussed in the five case-studied top Feitian Award-winning dramas. With the network pattern as the new organizing structure, characters in the stories could be but are not necessarily connected into binary oppositional relationships. Rather, far more diverse, complex and subtle relationships including binary oppositionary relationships are found to be existent among the characters depending on different events covered and on the different social roles taken by the different characters, just as have been shown by the five case-studied top Feitian award-winning dramas. And there is an overwhelming presence of such a network pattern in the selected top Feitian award-winning dramas.

From the domination of the binary oppositionary structure as the sole organizing structure in the stories of the literary and artistic works of the Maoist era, to the waning of the binary oppositionary

structure as the sole organizing structure in such mainstream cultural products as the top Feitian award winning TV dramas and further to the overwhelming presence of a network pattern as the new organizing structure, significant changes have taken place in the Party's political communication.

First of all, this network pattern (in combination with the cultural frames covered in chapter 6) makes possible the presentation of a network of different relationships among the characters which include but are not necessarily limited to oppositional relationships. Characters in the stories of the current post-reform eras are no longer posed against one another along the axis of class and class consciousness, as are their counterparts in the stories of the literary and artistic works of the Maoist eras. Rather, they are connected in various ways along the axis of different aspects of characters as ordinary human beings such as love, marriage, kinship, friendship, profession/work, townmanship, and identity. The different kinds of relationships thus established among the characters, as those shown in the above mentioned five case-studied TV dramas, show the complexity and subtlety of the secularized personal life concerns of the characters. While the binary-oppositional structure presents highly politicized messages by focusing on the political life of the characters by organizing this life into direct oppositions along the axis of class and class consciousness at the expense of their secularized private life, the network pattern depoliticizes the story by diluting/weaving the intended political message(s)/agendas into the secularized private personal concerns of the characters—i.e. different kinds of personal relationships established with regard to love, marriage, kinship, friendship etc. The message that the Party's ascendance to power is the result of Chinese people's historical choice, which the two case-studied revolutionary themed TV dramas (*Yan's an Song* and *The Road We Have Taken*) intend to convey, is packaged into the network of interpersonal relationships which integrate the characters' revolutionary work concern with their private personal life concerns. The Party's agenda of Constructing a New Socialist Countryside, which *Xi Gengtian's Story* intends to show, is embedded in the network of interpersonal relationships Xi Gengtian has established with his family members, with his fellow villagers, and with the cadres in and outside of his village. Other TV dramas are also similarly packaged with the political messages/agendas embedded in the network of interpersonal relationships established in different events. This de-politicization however does not necessarily mean the Party's abandonment of politicization of content but should rather be viewed as a re-politicization of content by the Party in a seemingly de-politicized secularized way by incorporating different private personal life concerns into the stories to give a humanized and secularized appearance and appeal so as to better convey the Party's messages/agendas. In this

way, the network patterned story then is not only a story with the Party-desired political messages/agendas but also a story about the characters' personal private life—their love, their friendship, their marriage, their emotions and other aspects of personal life concerns. Such secularized re-politicization resulting from the complexity and subtlety of the relationships created by the network pattern to some extent play to Chinese populace's desire for familial kinship, for love, for marriage, for friendship, and for other kinds of personal relations and the eventual result of this secularized re-politicisation is a new kind of propaganda—politico-tainment. The network pattern thus helps soften the political messages/agendas embedded in the story by packaging the story into a politico-tainment and thus makes the story more appealing and entertaining to the Chinese audience.

Besides, the network pattern facilitates the presentation of complexity and subtlety in the story's characterisation. Characters are no longer presented as class-based. Rather the class consciousness is erased. Various aspects of humanity such as feeling, passion, kinship love and self-interest, which the characters in the artistic works during the Maoist era have been deprived of, are given back to the characters, including both the heroes and the villains. Unlike the binary oppositional structure which gives an oversimplified depiction of the characters in the stories, presenting them either as born perfect heroes or unpardonably wicked villains, both of whom undergo no developmental process and are devoid of any humanity, the network pattern through its presentation of a network of different relationships among the characters portrays the characters in the stories in a humanized way. There is no traditional sense of heroes or villains, as are depicted by the binary oppositional structure in the revolutionary-themed literary and artistic works of the Maoist era. Absolutely positive or negative characters are very rare. Through its presentation of a network of complex relationships among the characters covered by the stories, a network pattern has endowed the supposed heroes with various weakness or villainous acts on the one hand and the supposed villains with various human virtues on the other hand, just as has been discussed in the earlier section of this chapter.

Like the stories of the revolutionary-themed literary and artistic works of the Maoist era, the stories of the selected top Feitian Award-winning TV dramas are still political discourses. They still need to fulfil more or less the same general mission as these stories of the Maoist era—to communicate the Party's messages/agendas to the audience. The way they employ for the fulfilment of the same

mission, however, is different and has undergone some change. The stories of the revolutionary-themed literary and artistic works of the Maoist era using the binary oppositional structure produce one single type of relationships which are oppositional, class-based, and class-consciousness-defined while the selected TV dramas using the network pattern produces the network of relationships which include but go beyond the oppositional, are multi-dimensional, and are defined by such diverse aspects of humanity as love, kinship, friendship, marriage, work. The binary-structured revolutionary-themed literary and artistic works produce an oversimplified stereotypical one-dimensional dull flat image of the characters while the network patterned TV dramas presents a multidimensional round image of the characters. From the over simplified one-dimensional depiction of the characters to the more nuanced multi-faced humanistic portrayal of the characters, the Party's political communication has undergone some sophistication. Such sophistication, as suggested by Gong Qian (2011) and by the production team of one family business drama—*Shiwan renjia* (Y. X. Chen, 2008; M.H. Cheng, 2008; H. Liu, 2008; Xu, 2008), is to make the story presented more touching, more engaging, and more appealing to the audience. Thus the messages embedded in the story can be more easily put across to the audience. Whether such sophistication as practiced by the TV dramas producers can produce the kind of effect they have expected from the audience cannot be answered by my current research as the answer would require an audience reception study, which my current study is obviously not.

5.5 Summary

Binary oppositionary structure, which Levi-Strauss and many other western scholars highlight as the underlying organizing structure for various narrative forms such as myth, folklore story, novels, films and TV dramas, is not unique to the western stories. It is also found in the stories presented by Chinese cultural works. In fact, binary oppositionary structure dominated the literary and artistic works of the whole Maoist era (between 1940s and the 1970s) as the sole and dominant organizing structure, whereby the characters in the stories of the literary and artistic works were posed into two extremes—idealization of such heroic characters as workers, peasants, soldiers and CCP members on the one hand and the demonization of such villainous characters as Nationalists, landlords and bandits on the other hand. Binary oppositionary structure's four-decade-long domination as the sole organizing structure for the cultural works in China was made possible due to the CCP's exertion of

strict ideological and political control over the cultural production in the country whereby the cultural workers were obliged to follow a set of rigid and formulaic norms prescribed by the Party—known as the socialist realist realism—the only officially endorsed representational mode.

The drastic changes that have taken place since the Party-initiated reform and open door policy in the late 1970s, such as the Party's shift of its propaganda policy toward Taiwan from hostile one in the pre-reform era to conciliatory one after the country's reform, the Chinese public's growing political cynicism, the commercialisation of China's cultural industry and the country's growing integration to the global economy have rendered impractical and unwise the further practice of binary oppositionary structure as the sole and dominant organizing structure for the cultural products. Due to the combination of the Party's various efforts to encourage cultural workers to practice innovation so as to produce mass-appeal cultural products and the cultural workers' actual innovative efforts to produce mass-appeal cultural products, China since the 1980s has thus witnessed a gradual moving away from the binary oppositionary structure as the sole dominant organizing structure in the cultural workers' production of cultural products such as films and TV dramas. In the place of binary oppositionary structure is a new organizing structure—a network pattern—which is a more flexible and more inclusive structure because it accommodates both the binary oppositionary relationships which the binary oppositionary structure intrinsically highlights and various other relationships which are not necessarily binary-oppositionary ones. With its presentation of a network of far more diverse and complex relationships among the characters covered, the network pattern not only brings about complexity, diversity and subtlety in the relationships among the characters but also brings about a characterization far more complex and subtler than the polarized characterization presented by a binary oppositional structure. The all-good image of heroes and the all-bad image of villains in the binary-oppositionally-structured stories give an over-simplified portrayal of and thus run counter to human beings' true nature whereby people as ordinary human beings can rarely be judged as totally good or as totally bad. However good they are, people in actuality somehow have their own defects; however bad they are, they somehow have their own merits. The revolutionary and historical themed stories of the Maoist era had carried this oversimplified binary characterization further to an extreme that not only villains but also heroes were given a dehumanized portrayal. The heroes are not shown to have any normal personal secular life concerns such as love, marriage and kinship or shown to sacrifice these normal secular life concerns for the sake of committing themselves fully to the CCP-led revolutionary cause of liberating the

majority of Chinese people from the oppressive, cruel and wicked landlords, Nationalists and bandit. The villains are shown to use these personal secular life concerns for their selfish wicked personal gains (detailed discussion is given in next chapter). In contrast to the extreme polarization of characterization in the binary-oppositionally structured stories which results in the flat dull depiction of both heroes and villains, network pattern with its presentation of far more diverse and complex relationships among the characters produces a round complex and subtle characterization whereby traditional stereotypical binary characterization of all-good-heroes-versus-all-bad-villains collapse and gets transformed. Villains are endowed with various human virtues such as filial piety, patriotism and fraternity while heroes are endowed with various human weaknesses such as slowness in learning and lack of worldliness, as has been shown by five case-studied top Feitian Award-winning dramas. With such complex and subtle characterization, both heroes and villains are depicted as normal human beings with normal personal secularized life concerns such as love, friendship, fraternity, marriage, kinship, emotions and other personal concerns.

From binary-oppositionally structured revolutionary and historical themed stories of the Maoist era to the network patterned stories of the top Feitian Award winning TV dramas, the Party's political communication has undergone significant changes. With binary oppositionary stories of the Maoist era, the Party's messages/agendas are conveyed in a rather crude and unrefined way. First, the Party's messages/agendas are conveyed in a highly politicized way in that these stories concentrate solely on the characters' political life/ activities in the political/public domain. Second, the Party's messages/agendas are conveyed in a rather straightforward way through polarized characterization—through condemnation of what villains do and represent on the one hand and affirmation of what heroes do on the other hand. With network patterned stories, such as the previously discussed five case-studied top Feitian Award winning dramas, messages/meanings are conveyed in a more complex and subtler way. The life of both heroes and villains is no longer restricted to the political public sphere but is extended to the private personal secularized sphere such as love, marriage, and friendship, familial relations with life in both domains very often criss-crossing one another. This depoliticizes and softens the Party's intended messages/agendas by wrapping up the latter in the appearance of love, marriage, friendship, familial relations, or other personal secular concerns. Added to this de-politicization and softening of the Party's intended messages/agendas is complex and subtle characterization whereby villains are endowed with various human virtues such as filial piety and kinship love while heroes are endowed with various

human weaknesses or flaws such as slowness in learning and failure in marriage. With such complex and subtle characterization, what heroes do is not always depicted positively and does not always merit affirmation; what villains do is not always depicted negatively and thus do not always deserve condemnation. The Party's desired messages/agendas, which were previously expressed rather straightforwardly through condemnation of what villains embodied and through affirmation of what heroes embodied in the stories of the Maoist era, are thus made complex and subtle and further depoliticized.

From the highly politicized and straightforward messages conveyed by binary oppositionally structured literary and artistic works of the Maoist era to the depoliticized complex and subtle messages conveyed by the network-patterned top Feitian Award winning dramas, the Party's political communication has demonstrated sophistication. The use of network pattern to communicate the Party's message or agenda in a more interesting and entertaining way is only one aspect of this sophistication. The other aspect of sophistication is that stories today are organized around traditional Chinese cultural values rather than around class-consciousness which had been defining and organizing the novels and artistic works during the Maoist era. Next chapter will discuss this aspect of sophistication.

Chapter 6 From Class-defined to Culturally-Framed

6.1 Introduction

From the Maoist era to the current post-reform era, China's political communication by means of story-telling has demonstrated some sophistication. In the previous chapter I have discussed one aspect of the sophistication in the Party's use of the most popular form of story i.e. TV drama for political communication in the current post-reform era by focusing on how the top Feitian-award winning TV dramas are structured. I have argued and demonstrated that these Feitian award-winning dramas which are structured by a network pattern communicate the Party's messages/agendas in a more interesting and subtler way than the binary oppositionally-structured genre of stories then popular during the Maoist era—the revolutionary themed literary and artistic works. The binary oppositional structure presents explicitly politicized messages/agendas by concentrating solely on the political life or activities of the characters at the expense of their secularized personal life concerns and by putting the characters in direct opposition against one another in the course of their political life or activities (endowing the heroes with exemplary behaviours and virtues, and filling the villains with the deplorable wicked behaviours and traits). The network pattern, however, packages stories with the Party's messages/agendas as stories about love, fraternity, familial kinship, marriage, friendship, and or about other personal relations by weaving these political messages/agendas into the network of different secularized rather than politicized interpersonal relationships established among the characters, particularly those established between the core character and other character, so as to soften the political messages/agendas and thus to make the stories more appealing and engaging to the increasingly politics-cynic sophisticated Chinese audience of the current post-reform era. The network pattern also gives a humanized depiction of the characters, showing them with love, friendship, marriage, kinship or other personal relations and endowing them with both shortcomings and virtues. The subtlety and sophistication which has been thus demonstrated from the transformation of the binary oppositional structure into the network pattern is only one aspect of sophistication in the Party's political communication. My research on the top Feitian award-winning TV dramas shows that these highly popular TV dramas in the current post-reform era are not only connected by a network pattern but are also organized around the traditional Chinese cultural values to the direct contrast of the stories of the Maoist era which are organized around class and class-consciousness. The

transformation from being class-organized into traditional Chinese cultural values-organized demonstrates other aspect of sophistication in the Party's political communication. This chapter explores this aspect of sophistication in the Party's political communication. It starts with an examination of how the stories presented by revolutionary themed literary and artistic works during the Maoist era are organized around the notion of class and class consciousness, followed by an examination of how the stories presented by the top Feitian award-winning TV dramas in the current post-reform era are organized around the traditional Chinese cultural values/practices, subsequently a discussion of the sophistication shown by the change from class-organized stories to the culturally-organized ones, and ends with a brief summary.

6. 2 Class-defined Stories of the Maoist Era

6.2.1 Overview

With the Party being in strict control over the cultural production and class struggle being the Party's dominant ideology during the Maoist era, cultural workers such as writers and artists were requested to embody class struggle as the dominant and the only valid theme and content of all cultural productions (Q. Gong, 2011; Y. Li, 2006; Tang, 1993; D. D.-W. Wang, 2000). Being the core component of the Party's cultural productions embodying the Party's ideology, the revolutionary-themed literary and artistic works are no exception to this class-based ideology. Socialist realism—the then dominant and the only officially sanctioned artistic representational style during the Maoist era—has prescribed formulaic requirements with regard to the embodiment of class struggle ideology in literary and artistic works. With class nature prescribed as the essence of a human being, writers and artists were urged to formularize and generalize heroes and villains, to various degrees, to represent the class to which they belonged with heroes representing the oppressed proletariat while the villains representing the oppressive ruling class. With class struggle between the ruling class and the proletariat considered as the only force driving social progress, writers and artists are requested to present such struggle as the only legitimate theme and concern running throughout their literary and artistic works.

As a result of the rigid application of these formulaic requirements, class distinction and class struggle are presented as the primary, the dominant and the only organizing principles underlying the binary oppositionally-structured stories of the revolutionary themed literary and artistic works during

the Maoist era. In other words, the binary-structured revolutionary historical themed literary and artistic works of the Maoist era are framed around class-distinctions or class struggles.

6.2.2 Class-defined Relationships, Problems and Solutions

The revolutionary historical themed stories of the Maoist era cover the oppression of the proletarians by various oppressors and their heroic and eventually successful struggles against these oppressors (Q. Gong, 2011; Y. Li, 2006; Tang, 1993; D.D.-W. Wang, 2000). What is highlighted in these stories are the processes of proletarians' struggles against the various oppressors, the essence of which is shown in the binary oppositional relationships established among the characters in the process of the struggles. Underlying the oppositional relationships established among the characters during the struggle is class consciousness. Throughout the stories, the characters are put into direct opposition against one another due to their different class status. On the one side are the protagonists/heroes representing the oppressed/exploited class—Party members, proletariat workers, farmers, and soldiers (i.e. armed workers and farmers); on the other side are the villains/enemies representing the oppressive ruling/exploiting class—the Nationalists, foreign invaders, landlords, capitalists or bandits. The heroes epitomize the essence of the perfect proletarian class and are distinguished by wisdom, bravery, uprightness and strength. The villains embody the essence of the evil oppressive class and are distinguished by stupidity, cowardice, deceit, and cruelty—the direct opposite of what the proletarians are endowed with.

The heroes and the villains are engaged in various forms of conflicts against each other in either the epic stories of the CCP-led revolutionary movement or those depicting the CCP-led socialist construction in the rural areas with class struggle depicted as the principle mode of conflict (Q. Gong, 2011; Y. Li, 2006; Tang, 1993; D.D.-W. Wang, 2000). Many of the epic stories such as Du Pengcheng's *Guarding Yan'an* [*Baowei Yan'an*, 1954] and Wu Qiang's *The Red Sun* [*Hong ri*, 1957], which narrate the origin of the CPC-led revolution and the early history of the nation, highlight the fights/struggles between the Communists and the Nationalists or between the CPC-led army and the Japanese aggressors. At the centre of the CPC-led land reform novels such as Zhou Libo's *Hurricane* and Ding Ling's *The Sun Shines over the Sanggan River* is the confrontation between the despotic landlords and poor peasants. The various conflicting relationships established between the heroes and the villains, ranging from the fights between the communists and the nationalists to the confrontation between the landlords and poor peasants, result from class distinctions and are

motivated by class consciousness. In Zhou Libo's *Hurricane*, a novel about the CPC-led land reform in a village of northern China, the poor peasants, like their counterparts in many other land reform novels, appear as silent inactive victims of their oppressive cruel landlords at the start of the story. They fight the oppressive landlords only after they have gradually acquired class-consciousness and the collectivist spirit under the guidance of the CPC land reform team and once aroused their class consciousness they fight until they eventually succeeded in overthrowing the oppressive landlords and thus liberating themselves from the oppression by the landlords.

The binary oppositional relationships between the characters demonstrated in the process of the various struggles are thus framed or organized solely around class distinctions and class struggles. Any other relationship between the characters arising from outside class distinction and class struggle such as kinship relationships or love relationships was considered as irrelevant and was to be stamped out or to be revised wherever possible. Many of the revolutionary historical themed literary and artistic works including *Tracks in Snowy Mountain*, *the Red Crag* and *The Red Lantern* underwent several rounds of revisions to fit in the frames of class distinctions or class struggles.

In *The Red Lantern* (Hong deng ji, 1970), one of the key revolutionary historical themed literary and artistic works, ties of blood (or blood ties) are deemed as a barrier to the real bond formed on the basis of class. To strictly apply the frames of class distinctions, the three main characters in the Li family in the story are made to be related to each other in this way: "Li Yuhe, a railroad worker who engages in underground work for the Communists in the Anti-Japanese War, adopts Li Tiemei, whose parents died as revolutionary martyrs. After his comrade-in-arms sacrificed his life for the revolutionary cause, Li looked after his comrade's mother and took her as his own mother. [After Japanese special agents took Li away due to the exposure of his communist identity by a renegade], Grandma Li reveals this special family relationship to Tiemei. This greatly inspires Tiemei to follow the example of her father and carry the revolution through to the end. *The Red Lantern* transformed the traditional human relations based on Confucian ethics, replacing them with a brand new class-consciousness and class relationship" (Q. Gong, 2011, p.143).

If relationships other than class-defined ones do appear in the stories they are there either to be sacrificed by the heroes for the sake of the class-based revolutionary ideals or to be condemned of the villains for their abuse of such relationships for their personal gain (Q. Gong, 2011; Y. Li, 2006; Tang, 1993; D.D.-W. Wang, 2000). Take for example Ding Ling's *The Sun Shines over the Sanggan*

River (1949). In the novel, the arch-villain Qian Wengui gets his son to join the Communist army and marries his daughter to the local cadre long before the land reform movement in the hope of keeping his land. Qian's intention to use the kinship-based personal relation network for his personal gain however fails, bringing him only more humiliation and loss. Cheng Ren, the newly appointed director of the land reform movement, is caught in the dilemma of his dedication to the Party and his love for Qian Wengui's niece Heini, but he eventually gives up all his personal feelings for the sake of revolutionary cause. In this case, both the heroes and villains are deprived of any other aspects of humanity as human beings such as love and kinship; what is left and highlighted is their class-based humanity. As David Der-Wei Wang has rightly observed, "if Qian Wengui [as a villain] is condemned for his lack of humanity, Cheng Ren [as a hero] is honoured because he can afford to lose his humanity]" (2000, p.45).

The application of the class and class struggle frames was carried to an extreme during the Cultural Revolution (Q. Gong, 2011; Y. Li, 2006). When one of the most popular novel *Tracks in Snowy Mountains* (which was written by Qu Bo in the 1950s) was brought onto the stage performance as an opera version entitled *Taking Tiger Mountain by Strategy* [*Zhiqiu Weihushan*], further revisions were made to fit in the rigid class and class struggles frames: the love relationships i.e. the love stories between one heroic figure Shao Jianbo and the army nurse Bai Xu were removed although this love relationship presents no harm to the revolutionary work Shao and Bai are devoted to; with Shao's hatred toward the bandits who killed his sister running the risk of turning a struggle between two classes into a traditional revenge story, this revenge plot was also removed.

As the central organizing ideas for the revolutionary historical themed stories, class consciousness and class struggle frames reduce the relationships between the characters to class-based relationships and the life of the characters to class-related activities—mainly class struggles. Such rigid application of class and class struggle frames to the stories thus strips the characters (both the heroes and villains) of any other aspects of humanity as an ordinary human being which include love, family, friendship, kinship and marriage and deprives them of any normal private secularized life concerns other than class struggles. As such, class consciousness and class struggle frames define the proletarian's problematic miserable life conditions as problems of class oppression, attribute the problems to various oppressors ranging from reactionary Nationalists and despotic feudal landlords, condemn the oppressors for their reactionary despotic cruel acts towards the proletarians, and

prescribe the Communist-led class struggle as the sole effective way to get the proletarians out of their oppression by the oppressors excluding any other alternative solution outside the realm of class struggle. To successfully struggle against the oppressors and to emancipate themselves from the oppression by the various oppressors, the proletarians should readily do away with or sacrifice any private personal life concerns including kinship, love, personal revenge against the oppressors and even their own life which may compromise their revolutionary struggle against the oppressors, making them hesitant in their struggle, just as Cheng Ren's love for landlord Qian Wengui's niece Heini has once made him hesitant in the class struggle against Qian in Ding Ling's *The Sun Shines over the Sanggan River*.

Class consciousness and class struggles frames and the binary oppositional structure discussed in the previous chapter combine to produce a highly dehumanized, politicized, oversimplified, black and white world in which characters are posed against each other simply because of their class nature. The proletarian heroes display exemplary behaviour or virtues featuring the essence of the proletarians while the villainous Nationalists and landlords display the deplorable acts and evil traits epitomizing the essence of the demons. Both the heroes and the villains have only class-based political struggles as their main life and activities with no private personal life concerns—with no love, no kinship, no marriage, and no friendship.

In the current post-reform era, class consciousness and class struggles as the central organizing frames have disappeared in the stories presented by the cultural products highly endorsed by the Party. In the place of class consciousness and class struggles frames are the traditional Chinese cultural frames. The subsequent section discusses how these stories are framed around the traditional Chinese cultural values by concentrating on the top Feitian Award-winning TV dramas—the dominant form of stories highly thought of by the Party.

6.3 Culturally-framed Stories of the Current Post-reform Era

Since Deng Xiaoping-led CPC leadership's introduction of reform and open door policy in the late 1970s, political control over the cultural realm has been relatively relaxed and cultural productions consequently have been toward diversity and openness (Barme, 1999; Q. Gong, 2011).

Produced under the Party's relaxation in political control over the cultural realm, TV dramas as the most popular story-telling cultural programs among all cultural products in the current post-reform era are very different from the revolutionary historical themed literary and artistic works of the Maoist era.

They demonstrate more diversification with regard to the coverage of subject matters concerned. The subject matters of the top Feitian Award-winning TV dramas under study range from the Party's revolutionary history from the 1920s up to the year 1949, the Party's socialist construction before the country's reform and open door policy in the late 1970s, the Party-initiated economic reforms since the late 1970s, familial history, familial life to the personal growth of the young people. These different themed TV dramas no longer feature class and class struggles as the main content and the main focus, but cover instead love, family, marriage, friendship, other human relations in the private sphere, emotions, career development and other aspects of secularized life concerns with some dramas concentrating on love, some on familial relations, some on marriage, some on friendships, and some others on different aspects of secularized life concerns. Also, these TV dramas feature as protagonists people from different social strata, including intellectuals, business entrepreneurs, farmers, workers, soldiers, young people, unlike the literary and artistic works of the Maoist era which overwhelmingly take the peasants, workers and soldiers as preferable candidates for protagonists. In addition, although these TV dramas cover conflicts of one kind or another and to this extent resemble the revolutionary historical themed literary and artistic works of the Maoist era which feature class-based conflicts or class struggle as the dominant theme and content, these TV dramas highlight the process of solving these conflicts which very often involves non-violent means taking violence only as the last resort, in stark contrast to the revolutionary historical themed literary and artistic works of the Maoist era which resort overwhelmingly to violence or struggle as the only solution to the problems covered. Besides covering different subject matters, themes, content, protagonists and conflicts, these TV dramas also distinguish themselves from the literary and artistic works of the Maoist eras by their distinctive presentation. They are not only structured around a network pattern but are all also organized around the traditional Chinese cultural values.

Following the previous chapter's discussion of how TV dramas under study are structured around a network pattern, this section will show how these network patterned TV dramas are framed around the traditional Chinese cultural values by concentrating on five TV dramas—*Yan'an Song*, *The Road We Have Taken*, *Soldier Sortie*, *Xi Gengtian's Story* and *Beautiful Daughter-in-laws*. The discussion

covers three aspects—the problems covered by the dramas, the network of relationships established among the characters in their efforts to solve the problems as well as the solution to the problems.

6.3.1 Culturally Defined Problems

First of all, the traditional Chinese cultural frames define the problems covered by the TV dramas under study in a way different from the literary and artistic works of the Maoist era. In five case-studied TV dramas, the problematic issues covered are no longer defined as resulting from class distinctions—the oppression of one class by the other—as those presented by the literary and artistic works of the Maoist era were defined. In *Beautiful Daughter-in-laws*, the problematic tense relationships between Doudou (as daughter-in-law) and Cao (as mother-in-law), between Doudou (as sister-in-law) and Yu Hao (as sister-in-law) are depicted as resulting from cultural differences – individuals' different ways and attitudes of life arising from certain life circumstances. Cao's various fault-finding behaviours toward Doudou, ranging from her dislike of Doudou's close association with Yao Jing to her fury at Doudou's well-intentioned plan to find for her a place in the most luxurious old people's home, all result from Cao's difficult life conditions—Cao's suffering from her ex-husband's extra-marital affairs with Yao Jing in her first marriage, Cao's unhappy second marriage with Yang Shu and Cao's depression upon Yang's death and Yang's will to be buried with his deceased former-wife upon his death. Yu Hao's persistent hostility toward Doudou results from their first unpleasant meeting at Yu Wei's flat, from Yu Hao's depression about losing her beloved husband the following day after their marriage, from her unhappy relationship with her father Yu Hongshui, and from Yu Hao's fear of losing her brother's love upon his marriage with Doudou. In *Soldier Sortie*, the problematic issues – Xu Sanduo's difficulty in acquiring the required military skills and the psychological hardships Xu suffers—are attributed to his extreme clumsiness in learning and the resultant self-abasement coupled with the contempt for him by most of his fellow soldiers. Similarly, the various problematic issues encountered by Xi Gengtian in his attempts to grow crops in his home village in *Xi Gengtian's Story* are also attributed to different personal life circumstances. The opposition from Xi's wife Xiulan and Xi's son Qingshan to his farming the contracted land upon Sangu's offer to buy Xi's contracted land at a high price and upon Sangu's profitable sand-digging project are due to Xiulan and Qingshan's desire to make more money out of the land through pragmatic means rather than farming. Xi's difficulty in establishing an agricultural economic cooperative in his village (mainly the villagers' lack of interest in joining the cooperative) is attributed to the villagers' concern with the potential risk involved in selling all the crops-to-be-produced and to

their self-interest-oriented worry that they will end up working for Xi rather than benefitting from the cooperative. Shuanzi's mother's social security problem is attributed to Shuanzi and his wife's, particularly his wife's reluctance to take care of her for her old age and lack of money. Chouwa's educational problem stems from the lack of due adequate care and guidance for a child of his age from his family—his mother died when he was still a baby, his father Liuzi works in the city and his grandmother is too old to look after him. In the two case-studied revolutionary themed TV dramas—*Yan'an Song* and *The Road We Have Taken*, the problematic KMT-CPC conflict in contemporary China's history is no longer defined as a class struggle between two parties representing two different classes with the CPC standing for the proletarians and the KMT standing for the oppressive class but rather as a bi-party conflict stemming from two parties' different political beliefs. The Japanese invasion is described as the national crisis posed by the foreign invasive forces rather than by class conflicts within the country. Other problematic issues such as the CPC's excesses of the Purification Campaign arise from some party members' erroneously carrying the campaign to extremes. Some other problems related to secularized concerns such as Mao's break-up with his second wife He Zizhen are attributed to the characters' personal cultural differences among which is their different attitudes towards foreign dancing practiced by Maoist leadership at the suggestion of the visiting American journalist Agnes Smedley. Mao regards acquisition of foreign dancing as a communication strategy essential to the CPC's future cause while He considers foreign dancing as a bourgeoisie way of life that is likely to corrupt Mao and strongly frowns upon his dancing with Smedley and her Chinese interpreter Wu.

By defining the problematic issues covered by the TV dramas as resulting from personal cultural differences rather than from class differences, the traditional Chinese cultural frames suggest that the problems can be addressed by means other than class struggle. Such definition of the problematic issues has important implications when many of the social problems in today's China such as those related to education, housing and healthcare actually result directly from the unfairly class-based institutional system within which the cadres enjoy many more benefits and many more resources than the majority of the ordinary populace and within which the urbanites are more privileged than the overwhelming large rural population. It wisely if not effectively directs the populace's attention away from the real causes of the social problems and gives time for the Party to seek solutions rather than the radical form of class struggle to avoid triggering the social unrest which is likely to explode at any moment given the fact that the great differences between the

wealthy elite, a small but growing well-off middle class and the mass of marginalized populace resulting from the Party-state's unchecked market-oriented economic development have made social conflicts and social parity become a real issue in the country and have made class struggle a solid reality (Q. Gong, 2011; Y.-Z. Zhao, 2008).

6.3.2 Culturally Defined Interpersonal Relationships

Besides defining the nature of the problems covered, traditional Chinese cultural frames also define the essence of the network of relationships among the characters as the embodiment of certain traditional Chinese cultural values. All five case-studied top Feitian award-winning dramas, like the other top Feitian award-winning dramas under study, highlight the process of the main characters', especially the core character's making efforts to solve the problems they come across. And the events covering this process of problem-solving are all elaborated through a network of interpersonal relationships formed among the characters, particularly the relationships the core character establishes with other characters in the problem-overcoming process. Underlying and woven into the network of interpersonal relationships are the various traditional Chinese cultural values since highlighted in this network of relationships are the embrace and practice of these various traditional Chinese cultural values by the characters involved, particularly by the core characters so as to solve the various problems they encounter.

In the core character Xu Sanduo's experience in the 7th Steel Company in *Soldier Sortie*, Shi Jin's persistent supportive relationship toward Xu by giving clumsy Xu patient step-by-step guidance with regard to Xu's acquisition of almost all the military skills/techniques and by giving unconfident Xu brotherly encouragement for every small bit of progress made by Xu is organized around such traditional Chinese cultural notions as benevolence, keeping promises, persistence and fraternity. Underlying Shi's support for Xu is an embodiment of Shi's benevolence toward Xu, a fulfilment of the promise Shi has made to Xu's father that he will develop Xu into a decent and competent soldier, and the embrace and practice of persistence and fraternity—the essence of the 7th Steel Company's spirit of 'never giving up yourself and never abandoning your fellow soldiers'. Xu's brotherly, trustful and reliant relationship toward Shi is organized around benevolence, persistence and fraternity since Xu's brotherhood, trust and reliance toward Shi results directly from Shi's persistent benevolence and fraternity toward him. The transformation of the initial hostility, contempt and rejection toward Xu by Gao Cheng (the company commander), Wu Liuyi and other fellow soldiers due to Xu's extreme

clumsiness in learning the required military skills into their subsequent appreciation and acceptance of Xu is organized around persistence and industry because underlying this transformation is Gao, Wu and other soldiers' appreciation of Xu's persistence and industry, with which Xu has acquired gradual but outstanding progress, stunning Shi, Gao, Wu and Xu's other fellow soldiers in the company, and with which Xu Sanduo has eventually won recognition and acceptance from the whole company. The network of relationships presented in other events in the drama is also organized around traditional Chinese cultural virtues. Yuan Lang's ostensibly abusive but actually fraternal relationship toward Xu and other trainee soldiers in the A-Squad-Training episode is organized around persistence and fraternity in that the aim of Yuan's inhumane training is to train Xu and other soldiers to acquire such traditional Chinese good virtues as persistence and fraternity and that Xu and Wu Zhe are invited by Yuan to join the A Squad for their embrace and practise of such good virtues during the training while Cheng Cai is rejected for his lack of such good virtues. The supportive relationship toward Xu by his fellow soldiers and his commanders, particularly from Yuan Lang and Gao Cheng, in the psychological-breakdown episode is organized around fraternity since the episode highlights the fraternal support to Xu from his fellow soldiers and his commanders to help him recover from the psychological shock of killing a drug trafficker in his first military mission. Xu's supportive relationships toward his hometown fellow and friend Cheng Cai in the Cheng-Cai's-Return-to-A- Squad episode is organized around fraternity and persistence in that the episode highlights Xu's persistent persuasion of Yuan until the latter's agreement to give chance to the already transformed Cheng Cai, and Xu's persistence in carrying on his mission despite his severe wound to help Cheng Cai out during a high-tech manoeuvre so that Cheng Cai has a better chance of staying in A Squad after the completion of the manoeuvre.

In *Yan'an Song*, patriotism underlies the various supportive relationships toward Maoist CPC leadership by Chinese people of different social strata since these relationships highlight and result from the latter's embrace of patriotism and the latter's appreciation of the former's embrace and practice of patriotism which is embodied in Mao's construction and practice of the national united front policy to deal with the national survival crisis posed by the Japanese aggression. The relationships listed as follows all highlight and result from the embrace and practice of patriotism by the characters involved:

- ✚ the secret cooperative relationship among Maoist CPC leadership, General Zhang and General Yang in the Mao-initiated construction of the North-West Tripartite Alliance,

- ✦ Zhang-Yang's disrespectful relationship toward Chiang in the Xi'an Incident by kidnapping the latter to force him to join the CPC to confront the Japanese invasion,
- ✦ Maoist CPC leadership's magnanimous relationship toward Chiang in the incident by negotiating his release and his promise to cooperate with the CPC to confront the Japanese aggression,
- ✦ the loosely cooperative-oppositional relationship between Maoist CPC leadership and Chiang-led KMT regime during the anti-Japanese war period,
- ✦ the supportive relationship toward Maoist CPC leadership by the Chinese intelligentsia such as Ding Ling and Xian Xinghai with their coming to work at Yan'an Lu Xun Academy of Literature and Fine Arts,
- ✦ the enlightened gentry Mr Li Dingming's supportive relationship toward Mao with his active participation in the CPC's Second Yan'an Frontier Administration Election,
- ✦ Chen Jiagen's supportive and appreciative relationship toward Mao at the end of his Yan'an visit
- ✦ the supportive relationship toward Maoist CPC leadership by other Chinese people.

Fraternity and sincerity underlie the supportive and friendly relationships between Mao and his close associates for such relationships highlight and are the result of their embrace and practice of mutual brotherhood and trust. The supportive and respectful relationship by the Chinese populace toward Mao, and Mao's compassion and care for the Chinese populace highlight and result from Mao's embrace and practice of people-orientedness and the appreciation of Mao's people-orientedness by the Chinese populace.

In *Xi Gengtian's Story*, Xi Gengtian's caring relationship toward Chouwa is organized around such traditional Chinese cultural values as keeping one's word and protecting the young for highlighted in Xi's relationship toward Chouwa are Xi's strenuous attempts to take care of, to protect and get the idle astray young Chouwa back to the right track, and Xi's fulfilment of the promise he has made to Liuzi that he will help take care of Chouwa for Liuzi after his return to the village. Xi's act of helping and protecting Wensheng embodies such traditional Chinese practices as showing lenience to the erring people and protecting the young while Wensheng's support to Xi by helping Xi to build a greenhouse emphasizes the traditional Chinese practice of returning hospitality and gratitude that one has received. Xi's supportive relationship toward Shuanzi's mother and his confrontational relationship toward Jiuxian who refuses to take care of Shuanzi's mother because of the latter's old age and lack of money emphasize the Chinese tradition of respecting and taking care of the elderly. The supportive relationship toward Xi and other villagers by such party leaders as Mr Li and Mr Niu is organized around the traditional Chinese notion of benevolent governance for the relationship

highlights the party leaders' attempt to minimize their intervention into the affairs of the villagers and to offer help and support whenever necessary to solve the various social problems for the villagers.

In *Beautiful Daughter-in-laws*, Doudou's persistent kindness, respect and tolerance toward her difficult fault-finding mother-in-law Cao Xinmei at all times, Cao's eventual acceptance of Doudou, and Doudou's supportive relationship towards her parents are organized around and are an embodiment of the traditional Chinese cultural practice of filial piety. Doudou's supportive relationship toward her 1st sister-in-law Qin Susu and her 2nd sister-in-law Meili is organized around such traditional Chinese cultural virtues as sincerity and kindness. Meili's relationship toward Doudou's parents is also organized around traditional Chinese cultural practice of showing filial respect to the elderly for the relationship highlights Meili's efforts to take care of her parents-in-law at all times and the total trust she thus wins from them with Meili being entrusted by them with the right to manage the whole family affairs.

In *The Road We Have Taken*, the oppositional-cooperative-brotherly relationship between Liqing and his brother Liren during the anti-Japanese war embodies such traditional Chinese cultural values as loyalty to one belief, patriotism, and brotherly love for the two brothers' fighting for their political belief, working together to confront the Japanese aggression and for the two brothers' brotherly love for each other. The oppositional-fraternal relationship between Fan Xiliang and Liqing during the KMT-CPC civil war embodies such traditional Chinese cultural values as loyalty to one's belief and fraternity for the two fighting for their own cause and for the two showing fraternal care during their fighting with each other. The cooperative-fraternal relationship between Fan and Liqing during the anti-Japanese war embodies such traditional Chinese cultural values as patriotism and classmately fraternity for cooperating with each other for the sake of fighting the Japanese invasion and for showing fraternal care for each other for their once being classmates and good friends. In the previous mentioned event in the drama –Liqing's coming to Chongqing to get married with Lin Er—the harmonious relationship among Lin Er, Liqing, Liren, and Lihua in front of Lao Yang and his wife Mei at dinner is an embodiment of traditional Chinese practice of filial piety (by the four children toward Lao Yang) for the four children's efforts to make their father happy by avoiding any demonstration of either their political differences or their sophisticated personal emotional entanglement with each other.

In a word, with the traditional Chinese cultural values being the central organizing ideas for the various events covering different problematic issues in different dramas, the various relationships established among the characters, particularly those highlighted relationships between the core character and other characters, are presented as resulting from the embrace and practice of certain traditional Chinese cultural values by the characters involved, rather than as resulting from class distinctions—which was the case with those binary oppositional relationships presented in the literary and artistic works of the Mao's era. As such, Mao and the CPC he represents in *Yan'an Song* are portrayed to embrace and practice such traditional Chinese cultural virtues as patriotism, wisdom, people-orientedness, self-reliance, humility, fraternity, and kinship love. Liqing in *The Road We Have Taken* is shown to embrace and practice such traditional Chinese cultural virtues as loyalty (to his political belief), patriotism, filial piety, benevolence, fraternity and kinship love. Doudou in *Beautiful-daughter-in-laws* is shown to embrace and practice such traditional Chinese cultural virtues as filial piety, sincerity, compassion, tolerance and generosity. Xu Sanduo in *Soldier Sortie* is shown to embrace and practice such traditional Chinese cultural virtues as persistence, benevolence, industry, and fraternity. Xi Gengtian in *Xi Gengtian's Story* is shown to embrace and practice such traditional Chinese virtues as perseverance, lenience to others, tolerance, hardworking, pragmatism, readiness to help and protect others especially those who err, respecting the elderly, protecting the young, benevolence, generosity, a strong sense of collective interest. With the embrace and practice of these various traditional Chinese cultural virtues by the characters involved, particularly by the core character, different kinds of relationships, including but not confining to oppositional relationships, are formed between the core character and other characters.

Traditional Chinese cultural virtues accommodate not only the relationships within the public politicized domain (e.g. patriotism defines the cooperation between the communist Liqing and the Nationalist Liren to confront the Japanese aggression during the anti-Japanese war period in *The Road We Have Taken*) but also the relationships within the secularized domain (e.g. the kinship relationship within Old Yang family, fraternity between Liqing and his WMA classmates, love relationships between Liqing and Lihua in the same drama) sometimes integrating the relationships in both political and secularized domain (e.g. the sophisticated interwoven relationships previously discussed in the event of Liqing's Coming to Get Married and Work at Chongqing). As such, they help restore to the characters the various aspects of humanity including love, friendship, fraternity, kinship and other personal relations, all of which have been suppressed by the literary and artistic

works of the Maoist era due to the rigid application of socialist realism to these works. As a result of the application of the more accommodating traditional Chinese cultural frames, the life of the characters in the current cultural products is not restricted to activities within the public political domain but is often extended to the activities beyond the public political domain for example activities related to various secularized life concerns. Characters portrayed this way live a life more or less the same as that of today's audience—with work, with love, with family, with friends and with other secularized life concerns—and are connected with one another in different ways depending on their embrace and practise of certain traditional Chinese cultural virtues rather than being posed in opposition with one another due to different class status.

6.3.3 Culturally Defined Solutions

Besides defining the various interpersonal relationships among the characters as embodiment of certain traditional Chinese cultural values, traditional Chinese cultural frames also define the solutions to the various problems covered as such that traditional Chinese cultural values are to great extent defined as the solution to the various problems since the highlighted relationships among the characters, especially the core character's relationship with others, which results from the embrace and practice of certain traditional Chinese cultural values, have contributed to or resulted in the solution of the problems covered.

In *Soldier Sortie*, the various problems the core character Xu Sanduo experiences in the army are largely solved due to the embrace and practice of some traditional Chinese cultural values by Xu himself and by his fellow soldiers and commanders toward him. In the previously mentioned Xu's experience in the 7th Steel Company, the two main problems Xu encounters—difficulty in acquiring the required military skills due to his clumsiness and slowness, and the resultant rejection of him by the company commander Gao Cheng and most of his fellow soldiers—are overcome largely due to Shi Jin's persistent and fraternal support (with Xu's own persistence and industry also playing an essential part in his overcoming of the problems). It is with Shi Jin's almost self-sacrificing benevolent, persistent and fraternal guidance and encouragement both inside and outside the usual military training hours that Xu picks up his confidence, persists and works hard, gradually acquires and masters the required military skills, and eventually wins the recognition and acceptance from the whole company. In other words, Shi Jin's embrace and practise of benevolence, persistence and fraternity toward Xu (in combination with Shi Jin-induced Xu's persistence and industry) has

contributed to Xu's acquisition and mastery of the required military skills and to his gaining the whole company's acceptance. The fraternal support from Xu's fellow soldiers and senior commanders Gao Cheng and Yuan Lang, particularly from Gao and Yuan, has helped Xu recover from his psychological shock of killing a trafficker for the first time in his life. Fraternal support from his fellow soldiers (in the form of financial help) also helps Xu to solve his family problem.

In *Beautiful Daughter-in-laws*, Doudou's filial duty toward her difficult mother-in-law Cao Xinmei by showing persistent kindness, understanding, tolerance and respect toward Cao eventually transforms the tense relationship between Doudou and Cao into a harmonious one between them with Doudou eventually winning Cao's heart and acceptance. Doudou's persistent kindness, understanding and tolerance toward her sister-in-law Yu Hao gradually dissolves Yu Hao's hostility toward her and wins Yu Hao's respect and friendship. Meili's filial piety towards her parents-in-laws (Doudou's parents) has removed the latter's prejudice toward her for her being from the countryside and has rewarded Meili with the latter's total trust of her by the latter's entrusting her with the right to manage the family affairs.

In *Xi Gengtian's Story*, Xi Gengtian's supportive relationship toward Shuanzi's mother (Mother Wang), which is shown in his tricking Shuanzi's wife Jiuxian into taking care of Wang and in his getting compensation on Wang's behalf from the fodder company for its illegal use of Wang's paper-cut pig pattern as the trademark, embodies the traditional Chinese virtue of respecting the elderly and has greatly helped solve Wang's old-age care problem. With Xu's tricking Jiuxian, Wang is taken care of temporarily by Jiuxian and Shuanzi. Upon Wang's being left in the care of the village committee as the aged childless due to Wang's being forced by Jiuxian to sever her relationship with Shuanzi, Xu tries to get compensation for Wang from the fodder company so as for Wang to live a better life with it. With the compensation, which Xi has managed to get from the fodder company and which Wang donated all to the village committee, Wang moves into and lives a better life in the new home specially built for the aged and childless villagers by the village committee using part of the compensation. Thus Xi's embrace and practice of traditional Chinese virtue of respecting the elderly helps solve Wang's social security issue as well as that of the other aged and childless people in the village. Xi Gengtian's support for Chouwa, embodying the traditional Chinese cultural virtues of protecting the young and keeping one's word, also helps to solve Chouwa's education problem for Chouwa eventually gets back to school and becomes a transformed boy, considerate of

others upon Xi's several attempts to help him—no longer an idle and astray boy. Xi's eventual establishment of an agricultural economic cooperative in his village, which signifies Xi's ultimate success in his farming career, is made possible because of Xi's embrace and practice of various traditional Chinese cultural values such as devotion to and perseverance in farming, industry, generosity to help others, lenience toward others, the practice of requiting favours toward Xi by such villagers as Ling'ai, the practice of benevolent governance by Erhu, Mr Li and Mr Niu toward Xi, etc.

In *Yan'an Song*, the biggest problem confronting the Chinese nation—the national survival crisis posed by the Japanese invasion—eventually got solved due to the embrace and practice of patriotism by different social strata in China embodied in the CPC's initiated national united front policy against the Japanese invasion. In the macro-grand national narrative of the CPC-KMT competing attempts to solve the pressing problems then confronting China—chaos and fragmentation created by the fighting warlords and the foreign imperialism—in *The Road We Have Taken*, the CPC eventually wins out over the KMT to found and to become the governing party of, the new nation i.e. the PRC for its embrace and practice of such traditional Chinese cultural virtues as benevolent governance, patriotism, people-orientedness, wisdom, pragmatism and bravery.

Almost all the problems covered, ranging from the national survival crisis confronting the Chinese nation, the Party's survival crisis, the intra-Party problems in *Yan'an Song*, through the KMT-CPC conflict and interpersonal emotional entanglements in *The Road We Have Road*, the problems in the countryside in *Xi Gengtian's Story*, the tense relationship between mother-in-laws and daughter-in-laws in *Beautiful Daughter-in-laws*, down to the problems a new recruit encounters in his growth in the army in *Soldier Sortie*, end up being solved largely due to the embrace and practice of certain traditional Chinese cultural virtues by the characters involved, particularly by the core characters.

The traditional Chinese cultural values highlighted in the award-winning TV dramas, however, are not exactly the same as those practiced in ancient and pre-modern China. Set in the various contemporary Chinese contexts where various social problems/issues are covered, these traditional Chinese cultural values have been appropriated to take on new meanings.

One example concerns the traditional Chinese practice of valuing agriculture, exemplified through various forms of Chinese' attachment to farming such as devotion to, perseverance in and industry in farming the land. Being a continental and agrarian country, China has had thousands-year-long

tradition of emphasizing agriculture as the root of the country's economy development while slighting commerce as the branch of the country's economy development (Fung & Bodde, c1976; Rainey, 2010). For this reason, the country's various philosophical thoughts have all highlighted the practices or values attached to the development of agriculture and to those engaged in the agriculture such as farmers' attachment or devotion to land and farmers' industry and persistence in farming while devaluing those associated with commerce such as self-interest, profiting oneself and gain (ibid). Being a farmer has been extolled as an honourable job while being a merchant has been made an undignified job (ibid). Such a tradition has led to the deep-rooted notion or practice of emphasizing agriculture and slighting commerce throughout Chinese history until the collapse of the last dynasty—Qing Dynasty (ibid). For thousands of years in China, Chinese people have devoted to farming land for the exclusive purpose of self-sustenance rather than for exchange with others. In the rural-themed TV drama *Xi Gengtian's Story* where China's economy has already been marketised, the practice of prioritizing agriculture to the marginalization/suppression of commerce has been updated to take on a new meaning. Agriculture is still emphasized in the country's economy. Such emphasis, however, is no longer to slight but to compliment commerce or vice versa. Agricultural products such as grains, fish and vegetables are now produced mainly for the purpose of exchange. In other words, agricultural industry is increasingly developed for commercial purposes. Commercial activities, which have long been disparaged in Chinese history, are now considered to be an integral part of and are promoted to help with the development of the country's agricultural development. In the agricultural economic cooperative project which Xi Gengtian and Sangui have jointly established in *Xi Gengtian's Story*, Xi is mainly responsible for the production of agricultural products while Sangui's main responsibility is to work out channels to market these agricultural products. In this case, such commercial practices as marketing are presented as essential to and complimentary to the agricultural development. What the drama has emphasized with regard to the commercial activities is earning profit or income through various commercial activities in a righteous way while depreciating the act of profiting through illegal or improper commercial activities. When Xi is asked by the general manager of a provincial food company to advertise the company's agricultural products in a misleading way, Xi refused angrily. Xi refused to sign a business contract with the company after he discovers the company's attempt to use his fame to deceive customers although this contract can earn him a lot of money. When the same general manager of the same company offered to cooperate with Xi-and-Sangui's-joint economic cooperative, Xi refuses the offer right away

at the very beginning. Xi agrees to cooperate with the company only after his knowledge of the company's sincerity in cooperation. Xi's first experience with the food company and his later experience with the same company highlight righteous profit-making commercial practice.

Another example of appropriation of traditional Chinese cultural values concerns the notion of filial piety. Traditionally, filial service from children (including sons, daughters, daughter-in-laws, sons-in-laws etc.) toward their elders (ranging from their parents, parents-in-law, other elders within the same family to elders outside the family), very often implies and has been practiced to mean one-way obedience from children toward their elders (Chu & Yu, 2010; Knapp, 2004; J-L. Liu, 2006; Lo, 2004; Nuyen, 2004; Rainey, 2010; Tan, 2004). Put it another way, children's filial duty towards their elders means the elders demanding absolute and unconditional obedience from the children or the children showing absolute and unconditional obedience toward their elders with regard to almost everything including children's career and marriage partners (ibid). The picture of filial devotion given by the award-winning TV dramas is quite otherwise.

On the one hand, filial children do not show blind filial obedience towards their elders. Rather they show or seek independence with regard to different aspects of personal life including their choice of spouses and careers. The dramas apparently highlights the various forms of filial conducts of the main characters toward their elders—Qingshan's persistent and strenuous attempts to help his father Xi Gengtian with farming despite his interest in other jobs in *Xi Gengtian's Story*, Doudou's persistent understanding, tolerance and respect toward her mother-in-law Cao despite the latter's fault-finding and eccentric behaviour toward her in *Beautiful Daughters-in-law*, and Old Yang's children's putting aside their political differences and their sophisticated personal emotional entanglement in Old Yang's presence in *The Road We Have Taken*. Alongside these various filial behaviours, however, are the different forms of independence or freedom by the same characters with regard to various aspects of their personal life over which they disagree with their elders. *Xi Gengtian's Story* presents Qingshan's persistence in his relationship with Gaihua despite Xi's objection to it. *Beautiful Daughters-in-law* shows Doudou's coaxing her parents into approving of her marriage with Yu Wei upon their opposition due to Yu Wei's sophisticated familial relationship. *The Road We Have Taken* depicts Old Yang's children's pursuit of different conflicting political believes, different revolutionary work and thus confrontation among them in the absence of Old Yang. Hence, the dramas present a

combination of children's filial conduct toward their elders with their insistence in independence or freedom with regard to their personal lives.

On the other hand, the award-winning dramas show the loosening, if not the total absence, of the elders' practice of excessive demand of obedience from their children. *Daughters-in-law* shows Cao's coaxing Doudou to be kind to her son Yu Wei by giving Doudou as a gift the priceless bracelet which she herself has cherished very much, by apologizing to Doudou for her daughter Yu Hao's hostility toward her, by gently warning Doudou against the difficult lives confronted by the remarried couples such as herself and Yang Shu, and by promising to give Yu Wei and thus to Doudou her years of savings which she has deliberately shown Doudou. The same drama also shows Doudou's parents' giving their full support to their daughter-in-law Meili's plan to run a flower shop and scolding their son Mao Feng for his opposition to the plan. *Xi Gengtian's Story* depicts Xi's eventually giving his consent to Qingshan's relationship with Gaihua due to Qingshan and Gaihua's persistence in and devotion to their relationship despite his initial disapproval which results from Gaihua's mother Ma Cuilian's meddling in the relationship. *The Road We Have Taken* shows Old Yang's giving freedom and independence to his children and showing understanding of them with regard to their political beliefs and their personal lives despite his knowledge of the inevitable confrontation among them due to their different political beliefs. In these above examples, elders are no longer portrayed as domineering as their traditional counterparts who demanded absolute obedience from their children. They coax rather than force their children to do what they want them to do, show understanding or recognition of the children's independence and freedom, and even give freedom and independence to their children with regard to different aspects of the latter's personal life.

Excessive practices of filiality are rare with some few exceptions such as Xi Gengtian's patriarchal attitude toward Qingshan's relationship with Gaihua in *Xi Gengtian's Story* and Xu Sandou's resigned acceptance of his father's non-stop beating of him and of his father's persistent cursing him as a turtle's son in the recruitment episode of *Soldier Sortie*. When such excesses are shown, they are all depicted in a negative light.

With some dramas such as *Beautiful-Daughters-in-law* which concentrates on the relationship between mothers-in-law and daughters-in-law, there is a feministic rendering of filiality. Traditionally, Chinese daughters-in-law relied financially upon their husbands and stayed at home as full-time housewives, managing the household affairs in general and serving their parents-in-law in particular

(J.-L. Liu, 2006; Lo, 2004; Tan, 2004). Unlike their traditional counterparts, both daughters-in-laws Doudou and Meili in *Beautiful Daughters-in-law* take up work outside and are thus financially independent. They of course still need to take up the household responsibility including taking care of their parents-in-law but they balance their job responsibility with their household responsibility including taking care of their parents-in-law. When her mother-in-law Cao becomes paralyzed due to the her loss of huge investment in the fraudulent woodland project, Doudou tries her utmost to take care of Cao, getting Meili's sister to help nurse Cao when she is at work, and taking care of Cao herself when she is off work. In the case of Meili, she does not have a job before her marriage. After her marriage to Mao Feng, she opens a flower shop herself with the support of her parents-in-law. As is the case with Doudou, Meili balances her job with her household responsibilities including care-taking of her parents-in-law. Her parents-in-law are so pleased with what she has done that they entrust her with the management of the household affairs. Moreover, daughters-in-laws such as Doudou are seen to remonstrate gently with their mothers-in-law, as evidenced by Doudou's gentle remonstrations with Cao when the latter cooks only vegetables for the whole family so as to save money and when the latter fakes a headache and asks Doudou to ask for a sick leave to look after her. This contrasts sharply with the traditional rigid filial requirement of daughters-in-law that they obey their mothers-in-laws on all occasions even when the latter are wrong.

Another example of new appropriation of traditional Chinese cultural values concerns the notion of brotherly respect (ti). Traditionally, brotherly respect implies one-way obedience from the younger brother toward the elder brother (Fung & Bodde, 1976; J.-L. Liu, 2006; Rainey, 2010). *The Road We Have Taken* has given a different picture of the relationship between the two brothers in the Yang family—Liqing the younger brother and Liren the elder brother. Between the two brothers is a sophisticated mixture—an integration of mutual affection with mutual independence, mutual equality and mutual antagonism. Moreover, Liqing sometimes shows defiant and challenging attitude toward Liren while Liren sometimes shows a contemptuous attitude toward Liqing. In other words, nowhere is seen the traditional one-way obedience from the younger brother toward the elder brother.

Other examples of appropriation of traditional Chinese cultural values concern Daoist non-pursuit of wealth and fame. Whereas the Daoist non-pursuit of wealth and fame in ancient and pre-modern China has been practiced to avoid service in the (often corrupt) imperial government so as to avoid harm to oneself (Hucker, 1975; J.-L. Liu, 2006), the same notion shown in the award-winning TV

dramas such as *Xi Shengdi* and *Five-Star Red Flag Flying In the Wind* has been appropriated to mean better service for the government which is led and represented by the CPC. The scientists in the second drama, for example, willingly conceal their real names and identities so as to devote themselves to the development of China's first nuclear bomb, first hydrogen bomb and first satellite. Similarly, Yang Dashui in the first drama has willingly given up various opportunities to be promoted so as to devote himself to the development of the oilfields in the remote areas in China.

All in all, various traditional Chinese cultural values such as filiality, brotherly deference and generosity have been updated to take on meanings different from those practised in ancient and pre-modern China. It is these newly rendered traditional Chinese cultural values that have been presented to help solve, if not completely solve, the various social problems covered in the award-winning dramas.

6.4 From Class-defined Stories to Culturally-framed Stories

From the class-defined stories of the literary and artistic works of the Maoist era to the culturally-framed stories of the top Feitian Award winning TV dramas of the current post-reform era, there have been significant changes in the Party-state's political communication.

First of all is the change from the domination of class struggle discourse in such cultural products as the literary and artistic works of the Maoist era to the downplaying if not the total disappearance of class struggle discourse in the top Feitian Award-winning TV dramas particularly in the revolutionary-themed genre where class and class struggle used to be the dominant theme.

Class and class struggle concepts had been an essential part of the Party's ideology up to the Party's reform and open-door policy in the late 1970s (Barme, 1999; Brady, 2008; Brady & Wang, 2009; Q. Gong, 2011; Kraus, 2012; Y. Li, 2006; Wang & Connery, 2006; X.-L. Zhang, c2011). They had been used by the Party to successfully mobilize the majority of the Chinese populace to support and participate in the Party-led revolutionary struggle against the Nationalist regime, successfully take power from the nationalists, found a new nation—the PRC in 1949 and eventually become the governing party of this new nation (ibid). During the three decades after the founding of the PRC, class and class struggle-based ideology continued to be used by the Party first to guide the transformation of the capitalist industry into the state-owned enterprises in the cities and the land

reform movements in the countryside and subsequently to launch the decade-long disastrous Cultural Revolution (1966-1976) in the country (ibid).

Class and class struggle-based ideology not only dominated the Party's work during the whole Maoist era but also penetrated the entire cultural realm during the same period (ibid). As have been previously discussed, all the cultural products including the literary and artistic works, which narrated either the Party's history and the origin of the PRC or the Party-led social transformation after the founding of the PRC, featured class and class struggle as the dominant and the only valid theme and content, defining the problems covered as of class nature (i.e. as the oppression of one class by the other class), organizing the relationships between fictional characters around class consciousness and class struggle, and presenting class struggle as the sole solution to the problems covered.

Had it not been for the disastrous consequences caused by the Cultural Revolution, class-based ideology would probably continue to be practised by the Party as its dominant ideology and class struggle discourse would thus likewise continue to dominate the cultural products today. The destructiveness caused by the Cultural Revolution, however, led to the social disillusion with the class struggle-based ideology in the country and with the Party which had launched the class-struggle-based Cultural Revolution, almost costing the Party its trust, its credibility as well as its legitimacy among the populace in the country (Barme, 1999; Brady, 2008; Brady & Wang, 2009; Q. Gong, 2011; Kraus, 2012; Wang & Connery, 2006; X.-L. Zhang, c2011). Not long after the end of the Cultural Revolution—in the late 1970s, Deng Xiaoping-led leadership shifted the Party's focus from class struggle to economic development with its reform and opening policy, signifying the official abandonment of and the gradual dissolution of the class-based ideology in the Party's governing practice. The following Jiang Zemin-led leadership and Hu Jingtao-led leadership continued the pursuit of the neoliberal practice in the economic realm initiated by Dengist leadership, further dissolving the class-based ideology in the country (ibid). Accompanying the Party's abandonment and dissolution of class-based ideology have been the downplaying if not the total erasure of class and class struggle discourse in the cultural products in the country since the late 1970s (ibid).

In the current cultural products of the post-reform era such as the top Feitian award-TV dramas under study, class and class struggle discourse have been largely downplayed. In the contemporary realist category of TV dramas such as *Beautiful Daughter-in-laws*, *Soldier Sortie* and *Xi Gengtian's Story*, there are no traces of class and class struggle discourse. As has been briefly discussed

above , almost all the problems covered in these dramas are no longer presented as resulting from class differences but rather as resulting from personal differences; character's relationships with one another including binary oppositional relationships are no longer organized around class consciousness or class struggle but are largely around the embrace and practice of certain traditional Chinese cultural values; the embrace and practise of certain traditional Chinese cultural values/virtues rather than class struggle are presented as contributing to if not a panacea to the solution of the problems covered.

In the historical category of TV dramas such as the two case-studied revolutionary-themed TV dramas, class struggle which had played an essential role in the Party's revolution and has greatly contributed to the Party's very ascendance to power has been strongly downplayed if not totally removed. In *Yan'an Song*, there are some events in which class or class struggle is still mentioned such as the Red Army's Eastern Expedition toward Shanxi province or the discussion of the CPC's construction of a nationwide United Front policy against the Japanese invasion. In the case of the Red Army's Eastern Expedition in which one of the Red Army's tasks is to confiscate the landlord's land and then to redistribute them to the poor peasants, the actual class struggle against the landlords and the redistribution of the confiscated land is not shown graphically but mentioned briefly and only verbally , to the direct contrast of the literary and artistic works of Maoist era which devotes a large amount of space elaborating on the scenes of the fierce class struggle such as the populace's verbal class hatred toward and actual fight against the oppressing class. The mere verbal mention of class struggle by the characters involved thus appear as empty ritual symbols without any supporting substance similar to the way today's Chinese party members are repeating Marxism in the party conferences without actually believing in or practicing it. In the case of the CPC's construction of the United Front policy which involves fierce debate over uniting the national bourgeois forces, class struggle as a primary principle for the CPC's revolution is given up for the sake of tackling the most pressing problem—national survival confronted by all the Chinese people caused by the Japanese invasion. In the place of class struggle which the CPC has been using up to then to lead the poor peasants and workers to fight their oppressors such as bourgeoisie class and the landlords is patriotism which the CPC employs to unite all the patriotic forces within China including poor peasants, workers, bourgeoisie class, the landlords, the intellectuals and etc. With patriotism as the organizing frames, people from different social strata in China are shown to work together to confront the Japanese invasion and eventually to create a new China in the coming

future. Within this patriotism frame, the Party differences, class struggles and personal conflicts are all put aside. In the Road We Have Taken, there is no mention or demonstration of class struggle. The KMT and CPC are no longer portrayed as fighting for two different classes respectively, but rather as two different political parties with totally different political beliefs and practices, competing with each other for the right to build a new unified though different nation out of the then chaotic and fragmentary China caused by the fighting warlords and the foreign imperialism in the country. Besides the depiction of the KMT-CPC conflict as resulting from the bi-party political differences rather than from class differences, the relationships between the characters involved in the bi-party conflict are overwhelmingly organized around traditional Chinese cultural values rather than around class consciousness or class struggle.

The change from the domination of class struggle discourse in the cultural products in the Maoist era to the downplaying of the class struggle discourse in the current post-reform era is significant. Once as the dominant concepts in the Party's ideology, class and class struggle now have been dropped out of the Party's ideology. Such a change signifies a significant change in the Party's ideology—the dissolution of class and class struggle concepts as an essential party of the Party's ideology.

Such a change seems to be nothing new since the Party had ceased to practise class struggle-based ideology for almost three decades. Given the fact that Dengist leadership's shift of the Party's focus from class struggle to economic development with its reform and open door policy not long after the Cultural Revolution—in the late 1970s has in effect declared the demise of the class-based ideology as the Party's ideology, it is ostensibly not a big surprise or a big deal to find the downplaying of class discourse in the current cultural products. The fact is that it is a big deal since the downplaying of class discourse in the current cultural products is different from the downplaying of class discourse upon the Party's immediate abandonment of the class-based ideology not long after the Cultural Revolution. At the very beginning of the country's reform and opening policy, the Party's abandonment of the class-based ideology and the corresponding official downplaying of class struggle discourse in the cultural realm is to make way for the Party's practice of new ideology—economic neoliberalism so as to rectify the chaos and destruction in the country done by the class-struggle-based Cultural Revolution. The recent downplaying of class struggle discourse in the cultural productions since 2000 is to avoid triggering the potential social unrest that is likely to explode at any moment due to the actual severe class conflicts in the highly polarized

Chinese society and is to make way for a new ideology which the Party hope could help solve these severe class conflicts in the country without resorting to class struggle or without triggering social revolution in the country. This new ideology certainly is not neoliberalism which the Party has pursued thus far in the course of the country's economic development for it is the very practice of this neoliberalism in the economy realm that has resulted in the very severe social conflicts in the country at the present moment.

What is the new ideology that the Party intends the recent downplaying of class and struggle-based ideology to make way for? This leads to the discussion of the second significant change in the Party's political communication—the prominence given to the traditional Chinese cultural values with the highlighting of traditional Chinese cultural frames in these TV dramas to the direct contrast of the downplaying of class struggle discourse in the same TV dramas.

Paralleling the previously discussed domination of the class and class struggle-based ideology in the Party's history was the Party's over-half-a-century-long anti-traditional Chinese culture discourse. The CCP, which was born of the 1919 May Fourth Movement's iconoclastic nationalism and was profoundly influenced by the movement's very iconoclastic spirit, had been holding a critical stance toward traditional Chinese culture particularly its backbone Confucianism since the very founding of the Party in 1921, considering traditional Chinese culture in general and Confucianism in particular as remnants of feudalism and as embodiment of everything that was backward and benighted in China (Guo, 2004; Hong, 2007; Tang, 1993).

Anti-traditionalism/anti-Confucianism discourse permeated the articles by such early communists as Chen Duxiu and Li Dazhao in the 1920s, the CPC-initiated left-wing literature of the 1930s, the literary and artistic works produced under the Party's influence in both the CPC-led revolutionary bases and the KMT-controlled areas during the anti-Japanese war period (1937-1945), the literary and artistic works produced under the Party's influence in the subsequent KMT-CPC civil war (also known as Liberation War) as well as the literary and artistic works produced during the first seventeen years after the Party's founding of the PRC in 1949 (ibid). In the works of these different periods traditional Chinese culture particularly Confucianism was overwhelmingly condemned as feudalistic and reactionary, being the obstacles to China's modernization and responsible for China's backwardness and victimhood of foreign imperialism in the country.

Although the Party had made some changes and adjustments in the treatment of the cultural heritage during the 1950s and 1960s, the Party's overall trend was a break with the old order and the old culture (Hong, 2007). "By the eve of the 'Cultural Revolution', an ideological trend in favour of an 'absolute break' with the 'old culture' was already widespread and the [Party's] impulse to build a utopia of 'true proletarian literature' on a blank foundation had already begun to be put into practice" (ibid: p. 26). The Party's political policy of carrying out destructive attacks on old culture during the Cultural Revolution (Guo, 2004; Hong, 2007; Kraus, 2012) resulted in frontal and repeated assaults on traditional Chinese culture particularly Confucianism. In such campaigns as the Campaign of Destroying the Four Olds⁸ and Establishing the Four News (between mid-August and the end of September in 1966) and the Criticizing Lin Biao and Criticizing Confucius Campaign (in the first half of the 1970s), traditional Chinese culture had been attacked not only discursively but also physically (Guo, 2004; Hong, 2007; Kraus, 2012; Miller, 2010; Mittler, 2008; Rainey, 2010). Cultural objects symbolizing China's traditional pre-modern society such as Buddhist, Religious Daoist and Confucian temples, statues, inscriptions, art, classical paintings and string-bound books were destroyed by the Red Guards (ibid). Works of Confucius, Mencius and other ancient philosophers were also banned and destroyed and were not allowed to be read without the official approval of the Party (Guo, 2004; Mittler, 2008). When they were allowed to be read, they were the very target of severe criticism, as was the case with the Criticizing Lin Biao and Criticizing Confucius Campaign where Confucius' works and Confucius himself were severely criticized. The officially sanctioned cultural works during the Cultural Revolution—mostly the highly promoted eight model operas—echoed the Party's anti-traditionalism discourse, condemning anything representing the remnants of feudalism (say the landlords) as reactionary forces and removing/suppressing all social relationships based on Confucian ethics such as familial relationship and marital relationship.

The Party's critical stance toward traditional Chinese culture continued after the end of the Cultural Revolution and lasted up till the late 1980s, the climax of which was the screening of the six-part documentary film *River Elegy (heshang)* on China Central Television in June 1988 (Guo, 2004; Ma, 1996). The documentary echoed May Fourth's vitriolic criticism that traditional Chinese culture particularly Confucianism was the major obstacle to China's modernization and responsible for China's backwardness and victimhood of foreign imperialism since the first opium war in 1840 (ibid).

⁸ The four olds were old customs, old culture, old habits and old ideas.

It was not until the early 1990s that the Party began to take a conciliatory approach to traditional Chinese culture (Guo, 2004). Not long after June Fourth Incident of 1989, Jiang Zemin leadership started to promote traditional Chinese culture for political purposes (ibid). It highlighted the prominent role of Chinese history and tradition Chinese culture in the series of patriotic education campaigns launched in the 1990s in response to the June Fourth Incident (ibid). It facilitated the resurgence of Confucianism by sponsoring and attending the celebration of the 2545th anniversary of Confucius birth in October 1994(ibid). On this officially-sponsored occasion, the then president Jiang Zemin and former vice-premier Gu Mu spoke favourably of Confucianism—Jiang spent two hours talking about his Confucian upbringing while Gu, chairing the conference as the Chairman of the China Confucius Foundation, in his keynote speech claimed Chinese culture as quintessentially Confucian and presented Confucianism as enlightened and progressive. Jiangist leadership also went as far as calling for the Confucian rule of virtue in managing state affairs in the Party's National Propaganda Conference in January 2001 and formally endorsing the rule of virtue at the 16th Party Congress to practise moral governance—the well-established Confucian tradition of benevolent governance that had been practised by ancient Chinese rules for well over two thousand years (Q. Li, 2009; People Daily Online, 2002; D.-S. Yang, People Daily Online; Zhu, 2008).

Hu Jintao leadership upon his assumption of presidency in late 2002 continued to promote traditional Chinese culture (Brady & Wang, 2009; CPC.people.com.cn; Feng, 2007; Lam, 2006; Xinhua, 2005; Xinhua News Agency, 2007; Yan, 2006; Zhu, 2008). During his presidency between late 2002 and early 2013, Hu leadership put forward various proposals including the scientific outlook on development and the construction of a harmonious society in which Confucian values such as the people-oriented principles and notion of harmony were assimilated into the Party's socialist core values and are highlighted as indispensable to the country's further development (ibid). Hu leadership has elevated the traditional Chinese cultural values particularly Confucianism-based ones to such a high position that the socialist core values promoted by Hu, as suggested by Guo Yingjie (2004), are not much different from Confucian values.

Corresponding to the Party's conciliatory attitude towards the traditional Chinese culture has been the Party's pro-traditional Chinese culture discourse since 1990s in the cultural products in general and the increasingly dominant form of cultural products— TV dramas in particular. An optimistic view of traditional Han culture is given in such new historical novels as *Er Yuehe's* Qing emperor

trilogy—*Great Emperor Kang Xi, Emperor Yongzheng and Emperor Qianlong* (Guo, 2012). Confucius and Confucian values are given a positive portrayal in such films as *Confucius* and in such TV dramas as *Confucius, The First Family under Heaven, A Story of the Kongs, and Confucius the Sage*, all of which are based on Confucius' life and experience (Guo, 2004). Confucian family values are promoted in such family saga serial dramas as *Grand Mansion Gate* and *Qiao's Grand Courtyard* and in dramas on family and ethical issues such as *Beautiful Daughter-in-laws*. Confucianism-based political and legal principles such as sage leadership is promoted in such dynasty dramas as *Kangxi Emperor, Yongzheng Dynasty*, and *Qianlong Emperor, The Great Emperor Hanwu, the Qin Empire* (Guo, 2012; Zhu, 2008). Patriotism, a notion deeply rooted in Confucian concern for the affairs of the state and the well-being of the people, is promoted in the revolutionary and historical themed TV drama such as *Yan'an Song, The Five Starred Flag Flying in the Wind* and *The Road We Have Taken*. The prominence the Party has been giving to traditional Chinese cultural values particularly Confucianism-based ones in cultural products was such that pro-traditional Chinese culture discourse has been found to permeate all the TV dramas under current study—TV dramas that have won the top awards of the top governmental TV drama award in China (i.e. the Feitian TV Drama Awards) since 2000. As has been shown by the previously discussed five case-studied TV dramas, traditional Chinese cultural values particularly Confucianism-based values such as patriotism, wisdom, family values, fraternity, sincerity, industry, perseverance, benevolence have been used overwhelmingly as the central organizing ideas for these top Feitian award-winning TV dramas. As such, these traditional Chinese culture values not only define the nature of the characters' narrative actions toward others, of the relationships established among the characters, and of the network patterned events which cover various problems or conflicts but they are also presented as the solutions to the covered problems/conflicts or as contributing to the solutions of the covered problems/conflicts, in sharp contrast with the Party's condemnation of traditional Chinese culture as feudalistic and reactionary in the pre-1990 cultural products.

From the Party's anti-traditionalism discourse in the cultural products before 1990s to the Party's pro-traditionalism in the cultural products after 1990s, the Party's political communication has demonstrated a significant change. Such prominent position of the traditional Chinese cultural values after 1990s particularly since 2000 signifies the Party's attempt to incorporate and the actual incorporation of the traditional Chinese cultural values into the Party's ideology. In other words,

traditional Chinese cultural values particularly Confucianism-based ones, which have been rejected by the Party over half a century, have now become part of the Party's ideology.

The downplaying of the class concepts and the highlighting of traditional Chinese cultural frames in the top Feitian Award winning TV dramas under study demonstrates not only a significant change in the Party's ideology but also a significant change in the way the Party communicates its messages/agendas to the Chinese populace.

As has been previously discussed, when class and class struggle concepts overwhelmed the literary and artistic works of Maoist era as the dominant and the only valid organizing principles, the Party's messages/agendas were conveyed in a rather crude, straightforward and over-simplistic way—namely through the polarization of characterization revolving around class distinction/class struggle. In the stories presented by these Maoist literary and artistic works, the characters were uniformly divided into two polarized types along the axis of class-consciousness/class struggle situated at the two extremes of a class continuum. On the one side are the heroes representing the Party-led proletarian class; on the other side are the villains representing the reactionary oppressive exploiting class. There are no middle ambivalent characters spanning both classes. The characters are either born perfect heroes endowed with sublime virtues or the demonized villains filled with wicked traits and cruel acts. The heroes, under the guidance of the Party, are engaged in heroic struggles with and eventually defeated the wicked villains hence the only relationship between the heroes and the villains is oppositional. Both the heroes and villains are denied any other aspect of humanity as an ordinary human being except for their class nature. As a result, they are shown to have only one type of relationship with other characters namely class-based relationships and they are only engaged in class-based activities namely class struggle; they are denied any normal secularized human relationships such as those related to family, marriage, love, friendship and emotions and are thus not shown to be engaged in any activities related to the normal secularized life concerns such family, love, marriage and friendship. The literary and artistic works of the Maoist era were overwhelmed with larger-than-life heroic figures and the absurd images of the paper-thin demonized villains that they almost become a parody of heroism and a parody of demonism, as suggested by some scholars as T. A. Hsia (1963) and David Derwei Wang (2000). In a word, political messages in the literary and artistic works of the Maoist era were conveyed in a rigidly uniformly dehumanized highly politicized way.

With Confucianism-based traditional Chinese cultural values as the organizing principles for the top Feitian Award-winning TV dramas—TV dramas highly endorsed by the Party, the way the Party communicates its messages and agendas has changed towards subtlety and sophistication.

Confucianism-based traditional Chinese cultural values prescribe a set of systematic ethical code of conduct which is composed of such self-cultivated sublime virtues as propriety (li), rightness(yi), loyalty(zhong), consideration(shu) (also known as sympathy, understanding and compassion), filial piety (xiao), brotherly affection (ti), sincerity (cheng) (also honesty and sincerity), faithfulness (xin), and reverence (jin) (Guo, 2004; Rainey, 2010). Such ethical code of conduct covers almost all normal human relationships of life of an individual Chinese both within the public political domain and within the private secularized domain, specifying exactly how people should behave depending on the social roles people assume under different social circumstances. Loyalty (or dutifulness), a virtue which develops from and implied through the virtue filial piety, covers an individual's relationships with the ruler and the state i.e. an individual's relationships of life in the public political domain, requiring an individual to be loyal to his ruler, to love the state/country, and to show concern for the affairs of the state and the well-being of the people and to prioritize the concern for the affairs of the state and the well-being of the people over an individual secular personal concern when the former and the latter are in conflict. Other virtues mainly cover an individual's human relationships of life in the secularized domain. Filial piety covers an individual's familial relationship with one's parents and requires the individual to show respect and reverence for them. Brotherly affection covers an individual's relationships with his siblings and requires the individual to show brotherly respect and love toward them. Reverence, which is an extension of filial piety, covers an individual's relationships with the elderly outside his family and requires the individual to show respect for the elderly for example his teachers and other elder people. Consideration, honesty/sincerity and faithfulness also cover an individual's human relationships with people outside his family say his friends, his classmates and his acquaintances and requires the individual to put himself in another's shoes, think about their wishes and feelings, to be sincere and faithful to them. With such traditional Chinese cultural virtues as the central organizing ideas for the top Feitian award winning TV dramas, the relationships between the characters in the TV dramas are not limited to but go beyond those within the public political domain to include those within the private secularized domain such as family, marriage and friendship and the activities of the characters are thus not confined to the public politicized activities but are extended to those private secularized life concerns

such as family life, marriage life, friendship and other personal relations. Sometimes the politicized activities of an individual converge with and are blended with those of the secularized domain and there is thus not a clear-cut boundary between the politicized human relationships and the secularized ones.

In *Yan'an Song*, the core character Mao Zedong's activities include those within the public political domain—namely the Maoist CPC leadership-led revolutionary work and those within the private secularized domain—Mao's marital life and familial life; Mao's relationships with other characters include those related to the public political domain—namely those related to the Party's revolutionary work (such as his secret cooperation with General Zhang Xueliang and General Yang Hucheng, his cooperation with Chiang-led regime on anti-Japanese resistance war, his supportive and friendly relationship toward the visiting foreign journalists, his cooperative and respectful relationship toward his colleagues and his humble relationship toward his subordinates, his compassionate relationship toward such ordinary people as Mother Ming and Widowed Wu) as well as those related to the private secularized domain such as his marital relationship with his second wife He Zizhen and his affectionate relationship toward his daughter Jiaojiao. In *the Road We Have Taken* the core character Liqing's activities also include activities in the political domain—his revolutionary work experience since his entry of the Whampoa Military Academy—and the activities in the secularized domain—familial kinship love toward his father, his brother and sisters, his love for Qu Xia, marriage with Li Er, classmately fraternity toward Fan Xiliang, his emotions and other secularized life concerns; Liqing's relationship with other characters also include those in the political domain and those in the private secularized domain. In *Xi Gengtian's Story*, the core character's relationship with other characters include those in the seemingly apolitical politicized domain (namely those related to Xi Gengtian's farming experience after the Party's tax exemption policy) and those in the private secularized domain (for example his familial relationship and his relationship with other villagers with regard to farming and other non-farming issues). In *Beautiful Daughter-in-laws*, the core character Doudou's activities are overwhelming those in the private secularized domain—namely getting on with her difficult mother-in-law and difficult daughter-in-law, and Doudou's relationships with others are mainly those in the private secularized domain mainly familial relationship such as the troublesome mother-in-law-and-daughter-in-law relationship and daughter-in-law relationship, marital relationship, relationship with her former boyfriend, friendship with Bai Xue. In *the Soldier Sortie*, the core character Xu Sanduo's activities integrates those of the public political domain and the private

secularized domain—his military experience is both political and personal and Xu's relationships with other characters include those in the political domain and those in the private secularized domain.

As a result of the incorporation of traditional Chinese cultural values in the Feitian Award winning TV dramas as the central organizing principles, the characters are shown to engage in various activities both within the public political domain and the private secular domain and thus to have multidimensional aspects of humanity—with concern for the country, with commitment to familial duties, with friendship, with emotions and other secularized life concerns. Depending on the characters' embrace and practice of different traditional Chinese cultural values in either public political or secularized domain or in the integration of both domains, they form different kinds of social relationships with other people including but not confining to oppositional ones—the oppositional, the cooperative, the cooperative-oppositional, filial and respectful, friendly, supportive and so on, just as previous discussion has shown.

In the previous chapter I have discussed the network pattern which structures the characters into a network of relationships through their narrative interactive actions with one another. While such network pattern, as has been previously discussed, provides a structural framework facilitating the presentation of different kinds of relationships rather than the binary-oppositional relationships of the literary and artistic works of the Maoist era, the traditional Chinese cultural values as the central organizing ideas for the different kinds of relationships presented give substance to these relationships by defining the essence of the relationships as embodiment of certain traditional Chinese cultural values such as friendship, kinship, fraternity, humility, compassion, rightness etc.

The various kinds of relationships established between the characters are therefore much richer and more complex than the binary oppositionary class-based ones presented by the Maoist literary and artistic works and the characters are thus shown to be multi-dimensional round characters capable of complexity in direct contrast of the uni-dimensional flat characters depicted by the binary-structured class-defined Maoist literary and artistic works. In this way, the incorporation of Confucianism-based traditional Chinese cultural values into the TV dramas as the central organizing principles not only enriches the humanity of the characters but also results in the complexity/sophistication of the characterization. The Party's political message or agendas embedded into the culturally-framed stories are thus conveyed in a more humanized and sophisticated way—humanized and sophisticated characterization.

Besides bringing about humanization and sophistication of characterization in the TV dramas under study, the traditional Chinese cultural frames also secularize the Party's political communication by conveying the Party's message in a secularized way.

As I have discussed, the messages of the literary and artistic works of Maoist era were overtly politicized and were conveyed in a purely politicized way. To ensure the purity of the political message, the Maoist literary and artistic works concentrated solely on and foregrounded the characters' political activities while the characters' secularized life concerns such as family, marriage, friendship and other personal relations and their social engagements with other people in the secular domain—namely the characters' secularized relationships were squeezed into the marginal peripheral or near non-existent position as they were considered as the barrier to the characters' political activities and thus their political relationships. The incorporation of the traditional Chinese cultural frames in the top Feitian Award winning TV dramas, however, allows the coverage of the characters' political engagements (i.e. their activities and relationships with others in the public political domain) as well as their secularized social engagements (i.e. their activities and relationships with others in the secularized life concerns such as family, marriage and friendship) with different dramas covering different aspects of secularized social engagements. MRMHD dramas such as the case-studied *Yan'an Song* foreground the core character Mao Zedong's political engagements with others but at the same time interweave his political engagements with his secularized engagements such as his marriage life with his wife He Zizhen, his kinship love for his daughter Jiaojiao and his personal fraternity and friendship with his colleagues; familial and ethical dramas (FEI dramas) such as the case-studied *Beautiful Daughter-in-laws* concentrate mainly on the secularized life concerns—namely activities and relationships within families; contemporary military TV dramas such as the case-studied *Soldier Sortie* covers and integrate both political and secularized engagements. Almost all dramas have covered the characters' secularized life concerns and their secularized engagements with other characters to various degrees with some dramas such as FEI dramas focusing mainly on the characters' secularized life concerns and their secularized engagements. Whatever kind of dramas they are, the top Feitian Award TV dramas under study have embedded within them the Party's agendas. Whatever Party's agendas these dramas intend to show to the Chinese populace, they are now increasingly embedded within, blended with or shown through the characters' secularized life concerns and their secularized engagements—namely in a depoliticized secularized way to the sharp contrast of the explicitly politicized way through the

characters' explicitly politicized activities and their overt political engagements with other people in these politicized activities. In a word, the incorporation of traditional Chinese cultural frames in the TV dramas has created a different way of communicating the Party's political message/agendas—to communicate the Party's political messages/agendas through the characters' secularized life concerns rather than solely through the characters' political engagements in the politicized activities .

Though Confucianism-based ethical code of conduct covers both political relationships (an individual's relationship with the state) and secularized human relationships (an individual relationships within the domain of the secular life concerns such as familial relationship, marital relationship, relationship with teachers, with friends and with classmates etc.), its hierarchical disposition inherently prioritizes the former over the latter especially when the two are in conflict. By incorporating the Confucianism-based traditional Chinese cultural values into the TV dramas as the underlying organizing ideas, the Party can then conveniently promote the Party's political agendas/messages through the coverage of the Party's desired individual political relationships while not denying even giving full rein to the coverage of different kinds of secularized life concerns through the coverage of the secularized human relationships desired by the ordinary Chinese populace as long as they do not conflict with the individual's political relationships expected of by the Party. In doing so, the Party conveniently naturalizes its political message into the everyday secularized life concerns of ordinary Chinese populace and makes the Party's messages/agendas a commonsensical consensus naturally resulting from people's daily social human relationships in their secularized life concerns.

6.5 Concluding Remarks

From the class-defined stories to culturally-framed stories, the Party's political communication has experienced significant change—not only the change of content in the Party's ideology but also the change in the way the Party communicates its messages or agendas. The downplaying if not the total erasure of class discourse in the current top Feitian Award winning TV dramas and the prominence of the traditional Chinese cultural frames in the same dramas signal the demise of the once-dominant class-based ideology and the re-articulation or reorientation of the Party's ideology by incorporating into the Party's ideology traditional Chinese cultural values particularly Confucianism-based ones, which the Party had been severely criticizing as the feudalistic remnants

and responsible for China's backwardness from the inception of the Party's founding up to the late 1980s. The downplaying of the class discourse and the incorporation of traditional Chinese cultural values into the TV dramas under study as the underlying organizing principles also bring about significant change in the way the Party communicates its messages or agendas. The Party's messages/agendas are no longer expressed in a highly politicized way through the highly polarized characterization whereby characters are shown to be engaged solely in politicized activities at the expense of their secularized life concerns and to be engaged solely in politicized relationships with other characters at the expense of secularized social relationships. Rather, the communication of the Party's messages/agendas has changed toward subtlety and sophistication whereby characters are shown to be engaged in both political activities and secularized life concerns such as marriage, familial life and friendship and to be engaged in political and secularized relationships; the characters' political activities and secularized life concerns as well as the characters' political and secularized relationships are interwoven and overlapped without a clear-cut boundary between them. In this way, political messages intended by the Party are embedded wrapped up in and naturalized into the characters' secularized life concerns; as a result, the political messages/agendas are communicated in a roundabout depoliticized secularised way.

Chapter 7 Sophisticated Messages and Beyond

7.1 Introduction

In the previous two chapters, I have focused on how traditional Chinese cultural values have been used in the top Feitian Award winning TV dramas to communicate the messages/agendas desired by the Party. I have demonstrated how Confucianism-based traditional Chinese cultural values such as patriotism, people-orientedness, filial piety, industriousness, persistence and fraternity have been woven into the network patterned TV dramas as the central organizing ideas. I have argued that the top Feitian Award winning dramas into which Confucianism-based Chinese cultural values have been woven are network patterned rather than binary-structured (which is often the case with different forms of narratives such as the cold war Hollywood films, the 1960s American films of the black people, the soviet novels of the 1930s and the literary and artistic works of Maoist era in China) and that the use of network pattern rather than binary-oppositional structure to connect the key components of the stories (i.e. characters and their actions) shows sophistication in the Party's political communication. The weaving of Confucianism-based traditional Chinese cultural values into the network patterned TV dramas as the underlying organizing ideas for these dramas, to the direct contrast of Confucianism-based Chinese cultural values as being condemned as feudalistic and reactionary in the Maoist binary oppositionally structured literary and artistic works, shows that the Party's ideology has been rearticulated and that Confucianism-based cultural values have been an integral part of this re-articulation—they have now been incorporated into the Party's ideology. The weaving of Confucianism-based cultural values into the TV dramas as the central organizing ideas, in combination with the use of network pattern as the organizing structure, also adds to sophistication in the way the Party communicates its messages/agendas. As a result of the weaving of Confucianism-based traditional Chinese cultural values into the network-patterned TV dramas as the central organizing ideas, the Party's messages/agendas are communicated in a sophisticated way and the messages produced this way are naturally sophisticated ones. What are these messages/agendas that have been communicated in a sophisticated way? How come these messages/agendas have been communicated in a sophisticated way? Although the previous two chapters have also covered these two questions, they have focused more on how the Party's messages/agendas are communicated in a sophisticated way through the use of a network pattern as the organizing structure and through the use of Confucianism-based traditional Chinese cultural values as the central organizing ideas. Following the previous two chapters' discussion of

sophistication in the Party's political communication through the textual narrative analysis of how the selected top Feitian award winning TV dramas are network patterned and culturally framed to communicate the Party desired messages/agendas, this chapter intends to bring a bit further the discussion of sophistication in the Party's political communication by giving a more detailed discussion of the aforementioned two questions. The chapter's first section covers the first question by summarizing the Party desired messages/agendas that have been communicated in a sophisticated way by the top Feitian Award winning TV dramas under study while the second section deals with the second question by discussing the various forces in China whose influences on China's TV drama industry have combined to result in these TV dramas' communicating the Party desired messages/agendas in a sophisticated way. The discussion in both sections is based on the secondary data I have gathered during my nine-month-long field trip in China.

7.2 Textual Sophisticated Messages

In the west, popular cultural products are usually not considered as serious since they are assumed to merely cater to the popular taste and are thus mainly for entertainment purposes. Unlike the cultural products in the west, Chinese cultural products are never solely for entertainment purposes. Chinese audience themselves expect to get something more than mere entertainment out of the cultural products. This is even more so with the Chinese government which has always considered the cultural products as an important tool, and has been using them, to communicate the Party's messages or agendas. The more popular the certain forms of cultural products among Chinese audience, the more likely they will be incorporated into the Party's propaganda machine to communicate the Party's agendas or messages. This is the case with TV dramas which have now become one of the most popular cultural products in China. All the TV dramas under study are supposed to, and as my research has found, actually express the Party's agendas or promote the messages desired by the Party to various extents.

MARMTM dramas such as the case-studied *Yan'an Song*, legendary style revolutionary-themed dramas such as the case-studied *The Road We Have Taken*, spy serials such as *Lurk* and contemporary military dramas such as the case-studied *Soldier Sortie*—dramas generally subsumed under the category of military-themed TV dramas—are part and parcel of the main melody dramas promoted by the Party-state. Behind these dramas lies the Party-state's attempt/agenda to educate

the country's populace particularly the youth about patriotism, collectivism, heroism and idealism through the party's revolutionary history or the history of the Party-led socialist construction before China's reform and open-door policy in 1979 or the heroic behaviour of contemporary Chinese soldiers since China's reform in 1979 (Ai, 1990, 1993a; 1994; Y. Li, 2008a, 2008b, 2011; L.-S. Liu, 2009; Y. Liu, 2011; Ruan, 1987; Wen, 1992; Xie & Shi, 1989; W.-G. Yang, 1997c & 1999). Through the depiction of the Party-led revolutionary history and the resultant subsequent establishment of the P. R. China, the MRMTH dramas such as *Yan'an Song*, the legendary style revolutionary themed TV dramas such as *The Road We Have Taken* and other revolutionary themed TV dramas such as spy serials intend to communicate to Chinese people such a message—Chinese people from all social strata have supported and taken part in the Party-led revolution because of such good qualities possessed by the Party as patriotism, people-orientedness, wisdom, benevolence, faithfulness, uprightness, readiness to correct its mistakes; its revolution, its subsequent establishment of the P.R.C. and its current governance of the country are thus the historical choice and the people's choice. By doing so, the revolutionary-themed dramas also provide the Party's leadership and its current governance in the country with a historical legitimacy. Contemporary soldiers dramas such as *Soldier Sortie* are an essential complement to and an extension of the revolutionary-themed dramas in that these dramas depict the Party-state's strenuous attempt to have its army retain the same good old qualities such as patriotism, people-orientedness, wisdom, benevolence, faithfulness, uprightness—those embraced and practiced by the Party and its army in the revolutionary era— in today's peace-oriented era by having the army undergo the various tough high-tech-oriented sophisticated military exercises in the often hard, tough and sometime deadly environments and by having it undertake the various challenging military operations. Complementing the Party's historical legitimacy to rule the country provided by the revolutionary-themed dramas, the contemporary soldier's dramas reaffirm and consolidate the Party-state's legitimacy to continue its governance of the country.

Dramas on socialist construction such as *Five-star Red Flag Flying in the Wind* and *Stories in Karamay oil Fields* show the achievements the Party has made during its socialist construction period (between 1950s and 1970s). *Five-Star Flag Flying in the Wind* (also a MRMTH drama), for example has been produced and broadcast as a gift to commemorate both the 90th Anniversary of the Founding of the Communist Party of China and the 100th Birth Anniversary of Qian Xuesen— 'the father of China's Space Program, the pioneer in Chinese rocketry, the leader of the research

that produced the nation's first ballistic missiles, its first satellite and the Silkworm anti-ship missile' (Hou, 2011; X.-M. Wang, 2011; D.-X. Zhang, 2011; R.-Y. Zhao, 2011). The drama demonstrates the great achievement the Party-state has made under difficult circumstances not long after the success of the Party-led revolution and the Party's subsequent establishment of the P. R. China—the successful development of the first nuclear bomb, the first hydrogen bomb and the first satellite (also known as two bombs and one satellite) and the solid foundation laid for China's current space program. The drama also highlights the spirits of such scientists as Qian Xueshen, Deng Jiaxian, Qian Sanqiang and Guo Yonghua—their patriotism, their endurance of hardship and their self-sacrifice—virtues which have contributed to the successful development of two bombs and one satellite and which the drama obviously intends the Chinese people particularly the young generation to learn from. The message conveyed by such construction dramas is clear—that China under the Party's leadership had made great progress and achievements during its socialist construction despite a great many difficulties encountered and that such achievements was due to the Party's and Chinese people's embrace and practice of such Chinese spirits as patriotism, perseverance, persistence, benevolence, industry.

The businessmen drama *Shiwan renjia*, as the drama's production team has pointed out, is a political task assigned by the Zhejiang provincial government, created both as a gift to welcome the 30th Anniversary of China's Reform and Opening-up and as an artistic cultural embodiment of the former president Hu Jintao's advocated scientific development concept which emphasizes the sustainable economic development by taking into account social harmony and environmental protection during the economic development process (Y.-X. Chen, 2008; M.-H. Cheng, 2008; H. Liu, 2008; J. Xu, 2008). Embedded in the drama is the message that Chinese entrepreneurs have made progress in upgrading and transforming their private enterprises under the Party's framework of scientific development concept though not without encountering quite a few challenges and that these challenges can be solved by integrating traditional Chinese good notions such as benevolence and harmony into the upgrading and transformation of the enterprises.

Rural dramas such as the case-studied *Xi Gengtian's Story*, as pointed out by the producers and directors of these TV dramas, cover the three main rural issues in China—agriculture, village/countryside, and farmers (*san nong wenti*) (issues which have always been on the Party's agendas). At the time when they were produced, the Party had just launched a five-year project of

building a new socialist countryside—the Party’s 11th five-year plan for the improvement of the three rural issues and the Party had put the publicity of the project as one of the SARFT’s top publicity priorities and before the production of these rural dramas TV drama practitioners had been urged by the then deputy director of the SARFT Hu Zhanfan in the 2006 ANTVDP to produce dramas on the new socialist countryside construction project (Ahlers & Schubert, 2009; M. Da, 2006b; Fu, 2007; B.-Y. Hu, 2009a; Z.-F. Hu, 2006; J.-P. Li, 2008 & 2009; Li & Zhou, 2006; M.-L. Zhang, 2008; C. Zhao, 2009). The rural reforms presented by these rural dramas including the medical reform and the abolition of the agricultural taxation to encourage farmers to grow grains are part of the Party’s five-year project of building a new socialist countryside to develop the agriculture in the rural areas and to improve the life of rural population. They cover both the changes taking place and the problems existent in the countryside since the formal launch of the new socialist countryside construction project from March, 2006. *Xi Gengtian’s story*, as suggested by Mr Niu Jianrong—the drama’s scriptwriter and director, originates from Niu’s idea of producing a TV drama reflecting the changes he has found on his return to his home village—Liliang village in Shanxi province after the state’s introduction of the agricultural tax and fee exemption policy (i.e. quite a few villagers who have been working in cities have returned to the village to grow grains in the lands that have been deserted for years) and Niu’s idea was strongly supported by the Propaganda Department of the Shanxi Provincial Communist Party Committee and the CCTV Film and Television Department and before its creation, the drama had already been listed as among the most important TV dramas dedicated to the subsequent 17th CPC National People’s Congress held in Beijing in October, 2007 (B.-Y. Hu, 2009a). What these dramas intend to convey is, as the TV dramas have also shown, that though the new socialist countryside construction project has encountered a lot of problems, with the efforts made by the rural residents themselves and the different forms of help and support offered by the government, some problems have been solved, other problems are being solved and the project so far has brought significant benefits to the rural population.

TV dramas on familial and ethical issues (FEI dramas) such as the case-studied *Beautiful Daughter-in-laws* are also among the Party’s agendas. At first glance, these dramas may seem to fall outside of the Party’s political agenda for they seem to have not focused on the grand social problems or issues such as those covered by the medical reform dramas, rural dramas or dramas on family business transition and upgrading—the issues which the Chinese government is attempting to

solve. However, the production of FEI is also among the Party's agendas for several practical reasons.

First of all is the significance of families within China's society. Both individuals and the Chinese state have been attaching paramount importance to families since the ancient times (Fung & Bodde, c1976; Chu & Yu, 2010). To ordinary individual Chinese, their families are the essential part of their lives. At work, they not only work for themselves but for the good of the family as well. Off work, they may occasionally go out for their meals and for other purposes such as entertainment and meeting friends but eventually they return home for family life—family being a shelter both physically and emotionally. Family is a safe haven where Chinese turn for help and support when in difficulty and for share of happiness when in good times. Families are equally important to the Chinese government since it considers the stability of Chinese families as a precondition for the stability of the country as a whole. The importance of the family has been even more strongly felt both individually and socially since China's entry into the WTO at the beginning of the 21st century. As I have briefly mentioned in the research background section, China has by 2002 already been confronted by a lot of social problems resulting from the excessive market economic development such as the uneven economic development between the east and the west, the widening income gap between the rich and poor, the crime prevention and the public security problem, the unemployment, social security, wealth disparity, health care, education and loss of moral grounding and since 2002 the already grim situation has been worsening rather than improving (Han, 2008; Lansdowne & Wu; 2009; Tubilewicz, 2006). Given the fact that the Party-state no longer provides its citizens with such welfare services as housing, healthcare and education as it did in pre-reform China before 1979, many of the social problems especially those related to social security such as housing, healthcare, education have to be tackled by Chinese families since individuals alone cannot solve them (Chu & Yu, 2010; Q. Gong, 2011; Yu, 2013). Today, no ordinary Chinese can afford a house in cities or towns with the salary earned at work and without the financial support provided by their family members. Quite a few college and university graduates have to depend on their family for financial support, for accommodation and for house-buying (H.-Y. Chen, 2011; Liu & Man, 2014). When a Chinese gets seriously sick and has to stay in hospital, it is their family who help cover the majority of the costly treatment (Ou & Liu, 2010; Q. Zhou et al., 2013). It is their family rather than the government that take care of them when Chinese grow old although the government has established programs to take care of the aged and childless people (Y.-C. Meng, 2011). Chinese families are the small social

units where many social problems converge including taking caring of the young and old, education problem, housing problem, healthcare problems etc. Chinese families have to some extent become and provided a helpful cushion for the many unexpected social problems in the country which have resulted from the profit-oriented market economy such as unemployment, soaring housing price, soaring medical fees, loss of moral grounding, extra-marital affairs etc. Given the significance of Chinese families to individual Chinese and to the Party-state, it is natural for the Party-state to reassert the importance of Chinese families at the beginning of 21st century through its various media outlets including such popular TV dramas as FEI dramas. Indeed, as Gong Qian (2011) and Zhao Yuezhi (2008) have suggested, the Party-state has been actively promoting Chinese families as a cushion to ease the hardships caused by the market-oriented economy.

The importance of Chinese family as a cushion for contemporary social problems is not the only reason for the Party's reassertion of the importance of families through the production of FEI dramas. Another reason for the Party's promotion of FEI dramas is that Chinese families themselves have increasingly encountered destabilizing problems resulting from the loss of moral grounding including the extramarital affairs, one night stand and quick marriage and quick divorce and that the potential threat posed by these problems to Chinese families' stability and indirectly to the country's stability has become the Party's concern and has merited the Party's attention (Guo, 2004; Han, 2008). These family-destabilizing problems and the aforementioned social problems are among the social problems that the former president Hu Jintao has been attempting to solve with his advocacy of building a socialist harmonious society in the country since 2004. Another important consideration behind the Party's promotion of familial and ethical dramas is the Party's urgency to restore the traditional Chinese cultural good virtues/values through such TV dramas to rectify the chaos of social values and the loss of moral grounding. The loss of moral grounding is so severe that the former president Jiang Zemin initiated the strategy of ruling the country by virtues at the 16th party congress and his successor Hu Jintao put forward the Eight Honours and Eight Disgraces to rectify the severity of the problem (Han, 2008; Lansdowne & Wu; 2009; Tubilewicz, 2006). The art workers in general and the TV drama practitioners in particular have been repeatedly called by TV drama regulatory authorities from the SARFT at the central level and from the Radio, Film and Television Bureaux (RFTB) at the provincial or municipal levels to produce TV dramas that embody the traditional Chinese good virtues, particularly FEI dramas, to serve the same purpose. The high popularity of FEI dramas among Chinese families has made such dramas good candidates for the

restoration of the traditional Chinese good virtues in general and the familial values and ethics in particular to rectify the loss of moral grounding. The SARFT authorities since 2004 have been urging the TV dramas practitioners to produce ordinary-people-based TV dramas particularly FEI dramas since family values and moral ethics are the foundation of the traditional Chinese good virtues and can be embodied through FEI dramas (Z.-F. Hu, 2004 & 2005; Xu, 2004a). Behind the promotion of FEI dramas also lies the Party-state's strategy of cultural diplomacy—to communicate the traditional Chinese good virtues to the outside world by the exported FEI dramas. Greatly inspired by the impact a Korean FEI drama *Winter Sonata* has created in Japan (Z.-F. Hu, 2005), the Party intends to exploit the great potential FEI dramas hold for the Party's cultural diplomacy strategy. FEI dramas together with historical dramas and costumes dramas are considered as good candidates for such purpose and since 2005 TV dramas practitioners producing such dramas have been urged to produce them with an awareness of cultural diplomacy (ibid).

Given the above mentioned pragmatic considerations, it is no surprise that the Party has prioritized the production of, screening and publicity of contemporary-life-based TV dramas in general and FEI dramas in particular. In the ANTVDPCC held in Beijing in 2004, Xu Guangchun (director of the SARFT) (2004a) and Hu Zhanfan (deputy director of the SARFT) (2004) prioritized in their keynote speeches the production of populace-oriented TV dramas which embody the traditional Chinese good virtues, urged the TV drama practitioners to produce FEI dramas and pointed out some of the Korean FEI dramas then screened in the CCTV as good examples for them to follow. Since then, FEI dramas have been among the Party's top priority TV drama programming agendas (Z.-F. Hu, 2004 & 2005; Xu, 2004a), more and more FEI dramas including *Golden Wedding*, *Gebi Mother* and *Beautiful Daughter-in-laws* have been produced under the SARFT's urge, and those thought highly of by the Chinese TV drama regulatory authorities have been screened on the primetime of the CCTV Channel or the primetime of the provincial TV stations. In addition, conferences have been organized by the TV drama authorities to publicize these highly popular TV dramas. These FEI dramas particularly those highly publicized by the Party such as *Golden Wedding* and *Beautiful-Daughter-in-laws* are expected to fulfil the Party's multiple agendas—to restore the traditional Chinese families ethics which have been conducive to the maintenance and stability of Chinese families, to rectify the loss of moral grounding resulting from the excessive profit-oriented economy development, to help cushion the previously mentioned other social problems which the Party is trying to solve, to rectify the TV drama industry's overwhelming trend of playing up the

problems or conflicts existent in the Chinese families such as the extra-marital affairs and tensions between mother-in-laws and daughters-in-laws, as well as to explore a feasible way of exporting Chinese TV dramas to the world. Additional agendas are also expected of some of these dramas to correspond with the Party's specific political campaign. Since Hu Jintao's advocacy of building a socialist harmonious society in 2004, the TV dramas produced since then including such FEI dramas as *Godden Wedding* and *Beautiful Daughter-in-laws* have been expected to embody Hu's concept of building a socialist harmonious society. What these dramas intend to show is that Chinese families are not without many problems and that these problems can be solved by upholding and practicing such traditional Chinese cultural values as filial respect for the elderly, kinship love, honesty, family support, devotion to and commitment to family solidarity, devotion to and loyalty to love, tolerance, commitment to marriage.

While each individual Feitian award-winning drama may embody the Party's specific agenda at a particular given period, underlying all dramas is one big shared common agenda—the call for the return and restoration of the traditional Chinese cultural values/practices/virtues that have been cherished and taken for granted by Chinese people since ancient times but have been increasingly marginalized by and losing ground to the money-worshipping tendency and the influx of various values from other countries ever since China's reform and open-door policy particularly since China's further opening-up and deepening of its economic development with its entry into the WTO, and the presentation of these traditional values/practices/virtues as essential helpful complementary solutions to, if not the panacea for, the various existent problems in the fast changing China. Embedded within this common agenda implies such a message—whatever problems encountered, they can be overcome as long as the aforementioned various traditional Chinese good values/practices are upheld and practiced.

Whatever Party's agendas or messages the top Feitian Award winning TV dramas intend to convey to the Chinese populace, these agendas/messages, as the previous two chapters' discussion of the five case-studied TV dramas has shown, are communicated in a sophisticated roundabout way—embedded within and spread out across the network of complex interpersonal relationships established among various life-like sophisticated round characters through their narrative interaction with one another in different events covered by the stories of different TV dramas through

the use of a network pattern as the organizing structure and the use of cultural frames as the central organizing ideas.

How come these abovementioned Party's agendas/messages have been communicated in a sophisticated way? The subsequent section discusses this question in some depth with the secondary data I had gathered during my field trip in China.

7.3 Beyond Textual Sophisticated Messages

The selected top Feitian Award winning TV dramas' communicating the Party's messages/agendas in a sophisticated way, which results in sophisticated Party messages/agendas, demonstrates sophistication of the Party's messages/agendas. Sophistication of the Party's messages/agendas, however, is shown not only in the sophisticated way these messages/agendas are constructed within the textual level of TV dramas themselves —through humanization of characterisation (or de-polarization of characterization) by means of a network pattern as the organizing structure and by means of traditional Chinese cultural values as the central organizing ideas—but also in how such sophisticated construction of the Party messages/agendas (or construction of sophisticated Party messages/agendas) has come about beyond the textual level of TV dramas —the context against which TV dramas have been produced and which involves various political actors who have purposefully or un-purposefully exerted their influence on the production of these TV dramas.

In the theoretical framework section, I have appropriated Entman's cascading network activation model of framing to propose a Trial and Test Appropriation Model to describe the dynamic sophisticated process of framing traditional Chinese cultural values in China's TV drama industry for political purpose—the dynamic sophisticated process of using traditional Chinese cultural values as the central organizing ideas in TV dramas for the purpose of advancing the Party-desired messages/agendas. This framing process, as my proposed model has shown, involves various levels of political actors (including the Party-state, the TV drama authorities representing the Party-state, TV dramas practitioners and the public/audience) who exercise their influence on the country's TV drama production in a hierarchical, dynamic and interactional way with the Party-state at the top followed first by TV drama authorities, then by TV drama practitioners and finally by the public.

My proposed model, as the subsequent discussion reveals, shows exactly how the top Feitian award winning TV dramas' sophisticated construction of the Party messages/agendas has come about—it is the result of the combined influences from these various levels of political actors.

7.3.1 Influence from the Party-state

The top level of political actor is the Party-state. Before the country's reform and open door policy in the late 1970s, the Party-state's influence on the construction of political messages in cultural products including TV dramas used to be very formal, direct and specific/microscopic with the Party-state prescribing formulaic instructions on the choice of theme, content and presentation of the political messages in the cultural products, as has been shown in the discussion of how literary and artistic works of Maoist era are uniformly organized by binary oppositional structure and are uniformly framed around the notion of consciousness and class struggle. As such, the cultural workers including writers, artists and TV drama practitioners did not have much freedom in the course of the cultural production.

After the country's reform and open door policy especially after the further commercialization of the TV drama industry in the 1990s, the Party-state's influence on the construction of political messages in the cultural products including TV dramas has tended to be more macro-oriented than micro-oriented and more on a regulatory basis. Instead of giving formulaic instructions to TV drama practitioners on their production of the TV dramas, the Party-state more often than not formulates very general cultural policy and very general guidelines to guide TV drama practitioners' production of TV dramas according to the latest directives put forward by the Party-state—usually the keynote speeches by the president incumbent such as Jiang Zemin's Three Represents and Hu Jintao's Construction of a Harmonious Society—through its formal regulatory authorities such as the SARFT or the provincial or municipal RFTBs and its informal regulatory mechanisms such as the ANTVPCs (Liu, 1994, 1995, 1996b; Ruan, 1987, 1988; Sun, 1995, 1996; Tian, 1998, 2000; Xu, 2002a, 2002b, 2002c, 2003a, 2003b, 2004a, 2004b; T.-H. Wang, 2008; Yang, 1995, 1996, 1997b, 1997c). Such general cultural policy and general guidelines formulated by the Party-state take different forms: the general guiding principles for TV drama practitioners such as Double Serving Policy to advocate the official ideological values (i.e. main melody), Double Hundred Flowers Policy to advocate the diversification of TV drama production, reflection of Jiang Zemin's Three Represents or Hu Jintao's Harmonious Society in TV dramas, the integration of ideological values, artistic value

and entertainment value in the TV dramas; the Party-state's general annual overall plan with regard to the broad subject matters or themes of the TV dramas to be produced and the allocation of certain proportion to TV dramas of different subject matters or themes; the Party-state's call for the production of TV dramas to celebrate such special occasions as the anniversary celebration of the P. R. China, the founding of the CCP or the impending Party Congress; the Party-state's call for the production of TV dramas to reflect the Party's current policy/agenda such as the construction of the new socialist countryside, the upgrading of the private family business in the country and the construction of harmonious society in the country (ibid). These different forms of general cultural policy and general guidelines result in the Party's practice of a loose general cultural framework to guide the country's TV drama industry.

Underlying the Party's loose general cultural framework is the Party-promoted ideology which since the early 1990s has become increasingly Confucianism-oriented due to the Party's increasing incorporation into its ideology of such Confucianism-based traditional Chinese cultural values as patriotism, people-orientedness, filial piety, kinship love, fraternity, industriousness and perseverance (Ai, 1994; Chinese TV, 2003a; Z.-F. Hu, 2005, 2006; Ji, 2000; Guo, 2004; Xu, 2003b, 2004a). This loose general cultural framework, is then passed down to next level of political actors—namely the TV drama regulatory authorities representing the Party-state including TV drama script evaluators, TV drama footage evaluators and TV drama awarding committee, who in return pass it down to the third level of political actors—TV drama practitioners (TV drama producers, scriptwriters and directors). It serves as the macro-framework for TV dramas producers/directors to guide their TV drama production proposal and their subsequent production of TV dramas; for TV drama evaluators to guide their examination of the TV drama production proposals from TV drama practitioners and of the completed TV dramas for the issuing of TV drama production license and TV drama distribution permit respectively; and for the TV drama award committee to guide its evaluation of the TV dramas concerned for the awarding of TV drama awards.

The second level of political actors in China's TV drama industry—which is the TV drama regulatory authorities on behalf of the Party-state—includes the SARFT, the provincial or municipal RFTBs and such TV drama award committees as Feitian Awards Committee. Similar to the influence of the Party-state on the TV drama production in the country, the influence of this second level of political actors on the country's TV drama production remains indirect and a bit general since they are still not

directly involved in the production of TV dramas in the country and they are mostly relying the Party-state's loose general cultural framework to the TV drama practitioners in the country. In comparison with the macroscopic influence from the Party-state on the TV drama production, however, their influence is relatively more specific in that this level of political actors such as the SARFT and the provincial/municipal RFTBS are now dealing with some specific TV dramas (including the proposed TV dramas-to-be-made and the actual completed TV dramas from the TV drama practitioners) when they apply the Party-state's general cultural framework to examine these specific TV dramas for the issuing of TV drama production licences and of TV drama distribution permit to the TV drama production companies concerned respectively.

The influence from the first two levels of political actors constitutes the Party-state's macroscopic influence on the construction of the political messages in China's TV dramas in general and those highly endorsed by the party-state in particular —the top Feitian award winning TV dramas. Without specifying what content to include and what representational methods to take, the Party-state's exercise of the macroscopic influence through its establishment of the loose general cultural framework gives a lot of flexibility for both TV drama practitioners and for the TV drama regulatory authorities on the Party-state's behalf.

On the one hand, within the general cultural framework, it is up to the TV drama practitioners to choose what TV dramas to produce, what content to include and how to present the content. The general cultural framework somehow serves as the Party's bottom line, and within this bottom line, TV drama practitioners have been given ample freedom to and have been encouraged by the Party-state to practice innovation in their production of TV dramas so as to come up with novel ways to better communicate the Party-state's messages/agendas to the increasingly sophisticated Chinese populace with the top governmental TV drama award (i.e. the Feitian awards) having been given to those TV dramas that have done so. Many of the top Feitian award-winning TV dramas such as the five case-studied ones have been awarded the top awards not only because they have been considered by the Party-state to have expressed the Party's agendas or messages but also because they have been considered by the Party-state to have done a good job in expressing these messages by demonstrating novelty in their selection of content and in their presentation of the content (China Television, 2005c & 2009d; China TV Art Committee Columnist, 2009a & 2011; Chinese TV, 2004c; Meng, 2009; D.-Y. Wang, 2009 & 2011; J.-Q. Wang, 2007). The

case-studied *Yan'an song*, for example, is a landmark among the MRMHT dramas produced up till then: it covers many of the taboo or sensitive events that have never been covered by the previous MRMHT dramas including the CPC Purging Campaign to purify the party, the Rescue Campaign to purify the thought of the CPC army, the break-up of Mao Zedong's marital relationship with his second wife He Zizhen; it gives objective portrayal of the transformation of some of controversial key senior CPC leaders such as Zhang Guotao who had contributed a lot to the communist revolution during its early periods but later defected to the KMT in 1938; it also gives an objective depiction of the substantial contribution made by the Nationalist Party (KMT) after the commencement of the full-scale war against Japan in such key frontal positional battles fought by the KMT as the Battle of Defending Shanghai, the Nanjing Massacre, the Battle of Taiyuan, and the Battle of Wuhan; it integrates the grand narrative of the revolution in modern China and the personalized narratives of the individual leaders (C.-Z. Wang, 2003, 2004a & 2004c; Zhong, 2004; Z. Li, 2004). Other four case-studied top Feitian award winning TV dramas, as will be shown later, also demonstrate innovations of their own and have been similarly awarded the top Feitian awards not only for their expression of the Party-state agendas/messages but also for their doing so in innovative ways.

On the other hand, the general cultural framework gives a lot of flexibility to China's TV drama regulatory authorities in their assessment of the completed TV dramas. Without any specific and concrete rules to follow, China's TV drama regulatory authorities themselves very often have very inconsistent interpretation of the Party-state's general cultural framework when applying it to their examination of the completed TV dramas' content and thus have very different opinions of and exercise different treatments of, the contents which fall into more or less the same category—with some content considered appropriate and thus allowed to stay by some TV drama evaluators while other similar content considered inappropriate and thus revised or removed by the same TV drama evaluators in the course of examining the dramas for the issuing of distribution permits or with some content considered to be subversive and thus strongly rejected by some TV drama evaluators but to be acceptable and thus approved by other TV drama evaluators. This is the case with *Yan'an Song*, an MRMHT drama which originally contained some detailed depiction of both Mao Zedong's marriage life with his second wife He Zizhen and Mao's marriage life with his third wife Jiang Qing. While the episodes about Mao's marriage life with He stay as have been shown in the released version, the initial two-episodic-long depiction of Mao's marriage life with Jiang (in which Jiang, under the general guiding principle for the MRMHT dramas production—the principle of being true to the

historical reality⁹, was depicted as a gentle and supportive wife) was ordered to be removed by the censoring committee and what remains is the brief sporadic appearance of Jiang in the drama. Both episodes are about Mao's marriage life but have received different treatments. The ones with Jiang's presence were reduced to a minimal symbolic appearance probably because Jiang still remained a highly controversial figure (and thus a sensitive topic) in the early 2000s when the drama was screened and too much positive albeit objective depiction of Jiang's life may arouse some controversy among the Chinese populace particularly those who have suffered during the Cultural Revolution in which Jiang had played an important role¹⁰. Another example is *When We Were Young*—a MRMTHT drama about the adolescent school life of Mao Zedong. When the drama's screenwriter Huang Hui first presented his proposed script to one member of the MRMTHT drama supervisory team, his proposal was immediately rejected by the member who told Huang that it is usually not allowed to present in an artistic form Mao's life and experience before his undertaking of the CPC revolutionary cause; but the same proposal was accepted and approved by another member of the same MRMTHT drama supervisory team, quite to Huang's surprise and great relief when Huang, frustrated but determined to have another try with the proposal, presented it to this member who nevertheless had offered quite a few suggestions for revision despite his giving approval of the proposal (C.-J. Xu, 2007).

While granting ample autonomy to TV drama practitioners in the course of TV drama production, the resultant flexibility due to the Party-state's practice of the loose general macro-framework thus also means uncertainty and unpredictability with regard to the Party-state's influence on the production of China's TV dramas. Whatever freedom the Party's loose general cultural framework can allow TV

⁹The general guideline for the MRMHT drama production was the four basic principles put forward by the secretariat of the Communist Party of China Central Committee (CCCPC) in the conference on February 7th, 1985—It is permissible to depict the actual historical leaders in the revolutionary-themed artistic works; the depiction must be true to the historical reality and the artistic works must be censored by the central leadership before its public screening; the current CPC leadership is normally not supposed to be depicted in any artistic works; Putonghua (also known as Mandarin) rather than the local dialects should be used in any artistic works on the historical CPC leaders (B. L. Xie & D. M. Shi, 1989; W. G. Yang, 1997c). The principle of being true to the historical reality has evolved into the principle of *dashi bu xu xiaoshi bu ju*—the depiction of the significant historical figures (mostly the revolutionary leaders) and the eventful events must be true to their historical reality while that of the minor events or other characters can be flexible (fictional).

¹⁰The director of *Yan'an Song* reveals in my field trip interview that the drama initially contained two episodes about Mao's Zedong's third wife Jiang Qing in which she was depicted to be very gentle and good wife but was ordered to remove these episodes upon sending the drama to the SARFT for examination and approval for the issuing of the screening licence.

drama practitioners to practice innovation in their production of TV dramas and whatever uncertainty and unpredictability the same loose general cultural framework may result in on the part of TV drama regulatory authorities in their evaluation of TV dramas-to-be-produced and of TV dramas eventually completed, TV dramas produced and eventually screened in the country is not too far away from or stays within the limits of the Party-advocated ideology which underlies the Party's loose general cultural framework and which, as I have just pointed out, has become increasingly Confucianism-based due to the Party's increasing incorporation of Confucianism-based traditional Chinese cultural values into its ideology. As a result, almost all TV dramas produced and eventually screened in the country somehow end up being organized/framed around Confucianism-based traditional Chinese cultural values to various degrees.

7.3.2 Influence from TV Drama Practitioners

The third level of political actors is TV drama practitioners including producers, screenwriters and directors. Given their direct involvement in the production of TV dramas, the influence from this level of political actors on the production of TV dramas and thus on the construction of the political messages of the TV dramas is the most direct but is at the same time the most sophisticated one since TV drama practitioners in the course of TV dramas production have to take into consideration the different needs/agendas from at least three different masters and the TV dramas they eventually turn out have to satisfy these three different masters—the Party-state, the market and TV drama practitioners themselves.

First of all, TV drama practitioners are obliged to satisfy the Party-state's basic bottom line agenda—the general cultural framework set up by the Party-state because the Party-state still maintains a strong grip on the country's TV drama industry particularly on the content of the completed TV dramas through various means such as issuing TV drama production licenses and TV drama distribution/screening permits and controlling/monopolizing TV drama distribution platforms although the party-state-initiated commercialization of the TV drama industry since its reform and open door policy in the late 1970s and its establishment of the general cultural framework for the TV drama industry have given a lot of leeway to TV drama practitioners in their production of TV dramas. Without TV drama production licenses, TV drama practitioners are not allowed to produce any TV drama in the country and without TV drama distribution/screening permits, any TV drama produced (even if they have been secretly successfully produced without gaining TV drama production

licenses from the Party-state) can't be screened in the country. Getting production licenses and distribution permits from the Party-state requires TV drama practitioners to follow and express in the TV dramas the party-state's general cultural framework. The party-state's general cultural framework, as has been briefly mentioned, is seemingly easy but in fact a bit difficult to satisfy because inconsistency in the interpretation of the general cultural framework (between the TV drama regulatory authorities and TV drama practitioners and) within the TV drama regulatory authorities has posed uncertainty and unpredictability on the part of the TV drama regulatory authorities in their awarding production licenses and distribution permits to TV drama practitioners concerned thus affecting the latter's chances of getting production licenses and distribution permits. Every year some TV drama production companies have been denied production licenses and distribution permits due to different reasons among which are misunderstanding or violation of the Party-state's general cultural framework, poor quality and cloning production (Zhang & Zhang, 2011; Zhang, et al., 2013).

Another master TV drama practitioners need to please is the commercial market. In the pre-reform Maoist era, the Party-state monopolized all aspects of the TV drama industry including the planning, funding, production and distribution of TV dramas. TV stations for which TV drama practitioners worked were an integral part of the party-state's political bureaucratic institutions (shiye). They arranged for the production and screening of some TV dramas in accordance with the party-state's propaganda needs. All the cost related to TV dramas' production and screening was covered by the subsidies they received from the party-state. Until 1979 China's TV drama industry still depended completely on the party-state's subsidies. Under such circumstances, although TV drama practitioners in the pre-reform era had little autonomy in the course of TV drama production, they need worry neither about the funding for the production of TV dramas nor about the distribution channels for the subsequently produced TV dramas.

Things began to change in the late 1980s when the party-state initiated market-oriented reform in the broadcasting system in the country (Jing, 2013; R. Liu, 2010 & 2011; H. Yin, 2010b). The TV drama sector was the first sector within the broadcasting system to try and practise such market-based mechanisms as the separation of TV program production from its broadcasting (also known as the commission system in the western countries) whereby TV program production was conducted by companies with TV program production licenses while TV stations became the broadcasting platforms for the TV programmes bought from these companies (ibid). After the first licensing system

started for TV drama production in 1986, many of the TV drama production departments originally established by TV stations to produce TV dramas themselves became separate production companies albeit still attached to their parent TV stations in a de facto mode of operations—quasi-independent television production companies inside the broadcasting system. With the TV drama production licenses from the TV drama regulatory authorities – either SARFT or the RFTBs at the provincial or municipal level, these separate companies could then have their own plan of TV drama production but at the same time have to finance the production of TV dramas themselves to great extent because the Party-state has gradually withdrawn funding for the production of the cultural products including the production of TV dramas since the country's economic reform started by Deng Xiaoping in the early 1980s. After Deng's tour in the southern provinces in early 1992 further deepened the country's market economy, the production of cultural products in general and of TV dramas in particular in the country has concomitantly undergone rapid commercialisation. The corollary of this rapid commercialization is the growth of independent TV production companies (i.e. television production companies outside the broadcasting system) alongside the aforementioned television production companies inside the broadcasting system. Since the formal registering of the first independent television production company in 1994 (although such independent television companies had already existed underground before 1994) television production companies engaged in TV drama production in the country have come to comprise not just those inside the broadcasting system but those outside the broadcasting system as well¹¹, all operating in more or less the same way—enjoying ample freedom in their own plan of TV drama production but at the same time having to finance their own production (Co-Research Group of SARFT's R&D Centre and Hunan Radio and Television Broadcasting Station, 2011; R. Liu, 2010 & 2011; Wei, 2010). Accompanying the rapid commercialisation of the TV drama production was the party-state's further withdrawal of funding for the TV drama industry. By the late 1990s when the TV drama production market has become totally commercialised, the Party-state has already cut off its funding for the production of most TV dramas and has reserved its funding only for some very few TV dramas such as the rural TV dramas to promote the party-state's special agendas like the construction of the socialist new countryside and MRMHT TV dramas to promote the Party's

¹¹ The former were those which used to be the TV drama production departments within the TV stations while the latter include those state-owned or partly state-owned by government departments and those totally private entities (Co-Research Group of SARFT's R&D Centre and Hunan Radio and Television Broadcasting Station, 2011; R. Liu, 2010 & 2011; C.Z. Wei, 2010).

historiography but such funding goes mostly to the Party-state's flagship TV station CCTV whose well-established China TV Drama Production Centre Co. Ltd (CTPC) makes it almost impossible for other TV drama production companies to compete with CCTV for such funding (Q. Gong, 2011; Y. Liu, 2011b; Wei, 2010). The rest of such funding which goes to the provincial and local TV stations for more or less the same propaganda purpose accounted for less than 5 % of the financial makeup of these TV stations—far from enough to recoup the immense investment in the production of TV dramas whose minimum production cost of one crudely produced episode has by then already reached 150,000 yuan (about 25,000 US dollars) with that of finely produced one even higher (ibid). As a result, nearly all TV drama production companies in the country except CCTV's CTPC (including those which produce the aforementioned party-state-promoted TV dramas and are thus partially funded by the party-state) from the late 1990s have to solicit funding through alternative sources such as advertising and enterprise sponsorship rather than state subsidies to finance the production of their TV dramas (Co-Research Group of SARFT's R&D Centre and Hunan Radio and Television Broadcasting Station, 2011; R. Liu, 2010; Wei, 2010).

Not only do TV drama production companies have to find funding for the production of TV drama themselves, they also have to look for distribution channels (mainly TV stations) themselves for the screening of the produced TV dramas—selling these TV dramas to whatever TV stations (and as many TV stations as) they could possibly find to be willing to buy from them at the most desirable price they can negotiate. This latter task very often turns out to be a very challenging one due to two contributing factors—the large annual TV drama output and the fierce competition on the part of distribution outlets for high-quality TV dramas. Since the formal registering of the first independent TV drama production company (ITVDPC) in 1994, more and more ITVDPCs have been established and have become the primary forces in the country's TV drama production market—in 2001 there were already 432 such companies, in 2009 the number of such companies reached 3343 and the number is expected to be on the increase in the future. These ITVDPCs, together with the previously mentioned separate television production companies inside the broadcasting system, are producing more and more episodes of TV dramas every year with the annual TV drama output having already exceeded 10,000 episodes since 2003 and reaching an unprecedented record of 17, 703 episodes (506 TV dramas) in 2012 (Co-Research Group of SARFT's R&D Centre and Hunan Radio and Television Broadcasting Station, 2011; J.-S. Li, 2013). Accompanying the large volume of TV dramas produced every year which are competing for the best screening platforms are the relatively small

number of screening outlets which are equally competing for potentially best-selling high-quality TV dramas so as to maximize profits through the screening of the TV dramas they have bought at the most desirable price they could possibly negotiate with TV drama practitioners. Some of these distribution outlets such as those provincial satellite TV stations offer a buying price for the TV dramas based on the latter's average viewing rate only after they have been screened for half a year or a year (known as the price based on the viewing rate—*yi dian lun jia*) (Co-Research Group of SARFT's R&D Centre and Hunan Radio and Television Broadcasting Station, 2011). CCTV since 2007 has been similarly practising its own *yi dian lun jia*— paying TV drama productions companies concerned only part of the initially agreed payment when buying some TV dramas from these companies with the rest of the payment paid and adjusted in accordance with these TV dramas' overall viewing rate (*ibid*). If the viewing rate of these TV dramas is above the average viewing rate of the TV dramas that have been previously screened in the same time slots of CCTV's certain channels say CCTV 8's or CCTV 1's primetime drama slot, TV drama production companies selling these TV dramas will not only be paid the rest of the unpaid payment but also be rewarded with extra payment (the highest of which has been 15 percentage of the initially agreed sum); if conversely the former is below the latter, then the initially agreed sum will be reduced and so will be the rest of the unpaid sum (*ibid*). This double competition—the competition for best distribution platform on the part of TV drama production companies and the competition for potentially best-selling high-quality TV dramas on the part of TV stations— was so fierce that only those TV dramas which TV stations consider to be most likely popular among the Chinese populace were sold and very often these were sold to and screened on several different TV stations simultaneously. With those TV dramas that have later been shown to be highly popular among the Chinese populace, they very often undergo several rounds of rebroadcasting or repeats in the same TV channels or TV stations. This repetitive selling and repetitive screening have important consequences—while some popular TV dramas have been broadcast and rebroadcast on several TV stations or TV channels simultaneously, fairly large number of TV dramas has been unable to reach any TV stations/channels for their presumed lack of popularity among the Chinese audience. Therefore, although with the commercialisation of TV drama industry and the upgrading of the television technology in the country from the analogue terrestrial broadcasting system into the latest digital and satellite broadcasting system, the screening/distribution outlets available to the TV drama production companies have proliferated dramatically including CCTV, provincial TV stations (both terrestrial and satellite ones) and lately the

online broadcasting platforms, the current overall annual screening sources/outlets (about 89.4 % of the existing 1974 television channels in China— a total of 1764 television channels excluding paid TV channels—are broadcasting TV dramas in 2010) are still far from enough to accommodate the immense annual output of TV dramas in the country which has already exceeded 10,000 episodes a year since 2003 (Zhang & Zhang, 2011; W.-Y. Yang, 2008). Not all the produced TV dramas with distribution permits could make it to the TV screen. Since 2003 there have been a considerable number of TV dramas remained unsold and unbroadcast every year (Fan & Jiang, 2011; Wei, 2010). Among the 14685 episodes of TV dramas with distribution permits in 2010 for example, only 8000 episodes made it to the screen and among the screened 8000 episodes only 3000 episodes made it to the primetime; over 6000 episodes—over 40% of all the produced TV dramas were unsold and unscreened (Fan & Jiang, 2011). All TV drama practitioners want their TV dramas to be broadcast and rebroadcast, if possible, at the primetime; no one wants their products to be screened out.

In order to attract investment both from the state-institutional funding and from the social private capitals but mostly from the latter (whose investment in TV drama production has accounted for 80 percent of the overall investment by 2003) and to compete for the still limited distribution outlet resources, TV dramas production companies have to produce TV dramas that sell well among the Chinese populace particularly the segment of the populace with the purchasing power since only well-sold dramas by virtue of high audience ratings can and have been shown to bring huge advertising revenue and thus huge profits to the potential investors in TV dramas' production and to the TV stations screening these TV dramas. In other words, the paramount agenda for TV drama practitioners in the current post-reform era is to produce commercially viable TV dramas apart from meeting the previously discussed Party-state's general cultural framework.

To do so, they need to produce dramas that appeal to the maximum majority of the Chinese populace particularly the segment of Chinese audience with good purchasing power. In order to make the dramas interesting to these audiences, they draw inspirations from TV dramas that have been popular among the Chinese populace—including both TV dramas imported from such countries and regions as Korea, Japan, Taiwan and Hong Kong and those domestically produced ones. They racked their brains to incorporate into their own dramas and give a new look to whatever popular elements that have been resonating well with the Chinese audience—something they desire such as love, friendship, marriage and familial life; something that is new to them such as fashions; and

something that is of immediate relevance to them such as education and health. In a word, the dramas produced need to appeal to and appealed to Chinese audience's secularized concerns, be they about love, friendship, kinship, marriage life or emotions. This is also the case with the award-winning TV dramas. Almost all TV drama practitioners of the award-winning TV dramas implied that the first and foremost thing that they kept in mind throughout the course of TV drama production is to make dramas interesting so as to attract as many Chinese audience as possible to watch them since that is the most effective way to maximize audience ratings, to maximize advertising revenue, to recoup their investment and thus eventually to make profit. Of course, TV drama practitioners need to ensure that the dramas produced are still within the Party-state's general cultural framework so as to avoid being screened out in the country.

China's TV drama practitioners' strenuous efforts to incorporate various popular elements into their own TV dramas to produce well-selling TV dramas in the country result in varied innovative representations both of the incorporated popular elements and of TV dramas of different subject matters or genres—innovation in the representation of the incorporated popular elements and innovation in TV dramas of different subject matters or genres. Almost all the TV dramas understudy, as is the case with most of other TV dramas, demonstrate innovations to various extents. The previously mentioned case-studied MRMHT drama *Yan'an Song* for example distinguishes itself from its previous predecessors (which has taken Mao Zedong as the core character) in several aspects one of which being its detailed coverage of Mao's gradually estranged marital relationship with his second wife He Zizhen, its moving though brief depiction of his fatherly affection toward Mao-and-He's daughter Jiaojiao and its unprecedented neutral though brief depiction of his marital relationship with his third wife Jiang Qing who still remains a controversial figure in China's history for her involvement in the Cultural Revolution. The case-studied legendary style revolutionary themed drama *The Road We Have Taken* incorporates such popular elements as love story, kinship relationships and classmately fraternity, elements which its pre-reformed revolutionary themed dramas are lack of, and the drama's combination of love story, kinship relationships and classmately fraternity distinguishes itself from other recently-made popular revolutionary style TV dramas such as *Draw Your Sword* and *Brothers* (Cai, 2009; Cao, 2009; Shi, 2009; Zhang & Liu, 2011). With regard to the familial and ethical issue drama *Beautiful Daughter-in-laws*, the drama is a stark contrast with the other previously screened dramas of the same genre in the country (J. Liu, 2011; Liu & Wang, 2012; L.-P. Wang, 2010; Wang & Wang, 2010). It is a light comedic drama whereby the familial conflicts

arising from such issues as the tense relationships between mother-in-laws and daughter-in-laws, tense relationship between daughter-in-laws, and extra-marital affairs are presented in a witty and humorous way and result in a more stable familial life with a more stable marital relationship and with more harmonious familial relationships especially among the in-laws whereas conflicts arising from more or less the same issues in the previously shown TV dramas of the same genre are presented in such a heavy way that the conflicts very often result either in the deteriorating relationship among the familial members or in the breakup of a family for example divorce between the young couple (ibid). The case-studied contemporary military drama *Soldier Sortie* also demonstrates unique innovations of its own. First of all, this drama can also be considered as a youth drama with its focus on a new recruit young soldier. Though this is not the only contemporary military themed drama with young soldiers as its focus, this drama has initiated the shift of the contemporary military themed drama from the high-ranking officers/generals to the young ordinary soldiers in the army. The other two unique aspects of the drama have to do with its content and its protagonist, as has been briefly discussed by Zhong Xueping (2010). “[...] in terms of content, unlike many youth dramas, its story is exclusively about the lives of soldiers away from the civilian world and does not have a single female character. Unlike other militarily-themed dramas, this drama does not include love interests or marriage issues in the personal lives of its soldiers and officers. The only [familial] content appears in the beginning, when the protagonist Xu Sanduo is urged to join the army by his widowed father (who has three sons none of whom are married), and then sporadically in two other moments later in the story, both having to do with Xu’s all-male family. ...the exclusively male cast and their stories do set the drama apart from its counterparts in the category of military-related dramas and in youth-related ones” (X.-P. Zhong, 2010, p.116-117). With regard to the protagonist Xu Sandou, he possesses none of the ‘normal’ traces of a hero. “As a ‘hero’, Xu Sanduo differs from traditional Mao era heroes, cynical Wang Shuo-esque youths, contemporary Chinese glamour-oriented middle-class youth idols, or white-collar chengong renshi (successful professionals). Xu Sandou’s difference from these mostly young cultural icons stems from his own version of anti-hero characteristics” (ibid, p.117). At the beginning of the story, Xu Sanduo is a clumsy, clueless but stubborn poor rural young man. At the end of the story, Xu Sanduo is still clumsy, clueless but stubborn though he has by then already been transformed into a well-trained soldier. Besides his clumsiness, cluelessness and stubbornness, Xu Sanduo has other anti-hero characteristics such as his single-minded way of doing what he believes to be the right thing and his supposed lack of the worldliness to know when to stop. Such

unique personality of Xu Sanduo has made the drama “full of humorous moments brought about by Xu Sanduo’s seemingly unsophisticated behaviour, including the questions he asks and the dialogue he has with other characters” (ibid).

Apart from the commercial agendas TV drama practitioners feel obliged to express in their TV dramas, TV drama practitioners have their own agendas. Intellectuals including writers and artists in China have had a paternalistic tradition of taking it as their responsibility and mission to reform and shape the ordinary populace’s behaviour and attitude so as to reform the society for the better (Fung & Bodde, c1976; Hucker, 1975; Lai, 2008; H.-T Li, 2001; J.-L. Liu, 2006; Rainey, 2010). During the pre-reform era (excluding the Cultural Revolution period when most intellectuals were harshly targeted), the intellectual’s paternalistic mission was institutionalized into the Party’s propaganda machine albeit at the expense of intellectuals’ autonomy with the Party prescribing formulaic instructions to them as to what artistic works to produce and how to represent these artistic works to influence the Chinese populace to produce the kind of socialist citizens desired by the Party-state (Barme, 1999; Q. Gong, 2011). Immediately after the Party-state-initiated reform and open-door policy in the late 1970s and 1980s, the intellectuals, who were then endowed with unprecedented freedom rarely enjoyed by their counterparts either in the Maoist era or in the reform-era after the Tiananmen Incident in late 1980s, were somehow still very much considered as the engineers of the soul for the Chinese people and were entrusted with the mission of producing artistic works to mould and shape the Chinese populace’s behaviour and attitude in a positive way (ibid). With the commercialization of the cultural industry and the resultant increasing domination of popular culture in Chinese populace’s daily life from early 1990s, the intellectual’s role as the engineers of the soul has been strongly weakened due to the intellectuals’ contempt for and reluctance to engage themselves in the burgeoning commodification of the culture industry which, according to the intellectuals, has increasingly lowered the quality of the cultural products in the country by making them cater to rather than elevate the popular taste—has vulgarized the cultural production in the country with its production of popular cultural products. For a period of over two years sometime starting from around mid-1993, there had been an earnest discussion among writers, artists and other intellectuals about the urgency of reviving humanism to counter the vulgar commodification of the cultural production in the country (ibid). Since the end of the discussion, however, the intellectuals have been increasingly obliged to join in the production of the popular culture since further non-engagement in the inevitable commercialization of the cultural production would mean

self-ostracism and thus self-relinquishment of their holy historical mission of shaping/reforming the populace through exerting their influence on the cultural production (ibid). Thus slowly and reluctantly, the intellectuals joined in the Party-state initiated commercialisation of the cultural industry (ibid).

As part of the intelligentsia who are engaged in the production of cultural products amid the commercialization of the cultural industry, TV drama practitioners to some extent still feel it part of their responsibility and mission to give a positive influence on the audience through their products although the commercialization of the cultural industry in the country has strongly weakened their mission as the engineers of the soul. They have been doing so by weaving into the commercial cultural products their own agendas as intellectuals—what they consider good or appropriate to enlighten the populace. This is also true of those TV drama practitioners whose TV dramas have won the top Feitian TV awards. Some scholars, however, may feel tempted to claim that all the Feitian Award winning TV dramas are merely the political assignments given by the Party-state to the TV dramas production crew and as such it is not very likely for the TV drama practitioners to have their own agendas in these dramas considering the fact that the Feitian Awards is the top governmental award for the TV dramas screened in the country—naturally awards will be given to those that have satisfied the ideological requirements desired by the Party-state. Some dramas like *Shi wan renjia* and *Yan'an Song* are indeed the political tasks assigned to the TV drama practitioners and have very clear political agendas assigned by the Party-state prior to the very creation of the TV dramas themselves besides those commercial agendas added to by the TV drama practitioners to make the drama interesting and appealing to Chinese audience, just as production team of these TV dramas have revealed (Y.-X. Chen, 2008; M.-H. Cheng, 2008; H. Liu, 2008; C.-Z. Wang, 2004a; F. Wang, 2011; Xiu, 2005; J. Xu, 2008). But even in such TV dramas, TV drama practitioners have their own agendas too. In *Yan'an Song*, for example, Wang Chaozhu—the screenwriter, and Song Jianming—the director, have tried to give a humanized depiction of almost all the characters in the drama by endowing them with normal secularized concerns such as marital relationship, familial kinship and other personal relations, and have tried to bring a cultural dimension to such humanized depiction by framing the characters around traditional Chinese cultural values such as patriotism, fraternity and kinship love (C.-Z. Wang, 2003, 2004a, 2004b & 2005). Other dramas like *The Road We Have Taken* are not political assignments from the Party-state. With these TV dramas, the TV drama practitioners have their own agendas too. These dramas are singled out by the party-state either for sponsorship or for awards because the content of the dramas happen to fit in well with the

agendas of the Party-state. This was the case with *The Road We Have Taken* which has been screen written by Jiang Qitao and directed by Zhang Li. Jiang finished the script for the drama one year before Zhejiang Radio, Film and Television Broadcasting Bureau (ZRFTBB) talked to him and Zhang for the production of a drama to commemorate the 60th anniversary of the founding of the P.R. China. Although the ZRFTBB has later established a special team to supervise the drama's production, there is not much intervention in the drama's actual shooting from the team whose responsibility concentrates more on smoothing out the various problems (such as financial problems) encountered by the drama's production team in the course of shooting (Cao, 2009; Shi, 2009). Hence, Zhang has had ample autonomy in presenting the drama the way he considers appropriate while remaining as close as possible to Jiang's original script. The result is that besides those commercial agendas Zhang feels obliged to express in the drama, as implied by the interviews Zhang has received from *the Life Weekly* and from *Oriental Outlook* (Cai, 2009; Rednet.cn, 2009), are also presented Jiang's and Zhang's own agendas – giving a realistic humanized depiction of the fictional historical characters in the history covered by the drama, the incorporation of the traditional Chinese culture as the overarching organizing ideas for the characters' actions, and the expression of a concern for the well-being of the state and the people (*ju an si wei*). In many of the artistic works on the Party's history particularly those in the pre-reform era, the historical figures (whether real or fictional) were very often portrayed in black and white terms— either as good or bad. In the actual history, historical figures were not like this. Zhang cites as typical examples General Zhang Xueliang and General Feng Yuxiang both of whom were ambivalent in their attitudes towards the civil war between the CPC and the KMT but were very clear-cut in their attitudes toward the Japanese invasion. Instead of giving a black and white mode of depiction of the characters in *The Road We Have Taken*, Zhang has given a humanized portrayal of almost all the characters with love, with political commitment, with familial values, with friendship, with classmately fraternity—none of whom can't be judged as either bad or good in black and white terms, just as I have previously discussed.

Like Jiang and Zhang in *the Road We Have Taken*, Wang Liping, who is the screenwriter of *Beautiful Daughters-in-law*, also has her own agenda—she wants to present something beautiful to give a positive impact on the audience especially the younger generation (Wang & Wang, 2010). Her inclination for something beautiful, as she explained in an interview, has largely to do with her childhood experience of watching some scenes of a movie which were too terrifying to her and her friends who were then still very young—scenes where the communist protagonist was forced to

submit himself to the enemy because the latter tried to rape the former's girlfriend right before the former (ibid). Such is her beautiful agenda that she has presented various familial problems/conflicts in *Beautiful Daughter-in-laws* in a witty, humorous and positive way, which contrasts sharply with other familial and ethical issues drama covering more or less the same familial problems/conflicts.

In the cases of *Beautiful Daughter-in-laws* and *the Road We Have Taken*, as with some other TV dramas, the agendas of the TV drama practitioners happen to converge with those of the Party-state. While the witty, humorous and positive portrayal of various familial problems in *Beautiful Daughter-in-laws* serves as a good corrective to the sweeping existence of 'family feud dramas' on China's screen which plays up the various conflicts in contemporary Chinese families, *The Road We Have Taken* serves the Party-state's purpose of commemorating the 60th anniversary of the founding of the P. R. China.

With regard to the case-studied TV drama *Soldier Sortie*, it is a drama that typifies TV drama practitioners' dogged persistence in their own agendas (bbs.ifeng.com, 2007a & 2007b; C.-Y. Chen, 2007; Jiang, 2008; Y. Liu, 2010; Ming, 2007; Song, 2008a & 2008b; V.ifeng.com, 2007; X. Zhang, 2008). The scriptwriter Lan Xiaolong intends to present through the drama the life of an ordinary grassroots recruit soldier in the army and the traditional Chinese cultural virtues (such as good-naturedness, persistence and fraternity) embodied by this soldier. Although the drama's anti-popular elements—no love interests, no marriage issues and not great protagonists—have turned away quite a few potential investors and directors, Lan persists in his own agenda. It was not until Lan awaited Kang Honglei who shares with him more or less the same agenda and who agreed to undertake the directing of the drama that the drama began to be produced in 2005—a long wait of four years after Lan completed the drama's script in 2001 (ibid). Without Lan's persistence on his own agenda and without Kang's support for Lan, *Soldier Sortie* will never make it to the screen as it has been shown.

In a word, most of the top Feitian award winning TV dramas, whether or not they are political assignments from the party-state, somehow still embody TV drama practitioners' own agendas, some of which, as have been shown, fit in well with those of the party-state and thus have received the latter's high endorsement.

When the completed TV dramas are submitted by the TV drama production units to the TV drama regulatory authorities for examination so as to get distribution permits, they are the framing results of

the TV drama production crew concerned including screen writers, producers and directors, which have integrated their interpretation of the Party-state's general cultural framework, their interpretation of the commercial agendas, and their own agendas. Whether this integrated interpretations fit in with that of the Party-state and that of the commercial market cannot be measured until after they have been examined by the TV drama regulatory authorities and until after they have been shown on the screen to the Chinese populace.

7.3.3 Influence from Chinese Audience

The next level of political actors is the Chinese audience (or the market). Although Chinese audience are not directly involved in the production of the TV dramas, their indirect influence on the production of TV dramas in the country is important and is felt right from the very beginning of the planning of every TV drama production project. Whereas cultural workers of pre-reform era did not have to worry about the audience reception of their cultural products because the state had subsidized the production of all cultural products, cultural workers in the current reform-era China including TV drama practitioners are under great pressure to take into consideration of how audience may receive their because audience are now the very consumers of their works and their liking for the works very much determines the life of their works and audience have thus become the bread and butter of the cultural workers. Given such a fact, TV drama practitioners have in their mind the importance of audience throughout the whole course of TV drama production right from the very beginning of TV drama production—screenwriting (Zhang & Liu, 2011; J. Zhang etc., 2009). The aforementioned innovations by the TV drama practitioners with regard to their choice of subject matter, the selection of certain theme and content, and the representation of the selected theme and content all aim to make the produced TV dramas appealing to the increasingly sophisticated Chinese audience whose volatile and difficult tastes have been fostered by their exposure to the myriad of cultural products available to them since the country's practice of market economy in the late 1970s. Audience's importance is also shown by the various other activities done by TV drama practitioners including the publicity prior to the shooting of TV dramas-to-be-produced, publicity in the course of the shooting of the TV dramas, and publicity immediately before the debut broadcasting of the completed TV dramas; the invitation of the influential directors to direct the TV dramas; the invitation of actors/actresses already popular among the Chinese audience to play the leading roles in the TV dramas—all of which aim to attract Chinese audience's attention to and expectation of the TV dramas and to make the TV dramas appealing and engaging to the audience (G.-H. Chen, 2007a &

2007b; B.-Y. Hu, 2006b & 2008; Shi, 2009; Yang & Zhang, 2008; Yong, 2006; Y. Zhang, 2006). Audience's importance, as has just been briefly discussed, is also felt at the moment of distribution when audience's likely reception of some newly produced TV dramas is also a paramount determinant in the consideration of the TV stations which directly influence these TV stations' final decision as to whether or not to buy some newly produced TV dramas for screening (Song, 2008a & 2008b). The influence of the audience on the production of TV dramas is also demonstrated by the Party-state's efforts to incorporate audience reception of TV dramas as one of the criteria according to which TV dramas are selected and evaluated as potential candidates for certain type of TV drama awards. The five case-studied top Feitian TV Award winning TV dramas, as with the other top Feitian Award winning TV dramas under study, achieved very high viewing rate when they were first broadcast and rebroadcast. *Yan'an Song*, for example, ranked the 8th among the top ten popular TV dramas screened at the primetime of CCTV 1 in the year 2004 (T. Zhang, 2005). *Xi Gengtian's Story* has an average view rate of 6.73 % when it was first broadcast in CCTV One in 2007 with some episodes reaching the viewing rate as high as 9.59% (B.-Y. Hu, 2009a; Meng & Tong, 2007; M.-L. Zhang, 2008). *Soldier Sortie* has also gained an overwhelming popularity among the Chinese populace after several rounds of broadcasting with 2007 year being dubbed as the year-for-Solider-Sortie although its viewing rating during its first broadcast in Shaanxi TV station was 4.18 %--a bit over the average viewing ratings (C.-Y. Chen, 2007; Ming, 2007; Song, 2008a & 2008b). *The Road We Have Taken* has achieved an average episodic viewing rate of 2.8% with the 47th episode reaching a viewing rate of up to 4.01% when it was first broadcast on CCTV 8 between June 2, 2009 and June 18, 2003—being one of the few TV dramas whose viewing rate at the evening primetime slot on CCTV 8 has ever exceeded 2% in the CCTV 8's TV drama screening history¹²; the drama's viewing rate in its subsequent rebroadcasting from 23.30 pm in the CCTV 1 of the next day (starting from June 3) also reached a record high of 0.69%, much higher than the average viewing rate of 0.2-0.3% for other previously screened popular TV dramas in the same channel; the viewing rate of the drama broadcast simultaneously on its PPS online network was over 7% (T. Chen, 2009; Lin, 2009); its rebroadcasting in provincial satellite TV channels after the debut

¹² The viewing rate of TV dramas shown on CCTV 1 is much higher than that on CCTV 8 largely due to the fact that CCTV 1's use of satellite direct broadcasting technology makes the programs of CCTV 1 have a much more extensive coverage among its viewers who can have satellite dishes more easily at their hand while CCTV 8's use of cable broadcasting technology makes the programs of CCTV 8 only accessible to those viewers with cable TV and due to the competition for audience viewing at the same prime time slot from the wider-penetration-rate CCTV 1.

screening on CCTV channels also achieved good viewing rates. *Beautiful Daughter-in-laws* has also achieved very high popularity among Chinese populace with the average viewing rate in Beijing Satellite TV reaching a record of 10.91 % with some episodes' viewing rate being as high as 16.5%--achieving what some newspapers called a miracle in TV dramas' recent viewing history in China (L.-P. Wang, 2010; Zhejiang Daily, 2010).

The indirect influence from the audience on China's TV drama production results in the incorporation into China's TV dramas the elements which have been proved popular among Chinese populace such as love, marriage, friendship, kinship, fraternity, emotions, and other secularized personal concerns. This has been the case with China's TV dramas in general since the Party-initiated commercialization of TV drama industry in the country in the mid-&-late 1980s. This has also been the case with the top Feitian Award winning TV dramas since the early 1990s when the Party-state started to embrace and practise as the integration of three values as the guiding principle for TV drama industry and as the criteria for high-quality TV dramas with entertainment value being one of the three values.

At the moment when the TV dramas in general are shown on the screen to the Chinese audience, it has already gone through several rounds of framings/influences from different political actors including the Party-state at the top, TV drama regulatory authorities on its behalf, TV drama production crew and the audience: the first round of influence begins with TV drama practitioners' TV drama production proposal, followed by the second round of influence in the SARFT or provincial RFTBs' issuing of TV drama production license, the third round of influence in the course of shooting TV dramas by TV drama practitioners , the fourth round of influence in the SARFT or provincial RFTBs' issuing of TV drama distribution permit, the fifth round of influence in TV dramas distribution platforms (mainly the screening TV stations). In these different rounds of influences, the influences from different political actors are interwoven with one another. When TV drama practitioners make certain TV drama production proposals and shoot the proposed TV dramas, they keep in mind the Party-state's general cultural framework and Chinese audience's taste or preference; when SARFT or principal RFTBs examine the TV drama production proposal and the completed TV dramas for the issuing of TV drama production licences and of TV drama distribution permits respectively, they refer to the Party-state's loose general cultural framework while at the same time taking into consideration of audience's possible reception of the TV dramas; when TV stations buy TV dramas from TV drama

production companies, they check TV drama distribution permits for these TV dramas held by the latter in accordance with the Party-state's loose general cultural framework and take into consideration of the audience likely reception of these TV dramas; before they screen the bought TV dramas, they conduct pre-broadcast examination in accordance with the Party-state's general cultural framework and may make some slight changes to fit in with audience preferences.

In the course of China's TV dramas moving toward the screen, influences from different political actors get interwoven with one another in a hierarchical, dynamic and interactional way. When some dramas make it to become the Feitian Award winning TV dramas they have been subject to further framing/influence from the Party-state and the audience—the quality criteria set up by the Party-state (i.e. the integration of three values) and the high popularity among the Chinese populace.

Therefore, China's TV dramas in general and the top Feitian award winning TV dramas under study in particular are the result of the combined influences from different levels of actors including the Party-state, its representatives, TV drama practitioners and the audience. A corollary of the combined influences from these different political actors on TV drama industry is that China's TV dramas in general and the top Feitian Award winning TV dramas in particular are produced with an awareness of multiple agendas—the Party-state's agenda, the commercial (or the audience's) agendas as well as TV drama practitioners' own agendas, and different elements have been incorporated into TV dramas by TV drama practitioners to meet the needs of these political actors. Content and subject matters relate to the Party's interest such as the Party-led revolution before its ascendance to power, the Party-led socialist construction in the pre-reform era, various Party-promoted projects in the current post-reform era such as the building of the new socialist countryside and medical reforms are selected either as the focus of the TV dramas or as part of TV dramas' content. Interwoven into these contents are elements popular among Chinese populace such as the abovementioned various secularized life concerns—love, marriage, friendship, fraternity, emotions etc. Added to these elements which are intended to meet the Party-state's needs and the needs of Chinese populace are other elements which are of concern to TV drama practitioners themselves such as the abovementioned ones—humanization of both villains and heroes in revolutionary-themed TV dramas such as the *Road We Have Taken* and *Yan'an Song*, positive portrayal of various familial conflicts in *Beautiful-Daughters-in-law*. All these elements are put together by TV drama practitioners into various well-knit stories as they eventually appear on the

screen—dramas of different types such as rural dramas, revolutionary-themed dramas, familial and ethical issues and contemporary soldier's dramas which are connected by a network pattern and are organized/framed around the general cultural framework set up by the Party-state—namely framed/organized around Confucianism-based traditional Chinese cultural values because the Party-state's general cultural framework, as I have pointed out earlier, has become increasingly Confucianism-oriented since the early 1990s. These stories are elaborated through the network of complex relationships established among the characters by virtue of their narrative interactions with one another in different events—these characters are shown to engage in various activities both in the political/public domain and in the private secularized domain with their activities in public domain often interwoven with those in the private secularized domain and with one character's activities often interwoven with those of the others. In this way, the Party's agendas/messages are not only shown in the characters' activities in the political/ public domain but are also shown to be interwoven with the commercial or audience interest when the characters' activities in the political/public domain are carried over to or interwoven with the characters' activities in the private secularized domain; similarly, the commercial or the audience agendas are not only shown in the characters' activities in the private secularized domain but also shown to be interwoven with the Party's agendas/messages when the characters' secularized concerns are carried over to the political/public domain. In addition, both the Party's agendas/messages and the commercial/ audience's agendas find their expression in the cultural frames which serve as the underlying organizing ideas for these dramas. The Confucianism-based traditional Chinese cultural values, as I have previously shown in the discussion of cultural frames, accommodates all normal human relationships of life of an individual Chinese both in the public political domain and in the private secularized domain, specifying what Chinese people should do depending on the social roles they take under different social circumstances. The Confucianism-based traditional Chinese cultural values as the underlying organizing ideas give substance to the network of complex relationships among the characters in different events by defining the essence of these relationships as embodiment of certain traditional Chinese cultural values such as loyalty to one's countries (or patriotism), friendship, kinship, fraternity, compassion etc. Such Confucianism-based ideas as loyalty to one's country, reverence to one's seniors, showing concerns for the affairs of the state and the well-being of the people, shown in the revolutionary and historical themed dramas, fit in well with the Party-state's patriotic education campaign among Chinese populace particularly the younger generation while other Confucianism-based values such

as consideration, honesty/sincerity, faithfulness, brotherly affection and filial piety, also shown in the same dramas, play to Chinese populace's desire for love, friendship, kinship, fraternity, harmonious familial relationship, happy marriage and other desirable personal relations in their daily life. Also shown in the dramas are TV drama practitioners' own agendas which find their expression in their innovative way of telling stories—through the very content and subject matters they have selected, through humanization of both heroes and villains or through representation of the conflicts in the events covered in the stories etc.

In other words, the combined influences from the abovementioned political actors have resulted in the production of TV dramas with multiple agendas—the Party's agendas, the commercial or audience's agendas and the agendas of TV drama practitioners. As such, the Party-state's agendas/messages in the top Feitian Award winning TV dramas are no longer expressed in a highly politicized way through the highly polarized characterization whereby characters are shown to be solely engaged in activities in the political or public domain at the expense of their secularized life concerns and to be engaged solely in politicized relationships with other characters at the expense of secularized social relationships, as were expressed the Party-state's messages/agendas in binary-oppositionally structured literary and artistic works of the Maoist era. Instead, the Party-state's agendas/messages in the top Feitian Award winning dramas are expressed in a depoliticized or secularized way whereby characters' are shown to participate in activities of both political/public and private/secular domain and to be engaged in both politicized and secularized relationships very often with these activities in both domains and the relationships established among the characters in both domains interwoven with one another—the Party-state's agendas/messages are given a secular appearance or wrapped up in secularized life concerns. As a result, the Party-state's messages/agendas are communicated in a roundabout depoliticized secularized way and the messages communicated this way become sophisticated messages.

7.4 Concluding Remarks

From previous two chapter's discussion of how top Feitian Award winning TV dramas communicate the Party's messages/agendas in a sophisticated way through the use of a network pattern as the organizing structure and through the use of traditional Chinese cultural values as the underlying organizing ideas, to this chapter's discussion of the Party-desired messages/agendas which have

been communicated in a sophisticated way and of how such messages have come to be communicated in a sophisticated way, the three chapters combine to give a relative comprehensive picture of the sophistication in the Party's political communication shown in the top Feitian Award winning TV dramas—TV dramas highly endorsed by the Party and well-received among the Chinese populace.

Chapter 8 Conclusion

8.1 Introduction

China has undergone vast social, cultural and economic transformations since Deng Xiaoping-initiated market reform in the late 1970s, particularly since Deng's Southern Excursion Talks to further deepen the country's market reform in the early 1992 (Barme, 1999; Q. Gong, 2011; J. Wang, 2001a & 2001b; Yu, 2009). The country has witnessed a double-digit economic growth, technological innovations, the rise and domination of consumerism and popular culture in Chinese daily life, the influx of plurality of information, ideas and beliefs as well as the emergence of one after another social problems (ibid).

Accompanying and to great extent resulting from these various changes is the change in the Party-state's political communication, although the change may not be as radical as those occurring in the economic and social spheres. An interesting phenomenon showing such a change in the Party-state's political communication is the Party-state's increasing appropriation of traditional Chinese cultural values in various media programmes, particularly such popular programs as TV dramas to promote the Party-state's political agendas or the messages desired by the Party-state. The Party-state's appropriation of traditional Chinese cultural values/practices for political purposes has presented itself as an amazing case for scholars on political communication given the fact that the very Party itself had been making great efforts to destroy traditional Chinese cultural values and practices, particularly Confucianism-based ones, from the founding of the Party in 1921 up till the Party-initiated reform and open door policy in 1979. Except for some few exceptions such as Zhu's (2008) study of politically charged dynastic TV dramas which argues that TV drama practitioners have selectively rewritten the historical events and figures of such bygone dynasties as Qing Dynasty and Han Dynasty in China to promote the Party-state's political agendas/messages, scant research has been conducted on such interesting phenomenon. With a view to filling in such a research gap, my research project has studied this interesting phenomenon by concentrating on the TV dramas highly-endorsed by the Party-state—a total of 35 top Feitian Award-winning TV dramas between 2002 and 2011—to work out how the Party-state uses TV dramas to appropriate traditional Chinese cultural values to promote various political agendas/messages desired by the Party-state and what implications the Party-state's appropriation of traditional Chinese cultural values for political purposes has brought to the Party-state's political communication. This final chapter

gives an overall summary of the whole project with regard to its main findings, strengths and weaknesses as well as the issues to be further explored in the future for me and for prospective future researchers.

8.2 Sophistication in the Party's Political Communication

Inspired by framing theory and Lévi-Strauss's binary opposition theory in their analysis of media content/messages and based on the essence of framing theory which involves selecting, highlighting and organizing in a certain way, certain aspects of social reality so as to promote a certain interpretation of this reality, I have proposed and elaborated a theoretical framework—network framing—to explain the cultural appropriation in the TV dramas under study (see chapter 2 for detailed elaboration of network framing). I have proposed that traditional Chinese cultural values have been woven into network patterned dramas as central organizing ideas to promote the Party-desired messages/agendas.

Given the qualitative nature of my research, I have adopted and designed mainly a qualitative methodology which combines textual narrative analysis and contextual secondary data analysis with the former as the main research method. My viewing of the selected top Feitian award-winning TV drama in general and the textual narrative analysis of five representative TV dramas in particular—one MRMTH drama, one legendary-style revolutionary themed drama, one rural drama, one FEI drama and one contemporary soldier drama—yield the following findings:

- ✚ To begin with, the selected TV dramas are diverse in genres ranging from MRMTH dramas, spy serials, Red classics, family sagas or FEI dramas in the historical category and rural dramas, medical dramas, contemporary soldiers dramas, youth dramas, MRMTH dramas, police dramas, workers dramas, FEI dramas, businessmen dramas in the contemporary realist category, to FEI dramas and workers dramas in the hybrid category (see 4.4.7 for more details)
- ✚ The selected TV dramas are also diverse in their subject matters which include the Party's revolutionary history, the Party's socialist construction history, the various Party-initiated social reforms in contemporary China, familial history, familial life as well as personal growth of the young people. In other words, the subject matters range from macro social issues/phenomenon down to different micro aspects of social life in China (also see 4.4.7 for more details)
- ✚ Next, the selected TV dramas, be they of historical category, of contemporary realist category or of the hybrid category, are all set in modern contemporary Chinese settings. Among the historical category, MRMTH dramas, red classics, and spy serials cover historical events and/or figures in contemporary CPC-led revolution or socialist construction spanning from the early 1920s up to China's reform in 1979 while *Qiao's Grand Courtyard*

(a businessmen drama or family saga) and *Journey to the Northeast* (a family saga or a FEI drama) cover historical events which are set around the collapse of the last dynasty in China in the late 19th century and around the founding of the Republic of China in the early 20th century respectively. All of the subgenres in the contemporary/realist category ranging from the drama on CPC Senior Officials such as *Provincial Party Secretary*, rural dramas such as *Xi Gengtian's Story* to contemporary soldier dramas such as *Soldier Sortie* are set in the recent contemporary Chinese setting starting from China's reform in 1979 up to the present moment. TV dramas in the hybrid category including *Stories in Karamay Oil Fields* (a drama on oil worker) and *Golden Wedding* (a FEI drama) cover events spanning from 1930's up to the current reforming China.

- ✚ Moreover, the selected dramas all deal with conflicts, problems or issues of one kind or another and all highlight the process of the characters' especially the core character's making efforts to solve these conflicts/problems/issues. The solution process sometimes involves conflict between the characters but mostly involves the self-made efforts by the characters and the help/support the characters offer to and receive from one another.
- ✚ Furthermore, the selected dramas are overwhelmingly structured around a network pattern which structures not only the dramas at the macro-story level as a whole but also the individual events which make up the drama at the micro-event level within an episode, across episodes and throughout the whole drama. At the event-level within specific events, the characters appearing in the events and their narrative actions/functions are structured around a network with one main character standing out as the centre. At the story level as a whole, each drama depicts a story about a number of different characters rather than one single character with the story of the core character being at the centre while the story of the other characters being closely related to and revolving around the story of the core character.
- ✚ In addition, the series of events covering some specific conflicts/problems/difficulties/issues in different dramas are organized or framed around the traditional Chinese cultural values. Underlying and woven into the network patterned dramas are the various traditional Chinese cultural values/practices/virtues which structure, organize and bring coherence to the events which cover various difficulties/problems /issues. The traditional Chinese cultural values /virtues/practices that have been woven into the dramas define the nature or essence of the narrative functions/actions of the characters, of the network of relationships established among the characters at different events, of the events, and of the TV dramas as a whole story. They are to great extent presented as the driving force for the core characters' actions to overcome and thus as solutions to the conflicts/problems/issues covered in the dramas.
- ✚ Finally, embedded within the selected TV dramas are the various agendas/messages desired by the Party (see 7.2 for more details of the Party-desired agendas/messages).

Overall, these above researching findings show two things: (1) the selected TV dramas, which are diverse in genres and in subject matters and which are set in modern contemporary Chinese settings, have overwhelmingly appropriated traditional Chinese cultural values for political purposes, confirming my hypothesis put forward at the beginning of the thesis that far more diverse genres of dramas rather than dynasty dramas have appropriated traditional Chinese cultural values for political purposes and traditional Chinese cultural values tend to be woven into more recent and contemporary Chinese settings rather than into ancient Chinese settings to communicate the

Party-desired messages/agendas; (2) the way traditional Chinese cultural values have been appropriated in the selected TV dramas for political purposes is more or less the same as I have proposed and elaborated i.e. Confucianism-based traditional Chinese cultural values have been woven into network patterned dramas as the central organizing ideas and have been largely presented as solutions to the problems /issues covered by the selected TV dramas.

These research findings have important implications.

First of all, the finding that traditional cultural elements have been used (i.e. woven into the selected TV dramas as central organizing ideas) to communicate the Party's messages or agendas suggests that there has been a re-articulation of the Party's ideology and that the traditional cultural elements have become an integral part of this re-articulation.

Prior to the Party-initiated reform and open door policy in China in the late 1970s the Party's ideology had been dominated by class and class struggle concepts. As an important tool for the Party to communicate and thus an important barometer of its ideology, the cultural works produced under the Party's influence prior to the reform era had been similarly dominated by class and class struggle concepts featuring them as the dominant and the sole valid theme and content. Immediately after the Party's reform and open-door policy in the late 1970s, this class-based ideology was officially abandoned and gradually replaced with the economy-oriented neoliberal ideology when Deng Xiaoping-led Party leadership shifted its focus from class-struggle to economic development. The continuous pursuit of Dengist leadership-initiated neoliberal practice in the economic realm by the subsequent Jiang Zemin-led leadership, Hu Jintao-led leadership as well as the current Xi Jinping-led leadership further dissolved the class-based ideology in the country. The Party's official abandonment of and dissolution of class-based ideology has been similarly reflected in the cultural realm with the country's cultural products since the late 1970s, downplaying if not completely erasing class and class struggle concepts. In the cultural works of the current post-reform era such as the selected top Feitian Award winning TV dramas, class and class struggle concepts are largely unseen.

Concomitant with the historical domination of and the contemporary downplaying of class and class struggle concepts in the Party's ideology are the seven-decade-long rejection of traditional Chinese cultural values, particularly Confucianism by the Party and the subsequent gradual ascendance of the Party's pro-traditional Chinese cultural discourse since the early 1990s. Since its founding in the

early 1920s, the Party had been condemning traditional Chinese culture in general and Confucianism in particular as feudalistic and responsible for China's backwardness and victimhood of foreign imperialism. The Party's anti-traditionalism or anti-Confucianism was echoed not only in the various cultural works produced under the Party's influence during the Party-led revolutionary period (between 1920s and 1940s) but also in those produced under the Party's rule during the first 17 years of the Party-led socialist construction period (between 1949 and mid-1960s). During the ten-year-long Cultural Revolution, traditional Chinese culture particularly Confucianism had been subject to further and repeated assaults both physically and discursively. The Party's critical stance toward traditional Chinese culture continued after the end of the Cultural Revolution and lasted until the late 1980s. It was only in the early 1990s that the Party began to change its critical stance toward traditional Chinese culture. The Party's pursuit of economic neoliberalism since the late 1970s has brought about tremendous economic achievements but at the same has brought about a lot of social problems such as corruption and loss of moral grounding. The Party leadership has since the early 1990s begun to turn to traditional Chinese cultural values, particularly Confucianism-based ones, for partial if not complete solutions to these various social problems. Accompanying the Party's official promotion of traditional Chinese culture in general and of Confucianism in particular has been the increasing prominence given to traditional Chinese culture in general and Confucianism in particular in the Party-promoted mainstream cultural products such as the selected top Feitian Awarding TV dramas. As has been discussed in Chapter 7, traditional Chinese cultural values particularly Confucianism-based ones have been woven into these selected TV dramas as the central organizing ideas and have been presented as the solution to the various problems/issues covered—in direct contrast to the Party's condemnation of the traditional Chinese culture particularly Confucianism as feudalistic and reactionary prior to the country's economic reform.

From the domination of class and class concepts in the cultural works of the pre-reform era to the downplaying of class and class concepts in the cultural works of the current post-reform era; from the condemnation of traditional Chinese culture in the cultural products before 1990s and the prominence given to the traditional Chinese culture in general and Confucianism particular in such cultural works as popular TV dramas after the 1990s particularly since 2000, the Party's ideology has experienced a significant change—class and class struggle concepts which had once dominated the Party's ideology have ceased to be part of the Party's ideology while the traditional Chinese

cultural values, particularly Confucianism-based ones, which had long been condemned and rejected by the Party, have become an integral part of the Party's ideology.

The finding that Confucianism-based traditional Chinese cultural values have been woven into the selected TV dramas as central organizing ideas to communicate the Party-desired messages/agendas demonstrates not only a significant change in the Party's ideology but also a significant change in the way the Party communicates its messages/agendas.

Class and class struggle were the sole and dominant organizing principles for all the cultural works in the pre-reform Maoist era. In the stories presented by these cultural works, such as the bulk of the revolutionary and historical themed literary novels and artistic works, the characters' narrative actions and the relationships among the characters were defined solely by their class nature (i.e. the type of class to which they belong). The heroes, such as the Party members, peasants, workers and soldiers, represented the oppressed proletariat class while the villains, such as the Nationalists, foreign invaders, landlords, capitalists and bandits, represented the oppressive ruling/exploitive class. The heroes and the villains were posed against one another due to their class distinction and they were depicted to be solely engaged in highly politicized class-related activities—various forms of class struggle/conflicts with the heroes fighting for the liberation of and the welfare of the oppressed proletariat class while the villains fighting for their selfish devilish personal gains. This rigid application of class and class struggle as central organizing ideas in the Maoist cultural works reduces the relationships among the characters to binary-oppositional class/class-consciousness-based relationships stripping the characters of any other relationships related to private secularized life concerns ranging from familial life, love and marriage to friendship and confine the characters' activities to those in highly politicized public domain (i.e. various class-related struggle/conflicts) depriving the characters of any other activity in the private secularized domain such as family, marriage, love and friendship. As a result, all characters (whether heroes or villains) in the culture works of the pre-reform Maoist era were given a uni-dimensional highly politicized dehumanized portrayal—heroes are larger-than-life perfect heroes while villains are demonized devils; both heroes and villains are shown to be engaged solely in politicized life with no secularized life concerns. As such, the Party's messages embedded in these cultural works were conveyed in a highly politicized dehumanized way.

This is not the case with the cultural works of the current post-reform era such as the selected top Feitian Award winning dramas which are organized around traditional Chinese cultural values, particularly Confucianism-based ones, rather than around class-distinctions and class struggle. Confucianism-based traditional Chinese cultural values, which are essentially a set of systematic ethical code of conduct, cover almost all normal human relationships of life as an individual Chinese both within the public political domain and within the private secularized domain. Loyalty/dutifulness covers an individual's relationship with the ruler or the state; filial piety with his/her parents; brotherly affection with his siblings; reverence (an extension of filial piety) with the elderly outside his/her family; consideration, sincerity and faithfulness with people outside his/her family say friends, classmates and acquaintances. While loyalty covers an individual's relationships within the public political domain, other traditional Chinese cultural values ranging from filial piety to consideration cover an individual's relationships within the private secularized domain with the relationships in both domains often intertwined with one another. With Confucianism-based traditional Chinese cultural values as the central organizing ideas, the social relationships among the characters in the selected dramas are shown to be far richer and far more complex than the binary-oppositional class-based political relationships presented by the Maoist cultural works; the characters in these dramas are shown to be engaged in activities far more diverse and far more complex than the highly politicized class-based class struggles of the Maoist cultural works. The characters (be they heroes or villains) in the selected dramas are thus depicted in a more complex and more humanized way—they are engaged in different kinds of relationships (ranging from those in the political domain and those in the secularized domains ones to those spanning both political/secularized domain) and show multidimensional aspects of humanity (i.e. with concern for the country, with commitment to familial values, with love, with friendship and other personal relations). The Confucianism-based traditional Chinese cultural values as the central organizing ideas thus bring about complexity of and humanization of characterization in the selected dramas and the Party's messages/agendas intended by these dramas are likewise communicated in a complex and humanized way.

Besides bringing about humanization and sophistication of characterization in the selected dramas, the traditional Chinese cultural values as the central organizing ideas also secularize the Party's political communication. The cultural works of the pre-reform Maoist era expressed the Party's messages/agendas in a purely politicized way—they concentrated solely on the characters' political

activities and thus on their political relationships at the expense of the characters' secularized life concerns such as marriage, love, friendship and emotions (and thus of their secularized relationships) for the latter were considered to be in the way of the characters' political activities and thus of their political relationships. With traditional cultural values as the central organizing ideas in the culture works of the current post-reform eras, the characters' secularized life concerns such love and marriage (and thus their secularized relationships) are increasingly presented as standing side by side or interwoven with their public political activities (and politicized relationships) and sometimes are even foregrounded as the focus of these cultural works pushing the characters' political activities (and their political relationships) to the background. In this way, the Party's messages/agendas intended by these cultural works are no longer communicated solely through the characters' political activities and their political relationships but are increasingly communicated through the characters' secularized life concerns and their secularized relationships as well since the Party's messages/agendas are now increasingly embedded within, integrated with or shown through their characters' secularized life concerns. In other words, the Party's messages/agendas are increasingly conveyed in a depoliticized secularized way.

From the class and class-struggle frames in the Maoist cultural works to the traditional Chinese culture frames in the cultural works of current post-reform era, the way the Party communicates its messages has changed toward subtlety and sophistication. Once overwhelmingly conveyed in a highly politicized dehumanized de-secularized way, the Party's messages/agendas are now increasingly expressed in a humanized, sophisticated, depoliticized secularized way.

The finding that the selected TV dramas into which the traditional Chinese cultural values are woven are network patterned rather than binary-oppositionally structured also shows significant change in the Party's political communication.

The binary oppositional structure was the sole and dominant organizing structure for almost all the cultural products of the pre-reform Maoist era. With such a structure, the characters of the Maoist cultural works were depicted in a highly polarized way—the proletariat heroes such as Party members, workers, peasants and soldiers were idealized with exemplary behaviours whereas the villain characters such as Nationalists, landlords and bandits were demonized with deplorable acts. As a result, the relationships between the heroes and villains were confined to various binary oppositional ones such as argument, fighting and confrontation. When combined with class

distinction/class struggle as the central organizing ideas, the binary oppositional structure reduced the character's relationship to binary oppositional class-based relationships denying the characters any normal secularized relationships as ordinary human beings such as those related to kinship, love, friendship and marriage and thus denying them any aspect of secularized life. Such extreme polarized characterization along the axis of class distinction/class struggle in the binary-oppositionally-structured class-based Maoist cultural works resulted in an oversimplified, stereotypical, dull, flat dehumanized depiction of both heroes and villains. The heroes were all-good-images (too good to be true) while the villains were all-bad-figures (too devilish to be credible); both were highly politicized figures divested of any normal secularized life concerns. The Party's messages intended by the binary oppositionally structured cultural works of the pre-reform era were conveyed in a rather straightforward unrefined way—through affirmation of what the heroes do and represent in the politicized domain on the one hand and through condemnation of what the villains do and represent in the politicized domain on the other hand.

This is not true of the selected TV dramas which are organized by a network pattern—a more flexible and more inclusive organizing structure than the binary oppositional one. In contrast with the binary oppositional structure which highlights one main category of relationships between the characters—various mutually oppositional relationships such as fighting, argument and confrontation, the network pattern makes possible the presentation of a minimum of four categories of relationships between the characters—mutually oppositional relationships, uni-dimensional oppositional relationship from one character toward another and non-oppositional relationship from the latter toward the former or vice versa, mutually non-oppositional relationships and an interwoven category relationships (i.e. a mixture among the first three types). Structured by such a network pattern, the selected dramas thus present far more complex and diverse relationships among the characters than those binary-oppositional-structured Maoist cultural works—including but not limited to binary-oppositional ones. Hence, the network pattern helps to bring and brings about subtlety and complexity of the relationships among the characters—subtle and complex characterization. When combined with the traditional Chinese cultural values as the central organizing ideas, the network pattern gives a subtle, complex and roundabout depiction of the characters in the dramas. The characters' relationships are no longer limited to but go beyond the politicized ones to include normal secularized ones; the characters are thus shown to have not only politicized life but also normal secularized life. In the network patterned dramas, the stereotypical binary

all-good-heroes-versus-all-bad-villains characterization collapses and gets transformed—the supposed villains now possess various human virtues such as filial piety, patriotism and fraternity while the supposed heroes assume various human weakness such as slowness in learning and failure in marriage. With such subtlety and complexity in characterization, both heroes and villains have come to be portrayed as normal human beings—with both merits and defects; with normal personal secular life concerns such love, friendship, fraternity, marriage and kinship. The network pattern thus facilitates and brings about a subtle, complex and roundabout characterization. With such subtlety and complexity in characterization, the Party's messages/agendas are no longer expressed in a rather straightforward unrefined way just like those in binary oppositionally structured Maoist cultural works. Rather, the Party's messages are conveyed in a more subtle, complex and roundabout way. The Party's messages are no longer expressed solely through the characters' political life and their politicized relationships but through their secularized life and secularized relationships as well. Also, the heroes are not always depicted positively for what they do while the villains are not always depicted negatively for what they do. Some deeds or virtues embodied by the villains such as their filial piety and their patriotism deserve affirmation while some weaknesses shown by the heroes such as their stubbornness and rashness deserve criticism. All these add to subtlety and complexity in the Party's messages/agendas which have been embedded within and spread across the characters' narrative actions and the various types of interpersonal relationships among the characters. The Party's messages/agendas intended by the network patterned dramas are thus communicated in a subtle, complex and roundabout way.

From the binary oppositional structure in the Maoist cultural works to the network pattern in the selected TV dramas of the current post-reform era, the Party's political communication has developed toward subtlety and complexity.

Finally, the research findings point to the relevance of my proposed network framing in explaining the top Feitian Award winning TV dramas.

In section 2.5, I have discussed Lévi-Strauss' binary structural theory which have been frequently used or appropriated by researchers to analyse the structure of and meanings/messages of various forms of stories including novels, films and TV dramas. Researchers using the binary structural theory argue that characters and their narrative actions (i.e. the key constituents of these different forms of stories) are connected into binary oppositionary relationships with the heroes and

the villains acting against one another and that the meanings/messages of the stories derive from these binary oppositional relationships. As I have pointed out in the discussion, the binary oppositionary theory is highly relevant in analysing conflict-stricken stories where characters are presented to be in binary oppositional relationships but is not adequate to explain such lifelike stories as the selected top Feitian Award winning TV dramas where various relationships including but not limited to binary oppositional ones are presented. A more inclusive and flexible theory which can accommodate both binary oppositional relationships and non-binary oppositional relationships is needed for the analysis of the TV dramas under study. Using my preliminary study of Xi Gengtian's Story, I have come up with such a theory—network framing—whereby characters through their narrative actions are connected by a network pattern rather than by a binary oppositional structure and are organized around some central ideas (in this case traditional Chinese cultural values) so as to promote the Party-desired messages/agendas.

The selected TV dramas, as my research findings have shown, demonstrate strong presence of network framing. They are structured by a network pattern and the network of interpersonal relationships they present (i.e. the previously mentioned minimum of four categories of relationships among the characters) are far more diverse and far more complex than binary oppositional relationships highlighted by binary oppositionally-structured stories. With this network of relationships organized around one core character, these network patterned TV dramas highlight the network of relationships established between the core character and other characters and the meaning conveyed by such network of relationships. Moreover, one character's relationships with others in the network patterned TV dramas are not fixed but dynamic. The relationship between Xi Gengtian and Sangui in Xi Gengtian's Story, for example, changes from the equal relationship at the very beginning to the confrontational, followed by the reconciliatory, to the one-dimensional supportive with the latter helping the former or vice versa, to one of mutual help and support, and eventually to one of cooperation. Underlying the network of relationships are Confucianism-based traditional Chinese cultural values. In a word, my research findings confirm the validity of my proposed network framing in explaining the selected TV dramas as these selected TV dramas are structured in more or less the same way as my proposed network framing has suggested. Network framing has been designed to capture the subtle and complex meanings the selected TV dramas intend to convey through their presentation of network of complex interpersonal relationships which binary oppositional theory fails to account for. Network framing's confirmed validity itself signifies the

existence of subtlety and complexity in the selected TV dramas' communicating the Party's political messages/agendas. Thus the confirmed validity of my proposed network framing also indirectly points to the subtlety and complexity in the Party's current political communication manifested in the Party's cultural appropriation through the selected TV dramas for political purposes.

Taken together, these abovementioned implications point to one thing—the Party's current political communication has developed toward sophistication. This sophistication is demonstrated not only within the textual level of the selected TV dramas themselves (as chapter 5 and chapter 6 have discussed in detail) but also in the context where these TV dramas have been produced and where various political actors have exerted their influences on the production of these TV dramas (as has been discussed in detail in chapter 7).

8.3 Contributions of the Thesis

Most social research projects are unique on their own with their own strengths. So is mine. The first strength of my research concerns its contribution to the current political communication research literature. Examining one non-journalism program as a tool to communicate political messages in one non-western country, my research broadens and extends the current political communication research landscape, which, as has been briefly mentioned in the research background section, has to date been overwhelmingly dominated by the western advanced democratic countries, esp. the US and the UK, and which has concentrated too much on election-campaigns, and has focused too much on journalism as an important tool for political communication.

The second strength of my research concerns its contribution to the current limited research on China's TV dramas' appropriation of traditional Chinese cultural values for political purposes. As has been discussed in the research background section, the current available limited research on China's TV dramas' cultural appropriation for political purposes i.e. Zhu's (2008) study of politically charged dynasty dramas focuses more on the macro-aspects of the cultural appropriation in these TV dramas—the domestic and international factors that have led to the emergence and popularity of these TV dramas—rather than on how these TV dramas appropriated traditional Chinese cultural elements to promote the Party-desired messages/agendas. Different from Zhu's study of politically charged TV dramas, my research zooms into the Feitian-Award-winning TV Dramas to give a micro-scopic picture of China's TV dramas' cultural appropriation for political purposes—what and

how traditional Chinese cultural values have been used by the Party through TV dramas to promote what kinds of political messages/agendas intended by the Party. Given the finding that the selected top Feitian Awards are far more diverse in genres and in subject matters than Zhu-studied politically-charged dynasty TV dramas, my research thus also gives a relatively more comprehensive picture of China's TV dramas' cultural appropriation for political purposes.

The third strength of my research has to do with its contribution to the current research on the Feitian TV Award-winning TV dramas. There has been some study of Chinese TV dramas but very little research has been done on the Feitian TV Awards as a group. There have been some newspaper commentaries or reviews about some Feitian TV award winning TV dramas before and after their winning the award. So far the only book available about the Feitian TV Award-winning TV dramas is the book *National Feitian TV Awards* (China TV Art Committee, 2006) which chronologically lists the TV dramas that have won the Feitian TV awards since its founding from 1982. Until the moment when my thesis is near its completion, my research has remained the first academic research on the Feitian TV Award-winning TV dramas as a group.

The last but not least strength of my research has to do with its contribution to the current TV drama studies and beyond with regards to the theoretical framework adopted. Unlike the existent TV dramas studies which has commonly turned to and appropriated Levi-Strauss' binary oppositionary theory to analyse the structure and the message of TV dramas, my research has turned first to framing theory and later to the same binary structural theory for theoretical solutions and, based on the insights offered by both theories, has come up with a network framing for the examination of the Party's cultural appropriation through popular TV dramas for political purposes.

Researchers applying binary oppositionary theory to TV drama studies argue that characters and their narrative actions—the key components constituting TV dramas—are structured into heroes-versus-villains binary oppositions and that meanings/messages of these dramas derive from and thus should be worked out by examining these binary oppositions.

Many stories, such as the cold War Hollywood films, Wright-studied Western movies and conflict-stricken TV drama like *Dallas*, are indeed found to be binary oppositionally structured. In such cases binary structural theory is highly relevant in the examination of the structure and the meaning/messages of these stories since these stories highlight the binary oppositionary relationships between the characters and the meanings conveyed by such relationships. This is

however not the case with such real-life stories as the selected TV dramas which are structured by a network pattern (i.e. in a way far more complex than binary structured stories) and which present a network of interpersonal relationships far more diverse and complex than binary oppositional relationships presented by binary oppositionally structured stories.

However insightful it may be in analysing binary structured stories, binary oppositional theory is inadequate in the study of the structure and meanings/messages of the selected TV dramas since its intrinsic binary tendency will inevitably over-simplify and thus fail to capture the complex relationships between the characters in these complexly-structured dramas.

My proposed network framing has been designed and aims to capture such diverse and complex interpersonal relationships presented by the selected TV dramas as well as the diversity and complexity in meanings resulting from such diverse and complex relationships. Different from the existent TV dramas studies which argues for binary oppositional structure as the organizing structure for TV dramas and argues for oppositional relationships between the characters in TV dramas, my research argues for a network pattern as the organizing structure for the selected TV dramas and argues for a network of complex relationships among the characters in these dramas. My research also argues that, besides being connected by a network pattern, the characters and their narrative actions are also organized around some central ideas (i.e. traditional Chinese cultural values in the case of the selected TV dramas).

With such network framing as has just been described, my research has not only worked out what and how traditional Chinese cultural values have been used by the Party through the top Feitian Award winning TV dramas to express the Party-desired messages/agendas (i.e. Confucianism-based traditional Chinese cultural values have been woven into network structured TV dramas as central organizing ideas to communicate various agendas/messages desired by the Party) but has also given an in-depth discussion of the implications of the Party's cultural appropriation through these TV dramas for political purposes—subtlety and complexity (or sophistication) taking place in the Party's current political communication.

The insight the network framing has offered into the Party's cultural appropriation through TV dramas to promote the Party-desired messages/agendas—the subtlety and sophistication taking place in the Party's current political communication—shows the network framing to be an insightful explanatory

tool for the understanding of TV dramas or other stories which are structured in a more or less the same complex way as the top Feitian Award winning TV dramas under study.

How does this network framing help to understand the top Feitian Award-winning TV dramas or stories which are similarly structured as these top Feitian Awards then? Below is a brief discussion of how the theory can help with the understanding of these TV dramas.

- ✚ Firstly, the network framing suggests that the story world created by these Feitian awards is no longer an oversimplified black and white universe where characters presented are posed against one another. Rather, as the theory suggests, the story world can be as realistic and as complex as the actual world where we ordinary people inhabit. In this world, fictional characters are related to one another in different ways in different situations/events depending on the social roles they take, just as we ordinary people are similarly connected. The relationships thus established with one another can be as diverse and complex as the ones we ordinary people form with other people around us in the actual world—the relationships among people include but are not restricted to oppositional ones; even when there is opposition between some characters, this opposition is not solely opposition but is interwoven with other types of relations such as love, appreciation, respect, kinship, fraternity.
- ✚ Secondly, the network framing defines this story world within some boundary. After all, the story world is not the actual world per se but a condensed fictional world modelled on the former. The story world shown in the selected TV drama tells a story about many characters but one character stands out as the most important one with other characters closely related to and revolving around this core character. However diverse the relationships among the characters may be, the network framing steers these relationships towards a centre making them organized around the core character. As a result, the story world is connected or structured by a network pattern. In this way, the story world highlights the story of the core character as the most important one while the story of other characters revolves around them. At the same time, the story world highlights the relationships the core character established with other characters at different events although it also presents relationships between other characters.
- ✚ Thirdly, the network framing suggests that the story world is not only structured by a network pattern but also is organized by some central ideas. These central ideas, such as the Confucianism-based traditional Chinese cultural values, structure, bring coherence to and define the essence of the character's actions, the relationships thus established among the characters, the events and the story world as a whole.
- ✚ Finally, the network framing suggests that to understand the selected TV dramas one needs to study the relationships resulting from the network structure pattern (particularly those relationships the core character establishes with other characters) as well as the organizing ideas or frames. It is from these relationships that the meaning of the drama derives and it is these organizing ideas/frames that help define the nature of and thus the meaning of the characters, their actions, the relationships among the characters, the events and the whole story world.

The network framing, of course, is not the only way to understand the selected Chinese TV dramas. There surely may be other ways of understanding. The network framing is only one of these maybe ways.

Besides being applied to the selected TV dramas, the network framing can also be applied to the TV drama landscape in China. The network pattern which structures the selected TV dramas can also be used to structure all the TV dramas produced and screened in China's screen. In the selected TV dramas, the network framing highlights the story of the core character as the core narrative throughout the story and the story of other characters as closely related to them. In the TV drama landscape in China, the core is the Feitian Award-winning TV dramas while the numerous non-awards winning other TV dramas are closely related to and revolve around this core, similar to the way the core character is related to other characters within the Feitian Award-winning TV dramas. Being highly thought of and endorsed by the Party, these Feitian Awards represent the embodiment of the mainstream values promoted by the Party while other TV dramas, also within the general framework set up by the Party, represent the alternative to this core, either reinforcing or contrasting the core values.

The network framing can also be applied to the top Feitian Award winning dramas. Within the top Feitian Award circle, the Party-oriented TV dramas such as MRMTH dramas, legendary style revolutionary-themed dramas and the contemporary soldiers dramas stand out among all TV drama awards for the large number of awards won (17 out of 31 won) and are the core in this circle while other ordinary-people oriented dramas are not in the same outstanding position as these party-oriented ones in terms of the small number of them—three rural dramas, one hospital drama, two businessman dramas.

The network framing can also be extended beyond the TV drama industry to explain the relationship between the officially-promoted mainstream culture and the plurality of non-mainstream cultures in Chinese society with the former being the core while the latter being the former's alternatives. There is not a clear-cut boundary between the core and the alternatives. Very often, the officially-promoted mainstream culture often converges with the alternatives with the former and the latter drawing elements from one another to enrich themselves.

8.4 Limitations of the Thesis

Despite the previously discussed contributions, my research project has its own limitations. The first limitation comes from the research scope of my project. The concentration on the textual analysis of the Party's cultural appropriation in the top Feitian award winning TV dramas allows me to give a

close-up examination of what and how traditional Chinese cultural values have been used by the Party through these TV dramas to promote what kind of political messages/agendas desired by the Party as well as to give an in-depth analysis of the implications of the Party's use of TV dramas to appropriate traditional Chinese cultural values for political purposes—sophistication in the Party's current political communication. But the disadvantage of doing so was to have technically left out other significant aspects of the phenomenon, say the reception of the Party's cultural appropriation by Chinese audience. To fully understand the Party's cultural appropriation through TV dramas for political purpose, it is necessary to conduct research on different dimensions of the Party's cultural appropriation in TV dramas including what cultural elements have been used and how cultural elements have been used in the TV dramas to promote what kind of messages/agendas desired by the Party, how the Party's cultural appropriation is received by the Party's targeted audience (i.e. Chinese public) as well as why the Party-state has started to use traditional Chinese cultural values to communicate its political agendas/messages. However insightful they may be, my current research findings can only provide a partial picture of the Party's cultural appropriation through TV dramas for political purposes—the textual manifestation of the phenomenon.

Similarly, the concentration on the five representative top Feitian Award winning TV dramas also has its own disadvantage. Although detailed textual analyses of these five TV top Feitian Awards have enabled me to find out exactly what and how traditional cultural elements have been used by these TV dramas to promote what kind of political messages/agendas desired by the Party, doing so has technically separated these five dramas from the rest of the selected top Feitian awards (30 in number) which have accounted for a large percentage of all 35 selected TV dramas.

There is no doubt that the rest of the selected top Feitian awards share many commonalities with the five case-studied TV dramas: they are all connected by a network pattern and thus present a network of relationships; they are all organized / framed around traditional Chinese cultural values and present these values as solution to the problems/issues covered; they all promote the Party's political messages /agendas. Each top Feitian award, however, has its own distinctions with regard to the settings chosen, the protagonists depicted and the issues/problems/covered. There are variations across different genres of TV dramas. Under the historical category for example, MRMTH dramas take real, often significant historical figures in China (usually senior CPC leaders in the Party's revolutionary history such as Mao Zedong) as protagonists and real significant historical

events as the TV dramas' settings. Other genres of dramas such as the legendary style revolutionary dramas and spy serials take fictional figures as protagonists although they also have actual historical events as the TV dramas' setting. In the contemporary realist category, protagonists and the settings vary greatly with different subgenres. Rural dramas for example have farmers as protagonists, the countryside as the main setting and the rural reforms as the main issues; hospital dramas have doctors/nurses as the protagonists, the hospital as the main setting and medical reform as the main issues.

Besides variations across genres, there are also variations within the same genre. Take *Those Innocent Years* and *Stories in Karamay Oil Fields* for one example. Both dramas are dramas about workers but they present very different stories. The former is a story about the life and experience of a group of young workers set in a factory in the beginning of China's reform and opening-door policy in the early 1980s while the latter is a story about the life and experience of the P.R. China's first generation of oilmen set in the remote and desolate Karamay in China's north-west Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region. Take for another example *My Family Tree*, *Beautiful Daughter-in-laws* and *Golden Marriage*. All three are FEI dramas (dramas on familial and ethical issues) but they have very different focus: the first focuses on the familial relationships among the four siblings who have no blood-ties; the second on the relationships among mother-in-laws and daughters-in-laws; the third on the marital relationship between couples.

Due to the various variations across and within genres, the network of relationships presented in each top Feitian award are different; so are the traditional Chinese cultural frames highlighted in and the Party's political messages/agendas promoted by each of these dramas. Including the rest of the 30 selected top Feitian award into my current study, if allowed, will surely give a more comprehensive if not full picture of the Party's use of TV dramas to appropriate traditional Chinese cultural values for political purposes. Narrowing down the focus of my research to five representative dramas can only catch a partial and limited picture of the Party's use of TV dramas to appropriate traditional Chinese cultural values for political purposes. Although I have added a section (5.8) depicting the general features of the top Feitian Awards since 2001 to supplement the analysis of the cultural appropriation in five representative top Feitian awards, the picture of the Party's cultural appropriation through the top Feitian Awards resulting from the analysis of these five dramas complemented by the added section is far from being the same as that when all the top Feitian

awards are analysed together. The concentration on the textual analysis of five case-studied top Feitian awards albeit complemented by the depiction of the general features of all top Feitian Awards risk over-representation or underrepresentation of the whole scenario of the Party's cultural appropriation through TV dramas for political purposes.

Other limitations concern the research methods adopted. The adoption of narrative analysis as the major research method has enabled me to work out what traditional cultural values have been appropriated and how they have been appropriated to promote what kind of political messages desired by the party but at the same time has failed to capture the complexity or sophistication involved in the Party's cultural appropriation—exactly how the Party uses the TV dramas to appropriate the traditional cultural values. The Party's cultural appropriation through TV dramas for political purposes, as I have proposed and demonstrated in the theoretical framework section, is a dynamic sophisticated process which involves different levels of political actors including not just the Party-state but also TV drama practitioners and Chinese populace (or the market). Each of these political actors has exerted their influences (either direct or indirect) on the production of all the TV dramas produced in the country including the top Feitian Award winning TV dramas. It is the combined influence from these different political actors other than the Party-state's influence alone that has made the top Feitian Award winning TV dramas appear as they are eventually shown on the Chinese screen. My initial research design had included semi-structured interviews of those directly involved in the production of the selected top Feitian award winning TV dramas—the directors, script writers and producers of some of these TV dramas—in the hope of finding out, through the eyes of the production team, the dynamic sophisticated process of the Party's cultural appropriation through TV dramas for political purposes. Due to the failure in carrying out the planned semi-structured interviews, I have used the secondary data gathered during my field trip to explain this sophisticated process in which the Party, though no longer the sole dominant player but still among the important players in China's TV drama production, works with other political actors to appropriate traditional Chinese cultural values through TV dramas to promote the messages or agendas desired by the Party. Though the secondary data I have gathered includes not only the account of the production of the selected top Feitian Award winning TV dramas by the TV drama production teams concerned but also the commentary on these TV dramas by TV drama regulatory authorities on different occasions, they are not the same as the first hand primary data that are collected directly through my planned interviewing of those involved in the Party's cultural appropriation through TV dramas for political

purposes. As He (2009) has rightly pointed out, it is common for Chinese people nowadays (maybe equally true of people of other nations as well) to practice dual discourses in their social interactions—public discourse and private discourse. In the public space of expression especially in the Party-state controlled mass media Chinese tend to express their opinion and thoughts in consonance with the Party-state promoted ideology to avoid possible political punishments from the government while in the private space of expression such as private oral conversations Chinese can and do express any thought ranging from free discussion of moral taboos to severe criticism of the government and political system in the country (ibid). Since all the secondary data I have gathered are part of the public discourse, I have good reason to be cautious about the whole truth revealed by the secondary data about the sophisticated process of the Party's cultural appropriation through TV dramas for political purposes. Those involved in the process of the Party's cultural appropriation through TV dramas are very likely to and may feel obliged to hold back some information if the revelation of the latter (say the revelation of the Party-state's removal of some episodes from or revision of some episodes in the top Feitian Award winning TV dramas for the sake of communicating the Party-state-promoted ideology) amounts to criticism of the Party-state's involvement in the production of these TV dramas and thus risks subjecting themselves to various forms of political punishments such as demotion or removal from their current positions. The resultant discussion of the sophisticated process based on such secondary data analysis thus provides only a partial picture of the sophisticated process of which the Party has been an integral part since the secondary data may have missed out some important information about the Party-state's involvement in the production of the top Feitian Award winning TV dramas. The first hand primary data about the Party-state's cultural appropriation in the selected TV dramas, if collected ideally as a private discourse through the direct interviewing of those involved in the cultural appropriation in these TV dramas on behalf of the Party-state (i.e. the TV drama regulatory authorities including the former SARFT, the provincial or municipal RFTBs and the Feitian Award judges), could help to bring out a more revealing picture of the sophistication in the Party's cultural appropriation through TV dramas for political purposes—what and how exactly the Party has done in its cultural appropriation through TV dramas for political process.

8.5 Issues to be Explored in the Future

There are many issues for me to explore in the future. First of all are the issues concerning the phenomenon of the Party's appropriation of traditional Chinese cultural values through TV dramas to communicate the Party-desired messages/agendas. Although my research on the Party's cultural appropriation through TV dramas for political purposes is near its completion, research into the Party's use of TV dramas to appropriate traditional Chinese cultural values for political purposes is far from being completed. To fully understand the phenomenon of the Party's use of TV dramas to appropriate traditional Chinese cultural values for political purposes, it is necessary to examine different dimensions of this phenomenon by answering different questions including not only those that have been covered by my research i.e.

- ✚ What cultural elements have been used by these Party-endorsed TV dramas?
- ✚ How these cultural elements have been used by these TV dramas to communicate what kind of political messages/agendas desired by the Party?

but also those that have not been explored by my research due to the relative limited scope allowed by a PhD project such as:

- ✚ How do the Chinese populace receive these TV dramas?
- ✚ What messages have they perceived in these TV dramas?
- ✚ Have they got the political messages/agendas intended by the Party?
- ✚ If yes, what do they think of these political messages/agendas? Do they accept or reject them?

Other issues that may be of interest to future researchers concern the applicability of the proposed network framing beyond the top Feitian award winning TV dramas. The network framing is currently used to explain the Party's cultural appropriation in the top Feitian Awarding winning TV dramas for the Party's political communication purposes. Is the theory applicable to other TV dramas in China which are outside the top Feitian awards? Is it applicable to TV dramas in other countries outside China? Can similar research be replicated in TV dramas rather than the top Feitian award winning ones? These are interesting questions to me and possibly to future researchers on TV drama studies.

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APPENDIX 1

TV Dramas and Directors Selected for Research (since 23rd to 28th in 2011) (A table drawn based on the information from Sina.com and SARFT.com)

Feitian TV Awards	Covering TV Dramas in	Serial TV Dramas Winning the 1 st Prize	Director of 1 st Prize awarding TV Dramas
23rd	2002	Provincial Party Secretary (Shengwei shuji); Shiyan wusheng	Su Zhou; Mao Weining.
24th	2003	Yan' an song; Love Tree or Kindred Tree (Qingqing shu)	Song Yeming & Dong Yachun; Xia Gang.
25th	2004	Wu kui cang sheng; Proof of Memories (Jiyi de zhengmin); Brothers(Lishi de tiankong)	Sang Hua & Xiao Jiang; Yang Yang; Gao Xixi.
26th	2005-2006	Draw Your Sword(Liang jian); When We Were Young (Qia tongxue shaonian); Qiao's Grand Courtyard(Qiaojia da yuan); The Eighth Route Army (Balu jun); Ren changxia; Chashu ling; Stories in Karamay Oil Fields (Xi Shengdi); Norman Bethune	Zhang Qian & Chen Jian; Gong Ruofei; Hu Mei; Song Yeming & Dong Yachun; Shen Haofang; Gu Jing; Miao Yue; Yang Yang.
27th	2007-2008	Chuang guandong (Journey to the Northeast) ; Soldiers Sortie (Shibin tuji); Gebi Mother (Gebi muqin); Golden Wedding or Golden Marriage (Jin hun); Lurk (Qianfu); Meditations on the white birch forest (Jingjing de bai hua lin); Zhou enlai in Chongqing (Zhou enlai zai chongqing); Shiwan renjia; Xi-Gentian's Story (Xi Gengtian de gushi)	Zhang Xinjian & Kong Sheng; Kang Honglei; Shen Haofang; Zheng Xiaolong; Jiang Wei & Fu Wei; Gu Jing; Dong Yachun; Chen Guoxing; Niu Jianrong.
28th	2009-2010	Yimeng; Beautiful Daughter-in-laws ; The Doctors (Yi zhe renxin); Mao anying; My youth who call the shots (wo de qingchun wo zuozhu); Bing feng; Liberate the Southwest (Jiefang da xinan); I am A special Soldier (wo shi tezhong bing); The Road We Have Taken(renjian zhengdao shi cangsang); Five-Star Red Flag Flying in the Wind (Wuxing hongqi yingfeng piaoyang); Those Innocent Years (Wo men de bashi niandai)	Guan Hu; Liu Jiang; Fu Dongyu; Liu Yiran; Zhao Baogang & Wang Yin; Liu Yan; Wan Jia & Qiangjun; Liu Meng; Zhang Li; Wang Xiaoming; Zeng Xiaoxin.

APPENDIX 2

TV Dramas and Directors Selected for Research (since 23rd to 28th in 2011) (in Chinese)

Feitian TV Awards 飞天奖	Covering TV Dramas in (参评的电视剧)	Serial TV Dramas Winning the 1 st Prize (飞天奖一等奖电视剧)	Directors of 1 st Prize awarding TV Dramas (获得飞天奖一等奖电视剧的导演)
23 届	2002 年度	《省委书记》、《誓言无声》(2 部)	苏舟; 毛卫宁
24 届	2003 年度	《延安颂》《亲情树》(2 部)	宋业明、董亚春; 夏钢
25 届	2004 年度	《无愧苍生》、《记忆的证明》、《历史的天空》(3 部)	桑华和小江; 杨阳; 高希希
26 届	2005-2006 (年度)	《亮剑》、《恰同学少年》、《乔家大院》、《八路军》、《任长霞》、《插树岭》、《西圣地》、《诺尔曼·白求恩》(8 部)	张前 陈健; 龚若飞; 胡玫; 宋业民 董亚春; 沈好放(优导); 顾晶; 苗月; 杨阳
27 届	2007-2008 (年度)	《闯关东》、《士兵突击》、《戈壁母亲》、《金婚》、《潜伏》、《静静的白桦林》、《周恩来在重庆》《十万人家》《喜耕田的故事》(9 部)	张新建、孔笙; 康红雷; 沈好放; 郑晓龙; 姜伟 付玮; 顾晶;董亚春;陈国星;牛建荣
28 届	2009-2010 (年度)	《沂蒙》、《媳妇的美好时代》、《医者仁心,2010》、《毛岸英》、《我的青春谁做主》、《兵峰》、《解放大西南》、《我是特种兵》、《人间正道是沧桑》、《五星红旗迎风飘扬,2011》《我们的八十年代》(11 部)	管虎; 刘江; 傅东育; 刘毅然; 赵宝刚和王迎; 刘岩; 王珈&强军; 刘猛; 张黎; 王晓明; 曾晓欣

APPENDIX 3

Category of the Top Feitian Awards-winning TV Dramas since 2001

Category Feitian Awards	Contemporary	Hybrid dramas	Historical
23 rd (2002) (2 TV dramas)	Provincial Party Secretary (Shengwei shuji) (1 in total)		Shiyan wusheng (1 in total)
24 rd (2003) (2 TV dramas)	My family Tree (1 in total)		Yan' an song (1 in total)
25 th (2004) (3 TV dramas)		Wu kui cang sheng; Proof of Memories (Jiyi de zhengmin) (2 in total)	Brothers (Lishi de tiankong) (1 in total)
26 th (2005—2006) (8 TV dramas)	Ren changxia; Chashu ling; (2 in total)	Stories in Karamay Oil Fields (Xi Shengdi) (1 in total)	Draw Your Sword (Liang jian) ; When We Were Young (Qia tongxue shaonian); Qiao's Grand Courtyard (Qiaojia da yuan); The Eighth Route Army (Balu jun); Norman Bethune (5 in total)
27 th (2007—2008) (9 TV dramas)	Soldiers Sortie (Shibin tuji); Meditations on the white birch forest (Jingjing de bai hua lin); Shiwan renjia; Xi-Gentian's Story (Xi Gengtian de gushi) (4)	Golden Wedding (Jin hun); (1)	Journey to the Northeast (Chuang guandong); Gebi Mother (Gebi muqin); Lurk (Qianfu); Zhou enlai in Chongqing (Zhou enlai zai chongqing) (4 in total)
28 th (2009—2010) (11 TV dramas)	Beautiful Daughter-in-laws (Xifu de meihao shidai); The Doctors (Yi zhe renxin); My youth who call the shots (wo de qingchun wo zuozhu); Bing feng; I am A special Soldier (wo shi tezhong bing); Wo men de bashi niandai; (6 in total)		Yimeng; Mao anying; Liberate the Southwest (Jiefang da xi'nan); The Road We Have Taken (renjian zhengdao shi cangsang); Five-Star Red Flag Flying in the Wind (Wuxing hongqi yingfeng piaoyang); (5 in total)
A total of 35 TV dramas	14 in total	4 in total	17 in total

APPENDIX 4

Table of the Selected Top Feitain Award-winning TV Dramas in Terms of Genres

Category TV drama genres	Contemporary (14 in total)	Hybrid (4 in total)	Historical (17 in total)
MRMHT dramas (9)	1		8
Dramas on family & ethical issues (5)	2	1	2
Red Classics (4)			4
Contemporary soldiers (3)	3		
Rural dramas (3)	3		
Dramas on businessmen (2)	1		1
Spy serial (2)			2
Dramas on Workers (2)	1	1	
Dramas on Policeman (1)		1	
Dramas on party leader (1)	1		
Dramas on Doctors (1)	1		
Youth drama (1)	1		
Others (1)		1	

APPENDIX 5

Table of Cultural Frames in Some Selected Feitian TV Awards

TV dramas (episodes)	Themes covered	cultural frames presented
My family tree	Story about a special family made up of four siblings who are not related by blood	Kind-heartedness; commitment to family values like kinship love; generosity; the practice of returning help and support received
Yan'an song (MRMHT drama)	struggle for China's national survival against the intensifying Japanese invasion, the struggle for the Party's own survival against the Nationalist regime's continuous attempts to destroy the Party and its Red Army, the problems within the Party and the Red Army.	Patriotism, nationalism, people-orientedness, self-reliance, wisdom, endurance of hardship, persistence, perseverance; fraternity; humility; kinship
Soldier Sortie	an ordinary soldier's growth and transformation in the army	perseverance, persistence, goodnaturedness; fraternity; industry
Meditations on the white birch forest (Jingjing de bai hua lin)	Medical reform in the country side; local development in the countryside	Kindness, devotion to the countryside people; simplicity, purity, sincerity, keeping promises
When We Were Young	Educating young people; the purpose of education; friendship; relationship between teachers and students	The traditional practice of teaching students according to their aptitude
Norman Beithune	Norman's experience in China during the Chinese	Selflessness; benevolence; devotion to saving people; sympathy to ordinary people; endurance of hardship; kind-heartedness; self-sacrifice;
Ren Changxia	first female director of the Public Security Bureau in the city of Dengfeng	Persistence; self-discipline; people-oriented; uprightness;
The Doctors	Medical reform; trust crisis between doctors and patients; tension between hospitals/medical professionals and patients	Benevolence, persistence, profession devotion/commitment, caring, sincerity
Shiwan renjia	family enterprises' transition and upgrading from the	keeping promises, benevolence, kinship love, brotherly

	traditional labor-intensive company into a modern technologically-based environmental-friendly company	fraternity, persistence
Those Innocent Years(Women de bashi niandai)	Life and work of the workers in the early 1980s	Purity, simplicity, sincerity, friendship, fraternity between workers, generosity, devotion to work, collectivism and a strong sense of justice
Stories in the Karamay Oil Fields	Life and work of the P.R. China's first generation of oilmen	Moral integrity, friendship, devotion to love, devotion to work, strong sense of responsibility, strong sense of justice, forgiving, industry, endurance of hardship
Beautiful Daughter-in-laws	marriage; the relationship between mothers-in-laws and daughters-in-law	Strong family support; filial duty to the elderly; generosity; kindheartedness; devotion to love; compassion; understanding; tolerance; forgiving
Wo de qingchun shui zuo zhu	Relationship between parents and young adults; adult growth with regard to their career , marriage and personal relationships	Strong family support; excessive parental care and love for their young adult children; perseverance and commitment to love; sense of responsibility
Special Arms (Wo shi tezhong bing)	The growth and transformation of a special arms soldier in the army	Loyalty to country and to people; persistence; soldierly fraternity
The Road We Have Taken (Renjian zhengdao shi cangshang)	Threat to national survival due to foreign invasion ; the party conflict between the CPC and the KMT during the civil war	Patriotism; respect for the teachers; benevolence; propriety; showing gratitude to those offering help and support; tolerance; sincerity; commitment to family values: filial duty to the elderly, brotherhood and kinship love;
Five-Star Red Flag Flying in the Wind	the development of China's the first nuclear bomb, first hydrogen bomb and the first satellite	Patriotism; endurance of hardship; hardworking; self-reliance; self-sacrifice

APPENDIX 6

Glossary of Chinese Characters

This glossary contains all the simplified Chinese characters given in the thesis in pinyin romanisation. Phrases and names are listed according to English alphabetical order of the first character.

Ai, Zhisheng 艾知生

Balu jun 八路军

Bai, Jingqi 白景琦

Bai, Tiejun 白铁军

Bai, Xu 白茹

Bai, Xue 白雪

Baowei Yan'an 保卫延安

Beijing 北京

bishang liangshan 逼上梁山

Bianjibu de gushi 编辑部的故事

Bing feng 兵峰

Cangtian zaishang 苍天在上

Cao, Hui 曹惠

Cao, Xinmei 曹心梅

Chashuling 插树岭

Changsha 长沙

Chen, Guoxing 陈国星

Chen, Jiageng 陈嘉庚

Cheng Cai 成才

Chengdu 成都

Cheng Ren 程仁

Chiang Kai-shek 蒋介石

Chongqing 重庆

Chouwa 丑娃

Chu, Cai 楚材

Chuang guandong 闯关东
Chuangkou 窗口
Cixi 慈禧
Cuotuo suiyue 蹉跎岁月
Dage 大哥
Da gongjiang 大工匠
Dashi bu xu xiaoshi bu ju 大事不虚小事不拘
Da Zhaimen 大宅门
Dai, Linfeng 戴临风
Dai, Qing 戴清
Deng, Jiaxian 邓稼先
Deng, Xiaoping 邓小平
Deng Yingchao he ta de mama 邓颖超和她的妈妈
Ding, Ling 丁玲
Dongfang, Wenying 东方闻樱
Dong, Jianchang 董建昌
Dong, Yachun 董亚春
Du, Pengcheng 杜鹏程
Erhu 二虎
Erwei fangzhen 二为方针
Eryuehe 二月河
Fanren xiaoshi 凡人小事
Fan, Xiliang 范希亮
Fan, Yan 范媛
Feiming 费明
Feitian 飞天
Fenhong nülang 粉红女郎
Feng, Yuxiang 冯玉祥
Gaihua 改花

Gan, Xiaoning 甘小宁
Gao, Cheng 高城
gao da quan 高大全
Gao, Xin 高鑫
Gebi muqin 戈壁母亲
Gong, Ruofei 龚若飞
Gongshe dangweishuji de nüer 公社党委书记的女儿
Gouli ren 沟里人
Gu, Mu 谷牧
guanshang xing 观赏性
Guangdong 广东
Guangming (Daily) 光明(日报)
Guangzhou 广州
Guo ba yin 过把瘾
Guomindang 国民党
Guo, Yonghuai 郭永怀
Hanwu dadi 汉武大帝
Haoxiang haoxiang tan lian'ai 好想好想谈恋爱
Hebei 河北
Henan 河南
Heshang 河殇
He, Zizhen 贺子珍
Heilongjiang 黑龙江
Heini 黑妮
Hong deng ji 红灯记
Honglou meng 红楼梦
Hong ri 红日
Hongse nianzijun 红色娘子军
Hong yan 红岩

Hu, Jintao 胡锦涛
Hunan 湖南
Hu, Zhanfan 胡占凡
Huanzhu gege 还珠格格
Huang, Hui 黄晖
Huang, Kegong 黄克功
Huogua 活寡
Jiqing ranshao de suiyue 激情燃烧的岁月
Jiyi de zhengming 记忆的证明
Jia'na Shahati 嘉娜·沙哈提
Jianchi sixiang jiben yuanze 坚持四项基本原则
Jiang, Qitao 江奇涛
Jiang, Qing 江青
Jiangshan 江山
Jiangsu 江苏
Jiang, Wei 姜伟
Jiang, Zemin 江泽民
Jiefang da xi'nan 解放大西南
jie gu yu jin 借古喻今
Jie qiang 借枪
jing 敬
Jin guang dadao 金光大道
Jinhun 金婚
Jinye you baofengxue 今夜有暴风雪
Jingjing de baihualin 静静的白桦林
Jiuxian 九仙
Juanlian 眷恋
Junma jiang 骏马奖
Junren jimi 军人机密

Kang, Honglei 康洪雷
Kangxi wangchao 康熙王朝
Kang, Youwei 康有为
kaochangshang de douzheng 考场上的斗争
Kewang 渴望
Kong, Fansen 孔繁森
Kong jingzi 空镜子
Kunming 昆明
Lan, Xiaolong 兰晓龙
Lao Mao 老马
Lao She 老舍
Lao Wei 老魏
Lao Yang 老杨
li 礼
Li, Dingming 李鼎铭
Li, Hongzhang 李鸿章
Li, Meng 李梦
Li, Ruihuan 李瑞环
Lishi de tiankong 历史的天空
Li, Tiemei 李铁梅
Li, Yuhe 李玉和
Liang jian 亮剑
Lin, Biao 林彪
Lin, Er 林娥
Lin Hai xueyuan 林海雪原
Ling'ai 玲爱
Liu, Huifang 刘慧芳
Liu, Laogen 刘老根
Liu, Shaoqi 刘少奇

Liu, Xiliang 刘习良
Liu, Yan 刘岩
Liuzi 六子
Liu, Zhidan 刘志丹
Lu Xun 鲁迅
Lüliang 吕梁
Ma, Cuilian 马翠莲
Ma, Dashuai 马大帅
Ma, Xiaoshuai 马小帅
Mao, Anying 毛岸英
Mao, Doudou 毛豆豆
Mao, Feng 毛峰
Mao, Na 毛纳
Mao Zedong 毛泽东
Meili 美丽
Modai huangdi 末代皇帝
Mu, Zhnfang 穆震方
Nanjing 南京
(County Head) Niu 牛县长
Niu, Jianrong 牛健荣
Nuerhachi 努尔哈赤
Nüyou 女友
Qia tongxue shaonian 恰同学少年
Qianfu 潜伏
Qianlong wangchao 乾隆王朝
Qian, Sanqiang 钱三强
Qian, Wengui 钱文贵
Qian Xuesen 钱学森
Qiaochangzhang shangren 乔厂长上任

Qiaojia dayuan 乔家大院
Qin, Susu 秦素素
Qingmei 青梅
Qingnian Mao Zedong 青年毛泽东
Qingshan 青山
Qiubai zhisi 秋白之死
Qiushi 求是
Qinqing shu 亲情树
Qu, En 瞿恩
Renjian zhengdao shi cangsang 人间正道是沧桑
Qu, Bo 曲波
Qu, Xia 瞿霞
Ren, Changxia 任长霞
Ruan, Ruoling 阮若琳
Sangui 三鬼
Sanjia qin 三家亲
San nong wenti 三农问题
Sang, Hua 桑华
Se nülang 涩女郎
Shajiabang 沙家浜
Shandong 山东
Shanxi 山西
Shanghai 上海
Shao, Jianbo 少剑波
Shensheng de zhize 神圣的职责
Shengwei shuji 省委书记
Shibing tuji 士兵突击
Shi, Jin 史今
Shiwan renjia 十万人家

Shiyan wusheng 誓言无声
shiyew danwei 事业单位
shu 恕
Sige dali changdao 四个大力倡导
Sishi tongtang 四世同堂
Shuanzi 栓子
Sun, Yat-sun 孙中山
Taiwan 台湾
Taiyuan 太原
Tang Minghuang 唐明皇
Tang, Muyu 汤慕禹
ti 悌
Tianjin 天津
Tie Ren 铁人
Tuo, Yonggang 拓永刚
Wang, Chaozhu 王朝柱
Wang, Liping 王丽萍
Wang, Ming 王明
Wei, Lihuang 卫立煌
Weixiao 微笑
Wensheng 文生
Wo de qingchun shui zuozhu 我的青春谁做主
Women de bashi niandai 我们的八十年代
Wo shi tezhongbing 我是特种兵
Wu, Baohe 吴保和
Wu kui cangsheng 无愧苍生
Wu, Liuyi 伍六一
Wu, Qiang 吴强
Wu, Qiuya 吴秋雅

Wuxing hongqi yingfeng piaoyang 五星红旗迎风飘扬

Wu, Zhe 吴哲

Wuzi de ge 无字的歌

Xi'an 西安

Xifu de meihao shidai 媳妇的美好时代

Xi, Gengtian 喜耕田

Xi Gengtian de gushi 喜耕田的故事

Xijia (Village) 喜家(村)

Xi, Jingping 习近平

Xi shengdi 西圣地

Xiyouji 西游记

Xian, Xinghai 冼星海

xiao 孝

Xiao, Jiang 小江

Xie, Wenqing 谢文清

xin 信

Xinhua 新华

Xin xing 新星

Xingjing duizhang 刑警队长

Xingguang jiang 星光奖

Xiulan 秀兰

Xu, Guangchun 徐光春

Xu, Sanduo 许三多

Xu, Shiyou 许世友

Xue, Lin 薛林

Xueye 雪野

Xunzhao huilai de shijie 寻找回来的世界

Yan'an 延安

Yan'an song 延安颂

Yang, Hucheng 杨虎城
Yang, Lihua 杨立华
Yang, Liqing 杨立青
Yang, Liqiu 杨立秋
Yang, Liren 杨立仁
Yang, Shu 杨树
Yang, Tinghe 杨廷鹤
Yang, Yang 杨阳
Yao, Jing 姚静
Yehuo chunfeng dou gucheng 野火春风斗古城
yi 义
Yikou caibingzi 一口菜饼子
Yimeng 沂蒙
Yizhe renxin 医者仁心
Yongzheng wangchao 雍正王朝
Yu, Hao 余好
yu jiao yule 寓教于乐
Yu, Wei 余味
Yuan, Lang 袁朗
Yuan, Shikai 袁世凯
Yunnan 云南
Zhang, Guotao 张国焘
Zhang, Jizhong 张纪中
Zhang, Li 张黎
Zhang, Xueliang 张学良
Zhejiang 浙江
Zheng, Xiaolong 郑晓龙
Wang, Wanping 王宛平
Zhengzhou 郑州

Zhiqu weihushan 智取威虎山

zhong 忠

Zhong, Chengxiang 仲呈祥

Zhongda geming lishiticaiju 重大革命历史题材剧

Zhou, Enlai 周恩来

Zhou Enlai zai Chongqing 周恩来在重庆

Zhou, Libo 周立波

Zhu, De 朱德

Zou xiang gonghe 走向共和

APPENDIX 7

Preliminary Narrative analysis of *Xi Gentian's Story* (Part 1: The Serial Plot)

Episode 1

Segment 1 Xi learns of the agricultural tax exemption policy; Xi's son Qingshan sells instant torches to villagers.

It is January 1st, 2006. Xi Gentian, a villager from Xijia Village and his fellow villager, Liuzi, are working on a construction worksite in a city. Around 5 pm, Liuzi asks the foreman to stop work early today since this is a New Year day and a special day for Xi. Xi plans to meet his wife who is working in a restaurant in the same city. He and his wife have come to work in the city to earn some money. They live separately and can only meet each other from time to time. Tonight they go to a guesthouse to spend their special day together. In the guesthouse, Xi happens to learn from one of the lodgers about the Party's new policy that will exempt farmers from all fees and all agricultural tax for their farming produce.

Xi is very happy about the tax exemption policy. When they leave the guesthouse early next morning, he asks his wife to go back to the village with him for farming. His wife asks him to return to the village to check the news first and promises to join him later if the news is true.

Meanwhile in Xi's home at the village, Qingmei, Xi's daughter, is talking with Qingshan, Xi's son. Qingshan is about to visit villagers at the village to sell them his instant torches. Qingmei suggests that Qingshan ask their Uncle Erhu, head of the village to announce the sale of the torches through the village's speaker and invite villagers to come to their house to buy the torches. Qingshan tells his sister that this method will not work since it is now very difficult to do business. He needs to persuade people to buy them. Villagers may not be willing to buy the torches even if he offers to show and sell the torches at their home. Qingmei asks Qingshan to make a phone call to their parents on his way to the sale. Qingshan replies that he has called their parents but has found them out.

Later at night, Qingshan sells a torch to one of his neighbors, Ling'ai. When Qingmei goes to work early next morning and asks him about his sale, he tells sister he has sold out all his torches to the villagers.

Back at the construction site, Xi is packing for his leave for the village, giving his quilt to Liuzi. Liuzi gives Xi a new pair of shoes and asks Xi to take care of his son, Chouwa and his mother at the village. Xi promises he will do so upon his return to the village.

Segment 2 Xi returns to the village; villagers come to return the torches to Qingshan and Xi returns money back to the villagers; Xi gets confirmation about the agricultural tax exemption policy first from Erhu and later from Mr. Li head of the town.

On Xi's arrival at the Xijia village, Xi goes straight to Xijia village CPC committee to check the tax exemption policy with Erhu, head of the village. Erhu tells Xi that the agricultural tax exemption is the country's policy and the village committee will implement the country's policy strictly to the letter. Not only will the agricultural tax be completely rescinded but also grants will be provided to those who are growing food crops. The village committee also plans to build and upgrade rural roads, set up water diversion projects as well as to establish a cooperative medical healthcare system. Tuition and miscellaneous fees for village children have also been completely eliminated. When Xi expresses some doubt about the policy, Erhu suggests that Xi ask Qingmei to take him to Longwan town government to check the policy with Mr. Li, head of the township.

Qingshan comes to the committee to get Xi home. On arrival home, the villagers to whom Qingshan has sold the torches come to see Qingshan to return the torches to him because of the problems of the torches. Xi pays the money back to the villagers and scolds Qingshan for the sale. Just then Qingmei arrives home and Xi tells her to take him to see Mr. Li, the head of the town the following day.

Mr. Li confirms the agricultural tax exemption policy by showing Xi the Party's policy document and tells Xi to come to the town government for help in the future. Excited about the news, Xi asks Qingmei to call Xiulan to return to the village

right away while he rides a bicycle to the land which has been left unfarmed and has mixed feelings. In recent years, villagers have been giving up farming and have been going to the city to earn money. He thinks: countrymen should farm the land, otherwise he has not lived up to the expectation of the land; if a countryman farms the land but has not got good income from the farming, his expectations have not been lived up to. He feels that he is a countryman, he wants to farm the land and if he does not this time, he feels he has not made good use of the good policy set up by the Party.

Segment 3 Xi wants to contract some land in the village; Erhu saves Tiedan with the help of Xi and other villagers; Xi and Sangui, another villager contract 15 mu of land respectively.

Next day, Xi tells Erhu about his intention to contract the land in the village for farming. Erhu tells Xi that almost all good land in the village has been contracted to the villagers and the remaining 30 mu of land is not so good. Without second thought, Xi, decides to contract this 30 mu of land. Erhu is glad of Xi's decision but tells Xi he will need to consult Baoqing and other committee members for his plan to contract the land. Just then, a villager comes and tells Erhu that Ling'ai's son, Tiedan, has fallen into a deep hole in a village. Erhu and Xi rush to the site where Ling'ai is crying and trying to get down into the hole with a rope to get Tiedan out. Erhu ties a rope around his feet and asks the villagers to lower him to the tight and narrow hole and with strenuous efforts the villagers slowly pulls out Erhu who holds Tiedan out of the hole.

Xi's wife returns to the village with gifts for Qingshan and Qingmei. Qingshan tells Qingmei he likes Gaihua, a girl in the same village.

Upon discussion in a meeting, the village committee approves Xi's application for the contracting of the remaining 30 mu of land and has posted the approval on the village locust tree for every villager's opinion. No one in the village disagrees with the decision until Sangui, another villager, who has been doing business in the city, comes back to the village and also wants to contract the land.

Sangui tries to persuade Xi to give up the land and offers a higher price to contract the Land Xi intends to contract. Both Xiulan and Qingshan persuade Xi to accept the offer, but Xi refuses. Xiulan and Qingshan are disappointed about Xi's refusal. Xi is fond of farming and wants to use the contracted land for farming while Sangui's purpose of contracting the land is not yet known at the beginning but it later turns out that there is a lot of sand in the land and he wants to dig the sand out and sell it for profit.

Sangui tries to bribe Erhu, the village head about the contracting of the 30 mu of land. Erhu returns the bribe to Sangui but asks him to come to the village committee to sign the land contract the next day. The village committee divides the 30 mu of land into two parts, and Xi and Sangui contract 15 mu of land respectively.

Xi goes to the contracted land, and feels a sense of security. Ma Cuilian, who learns of the high price Sangui offers to Xi, offers to contract her land to Sangui but Sangui refuses her offer.

Xi's wife tries to persuade Xi again to give the land to Sangui with threats but again in vain.

Episode 2

Segment 1 Qingshan digs the contracted land and angers Old Uncle Liu.

Xi is playing his erhu fiddle outside the house because his wife does not allow him to do so in the house since she is watching Korean TV dramas. Qingshan invites his father to play the erhu fiddle in his room. Once inside the room, Qingshan says to Xi that he is quite right not to give the land to Sangui. He finds it very strange for Sangui to offer a high price for Xi's land and he asks his father whether there is something valuable beneath the land, for example, bars of gold buried by the former landlords before liberation in 1949. Qingshan then goes out, leaving Xi wondering about what his son has just said about the valuables in the land.

Early next morning, Old Uncle Liu comes to complain angrily to Xi and his wife that Qingshan has dug up the tomb of his ancestors. Xi asks Qingshan about the matter and Qingshan denies it. Xi and Xiulan explain to Old Uncle Liu that his

family has contracted the land which lies the tomb of Old Uncle Liu's ancestors and Qingshan may have probably ploughed and evened the land and touched the tomb by chance and tries to calm Old Uncle Liu's anger. Old Uncle Liu does not buy what Xi and Xiulan have said. He tells them that he himself has been to the land and that big holes have been dug out of his ancestors' tomb. He has been told that Qingshan dug the tomb last night. Hearing Old Uncle Liu's words, Xi gets Qingshan out of his bed to explain to Old Uncle Liu about the digging. Qingshan tells Old Uncle Liu that he is curious about Sangui's good offer to re-contract his father's land and wants to find out whether there is something valuable in the land and thus has dug up the tomb but have found nothing but sand. Xi scolds Qingshan severely and gets him to apologize to Old Uncle Liu. Uncle Liu lets Qingshan off and then leaves.

Segment 2 Xi manages to persuade Xiulan to farm the land with him.

Xi asks Qingshan not to do such a foolish thing again and asks him to grow food crops with him. Qingshan tells his father he is not growing crops. He is going to work on his tourism project in the village when weather gets warmer. Xiulan, still angry about Xi's refusal of Sangui's offer, tells Xi that she plans to go back to the city to work. She tells Xi that he can do whatever he likes about the land. Angry and disappointed, Xi argues with Xiulan who pushes him out of the house.

Frustrated, Xi goes to the town governmental office and asks Qingmei, who has been working there, for advice. He explains to her daughter that her mother is angry with him. She is not cooking. She is not talking to him. And her brother, Qingshan is on her mother's side too. He asks Qingmei to help him out. Qingmei has given him several suggestions but Xi considers them not helpful. He explains to his daughter that he and her mother argues about the land and that land is the biggest problem between them and her mother is not willing to farm the land with him. He asks whether Qingmei has got any newspapers about farming the land and whether there are any newspaper articles on how people become rich because of farming the land. When Qingmei finds such articles, Xi asks his daughter to read one of them while he records her reading with a tape recorder she has found him.

Later in the evening when Xi tries to talk to Xiulan about the contracted land again she is impatient. Xi then plays her the recorded reading by his daughter.

The next day Xi and Xiulan begin to work on the land. Xiulan has been persuaded by Xi's re-telling of the stories of his grandfather and his father last night. His grandfather lost his life when making a bet on land by swallowing 5 jin of rice cake at a time. His father was so hungry in the year 1960 that he ate dead mice.

On their returning home, Xi and Xiulan hears Erhu calling Xi to go to the village committee through the village speaker. When Xi arrives there, he finds Ma Cuilian waiting for him. She wants to rent the land to Xi because she cannot farm the land on her own, but Xi refuses her offer.

Segment 3 Xi takes Chouwa home from the police station; Ling'ai comes to enquire Xi about Longevity Lock; Xi gets the lock from Chouwa.

December 23rd of the lunar calendar is a big pre-cerebration before the coming Spring Festival. On that day, Xi and Xiulan go to the village open market to buy food for the coming Spring Festival. When they are about to leave the market, they come across an unexpected event. A policeman is taking Chouwa, Liuzi's son, to the police station. Xi and Xiulan go to the police station and are told that Chouwa has been stealing things. The policeman asks Xi and Xiulan to educate Chouwa by persuasion instead of scolding and beating him. Xi signs the standing-guardian promise. Xi and Xiulan then take Chouwa back to the village. On their way to the village, Xi and Xiulan try to persuade Chouwa to behave well and study well. Chouwa argues with them and complains that his father, Liuzi, does not care about him and that he does not care about his father either. Chouwa tries to run away from them on the way but is caught back by Xi.

That night when Xi light off fire crackers to welcome the pre-Spring Festival occasion, Ling'ai comes to their home to thank Xi for saving her son Tiedan with a bar of tobacco which her husband, Pingchuan, has brought back from the city. Ling'ai then asks Xi whether he saw Tiedan wear a Longevity Lock (i.e. a necklace) on the day when Xi rescued him. Ling'ai tells Xi that she has not realized the Lock is lost until Pingchuan asks her about it. She tells Xi and Xiulan that the Lock is the family necklace handed down from the elder generation and is made of gold. When Xi and Xiulan asks her to

check with Erhu and other people present on that day, Ling'ai tells them she has already checked with Erhu who says that he has not seen the Lock. When they suggest that the necklace may have fallen into the deep hole, Ling'ai tells them she has searched the hole with a torch but has found nothing. Xiulan suggests that perhaps it has been stolen. Ling'ai thinks the same but can't think of anyone who could have stolen the Lock. Xi asks Ling'ai not to guess without evidence since that may wrong an innocent person. After Ling'ai leaves their home, Xiulan asks Xi whether Chouwa was present on that day and suggests that maybe he has taken the Lock. She asks Xi to check with Chouwa about the Lock.

The following day, Xi goes to Liuzi's home at the village and finds Liuzi's mother washing clothes outside. Xi asks her about Chouwa and she tells Xi that she has locked him into the house in case he goes out doing something improper. Xi says that it is not helpful to lock him into the house. She complains to Xi that Liuzi does not care about Chouwa's education and only cares about earning money in the city. Xi tells her he wants to talk to Chouwa. Xi talks to Chouwa about the Lock. Chouwa gives the Lock to Xi.

Later that night, Xi writes a letter to the city committee about the problem of educating village children who are left behind at home by their parents who are working in the city.

Segment 4 Xi's family receives Mr. Qiao, city party secretary during Spring Festival and tells him about Baoqing's and Yingping's gambling habit by chance and this infuriates Baoqing; Erhu scolds Xi for his revelation and writes a letter for Xi denying the fact of Baoqing and Yingping's gambling habit.

Next day Xi, Xiulan, Qingshan and Qingmei are eating dumplings to celebrate the First Day of Spring Festival at home. According to the tradition, whoever has eaten the dumpling with a copper coin inside it will be lucky in the coming year and Qingmei has eaten such a dumpling.

In the meantime, Erhu is working at the village committee office. He receives a call from Mr. Li, head of the town. Mr. Li asks Erhu to get some preparation to welcome Mr. Qiao, the city party secretary, who is coming to Xijia village to celebrate the Spring Festival with the villagers.

Xi family is still having the big celebration meal. The villagers are celebrating outside with singing, drumming etc. Qingshan goes out to join them. Urged by Qingmei and encouraged by Xi, Xiulan shyly sings her favorite songs she used to sing when she was young. Erhu comes in to complement Xiulan's singing. Erhu tells Xi the intention of city party secretary Qiao to celebrate the Spring Festival with the villagers and has arranged for Xi's family to receive Qiao. Xi feels surprised and unexpected about the arrangement. He tells Erhu his family is not the best one in the village but Erhu explains to him that Xi's family is the most suitable one. Xi is the first to come back from the city to the village to farm the land upon learning the party's agricultural tax exemption policy. Erhu asks Xi to prepare for Qiao's visit. Xi, Xiulan and Qingmei then begin the preparation in a hurry.

At the village tree bullet board, the villagers are drumming and singing to welcome party secretary Qiao. Mr. Li, head of the town introduces Qiao to the villagers and tells them about Qiao's intention to celebrate the Spring Festival with them in the village.

Erhu takes Qiao and his entourage to Xi's house. Qiao asks Xi why he has come back to farm the land. Xi replies that it is because of the agricultural tax exemption policy. Xi says that countryside is countrymen's root and land is farmers' life and he feels a sense of security with the land. Qiao says that going to work at the city and farming land in the countryside are both practical ways for countrymen to develop the country's economy and to earn a good living. Countrymen can choose whatever way fits them to earn their living. Xi agrees with Qiao but says that he himself is good at farming and he should make good use of the policy otherwise he does not live up to the expectations of the country's policy.

Meanwhile Gaihua and her mother Ma Cuilian are making dumplings for Spring Festival. Gaiping, Ma's younger daughter, comes into the house to tell Ma that city cadres have come to visit the village and are now in Xi's house. Ma wonders why the cadres visit Xi's family. Gaihua says to Ma that maybe they have come to celebrate the new year with them.

At Xi's house, Qiao meets Qingmei and Qingshan and asks about their jobs. Qiao learns through Mr. Li's introduction that

Qingmei works in the Town Agricultural Technology Office and he complements Qingmei on her job by saying that the agricultural science and technology has a promising future. Qingshan tells Qiao that his father wants him to help farm the land but he plans to work on folklore tourism when the weather gets warmer. Qiao also complements Qingshan's plan saying that folklore tourism develops the folklore culture and at the same invigorates economy. Qingshan asks whether Qiao can get Mr. Li to find him a driving position in the town. Qiao jokingly tells Qingshan that a driver does not earn much and his driver earns less than a successful farmer does. Qiao encourages Qingshan to learn science and technology to help his father with the farming and thus earns more but Qingshan says that he prefers a decent job rather than earning a lot of money. It seems that Qiao is quite happy with his visit of Xi's family.

In the meantime Ma asks Gaihua to go to Qingshan's house to find out what is going on there. Gaihua declines her mother's inquisitive request. Ma later talks to Gaihua about the goodness of Xi's family and offers to go to Xi's family to discuss the marriage between her and Qingshan if she is fond of Qingshan. Embarrassed, Gaihua asks her mother not to intervene.

Qiao asks Xi about the village people and the relationship between village people and the village cadres. Xi tells Qiao: village cadres used to collect different fees and taxes from people and that made the relationship between people and cadres stressful; now that all the fees and taxes have been rescinded everything is fine and village cadres find it easier to do their work in the village. When asked whether the village cadres are doing a good job or not, Xi tells Qiao that most of the cadres are doing a good job except Baoqing and Yingping who have a habit of gambling. Everyone present especially Xiulan is embarrassed by what Xi has said. Xiulan tries to break the embarrassment by explaining to Qiao that Baoqing and Yingping are not really gambling but playing that for fun on festival occasions. Xi stops Xiulan and insists that they are gambling. Xi then suddenly realizes the embarrassment he has caused and tries to entertain Qiao with fruit.

That night at the village committee, Baoqing complains to Erhu about what Xi has said about him before Qiao and asks Erhu to do something to help him out. Erhu tells Baoqing off and asks him not to gamble any more. Erhu asks Baoqing to get Xi to the village committee through the village speaker. Xi is reluctant to go there but Xiulan manages to persuade him to go. When Xi arrives, Baoqing asks him angrily about what Xi has said about him during Qiao's visit. Xi tells him that he has simply told the truth. Erhu explains to Xi the trouble he may have caused because of what he has said to Qiao today. Erhu then asks Xi to write a letter to tell Qiao what he has said today is not true. When Xi refuses, Erhu writes the letter for him.

(In this episode, the events are mainly chronologically described. Like the chronological order of the first episode, the order is not single chronological but syn-chronological because from time to time, events are described as happening simultaneously at different places.)

Episode 3

Segment 1 Xi reluctantly signs the letter Erhu has written denying the fact of Baoqing and Yingping's gambling; Xi declines Ma's proposal of marrying her daughter to Qingshan; Xi tells the truth to county party secretary Li with regard to the gambling incident and this angers Erhu.

After Erhu finishes the letter and reads it out to Xi, Erhu asks Xi to sign the letter. Xi refuses to sign but has to do so because of Erhu's threat of withdrawing Xi's contracted land.

The next day, Ma Cuilian comes to visit Xi and Xiulan. Ma has come to act as a matchmaker for her daughter Gaihua and Qingshan, the son of Xi and Xiulan. Surprised at Ma's proposal, Xiulan does not object to the match. Xi, however, disapproves of the match. Qingshan, who is fond of Gaihua, tells his father that he is happy about the match. Xi tells Qingshan that Ma will request betrothal gifts from them and Qingshan retorts that his father is mean. Ma leaves Xi angrily.

Qiao visits Mr. Li, party secretary of the county and tells Li about his recent visit in Xijia village, what Xi has told him about the gambling by some of the village cadres in the village and Xi's recent letter sent by the Xijia village committee denying the fact of gambling. He believed the gambling fact told by Xi and has some doubt about the letter. He senses

there is something wrong with the letter. He tells Li that the mutual trust relationship between villagers and cadres in the village is the key to the solution of the social problems in the countryside. He wants Li to go to Xijia village to investigate the letter.

Li sends his personal secretary to the village to get Xi to his office. Xi feels puzzled but goes anyway. He thinks Li wants to see him because of his letter about the education of children in the village. But it turns out that Li asks him about the letter denying the gambling.

Later in the evening, Xi goes to Erhu's home with some wine hoping to get forgiveness from Erhu and tells Erhu about his visit to Li's office that day. When Erhu learns that Xi has told the whole truth about the letter with regard to gambling incident, Erhu is very angry with Xi.

Segment 2 Xi protects Chouwa by not telling the truth about the Longevity Lock; Granma Qi tells the truth of the Longevity Lock to Erhu and Xi.

When Xi returns home from Erhu's, he finds Ling'ai waiting for him. Ling'ai tells Xi that the longevity lock Xi has given back to her is a false one, not the gold one handed down from the family. Ling'ai asks Xi to tell her who has given the lock to Xi and she wants to ask the person about the lock. Ling'ai says that maybe the finder has kept the real gold lock and has given the false lock to her and she insists that Xi tells him who has found the lock. Xi is angry about what Ling'ai has said and refuses to tell her the name of the finder because Xi wants to protect Chouwa. Xiulan tries to persuade Ling'ai to give up the attempt to find out the finder of the lock but Ling'ai does not listen and she turns to Erhu for help.

When Ling'ai goes and tells Erhu about the longevity lock and asks him why Xi does not tell her about the finder of the lock, Erhu is very drunk, takes her as Xi and talks about the various difficulties he encounters while working as village head. Ling'ai feels puzzled and leaves.

Next morning, Xi goes to the village committee. Erhu asks Xi who has found Ling'ai's lock and why he does not tell her the finder. Xi tells Erhu it is Chouwa who has found the lock. Xi then tells him everything he knows about Chouwa and that he wants to protect him since Chouwa is still a child. Erhu says that Xi is right in not telling Ling'ai about Chouwa but asks Xi whether the lock is real or not. Just then Grandma Qi, the grandmother-in-law of Ling'ai comes in to explain to them about the longevity lock. She has only got one family longevity lock but has given the lock to her eldest great-grandson on his twelfth birthday. Ling'ai is not happy about this and in order to pacify Ling'ai, she has got a lock from a stand in the town open market and has given it to Ling'ai telling her it is a family longevity lock.

Segment 3 Qingshan has brought back a donkey with 300 yuan; Grandma Qi dies; Qingshan is hurt by the donkey; the donkey owner and a police man come to Xi for the donkey.

Xi goes back home to look for Qingshan and Xiulan tells him that Qingshan has been to the Yang River to enquire about the tourism project there. Xi and Xiulan then go to the land to level the soil. Xiulan is curious why Sangui has not started working on the land yet and wonders what Sangui is going to grow on the land. Later Baoqing comes to the land asking Xi to help him level his land because he has been told by the town cadres to contemplate and write about his gambling bad habit. Xi is angry about Baoqing's sarcastic remarks. Xiulan tries to help Xi out of the embarrassment. Xiulan criticizes Xi about his extreme honesty. Xi tells her that he has nothing to fear the village cadres since they are no longer entitled to collect fees or taxes from villagers.

On their way home, Xi and Xiulan see Qingshan who has brought back a donkey. Qingshan tells them that he has bought this donkey with 300 yuan. Both Xi and Xiulan feel surprised at such a low price with which Qingshan has bought the donkey and they wonder whether Qingshan has got the donkey illegally. Back at home, Qingshan gives a thorough clean of the donkey. Xiulan jokingly tells Qingshan that the donkey is cleaner than Qingshan himself now. Xi wants to use the donkey to carry manure to the contracted land but Qingshan wants to use it for his tourism project. Xi and Qingshan argue over the use of the donkey. Later, a villager comes and tells Xi that Erhu wants him to go to Ling'ai's home. When Xi arrives there, Erhu is trying to calm down Ling'ai who is shouting angrily outside towards the room of Grandma Qi after learning the truth of the longevity lock. Xi and Erhu manage to calm down Ling'ai and get her into her own room. They

then enter Grandma Qi's room to comfort her and ask her not to take Ling'ai's words seriously. Qi tells them she is fine, gives them each a bottle of wine and then dies. Grandma Qi is 96 years old. When the villagers are sending Grandma's coffin to the burial site, Jianwen, Grandma Qi's elder grandson comes back from the city, stops them and tells them that Grandma Qi wants to be cremated after her death. After playing the recording of Grandma Qi's wishes, Jianwen gets his Grandma to be cremated.

At night, Xi is adjusting the old wooden trailer for the purpose of carrying manure. Qingshan goes to talk to Erhu about his tourism project. Early next morning, Xi fills the wood trailer with manure and asks Qingshan to carry the manure with his donkey. When Qingshan disagrees saying that will make the donkey smelly and nobody will ride his donkey and thus spoil his tourism business, Xi promises he will clean the donkey thoroughly and then spray perfume onto it. Qingshan has to do what his father tells him to. When Qingshan tries to harness the donkey to the trailer, the donkey kicks him and he gets hurt. Qingshan is sent to the village hospital. Xiulan blames Xi for the kick and Xi goes back home. When passing the village committee, he is stopped by Erhu who is about to take a policeman, and a villager who has lost a donkey, to see and enquire him about the donkey. They together go to Xi's home. The villager confirms that it is his donkey and he wants to take it home. Xi argues with the villager, saying that Qingshan has bought the donkey with 300 yuan and he is not returning it. When the policeman asks Xi to return the donkey to the villager and will return 300 yuan to Xi when the donkey theft is solved, Xi tells them that Qingshan has been kicked and hurt by the donkey and is staying in hospital.

Episode 4

Segment 1 The police man requests Xi's family to return the donkey to the owner.

Xi takes the policeman and the stranger villager to the village hospital to see Qingshan. The Policeman asks Qingshan about the donkey. Qingshan tells the policeman that he does not know the stranger and that he has brought the donkey with 300 yuan from a young man. The stranger and Xi's family argue against each other over the donkey. The stranger wants to take home his donkey. Qingshan wants him to pay for his medical fee since the donkey has kicked and hurt him. But the stranger insists that Qingshan go and find the young man for the 300 yuan and for the medical fee. The policeman settles the donkey incident this way: Qingshan pays the medical fee himself while the donkey is returned to the owner. Xiulan considers the settlement as unfair but has to accept it.

Segment 2 Xi makes his first and unsuccessful attempt to establish an economic cooperative in the village.

Qingshan recovers soon from the donkey's kick. Xi hires a horse to plough the land. In the field, Qingshan says that the county is promoting the project of building a new socialist countryside. He thinks their way of farming the land is too primitive and too inefficient for building such a project. Xi thinks what Qingshan has said is quite right. Xi tells Xiulan what he learned from Mr. Li that the final aim of building socialist new countryside is to modernize agriculture. Xiulan replies that machines are needed to modernize agriculture and that even if they have the necessary machines they will not work in their village since the village land is scattered and separate. Xi says that he can call on everyone in the village to establish a village economic cooperative and introduce mass production practice and that this will be closer to the socialist new countryside project. Qingshan says jokingly that his father is better than his Uncle Erhu and that Xi can work as the village head. Xiulan tells Qingshan that a village head always works for others and that Qingshan's suggestion is not good for his father. Hearing this, Xi says that he does not want to work as village head and that Erhu is more suitable for the position. Xi, however, says that he will talk to Erhu about the establishment of an economic cooperative in the village. Xiulan asks him to mind his own business.

On their way home from the field, Xi finds Liushiyi, a villager, demolishing the village agricultural irrigation facilities. Xi tells Liushiyi that the facility is the village collective property and he has no right to do so. When Xi tries to stop him from doing so, he hits Xi on the nose. Xi goes to the village committee to report Liushiyi's demolition of the irrigation system to Baoqing and explains to him the importance of irrigation system to the building of a socialist new countryside and says that the irrigation system should be protected. Though Baoqing comments sarcastically on Xi's beaten nose because of

Xi's talk of his gambling practice in the village before Qiao, he agrees with Xi on the importance of the irrigation system and tells Xi that he will report the incident to Erhu and discuss with Erhu how to solve the problem.

In the meantime a meeting is being held in the town government. Mr. Li is giving a report to the villager cadres attending the meeting on building a socialist new countryside. He urges all village cadres to carry out the agricultural tax exemption policy and make great efforts to build model villages and model households.

The following day, Erhu and Baoqing go and check the site where the irrigation facility has been demolished. Erhu says what Xi has done is quite right. Baoqing asks Erhu whether yesterday's meeting is about building irrigation system. Erhu says that irrigation system is important to the modernization of agriculture. They then go to Xi's field to talk to Xi. Erhu tells Xi that he is right in preventing Liushiyi from demolishing the water pipe and his idea of agricultural development is accurate. Xi tells them that he is looking for them too. He tells them about the economic cooperative project and the benefits it will bring i.e. increase in products and increase income. He asks Erhu whether he as a village head can call on the villagers to establish such a cooperative. Erhu and Baoqing agree with Xi on the benefits of the cooperative but tell Xi about the difficulty of the project. Every villager has different use of their land and the crops they grow differ. Xi suggests, Erhu and Baoqing also agree, that they gather some villagers that night to see whether they would like to join and establish such a cooperative.

That night some villagers discuss the establishment of a cooperative in the village committee. It goes well at the beginning but later when the villagers learn that there is no guarantee of selling all the crops produced and there may be some risk involved, they are not interested in joining the cooperative and thus the cooperative project is not established.

Segment 3 Ma complains to Xi about Qingshan's kissing Gaihua; County Cultural Gallery comes to record Folksong singing in Xijia village; Xi gets deputy head of the seeds station to compensate for the unsprouting seeds.

The following day, Xi is stopped by Ma Cuilian on his way home from the field. Ma tells Xi that his son Qingshan has kissed her daughter Gaihua and warns Xi to tell Qingshan not to do that again. Xi goes home angrily to look for Qingshan. When Xiulan tells him Qingshan is not yet home, Xi complains to his wife about the embarrassment he feels when Ma warns him about Qingshan's kissing Gaihua. When Qingshan comes home, Xi asks him about his relationship with Gaihua and tells him what Ma has told him. Qingshan denies the kissing.

The following morning when Xi and Qingshan are about to have their breakfast, they hear Erhu informing the villagers through the village speaker that the County Cultural Gallery is coming to Xijia village to promote the folklore art and is going to video record the folksong singing and that villagers who volunteer to take part in the folksong singing gather at the big locust tree in the village and that Xiulan should be well-prepared for and lead the occasion. Xiulan asks Xi to get ready for the occasion with his erhu fiddle and when Xi tells her he is not going Xiulan threatens to take down the strings of the erhu to make shoes.

When villagers are singing the folksongs under the village locust tree, a villager rushes in to tell Xi that the planted crop seeds do not sprout. Worried, Xi rushes to the field with the villager and his checking confirms the villager's finding. Xi and the villager rush to the village committee to enquire Erhu about the seeds since it is the committee which has got the seeds for them. When they arrive, some villagers have already gathered there complaining angrily to Erhu about the seeds. Erhu is also worried about the seeds and is a bit angry about their complaint but he promises to solve the problem for them. He and Xi ride to the seeds company in the town. On their way, Erhu tells Xi that he himself has come to the seed station to buy the seeds. When they get there and tell the deputy head of the seeds station about the unsprouting problem and want to get compensation because of the problem, the deputy head says that he needs to find out whether there is something wrong with the seeds and then discuss the compensation with them. When Xi and Erhu ask him to go to the field to check the seeds, the head refuses to go, telling them he is too busy with the work in the company. Erhu and Xi have to go back to the village for the time being. Early next morning, Xi and Xiulan go to the seeds company with the remaining ungrown seeds and plant the seeds in front of the seeds company. When the deputy head sees this, he

goes to the Xijia village to check the seeds. After checking, the head tells the villagers it is the problem of the seeds that have caused the unsprouting. He apologizes to the villagers, provides new seeds and gets the seeds sown for the villagers with a seeder. When Qingshan sees the technician finish sowing the seeds within a short time with the seeder, he advises his father to buy a tractor too because it is quick. Xi agrees with his son and tells him that they will buy two when they have money. Qingshan laughs at his father's words.

Segment 4 Dongping argues and fights with Erhu in the field; Shuanzi's mother faints and Xi and Erhu sends her to the village hospital; Xi attempts to trick Jiuxian into looking after Shuanzi's mother.

On their way home from the field after the completion of the seed sowing, Xi and Qingshan are stopped by Dongping, Erhu's wife who asks them about the whereabouts of Erhu. Qingshan tells her that Erhu seems to be helping Shuanzi's mother with sowing seeds in the west. Dongping complains to Xi that Erhu is always helping others in the village and seldom helps her with the farming. Erhu has paid his own travel in order to get seeds for the villagers and, when the seeds do not sprout, goes to the seeds company to solve the problem. When the seeds company comes to re-sow the seeds, he arranges for the re-sowing for all other households except his own, leaving herself doing all the things for the family. She can't stand him anymore and wants to divorce him. Dongping runs to the field for Erhu and Xi tries to stop her.

Dongping goes to the field where Erhu is helping Shuanzi's mother with seed-sowing. She tells Erhu she wants a divorce. Xi asks Erhu why he lets go the seed-sowing tractor. Erhu tells Xi that the tractor has used up the petrol and needs a refill. Since the village committee does not have money to pay for the refill, he has to let the tractor leave. Erhu says that all the households except his have got the seeds re-sown. As for his family, he can do the re-sowing himself. On hearing this, Dongping is very angry. She says to Erhu that he cares for everybody except her. She does not want to live with him anymore and she wants a divorce. Erhu asks Dongping to go home and he will do the re-sowing himself, but Dongping is so angry with him that she asks him to get back the tractor to sow the seeds for her otherwise she will divorce him. Shuanzi's mother tries to stop them and blames herself for the fault. Xi also tries to stop them from arguing. Dongping and Xi keep arguing with each other and then starts to fight with each other. Xi tries to stop them from fighting while Shuanzi's mother faints. Xi and Erhu rush Shuanzi's mother to the village hospital. Shuanzi's mother has no children and her husband died young. Shuanzi, the son of her brother, is her adopted son. She has been living on her own and has been supporting herself for the past two years since Shuanzi dare not look after her because of his wife, Jiuxian who does not like Shuanzi's mother.

At the hospital, both Erhu and Xi feel a need to help Shuanzi's mother. Xi thinks that Shuanzi and his wife should take care of her. Erhu agrees with Xi but fears that Shuanzi and Jiuxian are not willing to do so. Erhu asks Xi to persuade the young couple to take care of Shuanzi's mother. Xi goes and asks Shuanzi and Jiuxian to see and take home their mother-in-law. When Jiuxian refuses, Xi tells her about the potential property of her mother-in-law. Xi tells her that the father-in-law of her mother-in-law used to do business and her mother-in-law herself has once made 2000 yuan out of one single paper-cut pattern. Xi advises Jiuxian to take her mother-in-law home and take good care of her. Otherwise, the village committee will look after her. With these words, he goes home.

Xi arrives home and tells Xiulan about Shuanzi's mother and the argument between Dongping and Erhu. Xi, Qingshan and Xiulan all express sympathy with Erhu who is still at the hospital looking after Shuanzi's mother.

Meanwhile, Jiuxian asks Shuanzi about his grandfather's business and her mother-in-law's paper-cutting. When Shuanzi suggests that they go to see his mother, Jiuxian tells him that she will think about it.

When Xi comes back to the hospital to see Shuanzi's mother, Erhu has been down with sleep because of exhaustion. Xi tells Shuanzi's mother to put on airs and not to show excitement when Jiuxian and Shuanzi come to see her. Shuanzi's mother does not believe that they will come and see her since Shuanzi has not looked after her for three years. Xi reassures her that they will. Xi tells her what he has just said to Jiuxian. Though very sad, Shuanzi's mother promises she will do as Xi has told her to.

At the Shuanzi's home, Jiuxian is still thinking about whether or not her mother-in-law's paper cutting can make money in the future and whether she should go and take her home.

Episode 5

Segment 1 Xi managed to trick Jiuxian and Shuanzi into taking care of Shuanzi's mother.

Jiuxian and Shuanzi have not come to the hospital yet and this makes Xi anxious. Just then Qingmei comes to see him. Xi asks her to call and tell Erhu the news that a Hong Kong businessman is coming to their village to buy paper cut patterns at a high price since paper cut handcraft is part of the cultural heritage and that he gets Baoqing to inform the villagers of the news through the village speaker. On hearing news, Jiuxian asks her husband to go and bring home her mother-in-law with her. While Xi is waiting for Jiuxian and Shuanzi, Shuanzi's mother asks Xi to go home and tells him that she will be all right. She will go back home tomorrow. She does not expect Jiuxian and Shuanzi to come and see her. Xi reassures her that he will take her to live with his family if Jiuxian and Shuanzi do not take her home. Hearing what Xi has said, Shuanzi's mother is moved to tears. Just then, Jiuxian and Shuanzi get to the hospital to see Shuanzi's mother and take her home to live with them, just as Xi has expected. Jiuxian explains to Shuanzi's mother that she and Shuanzi have been too busy to look after her for the past two years and that they will make up for it in the future. Xi feels happy about their coming but feels a bit guilty because he has tricked Jiuxian into taking care of her mother-in-law.

Segment 2 Xiulan misunderstands Erhu for taking her deserved two yuan for her folk singing.

When Xi arrives home hungry and asks Xiulan to get him something to eat, she refuses. She is not happy. When Xi asks her why, she complains to Xi about Erhu. She tells Xi that everyone gets paid for their folksong singing performance and the County Cultural Gallery has given all the money to Erhu. Everyone who has taken part in the singing gets 30 yuan. Because she also plays the lead, she is supposed to get an extra of 20 yuan and a total of 50 yuan. But she has got only 30 yuan. She thinks Erhu has taken her 20 yuan. Xi does not believe that Erhu will do such a thing. He thinks Xiulan must have been mistaken. Xiulan asks him to check with Qingshan who has been given only 30 yuan. Qingshan tells his father that he has got only 30 yuan and this puzzles Xi. Xiulan keeps complaining to Xi about Erhu and insists that Erhu has taken her deserved 20 yuan. Xi warns her that she needs to show evidence to prove what she said and that she should not wrong a person without any evidence. Xiulan insists that Erhu has taken the 20 yuan because the staff from the County Cultural Gallery has told her about the extra 20 yuan for her lead. Just then a villager comes in to tell Xi and Xiulan that his wife, also named Xiulan, has got the extra 20 yuan for her folksong singing performance and that Erhu has given her the money by mistake because his wife has the same name as Xiulan. He comes to give the money to Xiulan. When Xiulan does not take the money, he insists that Xiulan accept the money because his wife does not deserve the money and he does not want Erhu to be misunderstood because of this mistake. Xiulan realizes her misunderstanding of Erhu and apologizes to Xi for it.

Segment 3 Xi helps deputy head of the seeds station to keep his job.

Ten days later the re-sown seeds sprout and the unsprouting has not caused any loss to the villagers. The deputy head of the seed station comes to the village to ask Xi to help him. He tells Xi that someone has reported the unsprouting of seeds to Mr. Niu, head of the county. Niu has scolded the head of seed station and the head of seed station wants to dismiss him from his post. Xi and the villagers write and sign a letter certifying that the deputy head is a good man, is thoughtful of the villagers, and has not brought any loss to them with the unsprouting, and requesting the head of the seed station not to dismiss him from his post. Erhu is a bit surprised by what Xi has done but stamps the letter with the village committee seal. Xi says that people should be lenient in treating each other. Just when Xi is about to leave the village committee, Jiuxian comes to enquire when the Hong Kong manager is coming to buy the paper cut patterns since she has got the patterns ready. Xi tells her that the manager is coming soon and asks her to be patient since Hong Kong is far away from the village. After Jiuxian leaves, Erhu warns Xi against the trouble of lying to Jiuxian about the paper cut patterns.

Segment 4 Sangui tricks Qingmei to the city and does matchmaking for her and Mr. Niu, a company head (also

syn-chronology: this is organized by logic since simultaneity is understood by logical implications)

Sangui needs to buy the machine needed for his sand-digging project in the village but he does not have enough money and he turns to Mr Niu, a fellow villager and also manager of a company, for help. He shows Niu his office in the provincial city and then invites him to lunch. Niu agrees to lend Sangui the money he needs but asks Sangui to help him find a young and beautiful fiancé from the village. After he comes back to his office, Sangui rack his mind for a possible candidate fiancé for Niu. He thinks of Qingmei. He calls her to come to the city and help him to negotiate with a company. After Qingmei arrives, Sangui introduces her to Niu. When Qingmei finds out the truth of Sangui's intentions, she is angry and leaves with the Scientific and Technological Documents for Agriculture which Niu has sent her as a gift. But Qingmei comes back to return the large sum of money which Niu has deliberately put into the documents. Niu gives the returned money to Sangui.

Meanwhile, Xi and Xiulan wonders why Sangui has asked Qingmei to go to the city. Xiulan is worried about Qingmei while Xi is not because Xi thinks Qingmei is smart. When Qingmei comes back to the village, she meets Xi and Xiulan on their way home. When Xi and Xiu asks her about her visit to the city, she tells them that Sangui wants to find her a boyfriend and asks them to forget about her visit to the city.

Segment 5 Sangui begins his sand-digging project in his contracted land; Erhu ignores Xi's complaint about Sangui's illegal use of arable land; Xi objects to Xiulan's sand-digging proposal and Xiulan argues with Xi for his objection.

Summer arrives. The crops in Xi's land grow well. Xi and Xiulan expect to have a good harvest. Beside Xi's land, Sangui's land remains uncultivated. Xi wonders what Sangui is going to grow in the land. On their way home passing the locust tree, Xi, Xiulan and Qingshan meet Sangui who gets out from a tractor. When Xi asks Sangui whether he is going to build a house in his contracted land, Sangui denies and this puzzles him. Xi is still thinking about what Sangui is going to do with the land when it is lunch time. Qingshan feels that Sangui is going to build houses in the land since the housing price is rising in the city. He thinks Sangui must be thinking about the potential housing market of the countryside. Xi says that the land is for agricultural use only. Xiulan says that Xi is not flexible. If Sangui wants to build houses in the land, nobody can prevent him from doing it. Xi says that if Sangui builds houses in the land his crops will be affected because the houses built in the land will block the sunshine needed for proper growth of crops. Qingshan tells Xi that he can ask Sangui to compensate money for the possible loss caused by his building of the houses. But Xi does not want compensation, he wants to grow crops. After lunch, Xi goes to the field and asks Sangui whether he is going to build houses in the land and Sangui tells him that he is digging sand out of the land. Xi goes to the village committee and tells Erhu about Sangui's use of the contracted land. Erhu asks to mind his own farming. Xi explains to Erhu about the proper use of the land. Though Erhu admits what Xi says is quite right, he asks Xi to mind his own farming and promises to explain to him about the approval of Sangui's use of land for sand-digging. Xi is not satisfied with what Erhu has said but he leaves.

That night when Xi is watching TV, Xiulan is saying to Xi how shrewd Sangui is in digging the sand out of the land. Xi replies to his wife that his crops grow well and he can earn a lot of money with the crops. Xiulan tells him that the money Xi makes out of the crops is far less than the money Sangui makes out of the sand. Qingshan tells his father that Sangui sells the sand to the highway road company which offers a high price. Both Xiulan and Qingshan try to persuade Xi to dig sand out of their contracted land so that they can also make a lot of money with their land. Xi refuses. When Xiulan threatens to destroy the crops in the land, Xi threatens to burn their house. They then quarrel with each other. Just then Qingmei comes home to stop their quarrel.

When they are having breakfast next morning, Xi tries to make up with his wife, but she ignores him. At the field Qingshan gazes at the sand-digging in Sangui's land from time to time.

Episode 6

Segment 1 Sangui declines Ma's offer of her land to him; Xi takes Chouwa home from the hospital; Qingshan

tells Xi that he likes Gaihua but Xi disapproves of his relationship with Gaihua;

Xi asks Sangui not to be too noisy with his sand-digging machine and Sangui asks Xi to stuff his ears with something to avoid the noise. Ma Cuilian comes to the field. When Xi asks her what has brought her there Ma tells Xi that she comes to ask Sangui to dig sand in her field. When Xi asks her what she is going to do with her crops she replies that with money she earns from the sand in the field she does not need the crops.

Erhu gets Xi to the village committee. When Xi arrives, the same policeman who has taken Chouwa to the police station tells him that Chouwa has stolen something from a shop and has been caught and beaten by the young son of the shop owner. He is wounded and is in the hospital. The policeman has come to inform Xi of Chouwa's case since he is Chouwa's temporary guardian. Xi asks Erhu for advice. Erhu asks Xi to go to hospital to see Chouwa and then take him back to the village committee if he recovers from his wound.

Ma Cuilian invites Sangui to dinner at her house. Ma wants Sangui to dig sand in her land. Sangui explains to her there is no sand in her land and tells her that is why he has not contracted her land. Ma is not happy about what Sangui has told her.

At night Xi takes Chouwa home. Xiulan is surprised to see Chouwa bandaged and is worried but Chouwa tells her that he is all right and asks her not to worry about him. Xiulan asks Xi to follow her into the kitchen and murmurs to Xi that he should not have signed the temporary guardian contract in the police station. Xi sighs and tells her that he will call Liuzi, Chouwa's father, to come back to take care of Chouwa.

In the meantime, Gaihua is meeting Qingshan under the big locust tree. Gaihua tells Qingshan that her mother has invited Sangui to dinner and this makes Qingshan worried because he thinks her mother wants Gaihua to marry Sangui. Gaihua tells him that her mother wants Sangui to dig sand in her land and this makes Qingshan feel relieved.

When Xi goes to the village committee later at night, Erhu has just finished his talk to the villagers through the village speaker about the family policy. Xi suggests that Erhu call Liuzi, Chouwa's father, to return to the village. Erhu tells Xi that he has already called him and that Liuzi cannot come back at the moment. Xi is worried about Chouwa because he has not been to school and has been wandering in the town doing nothing. Erhu tells him not to worry and he tells Xi that he will go and talk to the village school again to find a place for Chouwa. Xi then goes home. When Xi comes home, Qingshan tells him that Ma Cuilian has invited Sangui to dinner to get him to dig sand in her land. Xi replies that Ma is foolish to do that. Qingshan tells Xi that he likes Gaihua and Gaihua also likes him. Xi disapproves of their relationship since Gaihua has got a foolish mother.

Segment 2 Sangui's sand-digging has dried up Xi's crops; Xi wants to sue Sangui's sand-digging project but later decides to give up the sue.

Next day when Xi and Xiulan are watering the crops, Xiulan tells Xi that the land close to Sangui's is very dry and the crops there have already turned yellow. Xi goes and checks the crops there. He feels it strange because only the crops close to Sangui's land are dry and the rest of the crops are ok. Xiulan suggests that they turn to their daughter Qingmei for suggestions. Qingmei tells them that their land and Sangui's land is an integral whole and shares the same underground water system and that sand-digging by Sangui has caused the lowering of the underground water and thus has drained and dried the land close to Sangui.

The next morning, Xi goes to the village committee and finds Baoqing there. He complains to Baoqing that Sangui's sand-digging has dried up part of his contracted land. Baoqing does not believe it. Xi uses village speaker to get Sangui to come to the village committee. When Sangui comes, Xi asks him to stop his sand-digging because his sand-digging has drained the water in his land and thus has dried up his crops. Sangui does not believe what Xi has told him and insists on his sand-digging. Xi turns to Baoqing for help but Baoqing asks Xi to talk to Erhu.

That night, Xi goes to Erhu's house and complains to him that Sangui's sand-digging has dried up his land and the crops and that Baoqing has not helped him to stop Sangui from his sand-digging. At first, Erhu does not believe what Xi has

told him. When Xi tells Erhu Qingmei's explanation, Erhu still has some doubt about it and he tells Xi that he will need to go to the land to check whether the sand-digging indeed causes the drying.

Next morning, Erhu goes to Xi's land and find that what Xi has told him is true. Erhu gets Xi and Sangui to the village committee to discuss the problem. Sangui says that he cannot stop his sand-digging because he has signed a contract with the high-way company and he has invested a lot of money in the sand-digging business including workers and sand-digging facilities but he offers to compensate for the loss caused to Xi's crops. Xi tells Erhu that the contracted land is arable land and can only be used for farming not for other purposes. He does not want the compensation but his crops. Xi insists that Sangui stop his sand-digging. Xi and Sangui argues with each other. Unable to persuade Xi, Sangui leaves the village committee, leaving Xi and Erhu. Xi asks Erhu whether he has taken bribe from Sangui. Erhu denies and tells Xi that he needs to take care of a lot of problems in the village and it is difficult to stop Sangui's sand-digging project. Xi tells Erhu that he will report this to the higher official if the sand-digging is not stopped.

Xi goes to the field and feels very upset about the crops on which he has spent a lot time and which is being dried up because of the sand-digging. He asks Qingshan to borrow some water to water the drying crops while he goes to the town to report the problem. Qingshan suggests that he should report the problem to Mr. Niu the head of country not Mr. Li the head of town since Mr. Li is friendly to Erhu. When Xi is about to leave for the county, Baoqing rides to the field to tell Xi that Erhu wants to talk to him. Xi tells him that he is not seeing him and that he is going to report the problem to the head of the county. Baoqing tells Xi that he can do that after seeing Erhu.

Baoqing takes Xi to Erhu's home. Erhu entertains Xi with wine and special dishes. Xi tells Erhu that he will report the problem to the head of country even if Erhu entertains him with such special treat. Erhu tells Xi that the agricultural exemption policy has brought a lot of benefits to the villagers but it has also brought a lot of problems. The village committee used to collect tax from villagers to cover various fees needed for the work of the village committee such as the repairing of the village school, supporting of the childless and infirm old people in the village, the allowances for village cadres, the fees for village committee administrative work, and the fees to receive leaders from higher levels. Now that all taxes have been rescinded, the main financial source for the village committee is the money that is provided by the country. But the country has a lot of other problems to deal with and these problems also need a lot of money from the country. Thus the village needs and is trying to establish an economic cooperative to earn money to help cover the various fees the village committee needs to provide. Xijia village relies mainly on agricultural development and there is no village enterprise. Erhu tells Xi that he knows that Sangui contracts the land for other purposes rather than farming. But Sangui's sand-digging project can contribute one hundred thousand yuan to the village committee and with this huge sum, the village committee can do a lot of things and solve a lot of problems for the village. Erhu then takes Chouwa as an example. The village school needs teachers to educate children, but without enough money the school is unable to give salary to teachers and no teachers want to work in the school. Erhu tells Xi that he will continue to work as the village head and try to solve the problems existent at the village. If Xi reports the sand-digging case to the head of country, he is sure that Xi will be successful and that he will quit his job as village head and grow crops like Xi does. Erhu tells Xi that it is up to him to report the sand-digging to the country head or not. On hearing this, Xi promises not to report the problem.

Gaihua is waiting for Qingshan to come to the well to carry water. She turns down the water tap a bit so that she can spend more time with Qingshan while she is getting water. Qingshan feels happy when he realizes this. Gaihua asks Qingshan to take her around the city if he has time. Qingshan promises he will and he will invite her to MacDonald, Pizza and lot of other food when they are in the city. Xi passes by the well and asks Qingshan to carry the water home.

Segment 3 Mr. Niu comes to Xijia village to stop Sangui's sand-digging project; Sangui confronts Xi, suspecting Xi of reporting him on the project; Ma admits reporting Sangui to the county

Mr. Niu, head of the county comes to visit Xijia village. Mr. Li rushes from the town to the village. Erhu and the village committee members also rush to receive Mr. Niu. Erhu wants to take Mr. Niu to the village committee but Niu wants to go and inspect the field. Xi feels that Niu has known Sangui's sand-digging project. Xi wonders who has reported Sangui's

sand-digging to Niu since he has not done this. He thinks that Erhu and Sangui will surely blame this to him and he worries about Erhu and Sangui since Niu is upright and quick-tempered. Niu goes to Xi's field and sees the dried and dying crops in the field and the sand-digging beside the crops on the other side. He meditates in the field for a while and then calls a meeting back at the village committee. Niu severely criticizes first Mr. Li, head of town, and later Erhu about the misuse of the arable land. Erhu admits to Niu that it is he who has approved of the sand-digging and that Mr. Li knows nothing about it. Niu orders Erhu to stop the sand-digging right away. Baoqing runs to do this right away. Niu then gathers villager representatives at the village committee and holds a meeting among the representatives. Niu tells the villagers that he is angry when he sees the misuse of arable land and that he has criticized Mr. Li and Erhu about it and that the sand-digging has been stopped. He then talks about the benefits enjoyed by the villagers because of the agricultural tax exemption policy and the problems brought about by the policy. The collective economy used to rely on the tax collected from the villagers. Now that all the taxes are cancelled, the village collective economy can only count on the fund allocated by the county and this is not enough for the development of the village collective economy. Thus the village committee needs to think about other ways to develop economy to cover the various expenses needed for the work of the village committee. Mr. Li and Erhu have tried to solve the problems but the way they used to solve the problem is not proper. They have used the arable land to dig sand and that is not right. Niu tells the villagers that the arable land is only for farming not for other purposes. Niu suggests that the village committee and the villagers think about other ways to develop economy. Niu tells the villagers that he himself is a countryman and that countrymen used to be looked down upon because the countryside is poor. He hopes that the countryside develops the economy well and that countrymen become rich because of the economic development and the countrymen feels proud of being a countryman. Niu wishes every villager a good harvest. Every villager except Sangui feels happy about what Niu has said in the meeting. Sangui is angry about being reported to Niu about his sand-digging. He accused Xi of reporting his sand-digging to Niu and Xi denies his accusation. Sangui curses Xi, calling him a mule and threatens to destroy his crops. Angry at what Sangui has said, Xi slaps Sangui in the face and Sangui fights Xi. When the villagers try but fail to stop them from fighting each other, Ma admits that it is she who has done the reporting. Xi feels surprised.

Segment 4 Xi contracts the land left by Sangui; Qingmei comes back to the village as a laid-off; Xi goes to see Mr. Li for Qingmei's job; Xiulan argues with Xi over his failure to get back Qingmei's job.

Xi is on his way to the field. He watches Sangui's sand-digging vehicles leave the village. And Ma runs to apologize to him for his being misunderstood because of her. Xi thanks Ma for what she has done and promises to help her water her land when he finishes his busiest period of farming. When Xi arrives at his field, he finds Erhu squatting near the land from which Sangui has dug sand and which Sangui has given up after being reported. Erhu asks whether Xi stills wants to contract the land or not. Xi first hesitates but then he tells Erhu about his decision to contract the land. He then goes home earlier than usual. He tells Xiulan his decision to contract the land abandoned by Sangui. To his surprise, his wife tells him that he has the final say about the land. He is so excited about his wife's support that he kisses her. They then find Qingmei home earlier than usual and ask her why. Qingmei tells them that the town is laying off staff and that Mr. Li has talked to every staff including her about the lay-off and she is among the laid-off. Xiulan and Xi are about to send chicken to Mr. Li as a gift with a view to getting Qingmei back to her previous work. Qingshan tells them that it is not proper to send Mr. Li the chicken since the bird-flu is still prevalent. Xi thinks what Qingshan has said is quite right and then quits the plan. He goes to see Li empty-handed and explains to him about the truth of the reporting of sand-digging and what he has said about Baoqing during Qiao's visit. Li relieves Xi of his worry, telling that it is not right to misuse the arable land and that Xi is not wrong in telling Qiao about Baoqing's gambling during his visit to the Xijia village. Li asks Xi about his crops and the land left behind by Sangui. Xi tells him that his crops are good and that he has contracted Sangui's land. Li complements Xi on his initiative for farming and on his devotion to farming. Xi then asks Li whether Qingmei can get back her job in the town office and Li explains to Xi about the laying-off policy. Xi is persuaded about Li's explanation and comes back to tell Xiulan what Li has explained to him but his wife does not buy what Xi has told her. Xiulan and Xi argues with each other because of Qingmei's being laid-off. Qingmei comes to stop their argument and ask them not to mind her business.

(The narrative of TV dramas makes a lot use of what Greimas terms communicative doing function i.e. one character tells other character a message. The use of communicative doing function serves several purposes: it brings characters to move from one place to another; it also implies the simultaneity of events happening at different places; it also act as connectives connecting one event with another.)

Episode 7

Segment 1 Xi makes up with Xiulan; Qingmei wants to raise fish; Xi contracts the village pond for Qingmei;

Xi argues with Xiulan about Qingmei's job and Xiulan is so angry with Xi that she shuts him outside the house. Xi keeps thinking about ways to make up with her instead of beating her which he used to do when he was young. When Qingshan is home, Xi asks his son to pretend to beat him with a stick to attract Xiulan's attention and Xi succeeds.

Next day Xi's family goes to Xi's newly contracted land to fill the huge pit caused by the sand-digging. Qingshan suggests that it is better to dig a swimming pool out of the huge pit rather than filling it. Xiulan laughs at his son's suggestion but Qingmei says that Qingshan's suggestion is not entirely unreasonable. When villagers become rich, it is possible and practical to build a swimming pool in the village. Qingshan says that his sister is more cultured. Xi replies that she still has to come back home to grow crops though more cultured. Qingmei retorts her father by saying that she is not growing crops with him. She plans to contract the fishing pond in the village to breed fish. Both Xi and Xiulan express their doubt about her plan. Qingmei explains to them that more and more villagers now can afford to buy fish as their living standard has been rising. Villagers now have to go to the city to buy fish and the fish they bring back from the city may still be fresh in winter but will surely go bad in summer because of the high temperature. If she raises fish, people in the village can buy fresh and live fish and she can also sell the fish to people in the city. Right now it is the best time for her and the family to do so since no one in the town has raised fish. Xi thinks what Qingmei has said is sensible but he tells her that she has not had fish-raising skills. Qingmei tells her father that she can go and invite technicians in the town to teach and supervise her and that it is not difficult to learn the fishing-raising skills. Qingmei has got the family support for her plan and she plans to contract the village fishing-pond with her re-employment allowance due to her being laid-off.

Xi goes to the village committee to tell Erhu about his intention to contract the fish pond in the village. Erhu approves of his plan and asks Xi to sign a contract when Baoqing comes back. Xi contracts the pond with a low annual rent of one thousand yuan.

Segment 2 Liuzi returns with a Sichuan girl, Liuzi's mother disapprove of their relationship and Liuzi goes back to the city again; Sangui requests compensation from the village committee for his sand-digging project.

Xi and Qingmei are busy with rebuilding the fish pond and building a watch pavilion for the pond. Xiulan also comes to help and she tells Xi that Liuzi has returned to the village and that he has taken back a young girl and that Liuzi's mother does not approve of Liuzi and the girl's being together and does not allow the girl to enter the house. Liuzi wants Xi to help him out.

When Xi arrives, there is a big crowd outside Liuzi's house. Liuzi himself and the girl are also outside the house. Liuzi introduces Xi to the girl he has brought home and tells Xi that his mother does not allow them to go into the house. Liuzi wants Xi to talk to his mother and help him. Liuzi's mother lets Xi in and Xi takes Liuzi and his girlfriend into the house. Liuzi gives his mother the gift he has bought for her in the city and the stationeries for his son. His mother scolds him for his being away from home and his negligence of her and his son in particular. His mother tells him how Xi and Erhu have helped to take care of Chouwa, his son. Liuzi's mother tells him to stay at the village to take good care of Chouwa and tells him her disapproval of Liuzi's relationship with his girlfriend. She tries to persuade Liuzi's girlfriend to leave Liuzi. What she has said has made Liuzi very embarrassed. Xi invites Liuzi and his girlfriend to stay at his house for a day or two.

In the meantime, Sangui comes back to the village committee and shows Erhu the land contract and asks Erhu to compensate for the loss caused by the stopping of his sand-digging project otherwise he will sue Erhu. Erhu explains to Sangui the difficulties of the village committee and tries to persuade him off the compensation scheme. Sangui insists on

the compensation and threatens Erhu with a court case.

While having dinner that night at Xi's house, Liuzi asks Xi for advice and Xi tells him to make decisions himself. Liuzi's girlfriend tells Liuzi she will not stay at the village and will leave him if he stays at the village. Liuzi tells her that he will go to work in the city. Xi tells him about Chouwa and how Chouwa is going on in the village. Just then Chouwa comes over to Xi's house. Liuzi apologizes to his son about his not taking care of him and Chouwa tells Liuzi that his grandmother misses him very much and asks him to go home and that she has asked him to give him the pancake she has prepared for him. Chouwa then goes home, leaving Liuzi holding and eating the pancakes in tears.

The following day Liuzi and his girlfriend leave the village. Liuzi tells Xi that he will come back at the end of the year. In the same day, Erhu goes to the town to consult the judicial office about the land contract and tells him about the likely court case with regard to the breaking of the contract. Erhu feels relieved when he is told that Sangu is not able to win the case since the contract signed is not a valid one. Erhu then goes to Xi's fish pond and gives Qingmei a bank card with her re-employment allowance.

Segment 3 Xi builds a mobile tractor-toilet to collect human manure from the city and gets reported by TV station.

Qingmei, Qingshan and Xi go to the city to buy fingerlings for the fish pond. On their way home, Xi needs to go to a toilet and has great difficulty in finding a public toilet. When he finds one, he is asked to pay for his use of the toilet. His inconvenience in finding a toilet in a city has led him to think about building a toilet in the city and using the toilet to collect human waste from people in the city.

When Xi goes back home, he tells Xiulan about his idea. Xiulan has a good laugh over his idea and tells him about the different bureaucratic procedures for building and running a toilet in the city. Xi later comes up with an idea of building a mobile toilet. Xi explains to Xiulan that he can take his mobile toilet to the most crowded part of the city and offer free use service to people. Xiulan thinks the idea feasible but reminds Xi of the long distance between the village and the city. Xi suggests that they buy a tractor to build his mobile toilet and he gets support from his wife. But Xi has not enough money to buy a tractor. He turns to their neighbor Ling'ai for help. With the three thousand yuan which Ling'ai has readily lent him, Xi buys a tractor and builds a mobile toilet out of it. Xi and Qingshan go to the crowded part of the city with their mobile toilet and offer free toilet use to people. Xi's mobile toilet is novel and attracts a lot of people to use his toilet. Xi's mobile toilet even attracts the attention of the county TV station. When interviewed by the TV journalists from the station, Xi tells them: his idea of mobile toilet comes out of his previous experience of finding a toilet in a city with great difficulty; with the mobile toilet he no longer needs to spend money on the chemical fertilizer which is too expensive and does not produce tasty crops; with his mobile toilet he can collect the natural manure which is good for the growth of the crops and with which he can grow good and organic healthy crops including vegetables.

Segment 4 Xi makes claims about Ma having body odor to stop Qingshan's relationship with Gaihua.

That night when Xi is playing his erhu fiddle, Ma Cullian comes to ask him whether he collects free manure from the city and asks him to get her a tractor of manure for her crops which do not grow well because of lack of fertilizer. Xi agrees and Qingshan offers to get her two tractors of manure for her. Ma compliments Qingshan for his offer but Xi is not happy with Qingshan's offer. Qingshan senses Xi's unfriendly attitude towards Ma and asks Xi why he does not approve of him and Gaihua being together. When Xi tells his son that Gaihua's mother is foolish, Qingshan reminds his father that Gaihua is not. Xi tells his son that there are other reasons but he refuses to tell his son about them. Xi nods his head when Qingshan asks him whether Gaihua and her family members have body odor.

The following day, Xi and Qingshan bring to Ma's field a tractor of manure from the city. While Ma is unloading the manure, Qingshan tries to smell her to see whether Ma has body odor or not. Xi tries to stop his son. When they are having dinner at night, Xi scolds his son for smelling first Gaihua and later Ma. Qingshan explains to his mother that Xi has told him Gaihua's family has body odor and that he has done that in order to find out whether Ma and Gaihua has body odor or not and that what his father has said is not true. Xi tells his son not to smell Gaihua and Ma again. Xi also

tells his son about his disapproval of his son's relationship with Gaihua. Qingshan feels unhappy about his father's disapproval.

Segment 5 TV station's reporting of Xi's green vegetables attracts a provincial healthy Food Company to invite Xi to sign a contract with the company.

Xi once again attracts the attention of a TV Station. The reporters from the city TV station come to his field to interview him about the vegetables he has grown using the natural manure he collects from the city. At the beginning Xi answers the questions by the reporters. When Xi is asked questions more or less the same as those by the county TV Station reporters; he refuses to go on with the interview and asks them to interview Erhu. Erhu then takes TV reporters to the village committee to continue the interview.

Later at night Xi and his family watch the interview program at home. Xiulan feels happy. So does Xi, Qingshan and Qingmei.

The following day when Xi is coming back home from the field, the manager and his assistant of a provincial healthy food company who have learned of Xi from the TV programs come to the village to meet him with a view to establishing business relationship with Xi. On their request, Xi takes them to the field and shows them the two mu of vegetables he has grown. They invite Xi to go to their company in the city on the same day. He tells them he has grown two mu of vegetables and the rest of the field is for the grain crops.

Xi goes back home to pack briefly for his leave for the provincial city.

Liuzi comes to the hotel to see Xi. Liuzi feels surprised. Xi tells him that a provincial company has invited him to the city and wants to buy up his vegetables. Xi finds Liuzi unhappy during their casual talk.

Episode 8

Segment 1 Liuzi comes to see Xi and tells him about his dilemma with Sichuan girl; Xi refuses to sign contract with the food company; Xi is angry with Qingshan because of his telling Ma about his claim about her body odor.

In the hotel where Xi stays, Liuzi tells Xi that he is not happy. He and the Sichuan girl whom he last took home has already separated. Several days ago she came back to tell him that she is pregnant with his child and this is what worries him and makes him unhappy.

Xi is asked to advertise vegetable for the food company. The photographer asks him to put on the dirty shirt he has worn in the field but Xi thinks it not proper to appear on TV with it. The photographer explains to him that he does not look like a farmer with the clean and formal shirt he wears. Xi argues with him that he is a farmer and that the photographer is uglifying a farmer by asking him to put on the dirty shirt. In order to mollify Xi's anger, the company manager, his assistant and the photographer ask Xi to hold a pipe. After the advertisement, Xi is asked to sign a contract. When Xi reads the contract, he finds that the contract describes him as growing 500 mu of vegetable rather than the two mu which he has currently grown and he points out the mistake to the company manager. The manager asks Xi not to take that too seriously. He tells Xi that he can buy the vegetables grown by the villagers in his village and that can make up 500 mu. Xi insists that he has only two mu of land that is grown vegetable and that only his vegetables is grown with natural manure and all other villagers have grown vegetable with chemical fertilizers. Xi thinks that the company is deceiving people and refuses to sign the contract. Xi goes back to the village.

Qingshan picks up Xi with his tractor from the railway station and drops him near the big locust tree. Xi is about to go home when he is stopped by Ma Cuilian. Ma angrily scolded him for saying that Gaihua has body odor but Xi denies saying so. Ma tells Xi that she has learned this from Qingshan.

Xi arrives home angrily. Xiulan asks him whether he is bothered by his visit to the city. Xi asks his wife for a needle so that he can seal Qingshan's mouth with the needle. Xiulan asks Xi what Qingshan has done to make him angry since

Qingshan has not been to the city with him. Xi tells his wife what Ma has just told him on his way home. Xiulan blames Xi for his making claims about Ma's body odor. Xi denies having ever made such claims and tells his wife that Qingshan has simply made a wild guess about what he meant when he nodded. Xiulan tells Xi that it is his own fault to nod. Xiulan asks Xi about his visit to the company in the city. Xi is still angry with what Qingshan has told Ma. When Xiulan asks him again about the company, he simply tells her that what the company has promised is a lie and asks her not to ask him about his visit again. He then talks to Xiulan about Qingshan again. Just then Qingshan arrives home. Xiulan tries to warn her son away, but it is too late. Xi beats Qingshan with his shoes. Qingshan is angry with his father too. He asks his father why he beats him. He has done nothing wrong but to offer one tractor of manure to Ma. Xi demands his son to tell him what he has told Ma. Qingshan says that he has told Ma that his father makes claims about Gaihua's family having body odor to stop him from seeing Gaihua. Xiulan tries to stop Xi from beating Qingshan. Qingshan leaves home angrily.

Segment 2 Mr. Li manages to reconcile Xi and Sangui and but fails to get them to work together.

Mr. Li comes to Xijia village and Erhu takes him to the village committee where Baoqing is repairing the village speaker. Li asks Erhu whether he has solved the problem with regard to Sangui's sand-digging project. Erhu tells Li that he has explained to Sangui about the invalidity of the land contract signed and Sangui's acquiescence about it. Li tells Erhu and Baoqing that Sangui is a capable businessman. Li adds that if Sangui and Xi can cooperate with each other that will benefit the whole village. Li then asks them about Xi's recent visit to the city and they tell him what has happened. Li tells them that Xi's unique farming is a good thing. Li asks them whether they can get Sangui and Xi to work together and they explain to Li about the difficulty in getting them to work together. Li suggests that the village committee develop a special mode of agricultural industry integrating Xi's unique farming to produce food and Sangui's capability to market the food produced by Xi in the city and thus lead and set an example to the village's economy and even the economy of the whole town. Erhu and Baoqing think Li is quite right but they explain to Li about Xi's previous unsuccessful attempt to set up a cooperative economy project in the village. Li asks Erhu about the reason for the failure. Erhu tells him it is because of the risk involved in the selling of crops produced. Villagers feel no guarantee of selling the crops produced and thus no guarantee of income. Li explains to Erhu that that is because villagers do not know the food market. That is why he wants Sangui to do the marketing for the village. That way, Xi's idea of setting up an economic cooperative in the village can become a reality. Baoqing is afraid that Sangui may be reluctant to join Xi due to the latest incident. Li asks them to try persuading Sangui. Erhu asks Baoqing where Sangui is at the moment. Baoqing tells him that Sangui seems to be in the town for a flange project. On Li's suggestion, Erhu calls Sangui about Li's wanting to see him but Sangui refuses the meeting. Li asks Erhu to invite Xi and together they go to the town to meet Sangui.

Li invites Xi and Sangui to a lunch meeting. Both Sangui and Xi feel surprised about the meeting. Li explains to them his intention to get them to work together for the village. Xi expresses his reluctance to work with Sangui and so does Sangui. Upon Li's persuasion and mediation, Xi and Sangui reconcile with each other.

At night, Xi tells Xiulan about his reconciliation with Sangui and his plan to set up an economic cooperative project. Xiulan laughs at his plan but Xi takes the plan seriously though with some worry.

Segment 3 Sangui is fond of Gaihua and wants Erhu to be his matchmaker but Erhu declines.

When Ling'ai is about to go to her mother's, she is stopped by Ma who is going to ask her for advice. Ma tells Ling'ai that she is afraid of meeting Sangui since she last reported his sand-digging to the county head. She feels puzzled because Sangui is not angry with her when meeting her. Instead he behaves as if nothing happens and he is being more enthusiastic than ever before. She asks Ling'ai for possible explanation. Ling'ai tells Ma that Sangui must be fond of her daughter Gaihua. What Ling'ai has said puzzles Ma and makes her thinking.

At night, Ma talks to Gaihua about marrying her off to Sangui because Sangui is rich. Gaihua is angry with her mother's suggestion and tells her that she is fond of Qingshan and that she will marry only Qingshan.

In the meantime, Sangui goes to the village committee and tells Erhu that he is willing to work together with Xi because

Erhu and Mr. Li have thought highly of him and have taken him seriously. Erhu finds it strange about Sangui's willingness to cooperate with Xi. Sangui asks Erhu to act as a matchmaker between him and Gaihua because he is fond of her. Erhu refuses to do so. He tells Sangui that Gaihua and Qingshan are fond of each other and that it is not proper for him to intervene.

Segment 4 Chouwa gets some kids to blow Xi's fish pond; Xi feels relieved about Chouwa's transformation after knowing the truth.

Several kids try to blow fish out of Qingmei's fishing pond and Xi is helping her to chase them. One of the kids is caught by Xi. Xi asks him who has taught him to blow fish and why he has done so. The kid tells Xi that it is Chouwa who has taught him and has asked him to blow fish. He tells Xi that Chouwa cannot do this because Xi has saved him and that Chouwa wants the fish.

Xi feels puzzled and goes to the village school to ask Chouwa about the fish blowing. Xi meets Ms Wang, the village teacher and asks her how Chouwa is going on in the school. Ms Wang tells Xi that Chouwa behaves well at school and that he lacks and needs family education besides school education. Xi thanks Wang for educating him at the school and tells her about the fish blowing. Wang feels puzzled too because Chouwa is behaving well and performing well in the school. She gets Chouwa to see Xi and asks him whether he gets other kids to blow Xi's fishing pond. Hesitantly and timidly Chouwa admits asking other kids to blow the fish. Chouwa tells them that he wants to get the fish for Miss Yang who teaches them maths. Yang is from the city and is not used to the food in the village. Yang wants to go back to the city because she cannot have fish in the school and cannot stand eating the food in the village school. He wants to get fish to Yang so that she can stay and continue to teach them maths. There is no fish in the school but he knows Xi has raised fish. He has asked some kids to catch fish out of the pond but it is difficult to get one. Therefore he asks them to blow the fish out of the pond. He himself cannot do the fish-blowing since Xi has saved him. On hearing this, Xi feels upset and happy and leaves. He feels happy that Chouwa has transformed into a good boy and he no longer needs to worry about him. He feels upset about Yang's leaving the school and the village education.

Segment 5 Qingshan has an accident and Xi's family feels relieved to know Qingshan is fine.

Xi, Xiulan and Qingmei are busy working in the field. Xi hears Erhu calling him through the village speaker to go to the Yabei Slope where Qingshan's tractor has been upset. Xi, Xiulan and Qingmei rush to the slope and find Qingshan trapped under the upset tractor. With the help of the villagers, they get him out. When Qingshan tells them that he feels no pain, Xi carries him home. Finding Qingshan ok, the whole family feels relieved. Xi and Qingmei go back to continue the work in the field, leaving Xiulan to take care of him at home. They meet Gaihua outside their house anxious about Qingshan. Xi tells Gaihua that Qingshan is ok and asks her not to worry. When Gaihua asks Xi whether she can go and see Qingshan, Xi does not reply. Qingmei feels that Gaihua loves her brother and promises to help her and Qingshan. Qingmei advises Gaihua not to go inside and see Qingshan then since her mother is taking care of Qingshan at the moment and her parents do not approve of their relationship but she promises to tell Qingshan to go and see her in two days' time.

At night, Xi and Qingmei are watering the crops in the field and they are joined later by Xiulan and Qingshan. Xi asks Qingshan whether he is fine or not. Qingshan reassures his father that he is all right. Qingshan tells Xi that he may become unsilly because of the accident. Xiulan says that her son is not silly and that he appears silly because his father keeps repeating saying he is silly. Qingmei tells her brother a joke to test whether he is silly or not. Xi feels relieved because Qingshan is all right and he finds the moon that night extremely bright and the wind extremely comfortable. He feels like singing and he listens to his family singing since he cannot sing himself.

Segment 6 Qingshan quarrels with Ling'ai; Xi asks Xiulan to return money to Ling'ai.

The following day when Qingshan is cleaning his tractor he finds some kids urinating on his tractor. He gets them off the tractor and tells them off. Tiedan, Ling'ai's son is among the kids, feels scared and cries. Ling'ai comes over to ask Qingshan why Tiedan cries. Qingshan tells her what has happened and Ling'ai scolds Qingshan for scaring her son.

Qingshan talks her back. Xi happens to pass by and reprimands Qingshan for speaking to her impolitely. Qingshan says that he is simply telling Tiedan off for urinating on his tractor. Ling'ai is angry with Qingshan and tells him that she will not let him off if Qingshan scares her son. Xi tries to pacify Ling'ai and asks her not to take what Qingshan says too seriously since Qingshan is still young. Ling'ai says that Qingshan is too wild. Qingshan is angry with what she says and asks her to explain why he is wild. Qingshan says that she is trying to find fault with him because she lends his family money to buy the tractor. Qingshan says that he can return the money to her. Ling'ai tells him that she will not refuse it if he returns and says that Qingshan is silly. Hearing this, Xi thinks Ling'ai is going too far and tells her that she is not right to call his son silly. He promises to return the money to her within two days. Ling'ai angrily tells Xi that it is up to him to do so. Xi is angry with Qingshan for what has happened and kicked him. Qingshan argues with Xi on their way home and insists that he is right in telling the kids off. When they arrive home, Xi asks Xiulan to borrow three thousand yuan from her mother. Qingshan tells his mother that he argues with Ling'ai and they had better return the money to her. He tells his mother what has happened. Xi tells Xiulan that Ling'ai is a person who likes to find fault with others and suggests that they return the money to her as soon as possible. Qingmei offers to give her parents 3000 yuan to help them out.

Segment 7 Xi has an unhappy experience of the tourism project of towing a boat in the riverside.

Later, Erhuo, a villager comes to tell Qingshan a way to earn money and tells Qingshan to come over to the riverside. Qingshan asks him what he needs to do. Erhuo explains to him that they will give a performance of towing a boat for foreigners and each person earns 500 yuan for its performance. Qingshan tells Erhuo he can ask all his family members to tow a boat, but Erhuo tells him that only men are needed not women. Qingshan tells Erhuo that he and his father will come to tow a boat at the riverside. Xiulan asks Qingshan what he and Erhuo talk about. Qingshan tells Xi what Erhuo has told him and tells Xi that they each can earn 500 yuan in one day by giving a performance of towing a boat in the riverside to foreigners who are interested in Chinese folklore culture. Qingmei also encourages his father to have a try. Xi agrees to go and tow a boat in the riverside.

Next day Xi and Qingshan go to the riverside. When they arrive, there are other villagers waiting there. The tourist guide is giving instructions to them and promises to give money to them after their performance. Then he asks the men there to take off their clothes. The men do as they are told until there is only underwear left. The tourist guide asks them to take off their underwear. Others take off their underwear but Xi refuses to do so and demands all others to put on their underwear. Xi thinks it indecent to tow a boat with nothing on and argues with the tourist guide. He leaves and goes home with Qingshan. When they arrive home, Xiulan asks him for the money they are supposed to have earned. He angrily tells his wife to ask Qingshan to tell her what has happened in the riverside. Qingshan tells his mother what has happened. He says that his father does not want to take off all the clothes and that he does not allow him to do so. Xiulan reprimands her son for being silly. Xi feels happy about her reprimand of Qingshan because she is on his side for the first time and he gives her a special treatment by serving her food himself. Xiulan tells her husband that she is always sensible, knowing what money should and should not be earned. Xi asks her to explain. She tells Xi that they should have earned money if they had accepted Sangui's offer to contract their land. Hearing this, Xi takes the food he has served her to Qingshan.

Segment 8 Qingmei learns the reason of Xi's disapproval of the relationship between Gaihua and Qingshan and offers to tell Ma not to meddle in the relationship.

Gaihua is talking to Qingmei outside Xi's house. Qingmei asks her to wait for Qingshan but she does not want her father to find out so she tells Xi that Gaihua has come to borrow books from her as Xi goes out for a walk. Qingmei tells Gaihua that if her mother is not at home she can go inside to talk to Qingshan. Xi has planned to go out but he returns after he happens to hear what Qingmei has said to Gaihua. Qingmei is surprised that her father turns back home. Xi asks his daughter to follow him. Qingmei tells Gaihua to go home first and she promised Gaihua that she will talk to her father about her relationship with Qingshan. Qingmei asks Xi why he does not approve of Qingshan's relationship with Gaihua. Xi tells her daughter that Gaihua's mother is silly and tends to tell everything to everybody regardless of whether it is proper or not. Xi asks his daughter to stop encouraging Qingshan and Gaihua to be together. Qingmei explains to her

father that Gaihua is different from her mother and that Gaihua is a sensible girl. Xi agrees with her daughter but tells her that having an insensible mother will make a sensible daughter insensible. Qingmei tells Xi that she can ask Gaihua to tell her mother not to intervene in the relationship between Gaihua and Qingshan. Xi tells Qingmei that he will not oppose the relation between Qingshan and Gaihua so long as Gaihua's mother stops meddling in the relationship.

When Xi is on his way to the field next day, he meets Qingshan who is riding the tractor out of the village. Xi asks his son what he is doing with the tractor. Qingshan tells him that he is going to transport coal for Liushiyi for forty yuan and he will be back in the afternoon. He asks his son to be careful. Just then Ma Cuilian comes to tell Xi that Gaihua has told her Qingmei's suggestion.

Episode 9

Segment 1 Technician Liu comes to save Qingmei's fish.

Ma tells Xi that Gaihua has passed on to her what Qingmei has told Gaihua and she promises Xi that she will stop meddling in the relationship between Qingshan and Gaihua. Ma also promises Xi that she will no longer mention what happened between them in the past. Xi leaves for the field, still hearing Ma saying loudly to him her promises.

Xi goes to the fish pond and finds Qingmei spraying fish feeds into the pond. Qingmei finds some dead fish and feels worried about it. She asks her father to keep an eye on the pond while she goes to the county town to get a fish expert to come over to find out the cause for the death of fish.

Sangui's car has broken down in the road. He sees Qingmei in a car and hails her. On Sangui's hail, Qingmei gets off the car to meet him. Sangui asks Qingmei whether her driver can help him repair his car. Qingmei tells Sangui jokingly that he can repair fish not cars. Before she leaves, Sangui asks Qingmei whether Qingshan and Gaihua are still in a relationship of boyfriend and girlfriend and Qingmei gives him a 'yes' answer.

When Qingmei takes the fish expert Mr. Liu to the fish pond, Qingshan tells his sister that he has just had two more dying fish. Liu asks Qingmei some questions and then tells her that her fish may have got bacterial enteritis. Qingmei is worried and asks Liu whether there is a way to save her fish. Liu gives her a positive reply but he tells her that he cannot guarantee that the way can prevent most of the fish from dying. Xi pleads with Liu to try whatever way possible to save the fish because the fish is all Qingmei has had after her laid-off.

Liu and Qingmei are making some medicine for the fish while Xiulan is preparing dinner for them. Before dinner, Xi tells his wife seriously that the fish is dying. Xiulan feels surprised and asks her husband why but Xi tells her he does not know. When Qingmei and Liu come to dinner, Liu tells Xi and Xiulan not to treat him as a guest since he and Qingmei know each other. Xiulan asks Qingmei whether their fish is dying. Qingmei looks worried and asks her parents not to ask her about the problem. Liu asks Xi and Xiulan not to worry since he and Qingmei are trying to work out some way to save the fish.

The following morning, Xi, Liu and Qingmei go to the fish pond. Qingshan who has been keeping an eye on the fish since yesterday tells them impatiently that he is exhausted and that he wants to go home. Qingmei asks him to go home. Qingmei and Liu then feed the fish with the medicinal fish food Liu has worked out. When Qingmei asks Xi to return home, Xi looks worried and asks Liu whether the fish can be saved. Liu tells him that he will need to see how the fish is coping tomorrow. The fish can be saved if there is no more death and if the fish is still alive tomorrow. Otherwise, the fish will all die. Xi asks Liu and Qingmei to go home and tells them he can keep an eye on the fish. Qingmei tells her father to go home but Xi insists on staying at the fish pond to look after the fish.

Segment 2 Fish is saved while Xi is fooled

That night, Xi thinks of his mother who passed away long time ago. He was with her in the hospital for a night but she died the next morning. He hopes that this night is different from that night. When Xiulan, Qingshan, Qingmei and Liu arrive at the fish pond early next morning, Xi is still asleep. They find the fish still alive. Xiulan is very excited while Qingmei cries with happiness. Liu is happy too. Qingshan says jokingly that his father has wasted a whole night on the

fish. Qingmei teases her father by telling him that the fish has died. Xi looks sad and tells them that he has just dreamt of the fish, alive, jumping, big and colorful. He adds that the old saying is quite right in telling people that the dream is usually contrary to the reality. Qingmei asks his father what she should do. Xi tells her that she could do nothing. It is just fish anyway. It is not human. He then tells them about his father. He cried when his father died but he must go on with his life as usual and should try to live a better life. He then tells them about his life since the death of his father. He started to support the whole family at the age of sixteen and married their mother at about twenty. He tells them that he has survived a lot of tough times and can survive whatever confronts him. Fish is just fish. If it died, they can raise new fish. If it dies again, they can raise new fish again. He is sure that his family can live a better life if they can live a hard and difficult one. They are all moved by what Xi has said but at the same time all laugh at him. Qingshan tells his father that he has been fooled by Qingmei. They then tell him and show him that the fish is still alive. Xi feels relieved, happy and excited. They all have a good laugh over Xi's having been fooled.

Xi, Xiulan and Qingmei see Liu off. Xi thanks Liu for what he has done to save the fish. Liu tells them it is what he should do and promises to come back if similar things happen again. Qingmei jokingly tells him that she does not want him to visit them again because of the fish. Xi laughs mysteriously at what Qingmei has just said. Xiulan gives Liu some products they have grown and asks Qingmei to see Liu off. Looking at Liu leaving, Xiulan says that Liu is a cultured and knowledgeable young man and that anyone marrying him will surely live a good life. Xi asks Xiulan to make a match between Liu and their daughter. Xiulan wonders whether Liu is fond of their daughter. Liu is from the city and has got a good job while their daughter is from and works at the countryside. Xi tells her that there is no need to worry about that and that Liu and their daughter must be fond of each other. Xiulan doubts what her husband has said. She doubts Liu and their daughter can be fond of each other within two days. Xi tells her that time is not that important. What is important is the feeling between two people just as the song 'Follow your feeling' has suggested. Xiulan then asks Xi how he felt about her when they were young and leaves him angrily when Xi tells her that he has forgotten with passage of time. Xi considers Liu and Qingmei a good match and he will give his consent to their relationship if they are fond of each other. Xi, however, is a bit worried because he is not sure whether Liu's parents will approve of their relationship.

Segment 3 Ma requests betrothal gift from Xi; Qingshan argues with Xi over his refusal to give betrothal gifts.

Xi, Xiulan, Qingshan and Qingmei are levelling the land left behind by Sangui. Qingshan asks his father when they can finish levelling the land and asks his father whether they can give up the land. Xi asks him what he wants to do without land. Qingshan tells his father that his sister is now raising fish. He also wants to do something. He thinks it is not good enough to drive a tractor. Xiulan asks Qingshan to tell her what he wants to do and will support him. Qingshan tells his mother that he wants to raise dogs because he learns from Erhuo that raising dogs can make a lot of money. Xi thinks his son's plan not feasible. Xiulan accuses her husband of being prejudiced toward his son. She tells her son to think over his plan and promises to support him financially if he is sure he can make money out of raising dogs. Later Gaihua comes to the field to tell Qingmei that her daughter promises not to meddle in her relationship with Qingshan but that her mother tells her to get betrothal gifts from Qingshan. Qingmei tells Gaihua that Gaihua's relationship with Qingshan is not yet finalized and that her father may be unhappy if she demands betrothal gifts right now. Gaihua tells Qingmei that she has explained this to her mother but that her mother insists on getting the gifts because that can assure her of the relationship. Qingmei tells her to go back and tell her mother that Xi agrees to give betrothal gifts in the future. After Gaihua leaves, Xiulan asks Qingmei what Gaihua has told her. Qingmei tells her parents that Gaihua's mother requests betrothal gift. Xi is angry about Ma's request. Xiulan tries to calm her husband down by telling him that there is nothing wrong with Ma's request. Xi gets emotional. He explains to his wife that betrothal gifts are the evil of the feudal society and that China has entered a modern era and it is not right to ask for betrothal gifts. He refuses to give Ma the betrothal gifts. Xiulan criticizes her husband's stubbornness. Xi says that giving betrothal gifts means to regard a bride as goods and sell a bride as a commodity. He asks his wife that what betrothal gifts he gave to her when marrying her. His wife tells him angrily that all she received was an autumn dress. Qingmei criticizes her father as contradictory, being traditional on the one hand and modern on the other. She thinks her father is traditional when he says that he married her mother because the word 'marry' reflects the meaning of being feudal. She suggests that her father should say he and

her mother got married. Xiulan likes what her daughter has said and regards her daughter as educated. Xi is still angry with Ma's request of betrothal gifts. He gets a rock in the field and strikes it repeatedly. He tells his wife and her daughter that the rock is the betrothal gift and striking the rock is his attitude toward it. His wife laughs at what he has done with the rock.

At night Xi is playing his erhu fiddle in the courtyard. Qingshan comes over to ask him to stop playing the fiddle. He tells Xi that Ma asks Xi to give her part of the betrothal gift for fear that Xi changes his mind as to the relationship between Qingshan and Gaihua. Xi asks Qingshan who has promised to give Ma the betrothal gift. Qingshan tells his father that Qingmei has done so. Xi asks Qingmei about the betrothal gift. Qingmei tells her father that she has given the promise so as not to hurt Ma's feelings. Xi tells Qingmei angrily that he will not give betrothal gift to Ma even if he dies. Qingshan is angry with what his father said and accuses him of making him wifeless. Xi and Qingshan then quarrel with each other. Xi questions his son sarcastically whether he is afraid of being unable to find a wife without giving betrothal gift. Qingshan answers back that he is not as capable as his father. Xi tells his son angrily that Qingshan is not his son if he is unable to find a wife without giving betrothal gift. Qingshan retorts to Xi whose son is he if he is not Xi's son. Xi's answer that Qingshan is the son of his mother angers Xiulan. Xiulan comes over to question Xi whether he hates her. Realizing he has said something inappropriate, Xi leaves without saying anything. Xiulan scolds Qingmei and Qingshan for what they have talked to their father. Qingshan asks his sister for advice. Qingmei tells her brother that she cannot help him anymore. She tells him to talk to their father when he feels good. Qingshan feels sad. He comes close to the room and asks his father through the window whether his father is giving Ma betrothal gift or not. When his father refuses, Qingshan threatens to sell the tractor. Qingshan's threat makes his father furious. Xi and Qingshan argue with each other through the window.

Segment 4 Liu and Qingmei are fond of each other; Qingshan fools his parents

Xi's family is working in the fish pond. Technician Liu comes to the fishing pond to see Qingmei. Liu tells the family that he comes to see the fish but Qingshan says that he comes to see Qingmei rather than the fish. Liu asks Qingmei about the fish and Qingmei tells Liu that the fish is all right and that her family is very grateful for his help with the fish. Liu asks Qingmei not to thank him because he will also help others if they have problems with their fish. Qingmei shyly asks Liu about his impression of her and is glad to learn that he likes her. Qingmei tells her mother to call technician Liu Xiaoliu from now then. On Xiulan's suggestions, Qingmei and Liu go home. Qingshan is jealous of his sister's relationship with Liu and complains to his father that the relationship between his sister and Liu is developing too fast and that his half-year-long- relationship with Gaihua has not had any result yet. His father asks him if he is blaming anyone. Qingshan tells his father that it is his fault because he disapproves of his relationship with Gaihua. Xi explains to his son that he has good reasons to disapprove of his relationship with Gaihua. Qingshan asks him whether he approves of Qingmei's relationship with Liu. Xi tells his son that Qingmei is different from him. Qingshan asks his father to explain the difference. Qingmei is to be married while Qingshan is to marry. Qingshan however sees no difference. Xiulan agrees with her husband and explains to Qingshan that Qingmei's children-to-be take the surname of her future husband while Qingshan's take the surname of Xi. Qingshan retorts that he makes contribution to Xi's family with regard to what his mother has said and asks his mother why they do not give betrothal gift for him. Xiulan tells his son that his father is afraid of getting trouble by giving his consent to his relationship with Gaihua because her mother is silly. Qingshan complains that his parents always consider him as silly. He warns them that he will get them fooled one day.

At night, Liu is teaching Qingmei in her room the latest science and technology in raising fish while Qingshan is eating noisily beside them. Qingmei drives her brother out because he is interrupting them. Qingshan leaves them but tells his mother that Qingmei is having a stomachache. Xiulan is worried about her daughter and goes to check but is told by daughter to leave the room. Qingshan then tells his father that there's a scorpion in Qingmei's room. After hearing what Qingshan says, Xi hurries to Qingmei's room and asks her about the scorpion but is pushed out of the room by his daughter. Qingshan then tells his mother that Qingmei has hurt her leg. Anxious, Xiulan hurries to her daughter's room to check her leg. Qingmei is annoyed by being interrupted by her parents and complains to her mother that there is

something wrong with them and that they are being silly. Hearing what her daughter has said, Xiulan realizes that Qingshan has played a trick on her and her husband. Xiulan looks for Qingshan and asks him to explain what he has done. Feeling satisfied, Qingshan tells them jokingly that he just wants to fool them.

Segment 5 Xi and Xiulan recall their past at the fish pond

The following day, Qingmei and Liu go sightseeing. Qingmei asks her parents to look after her fish. Xiulan and Xi go to the fish pond to look after the fish as Qingmei has told them. Xi plays his erhu fiddle at the pond while Xiulan does her needlework. Xi stops playing the fiddle and looks at Xiulan. Xiulan asks Xi why he stops playing his fiddle. Xi tells her that she looks more beautiful than usual and puts a flower into her hair. Xi tells her that she looks even more beautiful than twenty years ago. Xiulan feels happy though she says that Xi is kidding. Xiulan asks Xi to continue his fiddle-playing. She tells him that she likes to listen to his fiddle-playing. She adds that it is his fiddle-playing that made her fond of him when she was young. Xi asks Xiulan to sing. He tells her that he likes to hear her sing and that is her singing that made him fond of her when he was young. Xiulan clears her throat and sings 'Spring Water at the Frontier is Clear and Pure', the song requested by Xi. Xiulan suddenly stops her singing and is lost in thought of the hard time she and Xi had spent together twenty years ago. Together they happily recall what they had done, building river dikes and reclaiming land from marshes. They feel they have grown old. Xiulan tells Xi that he is still young because he has not changed much especially his stubbornness and his quick-temper. Xi also thinks he is still young and that he wants to do something ambitious.

Segment 6 Jiuxian confronts Xi after knowing the truth of Xi's lie.

Xi goes to the well to carry water but he turns back when seeing Jiuxian getting water from the well. Jiuxian sees him and calls him back. She asks him about the Hong Kong manager who he has promised to buy paper-cutting pattern. She asks him whether the manager has died because of plane crash and whether he cannot come. Xi asks her how she has come to know the news. She tells him that she has learned this from a donkey. She accuses Xi of tricking her into supporting her mother-in-law and she asks him why he has done this to her. Xi admits that he has played tricks on her but he tells her that he has done nothing wrong. He tells her that Shuanzi's mother has raised Shuanzi although she is not his natural mother. It is the duty of her and husband to support Shuanzi's mother when she is too old to support herself. Jiuxian tells Xi that it is none of his business whether she and her husband support her mother-in-law or not. She tells Xi that he is neither village head nor president of a court. Xi replies that he is merely a countryman, but he tells her that she should know what it is a proper thing to do. She should see things through other people's eyes. She will also grow old one day and she needs to be taken care of then. It is her duty to take good care of her mother-in-law. She asks Xi to mind his own business and curses him. Xi is furious at what Jiuxian has said. He wants to slap her but he controls himself. He throws her bucket of water into the ground while Jiuxian throws his bucket into the ground. When Xi gets home with water leaking from the bucket, Xiulan asks him what has happened. Xi tells his wife what has just happened between him and Jiuxian. Xiulan criticizes him for meddling in other's business. Xi tells her that whoever does not take care of the elders is not a man. She asks him not to meddle in the affair of Shuanzi's mother otherwise next time Jiuxian will destroy the bucket completely. Xi stands up and leaves home. Xiulan asks what he is doing. Xi tells her that he is seeing Shuanzi's mother and that he will bring Jiuxian and Shuanzi to court for not taking care of Shuanzi's mother. Xiulan tries to ask Xi not to do that but she cannot stop him.

Segment 7 Shuanzi's mother tells Xi she has earned some money from her paper cut patterns; Xi tells Erhu about Shuanzi's mother fortune.

Xi goes to see Shuanzi's mother and tells her not to worry about Shuanzi and Jiuxian's not taking care of her. He tells her that he will bring the couple to court for not taking care of her. Shuanzi asks him not to do that. Xi tells her that there is a law with regard to taking care of the elderly. She tells Xi that she does not want Jiuxian and Shuanzi to take care of her and that she can support herself and that she will live a better life than Jiuxian and Shuanzi. She tells Xi that she has been blessed by Heaven. She tells Xi that she used to take part in paper-cut craft competition and that she came to know one of the judges, also the former head of the Cultural Bureau. She once cut window paper patterns for the head in

person and the head invited her to dinner because of that. The head's son visited her yesterday and gave her some gifts. She gives Xi some of the gifts but Xi asks her to keep them to herself. She tells Xi that the head's son asked her whether she could still cut window paper patterns. She cut some for him right away and he was very happy. He paid her a deposit of two thousand yuan for her window paper cut patterns. He asked her to cut as many paper window patterns as possible and promised to pay her some more money when he comes back to get them. Xi feels happy for Shuanzi's mother. Shuanzi's mother feels overjoyed and thanks Xi for his help. She says that she has never dreamed of such a fortune. The beautiful lie initiated by Xi has become a reality. Xi asks her to take good care of the money so that her money will not be coaxed out of her by Jiuxian and Shuanzi. Shuanzi's mother asks Xi to tell Erhu about her luck and asks Xi to keep it a secret just among Xi, Erhu and her. She is afraid of inviting trouble if Jiuxian and Shuanzi know about the head's son's recent visit. Xi promises Shuanzi's mother to keep the visit a secret.

Erhu and his wife Dongping are working on the crops in the field. Xi comes to help them, jokingly telling them that he has already finished his work on the field, unlike his brother Erhu who always helps others first. Xi tells Erhu about what has happened to Shuanzi's mother recently and asks him not to worry about her. Xi asks Erhu to keep it a secret what he has just told him so that Jiuxian will not trouble Shuanzi's mother. Erhu is glad to hear what Xi has told him and makes a joke about Xi's power to turn a lie into a reality. Erhu asks Xi to fabricate a lie that his field can produce helicopter so that the villagers all follow him to grow crops in the field. Each villager can get a helicopter out of the field. Then Xijia village will become the richest village in the county, in the country and even in the world. Realizing Erhu is making a joke on him, Xi tells him that this lie is a very challenging one. The two brothers have a good laugh over the helicopter lie. Just then, Sangui comes to the field to look for Erhu. Erhu asks Sangui what has brought him back to the village. Sangui tells him that he has an important project and tells Xi who is standing behind Erhu that the project involves Xi. Sangui tells Erhu that he will tell him the details of the project at night and invites Xi to come along with Erhu to dinner at the restaurant near the village bridge to discuss the project during dinner. Erhu tells Xi to go to the dinner but Xi refuses to go telling him that he is not a village cadre.

Segment 8 Xi agrees to help Sangui organize the gong and drum performance team in the city.

Baoqing comes to get Xi to the dinner but Xi does not want to go. Upon Baoqing's persuasion and Xiulan's gentle urging, Xi reluctantly goes to the dinner. Erhu asks Sangui what he is going to deal with him and others. Sangui laughs and tells them that he has become infamous due to the sand-digging incident and that he is not a bad man. Erhu says that he is only making a joke on him and asks Sangui about his important project. Sangui says that he is thinking of gathering the villagers to establish a gong and drum team to give performance in the city to make money for the village. Erhu asks Sangui about the feasibility of the project. Sangui explains to Erhu that people in the city are rich and are travelling to see unique places in the countryside such as Qiao's Grand Courtyard and Wang's Grand Courtyard in Shanxi province. Sangui adds that city people are not only interested in the traditional buildings but are also interested in the folk art in Shanxi. Sangui plans to set up a gong-and-drum team and perform gong-and-drum to people in the city. When Baoqing asks him who will need the gong and drum performance, Sangui says that the team will provide performance for anyone who is need of service such as companies who are holding certain celebrations, people who are holding a luxurious wedding ceremony, tourist resorts which are giving performances to audiences. Sangui tells them that the gong and drum performances can be used in different occasions and that he has done some research about the market of the performance. Xi asks Sangui who are going to grow crops if the villagers go out to the city for the performances. Sangui reassures Xi that the team will only go to the city when they are not busy with crops. Sangui says that Xi is well-known for his drumming performance and that he would like him to lead the team. Sangui turns to Xi for his opinion. Xi hesitates. Erhu tells Xi that Sangui's project makes sense and that it is good for the village. Erhu hopes that Xi can cooperate with Sangui and will lead the team. If not, Xi is being mean. Sangui proposes a toast to Xi by drinking three cups of wine and it is up to Xi to lead the team. Xi says to Sangui that he has done a good thing for the village and that he will support his project by leading the team. Xi drinks 5 cups of wine to show his support for Sangui.

Episode 10

Segment 1 Villagers go to the city to do gong-and-drum performance in the city but soon returns due to a lack of performance license.

Shanxi is well-known for its impressive and magnificent gong-and-drum performance and has been invited to perform its famous gong-and-drum in Asian Games to celebrate the festive atmosphere. Xi has never thought of making money out of the gong-and-drum performance. When Sangui has suggested the idea of performing gong-and-drum in the city to earn money, Xi shows him his full support. He is busy helping the villagers to get ready for their departure for the city performance. They take the train to the city. When they arrive, Sangui has already found a place for their stay. Xi tells the villagers to be careful about their safety. Xi asks Sangui to take good care of the villagers because safety is more important than earning money. Next day they start their performance of gong-and-drum in the city.

In the meantime Mr. Niu, head of the county goes to inspect the Longwan town government and Mr. Li, head of the town received Niu. Niu asks Li whether Sangui has been back to Xijia village. Li tells Niu that Sangui is a clever and capable young man and that he is enthusiastic about the village economic development. He tells Xi that Sangui has just established a gong-and-drum team from the villagers and taken the team to perform in the provincial city. Niu says that organizing the gong-and-drum performance is also a good thing but Niu thinks that is not Sangui's strength. Niu hopes that Li tries to focus on the agricultural economic development. Niu tells Li that the provincial committee has recently put forward the plan of developing mountainous areas and revolutionary regions and that the issues of agriculture, rural areas and farmers are still the focus of Li's job. Niu tells Li that he has come to see whether Li has any new plan for the agricultural development in Longwan town. Li tells Niu about his recent efforts to persuade Xi and Sangui to cooperate with each other to develop a new type of agricultural economic development in Longwan town. Li tells Niu the difficulty in developing this new type of agricultural economic development. Li tells Niu that villagers are not confident of the new economic development and that they are worried about the risk involved in such a new mode of economic development. Li also says that the difficulty is also due to the fact that both Xi and Sangui are ordinary villagers and that they are not yet ready for such a cooperative economic project due to their current cooperation awareness and their ability to run and manage a cooperation enterprise. Niu tells Li to be patient because it takes time to build a new socialist countryside. Niu stresses that the wishes of the villagers should be respected and that timely and ample guidance should be given to them during the course of building the countryside. Niu also suggests that Li not force the villagers to cooperate without thinking about the villagers' wishes.

In the meantime, Sangui and Xi are walking in the city street. Sangui tries to persuade Xi to get his feet cleansed and massaged in a professional feet cleansing shop. Xi refuses Sangui's offer, telling him that it costs money and it is not decent to get others wash his smelly feet. Sangui gets Xi to a professional feet cleansing shop to have their feet cleaned and massaged in spite of Xi's reluctance. While they are having their feet washed, Sangui receives a call telling him that one of the villagers Changgui is wounded and is now in hospital. They rush to the hospital when Changgui is now being treated for his wound. One of the villagers tells Xi and Sangui how Changgui has got his wound: he bargained with a shop owner on a shirt he intends to buy for his wife but refuses to buy the shirt since the bargained price is still too expensive for him and he gets beaten by the shop owner because of the refusal. Xi tells the villagers to be careful next time to avoid the similar accident. Xi tells them that he or Sangui can accompany them if they want to do shopping in the city. Changgui wants to go home because of the accident but Xi persuades him to stay.

The following day Xijia gong-and-drum team is giving a performance for a company. An administrator from the City Cultural Market Inspection comes to talk to Sangui and asks him to show a performance license. Sangui tells the inspection team that he is applying for the performance license and will get the license soon. The administrator asks Sangui to stop the performance and tells Sangui that the City Cultural Market welcomes and supports the folk art performance in the city but he needs a performance license since his team is giving a commercial performance. He asks Sangui to apply for and get the license as soon as possible.

The villagers are having meals in a restaurant. Sangui tells his fellow villagers that he had planned to take them to the

city to earn money by giving gong-and-drum performance but that he is afraid that he has to give up his plan now. He explains to the villagers that they need a performance license for their performance in the city. He has tried to get a friend to apply for the license but has been told that it is not possible to get a license within a few days. He apologizes to the villagers. Changgui relieves Sangui of his embarrassment by telling him that it is not his fault. Other villagers also show Sangui their understanding. Sangui then apologizes to Xi for the failure. Xi reassures Sangui that it is not his fault and says that he only wants to help the villagers. Xi, however, advises Sangui to take everything into consideration in the future.

Segment 2 Jiuxian asks Xi for her mother-in-law's money

Xiulan is surprised at Xi's early return to the village. Xi tells her what has happened. Xiulan says that Sangui should have taken everything into consideration when planning the performance project. He agrees with her. Xi asks his wife for his crops in the field. Xiulan tells him everything is all right with the crops but she is annoyed by Jiuxian. She tells Xi what has happened after he leaves the village for the city performance. Someone from the provincial city has come to collect the paper patterns by Shuanzi's mother and given some money to Shuanzi's mother. Shuanzi's mother has asked Xiulan to take her to a credit cooperative to deposit the money there and asked Xiulan to keep the bankbook for her. When Jiuxian knows this, she comes to trouble Xiulan saying something not nice. Xi tells Xiulan to pay no attention to Jiuxian and to get her out of their house if Jiuxian comes again to annoy her. Just then Jiuxian comes and hears what Xi has just said. Jiuxian tells Xi that she is not happy with Xi has said. Xi criticizes Jiuxian for her maltreatment of her mother-in-law and asks her to respect and take care of the elderly. Jiuxian wants to get her mother-in-law's money from Xi. Xi refuses and asks Jiuxian to stop thinking about getting her mother-in-law's money. Jiuxian accuses Xi of wanting to get her mother-in-law's money. Xiulan is angry with what Jiuxian has said and argues with her. Xi stops Xiulan from arguing with Jiuxian. Qingshan comes in to tell Jiuxian that Shuanzi and Shuanzi's mother are arguing with each other and that Shuanzi's mother has just fainted because of anger. On hearing this, Jiuxian leaves Xi's house. Xi asks Qingshan whether what he has said is true. Qingshan denies and tells Xi that he does that to get Jiuxian away. Xiulan says that it is not possible to get rid of Jiuxian's annoyance and that Shuanzi's mother affair is a big trouble sooner or later. Xiulan asks Xi for a way to avoid being involved in the affair. Xi suggests that they give Shuanzi's mother's bankbook to the village committee. That way, Jiuxian will go to Erhu and Baoqing for the money. Xiulan criticizes Shuanzi for being hen-pecked and manipulated by Jiuxian. Qingshan tells her parents that he will throw his wife out of the earth if his wife maltreats them. Xiulan laughs at what her son has just said. Xi says that it is ok if Qingshan finds a wife not beautiful but he may not be as good as Shuanzi if he finds a beautiful wife. Qingshan asks his father why he is not afraid of his mother who is also beautiful. Xi angrily says to Qingshan that he and Qingshan are different. Qingshan retorts that he is Xi's son. Xi wished that Qingshan was like him. Xiulan feels angry and says that Xi and Qingshan are talking nonsense again.

Segment 3 Jiuxian and Shuanzi repudiate all relations with Shuanzi's mother. Erhu wants Xi to establish the economic cooperative with Sangui. The gong-and-drum team goes to the city again to give performance.

Xi goes to see Erhu about the relationship between Jiuxian and Shuanzi's mother. Erhu asks him why he comes home earlier. Xi tells him that performing gong-and-drum in the city needs a license and that Sangui cannot get a license within a short time. Erhu tells Xi that it is good he has come back since he needs to talk to him about something. Erhu asks Xi what Xi has come to see him for. When Xi tells Erhu that he has got involved in the worsening relationship between Jiuxian and Shuanzi's mother, Erhu stops him and tells him about Mr. Niu's recent visit of Li and that both Niu and Li would like Xi and Sangui to work together to work out a way to develop Xijia village's agricultural economy so as to increase the income of the villagers. Xi tells Erhu that he has talked about the economic cooperative project but no one is interested in it. He wants to discuss with Erhu the relationship between Jiuxian and Shuanzi's mother. Erhu considers Jiuxian-and-Shuanzi's-mother's relation is not as important as the village economic development. Erhu tells Xi that Niu and Li attach great importance to the agricultural economic development in Xijia village and suggests that Xi and Sangui discuss with each other to develop a practical mode of economic development for Xijia village. Xi tells Erhu that Sangui has not returned to the village yet and that he has no chance to discuss the project with him. Xi suggests that Erhu

discuss with him the relationship between Jiuxian and Shuanzi's mother. Erhu tells Xi that Jiuxian has not realized the importance of building a new socialist countryside and that Xi cannot count on Jiuxian to understand that. Xi feels strange about what Erhu has said and asks him whether he has drunk too much. Just then Dongping, Erhu's wife comes back and scolds Erhu for getting drunk again. Erhu is angry about Dongping's scolding of him. Xi tells Erhu that he will wait for him that night at the village committee to talk with him about the relationship between Jiuxian and Shuanzi's mother.

The night Xi takes Shuanzi's mother to the village committee where Jiuxian and Shuanzi have been waiting for them. Erhu tries to reconcile Jiuxian and Shuanzi with Shuanzi's mother. Jiuxian and Shuanzi insist on getting Shuanzi's mother's money. Shuanzi's mother refuses to give them money because they have maltreated her. Jiuxian decides to repudiate all relationship with Shuanzi's mother and Shuanzi has to listen to his wife since he is hen-pecked. Feeling sad, Shuanzi's mother agrees on the repudiation of the relationship. Since then on, Shuanzi's mother has to live on her own. Erhu incorporates Shuanzi's mother into the village five-guarantees-family-system where the aged, the childless, the infirm, old widows and orphan are supported and taken care of by the village in five ways i.e. food, clothing, medical care, housing, and burial expenses. Shuanzi's mother is thus supported and taken care of by the village committee.

Sangui calls the village committee and tells Yingping who answers the call to tell Erhu and Xi that he has got the performance license and to ask them whether they are still available for the gong-and-drum performance in the city. The Next day, Xi and the gong-and-drum team go back to the city to perform gong-and-drum. Sangui has already found quite a few clients who need the performance and the team can give performance in the city until it is time to harvest crops in autumn.

Segment 4 Xiulan has got a high fever, asks Erhu to give her injection, gets better after the injection but becomes lame; technician Liu comes to see Qingmei and tells her his affection towards her.

Xiulan, Qingshan, Qingmei and Xi are harvesting corn, sorghum and millet in the field. They have been harvesting the crops for three consecutive days. On the fourth day, Xiulan is down with fever and Xi takes her home.

In the meantime, Ma Cuilian and Gaihua are harvesting sorghum in the field. Ma complains to Gaihua that the harvest work is too tiring for her. She scolds Gaihua for being fond of Qingshan who cannot come over to help her with the harvest. Gaihua asks her mother to harvest crops rather than complaining.

After Xiulan has taken some medicine, she sends Xi back to the field to help with the crop harvest. On the way back to the field, Xi meets Ma. Ma asks Xi his attitude towards the relationship between Gaihua and Qingshan. She asks Xi to send her the betrothal gift to formalize the relationship otherwise she will get Qingshan's leg broken. Xi tells Ma that he had not approved of the relationship between Gaihua and Qingshan from the very beginning and that he will not give the betrothal gift to Ma. Xi returns to the field, angry. When Qingshan tells him that he plans to help Gaihua to harvest her crops after finishing the harvest in the field, Xi angrily tells Qingshan to break off his relationship with Gaihua, threatening to break off his father-son relationship with Qingshan. Qingmei asks her father what has made him angry. Qingshan feels baffled and angry about his father's sudden anger at him. Qingmei tries to help calm her father and her brother down.

When Xi, Qingshan and Qingmei return home that night, they find Xiulan still having high fever. Qingshan wants to take Xiulan to see a doctor but his mother refuses. Xiulan asks him not to worry about her and ask him to help his father and his sister to harvest the crops as soon as possible for fear of the coming wind that may blow down the crops in the field. Xiulan tells them that she will go to the hospital if she does not feel better the next day.

Next day Xi, Qingshan and Qingmei go to the field to continue their harvest of the crops in the field. Autumn is the time when farmers are the busiest in a year and it is also the time when they feel the happiest. In autumn farmers harvest their crops as well as their happy mood.

Xiulan goes to see Erhu when he is about to go to the field to get in crops. Xiulan tells Erhu that she is having a high fever and asks him to give her an injection for her fever. Erhu tells her that he has not given injection for years and that he usually does not give injection for people except family members. Xiulan tells Erhu that Xi is too preoccupied with the

crops in the field to send her to the village clinic and that she is Erhu's sister-in-law. On Xiulan's earnest request, Erhu gives her an injection.

Xiulan gets better after the injection and prepares dinner for the family that night. At dinner, Qingshan is surprised to learn from his father that his mother goes to Erhu for an injection. Xi tells his son that Erhu had practiced medicine before he works as village head. Qingmei has some doubt for Erhu's ability because he has not practiced medicine for years. Xi tells her daughter that her mother has got better due to Erhu's injection. Xiulan tells them that Erhu tells her that he does not give injection to people except family members in order to avoid getting trouble. Xi says that it is just an injection not an operation. Technician Liu comes to visit the family. Qingmei is surprised at Liu's visit at night. Liu tells her that he has come to help her keep an eye on her fish pond since she is busy with the crops in the field these days. Qingshan teases Liu that he should go straight to the fish pond for the fish. Qingmei is annoyed by her brother's teasing. She and Liu then go to the fish pond for a walk.

During the walk Liu express his feeling towards Qingmei by holding Qingmei's hands. Qingmei asks Liu whether his parents will approve of their relationship. Liu says that his parents do not interfere with his life and that he has right to choose a girlfriend.

While Xi is washing his feet, Xiulan asks Xi how he thinks of their daughter's relationship with Liu. Xi tells Xiulan that he is not confident in the relationship because Qingmei is a farmer. Xiulan is not happy at what Xi has said. She says that there are a lot of laid-off workers in the city and that city people may even come to work in the countryside in the future when the countryside is fully developed. Xi thinks highly of what Xiulan has said. When Xiulan helps Xi to throw out his foot-washing water, Xi notices that his wife has difficulty in walking and asks her why. Xiulan tells him that she feels pain in her leg. Xi assures her that she will be all right in a few days. When Qingshan comes back home later, he is surprised to see his mother walking lamely and he is worried that his mother's lameness may be caused by Erhu's injection in the wrong place. Hearing what Qingshan has just said, Xi goes to see Erhu who has just come back from the field. After hearing what Xi has told him about Xiulan, Erhu goes to Xi's house to check Xiulan's injection site. After checking, Erhu looks worried and tells Xi that he has given the injection in a site slightly away from the safe injection site. He advises Xi to take Xiulan to see a doctor in a provincial hospital. Qingshan is so worried about his mother that he blames Erhu for his mother's lameness. Xiulan stops his son from blaming Erhu. Erhu suggests that he take Xiulan to the provincial hospital right away. Xiulan tells him that they go to the hospital next day since it is too late at night.

Erhu is worried after he goes home. Dongping tells him not to worry. Erhu explains to Dongping that he may have injected Xiulan in a site connected to the nervous system and that Xiulan may be lame for the rest of her life. Hearing Erhu's explanation, Dongping becomes worried and complains to him about his meddling in other's business in the future. Erhu is annoyed at Dongping's complaint.

The following day, Erhu and Qingmei take Xiulan to a provincial hospital. When Erhu goes to check in with the registry for a neurologist, the registration staff tells him that all neurologists are fully booked and that he will need to register for an emergency care. He tells Xiulan what registry staff has told him and tells Xiulan that they need to register for an emergency care. Xiulan suggests that they come back tomorrow because of the likely high cost required by an emergency treatment. Qingmei asks her mother not to worry about the cost. Erhu agrees with Qingmei and takes Xiulan for an emergency treatment.

Episode 11

Segment 1 Xiulan goes to the city hospital for her leg, Sangui helps to find an expert to treat her leg but she comes back uncured.

Xi and Qingshan are getting in the crops in the field. Baoqing is singing in the field. Xi is in a bad mood because of Xiulan's leg problem and asks Baoqing to stop singing but Baoqing refuses.

Xi is at the village committee waiting for Qingmei to call to tell him about Xiulan's treatment in the hospital. Qingmei tells him that her mother's case is serious and that the injection has affected her sciatic nerve and that her mother needs to see some other experts for treatment. Qingmei asks Xi to come to the hospital and Xi tells his daughter that he will arrive at the hospital next morning. That night, Xi becomes restless. He tosses and turns all night, thinking about Xiulan.

The following morning, Xi gets to the hostel where Erhu, Xiulan and Qingmei are staying. Xiulan weeps on seeing Xi. Xi reassures her that she will be all right with the modern technology. Erhu apologizes to Xi for the big trouble he has caused to him. Xi does not scold Erhu. He tells Erhu that the most important thing is find another expert to treat Xiulan's leg. Xi does not feel like eating when Qingmei presents him some food. Erhu tells Xi that Sangui has helped contacted an expert and they will see the expert the following morning.

The next morning they arrive at the hospital early. Xi thanks Sangui for his help when Sangui arrives to meet them. Xi suggests that they invite the expert to lunch after treatment. Sangui tells them that the expert is unique and that he does not accept red packet from patients. Sangui agrees with Xi that they invite him to lunch to thank him for his help. When Xiulan learns from Sangui that a lunch will cost them about one thousand yuan, Xiulan refuses to see the expert. Xi tries to persuade his wife, explaining to her that it is more important to get her leg treated than to worry about the cost of the lunch. Qingmei also tries to persuade her mother to get the treatment, telling her that she will get her mother treated regardless of the cost. Just then, Sangui sees the expert back to his consultation room. They follow him to the room but are told to knock at the door before entering. Sangui, Xiulan and Qingmei enter the room, leaving Xi and Erhu waiting outside anxiously. When Xiulan comes out with the help of Qingmei and Sangui, Xi rushes forward to greet her and ask her what the doctor has said. Xiulan shakes her head. Qingmei tells her father the doctor's diagnosis. The injection has hurt the nervous system and Xiulan needs to recover naturally. On hearing this, Xi is too upset to say any word. Sangui tries to comfort Xi and Erhu apologizes to Xi for what has he done. Xiulan urges the depressed Xi to leave the hospital. In tears Xi carries Xiulan on his back to go back to the hostel, but he stops to tell Sangui that they invite the expert to lunch to thank him. Sangui tells Xi that he has done that but the expert has declined the invitation. Xi asks Sangui to invite the expert again but Sangui tells him that the expert will get angry at the further invitation. After getting back to the hostel, Xiulan asks Qingmei to check out at the hostel registry and asks Erhu to wash his face which has not been washed for three days. When Xi and Xiulan are alone, Xiulan weeps. Xi comforts her, telling her that she is still his wife and the mother of Qingshan and Qingmei and that he will take care of her for the rest of her life.

When Xi, Xiulan, Qingmei and Erhu arrive at the village on Qingshan's tractor, Liushiyi tells Erhu that Ling'ai has got in his crops and that Erhu should talk to Ling'ai about this for him. Erhu tells him that he will do that later.

Segment 2 Gaihua fetches her Third Uncle to cure Xiulan's leg with acupuncture; Erhu goes to the town to sue himself for causing Xiulan's lameness with his injection and Xi goes to the town to stop him.

At the night when Xiulan comes back home, Ma Cuilian learns from Gaihua during dinner that Xiulan becomes lame because of Erhu's injection and that the experts in the provincial hospital cannot cure Xiulan's lameness. Gaihua suggests that she invite her third Uncle to treat Xiulan's lame leg with his acupuncture. Ma tells her not to bring more trouble to Xiulan. Ma does not think the third uncle can cure Xiulan's lame leg if the experts in the hospital cannot. Gaihua reminds her mother that her third uncle has cured quite a few people with his acupuncture. Ma tells her daughter that her father has been dead for years and she doubts that her daughter can have him come over her to cure Xiulan's leg. Gaihua tells her mother that her third uncle is kind and scolds her mother for her finding faults with people. Ma tells her daughter that she may as well invite her uncle to cure Xiulan's leg. That way Xi should be grateful for their help.

The following morning when Xi comes out to the house to clean the urine basin for Xiulan, Dongping comes to tell him what Erhu has been doing these days since he came back from hospital last night. He has thrown away his medicine kit, all the medicine and all syringes. He has got drunk again, crying and laughing. He has called Mr. Li, head of town and has told Li that he wants to quit his job as village head. When Li refuses Erhu's request, Erhu argues with Li over the phone. Erhu was restless the whole night. This morning Erhu has been to the town, intending to sue himself and get himself imprisoned. Xi assures Dongping that he will go and look for Erhu in the town right away. Dongping wants to

apologize to Xi for Erhu for what he has done to Xiulan. Xi stops her and tells her that he does not blame him for what has happened. When Xi leaves for the town, Xiulan asks him where he is going. Xi tells her that he is going to the town to look for Erhu and that he will explain to her why when he comes back.

Xi goes to the Judicial Department to look for Erhu. The head of Judicial Department tells Xi that Erhu has been there. Xi tells the head of the station that Erhu had wanted to help Xiulan but has made a mistake. Xi asks the head not to try Erhu. The head explains to Xi that the case is a civil case and that he can help reconcile people involved in the case but that he has no right to try Erhu. On hearing this, Xi feels relieved and thanks the head.

While Xi has been away to the town for Erhu, Gaihua invites and takes her third uncle to cure Xiulan's leg. Gaihua asks her uncle that he must cure Xiulan's leg. Her uncle tells her that he will try his best. Xiulan asks Gaihua not to give her uncle pressure.

When Xi gets back to village, he meets Erhu who has just come back on Qingshan's tractor. Xi scolds Erhu for suing himself. Erhu apologizes to Xi for his mistake. Xi tells Erhu that he does not blame him for what has happened to Xiulan and asks him not to blame himself any more.

When Xi and Qingshan arrive home, they cannot find her and they find it strange. Just then Qingmei comes back. Qingshan asks his sister where their mother has been, Qingmei tells him that she has no idea because she has just come back from the fish pond. She guesses that their mother must be somewhere near the house since she has some difficulty walking far. Qingshan is afraid that their mother kills herself because of her lame leg. While they are still wondering where Xiulan is, she walks out of the house and tells them that she is not silly. Qingmei, Qingshan and Xi are surprised and excited to see Xiulan walking again. Xiulan tells them that it is Gaihua who has taken her uncle to have her leg cured. Qingshan is excited to hear that it is Gaihua who has helped to have his mother's leg cured. He talks to his father about his relationship with Gaihua.

Segment 3 Qingshan thanks Gaihua for her help; Ma asks for the betrothal gift again; Xi refuses Ma's request.

Later that night, Qingshan goes to Gaihua's house to thank her for her help with some gifts. Both Gaihua and Ma are glad to see Qingshan. Gaihua tells Qingshan that she is worried about his mother and invites her uncle to try to cure his mother's leg with his acupuncture and that she is happy to see his mother able to walk again. Ma asks Qingshan whether his father sends him to their house. Qingshan tells her that his father asks him to come to thank Gaihua for her help. Ma asks Qingshan whether his father sends him to thank Gaihua or sends him to formalize his relationship with Gaihua. Qingshan tells Ma that his coming means both. Ma tells Qingshan that she has accepted the thanks but not the second with the protest of Gaihua. Ma asks Qingshan to tell Xi that he should send her the betrothal gift to formalize and finalize Qingshan's relationship with Gaihua. Qingshan tells Ma that he will tell his father about the betrothal gift.

When Xi and Xiulan are arranging the harvested corns in their home the next day, Xi tells Xiulan his attitude towards giving the betrothal gifts. He will give Gaihua whatever she asks from him since she has saved Xiulan, but he will not give Ma the betrothal gifts. Xiulan scolds Xi for being as stubborn as a donkey. She tells Xi that Ma and Gaihua are mother and daughter. Giving Ma the betrothal gifts is no different from giving betrothal gifts to Gaihua. Xi insists that Ma and Gaihua are not the same. Xiulan complains to Xi that he is impossible. Just then, Qingmei comes back to tell them that she is going to the city to discuss something with Liu, who is now her boyfriend. Qingshan, who has been helping with the arrangement of the crops and has been listening to his parents' conversation, tells his father that he will marry into and live with Gaihua's family if he refuses to give Ma the betrothal gifts. Xi is angry at what Qingshan has just said and intends to hit him with one of his shoes. But instead of hitting Qingshan, the shoe hits Baoqing who has just come to see Xi. Baoqing tells Xi that villagers are interested in the economic cooperative project that Xi has talked about. Baoqing wants Xi to go to the village committee and discuss the economic cooperative project with the villagers. Xi is happy to hear what Baoqing has told him.

Segment 4 Xi makes a second but unsuccessful attempt to establish an economic cooperative project in the village; the relationship between Qingmei and Liu fails.

Xi goes to the village committee with Baoqing right away. When Xi and Baoqing arrive, the villagers are arguing with each other about the project. Xi suggests that they cooperate with each other in all aspects ranging from ploughing of land, growth of crops to getting-in of crops. The cooperation saves time as well as labor and thus benefits everyone. One of the villagers advises Xi to lead the cooperative to plough all their land using Xi's tractor. Xi says that the villagers just want to use his tractor. Xi suggests that they should cooperate with each other not just in land-ploughing but in other aspects as well. Baoqing says that land-ploughing is just one simple form of cooperation. He suggests that they should cooperate in all aspects related to agriculture including seeds, fertilizers, agricultural chemicals, seed-sowing, getting-in of crops and sales of crops etc. and that all aspects should be unified and be professionalized so as to save labor. When one of the villagers asks who will lead the cooperative, Baoqing suggests Gentian. Gentian tells them that the cooperative involves everyone and he suggests that they should discuss with each other during the course of the cooperation. Liushi says that different people have different ideas and it is difficult to carry out the cooperative which is led by everyone. He backs out from the cooperative discussion.

While Xi and villagers are discussing the cooperation project, Qingmei and Liu are discussing their future in the city. Liu tells Qingmei that his parents want Qingmei to work in the city and his father has already found her a job in the city. His parents think that the city is better than the village in many aspects including education, medical health care, social security and insurance services etc.

At the village committee, Xi and the villagers are still discussing the cooperative project. The villagers feel that they will end up working for Xi if they join the cooperative and that the cooperative benefits Xi rather than themselves. Xi is angry at what the villagers think of the cooperative and leaves. Baoqing scolds the villagers for being narrow-minded. The economic cooperative project is not yet set up.

Meanwhile, Qingmei's discussion with Liu is not going well either. She tells Liu that she understands what Liu's parents have done for her. But she tells Liu that she is from the countryside and she prefers to work in the countryside. She does not have a sense of belonging in the city. Liu tries to persuade Qingmei to go to the city but Qingmei says that she will not leave the countryside since she is from the countryside.

That night Xi talks to himself in the living room about the importance of educating countrymen. Xiulan reminds him that he himself is a countryman. When Qingmei comes back home and goes to the living room for a painkiller from Xiulan, Xi is still talking to himself about the importance of educating his fellow countrymen. He asks Qingmei why his fellow villagers are not as clever as the city people and why they cannot see the benefits of his cooperative project. He considers them as silly. Qingmei is not happy to hear what her father has said about city people being better than countrymen. She angrily asks her father to go and live in the city rather than staying with countrymen like her. She goes out of the living room, leaving Xi and Xiulan wondering what has happened to her daughter. Xi and Xiulan follow their daughter to her bedroom but she shuts them outside.

Segment 5 Qingshan and Xi go to sell their grains to the Town Grain Shop; Qingshan recognizes and catches Wensheng who has sold him the donkey;

(Before the segment, Xi summarizes what has just happened. This is what Wallace Martin calls summary narrative. This summary narrative is repeated throughout the whole story. Xi summarizes this way: The relationship between Qingmei and Liu fails and his cooperative project is not yet established.) Xi and Qingshan go to sell their grains to the Town Grain Shop. When they arrive at the Grain shop, there is a long queue. After selling their grains, Xi and Qingshan go home. On their way out of the town, Qingshan sees and recognizes the young man who has stolen and sold the donkey to him. Qingshan gets off his tractor to chase the young man. Xi follows his son. Qingshan and Xi catch the young man. The young man admits that he has sold the donkey to Qingshan. Qingshan angrily tells the young man that the owner of the donkey has taken away the donkey and that the donkey has hurt him. The young man pleads with them not to send him to the police. He promises to give money back to Qingshan. When Qingshan and Xi say that they are going to hand him over to the police station, the young man runs away from them. Qingshan and Xi chase after him.

The young man runs uphill and Xi and Qingshan chase him there. Qingshan asks the young man to stop running; the young man tells Qingshan and Xi that he will not run if they promise not to hand him over to the police. And he promises to return 300 yuan to Qingshan. Qingshan tells the young man that he can't trust him because he is a thief. When Qingshan comes forward to catch him, the young man threatens to kill himself by jumping down into the ground far below the hill if Qingshan keeps chasing him. Worried that the young man really jumps down the hill, Xi stops Qingshan from chasing the young man. Qingshan promises not to hand him over to the police. When the young man does not believe Qingshan will keep his promise, he asks Qingshan to swear that he will not hand him over to the police. Only when Xi swears that he will not hand him over to the police does the young man come towards them. Xi tells the young man that he will let him off as long as he returns 300 yuan. The young man gives all the money he has had to Xi and Qingshan but it is not enough to make 300 yuan. He promises to return the rest of the money when he has earned enough. Qingshan does not believe what he said. The young man suggests to Xi and Qingshan that he can work for them and that they let him go when his work can pay for the rest of the money he owes them. If he is found dishonest during his work, he tells them that they can hand him over to the police station. Qingshan tells his father to take the young man's suggestion. Xi agrees. Qingshan asks the young man his name. The young man tells them his name—Li Wensheng. Xi asks whether it is the first time that he has stolen and Wensheng gives him an affirmative answer.

Segment 6 Wensheng has come to work for Xi to pay for the money he owes them.

Xi and Qingshan take Wensheng home. Xiulan and Qingmei tell Xi that Wensheng does not look like a thief. When Xi tells them that Wensheng did steal the donkey, Qingmei tells her father that there must be reason for it and she asks her father to ask Wensheng for the reason. When Xi asks Wensheng why he stole the donkey, Wensheng tells him he was forced to do so. Years ago Wensheng failed in the National Entrance Examination to College. He went back to the village. He did not want to find work in the city because his family does not have good human resources. He wanted to grow crops in the contracted land. He learned the skills of establishing big wooden cabin for the growth of food crops indoors (i.e. the skills of grow plants in the greenhouse) but his father is in the habit of gambling and owed a huge debt due to gambling this spring. The creditor not only took everything away from his home but also uprooted all the vegetables in the field and destroyed the wooden cabin for the growth of crops. What happened was too much for his mother. She drank farm chemicals and died. His father has disappeared since then. He went out to find some work. He worked for a coal-cleansing company in Longwan town for a month but he did not get any pay for his work because the company owner ran away due to his wrong doing. He had not had any food for several days. He was so hungry that he came up with an idea of stealing. He went to steal a donkey from a neighboring village. Wensheng feels embarrassed about what he has done. Xi believes what Wensheng has told him. Xi hates Wensheng's father for what has happened to Wensheng and he is sympathetic with Wensheng. He thinks Wensheng's mistake is understandable and forgivable. He is confident that Wensheng will be a good man since he is young and educated.

Segment 7 Xi asks Wensheng to build a greenhouse for him to grow crops; Xi thinks highly of Wensheng; Xi goes to see Liuzi's mother who has become ill and feels happy about Chouwa's progress.

While working in the field, Xi asks Wensheng whether he has learned the skills of growing crops in greenhouse. Wensheng tells Xi that he has indeed learned the skills. Qingshan says that Wensheng is simply bragging. Wensheng tells Qingshan that he is telling the truth. Xi asks him to help set up a greenhouse in his field to grow the crops after they finish loosening the soil in the land. Wensheng gives Xi his promise. Qingshan tells Wensheng that his father has got quick temper and advises him not to lie to him and threatens to hand him over to the police if he tells lies. Xi scolds his son for being rude. Wensheng tells Qingshan that he does not lie and that he can wait and see whether he can establish a greenhouse for his family and grow crops in the greenhouse. Xi reassures Wensheng that he believes what he has said.

In the meantime, Liuzi's mother is ill and Chouwa is helping his grandmother to take medicine for her illness. After taking the medicine, Liuzi's mother tells Chouwa that she may not recover from her illness and asks him to tell Xi to call his father back from the city.

Back home, Xiulan asks Qingshan to carry water but Qingshan tells her that he is too tired. Qingshan suggests that his father go and get the water. Xiulan is angry at her son and insists that Qingshan carry water. When Qingshan does not go, Xi takes the bucket to get water. Wensheng hurries over to Xi, takes the buckets from his hand, and get the water for the family. Xi has good impression of Wensheng. Qingshan tells his parents that they should make good use of him for his stay in their family. Xiulan suggests that Wensheng eat with them at the same table later. Qingshan is jealous of his parents' attitude toward Wensheng and accuses them of being friendlier to Wensheng than to him. Qingshan says that Wensheng has stolen a donkey after all. Xiulan says that she has learned from his father that Wensheng was forced to steal the donkey. Xi compliments his wife for what she just said and for being on the same side with him on Wensheng. Qingshan jokes about his parents' temporary agreement, saying that they will soon argue with each other on other things.

Xi goes to see Liuzi's mother and asks her whether she feels better. She tells him that she has a headache and feels dizzy. Everything is turning round and round. Chouwa tells Xi he has cooked food for his grandmother. Xi tells Liuzi's mother not to worry. Xi tells her that Liuzi is coming home that day. She tells Xi that she does not worry about herself but Chouwa. She is worried that her illness will keep Chouwa from going to school. Chouwa tells his grandmother that his schooling will not be affected if she recovers soon. Xi feels happy about Chouwa's progress.

Episode 12

Segment 1 Liuzi returns to the village and decides to stay there; Qingmei is friendly to and fond of Wensheng; Wensheng starts to build a greenhouse for Xi; Qingmei makes her first but unsuccessful attempt to help Xi's economic cooperative project; Xiulan begins to be alert to the possible relationship between Qingmei and Wensheng.

Liuzi comes back to see his mother. Liuzi's mother cries when she sees her son. Liuzi tells his mother that he decides to stay at home and will not leave her again. He tells her that she is right in telling him that there is no better place than home.

While Xi is at Liuzi's home, Qingmei comes back home. She tells Wensheng that she has learned from her father that he has learned the skills of establishing solar greenhouse for growing crops indoors and asks him whether that is true. Wensheng gives her an affirmative reply. Qingmei asks him whether he has learned some other skills. Wensheng says no. When Qingmei asks him about the income out of the greenhouse crops, Wensheng tells her that the income from greenhouse crops are several times more than that from the ordinary crops. She asks him to establish a greenhouse for her family. Wensheng tells her that her father has already told him to do so. Qingmei asks him whether it is feasible for the whole village to practice greenhouse crops. Wensheng gives her a positive reply but tells her about her father's plan to experiment with the greenhouse crops. If the plan is successful, her father will encourage other villagers in the village to do similar practice. Qingshan comes over to ask his sister to stop interrupting Wensheng so that he can go and carry water. Taking the buckets from Wensheng and give them to Qingshan, Qingmei asks her brother to carry water instead. Qingshan scolds her for being thoughtful of Wensheng other than her brother, but has to do as her sister has told him to. Qingmei then asks Wensheng to follow her since she has something to discuss with him.

Wensheng is building a greenhouse in the field for Xi to grow crops. The practice of growing crops in a greenhouse is not novel. Some villagers in Xijia village have practiced it before but without good result. Xi has full trust in Wensheng since has learned the skills in growing crops in a greenhouse. Qingshan tells Xi that his sister will come to help him soon and that he wants to leave the field early and go to the city with Erhuo to find out whether there is an opportunity to earn money there. Xi does not think highly of Erhuo ever since the boat-towing incident and tells Qingshan not to mingle with Erhuo in the future. Qingshan disagrees with his father, saying that mingling with Xi he has to work on the field all day. Xi replies to Qingshan, saying that Wensheng is educated and knows how to establish a greenhouse for the growth of crops. Xi says that Wensheng is a promising young man. Qingshan jokingly criticizes himself as silly as a donkey. The word 'donkey' makes Wensheng uncomfortable since it reminds him of his unpleasant experience of having ever stolen a donkey. Sensing Wensheng's sensitivity to the word, Xi asks Qingshan not to mention 'donkey' in the future but he

himself scolds Qingshan for being as silly as a donkey and this makes Qingshan laugh. When Qingshan leaves the field, Qingmei arrives. Qingmei tells her father that she has something to tell him. She tells Xi that Mr. Li, the town head, has talked with her and asked her to help Xi to establish an economic cooperative in the village. Xi doubts whether his daughter can help him. When Qingmei tells her father that she can offer any help he needs, Xi says that she is bragging. Xi tells her that several villagers want to establish an economic cooperative with him to earn more money but they fear the likely loss and risk that may be caused by the cooperative. Qingmei asks her father who the villagers are and Xi tells her they are the villagers whose fields are adjacent to theirs. Qingmei tells her father that his failure to establish a cooperative results from his lack of impatient persuasion and his assumption of an air of superiority despite his readiness to help others. Xi challenges his daughter to persuade the villagers. Qingmei readily accepts the challenge and then leaves the field. (In this segment, Qingshan's leave for the city implies that his going to the city and Xi's working in the field are taking place simultaneously in two different places).

When Xi, Xiulan, Qingshan, Qingmei and Wensheng are having their dinner that night, they hear Erhu calling through the villager speaker asking Liushiya, Li Shuancai, Cui Guangwen and Zhao Fugui to go to the village committee for a discussion on matters of importance after supper. Xi asks Qingmei whether she has asked Erhu to call the villagers to the village committee. Qingmei gives a positive reply and asks Wensheng to go with her. When Xiulan asks her daughter why she asks Wensheng to go with her, Qingmei explains to her mother that Wensheng can help her to explain how the growth of crops in a greenhouse works to the villagers.

After Wensheng and Qingmei leave, Qingshan tells his parents that Wensheng and Qingmei are fond of each other. Xiulan is angry at what Qingshan has said about Wensheng and Qingmei. Xiulan tells his son that what he has suggested is to disparage Qingmei. Xi disagrees with her. Xiulan says that Wensheng is a good young man but she thinks it impossible for Wensheng and Qingmei to be together. Xi tells her that it all depends on how Wensheng and Qingmei feel about each other. Xiulan doubts Xi's feeling theory. She tells him what he has felt about Qingmei and technician Xiaoliu has turned out to wrong. She asks him not to foster any 'feeling' about Qingmei and Wensheng. Xi tells her that having a feeling is not a bad thing but following that feeling is. Qingshan laughs at what his father has said about feeling. Xiulan scolds Qingshan for his laughing and asks him to help clear the table. Xi murmurs to himself the popular song *Follow One's Feeling* and this annoys Xiulan who is clearing the table.

Qingmei and Wensheng are waiting for the villagers at the village committee. When Liushiya comes, Erhu tells him that Qingmei and Wensheng have something to discuss with him. Liushiya asks Qingmei for her father, she tells him that she comes to discuss on behalf of her father. Liushiya refuses to talk with her without Xi's presence and leaves. Qingmei feels disappointed. Erhu feels embarrassed and apologizes to her for Liushiya's rudeness. The other villagers meet Liushiya in front of the village committee. They ask Liushiya what the meeting is for. Liushiya tells them that Qingmei and Wensheng want to discuss something with them without Xi's presence. He thinks that a discussion without Xi will come out nothing and asks the villagers not to attend the meeting. Erhu, Qingmei and Wensheng have been waiting for the villagers for a long time but no one comes. Erhu then uses the villager speaker to call them again. Still no one comes. Disappointed, Qingmei and Wensheng leave the village committee.

Xiulan feels that Qingmei and Wensheng are fond of each other. She does not approve of their relationship. She suggests to Xi that Wensheng leave their home the following day. Xi tells her that Wensheng is educated and knows how to grow crops in a greenhouse and that he needs Wensheng to help him. Xiulan tells Xi her disapproval of Qingmei and Wensheng being together because Wensheng once stole a donkey and he is a countryman. Xi disagrees with her, saying that she herself is a farmer. Xiulan insists that Wensheng leave the next day. She asks Xi to tell Wensheng to leave next day and will do so herself if Xi does not. She tells Xi to find another person to help him to grow crops in a greenhouse.

Segment 2 Xiulan fears that Qingmei will be fond of Wensheng and wants Wensheng to leave the family; Qingmei tells her family her positive attitude towards Wensheng.

When they are having breakfast the next morning, Xiulan reminds Xi to tell Wensheng to leave by stepping heavily on his

foot. Qingmei notices her mother's strange behavior and asks her mother why. Xiulan tries to cover up her embarrassment, saying that she is all right. Qingmei asks Wensheng to have more food and rice. Qingshan asks Wensheng whether his sister is nice to him. Wensheng replies that everyone in the family is nice to him. Xiulan tells Wensheng that he has already helped them for fourteen days and that he has helped them a lot and that he can leave after breakfast. Wensheng tells her that he will keep his promise of working 15 days for them and he will work for them for two extra days because the whole family has been nice to her ever since his coming to their home. Xiulan insists that Wensheng leave after breakfast because what he has been working is worth far more than 300 yuan. Wensheng insists that he work for two more days for them while Xiulan insists that Wensheng leave because what he has done is enough. Qingshan tells her mother to accept Wensheng's offer if he is willing to do so. Qingmei suggests that Wensheng's work for the family be over after that day and that her family pay him for his work after that day if he is willing to stay. Qingmei suggests that her family pay him 25 yuan a day. Wensheng tells her that he will not stay to work for them because the payment is too high. Xiulan is glad to hear Wensheng's refusal to stay and work for the family. Qingmei and Xi are surprised at Wensheng's refusal to stay and work for the family because of high payment. Wensheng explains to the family that he feels grateful to them for helping and protecting him and that he does not want to work for them for money. Glad about what Wensheng has said, Xi asks Wensheng to stay at the family and work for them and says that he knows how much to pay for him. Xiulan insists that Wensheng leave since he may miss home. Sensing that Xiulan dislikes him, Wensheng stands up and says that he will leave if she does not want him to stay. Qingmei tells Wensheng not to be angry because her mother does not mean that. Qingshan also asks Wensheng to stay. Wensheng goes to the field to work immediately after his breakfast. Xiulan expresses her anger by putting her bowl heavily on the table. Qingmei asks her mother whether she does not want Wensheng to stay, Xiulan admits. Qingmei tells her mother that she thinks highly of Wensheng and that she may want Wensheng to be her boyfriend as well. Xi sneezes when hearing what Qingmei has said. Xiulan is annoyed by Xi's sneeze and scolds him for shocking her. Xi tells that he is shocked and moved by what Qingmei has said.

Segment 3 Liuzi wants to sell lamb to the city and Xi manages to get money from Xiulan to help him to start his business.

Liuzi goes to see Erhu at the village committee. Erhu asks Liuzi whether he has broken up with the Sichuan girl he last brought home. Liuzi tells Erhu that his relationship with the girl is ambiguous. The girl once asked Liuzi to give her money. When Liuzi did not, she hired 3 people to beat him and he stayed in hospital because of that. She came to the hospital to see him but has never asked him for money ever since. She insists that she is pregnant with his child. Liuzi tells Erhu that he cannot understand her insistence. After some pause, Liuzi adds that he will feel guilty if the child is really his. Erhu asks Liu not to think about the thing anymore now that he has come back to the village. He asks Liuzi about his plan in the future. Liuzi tells Erhu that he cannot grow crops as Xi does. He wants to do some small business. He wants to sell lamb in the winter. Erhu asks him how he is going to sell lamb. He explains to Erhu that he will get lamb from Xijia village and neighboring villages and then sell them to the city restaurants which need lamb for their hotpot dish. Liuzi tells Erhu that he can earn at least 30 to 40 yuan with one lamb and that he plans to sell 10 lambs for a time and thus can earn 300 to 400 yuan. Erhu thinks the plan feasible. Liu wants to borrow some money from the village committee because he does not have money to start his business. Erhu tells Liuzi that the committee is too poor to lend him money and that he himself cannot help him either. Liuzi assures Erhu that he will think out some other way.

That night Liuzi invites Xi to supper at his home and wants to borrow money from him to start his business. Xi tells Liuzi that he has just contracted the fish pond, bought a tractor and is building a greenhouse to grow crops in the field and that these have cost him a lot of money and that he himself has borrowed money. Liuzi says that Xi is better than him and he asks Xi to help him. Xi promises to help him.

When Xi arrives home that night, he helps his wife to make up her bed, prepare and take away the foot-cleaning water for her. Xiulan is surprised at his help. Xi tells her about Liuzi's plan to sell lamb and that they can have lamb this winter because of Liuzi's lamb business. Xi asks Xiulan whether they can help Liuzi with his lamb business. Xiulan asks how

they can help Liuzi. Xi asks Xiulan whether she can give lend Liuzi some money but his wife refuses. Xi tells his wife that he has promised to lend Liuzi money and that he will lose face if he breaks his promise. Xiulan tells him that his face is not worth any money. Xi tries to persuade his wife to lend him money but Xiulan does not listen to him. Xi then exposes himself to freezing wintry weather by having as little clothes as possible. Xiulan tries to avoid Xi's tricky behavior by going into Qingmei's room. Xi follows Xiulan into Qingmei's room. When Qingmei knows Xi needs some money to help Liuzi, she offers to give her father some money. Xi insists on getting money from his wife. Xiulan has to give Xi money for fear that he really gets a cold because of his stubborn behavior.

Segment 4 Qingmei and Wensheng become fond of each other; Xiulan has to accept the relationship between Qingmei and Wensheng;

Wensheng stays and helps to build the greenhouse in the field Xi needs to grow his crops. Qingmei does not want Wensheng to leave when the greenhouse is almost completed. Wensheng tells her that he can stay provided that no one in the family mentions the word—donkey. Qingmei and Wensheng become fond of each other. Witnessing the relationship developed between his sister and Wensheng, Qingshan tells Xi that he wants to steal a donkey too because Wensheng has stolen his sister's affection because of his stealing of a donkey.

While Xi is watching TV at night, Qingshan tells his father that he is going to the city the next day to find a project to earn money. When Xi doubts his son's ability to get a money-earning project, Qingshan protests to his father. Xi warns his son against doing anything illegal. When Qingshan gives Xi his promise of finding a project in a legal way, Xi gives his permission to Qingshan's project-finding city adventure, but he asks Qingshan to take back some natural manure from the city with his tractor in spite of Qingshan's reluctance.

While Qingmei and Wensheng are talking to each other, Xiulan gets her daughter out and asks her not to be too intimate with Wensheng and she will not give her consent to her relationship with Wensheng. Xiulan tells her daughter that Wensheng is not as educated as technician Liu, is a farmer and has once stolen a donkey. Annoyed at what her mother has said to her, Qingmei tells her that she wants to be Wensheng's girlfriend. Xiulan sighs but has no way to persuade her daughter.

Qingshan leaves for the city early next morning without having breakfast although Xi asks his son to have breakfast before his leave. Qingshan tells his father that it does not matter since he does not go to work in the field. Xi asks Xiulan to make breakfast but she refuses to do so because she is still angry with what Qingmei said to her yesterday. Xi asks Xiulan not to take Qingmei's words too seriously, but his wife is still worried. Xiulan tells Xi to be on her side and asks Xi to tell Wensheng that the police man has come to investigate his stealing of the donkey. Xi refuses Xiulan's request, telling her that he cannot tell lies. Xiulan wants to do so herself but when she goes to Wensheng's room she cannot find him. She finds it strange and asks Xi. Xi and Xiulan go to Qingmei's room and Qingmei is not in her room either. Xiulan is worried that Qingmei and Wensheng may have run away together, but Xi does not believe his daughter will do so. He guesses that they may go and work in the field. Xiulan asks Xi to climb to the top of the house to check whether they are in the field. At first Xi could see no one in the field, but later he sees Qingmei and Wensheng walking to the field. When Xiulan does not believe Xi, he asks his wife to come to the top of the house to see for herself. When Xiulan sees for herself that Qingmei and Wensheng are indeed working in the field together, she sighs and has to accept her daughter's relationship with Wensheng though she disapproves of it.

Xi brings the breakfast to the field for Qingmei and Wensheng. Qingmei asks Xi whether her mother has cooked the breakfast. Xi tells her that her mother is too angry with her to cook and have the breakfast. Qingmei asks her father to go home to comfort her mother and Wensheng apologizes to Xi for the trouble he has brought to the family. Xi assures Wensheng and asks him to take the family as his family from then on.

Segment 5 Qingshan wants to establish a methane project in the village and wants to get money from village committee to start his project; Erhu tells Xi Qingshan's intention to sue him for causing his mother's lameness because of Erhu's refusal to give money for his methane project; Xi goes to the town to stop Qingshan from

suings Erhu but discovers Qingshan intends to bribe Erhu with gifts; Qingshan exchange the returned gifts for forgery bracelets and rings and with Gaihua's approval, sends them to Ma as betrothal gifts; Sangui returns to the village for lavender seeds project.

When Qingshan comes back home that night, he tells his parents that he has got a good project promoting the use of methane in the village. Xi tells his son that the use of methane is not new. People's Commune used to build methane pits, but the methane could neither light the lamp nor cook the meals. An old she-pig fell into the pit and got drowned. Xiulan agrees with what Xi has said and laughs when Xi mentions the pig story. Xiulan tells her son that the methane pit smells bad and it does not work well. Qingshan tells his parents that the methane pit failed because people did not know how methane works. If he runs the methane project, he will make sure the same thing will not happen again because he has got the knowledge necessary for the project. Qingshan then shows his parents the brochures about the methane project he has taken from the city. He adds that some specialists will also come to give technical support for the project. Xi asks his son whether he is running the project himself and asking the villagers to run the project. Qingshan tells his father that he is running the project himself but he will provide the methane service for the villagers and make money out of the project at the same time. Xiulan asks Qingshan whether the project needs any investment. Qingshan gives his mother a positive reply. Xi asks his son how he is going to get money for his project. Qingshan says that he will get the money from the village committee since his project helps people and is thus part of the project of building a new socialist countryside. Xi tells his son that it is impossible to get money from the committee because it has no money. Qingshan tells his father that he has learned that the county is going to allocate money for the building of the agricultural infrastructure in the village and that he is going to use that money. Xiulan doubts whether Erhu will approve of his project. Qingshan says that the money is not Erhu's and that he cannot think of any reason why he will disapprove of the project. Xi tells Qingshan that Erhu is a man of principles and that every affair with regard to the village will need to be discussed and approved of by the village committee. Xi does not think that other committee members will approve of the project even if Erhu does. Qingshan says that Erhu is the village head and the others are not important. Qingshan tells his parents not to warn him away from his project. He tells them that he will go to talk to Erhu about the project right away. Qingshan goes to the committee for Erhu. Xi does not think that his son can run the methane project. Xi thinks his son is inviting trouble for himself.

The following day, Xi goes to the village committee to see Erhu since the latter has sent for him. When Xi arrives, Xi asks Erhu whether Erhu wants to talk to him about Qingshan's methane project. Erhu gives Xi a positive reply. He tells Xi that Qingshan went to talk to him last night about his methane project. Erhu approved of Qingshan's methane project and agreed to allocate land for his project if needed. The problem is that Qingshan wants the committee to provide money for his project and that the committee is short of money. When Qingshan wanted to use the money allocated for the construction of village infrastructure, Erhu told him that methane project is not part of the village infrastructure construction. Angry with Erhu's refusal to give him the money he needs for his project, he told Erhu that he would sue Erhu for making his mother lame with his injection. Hearing what Erhu has told him, Xi tells him that he will talk to Qingshan.

Xi arrives home, angry and looks for Qingshan. Xiulan tells him that Qingshan seems to have gone to the town. Anxious, Xi leaves for the town for Qingshan. Xiulan asks Xi why he is angry with Qingshan again. Xi tells her that Qingshan wants to sue Erhu for making her lame with the injection because of Erhu's refusal to give him money for his methane project.

Xi goes to the Judicial Department in the town and asks the head of the department whether Qingshan has come to sue Erhu or not but he could not get any information. He then goes to other places for Qingshan. He happens to meet Qingshan who has just got out of a shop. When Xi asks Qingshan what he has come to the town for, his son tells him that he has come to buy some gifts for Erhu. Xi tells his son that Erhu has told him about his plan to sue Erhu. Qingshan says that he only wanted to scare Erhu by saying that. Xi tells Qingshan that Erhu is not a man who will accept gifts and asks his son to return the gifts back to the shop. Qingshan has to do what his father has told him to despite of his

reluctance to do so. The shop assistant refuses to refund Qingshan money but allows him to exchange other goods in the shop for the same value. Qingshan gets a set of forgery wedding rings and bracelets and wants to send them to Ma Cuilian as betrothal gifts. Xi gives his consent to Qingshan's choice.

While Xi goes to the town for Qingshan, Sangui returns to the village with his car. Erhu is surprised at his return and asks him why he has returned. Erhu tells Erhu that he has come back to help the village this time. At the village committee, Sangui tells Erhu that he has a grass-growth project. It is a cooperative project between him and a businessman in Guangdong province. It involves growing lavender seeds. Sangui tells Erhu that he is very confident that lavender can make great profit and he suggests that the plant be grown the right away. Erhu tells Sangui that winter is not the right season for the growth of lavender and that he has to wait for next year for the growth. Sangui tells Erhu that lavender can be grown in a greenhouse. Xi asks Sangui to wait for Xi and discuss with him about the lavender project. Sangui agrees.

When Qingshan and Xi arrive back at the village, they meet Gaihua who is on her way home. Qingshan asks his father to go home first. Qingshan then stops and talks to Gaihua. He tells Gaihua that he has just been to the town and that has got the betrothal gifts her mother requests. Gaihua does not believe that Qingshan can afford to buy the gifts her mother demands. When Qingshan shows her the forgery rings and bracelets, Gaihua says that it costs too much to buy them. When she learns from Qingshan that they are not real ones, she thinks they may as well serve the purpose of satisfying her mother's request for the time being and thus get her formal consent to their relationship. Qingshan then takes the crops for Gaihua and accompanies her home.

Segment 6 Xi agrees to cooperate with Sangui with regard to lavender project; Qingshan goes to the city to take lavender seeds and Gaihua goes with him; Ma worries about Gaihua and Qingshan going to the city together and ask Xi's family to prepare their marriage in advance; Ma's request annoys Xi.

That night, Xi goes to the village committee. Sangui tells him about the project of growing lavender and assures him that it is profitable. Xi finds the project interesting but is worried about the selling of the lavender seeds. Erhu tells Xi that Sangui will be responsible for the sale of the seeds and Sangui confirms what Erhu has said. Erhu thinks the plan feasible and suggests that they can take this opportunity to establish an economic cooperative. The villagers have hesitated to form and join the cooperative because they worry about the selling of the products produced. Now that Sangui is responsible for the selling of the projects, all the villagers are willing to join the cooperative. Sangui, however, disagrees with Erhu's suggestion that the whole village grow the lavender for its seeds. He explains to Erhu that too many people growing lavender may cause the supply to be greater than demand and that will prevent the project from being profitable. Sangui suggests that Xi's 30 mu of land is enough to grow the lavender for its seeds. If they form an economic cooperative, they need to do market investigation to decide what unique crops to grow. Erhu thinks Sangui's suggestion practical. If their lavender project turns out to be successful and thus works out a feasible way for an economic development, Erhu suggests that Sangui come back to the village and form an economic cooperative with Xi. They can then set an example for the whole village and thus lead the whole village to develop the village economy. Xi agrees. Sangui learns from Xi about the completion of his greenhouse and gladly tells the latter that they can start the project right away with the completed greenhouse. Xi tells Sangui to take Qingshan to the city to get the lavender seeds and sign the lavender contract.

The following day, Qingshan waits for Sangui at the village locust tree. When Sangui arrives with his car and asks Qingshan to get in, Qingshan asks him to wait for Gaihua who also wants to go to the city. Immediately after Qingshan and Gaihua leave with Sangui for the city, Ma Cuilian comes to tell Xiulan and Xi that Qingshan has taken Gaihua to the city. Qingmei tells Ma that it may be good for Gaihua and can help her to open her eyes for she has never been to the city before. Ma agrees with Qingmei to some degree but she is worried that Qingshan and Gaihua are not yet married and that it is not proper for her and Qingshan to go together to the city before their marriage. Ma asks Xiulan and Xi to start preparation for the marriage of Qingshan and Xi before their return. She tells Xi and Xiulan about her plan for the preparation and this annoys Xi. Ma tells him all she is doing is for the good of the two young people. She worries that they will cohabit and may have children before marriage, which is not appropriate.

Episode 13

Segment 1 Xi withdraws his consent to the relationship between Qingshan and Gaihua and denies sending Ma any betrothal gifts; Ma leaves angrily; Xi gets framework manufacturer to rebuild his collapsed greenhouse; Gaihua stays at the city;

Ma asks Xi why he is angry every times she talks to him. She tells him that she is simply doing something for the two young people in case they live together before marriage and have children before marriage. She suggests that Gaihua and Qingshan get married as soon as possible. Xiulan is surprised at Ma's suggestion and tells her that the relationship between the two young people has not been finalized yet. Xi tells her that he had disapproved of the relationship from the very beginning. He has changed his mind and has not stopped Qingshan from seeing Gaihua because Gaihua has recently helped to cure Xiulan's leg. He had wanted to give and has given Ma a chance to change her annoying habit of meddling in the relationship. Xi tells Ma that she has not changed for the better but for the worse. Xi angrily tells Ma that he will not give his consent to the relationship. Ma tells Xi that she has expected that Xi will change his mind and that she will not return the betrothal gifts to him. Xi denies sending her any betrothal gifts and asks her to ask Gaihua about the gifts. Ma feels puzzled by what Xi has just said and asks Xiulan whether the gold ring and silver bracelet sent to her are the forgery ones. Xiulan tells Ma she knows nothing about the betrothal gifts. Ma goes home angrily. After Ma's leave, Xiulan goes to ask Xi to explain what has happened. Xi tells his wife the truth of the betrothal gifts. When Qingmei comes to ask Xi about what has happened, Xi asks her not to meddle in the relationship between Qingshan and Gaihua anymore. Xi cannot put up with Ma and does not want to invite any further trouble from Ma. While they are still talking, there starts a strong wind. Xi is worried about the newly established greenhouse but Qingmei tells her father that the greenhouse will be all right since Wensheng has told her so.

When Xi, Qingmei and Wensheng go to check the greenhouse in the field the following day, they find the greenhouse has collapsed. Wensheng checked the collapsed pieces and tells Xi that the collapse results from poor quality of the main framework. That night, Xi goes to the village committee to talk to Baoqing about the collapse of his greenhouse because Xi has bought the framework from Baoqing's friend. Baoqing calls his friend, Jianping, about the collapse of the framework. Jianping asks him to tell Xi to go to the factory to get refund or get a new framework if the collapse is confirmed to be caused by the poor quality of the framework.

The following day, Xi goes to the factory and shows part of the collapsed framework to the factory staff that is in charge of the quality. The staff admits that there is a problem with the framework. Xi asks for a compensation of all the cost caused by the poor quality of the framework but the staff tells Xi that he can only get part of the compensation. Xi argues with the staff about full compensation but the staff refuses. The head of the factory comes and invites Xi to his office to discuss the compensation. The head scolds the quality staff for his attitude towards Xi, sends factory workers to transport a new framework to Xijia village and to rebuild a new greenhouse for Xi.

Sangui is showing Gaihua and Qingshan around the city. Sangui is fond of Gaihua and tries to be close to her but Gaihua sticks to Qingshan closely. In his office, Sangui sends Qingshan to buy food so that he can be with Gaihua alone. Sangui asks Gaihua to stay at the city and work as his secretary but she refuses his offer. She tells Sangui that she wants to stay at the city and asks him to help her find some other job. Sangui promises to find her a job.

When Gaihua later tells Qingshan about her plan to work at the city, Qingshan wants her to go back to the village with him. Gaihua manages to persuade Qingshan to let her stay and work at the city with her explanation that she wants to avoid her annoying mother.

Segment 2 Ma scolds Qingshan for sending her forgery betrothal gifts and accuses Qingshan of seducing Gaihua into the city and Qingshan admits doing the former but angrily denies doing the latter.

When Qingshan comes back to the village two days later, Ma is waiting for him at the village locust tree. Qingshan tells her that Gaihua stays and works at the city. Ma scolds Qingshan for taking her daughter away to the city. She accuses Qingshan of being as bad as his father Xi. She asks Qingshan why he has given her the forgery betrothal gifts. Qingshan

tells her that he was forced to do so but he promises to give her the real ones in the future. Ma tells Qingshan that she does not believe him or his father and that her daughter Gaihua will have no more relationship with him from then on. She tells him that she will go to the police to charge him with sexual harassment if he tries to seduce her daughter again. Qingshan is angry at Ma' unreasonable remarks and argues with her. Ma insists that Qingshan has seduced her daughter to the city. Qingshan denies her charge and tells her that Gaihua herself wants to go to the city. She wants to stay at the city to avoid her silliness. Xi has been hiding behind the locus tree, watching what has happened between Ma and Qingshan. He signals to his son, asking him to leave, but he is found out by Ma who angrily challenges him to get out to face her. Qingshan runs away home while his father runs to the field.

Segment 3 Xi's family grow lavender in the field; Ma goes to the village committee to ask Erhu to get Xi's family to get Gaihua back to the village for her; Ma's extreme rudeness infuriates Xiulan who has come to the committee on Erhu's request; Ling'ai goes to the field to ask Xi to get Wensheng to help her establish a greenhouse and Xi tells her he needs to consult with Xiulan;

Xi, Qingmei, Qingshan and Wensheng are growing lavender in the field. Growing lavender is different from growing crops. Qingmei and Qingshan grow lavender seeds according to the instructions of the handbook while Xi helps them.

Ma goes to the village committee to complain about Xi's deceiving her with forged betrothal gifts and Qingshan's taking Gaihua to the city. Erhu tries persuading Ma to be tolerant and forgiving. Erhu asks Xiulan to come to the village committee about the matter. When Xiulan arrives, she finds that Ma is also at the committee. Erhu signals Xiulan to Ma who is hostile and rude to her. Xiulan comes over to ask her not to worry about Gaihua since her daughter is a grown-up. Xiulan tells Ma that Gaihua's going to the city is not Qingshan's fault. Ma insists that Qingshan seduces her daughter to the city and that her daughter will not know where to take the bus to the city without Qingshan's seduction. Since Ma insists on getting Gaihua back to the village, Erhu suggests that Ma go to the city herself and that Xi's family pay Ma the transportation fee. Xiulan agrees but she tells Ma that it is not a bad thing for Gaihua to stay and work in the city and asks Ma to let her daughter do what she wants. Ma is angry at Xiulan's suggestion, asking her why Qingmei does not go to the city. Xiulan tells her that Qingmei's situation is different. Ma insists that Xi's family go and get Gaihua back to the village. Otherwise she will stay Xi's house. Xiulan tells her that it is ok if Ma wants to come and stay with her family. Xiulan tells Ma that they can do the washing and other housework together. Ma is angry with Xiulan's suggestion and says something humiliating to Xiulan. When Ma goes too far, Erhu stops her. Xiulan cannot stand Ma's rudeness anymore and leaves the committee angrily. Erhu tells Ma that she will have to go to the city and get Gaihua back to the village herself.

While Xiulan is at the village committee, Xi and others are still busy growing lavender seeds in the field. Xi asks Qingshan to go to the city the following day to get a tractorful of organic human manure for their lavender. Qingshan suggests that they could use chemical fertilizer for the lavender. Xi tells his son that chemical fertilizer costs a lot of money. Qingshan agrees to go to the city to get human manure to lower the cost of growing lavender. Later Ling'ai comes over to the field and asks Xi whether the greenhouse can make money and gets positive reply from Xi. Xi asks her whether she wants to build a greenhouse and grow crops in it. Ling'ai tells Xi that she tried to build a greenhouse and grow crops in it years ago but failed. Xi tells her that her failure results from her lack of greenhouse growth knowledge and skills. Ling'ai agrees with Xi and asks Xi how he has come to get the knowledge and skills needed. Xi shows her Wensheng who is working in the field. Ling'ai asks Xi who Wensheng is. Xi tells her that he is Qingmei's fiancé and his son-in-law-to-be. Ling'ai asks Xi whether Wensheng can help to build a greenhouse for her. Xi tells her that he needs to discuss with Xiulan since she is an important part of the family and has a final say with regard to family matters. Ling'ai jokingly tells Xi that anyone who marries him will surely enjoy a happy life like Xiulan has. Xi returns her joke, saying that Xiulan does not since she almost gets lame and that Xiulan needs to enjoy her life now in case she has arm broken one day. Ling'ai scolds Xi for talking non-sense. Qingmei feels puzzled when her father tells Ling'ai that he needs to discuss with Xiulan when Ling'ai wants Wensheng to help her build a greenhouse. After Ling'ai leaves the field, Qingmei asks her father why. Xi tells her that her mother has got the money the family needs from Ling'ai and has returned the money to

Ling'ai and that what he has just done is to make Ling'ai know the importance of her mother in their family and thus make her mother feel honored. Hearing her father's words, Qingmei teases her father for being naughty.

Segment 4 Ling'ai gets her husband Pingchuan back to help her with the greenhouse and Xiulan gives Ling'ai her promise to get Wensheng to help her.

Pingchuan hurries home from the city when he learns that his wife Ling'ai has broken her arm. When he arrives home, he finds Ling'ai intact. Feeling strange that Ling'ai has lied to him, he asks Ling'ai why she has got him back. Ling'ai tells him about Xi's recent establishment of a greenhouse to grow crops. She wants to build a similar greenhouse and wants Pingchuan to come back to help her with the building of the greenhouse. Pingchuan is a bit annoyed about his wife's getting him back for the greenhouse.

At night Xiulan tells Xi that Ma has been to the village committee during the day and that the committee has asked her to the committee. When Xi asks his wife what Ma has wanted from her, his wife tells him that Ma wants her to get Gaihua back to the village. Xi tells his wife to pay no attention to Ma, saying that Ma has to go to the city to find Gaihua herself. Xi then tells Xiulan that Ling'ai has come to the field and talked to him during the day. Ling'ai is interested in building a greenhouse and wants Wensheng to help her with the greenhouse. Xiulan tells Xi that Wensheng can go and help her. Xi tells Xiulan that he has not given her a reply right away and that it is up to her to decide whether Wensheng should go and help Ling'ai with the greenhouse. Xiulan is glad about Xi's respect for her with regard to Ling'ai request.

The following morning Pingchuan tells Ling'ai that they have built a greenhouse before but with failure. Ling'ai tells Pingchuan that the failure was due to lack of the skills needed to build and use the greenhouse. She wants Pingchuan to come back to the village and they together can build a greenhouse with the help of Wensheng. Pingchuan is not very interested in her plan. He shows his doubt about Wensheng's skills. Ling'ai tells Pingchuan her conviction for what Xi has been doing. She says that they should follow Xi's suit. Pingchuan wants to go back to the city to work, but he gives in to his wife's aggressive persuasion despite his reluctance to stay at the village. He asks Ling'ai to talk to Xiulan about Wensheng's helping them.

Ling'ai comes to see Xiulan with a bar of cigarette for Xi. Xiulan tells Xi about Ling'ai's coming but Xi pretends to go to the toilet. Xiulan asks Ling'ai about Pingchuan. Ling'ai tells Xiulan that she has got Pingchuan back to the village and that she wants to build a greenhouse and grow crops in it. She wonders whether Xiulan can tell her son-in-law Wensheng to help them with the greenhouse. She apologizes to Xiulan for her rude remarks with regard to Qingshan's tractor. Xiulan says she has already forgotten the unpleasant happening and asks Ling'ai to forget it too. Xiulan thanks Ling'ai for lending her family the money needed to buy the tractor and she gladly promises Ling'ai that Wensheng will go to help her to build a greenhouse.

Segment 4 Xi gets the tractor from the traffic police; Qingmei suspects Wensheng and Xiulan reassures her of Wensheng; Pingchuan and Ling'ai argue with each other about the establishment of a greenhouse; Ling'ai and Pingchuan make up with each other. (Sequences get interwoven with each other in that one sequence has not yet finished, it presents the item(s) to start the coming sequence and in this way, one sequence goes smoothly to the next).

When Qingshan is on his way to the city to collect human manure with his tractor, he is stopped by a traffic policeman and his tractor is detained because it has affected the city image.

Meanwhile Wensheng is helping Ling'ai to measure the land for the establishment of the greenhouse. Pingchuan is smoking nearby and is obviously not interested in the greenhouse. He has no confidence in the greenhouse since he has failed once. Wensheng tells Pingchuan that he can help him with the knowledge and skill but still not draw Pingchuan's interest in the greenhouse. Ling'ai is angry with Pingchuan's rudeness and tells him off. Pingchuan tells her that he is not interested in the greenhouse and does not want to come back to the village. Ling'ai doubts Pingchuan has an affair in the city and argues with him and they fight with each other in the field. Wensheng tries to separate them and stop them fighting against each other. Ling'ai scolds Pingchuan for doing nothing when coming back. Pingchuan leaves the field.

In the city, Qingshan rushes to a shop to buy some cigarette to send them to the traffic policeman and asks him to let him

go, but the traffic policeman refuses his gifts and asks him to drive his tractor to the side of the road.

In the field, Ling'ai apologizes to Wensheng for what has happened, asks him to go home first and says that she will come to thank him later for his work. Wensheng asks Ling'ai to talk over the building of greenhouse with Pingchuan.

Qingshan calls Erhu, asking him to tell his father to come to the city as soon as possible because his tractor has been detained by the traffic police.

Erhu runs to find Xi and meets Xi on his way to the field. Erhu tells Xi about the detention of Qingshan's tractor by a traffic police and has called to ask him to get to the city as soon as possible. Erhu has given Xi an introductory letter in case he needs it. Xi rides a bike to the traffic police station. When Xi arrives, Qingshan has been waiting for him for quite a while. Xi asks Qingshan why the tractor has been detained. Qingshan tells him that the city is improving the city image these days. The traffic police tells him that signs have been put up showing the tractor is not allowed to enter the city. Qingshan has missed the sign and thus gets his tractor detained. Xi tells his son that they will have to do what the traffic police tell them to do since they have violated the traffic regulations. Xi is shocked when Qingshan tells him that they need to pay a fine of 200 yuan. Qingshan tells him that 200 yuan is not big and that he has been asked to write a self-criticism, promising not to violate the same rule again. Xi goes to talk to the head of the traffic police.

In the meantime, Qingmei and Xiulan are feeding the fish in the fish pond. Qingmei talks to her mother about Wensheng. Qingmei says that Wensheng has never talked about his home. She has told him several times that she wants to go to his home but he always find some excuses to refuse her request. Qingmei thinks there must be some problem with Wensheng's refusal. She is afraid that Wensheng has a wife at his home and does not want her to find that out. Xiulan says that her daughter is talking non-sense and that Wensheng is not a person she thinks. Xiulan tells her daughter what she has learned from Wensheng about his family. Wensheng's mother is dead and his father has disappeared. Xiulan thinks it is understandable that Wensheng does not want to go home. Qingmei insists that Wensheng should have the desire to go home since that is still his home despite the fact her mother has just mentioned. Qingmei thinks that Wensheng may have some brother or sister besides his parents. She thinks that Wensheng must have something that she does not know.

Xi is talking to the head of the traffic police. He explains patiently to the head about his mobile tractor-toilet that is used to collect human manure in the city. His mobile toilet has been reported by TV stations. Qingshan has ridden this tractor-toilet to the city to collect human manure. The head tells Xi that his son has violated the traffic regulation that forbids the tractor to enter the city because of the city image project and insists that Xi pay a fine of 200 yuan for the violation. Xi tells the head that a farmer has great difficulty earning money and that 200 yuan is a huge sum for a farmer like him. On Xi's explanation, the head tells Xi that he will go and check his tractor-toilet and then decide that whether he pays the fine or not. If it is a toilet, the head will let Xi off and if not, Xi pays the 200-yuan fine. Xi agrees. The head takes a look at the tractor-toilet and tells Xi that it is a tractor while Xi insists it is a toilet by showing him the toilet attached to the tractor. It is the first time that the head has seen such a combination of a tractor and a toilet. The head tells Xi that it is indeed a good practice for farmers to go and collect human manure from the city. He decides to let Qingshan off but he requests them not to ride the tractor-toilet into the city again. Qingshan and Xi are glad of the fine exemption and readily accept the head's request. Xi and Qingshan ride the tractor immediately out of the traffic police station. On their way back to the village, Xi keeps thinking about the city image project and his manure-collection in the city. It is all right to have the city image improved but it is not wrong for him to go and collect human manure in the city. He thinks it is feasible for him to use a tractor to do the manure-collection work. He cannot think of using others better means to do the job. He cannot use a car to do the job.

When Xi and Qingshan come back home, Xiulan tells Xi that Qingmei has some doubts about Wensheng. Xi reassures Xiulan that Wensheng is good and there is nothing wrong with him. Xi, however, tells Xiulan that he is a bit worried about Qingshan. He explains to his wife that Qingshan is always fond of Gaihua and Gaihua is fond of him too. He is worried that Gaihua may change her mind during her stay in the city. Sangui is fond of Gaihua too and has helped to find a job for Gaihua. It is easy for Sangui to see Gaihua while she is in the city. It is very likely that Gaihua may become of fond of

Sangui. When that happens, Qingshan will have no more relation with Gaihua. Hearing Xi's explanation, Xiulan feels sorry for her son, but Xi does not. Xi does not want his son to become the son-in-law of Ma Cuilian.

That night Ma is packing for her leave for the city tomorrow. When her daughter Gaiping asks where she is going, Ma tells her that she is going to the city to look for her elder sister Gaihua. When Gaiping asks her whether she can find her sister or not, Ma tells her that she can find her sister so long as she finds Sangui. Ma asks Gaiping for Sangui's telephone number. Gaiping tells her that it is written on her arm. Ma looks at her arm for it but it has already been washed away by soap. Ma complains to herself about the soap, saying that the soap is effective in washing away what should be remained and is not effective in washing away what should be cleaned.

In the meantime, Pingchuan reconciles with his wife Ling'ai.

Segment 5 Ma Cuilian goes to the city to look for Gaihua and manages to persuade Gaihua to be Sangui's girlfriend with threat.

Sangui comes to the railway station to pick up Ma Cuilian and takes her to his office. Ma is very impressed by Sangui's office and compliments him on what he has had. He thanks Ma for her compliments but tells her that he cannot make Gaihua like him despite what he has had. Sangui is excited and surprised when Ma tells him that she wants to marry Gaihua to him. Ma tells him about Qingshan's giving her the forgery rings and bracelets as betrothal gifts. Ma asks Sangui about Gaihua and he calls Gaihua about her mother's coming and Ma speaks to her daughter over the phone.

In the meanwhile, Liuzi sends some lamb meat to Xi and Xiulan to thank them for lending him money to start his lamb business. When Liuzi returns 1000 yuan to Xi, Xi gives the money to Xiulan who feels happy.

Gaihua goes to Sangui's office to meet her mother. Sangui leaves them in the office. Ma tells Gaihua that she and Qingshan are over and asks Gaihua to forget Qingshan. When Gaihua tells Ma that she will go home, Ma tells her that there is no rush for her to go back the village. Ma tells Gaihua that she has found a new boyfriend for her. Gaihua is angry with Ma and asks her not to intervene in her marriage. Gaihua wants to have the freedom to choose her boyfriend. Ma asks Gaihua to be Sangui's girlfriend. Gaihua refuses right away but has to give in to her mother who plays on familial love and who threatens to kill herself if Gaihua does not take her advice.

Ma is very impressed by the dinner Sangui has invited her to. During the dinner, Sangui asks Ma whether she really wants Gaihua to break up with Qingshan. Ma tells Sangui that she does not want Gaihua and Qingshan to be together at all. She thinks highly of Sangui and tells him that he is much more generous than Xi.

Episode 14

Segment 1 Ma requests and gets betrothal gifts from Sangui; Xi turns to Niu for help and Niu gets him a special permit for his tractor-toilet to enter the city to collect human manure.

At dinner, Ma requests betrothal gifts from Sangui who has readily done so.

Qingshan tells his father that they will need to spend a lot of money buying chemical fertilizers without using the tractor to collect human manure in the city. He asks his father to talk to Mr. Li, head of town to get them a permit for their tractor-toilet to go to the city for manure-collection. Xi doubts whether Li is in charge of the traffic police. Qingshan then suggests that Xi turn to Mr. Niu, head of country for help. Xi takes his son's suggestion.

Niu is surprised to find Xi waiting for him outside his house. Xi tells him that he cannot find him at this office and thus waits for him there. Niu invites Xi to his house, introduces Xi to his wife and tells her to invite him to the house if Xi comes for him again in the future. Niu says that he does not want other people think that he looks like an officer. Xi tells Niu that he is in fact an officer. Niu tells Xi that an officer has a good job if people feel that the officer does not look like an officer. Niu says that he wants to be a good officer. Xi tells Niu that he is indeed a good officer. If he is not, a farmer like him will not dare come to visit him. Niu asks his wife to prepare meals for him and Xi. Niu asks Xi what he has come to visit him for. Xi tells Niu about his tractor-toilet. He has been using it to collect human manure in the city. It has brought

convenience to city people, and at the same time has provided him with the organic human manure needed for the growth of crops. The manure collected is much better than the chemical fertilizer and has helped to grow green crops for him. He has been praised for his novel practice and has been reported by TV stations. Niu tells Xi that he has heard about this and has talked about it in an agricultural meeting. He did not know it was Xi that has come up with such a good idea and he compliments Xi on his innovation. Xi tells Niu that he cannot carry out his practice anymore because the traffic police division does not allow his tractor-toilet to enter the city for fear that it will affect the city image. He has contracted a lot of land and needs a lot of organic human manure. Xi wonders whether Niu can call the traffic police division to give him a special permit for his tractor-toilet so that he can still go and collect human manure in the city. He tells Niu that his tractor is not only a tractor but a toilet as well. Niu thinks for a while and promises to get Xi a special permit but he asks Xi to beautify the appearance of the toilet so that it will not affect the city image. Xi gladly accepts Niu's advice. Niu then gives a call to Director Li and asks Li to communicate to the traffic police division to give Xi a special permit for his tractor-toilet. Xi is overjoyed with what Niu has done for him.

Segment 2 Qingshan learns from Ma that Gaihua has a new boyfriend, Sangui ; Qingshan argues with Ma, becomes furious with Xi and threatens to kill Sangui while Xi is happy.

Ma Cuilian comes back to the village and meets Ling'ai at the village locust tree. Ling'ai asks Ma whether she has found Gaihua and why Gaihua has not come back. Ma tells Ling'ai that Gaihua has found a boyfriend in the city and stays there. Knowing that Qingshan is walking nearby, Ma tells Ling'ai that her boyfriend is a company head. Hearing what Ma has said to Ling'ai, Qingshan stops and asks her not to talk non-sense in case other villagers laugh at her. Ma tells Qingshan that Gaihua's finding a boyfriend in the city has nothing to do with him. Qingshan tells Ma that he and Gaihua are still boyfriend and girlfriend. Ma retorts that Gaihua and he have no more relationship otherwise Gaihua will not have become Sangui's girlfriend. Qingshan is angry at what Ma has said and asks her to get Gaihua back to the village and he will ask Gaihua about their relationship. Ma refuses Qingshan's request. Qingshan rebukes Ma for being silly and for being only interested in money. Qingshan argues with Ma and Ling'ai tries to stop them from arguing.

Qingshan arrives home, angrily throwing the water bucket onto the ground. Xiulan comes over and asks him whether he has any hatred toward the buckets. He tells his mother that he has hatred toward people and that he wants to kill people. He tells his mother that Sangui has seduced Gaihua and that he will not let him off. Xi , who has just come back from his visit from Niu, tells Qingshan that he could do nothing to Sangui since he is in the city. Qingshan threatens to uproot the lavender in the field. Xiulan reminds her son that the lavender is not Sangui's but theirs. Qingshan threatens to kill Sangui when he returns to the village. Xi ironically suggests to his son that he should crash Sangui with a plane. Xiulan asks Xi to stop inflaming Qingshan's anger. Qingshan blames his father for what has happened to him today. Xi tells his son that it is not a bad thing for him and asks him not to worry. Qingshan tells Xi that it is the best thing for Xi but the worst thing for himself. Xi scolds Qingshan for being good-for-nothing. Qingshan retorts to his father and spits on to his father, saying that he is good-for-nothing and that he is not Xi's son. Xi laughs at Qingshan's behavior while Xiulan feels worried.

After Erhu's daughter goes to her room to do her assignment on his request, Dongping, who is working on the sewing machine, tells Erhu that Sangui is a trouble-maker. Whenever Sangui comes back, something unpleasant will surely happen. Erhu tells his wife that Sangui has helped his brother Xi with regard to his relationship to Gaihua. Otherwise Xi will have great trouble. When his wife asks him whether Gaihua has come back, Erhu gives her a negative answer. Dongping asks how he has learned the relationship between Gaihua and Sangui. Erhu tells her that Ma has said so. Dongping says Ma's words are not to be trusted and tells Erhu that it is really difficult to tell what things may be like. Erhu feels a burst of stomachache again. Dongping gives Erhu some medicine for stomachache and asks him to go to the county hospital tomorrow instead of working.

Segment 3 Erhu goes to the county hospital for his stomach trouble; Erhu happens to find that the paper cut pattern by Shuanzi's mother has been used as the trademark of a fodder company.

The next day, Qingshan sends Erhu and Dongping to the county hospital with his tractor.

Xiulan and Xi are weeding the lavender field. She asks Xi when the lavender will bear seeds. Xi tells her that the lavender will bear seeds at the end of the year. Xiulan tells Xi that they need to keep an eye on the lavender during the seeding period in case someone comes to steal the seeds out of jealousy. Xi does not think that any one will steal the seeds since the seeds are not edible and that the seeds can only be sold to businessmen who are interested in purchasing them. In spite of Xi's explanation, Xiulan still insists that they keep an eye on the lavender in case someone destroys the seeds in purpose. Xi does not think that anyone will come and destroy the seeds since they have not offended anyone. Xiulan reminds Xi that he has offended Ma Cuilian but Xi does not think Ma is cruel because Ma is from the same village. Xiulan tells Xi that she does not know Ma as well as he does.

The doctor tells Erhu that his stomachache is very serious and advises him to have meals regularly. The doctor also tells Erhu to stop drinking wine in the future otherwise his life will be in great danger. Erhu tells the doctor that he is head of a village and that he cannot solve a lot of problems without drinking wine. The doctor tells Erhu that work is important but it is not worthwhile if the work endangers his life. The doctor prescribes some traditional Chinese medicine for Erhu and asks Erhu to get and take the medicine accordingly.

Qingmei goes to the field to help her parents. Xiulan asks her about Wensheng and Qingmei tells her mother that he has gone to help Ling'ai with their greenhouse.

After leaving the hospital, Dongping and Erhu have some noodles in a noodle restaurant. While having their noodles, Erhu and Dongping recognize the trademark on a fodder bag as the paper cut pattern by Shuanzi's mother.

Segment 4 Shuanzi's mother gives Erhu her permission to get compensation money from the fodder company which has used her paper pattern as the trademark and manages to persuade Xi to seek compensation for Shuanzi's mother from the company.

After going back to the village, Erhu visits Shuanzi's mother at night. He shows her the rice bag with the same trademark he has seen in the city and asks her whether she can recognize the pattern. Shuanzi's mother tells her Erhu that it is the pattern she has cut but does not know why the pattern has been there. When Erhu learns from her that she has only given her paper patterns to the son of the former head of the Cultural Bureau of the county, he realizes that Shuanzi's mother's paper cut pattern has been used by a fodder company as the trademark without her permission. Shuanzi's mother asks Erhu whether there is something wrong with her paper pattern on the bag, he explains to her that the fodder company has no right to use but has used her paper pattern as their trademark and that the company has infringed on her intellectual property right for doing so and that she can sue the company for their doing so and ask the company to pay money to her for their usage of her pattern. Erhu asks her whether it is ok for the village committee to sue the company on behalf of her. Shuanzi's mother tells Erhu that she has total trust in Erhu and that Erhu can do what he thinks it is right for her. She adds that she will give all the money to the village committee if she can get money from the company. Erhu says that the village committee will not take the money since it is related to her. He suggests to her that they get the money from the company first and then she decides how to use the money. She agrees with Erhu.

The following morning Erhu uses the village speaker to call Xi to go to the village committee. When Xi arrives, Erhu tells Xi that a fodder company has used the paper pattern cut by Shuanzi's mother as the company's trademark without her permission and that Shuanzi's mother can sue the company for their illegal use of her pattern and she can get compensation money from the company. She has given him Erhu the right to sue the company on her behalf and that she has offered to contribute all the prospective money to the village committee. Erhu tells Xi that the compensation money can amount to a big sum of as much as one million at most and hundreds of thousands at least. Erhu tells Xi that Shuanzi's mother considers Xi as her family and that he wants Xi to do the suing job for Shuanzi's mother since he is intelligent, has been to work in the city and knows how to handle different situations. Erhu wants to Xi to go to talk to the fodder company first and find out how much compensation the company is willing to pay for the use of Shuanzi's mother's paper pattern. When Xi declines, Erhu tells him that he can allocate a portion of the compensation as a special fund to start his economic cooperative if they get the compensation from the company. Xi is highly motivated by Erhu's offer and readily accepts the task to sue the fodder company for Shuanzi's mother.

Segment 5 Xi makes his first but unsuccessful attempt to get compensation from the fodder company for its infringement of copyright of Shuanzi's mother's paper pattern; Xi turns to Sangui for help; Gaihua tells Sangui that she does not love him.

Xi does not fear arguing or fighting with others, but he has never had the experience of bringing other to court. Xi takes a train to the city and goes to the fodder company right away. Xi talks to the head of the company about his company's illegal use of the paper pattern by Xijia village.

In the meantime, Gaihua goes to see Sangui. She tells Sangui that she has not promised him anything and asks him why he has given betrothal money to her mother. Sangui tells her that her mother has asked him for the betrothal money. Gaihua tells him that the betrothal money are not real betrothal gifts but be considered as money he has lent to her mother. Sangui is a bit angry and asks Gaihua why he should lend money to her mother. Gaihua tells him that she is grateful for his kindness to her, but she only likes Qingshan. She asks him not to put her in a difficult situation. Sangui tells her that he only like her. Gaihua requests him not to think it that way. Sangui asks her in which way he is not as good as Qingshan. Gaihua tells him that people are not things and thus cannot be compared. Sangui asks her in what way Qingshan is good. Gaihua says that she likes Qingshan whatever he is, for better and for worse. Sangui is frustrated by what Gaihua has said.

Xi and the head of the company are still talking. The company head tells Xi that the paper pattern his company has used as the trademark is part of the folk paper cut art and that it is difficult to tell who has cut the paper pattern. The head tells Xi that he did not know where the paper pattern came from. Xi tells the head that he should have known the source of paper pattern since he is the company head and that he should be responsible for the pattern now that the pattern has become the trademark of his company. The head asks whether the pattern has been cut by Xi. Xi tells him that the pattern has been cut by an old woman in Xijia village and that she has given him her permission to ask the company to pay compensation for the company's illegal use of her pattern. Xi tells the head that Xijia village, part of Qi county has the folk tradition of cutting paper patterns and that the paper pattern the company has used as the trademark is cut by Wang Daniang (Aunt Wang). Xi tells him that someone from the provincial city came to collect paper patterns from her that summer. Xi guesses that the company may have come to know the pattern from him. The head thinks Xi's guess may be right. He asks Xi to wait for him while he goes to the company office to check the source of pattern. The head comes back later to tell Xi that the trademark of his company has been designed by a cultural company and that Xi should go to talk to the cultural company for compensation.

Segment 5 Xi happens to learn Gaihua does not like Sangui and asks Sangui not to take advantage of her.

After Xi leaves the fodder company, he goes to Sangui's company. When Xi arrives, he hears from outside that Gaihua is trying to get away from Sangui. Xi enters and asks whether Sangui has done anything to Gaihua. Xi asks Sangui not to take advantage of Gaihua. Sangui denies taking advantage of Gaihua. Xi asks him whether his relationship with Gaihua is finalized. Sangui tells him that Gaihua's mother has finalized their relationship but Gaihua has not given her consent yet. Xi is annoyed at what Sangui has told him. Sangui explains that Gaihua's mother has taken betrothal gifts from him but Gaihua does not even allow him to touch her hand because she is still fond of Qingshan. Xi asks Sangui to be patient and to take his time just as the city people do. Sangui disagrees with Xi's suggestion, reminding him of the fact that Gaihua and Qingshan have been with each other for a whole year and that Xi still has not given his consent to their relationship. Xi changes their talk and tells Sangui that he has come to see him for something important.

Segment 7 Xi and Sangui go to see Bai Tianliang for the paper pattern; Bai tells them he has never given the paper cut pattern to anyone and gives his full support for Xi's attempt to get compensation from the fodder company for Shuanzi's mother.

Xi tells Sangui why he has come to the city. Sangui goes with Xi to the Cultural Company. On their way to the cultural way, Sangui tells Xi that it is a bit difficult to sue the fodder company for infringement upon property right and that he has watched similar cases on TV stations. The design company and the company using the trademark by the design

company usually push the responsibilities of infringement upon intellectual property to each other. Xi agrees with Sangui. Xi suggests that they first go and talk to the person who has come to collect the paper patterns by Shuanzi's mother and asks him how the paper pig pattern has passed from him to the fodder company. Xi tells Sangui that it will be difficult to sue the fodder company if the person has given the fodder company the permission to use the pattern or the fodder company has paid the person for the use of the pattern because Shuanzi's mother has received money from the person. Sangui agrees with Xi.

Xi and Sangui go to the Folk Art Gallery to find, Bai Tianliang, the person who has collected Shuanzi's mother's paper cut patterns. Bai gladly receives them. When Xi tells Bai what he has come to the city for, Bai tells him that he has never taken part in any commercial activity. Bai tells them that he has never given Wang's paper pattern to anyone. He has selected several of Wang's paper patterns and put them in a book of folk paper cut patterns which he later shows them. Xi and Sangui look through the book and recognize the pig pattern collected in the book. Bai adds that he has paid Aunt Wang some money for her paper patterns before the publication of the books and that he himself has given her some money given her difficult situation. Xi thinks that the fodder company must have got the pattern from the book. Bai thinks it very likely because the book is published and available in the market. Sangui tells Bai that he and Xi want to sue the fodder company for its illegal use of Aunt Wang's pig pattern and asks whether he is willing to help them as a witness if necessary. Bai readily accepts their request. He thinks that the fodder company should be providing service for the farmers and should not infringe on the interests of the farmers. He, however, suggests that Xi and Sangui go and talk to the fodder company again for the compensation and sue the company if it refuses to compensate. Sangui and Xi take Bai's suggestion and thank him for his help and for giving them the book.

Segment 8 Together with Sangui, Xi makes the second but unsuccessful attempt to get company compensation from the fodder company and decides to bring the company to the court.

When Xi and Sangui talk to the head of the fodder company again about his company's illegal use of Wang's pig pattern, the head denies having any responsibility and insists that they turn to the cultural company for compensation. Xi tells the head that his company has infringed on the copyright of Aunt Wang's paper pig pattern and his company should pay compensation to Aunt Wang. If the company refuses to pay compensation, Xi tells the head that he will sue the company for copyright infringement on behalf of Aunt Wang. The head tells Xi to go ahead. When Xi and Sangui are leaving, the head calls them back to discuss the compensation. The head offers to compensate by giving them the fodder. Sangui tells the head that the village does not raise pig. The head suggests that they can sell the fodder to get money. Xi tells him that it takes time and energy to sell the fodder and there is no guarantee that they can sell the fodder. Xi tells the head to pay compensation by cash. The head tells Xi that his company is in financial difficulty and that he can only pay compensation by fodder and asks Xi to show understanding. Xi tells the head that he should show his understanding to the farmers. Xi says that farmers have a lot of difficulty in farming and that country leaders have thus given a lot of preferential policy to the farmers. The farmers are called on to build a new socialist countryside. Xi urges the head to understand the difficulty of farmers and contribute to the building of the new countryside. The head compliments Xi on his eloquence. Sangui tells the head that Xi is a well-known farmer among the city and county leaders and that Director Wang of the Provincial Economic Committee is Xi's uncle-in-law. Sangui says that Xi is a person who likes to keep a low-profile. When the head asks Xi whether Director Wang is his uncle-in-law, Xi nods despite Sangui's lie. Xi tells the head that he and his uncle-in-law are different and that his uncle-in-law has nothing to do with the case. The head invites Xi and Sangui to lunch and suggests that they go on their discussion during lunch. During lunch, Xi talks to the head about the compensation. The head asks Xi to suggest the amount of compensation and Xi suggests five hundred thousand yuan. The head requests Xi to introduce him to Director Wang and then give him the compensation. Sangui insists that the head pays the compensation before being introduced to Director Wang. The head worries that he cannot see Director Wang after paying the compensation and Sangui equally worries that the head does not pay the compensation after seeing Director Wang. Xi suggests a compromise. Xi suggests that the head sign a compensation contract with them and that they will then introduce him to Director Wang. The head hesitates but then agrees. He says that he will get the contract drafted and then sign the contract with Xi tomorrow.

That night, Xi does not sleep well. Xi complains to Sangui about his telling lies about Director Wang. Sangui tells Xi that it is not possible to have the compensation without the lie.

The following morning Xi and Sangui go to see the company head to sign the compensation contract with him. They ask the head whether he has got the contract ready. They are shocked when the head angrily demands them to stand up. He tells them that they have almost fooled him. He tells them that he has worked as a policeman before and that he did not believe them. Xi tells him why he invited them to lunch if he did not believe them. Sangui agrees with what Xi has just said. Xi apologizes to the head for lying to him but says that it is he who has forced them to do so. The head asks Xi for an explanation. Xi tells the head that he has infringed on the copyright of Aunt Wang but refused to pay compensation for the infringement. The head tells them that he has promised to give them the fodder. Sangui tells the head that they want money instead of the fodder. The head tells them that it is impossible to pay compensation in cash. Sangui tells the head that they will sue him for the infringement and then leaves the fodder company. Xi blames Sangui for his lie. Sangui tells Xi that they can only blame the head for his vigilance. Xi says that they have no other choice but to sue the company now. Sangui had thought that they should bring the case to the court from the very beginning. He suggests that they go to talk to a lawyer for an indictment first and then go to the court to file a lawsuit against the company. They go through a series of annoying court procedures like filing a complaint, paying money and the application of the case. Xi regrets having accepted the task of fighting the compensation for Shuanzi's mother from Erhu. Since he has accepted the task, Xi feels he needs to try his best to do the job well.

Segment 9 Xi talks to Sangui about their economic cooperative, and about Gaihua.

After going through the legal procedures necessary for bringing a case to court, Xi and Sangui have a brief lunch. Sangui tells Xi to return to the village and wait for further information about the lawsuit against the company. Sangui tells Xi that he is too busy with his company work at the city to go back to Xijia village. Xi asks Sangui to find time to think about their economic cooperative project in the village. Sangui tells Xi that it is difficult to establish a cooperative in the village since it involves farmers in the village and he finds it troublesome to communicate with farmers. Realizing that he has offended Xi with what he has just said, Sangui says that Xi is an extraordinary farmer. Xi tells Sangui that he wants to establish a company because of this extraordinariness. Sangui promises Xi that he will return to the village for the establishment of the economic cooperative once he finishes the lavender project. Xi advised Sangui to stop going after Gaihua since she does not have any affection for him at all otherwise he may give people an impression of taking an advantage of her. Sangui reassures and promises Xi that he will not do anything that annoys Gaihua again in the future.

Segment 10 Xi meets Gaihua on the train back to the village; Xi is moved by Gaihua' devotion to Qingshan and accepts her request to give Ma betrothal money.

On the train back to the village, Xi meets Gaihua who offers her seat to him. Xi asks Gaihua whether she hates him for not sending betrothal gifts to her mother. Gaihua tells him that she does not since it is not his fault. Gaihua apologizes to Xi for her mother's demand of betrothal gifts from her but she requests Xi to do her a favor by giving her mother the betrothal gifts. Gaihua promises to pay him back the betrothal money in the future. When Xi asks her whether she does not like Sangui at all, Gaihua tells him that she is not fond of anyone else except Qingshan. Gaihua adds that she has come to work in the city for the sake of Qingshan and help him earn the betrothal money he needs. Xi asks what she is going to do with the betrothal money Sangui has given to her mother. Gaihua tells him that she will get her mother to return it to Sangui. Gaihua is overjoyed and thanks Xi when Xi asks her to tell her mother that he will send the betrothal gifts to her in two days.

Segment 11 Qingshan is overjoyed by Xi's final approval of his relationship with Gaihua but becomes suspicious that Gaihua may have become fond of Sangui after her stay at the city; Gaihua manages to get her mother's consent to her relationship with Qingshan with threats.

When Xi returns home, he tells Qingshan that he has decided to give his consent to his relationship with Gaihua. Qingshan is excited and asks Xi why he has suddenly changed his mind. Xiulan asks Qingshan not to ask his father for

any explanation and asks him to go and see Gaihua. When he asks Xi where Gaihua is, Xi tells him that he and Gaihua have been on the same train back to the village. Qingshan is about to see Gaihua when he stops and turns back. He thinks it unusual that Gaihua is still fond of him. He thinks Gaihua has been in the city for quite a long time and he is not sure whether Gaihua and Sangui have developed any affection for each other during Gaihua's stay in the city. Xi explains to his son that Gaihua has been thinking about him all the time and he has decided to approve of their relationship because he is moved by her devotion to him. Xi asks his son not to have any doubt about Gaihua. Xi tells his son that Gaihua is not fond of Sangui. Despite Xi's explanation, Qingshan still think that something has happened between Gaihua and Sangui, saying that Gaihua is not fond of Sangui but Sangui is fond of her. Xiulan asks Qingshan to stop his doubt.

Gaihua tells Ma that Xi has given consent to her relationship with Gaihua. Angry with Xi, Ma tells her daughter that she disapprove of her relationship with Qingshan. Gaihua angrily scolds her mother for being unreasonable and cries and threatens to kill herself if Ma does not give consent to her relationship with Qingshan. Seeing her daughter really upset, Ma tells Gaihua that she will approve of her relationship with Qingshan if Xi sends her the betrothal gifts equivalent to what Sangui has given her and that she will forget the unpleasant happenings between her family and Xi's.

Episode 15

Segment 1 Qingshan expresses his suspicion of Gaihua and Gaihua is angry with his suspicion.

Xi goes to the village committee to tell Erhu about his visit to the fodder company at the city. Xi tells Erhu that they can do nothing but wait for the notice from the court. Erhu tells Xi that Sangui has given him a lot of support with regard to the case. Xi agrees with Erhu, telling him that Sangui has helped to find a lawyer, file the lawsuit against the fodder company etc. Erhu adds that Sangui has also helped Xi with regard to his relationship with Gaihua. Xi disagrees and tells Erhu that he has agreed to send betrothal gifts to Ma Cuilian and this surprised Erhu.

Qingshan goes to see Gaihua at the village locust tree. Qingshan asks Gaihua about her relationship with Sangui. Gaihua tells Qingshan that she has been thinking about him all the time and she is fond of nobody but him. Qingshan asks Gaihua why her mother has accepted betrothal gifts from Sangui. Gaihua tells Qingshan that she did not know that she had accepted the betrothal gifts and that her mother has agreed to return the betrothal gifts to Sangui. Qingshan says that he does not believe that nothing has happened between Gaihua and Sangui since she has been in the city for a long time. Gaihua asks Qingshan to stop his nonsense and his unreasonable guess. She reassures him that she is not fond of Sangui. Qingshan says that Sangui is fond her and he does not believe that Sangui did not pursue her. Gaihua tells Qingshan that Sangui did pursue her but that she has not accepted his pursuit. Still Qingshan does not believe Gaihua and Gaihua is angry with Qingshan's doubt about her. She tells Qingshan to ask his father if he does not believe her. Gaihua angrily asks Qingshan whether he still wants to maintain their relationship with each other. Qingshan tells her that he has no confidence in their relationship before finding out what has happened between her and Sangui. Gaihua angrily scolds Qingshan for his distrust in her. She tells Qingshan that she has seen through him with his suspicion of her. She thinks Qingshan is not a real man. He will still be suspicious of her even if she marries him. Angry, Gaihua leaves Qingshan.

Segment 2 The fodder company representatives come to Xijia village to discuss compensation with the village committee; Erhu drinks wine at lunch to get more compensation from the company; Erhu's drinking sends himself to hospital because of his severe stomach trouble.

Erhu and Xi are waiting for the representatives of the fodder company who will come and discuss with them the compensation with regard to the company's infringement of copyright of Shuanzi's mother's pig pattern. The company representative and its lawyer get down to business immediately after their arrival at the village. They tell Xi and Erhu that they have received a subpoena from the court and a copy of their complaint. They have come on the behalf of the head of the fodder company to settle the infringement dispute out of the court. The representative wonders whether Erhu and Xi agree with the out-of-court settlement. Erhu tells the representative that it will depend on the likely outcome of the

out-of-settlement and that he will wait for the court decision if the settlement is to the disadvantage of the village committee. The lawyer explains that out-of-court settlement is to have consultation with each other and is based on mutual understanding. He suggests that they should do it in a peaceful and friendly way rather than in a hostile way. He says that he and his client have come a long way to the village and this shows their sincerity in their attempt. Erhu tells them that the village had not wanted to bring the dispute to the court and that the village just wants to have the dispute solved. The lawyer suggests that the fodder company admitted to having used the village paper pattern mistakenly, thus resulting in the infringement of copyright right of the pattern, and that the fodder company agrees to pay the village the compensation thus incurred. The lawyer suggests a payment of two hundred thousand compensation fees for the infringement. Xi disagrees on the suggested payment, telling them that it is not enough to build a Home for the Childless Aged People in the village. The representative tells Xi that the sum is compensation for the infringement on copyright of the pattern and has nothing to do with the home for Childless Aged People. Erhu shows them the village's gratitude for their coming a long way to settle the copyright dispute but tells them that the village cannot accept the sudden fall of compensation to two hundred thousand from five hundred thousand. Erhu tells them that the village can only accept a reduction of one hundred thousand yuan. The representative tells Xi and Erhu that their suggestion is not possible and that the head of the company has promised to pay twenty-five hundred thousand at most. Erhu tells them that the suggested compensation is too far from their expected compensation. Erhu says that they are the village's guests and suggests that they have lunch first and then go on with the discussion. The representative and the lawyer decline their invitation due to the unsuccessful settlement of the dispute. Xi tells them that the head had invited him to lunch when Xi visited the company last time and that the village should invite them to lunch in return. The representative and the lawyer decline again but Erhu and Xi insist that they stay for lunch. Erhu and Xi tell them that they should show them their gratitude and hospitality in spite of the failure in settling the infringement dispute.

Xi and Erhu entertain the representative and the lawyer with food and drink. Xi serves wine to the representative. The representative declines to have more wine after several cupfuls of wine for fear that the head will get him fired. Xi suggests that they just drink wine and put aside the discussion of the compensation. The representative suggests that if he drinks one cupful of wine Xi deduct twenty thousand yuan from two-hundred-and-fifty-thousand yuan compensation. Xi suggests that the representative add ten thousand yuan to the same compensation amount if Xi himself drinks one cupful of wine. The representative says that Xi has advantage over him with regard to wine drinking capacity. The representative suggests that Erhu rather than Xi drink wine and offers to add ten thousand yuan to two-hundred-and-fifty-thousand-yuan compensation. In order to get more compensation for the village, Erhu agrees to drink wine despite Xi's attempt to stop him from doing so. He prepares 10 cups and fills them all with wine and starts drinking them, but as the doctor has suggested, drinking wine is dangerous for his life and he falls into the ground upon his drinking of ten cupfuls of wine. Erhu is sent to the hospital for his stomach starts bleeding because of his drinking too much wine.

Dongping cries in the hospital. Xi apologizes to her for his failure to stop Erhu from drinking wine. Mr. Li, head of town comes over to the hospital. Xi tells Li that Erhu needs to have part of his stomach cut. Li asks Xi why this has happened. Xi tells him that Erhu wants to get more compensation for the village. Li scolds Xi for getting money at the expense of Erhu's life.

After the operation, Dongping asks Erhu whether he still feels pain in the cut of his stomach. When Erhu tells her that he does, Dongping scolds him gently for his having drunk wine again. Erhu asks Dongping to get him a cup of water. When Xi comes in to see Erhu, he struggles to get up from the bed. Erhu asks Xi whether he has signed the compensation contract with the fodder company. Xi scolds him for still thinking about the contract in the hospital. Xi tells him that he has not yet signed the contract and asks him to take care of himself first. Erhu asks Xi to sign the contract with the company as soon as possible in case there is a change. Xi tells him that Baoqing has been to the company and will be back that day. Erhu tells Xi that the cut he has suffered from is worthwhile so long as they can get the agreed compensation. The nurse in the hospital comes to tell Erhu that he has a call. Baoqing tells Xi through the call that the company refuses to sign the compensation contract with him. Xi tells Baoqing that he will go to the company right away.

Segment 3 Xi goes to the fodder company to sign the compensation contract and with a trick, manages to get the compensation the representative has promised at lunch.

When Xi arrives, the representative tells Xi that the head has agreed to pay compensation but not the agreed amount during the lunch. Baoqing reminds the representative of his promise during the lunch. The representative says that the promise offered while drinking should not be taken too seriously. Baoqing says that the promise should be kept for Erhu has drunk wine for his offer at lunch. Baoqing blames him for getting Erhu into drinking wine and thus resulting in the cut of his stomach. The representative replies that Erhu has been having stomach trouble. Baoqing angrily asks the representative why he has challenged Erhu to drink wine despite his knowledge of Erhu's stomach trouble. Xi asks Baoqing to leave him and the representative alone for a while. After Baoqing leaves, Xi asks the representative to come near him. Xi explains to him that the compensation money is not from him but from the company. Xi asks him to help him with the compensation and then thrust a bracelet into his hands. The representative declines Xi's offer and tries to give the bracelet back to Xi. Xi refuses to take it back. Between the return-and-refuse-to-take-it-back attempts, the bracelet falls onto the ground, broken. Xi says that he has just lost another thirty thousand yuan with the fall of the bracelet. The representative is surprised and worried about the fall of the bracelet. Xi tells him about negative influence of the incident on him if the incident is known by other people. Xi tells the representative that he is not afraid of being charged with bribing him. What Xi has said makes the representative anxious and he asks Xi for suggestion. Xi, feeling lost, turn to him for suggestion. The representative asks Xi to wait for him while he himself goes to talk to the head of the company. Xi laughs to himself after the representative goes to talk to the head of the company. Baoqing notices and feels mysterious about Xi's laughing to himself. Xi assures Baoqing that the representative will help them to get the compensation he has promised at lunch. Baoqing has some doubt about Xi's assurance. Very soon, Xi and Baoqing sign the contract with the company and get the agreed compensation, as Xi has just assured Baoqing.

On the train back to the village, Baoqing talks to Xi but finds him asleep. Xi has played a trick on the representative with a false bracelet. He says that Xi is a man of ability, sometimes kind and sometimes mischievous. After they go back to the village, Xi and Baoqing go to the hospital to see Erhu. Erhu tells them that Shuanzi's mother has donated the money to the village and that they should start to build the Home for the Childless Aged People in the village. Erhu suggests that Shuanzi's mother will be the first candidate to live in the Home once it has been completed. Dongping threatens to send Erhu to the Home if he ever drinks wine again. Noticing the falling leaves outside the window, Erhu tells them that they should get the foundation of the home completed by the coming winter solstice. Baoqing gives Erhu his promise to finish the task by then.

Segment 4 Jiuxian charges Erhu and Xi with taking away Shuanzi's mother's copyright of paper pattern; Erhu, Xi, and Shuanzi's mother deny Jiuxian's charge before the head of the Judicial Department and Jiuxian fails her charge.

Erhu recovers and go out of the hospital very soon. When the village committee is about to start the project of the home for the Childless Aged People in the village, something happens with regard to the copyright of Shuanzi's mother paper pattern.

While Erhu and Xi are talking at the village committee, Erhu receives a call which says that Jiuxian has sued him and Xi. Both Erhu and Xi are surprised. At the Judicial Department, the head asks first Jiuxian and later Xi whether they accept conciliation. Jiuxian tells the head that she does not know about conciliation. It is ok with her so long as she can invite her mother-in-law back to live with her family and get back her mother-in-law's copyright. Xi tells the head that he will accept conciliation as long as it is sensible and reasonable. Jiuxian says that she herself is reasonable and that Xi has been well-known in the village for his mischievous tricks on her mother-in-law. Xi says that what she has said is all lies and that no one will believe her. The head asks Jiuxian to explain her reasons for charging Xi. She tells the head that she and her mother-in-law had been getting on well with each other. Although they do not live together, she and her husband come to look after her mother-in-law from time to time, especially when her mother-in-law is not comfortable. She and her husband later invite her mother-in-law to live with them when she becomes sick. Her mother-in-law later lives alone

because she feels it inconvenient to live with them, but they still support her mother-in-law. She charges Xi for damaging their good relationship with her mother-in-law because of Xi's interest in the copyright of her mother-in-law's paper cut pattern. Her mother-in-law thus breaks up relationship with her and her husband. Later, Xi tricks her mother-in-law into giving him the copyright of the pattern. With the copyright of the pattern, Xi went to the provincial city to sue the company and get the money for himself. Jiuxian says that the copyright is not Xi's but should belong to her and her husband. Jiuxian says that she wants to get back the copyright from Xi and that she and her husband want her mother-in-law to live with them again. While Jiuxian is saying all these, her husband Shuanzi feels embarrassed, her mother-in-law is upset and Xi is furious.

The head of the judicial department asks Xi what he thinks of Jiuxian's statements. Xi stands up furiously and tells him that Jiuxian's statements are total non-sense and complete lies. Xi then tells the head what has happened. That spring, Jiuxian and her husband Shuanzi stopped taking care of Shuanzi's mother and Shuanzi's mother had to work in the field on her own. Xi and Erhu, head of village, had helped Shuanzi's mother with her field work. When Shuanzi's mother became ill later, Xi tried to persuade Jiuxian to invite Shuanzi's mother to live with them and to take good care of her. Jiuxian did not take his suggestion so he lied to her, telling her that Shuanzi's mother had a lot of property and that a Hong Kong businessman wanted to buy a lot of paper patterns cut by Shuanzi's mother. Jiuxian was interested in Shuanzi's mother's money and, believing his words, took Shuanzi's mother to her home to live with them. Two months later, Jiuxian discovered that Shuanzi's mother had no property, that no businessman had come to buy the paper patterns, and that he has lied to her. She drove Shuanzi's mother out of their home. Until Now, Shuanzi's mother has lived on her own. Later, an artist from the provincial art gallery came to collect the paper patterns cut by Shuanzi's mother and paid her money for the patterns. The artist himself paid an extra two thousand yuan to Shuanzi's mother for her poor living condition. The recent copyright case has nothing to do with Xi himself. Erhu, head of the village has assigned him the task to get compensation for Shuanzi's mother. Xi asks the judicial head whether Erhu can say something about the copyright case. The head asks Erhu to give his evidence.

Erhu tells the head that Shuanzi's mother Wang Kuihua has become one of the childless aged people in the village and has been supported and taken care of by the village ever since her son Wang Shuanzi and her daughter-in-law Jiuxian broke their relationship with her. Several days ago he happened to discover that a fodder company has used Wang's paper pattern as the trademark. If the same thing happened in the past, no one would mind its use, instead would feel happy about its use and would not even realize that the use is an infringement on the copyright. He himself has learned from some other people that Wang can ask the company to pay compensation for its use of the paper pattern. He later went and talked to Wang about the use of her paper pattern by the fodder company. Wang does not know the copyright infringement either. She has given her copyright to the village committee and the committee in turn has asked Xi to talk to the fodder company about the compensation. Erhu says that the copyright infringement case has nothing to do with Xi and that Erhu himself is responsible for the case. If Wang has now changed her mind and wants to give her copyright of the paper pattern to Jiuxian, he himself and the village committee have no objections.

Shuanzi's mother says that she does not want to give her copyright to Jiuxian. The judicial asks her to express her opinions. Shuanzi's mother tells the head that what Erhu and Xi have said are right while Jiuxian is lying. Shuanzi is her nephew and has been adopted as her son. She has treated him as her son, but Shuanzi is hen-pecked. On his wife's suggestions, he stops respecting and taking care of her. She is now supported and taken care of by the village, by the collective and by the country. She should be grateful for what the village has done for her. She gives the village the right to handle the copyright infringement compensation. The village can use the money to introduce tap water to the village or to establish a home for the Childless Aged People in the village. They are good things for the village. She agrees on what Erhu has done with the compensation. All the villagers except Shuanzi and Jiuxian show support to Wang's decision. Jiuxian feels embarrassed and leaves in dejection.

Segment 5 the Discipline Inspection Bureau of the Longwan town comes to investigate Erhu on taking bribes from Xi; Xi tells the team that he has given a red belt to Erhu and scolds the team's unreasonable

investigation.

The village committee starts to build the foundation of the Home for the Childless Aged People in the village. Erhu assigns the task of transporting stones to Qingshan. Mr. Tian, Director of the Discipline Inspection Bureau of the Longwan town, and Mr. Li, his assistant, come to the village for an investigation. Tian asks Erhu to get Xi to the village committee. When Xi arrives at the committee, Tian tells Xi that he and Li have come to investigate Erhu. Xi is surprised and tells Tian that there is no problem with Erhu. Xi gives Tian a positive answer when he is asked whether Erhu has assigned the task of carrying stone materials to his family in the project of building the home for the Childless Aged People in the village. When asked what benefit Erhu has got from his family by this assignment, Xi tells Tian that he has given Erhu a red trousers belt made of cloth by his wife Xiulan. His wife tells him that the red belt can bring good luck to Erhu since that year is Erhu's year of birth. Tian asks Xi whether he has given money or anything else to Erhu. Xi feels strange about his question. Tian tells Xi that someone has reported to the Discipline Inspection Bureau that Erhu he has taken bribes from him and he has come to investigate this. Xi asks Tian whether they can investigate Erhu on what he has done for the village. Erhu has saved a child from a deep well and has been working for the village at the expense of his family. Tian tells Xi that the things Xi mentions are not part of their job. Xi scolds them for believing a malicious accusation against Erhu. Tian explains to Xi that it is part of their job to investigate whatever report they receive. Xi asks Tian who has reported to them on Erhu's alleged bribery. Tian refuses Xi's request, telling him that it is a principle not to reveal the reporter.

Segment 6 Xi punishes Jiuxian for her revenging false charge against Erhu by tricking her into digging the stubble in the field for Erhu and warns her against any further false charges.

That night, Xi tells Xiulan about Tian's investigation of Erhu and wonders who has reported Erhu. Xiulan tells him that it must be Jiuxian who has done the reporting. Xi agrees with Xiulan on her reasoning. He wants to go and ask Jiuxian for her reporting. Xiulan stops him from doing so and warns him against Jiuxian's tricks on him. When Xi suggests that Erhu punish her, Xiulan explains to Xi that it will put Erhu in a difficult situation if Erhu does that. Xi tells his wife that he will punish Jiuxian for her malicious behavior. Xiulan tells Xi that he cannot punish her since he is not a village cadre. She says that he can only play tricks on Jiuxian and that Jiuxian will not be fooled again since she has been fooled by him once. Xi does not agree with his wife. He reassures Xiulan that he will get Jiuxian fooled again.

The following day Xi visits Jiuxian. Jiuxian is hostile to Xi and asks him what he has come to her for. Xi tells her that he has some good news for her. Jiuxian doubts whether Xi has any good news for her and tells Xi that she will not believe him anymore. Xi scolds her for bearing a grudge towards him. Xi tells her that Erhu has had a discussion with him about the copyright infringement compensation. Erhu feels it inappropriate not to give any money to her. Xi suggests that she write an application to Erhu. She may probably get some money with Erhu's approval. Jiuxian is excited at Xi's suggestion and asks Xi whether he is telling her a truth. When Xi pretends to be hurt with her distrust in him and pretends to leave, Jiuxian invites him to her house. Jiuxian asks Xi what has happened. Xi tells her that someone from the town came to investigate Erhu and Erhu was upset with the investigation. What Erhu has been doing is for the whole village and he does not want to disappoint villagers. Erhu wants to give part of the compensation to her and Xi feels it understandable for him to do so. Xi thus comes to tell her. Jiuxian is happy about what Xi tells her. She says that Xi is kind to everyone and wants to invite him to tea. Xi declines her invitation. Xi tells her that Erhu has just thought about giving her some part of the compensation but has not yet made a decision. He suggests that she and Shuanzi go to see Erhu and then go to Erhu's field to dig out the stubble for him. Erhu is too busy to do so these days. She readily accepts Xi's suggestion. When Xi leaves, Jiuxian asks Xi to tell Erhu not to change his mind with regard to giving her some part of the compensation. Xi reassures her that he will do so for her and asks her to go to Erhu's field to dig out the stubble for him. Jiuxian is fooled once again by Xi. Xi does not mean to do her any harm. Xi simply wants to educate her.

Jiuxian and Shuanzi go to Erhu's field to dig the stubble out for him. Xi climbs to the top of the village committee building to check whether Jiuxian and Shuanzi are in Erhu's field. There in the field, they are digging the stubble out for Erhu. Xi asks Erhu to climb to the top of the building. When Erhu climbs up the top, he finds it strange that someone is digging the

stubble for him. Xi tells him that he has got Jiuxian and Shuanzi to do the digging for him because of what Jiuxian has done to him. He tells Erhu that he simply wants to play tricks on Jiuxian and wants to educate her about her false charge against Erhu. Xi asks Erhu to tell Jiuxian that Xi himself is responsible for everything if she gets Erhu some trouble.

Later Jiuxian comes to Erhu's house to help Dongping carry water. Dongping finds it strange and tries to stop Jiuxian from doing so. Just then Erhu comes back home and asks Jiuxian why she is trying to help his family first to dig out the stubble in the field and now to carry water. Jiuxian tells Erhu that she has known about his plan to give her some part of her mother-in-law's compensation and that carrying water and digging out the stubble in the field are what she should do. Erhu asks her who has told her that he is going to give the compensation to her. Jiuxian says that Xi has told her his plan. Erhu tells her that Xi is telling her a joke. It is impossible to give the compensation to her since the compensation case has been over. She asks Erhu not to make jokes with her. Erhu tells her that he is not joking. Erhu tells Jiuxian that she is too shrewd about everything to be shrewd. He asks her to use her head when doing things in the future. Realizing that she has been fooled again by Xi, Jiuxian is too embarrassed to say anything and runs to Xi's house. Dongping gets Erhu to carry water.

Jiuxian curses Xi for fooling her the second time and asks him why he has done this to her. Xi tells her that he has not done any harm to her. She instead has tried to offend Erhu and him. She has made false charge against Erhu and him. Xi tells her that what he has done that day is for Erhu. Her digging the stubble for him is what she has owed Erhu. Xi warns Jiuxian against making any further false charges against other people. If she does so in the future, he will bring her to the court. Jiuxian says nothing and leaves.

'Segment 7 Pingchuan's wristwatch is missing, Ling'ai is suspicious of Wensheng.

Wensheng is helping Ling'ai and Pingchuan in their greenhouse. He is giving them instructions with regard to the handling of the temperature in the greenhouse and the watering of the vegetable there. Wensheng then leaves them for Xi's field to see Qingmei. When he arrives, Qingmei tells him to be careful when helping Ling'ai and Pingchuan because Ling'ai tends to find fault with people.

Ling'ai asks Pingchuan to check his watch for the time to see whether she needs to go home to prepare meals for her son. Pingchuan searches his pocket for the watch but could not find it. Ling'ai is suspicious that Wensheng may have taken it since no one else except Wensheng has been to their greenhouse. Pingchuan scolds his wife for her suspicion since Wensheng has come to help them. Ling'ai asks Pingchuan to search the watch again.

Ma Cuilian is carrying water home. On her way, Ma meets Ling'ai and asks her about her greenhouse. Ling'ai tells Ma that vegetables grow in the greenhouse but Pingchuan's watch is missing. She tells Ma that the watch costs five to six hundred yuan. Ma asks her to look for the watch again, but Ling'ai tells her that she has searched all over the greenhouse for the watch but in vain. Ma asks Ling'ai where she has lost the watch. Ling'ai tells Ma that the watch has been lost in the greenhouse. Ma asks her whether someone else has been to her greenhouse. Ling'ai tells Ma that no one except Wensheng has been to the house but he has been to help them. Ma tells Ling'ai that Wensheng has once stolen a donkey and has come to Xi's family because of the donkey. What Ma has told her makes Ling'ai think that Wensheng has stolen the watch.

On their way home, Qingmei and Wensheng meet Ling'ai. Ling'ai asks Wensheng whether he saw Pingchuan's watch in the greenhouse. Wensheng tells Ling'ai that he did not see Pingchuan's watch and asks her to look for the watch in the greenhouse. Ling'ai tells him that she has searched all the over the greenhouse but can't find the watch. Qingmei tells Ling'ai that Pingchuan's watch has nothing to do with Wensheng since he did not see it. Ling'ai says that no one except Wensheng has been to the house. Qingmei is angry with what Ling'ai has implied. She tells Ling'ai that Wensheng has been to help her and scolds her for her suspicion of Wensheng. She asks Ling'ai to get the police to find her watch. When she comes back home, Qingmei asks Wensheng not to go and help Ling'ai again. Wensheng is not happy about Ling'ai's suspicion of him. Qingmei says that she will ask her to turn to police for her watch if Ling'ai does not stop her suspicion of him. The word "police" makes Wensheng anxious.

Xi asks Qingshan whether he has talked to anyone about the donkey. Qingshan tells his father that he has talked about it once and that he has never talked about it ever since Wensheng and Qingmei are together. Xi tells his son not to talk about the donkey to anyone in the future. Qingshan gives Xi his promise.

In the meantime, Ling'ai tells Pingchuan what Ma has said to her. Pingchuan thinks Ma's words are not to be trusted. He does not believe his wife's suspicion. He thinks Wensheng is a good young man. If not, he will not stay at Xi's family and Qingmei will not be fond of him either. Wensheng is not a man as his wife has expected. He thinks his wife's suspicion will hurt Wensheng. Ling'ai insists on her suspicion because Wensheng has stolen a donkey.

Episode 16

Segment 1 Wensheng leaves Xi's family because of the Pingchuan's lost watch; Pingchuan comes to tell Xi that his watch is found and apologizes for Ling'ai's suspicion; Qingmei gets Wensheng back to the family; the police comes to arrest Wensheng away not because of the donkey but because of his hurting the eye of the village cadre at his home village.

Ling'ai tells Pingchuan that Qingshan once told her about Wensheng's stealing a donkey. Pingchuan tells his wife that he does not believe Qingshan's words either. He will believe it if Xi and Xiulan tell him so. He asks his wife not to talk about the missing watch again to other people.

The following day, when Qingmei asks Wensheng to have breakfast, she cannot find him in his room. Instead, Qingmei finds a letter by Wensheng, telling Xi's family that he is leaving them for the time being for fear the police come and investigate Ling'ai's missing watch and thus investigate the donkey incident. Qingmei shows the letter to Xi, Xiulan and Qingshan. Xiulan thinks that Wensheng has just left and asks Qingmei to get him back. Just then, Pingchuan comes to tell them that he has found his watch and he wants to apologize to Wensheng for his wife. Xi scolds Ling'ai for her suspicious inclination and begins to tell Pingchuan about the Longevity lock incident but he stops.

Wensheng runs away on hearing the word police. Wensheng's running away is easy to cause people's suspicion of him. Qingshan suggests that Wensheng's fear of police is not as simple as the donkey incident has shown. Qingshan's suggestion invites Qingmei to scold him for being silly.

Qingmei finds Wensheng waiting at the bus station. She tells Wensheng that Pingchuan has found his watch. Wensheng comes back to Xi's family with her.

Qingmei is explaining to the villagers what an economic cooperative is and the benefits of joining an economic cooperative at the village committee. The policemen have come to the committee for Wensheng. Qingmei tells the policemen that donkey incident has been solved but the policemen tell her that they have not come for the donkey but for events related to people. Before Wensheng leaves with the policemen, he apologizes to Xi and Qingmei for not telling them what has happened at his hometown. He tells Qingmei that he is not guilty and that he would like her to find a lawyer for him if she is willing to do so. Qingmei asks Erhu what has happened. Erhu tells Xi and Qingmei what he has learned from the police station. Wensheng has hurt the eyes of a village cadre back at his home village. It happened because of tax and fee payment. The village cadre forced Wensheng's family to pay tax and fees while Wensheng refused to do so. The cadre and Wensheng then fought with each other and Wensheng hurt the cadre's eyes. Erhu asks Qingmei not to worry about Wensheng too much because he thinks Wensheng hurt the cadre's eyes by accident. He asks Qingmei to go to Wensheng's home village to find out what exactly has happened.

Segment 2 Xi goes to consult head of the Judicial Department about a case similar to Wensheng's and the head tells Xi that the defendant will be not guilty if a witness can improve he has not hurt the eye of the village head on purpose.

That night Xi does not sleep well. He keeps thinking about the relationship between farmers and land.

The following morning, Xi goes to see the head of judicial department at the Longwan town. He explains to the head the situation similar to Wensheng's incident and asks the head how the judge will decide on the situation. The head tells Xi

that the defendant is not guilty if he can find evidence to prove four things: the cadre has collected tax and fees in an illegal way; the defendant has not initiated violence; the defendant has not hurt the cadre's eyes on purpose; the tool the defendant has used has not directly touched the cadre's eye. Hearing the judicial head's explanation, Xi feels relieved. At the same night, Xi, Xiulan and Qingmei are discussing the four things the head has suggested. Xiulan thinks that the cadre must have collected the tax and fees illegally, using the Xijia village as an example, forcing people to pay pig-raising fees even if they have no pigs and forcing people to pay family planning fees even when they do not have children. Xi thinks it is impossible for Wensheng to initiate violence because generally a group of cadres not a cadre go to do the tax and fee collection. Qingmei thinks it impossible for Wensheng to hurt the cadre's eye intentionally for he is kind-hearted. Xi also thinks it impossible for Wensheng to hurt the cadre's eye with a tool because the fight must involve several people struggling with each other and the cadre would also try to avoid being hurt. Qingmei suggests that she go to Wensheng's home village to find out what has exactly happened and Xi tells her that he will go with her.

Segment 3 Xi and Qingmei go to Wensheng's home village to find the witness to prove Wensheng's innocence; they find the villager witness with a humpback has been forced to give a false testimony; they go to the county police station hoping to check the facts with village head Mr. Wang but the policeman on duty tells them that Wang has withdrawn the lawsuit against Wensheng; Wensheng is released; Sichuan Girl comes to Xijia village for Liuzi with his baby son but Liuzi's mother and Chouwa do not like her coming.

The following day, Qingmei and Xi go to the county police station and is told that a villager at Wensheng's home village has said that Wensheng used a carrying pole to hurt the cadre's eye. Qingmei is worried. Xi suggests that they go and talk to the villager to see whether he is telling the truth or not. When they arrive at the villager's home, they find him a humpback. Qingmei asks the villager whether he really sees Wensheng has hurt Wang, the village head, with a carrying pole. The villager gives a positive answer. Xi tells the villager to think about what he said because Wensheng may be found guilty or not guilty because of his words. The villager tells Xi that he has thought it over before giving evidence. Xi warns the villager about getting imprisoned if he is found to have commit perjury. The villager insists that he has seen Wensheng hurt Wang's eyes with a carrying pole. Xi somehow feels that the villager is not telling the truth but he is sympathetic with the villager for his difficult life because of his humpback. Xi chats with him about his life. The villager tells Xi that his humpback was caused by an explosion of stones. Xi asks him whether the village has provided some support for him. The villager tells Xi that the village used to support him but not now. Xi feels it strange and asks him to find the cadres for support. The village tells Xi that he has talked to the cadres about his difficult situation but there was no use because the cadres have pushed him toward each other. During their chat, Xi finds that villager was blind and that he was forced to give false testimony. The villager is worried that the police will punish him for his perjury. Xi reassures him that he will be ok and promises to help him to get support for him from his village. Xi leaves him two hundred yuan for his difficult situation. Xi and Qingmei then go to the police station at the same night. Xi asks the policeman whether Wang, the village head, has come to the police and that he wants to check some facts with him. The police tell Xi that Wang has come to withdraw the lawsuit and Wensheng will be released within two days. Xi and Qingmei feel relieved.

In the meanwhile, the Sichuan girl goes to Xijia village with her baby. Liuzi is surprised at and worried about her visit. The Sichuan girl tells Liuzi that she has taken his son to see him. She tells Liuzi's mother that she has brought her a grandson. Liuzi's mother is not happy at Sichuan girl's coming and because of this, Liuzi scolds Sichuan girl for her coming to see him. Sichuan girl wants to stay with Liuzi but Liuzi's mother wants her to leave. Liuzi begs his mother to let her stay. Liuzi's mother has to give her consent in spite of her reluctance. Liuzi's mother cries, mentioning Liuzi's dead wife. Chouwa is not happy about Sichuan girl's stay with his father either. He does not come home at night. Liuzi looks anxiously for him the whole night. He goes to the village committee wanting to ask Erhu about Chouwa's whereabouts but he finds the committee empty and dark. He finds Chouwa standing outside the village committee. Chouwa tells him that he wants to use the village speaker to tell the villager about his affairs with Sichuan girl. Liuzi scolds and beats his son for his disappearance and for his plan. Chouwa's cry makes Liuzi regret having beaten him. He takes Chouwa home.

The following day Wensheng is released. He is happy to find Qingmei and Xi waiting for him and thanks them for saving him. Xi tells Wensheng that they had planned and wanted to save him but Wang, the village head, has done that faster than they. Wensheng feels surprised. Xi explains to him that they have planned to ask Wang to withdraw the lawsuit against him but Wang himself has done the withdrawal. Xi goes home on his own because Wensheng asks Xi to meet his family. Xi thinks both Wang and the humpback villager are good and kind-hearted men.

Segment 4 Liuzi asks Xi to come to his house and help him out; Xi finds it difficult to judge whether Sichuan girl's baby son is Liuzi's son and advises Liuzi to accept the child; Old Uncle Liu comes and blames Xi's growing lavender for bringing bad luck to his family because Li Erxian tells him that his family's bad luck has something to do with his ancestors' tomb; Xiulan and Xi ask Old Uncle Liu not to believe Li Erxian's word since that is superstitious practice but Liu does not listen to them and insists on uprooting Xi's lavender.

Qingshan asks Xi why Qingmei and Wensheng have not come back with him. Xi tells his son that Wensheng wants Qingmei to meet his family. Qingshan compliments his father on his successful attempt to save Wensheng. Xi feels happy at his son's compliment.

Liuzi comes to tell Xi that he is in great trouble because Sichuan girl has come to find him. He asks Xi to come over his home to help him solve the problem. When Xi arrives at Liuzi's home, Xi finds Liuzi's mother upset by Sichuan girl's coming. Xi goes to see Sichuan girl. She complains to Xi that Liuzi does not accept the child as his son. She tells Xi that she will stay with Liu and will not leave him. She asks Xi to persuade Liuzi to accept the child. She does not feel happy when Xi asks her whether the child is Liuzi's. She says that Xi does not believe her. Xi tells her that he does not believe Liuzi. She asks Xi to come over to see the child and tells Xi that the child looks like Liuzi. Xi tells her that it is difficult to tell whether the child is Liuzi's because it is too young to identify. Liuzi does not know whether the child is his or not.

While Xi is at Liuzi's house, Old Uncle Liu comes to Xi's home to look for Xi. Xiulan tells Liu that Xi is at Liuzi's house. Liu tells Xiulan that he will wait for Xi until Xi comes back. Xiulan tries to get Liu to talk to her about what has happened and why he feels angry. Liu complains to Xiulan that everything in his family turns wrong ever since Qingshan dug the tomb of his ancestors. First his eldest son had an accident. Then his second son lost money in his watermelon business. Later, the daughter of his daughter failed in her National Entrance Examination with one credit below minimum passing score. Now his eldest grandson has developed an athlete foot. He has asked Li Erxian, the fortune-teller in the village, to work out the reason for his family's bad luck this year. Li tells him that the bad luck results from the problem with his ancestor's tomb. He blames Qingshan's digging of the tomb for his family's bad luck. Xiulan tells her that what has happened to his family is a coincidence and has nothing to do with Qingshan's digging of the tomb. Xiulan asks Liu not to believe what Li Erxian has said because that is superstition. Liu tells Xiulan that the former county head invited a feng shui specialist to check the location when he had a building established. Xiulan tells Liu that the county head was removed from his position because of his practice of feng shui. Liu is not persuaded by Xiulan's words. He insists that the bad luck of his family results from Qingshan's digging of his ancestor's tomb. He asks Xiulan to uproot all the grass in the land which Xi has contracted and tells Xiulan that her family can only grow the vegetable in the land otherwise his family will continue to have bad luck. Xiulan feels surprised at Liu's suggestion. She serves Liu with a cigarette and asks him to wait for Xi while she goes to get him back home.

When Liuzi sees Xi off, Liuzi asks Xi whether there is a way to solve his problem. Xi tells Liuzi that the only way is to have a paternity test. Liuzi asks Xi about the test. Xi tells him it costs a lot of money and advises Liuzi to accept the child since the money needed for the paternity test is far enough to raise two children. When Liuzi wants to ask Xi for further explanation about the test, Xiulan comes to get Xi, telling him about Liu's complaint.

When Xi comes home, he tells Liu not to believe Li Erxian's words. Liu takes Li's words seriously. He scolds Xi for growing grass rather than vegetables. Xi explains to Liu that the grass is now tall and cannot be uprooted. Xi tells him that he will need to harvest the grass seed first before uprooting it and that he will need to wait until next year to grow vegetable in the land. Hearing this, Liu tells Xi that he will need to go and ask Li Erxian whether Xi's suggestion is ok or not. Liu then leaves for Li. Xiulan is angry with Li, saying Li is a nuisance. Xi agrees and wants to punish her for her

nuisance.

Segment 5 Xi invites Li Erxian to tell fortune about their growing lavender; Xi pays Li 200 yuan and Li tells them that Uncle Liu's family bad luck has something to do with their growing lavender; Xi records Li's whole fortune telling service and asks Qingshan to play the recording to Uncle Liu; Uncle Liu gets mad with Li and challenges Li with a rod; Xi comes to help Li out but get back from Li the 200 yuan and Uncle Liu's 10 yuan fortune-telling fee. (Xi gets Li Erxian punished).

Xiulan asks Xi how to punish Li. Xi asks Xiulan to prepare some good dishes and get Qingmei's recorder ready for him. Xiulan feels puzzled by Xi's request but she does as Xi tells her to do. Xi invites Li Erxian to lunch at his home. Li is surprised at his invitation. When Xi asks Li whether he can grow grass in his contracted land, Li thinks for a moment and asks him whether his grass is used to feed a cow or a sheep. When Xi tells Li that his grass is for neither purpose, Li reassures him that he can surely grow grass and will become rich with the grass. Xi then asks Li that whether his growth of grass will do any harm to Liu's ancestors' tomb. Li sighs, thinks for a longer while and says nothing. When Xi gets one hundred yuan note and puts it near her fortune-telling hands, Xi feels the note and tells Xi immediately that his growth of grass does not affect the tomb at all. She adds that Xi can even the tomb if he feels the tomb prevents him from growing grass. The tomb is very old and there remains almost nothing in the tomb and therefore Xi need not be too particular about it. Xi tells Li that Liu's family, both the young and the old, have had unpleasant experiences. Xi asks Li whether their unpleasant experiences have anything to do with the tomb. Li sighs again and closes her eyes to predict. Xi signals to his wife for money. Xiulan wants to give a ten yuan note but Xi snatches another one hundred yuan note from her and puts it directly into Li's fortune-telling hand. Li opens her eyes and tells Xi that both the young and the old in Liu's family are silly and that their unpleasant experiences have nothing to do with the tomb. Xi and Xiulan are glad at what Li has said and asks her to have some dishes and drink some wine. While Li is having the dishes and drinking the wine, Xiulan gets Xi to the kitchen and tells him not to give Li any more money. Xi reassures her that he will not give Li any money. Li checks the money and then happily leaves Xi and Xiulan. Just then Qingshan comes back hungry and wants to have something. Xi asks him to give and play the recording they have just done to Old Uncle Liu before he has something. Qingshan asks his father what it is. Xi asks his son to listen to the recording together with Old Uncle Liu. After Qingshan leaves, Xi hums his favorite tune. Xiulan asks him to sing a song but Xi tells her that he cannot sing.

When Qingshan arrives at Old Uncle Liu's home, he find Liu is sharpening a sickle. Qingshan feels strange and asks what he is going to do with the sickle. Liu tells him that he is going to cut the grass in his greenhouse. On hearing this, Qingshan rushes back to tell his father about Liu's plan to cut the grass in their greenhouse. Xi asks Qingshan whether he has played the recording to Liu, Qingshan gives a negative answer. Xi tells Qingshan to go back to play the recording and assures him that Liu will never talk about cutting the grass in their greenhouse again in the future. When Qingshan goes back to Liu's home, Liu is about to leave for their greenhouse for the grass. Qingshan plays the recording to him. Liu feels furious after hearing the recording. He goes to see Li Erxian with a rod in his hand. Qingshan follows Liu.

While Xi is still humming his favorite tune, Qingshan runs back to tell him that Liu has gone to look for Li Erxian after hearing the recording. He tells his father to go to Li's home in case something serious happens since Liu has carried with him a rod. When Xi rushes to Li's quart yard, Liu is challenging Li Erxian to come out. Li is hiding in her room, scared and signals Xi to help her. Xi tells Liu that Li may have run back to her mother's home and that he will get back his ten yuan from her. Xi tells Liu not to be fooled by Li again in the future. Li comes out after Liu leaves the courtyard. Xi asks Li to give him back the money. When Li gives Xi ten yuan, Xi tells her that the ten yuan is for Liu. Li realizes that Xi has fooled her but has to give back two hundred yuan to him. Xi tells her that what he has done is the best way to punish her nuisance. Everyone in the courtyard laughs at Li's embarrassment.

Segment 6 Erhu and Baoqing scolds Li Erxian for her superstitious practice.

Erhu and Baoqing call Li Erxian to the village committee. Erhu scolds her for her practice. Erhu tells her that the central government is now calling on the whole country to build a new socialist countryside. One of the tasks is to promote advanced socialist culture and new moral virtues in the village. Erhu signals Baoqing to talk to Li. Baoqing asks Li

whether she knows President's concept of honor and disgrace and the Eight Honors and Eight Shames. Li shakes her head, saying that they are for the cadres, the students and the soldiers. It is still too far away for the villagers to follow them. Baoqing is angry at Li's reply and asks her to come over to the blackboard to read the Eight Honors and Eight Shames written on it. Erhu asks Li to repeat the first honor 10 times and then pay a fine for her superstitious practice in the village.

Segment 7 Xi kills by accident one of the goats which are eating the lavender and the Shepherd wants him to compensate for the goat; Qingshan meets Gaihua but Gaihua is still angry with him and ignores him.

Qingshan is about to go to the city to collect human manure. Xi comes over to ask him to be careful. Qingshan asks his father to look after their grass in the greenhouse. Xi goes to the greenhouse for the grass. When he gets there, five goats are eating the grass. He is so worried about their eating of the grass that he kills one of the goats when he tries to drive them out of the greenhouse.

On his way back from the city to the village, Qingshan sees Gaihua. He gets off his tractor and wants to give her a ride, but she pays no attention to him.

Later, the shepherd and Xi go to see Erhu at the village committee. The shepherd wants Xi to compensate the killed goat while Xi wants the shepherd to compensate his grass. When Xi learns from the shepherd that some of the goats may belong to Ma Cuilian, he gives up his compensation for the grass. He tells Erhu to decide on how much compensation he needs to pay to the shepherd. When Xi is about to leave the committee, Ma comes to the committee.

When Qingshan comes back home, he tells his mother his worry that Gaihua may want to marry Sangui. Xiulan asks him whether he is still fond of her.

Episode 17

Segment 1 Xi and Ma argues with each other at the village committee over compensation of her killed goat and Xi's lavender; Ma knows from Gaihua that Qingmei has helped provide money to Gaihua to return betrothal money to Sangui.

Qingshan tells his mother that he keeps thinking about Gaihua and misses her very much. Xiulan scolds his son for being silly. Gaihua has always been fond of him and his father has finally given his consent to their relationship. But then he suspected Gaihua. It was really silly of him to do so. Qingshan tells his mother that he couldn't help being suspicious. Qingshan wants his mother to ask Gaihua whether she will marry Sangui or not. Xiulan tells her son that she needs to have a discussion with his father when he comes back.

At the village committee, Erhu is mediating between Ma and Xi. Ma wants Xi to compensate her dead goat. Erhu explains to her that her goat first ate Xi's grass and then is killed by Xi. He thinks both she and Xi have suffered losses and suggest that they settle the matter without asking each other for compensation. Ma does not agree. She insists that Xi pay compensation to her. When Ma requests a compensation of eight hundred yuan from Xi, Xi disagrees and leaves the committee angrily, saying that eight hundred yuan can buy a cow.

Xi is angry when he comes home from the village committee. Xiulan tells Xi about Qingshan's request of her to ask Gaihua whether she wants to marry Sangui or not. Xi angry at what Xiulan has told her. Xiulan asks Qingshan to go back to his room but Qingshan refuses.

After Ma comes back home, Gaihua tells her mother that she has returned betrothal money to Sangui and that she does not owe Sangui anything. Ma is angry with what Gaihua has done and asks her daughter who has helped her to pay the money. Gaihua does not want to tell her but on Ma's promise not to tell anyone she tells her that Qingmei has given her money.

Segment 2 Qingmei and Wensheng comes back. Qingshan and Gaihua make up with each other.

Qingmei and Wensheng have come home. Wensheng feels released of pressure while Qingmei is happier than before.

Xi feels happy about their coming back. Xiulan and Qingmei prepare some special dishes to celebrate Wensheng's coming back. Qingshan, however, is unhappy. Xi asks Qingshan to be happy for Wensheng's sake. Qingshan, however, could not feel happy. He wants to go to the greenhouse to look after grass. Qingmei runs after him and asks him whether he is still thinking about Gaihua. He gives his sister a positive answer but worries that Gaihua may have already become fond of Sangui. Qingmei tells her brother not to worry about his relationship with Gaihua. She promises to help him and Gaihua. She asks Qingshan to wait for Gaihua in their usual meeting place, the locust tree. Qingmei gets Qingshan back to the table to celebrate Wensheng and her coming back.

Immediately after their supper, there comes snow and it is the first spell of snow in that winter. Qingshan goes to meet Gaihua at the locust tree. They make up with each other under the locust tree.

Segment 3 Erhu accompanies Sichuan girl to the hospital for her sick baby son. Xi learns that Qingmei has given money to Gaihua to help her return betrothal money to Sangui; Xi gives no more objections to the relationship between Gaihua and Qingshan.

Early next morning when Dongping is sweeping the snow in front of her house, Sichuan girl comes to look for Erhu. She tells Dongping that her son has been having a diarrhea since last night and that she wants Erhu to accompany her to the village town hospital since Liuzi has not come back home yet because of the slippery road caused by the heavy snow. Dongping tells her that Erhu is still in bed for he had a meeting later last night. She asks Sichuan girl whether she can turn to other people for help. Sichuan girl tells her that she does not know other people in the village except Erhu and Xi and that she cannot always go to bother Xi. Erhu wakes up on their talking outside. Hearing what Sichuan girl has told him, Erhu accompanies her to the town hospital. When they arrive at the hospital, the doctor asks Erhu whether the child is his. Erhu tells the doctor the child is the girl's.

Ma comes to Xi's house to thank Xiulan and Xi. Xiulan feels surprised. Ma explains to Xiulan that Qingmei has given Gaihua twenty hundred yuan and that Gaihua is able to return Sangui the betrothal money Ma has accepted from him. Xi is surprised at what Ma has said and wants to go and ask Qingmei about the money. Ma tries to stop him but fails. Ma tells Xi to give his consent to the relationship between Gaihua and Qingshan. Ma feels embarrassed and frustrated because Xi and Xiulan ignore her.

Xi goes to the village committee to ask Qingmei whether she has given Gaihua twenty hundred yuan. Qingmei admits giving Gaihua the money. She tells her father that Gaihua does not like Sangui at all, but Ma has requested and accepted betrothal money from Sangui. Gaihua wants to return the betrothal money to Sangui but does not have money. Gaihua turns to her for help. The money which she has given Gaihua is from Wensheng's Uncles and Aunts. They have given Wensheng and her money when learning that she and Wensheng are getting married. Qingmei then borrows the money from Wensheng. Xi worries that Qingmei cannot get the money back in the future. Qingmei says that she will then treat it as gift to Qingshan if she cannot get it back and that she wants to help Qingshan. Xi sighs for what Qingmei has done. Qingmei tells her father that Gaihua loves Qingshan very much and that Qingshan feels the same towards Gaihua. She asks him not to oppose the relationship between Qingshan and Gaihua because of Ma's annoying behavior. Xi says nothing more about Qingmei's giving Gaihua money for her to return the betrothal money to Sangui.

Xi thinks Gaihua is a girl devoted to her love for Qingshan and Qingshan is honest and kind. Xi thinks highly of and is moved by their devotion to each other and gives no more objections to their relationship. Gaihua and Qingshan are working together to sweep away the heavy snow that have fallen on the roof of the greenhouse.

Segment 4 Ma objects to Wensheng's marrying into Xi's family; Xi puts up a notice on the locust tree announcing the severing of his relationship with Qingmei to handle her opposition.

Qingmei and Wensheng go to the town government to get marriage certificate. They meet Li who comes to congratulate them on their marriage. Qingmei apologizes to Li for not doing a good job in helping her father with the economic cooperative project. Li tells Qingmei to take her time and asks her to be patient. Qingmei promises to do more work to familiarize the villagers with the cooperative project. Li expresses his confidence in Qingmei. On their way back to the

village, Ma stops them and asks whether they have registered their marriage today. Qingmei gives her a positive answer, telling her that she has registered her marriage before Qingshan since she is older than Qingshan. When Qingmei tells her that Wensheng will marry into and live with Xi's family, Ma is not happy. It is not customary for a son-in-law to marry into and live with his fiancé's family when his fiancé has a brother since the couple's presence is considered to have a negative effect on the brother. Ma wants to talk to Xi and express to him her disagreement with Wensheng's marrying into Xi's family. Qingmei stops her and tells her that she will marry into Wensheng's family for fear that she bothers her father again. Qingmei is not happy about Ma's interference in Wensheng's marrying into her family. Qingmei talks to Gaihua about Wensheng's marrying into her family and about her mother's opposition to this. Qingmei tells Gaihua that she wants to change the traditional practice of opposing the son-in-law marrying into his fiancé's family with her marriage. Gaihua tells Qingmei that she dare not go against her mother for fear that her mother meddles in her relationship with Qingshan again. Qingmei tells her that she has to turn to her father to solve this problem then. Gaihua is worried that Xi will oppose her relationship with Qingshan once he knows her mother's objection to Wensheng's marrying into Xi's family. Qingmei reassures Gaihua that she will help her and Qingshan.

That night when Qingmei tells Xi about Ma's opposition to Wensheng's marrying into their family, Xi is angry with Ma again. Qingmei tells Xi that she turns to him for suggestion not for his anger. Xi tells her there is some way to handle Ma's objection but asks her to wait and see.

In the meantime, Ling'ai asks Pingchuan how much they should give to congratulate Wensheng and Qingmei on their marriage. Pingchuan suggests one hundred yuan, a bit more than the village practice of fifty yuan. Ling'ai thinks one hundred is too little and suggests three hundred yuan since Xi has helped save their son Tiedan and Wensheng has helped them with their greenhouse. Pingchuan feels surprised at his wife suggestion and asks her whether something is wrong with her. For some while, she thinks about the bad side of Xi's family and for other while, she thinks about the benefits that Xi's family has given her. Ling'ai laughs at Pingchuan's comments on her. She tells him jokingly that she is a good woman otherwise he would not have married her. Pingchuan suggests one hundred while Ling'ai suggests at least two hundred.

The following morning, Xi puts up a notice on the locust tree, informing the villagers of the severing of his relationship with Qingmei. The villagers ask Xi why he breaks up with his daughter and Xi tells them to ask Ma. Ma is happy about Xi's breaking up with Qingmei. Gaihua scolds her mother for her gloat and blames her for what has happened. Ma tells her daughter that it is the village custom for the son-in-law not to marry into his fiancé's family when the family has a son. Gaihua asks her mother when she can become wise.

Segment 5 Qingmei and Wensheng hold a unique wedding in the village.

Xi chooses a lucky date, the 17th of the lunar month for Qingmei and Wensheng to have their formal wedding ceremony. Xiulan wants to give them a traditional Chinese wedding ceremony while Qingmei wants to have a modern simple wedding ceremony. The mother and daughter have argued with each other for half a day over the wedding ceremony but Qingmei wins her mother over. While Xi and Xiulan are preparing for their wedding ceremony, Qingmei comes to tell them to stop their preparation because she is not holding a wedding ceremony. Xi and Xiulan feel strange and ask their daughter what has happened. Qingmei asks her parents to ask Wensheng. Wensheng tells them that his father has come and has suddenly changed his mind, disapproving of Wensheng's marrying into Xi's family. Xi is angry at Wensheng's father. Xi asks Qingshan whether he has a way to solve the problem. Qingshan tells them that Wensheng's father must have gambled again and have lost all his money. He must have come to ask Wensheng for money. He does not really disapprove of Wensheng's marrying into their family. He suggests that Xi cover Wensheng's face with hen blood to give an impression of being beaten and then take him to Wensheng's father, asking him to take Wensheng back. Xi and Xiulan think it a good idea and do as Qingshan has suggested. Qingshan's suggestion works and Wensheng's father has indeed come to Wensheng for money because of losing money again with his gambling. Xi scolds Wensheng's father for his gambling. Wensheng's father feels sorry and wants to leave but Xi invites him to stay for the wedding. Qingmei and Wensheng's wedding go on as planned. There is neither wedding feast nor a sedan chair to carry

the bride. Instead, Qingshan uses his tractor to carry Qingmei and Wensheng for them to send their wedding candy and the scientific agricultural pamphlets to the villagers. Their wedding is well received by the majority of the villagers except for a very small number of old villagers.

Segment 6 Gaihua takes Qingshan's advice to threaten to jump into the village well unless Ma stops interfering in her marriage; Ma promises not to meddle in Gaihua's relationship with Qingshan anymore.

Ma, who has just witnessed Qingmei and Wensheng's wedding ceremony, comes back home to ask Gaihua whether Xi and Xiulan have really broke up with Qingmei and Wensheng. Gaihua gives her mother a positive answer but Ma does not believe her. She wants to ask Xi for an explanation. Gaihua asks her mother not to do so. Ma goes to talk to Erhu instead. Gaihua tries to stop her mother but in vain.

Ma arrives at the village committee but cannot find Erhu. Baoqing plays a trick on her, telling her that Erhu has been to the toilet. Ma waits outside the toilet for Erhu for a long while but Erhu still has not come out. Realizing she has been fooled by Baoqing, she is angry with him but could do nothing to him since Baoqing shuts himself in the committee.

That night, Gaihua meets Qingshan at the locust tree as usual. She tells him that her mother begins to meddle in her life again. She asks Qingshan to come up with a way to solve the problem of her mothers' nuisance once and for all. Qingshan tells her a plan and asks her to do what he has suggested.

The following day, Gaihua sits upon a village well, crying that her mother has pushed her too far and that she does not want to live any more. Gaihua's crying draws the attention of the villagers and her mother. When one villager tries to come near to stop Gaihua from jumping in the well, Gaihua threatens to jump into the well if he comes nearer. The villager thus stands back. Witnessing her daughter's threat, Ma apologizes to Gaihua and promises not to push her any more. Gaihua then comes off the well and cries with her mother.

Segment 7 Niu has cerebral hemorrhage when trying to help Xi when city vagrants get him trouble with his tractor-toilet.

At lunch, Qingmei tells Xi that she met Li when she and Wensheng went to the town to register their marriage. Li asked her about Xi's cooperative project and she tells Li about her father's strong interest in the project and the lack of motivation by the villagers. Qingmei tells Xi that Li has asked her to do some more work to get people interested in the cooperative. Qingshan says that the villagers do not deserve their help. Xiulan says that Xi wants to become a model. Xi feels proud and teases his wife, telling her that she does not have a chance to be a model even if she wants to. Xi tells his son to go to the city after lunch to collect two tractorfuls of human manure for the villagers to move them. Qingmei tells her father that this is the best way to motivate the villagers to join the cooperative. Qingshan tells Xi that several vagrants have come to cause trouble his toilet and city people are afraid of using their tractor toilet. Xi tells Qingshan he will go to the city with him.

When Xi and Qingshan arrive at the city, the same vagrants come near them to ask them for money. Qingshan warns them to go away they refuse. Xi tries to reason with them but they start to beat Xi. Qingshan shouts loudly to get help. Mr. Niu, happens to pass by and scolds the vagrants for their behavior. The vagrants want to beat Niu too. Xi stops them, telling them that they cannot beat Niu and that Niu is head of the county. The vagrant humiliates Niu by claiming that his father is the mayor. Niu is so furious at the vagrant's rudeness that he has a burst of cerebral hemorrhage and falls in a faint. Xi carries Niu to the hospital in a hurry. Niu stays in the hospital. Niu is out of danger but the doctor says that Niu may suffer from the side effects of cerebral hemorrhage. Xi feels upset about Niu's illness because Niu illness results from his attempt to help him.

Segment 8 Li, head of town talks to Erhu about the establishment of economic cooperative project again.

Li, head of Longwan town gets Erhu to the town and talks to him about the coming annual work assessment in Longwan town by the county above at the end of 2006. Li tells Erhu that the country will assess the work of the Longwan town and Longwan town will assess the work of the villages within the town and Xijia village will be the focus of the town

assessment. Erhu tells Li that Xi's family is the focus of the Xijia village. Erhu tells Li that Xi has been thinking of establishing an economic cooperative with the villagers ever since his return to the village at the beginning of 2006 and has not yet set up the cooperative yet. Li tells Erhu that the failure to establish the cooperative results from the villagers' worry about the risk involved in the market and Xi himself does not have the marketing ability. Li says that Xi wants to move the villagers to join the cooperative with his perseverance. Li thinks the way Xi works cannot solve the problem of getting the villagers to join the cooperative. Erhu tells Li that Qingmei has explained to the villagers how an economic cooperative works. Li tells Erhu that theoretical explanation is needed but putting the theory into practice by setting up a cooperative is more important. He suggests that Erhu get Sangui to join the cooperative. With Sangui in charge of marketing the agricultural products, the villagers need not worry about the selling of the products. Li takes the Sangui's lavender project as a good example. Only through this way will the corporation-plus-farmers production mode come into existence. Erhu tells Li that he will put Li's suggestion into practice as soon as possible and that he wants to get a best village title for Xijia village in the coming annual assessment.

Segment 9 Xi's family has harvested the lavenders seeds but cannot contact Sangui; Sichuan girl is beaten by Liuzi and asks Xi to talk to Liuzi; Xi advises Liuzi not to beat Sichuan girl but finds Liuzi drunk; Xi advises Sichuan girl to do a paternity test for her baby son in the future.

Xi's family is on their way to the greenhouse to harvest the lavender seeds with Qingshan reading them the instructions about how to harvest the seeds. Xi tells his son that they will harvest the seeds carefully, treating the seeds as gold. Xi is happy and is humming his favorite tune again. They finish the harvest within a day.

That night Qingshan comes to tell Xi that he cannot get through to Sangui's mobile. Xi tells his son he will go to the village committee to phone Sangui again the following day. Xi goes to the committee the following morning and wants to ask Erhu for Sangui's other phone numbers. When Xi tells Erhu that he has already harvested the lavender seeds, Erhu tells Xi to contact Sangui as soon as possible for the selling of the seeds and get Sangui to come back to the village once the seeds are sold. When Erhu tries Sangui's other phone numbers, Sangui's phone has been turned off. Xi is worried and wonders whether something has happened to Sangui. Erhu suggests that Xi go and take the seeds to the city to find Sangui. On his way back home from the village committee, Xi meets Sichuan girl who is on her way to the village committee to complain to Erhu about Liuzi's beating her because Liuzi does not believe the son is his. Xi asks her not to bother Erhu with such a thing. Sichuan girl then gets Xi to talk to Liuzi. When Xi arrives, Liuzi is drinking wine. Xi scolds Liuzi for beating Sichuan girl since she has come a long way to see him and has had a baby son with her. Liuzi is drunk and argues with Xi. Xi realizes that Liuzi has lost money in his lamb business. Before going home, Xi tells Sichuan girl to forgive Liuzi because Liuzi has suffered losses in his business. Xi advises her to do a paternity test for her son in the future when they can afford the test otherwise she will not have a happy life with Liuzi for the rest of her life. Sichuan girl is offended by Xi's distrust in her. Xi tells her that his trust in her has no use and that she has to get Liuzi to trust her. Just then Qingshan comes to ask him whether he has contacted Sangui or not. Qingshan scolds his father for minding other people's business when Xi tells him that he can't reach Sangui with the call.

Episode 18

Segment 1 Xi and Qingshan take the lavender seeds to the city for Sangui but can't find Sangui; Gaihua goes to the city to find Sangui on Erhu's request; Gaihua happens to meet Sangui and takes him to see Xi and Qingshan; Sangui tells Xi, Qingshan and Gaihua how he manages to get his share of investment from his running business partner; Sangui helps to sell the seeds and gets money from the seed project.

Qingshan gathers the whole family to discuss as to how to handle the seeds and Xiulan suggests taking the seeds to the city to find Sangui. Wensheng disagrees for fear that they cannot find Sangui in the city. Qingmei supports her mother's suggestion. Xi feels that they have no other way but to take the seeds to the city for Sangui.

The following morning, Xi and Qingshan take the lavender seeds to the city for Sangui. Xi is a bit worried when he cannot contact Sangui by phone. When they go to Sangui's company office at the city, the office is closed and Sangui is not

there. A middle-aged woman working in the building tells them that there has not been any one working in Sangui's company for quite a long time. Her account makes Xi worried. Xi is upset and says that Sangui has deceived them. Qingshan disagrees with his father, reminding his father that Sangui himself has bought the seeds. They wait in the building for Sangui for a while, but Sangui does not return. Xi later takes Qingshan to the hostel where he and Xiulan stayed last time and stay there for a night. Qingshan gets his father to go and have something with him at a small restaurant, but Xi is too upset about Sangui's disappearance to feel like eating anything. At the restaurant, Qingshan reads some information about seeds companies from a newspaper and suggests that they go to the companies to sell their seeds. Later, they go to one of the seed companies to sell their seeds. The company head asks them for a seed contract. When he learns that they have not signed a seed contract, he refuses to buy their seeds, telling them that they only buy the seeds from those who have signed a contract with the company.

Qingshan feels frustrated and feels that they have wasted over half a year on growing the unsalable seeds. Xi tries to comfort Qingshan with the difficulties he has encountered during his life. Xi tells Qingshan that money is something to be desired. Use it when you have it and do not worry about it when you do not have it. He suggests that they have a good bath and a good rest that night and that they go home the following day. That night, Xi calls Erhu about his plan to return to the village since they cannot find Sangui. Xi tells Erhu that Sangui has deceived his family. Erhu asks Xi to stay at the city while he will get someone find Sangui for him. Qingmei, who is at the committee, scolds Sangui for deceiving the fellow villagers. Erhu gets Gaihua to the village committee and asks her to go to the city to find Sangui for Xi. Qingmei tells Erhu that Gaihua has not been in contact with Sangui for quite a long time. Erhu tells her that Gaihua has known Sangui's friends and that through Gaihua they can find Sangui. Erhu asks Qingmei not to worry about Gaihua since Qingshan and her father are in the city. Qingmei tells Erhu that she is afraid that Gaihua is not willing to find Sangui. Erhu says that Gaihua has to go and find Sangui since the seed project is of great importance to the whole village. Gaihua is surprised at Erhu's request but she leaves for the city that night.

That night, Xi meets the same lodger who he met last time in the hostel. The lodger invites Xi to his room for a meal. The lodger also goes back to his village to contract land. He has contracted 20 mu of land and has got a good harvest from the land. Through their meeting, Xi learns that the lodger also grows the lavender that year just as he himself has done.

In the meantime, Gaihua meets Mr. Zhang on the train to the city. Gaihua asks Zhang whether he has met Sangui recently. Zhang tells her that he met him two days ago and drank wine together. Gaihua arrives at the city the following day. When she is about to make a phone call, she recognizes a passer-by as Sangui. She scolds Sangui for deceiving Xi's family into growing the seeds for him. Sangui asks Gaihua to take him to see Xi and Qingshan. When Sangui tells Xi and Qingshan how he has used tricks to get his investment from his seed- project partner, Xi feels relieved and tells Sangui his anxiety during his stay at the city. Xi sells the seeds that day. Xi, Qingshan and Gaihua go back to the village on the same day.

Xi goes to the village committee that night after he returns to the village. Erhu scolds Sangui for not coming back to the village. Xi tells Erhu that Sangui will be back in a few days. Erhu is worried about the coming annual assessment of the village by the town. He is worried that Sangui's delay in coming back to the village may postpone the establishment of the economic cooperative project in the village. Xi promises to call Sangui to come back soon. Xi asks Erhu how Niu is recovering from his illness. Erhu tells Xi that he is too busy with the village work to ask about his recovery. Erhu says that Niu is county head and that he is not in a position to ask about his recovery. Erhu suggests that Xi go and see Niu on behalf of himself and on behalf of the whole village. Xi asks Erhu who is going to cover the expense for visiting Niu. Erhu suggests that Xi cover the cost himself since he has just earned money from selling the lavender seeds. Xi readily accepts the task Erhu has just assigned him.

Segment 2 Xi goes to thank Niu with a lamb.

Xi goes to see Liuzi and asks him to get him a best-quality lamb. When Xi gets the lamb from Liuzi, he asks the whole family to clean the lamb thoroughly, cutting very wool off the lamb. Xi has never sent gift to other people, but he is going to break this practice of his for Niu since Niu is kind to farmers. Xi comes to see Niu with the thoroughly cleaned lamb.

Niu scolds Xi for spending money on the lamb. Xi tells Niu that he has not spent money about the lamb and that he has raised the lamb himself. Niu's wife asks Xi to take back the lamb to the village since it is not easy for him to have lam. Xi tells Niu that there are several lambs still at home. Xi thanks Niu for helping him first with the land and later with the collection of human manure from the city. Niu tells Xi that there is no need to thank him. Niu tells Xi that he has been thinking about the work in the countryside while he is ill in bed. He feels that the key to the work related to agriculture, village and farmers depends on the feeling the cadre hold towards farmers. When the cadres go to the countryside, the villagers invite them to their Kang to have food without asking them to take off their shoes, take out the best things they have to serve the cadres. When the villagers go to the city, they do not enjoy the same and equal treatment from the cadres. Very few cadres invite them to their home to have meals or to drink. The villagers are required to change their shoes before entering their house. Niu thinks that the problem the villagers face is not of the simple personal relationship but related to the political social status of the villagers. He thinks it unfair to the villagers. Xi is moved by what Niu has said. Niu's wife scolds Niu for his stubbornness. She then tells Xi a story about their visit to a vice secretary, Wang, when the latter moved into a new house. She and Niu went to visit Wang on his invitation. When they entered the house, they were told to take off shoes. Niu told Wang that he takes off his shoes in order to get to a kang. Since there is not a kang in Wang's house, he did not want to take off his shoes. She teases Niu for being a countryman. Niu reminds her that he is indeed a countryman. The account makes Xi laugh.

On his way to the village, Xi keeps thinking about Niu. Xi does not like telling lies and his parents have taught him not to tell lies. But he has lied to Niu with regard to the lamb for fear that Niu will ask him to take the lamb back to the village. He does not feel guilty about his lying to Niu today.

Segment 3 Xi and Sangui establish an economic cooperative in the village.

Ling'ai comes to see Xiulan. She learns from Xiulan that her family has sold out all the lavender seeds and has earned money from the seeds. Ling'ai asks Xiulan whether she can follow her family's suit when growing crops in the field, Xiulan tells her that there is no problem. Ling'ai asks Xiulan whether her family can join the economic cooperative project Xi wants to establish, Xiulan gives her a positive answer.

Sangui comes back to the village. Erhu, Baoqing, Xi and Sangui discuss the establishment of an economic cooperative project. Erhu tells Sangui and Xi to establish the cooperative project as soon as possible so as to be in time for the coming annual advanced village assessment in 2006. Xi tells Sangui that some villagers like Ling'ai offer to join in the cooperative through their joint project of lavender growth. Sangui suggests that the cooperative project should concentrate on growing the organic crops Xi has initiated. Baoqing asks Erhu about the investment of the project. Erhu tells Xi and Sangui that the village committee will invest some money in the cooperative as a collective shareholder while Sangui and Xi will be the two main shareholders of the cooperative. The villagers can join in the cooperative of their own free will. Xi humbly suggests that Sangui be the biggest shareholder of the cooperative. Xi had not expected and feels a bit disappointed about Sangui's ready acceptance of his suggestion. When Xi comes back home that night and tells Xiulan about Sangui's acceptance of his suggestion, Xiulan is angry with Xi. Xi also regrets his own suggestion but he feels it is not proper to change his mind now that he has already offered the suggestion. Xiulan asks Xi to come up with a way to make up for what he has done. Xiulan suggests that Xi tells Sangui that Qingmei and Qingshan disagree with his being the biggest shareholder of the cooperative because Xi has their money to invest in the cooperative. Xi considers Xiulan's suggestion as feasible but he tells her that he himself cannot go and tell Sangui about this.

The following day, Qingshan goes to the village committee to tell Erhu and Sangui that their family's investment in the cooperative is also contributed by Qingmei and him, not just by his father. Qingshan tells them his disagreement with Sangui being the largest shareholder of the cooperative and suggests that Erhu be the largest shareholder of the cooperative. Erhu feels surprised. Sangui has no objections and asks Erhu to prepare money for the cooperative. Erhu tells Sangui that the village can only be a minor shareholder because of shortage of money. He says that Xi's family and Sangui will be the two main shareholders. Sangui explains to Qingshan that the biggest shareholder of the cooperative is different from a village head and is not selected by people but by the amount of money the shareholder has invested in

the cooperative. Whoever invests the largest sum in the cooperative will be the biggest shareholder of the cooperative. Sangui offers no objections when Qingshan asks him whether he could be the biggest shareholder if he invests more money in the cooperative.

Qingshan comes back to tell Xiulan and Xi that Sangui has agreed to let Xi's family to be the biggest shareholder of the cooperative but tells them that they need to invest more money in the cooperative. Xiulan feels surprised but Xi tells her that they will need to sacrifice money for being the biggest shareholder of the cooperative.

Xi soon goes to the Qi County Administrative Bureau of Industry and Commerce to register the cooperative. The village committee holds a formal opening ceremony to celebrate the establishment of the cooperative project which is named the Prosperous Agricultural Economic Cooperative. Xi is the president of the cooperative while Sangui is the general manager. Qingmei and Wensheng provide the scientific and technologic support for the cooperative. Up to fifty households in the Xijia village have jointed the cooperative. With the establishment of the cooperative, Xijia village begins to grow the crops in the greenhouse on a large scale.

Segment 4 Mr. Li tells Erhu to get well-prepared for the assessment of the advanced village; Erhu explains to Xi about the importance of winning the advanced village title for Xijia village and requests him to say positive things about the village to the assessment team.

Erhu goes to the town to tell Li about the establishment of the cooperative in Xijia village and Li is happy about the news. Li tells Erhu that the Advanced Village Assessment Team from the county will go to the village to assess the work of Xijia village the following Tuesday. Li asks Erhu to get well-prepared for the coming assessment of the work in the village including the agricultural economic development as well as other aspects of the work in the village. Li tells Erhu that Xijia must win the Advanced Village Title in the assessment. Erhu goes back to the village to start preparation for the coming assessment.

While Erhu is writing the summary of the village work for 2006 the day before the assessment work, Dongping tells him that he must go to the hospital to have his stomach rechecked the following day. When Erhu tells her that he needs to be at the village to receive the assessment team, Dongping insists that he go to the hospital for the recheck because she has already made an appointment with the doctor. She tells Erhu that he can leave the reception work to Baoqing and Yingping, who are also the village carders. Erhu has to listen to Dongping's suggestion despite his reluctance because Dongping threatens to spoil the assessment if he does not go for a recheck the following day. That night, Erhu tells Xi about his recheck at the hospital. He asks Xi to help receive the coming assessment team. He asks Xi to be cautious about what he is going to say to the assessment team. Xi asks him for advice as to what he can and cannot tell the assessment team. He tells Xi to tell truth with regard to what his family has done in the field including his coming back to the village to contract land, his greenhouse project and his economic cooperative. Erhu also reminds Xi to tell the assessment team how he has helped Chouwa because that is about the education of adolescents in the village and the county has attached great importance to the education of adolescents. Xi tells Erhu that he will tell the team as he has just suggested but Erhu asks him to be flexible. Xi feels very anxious about the likely talk with the assessment team. Erhu tells him not to be worried. Xi asks Erhu what things he cannot tell the team and should be cautious when asked about. Erhu tells Xi not to talk to the team about such things as Liushi's beating people after getting drunk and Li Erxian's superstitious practice. Xi thinks that Erhu is asking him to tell lies. Erhu explains to Xi that the village may be awarded with a sum of money as much as one hundred thousand yuan if the village gets the advanced village title and the award can help the village to solve a lot of problems. Erhu tells Xi that he is only telling harmless lies and requests Xi to do so for the sake of the whole village and to do him a favor. Xi gives Erhu his promise reluctantly. Xi feels it a great pressure for him to tell lies and he is very anxious about the assessment. Xiulan suggests that he leaves the village for a while to avoid getting involved with the assessment work.

Episode 19

Segment 1 The assessment team has come to Xijia village for assessment; Xi pretends to have hurt his throat

and to have difficulty in speaking and keeps silent all the time until Xiulan comes and tells him that Li Erxian has been at their house to weep and cry, accusing Xi of cutting her means of earning money; and Xi says something that embarrasses the village: he is going to stop the fortune-teller Li Erxian's nuisance at their house

Xi tells Xiulan that he cannot avoid the assessment work because Erhu tells him that he has now become well-known among the cadres in the county and in the town. Xiulan suggests that he only tell something good and avoid telling something bad. Xi finds it difficult to decide what is good and what is bad. Xi feels anxious and worried because of the coming assessment.

The following morning when Xi is on his way to carry water, he meets Baoqing who is on his way to see him. Baoqing tells Xi that he is the acting village head that day since Erhu has been to hospital for a re-check. Baoqing asks Xi to be careful when talking to the assessment team. Baoqing tells him about the importance of the advanced village title for Xijia village. Xi tells Baoqing that Erhu has also talked to him about the importance of the title for the village. Xi asks Baoqing whether he can be excused from the assessment because he is very anxious of the assessment. Xi is worried that he will say something improper. Baoqing tells Xi that he is too famous and too important to be excused from the assessment. He tells Xi that he will call him through the villager speaker and asks him to get to the village committee on the call. Baoqing then goes to check the cleanness of the village.

Xi is still worried about the assessment. He tells Xiulan that he is afraid of saying something to spoil the village's opportunity to get the advanced village title. He asks Xiulan to get him the cupping glass and then asks her to apply the heated cup to somewhere near his throat. With the cupping done, Xi gives the appearance of having a hurt throat.

When the assessment team arrives, Baoqing shows the team Xi's greenhouse and tells the team Xi's influence on the villagers to establish similar greenhouses. Baoqing also tells the team that Xi is the model of Xijia village. Xi is the first to have come back to the village on learning the agricultural tax exemption policy. After his return to the village, Xi has first contracted some land in the village and later the village fishing pond. Xi has recently established an economic cooperative project in the village. Baoqing tells the team that Xi is a talented farmer. Xi accompanies the team and gets complimented on what he has achieved ever since his return to the village from the city. When the head of the team asks Xi to say something, Xi shows the head his hurt throat. Qingshan speaks on his behalf. He expresses thanks to the country's preferable agricultural tax exemption policy and to the support his family has got from the county, city and the town.

The team head asks Baoqing to take him to the Home for the Childless Aged Villagers and the village primary school. Xi compliments Qingshan on what he has just said. Baoqing turns back to compliment Xi and Qingshan on what they have just done. He asks them to do likewise when the team goes to the village committee for further assessment. When the team arrives at the committee, the representatives of villagers have been waiting for them. Baoqing briefly introduces Yang, head of the team and Li, his assistant, to the representatives. Baoqing tells the representatives to tell the truths when Yang and Li ask them questions. Yang also asks the representatives to tell truths about the village to so as to support their work as well as to further develop the new socialist construction of Xijia village. When asked whether there are any quarrels or fights in the village, one representative tells Yang that there used to be but not now this year since everyone is preoccupied with their work in the field. When asked whether the village cadres work well with each other or not, another representative tells Yang that Erhu is fair and just while others are also good. Baoqing confirms the representative's account. Yingping tells Yang about the achievement of the adolescent education in the village, citing Chouwa's case as an example. When Yang asks Xi whether there is anyone practicing superstition in the village, Baoqing gives a negative answer for Xi and Xi confirms by nodding his head. Just then, Xiulan comes to tell Xi that Li Erxian has come to cry at their house, accusing Xi of cutting off her sources of earning money. Xi apologizes to the assessment team for his leave for his home, telling them that Li Erxian the fortune teller has come to his home to cause trouble and that he has to go home to stop her nuisance. Yang is strange at what Xi has just said. He asks Xi why he says there is a fortune teller in the village since he has just denied the existence of superstitious practice in the village. Xi tells Yang that there is indeed a fortune teller in the village. He has been asked not to tell him this. He tells Xi that he has

been pretending to be unable to speak for almost the whole day. Everyone in the room is shocked and embarrassed by what Xi has just said. Feeling extremely embarrassed, Xiulan pulls Xi away from the room.

When Xi arrives at his home, Li Erxian is blubbering in Xi's courtyard over Xi's cutting off her means of earning money. Xi tells her that the county carders are assessing the village work that day and threatens to take her to them if she does not stop her nuisance. Learning about the assessment team, Li stops her nuisance and runs away quickly. Xi asks the villagers who have gathered at his courtyard to watch Li's nuisance not to believe Li's superstitious practice and asks them to go home.

Segment 2 Erhu scolds Xi for spoiling Xijia village's chance of winning the best advanced village title; Xi argues with Erhu when Erhu calls him a traitor of the village; Xi goes to talk to the head of the assessment team; the village gets the advanced village title; Xi helps Sichuan girl.

Erhu and Dongping come back to the village at night. Baoqing comes to enquire about Erhu's re-check. Erhu tells him that he has recovered from his stomach trouble. Erhu asks Baoqing about the assessment work that day. Baoqing tells Erhu what has happened during the assessment that day. Angry about what he has learned from Baoqing, Erhu leaves immediately for the village committee, followed by Baoqing. Erhu calls Xi to the committee through the village speaker.

Hearing the call from Erhu, Xiulan scolds him for telling truths about the Lie Erxian in front of the assessment team. Xi blames her for coming to tell him about Li Erxian at the wrong moment. Xiulan asks Xi to go the committee but Xi is not reluctant to go there. Xiulan persuades him to go, telling him not to argue with Erhu or Baoqing.

When Xi arrives at the committee, Erhu angrily scolds him for what Xi has said that day. Xi tells Erhu that he is not totally responsible for what has happened. He blames Li Erxian partly for what has happened. Erhu is still angry with Xi and does not stop his scolding. Xi does not argue with Erhu until Erhu accuses him of being Xijia village's traitor. He blames Erhu and other cadres in the village for what has happened that day. Xi scolds Erhu and other village carders for not stopping Li Erxian's superstitious practice in the village. If they have stopped her, he would not have said what he has said that day. Erhu could not say anything with regard to Xi's scolding. After a long while of silence, Erhu tells Xi to run for the village head at the village head election at this end of that year. Xi tells him that he cannot make the village head. Erhu says that Xi can make a good village head because of his competence. Erhu admits that it is his fault not to have handled Li Erxian's superstitious practice. He is too busy to hand the case. Xi tells Erhu that he is too busy to take care of his health, not to mention Li Erxian's case. Erhu asks Xi whether the village head is an officer or not. Xi thinks that village head is actually a director of the village committee rather than an officer. Erhu says that Xi can make a village head since he knows this. Xi suggests that Erhu be director of the village committee if he himself works as the village head. Erhu smiles and nods his agreement with Xi's suggestion. Xi then asks Erhu about his re-check and Erhu tells him that the re-check shows him all right. When Xi is about to leave, Xi asks Erhu whether he wants him to do something to make up for what happened during the assessment. Erhu declines.

When Xi comes back home, Qingshan asks his father why Erhu has called to see him. Xi tells his son that Erhu scolds him and later he scolds Erhu back. Xiulan asks Xi why he has scolded Erhu. She thinks that it is Xi who has said something inappropriate during the assessment. Qingshan asks Xi what he has said. Xi tells his son that he has told the team about Li Erxian's superstitious practice. Qingshan does not think what his father has said is something serious. Xiulan tells Qingshan that the village will not get the advanced village title because of that. Qingshan thinks that his father does not need to worry about that since he is the president of the cooperative. Xi admits that he had made a mistake in that day's assessment. Xiulan asks Xi whether he can do anything to remedy his mistake. Qingshan thinks that the remedy may make matters worse. Xi says that he will go to the town the following day.

The following day, Xi goes to the town to see Li, hoping that he can talk to Yang through Li's help. When he arrives, Li tells him that he is about to see him too. When he enters Li's office, Yang is also there, and wants to see him too. Yang asks Xi whether there is someone in Xijia village practicing superstition. Xi explains to Yang that Li Erxian used to practice superstition. Xi has stopped her superstitious practice and no one in the village goes to see her for her

superstitious practice. During the assessment day, she came to his home to cause him trouble and he went home to solve the trouble. Xi tells Yang that this shows that no one in the village practice superstition. Xi asks Yang whether Xijia village can still get the advanced village title. Yang's affirmative answer makes Xi released. Xijia village is going to get the advanced village after all.

Baoqing and Erhu feel released too when they learn the news from Xi. The village committee decides to invite Xi to drink wine to thank him for what he has done for Xijia village's winning the advanced village title. While Xi and the village cadres are having their drinks, Sichuan girl comes to see Erhu. She tells Erhu that Liuzi no longer beats her and that he no longer argues with her over her baby son. But Liuzi's mother threatens to kill her son because she does not believe that the baby is Liuzi's son. Sichuan girl asks Erhu to help her and provide evidence that her baby is Liuzi's son. When Erhu asks her whether Liuzi admits that the baby is his son or not, she tells him that Liuzi sometimes admits and sometimes denies. Erhu feels it difficult to help her since she is not married with Liuzi and that Liuzi does not admit that the baby is his. Erhu asks her to get Liuzi to the committee. Xi stops Erhu's attempt to get Liuzi to the committee. He tells Erhu that he knows Sichuan girl's situation and that even the judge cannot solve her problem. Xi tells Erhu that he will solve her problem for him. Xi asks Baoqing to get pen and paper and dictates to Erhu a certification for Sichuan girl, Ladi, on behalf of the village committee. The certification certifies that Ladi's baby son is Liuzi's son and requests Liuzi and Liuzi's mother to be nice to Ladi's son rather than beating him. The certification is sealed with Xijia village committee stamp, dated Dec., 20th, 2006. Ladi is very grateful to Xi for helping her.

Ladi and Liuzi get married later. On the second day of Ladi and Liuzi's marriage, Xijia village is formally announced as the advanced village. On the day, the whole village organizes a folk singing performance at the village locust tree to celebrate the village's getting the advance village title at the assessment. The celebration praises Xi's efforts to grow crops in the land and his achievements and calls on the villagers to follow his suit.

Segment 3 The General Manager of the Healthy Food Company comes to the village again for cooperation; Xi first refuses to cooperate with the company because of his previous unpleasant experience but agrees to sign a cooperation contract with the company for the company's sincerity in cooperation; Mr. Niu, comes to visit Xijia village on his last day as county head; Xi welcomes Niu and takes Niu to the field on Niu's request; Xi sings a song for the first time.

On the last date of 2006, Qingmei gets a phone installed at the family because she wants to use the internet. Xi knows nothing about the internet.

On the same date, Sangui returns to the village and takes Mr. Wang, the general manager of Healthy Food Company in the provincial city to the village committee to see Erhu. Wang apologizes to Erhu for what has happened in the past and for making Xi unhappy with their inappropriate way of using Xi's fame to promote their company's products. Erhu reassures Wang that they should forget about the unpleasant happening in the past and look into the future cooperation. Since there is something wrong with the village speaker, Erhu goes to get Xi to the village committee.

Erhu arrives at Xi's house and tells him that Sangui has come back with a big cooperation project. Xi is excited at the news but he is unhappy when Erhu tells him that the company that is going to cooperate with his cooperative is the same company that invited him to the city to advertise its products that summer. Xi refuses to cooperate with the company because the company is deceiving customers. Erhu explains to Xi that everything is changing and so is the company. The company has a new president. Erhu tries to persuade Xi to go to the village committee to meet and talk to the company's general manager but without success. Erhu comes back to the village committee without Xi. Sangui is a bit angry with Xi but Wang tells Sangui to be patient. Sangui suggests that they go to talk to Xi with the drafted contract.

In the meantime, Xiulan is talking to Xi and tells him to be tolerant. Just then, Sangui, Wang and Erhu arrive. Wang greets Xi but Xi is not friendly. Sangui asks Xi to take a look at the drafted contract and then make a decision. When Xi reads the contract, he is surprised to find that the Healthy Food Company promises to pay two hundred thousand yuan in advance to the village cooperative. Wang explains to Xi that the prepayment is proposed by the new president of the

Healthy Food Company and proposed by Wang himself since the company has given Xi a very negative impression. Wang tells Xi that his company wants to establish sincere and honest cooperation with the village cooperative and to rebuild its new image. Xi is excited at Wang's promise and agrees to cooperate with the company. Xi invites Wang, Sangui and Erhu to lunch at his house. Wang tells Xi that they have signed a six-hundred mu contract and is not sure whether Xi's cooperative can provide the vegetables needed. Xi reassures Wang that their cooperation is centered on his economic cooperative and extends to the whole village. Erhu confirms Xi's promise, telling Wang that the cooperative is the village's leading industry and will use this cooperative to lead and promote the development of other projects in the village. While they are still discussing the cooperation on the table, Qingmei receives a phone call from Mr. Li, head of Longwan town. Li tells Qingmei that Niu, head of the county, is coming to visit the village and asks her to tell her father to prepare for his coming. Qingmei tells Xi what Li has told her. On hearing Niu's coming visit to the village, Xi, Sangui, Erhu and Wang are excited.

Segment 4 Niu comes to visit Xijia village again.

Xi, Erhu, Sangui, Wang, Qingmei and others go to the locust tree to welcome Niu's coming. When Niu arrives, he tells Xi that this is his last day as head of the county. When Xi is surprised, Niu explains to him that he has reached retirement age and that it is time that he retires. Erhu tells Niu that farmers will get more support if he works longer as head of county. Niu says that whoever works as head of county will support their work in the village. Niu tells them that issues related to agricultural development, countryside and farmers are too important to be ignored. Li suggests that Niu go to the village committee. Niu, however, wants to go to the field and he asks Xi to take him there. Xi introduces Wang to Niu. He tells Niu that Wang is the general manager of provincial food company and has come to sign a contract with his cooperative and provides prepayment to his cooperative. Niu is glad at the news. Niu also tells Xi good news that Xijia village have been assessed as the model village in Qinxian county in the course of constructing new socialist countryside. Everyone is excited at the news. Niu asks Xi to take him to the field. While in the field, Niu asks Xi whether he has any problem that he wants him to solve. Niu promises Xi that he will take the opportunity of his last day as head of county to help him to solve the problem. Xi tells Niu that everything is fine now. Niu goes first to Xi's greenhouse and later to the greenhouse of other villagers. Niu feels happy about what he has seen and tells Xi that he will come to Xijia village frequently after his retirement. When Niu is about to leave, Xiulan runs to see Niu off with a bag of dates.

After Niu leaves, Xiulan asks Xi whether he is happy that day. Xi tells her that he is not just happy that day but throughout the whole year. Qingshan asks his father why he does not sing if he is happy all the year. Qingmei also suggests that he sing. Otherwise he has not lived up to the expectation of 2006 since the following day will be 2007. Xiulan asks Xi to sing just for that day. Xi feels shy and embarrassed to sing, but on the request of the whole family, he sings loudly and proudly.

APPENDIX 8

Preliminary Narrative analysis of Xi Gengtian's Story

(Part 2: Events covered by Xi Gengtian' Story)

Episode	Events covered by the episode
<p>Episode 1</p> <p>(initial situation:</p> <p>Contracting land</p>	<p>Segment 1: Xi learns of the agricultural tax exemption policy from a lodger in a city guest house; Xi's son Qingshan sells instant torches to villagers.</p> <p>Segment 2 Xi returns to the village; villagers come to return the torches to Qingshan and Xi returns money back to the villagers; Xi gets confirmation about the agricultural tax exemption policy first from Erhu, his brother and also head of Xijia village and later from Mr. Li, head of Longwan town.</p> <p>Segment 3 Xi wants to contract some land in the village; Erhu saves Tiedan with the help of Xi and other villagers; Sangui returns to the village from the city and offers a high price to contract the land Xi intends to contract; Xiulan and Qingshan try to persuade Xi to give land to Sangui but Xi refuses; Xi and Sangui, another villager contract 15 mu of land respectively.</p>
<p>Episode 2</p> <p>Preparing land</p>	<p>Segment 1 Qingshan digs the contracted land and angers Uncle Liu.</p> <p>Segment 2 Xi manages to persuade Xiulan to farm the land with him.</p> <p>Segment 3 Xi takes Chouwa home from the police station; Ling'ai comes to enquire Xi about Longevity Lock; Xi gets the lock from Chouwa.</p> <p>Segment 4 Xi's family receives Mr. Qiao, city party secretary during Spring Festival and tells him about Baoqing's and Yingping's gambling habit by chance and this infuriates Baoqing; Erhu scolds Xi for his revelation and write a letter for Xi denying the fact of Baoqing and Yingping's gambling habit.</p>
<p>Episode 3</p>	<p>Segment 1 Xi reluctantly signs the letter Erhu has written denying the fact of Baoqing and Yingping's gambling; Xi declines Ma's proposal of marrying her daughter to Qingshan; Xi tells the truth to county party secretary Li with regard to the gambling incident and this angers Erhu.</p> <p>Segment 2 Xi protects Chouwa by not telling the truth about the Longevity Lock; Granma Qi tells the truth of the Longevity Lock to Erhu and Xi.</p> <p>Segment 3 Qingshan has brought back a donkey with 300 yuan; Grandma Qi dies; Qingshan is hurt by the donkey; the donkey owner and a police man come to Xi for the donkey.</p>
<p>Episode 4</p> <p>Sowing crop seeds</p>	<p>Segment 1 The police man requests Xi's family to return the donkey to the owner.</p> <p>Segment 2 Xi makes his first and unsuccessful attempt to establish an economic cooperative in the village.</p>

	<p>Segment 3 Ma complains to Xi about Qingshan's kissing Gaihua; County Cultural Gallery comes to record Folksong singing in Xijia village; Xi gets deputy head of the seeds station to compensate for the unsprouting seeds.</p> <p>Segment 4 Dongping argues and fights with Erhu in the field; Shuanzi's mother faints and Xi and Erhu sends her to the village hospital; Xi attempts to trick Jiuxian into looking after Shuanzi's mother.</p>
<p>Episode 5</p> <p>Looking after crops</p>	<p>Segment 1 Xi managed to trick Jiuxian and Shuanzi into taking care of Shuanzi's mother.</p> <p>Segment 2 Xiulan misunderstands Erhu for taking her deserved two yuan for her folk singing.</p> <p>Segment 3 Xi helps deputy head of the seeds station to keep his job.</p> <p>Segment 4 Sangui tricks Qingmei to the city and does matchmaking for her and Mr. Niu, a company head.</p> <p>Segment 5 Sangui begins his sand-digging project in his contracted land; Erhu ignores Xi's complaint about Sangui's illegal use of arable land; Xi objects to Xiulan's sand-digging proposal and Xiulan argues with Xi for his objection.</p>
<p>Episode 6</p> <p>Looking after the crops</p>	<p>Segment 1 Sangui declines Ma's offer of her land to him; Xi takes Chouwa home from the hospital; Qingshan tells Xi that he likes Gaihua but Xi disapproves of his relationship with Gaihua;</p> <p>Segment 2 Sangui's sand-digging has dried up Xi's crops; Xi wants to sue Sangui's sand-digging project but later decides to give up the sue.</p> <p>Segment 3 Mr. Niu comes to Xijia village to stop Sangui's sand-digging project; Sangui confronts Xi, suspecting Xi of reporting him on the project; Ma admits reporting Sangui to the county.</p> <p>Segment 4 Xi contracts the land left by Sangui; Qingmei comes back to the village as a laid-off; Xi goes to see Mr. Li for Qingmei's job; Xiulan argues with Xi over his failure to get back Qingmei's job.</p>
<p>Episode 7</p> <p>Looking after crops</p>	<p>Segment 1 Xi makes up with Xiulan; Qingmei wants to raise fish; Xi contract the village fond for Qingmei;</p> <p>Segment 2 Liuzi returns with a Sichuan girl, Liuzi's mother disapprove of their relationship and Liuzi goes back to the city again; Sangui requests compensation from the village committee for his sand-digging project.</p> <p>Segment 3 With the money borrowed from Ling'ai, Xi builds a mobile tractor-toilet to collect human manure from the city and gets reported by TV station.</p> <p>Segment 4 Xi makes claims about Ma having body odor to stop Qingshan's relationship with Gaihua.</p> <p>Segment 5 TV station's reporting of Xi's green vegetables attracts a provincial healthy Food Company to invite Xi to sign a contract with the company.</p>

Episode 8	<p>Segment 1 Liuzi comes to see Xi and tell him about his dilemma with Sichuan girl; Xi refuses to sign contract with the food company; Xi is angry with Qingshan because of his telling Ma about his claim about her body odor.</p> <p>Segment 2 Mr. Li manages to reconcile Xi and Sangui and but fails to get them to work together.</p> <p>Segment 3 Sangui is fond of Gaihua and wants Erhu to be his matchmaker but Erhu declines.</p> <p>Segment 4 Chouwa gets some kids to blow Xi's fish pond; Xi feels relieved about Chouwa's transformation after knowing the truth.</p> <p>Segment 5 Qingshan has an accident and Xi's family feels relieved to know Qingshan is fine.</p> <p>Segment 6 Qingshan quarrels with Ling'ai; Xi asks Xiulan to return money to Ling'ai.</p> <p>Segment 7 Xi has an unhappy experience of the tourism project of towing a boat in the riverside.</p> <p>Segment 8 Qingmei learns the reason of Xi's disapproval of the relationship between Gaihua and Qingshan and offers to tell Ma not to meddle in the relationship.</p>
Episode 9	<p>Segment 1 Technician Liu comes to save Qingmei's fish.</p> <p>Segment 2 Fish is saved while Xi is fooled.</p> <p>Segment 3 Ma requests betrothal gift from Xi; Qingshan argues with Xi over his refusal to give betrothal gifts.</p> <p>Segment 4 Liu and Qingmei are fond of each other; Qingshan fools his parents.</p> <p>Segment 5 Xi and Xiulan recall their past at the fish pond.</p> <p>Segment 6 Jiuxian confronts Xi after knowing the truth of Xi's lie.</p> <p>Segment 7 Shuanzi's mother's tells Xi she has earned some money from her paper cut patterns; Xi tells Erhu about Shuanzi's mother fortune.</p> <p>Segment 8 Xi agrees to help Sangui organize the gong and drum performance team in the city.</p>
Episode 10 Harvesting crops	<p>Segment 1 Villagers go to the city to do gong-and-drum performance in the city but soon returns due to a lack of performance license.</p> <p>Segment 2 Jiuxian asks Xi for Shuanzi's mother's money.</p> <p>Segment 3 Jiuxian and Shuanzi repudiate all relations with Shuanzi's mother; Erhu wants Xi to establish the economic cooperative with Sangui; the gong-and-drum team goes to the city again to give performance.</p> <p>Segment 4 Xiulan has got a high fever, asks Erhu to give her injection, gets better after the injection</p>

	but becomes lame; technician Liu comes to see Qingmei and tells her his affection towards her.
Episode 11 Selling crops	<p>Segment 1 Xiulan goes to the city hospital for her leg, Sangui helps to find an expert to treat her leg but she comes back uncured.</p> <p>Segment 2 Gaihua fetches her Third Uncle to cure Xiulan's leg with acupuncture; Erhu goes to the town to sue himself for causing Xiulan's lameness with his injection and Xi goes to the town to stop him.</p> <p>Segment 3 Qingshan thanks Gaihua for her help; Ma asks for the betrothal gift again; Xi refuses Ma's request.</p> <p>Segment 4 Xi makes a second but unsuccessful attempt to establish an economic cooperative projects in the village; the relationship between Qingmei and Liu fails.</p> <p>Segment 5 Qingshan and Xi go to sell their grains to the Town Grain Shop; Qingshan recognizes and catches Wensheng who has sold him the stolen donkey;</p> <p>Segment 6 Wensheng comes to work for Xi's family to pay for the money he owes Qingshan.</p> <p>Segment 7 Xi asks Wensheng to build a greenhouse for him to grow crops; Xi thinks highly of Wensheng; Xi goes to see Liuzi's mother who has become ill and feels happy about Chouwa's progress.</p>
Episode 12 The beginning of lavender project	<p>Segment 1 Liuzi returns to the village and decides to stay there; Qingmei is friendly to Wensheng; Wensheng starts to build a greenhouse for Xi; Qingmei makes her first but unsuccessful attempt to help Xi's economic cooperative project.</p> <p>Segment 2 Xiulan fears that Qingmei will be fond of Wensheng and wants Wensheng to leave the family; Qingmei tells her family her positive attitude towards Wensheng.</p> <p>Segment 3 Liuzi wants to sell lamb to the city and Xi manages to get money from Xiulan to help him to start his business.</p> <p>Segment 4 Qingmei and Wensheng become fond of each other; Xiulan has to accept the relationship between Qingmei and Wensheng;</p> <p>Segment 5 Qingshan wants to establish a methane project in the village and wants to get money from village committee to start his project; Erhu tells Xi Qingshan's intention to sue his for causing his mother's lameness because of Erhu's refusal to give money for his methane project; Xi goes to the town to stop Qingshan from suing Erhu but discovers Qingshan intends to bribe Erhu with gifts; Qingshan exchange the returned gifts for forgery bracelets and rings and with Gaihua's approval, sends them to Ma as betrothal gifts; Sangui returns to the village for lavender seeds project.</p> <p>Segment 7 Xi agrees to cooperate with Sangui with regard to lavender project; Qingshan goes to the city to take lavender seeds and Gaihua goes with him; Ma worries about Gaihua and Qingshan</p>

	going to the city together and ask Xi's family to prepare their marriage in advance; Ma's request annoys Xi.
Episode 13 Growing lavender seeds	<p>Segment 1 Xi withdraws his consent to the relationship between Qingshan and Gaihua and denies sending Ma any betrothal gifts; Ma leaves angrily; Xi gets framework manufacturer to rebuild his collapsed greenhouse; Gaihua stays at the city;</p> <p>Segment 2 Ma scolds Qingshan for sending her false betrothal gifts and accuses Qingshan of seducing Gaihua into the city and Qingshan admits doing the former but angrily denies doing the latter.</p> <p>Segment 3 Xi's family grow lavender in the field; Ma asks Erhu to get Xi's family to get Gaihua back to the village for her; Ma's extreme rudeness infuriates Xiulan; Erhu asks Ma to find Gaihua herself; Ling'ai asks Xi to get Wensheng to help her establish a greenhouse and Xi tells her he needs to consult with Xiulan;</p> <p>Segment 4 Ling'ai gets her husband Pingchuan back to help her with the greenhouse; Xiulan gives Ling'ai her promise to get Wensheng to help her with the greenhouse.</p> <p>Segment 5 Xi gets the tractor back from the traffic police; Qingmei suspects Wensheng but Xiulan reassures her of Wensheng; Pingchuan and Ling'ai argue with each other about the establishment of a greenhouse; Ma is packing for her leave for the city to find Gaihua herself; Ling'ai and Pingchuan make up with each other.</p> <p>Segment 5 Ma Cuilian goes to the City to look for Gaihua and manages to persuade Gaihua to be Sangui's girlfriend with threat.</p>
Episode 14 Looking after lavender	<p>Segment 1 Ma requests and gets betrothal gifts from Sangui; Xi turns to Niu for help and Niu gets him a special permit for his tractor-toilet to enter the city to collect human manure.</p> <p>Segment 2 Qingshan learns from Ma that Gaihua has a new boyfriend, Sangui; Qingshan argues with Ma, becomes furious with Xi and threatens to kill Sangui while Xi feels happy.</p> <p>Segment 3 Erhu goes to the county hospital for his stomach trouble; Erhu happens to find the paper cut pattern by Shuanzi's mother has been used as the trademark of a fodder company.</p> <p>Segment 4 Shuanzi's mother gives Erhu her permission to get compensation money from the fodder company which has used her paper pattern as the trademark and manages to persuade Xi to seek compensation for Shuanzi's mother from the company.</p> <p>Segment 5 Xi makes his first but unsuccessful attempt to get compensation from the fodder company for its infringement of copyright of Shuanzi's mother's paper pattern; Xi turns to Sangui for help; Gaihua tells Sangui that she does not love him.</p> <p>Segment 6 Xi happens to learn Gaihua does not like Sangui and asks Sangui not to take advantage</p>

	<p>of her.</p> <p>Segment 7 Xi and Sangui go to see Bai Tianliang for the paper pattern; Bai tells them he has never given the paper cut pattern to anyone and gives his full support for Xi's attempt to get compensation from the fodder company for Shuanzi's mother.</p> <p>Segment 8 Together with Sangui, Xi makes the second but unsuccessful attempt to get company compensation from the fodder company and decides to bring the company to the court.</p> <p>Segment 9 Xi talks to Sangui about their economic cooperative, and about Gaihua.</p> <p>Segment 10 Xi meets Gaihua on the train back to the village; Xi is moved by Gaihua' devotion to Qingshan and accepts her request to give Ma betrothal money.</p> <p>Segment 11 Qingshan is overjoyed by Xi's final approval of his relationship with Gaihua but becomes suspicious that Gaihua may have become fond of Sangui after her stay at the city; Gaihua manages to get her mother's consent to her relationship with Qingshan with threats.</p>
Episode 15	<p>Segment 1 Qingshan expresses his suspicion of Gaihua and Gaihua is angry with his suspicion.</p> <p>Segment 2 The fodder company representatives come to Xijia village to discuss compensation with the village committee; Erhu drinks wine at lunch to get more compensation from the company and is sent to hospital because of the drinking.</p> <p>Segment 3 Xi goes to the fodder company to sign the compensation contract and with a trick, manages to get the compensation the representative has promised at lunch.</p> <p>Segment 4 Jiuxian charges Erhu and Xi with taking away Shuanzi's mother's copyright of paper pattern; Erhu, Xi, and Shuanzi's mother deny Jiuxian's charge before the head of the Judicial Department and Jiuxian fails her charge.</p> <p>Segment 5 the Discipline Inspection Bureau of the Longwan town comes to investigate Erhu on taking bribes from Xi; Xi tells the team that he has given a red belt to Erhu and scolds the team's unreasonable investigation.</p> <p>Segment 6 Xi punishes Jiuxian for her revenging false charge against Erhu by tricking her into digging the stubble in the field for Erhu and warns her against any further false charges.</p> <p>Segment 7 Pingchuan's wristwatch is missing, Ling'ai is suspicious of Wensheng; Qingmei is furious at Ling'ai's suspicion.</p>
Episode 16 Looking after lavender	<p>Segment 1 Wensheng leaves Xi's family because of the Pingchuan's lost watch; Pingchuan comes to tell Xi that his watch is found and apologizes for Ling'ai's suspicion; Qingmei gets Wensheng back to the family; the police comes to arrest Wensheng away not because of the donkey but because of his hurting the eye of the village cadre at his home village.</p> <p>Segment 2 Xi goes to consult head of the Judicial Department about a case similar to Wensheng's</p>

seeds	<p>and the head tells Xi that the defendant will be not guilty if a witness can improve he has not hurt the eye of the village head on purpose.</p> <p>Segment 3 Xi and Qingmei go to Wensheng's home village to find the witness to prove Wensheng's innocence; they find the villager witness with a humpback has been forced to give a false testimony; they go to the county police station hoping to check the facts with village head Mr. Wang but the policeman on duty tells them Wang has withdrawn the lawsuit against Wensheng; Wensheng is released; Sichuan Girl comes to Xijia village for Liuzi with his baby son but Liuzi's mother and Chouwa do not like her coming.</p> <p>Segment 4 Liuzi asks Xi to come to his house and help him out; Xi finds it difficult to judge whether Sichuan girl's baby son is Liuzi's son and advises Liuzi to accept the child; Old Uncle Liu comes and blames Xi's growing lavender for bringing bad luck to his family because Li Erxian tells him that his family's bad luck has something to do with his ancestors' tomb; Xiulan and Xi ask Uncle Liu not to believe Li Erxian's word since that is superstitious practice but Liu does not listen to them and insists on uprooting Xi's lavender.</p> <p>Segment 5 Xi invites Li Erxian to tell fortune about their growing lavender; Xi pays Li 150 yuan and Li tells them that Uncle Liu's family bad luck has something to do with their growing lavender; Xi records Li's whole fortune telling service and asks Qingshan to play the recording to Uncle Liu; Uncle Liu gets mad with Li and challenges Li with a rod; Xi comes to help Li out but get back from Li the 150 yuan and Uncle Liu's 10 yuan fortune-telling fee. (Xi gets Li Erxian punished).</p> <p>Segment 6 Erhu and Baoqing scolds Li Erxian for her superstitious practice.</p> <p>Segment 7 Xi kills by accident one of the goats which are eat the lavender and the Shepherd wants him to compensate for the goat; Qingshan meets Gaihua but Gaihua is still angry with him and ignores him.</p>
<p>Episode 17</p> <p>Harvesting lavender seeds</p>	<p>Segment 1 Xi and Ma argues with each other at the village committee over compensation of her killed goat and Xi's lavender; Ma knows from Gaihua that Qingmei has helped provide money to Gaihua to return betrothal money to Sangui.</p> <p>Segment 2 Qingmei and Wensheng comes back. Qingshan and Gaihua make up with each other.</p> <p>Segment 3 Erhu accompany Sichuan girl to the hospital for her sick baby son. Xi learns that Qingmei has given money to Gaihua to help her return betrothal money to Sangui; Xi gives no more objections to the relationship between Gaihua and Qingshan.</p> <p>Segment 4 Ma objects to Wensheng's marrying into Xi's family; Xi put up a notice on the locust tree announcing the severing of his relationship with Qingmei to handle her opposition.</p> <p>Segment 5 Qingmei and Wensheng hold a unique wedding in the village.</p> <p>Segment 6 Gaihua takes Qingshan's advice to threaten to jump into the village well unless Ma stops interfering in her marriage; Ma promises not to meddle in Gaihua's relationship with Qingshan any</p>

	<p>more.</p> <p>Segment 7 Niu has cerebral hemorrhage when trying to help Xi when city vagrants gets him trouble with his tractor-toilet.</p> <p>Segment 8 Li, head of town talks to Erhu about the establishment of economic cooperative project again. (At the town)</p> <p>Segment 9 Xi's family has harvested the lavenders seeds but cannot contact Sangui; Sichuan girl is beaten by Liuzi and asks Xi to talk to Liuzi; Xi advices Liuzi not to beat Sichuan girl but finds Liuzi drunk; Xi advices Sichuan girl to do a paternity test for her baby son in the future.</p>
<p>Episode 18</p> <p>Selling lavender seeds and the beginning of another production cycle with the establishment of economic cooperative</p>	<p>Segment 1 Xi and Qingshan take the lavender seeds to the city for Sangui but can't find Sangui; Gaihua goes to the city to find Sangui on Erhu's request; Gaihua happens to meet Sangui and takes him to see Xi and Qingshan; Sangui tells Xi, Qingshan and Gaihua how he manages to get his share of investment from his running business partner; Sangui helps to sell the seeds and gets money from the seed project.</p> <p>Segment 2 Xi goes to thank Niu with a lamb.</p> <p>Segment 3 Xi and Sangui establish an economic cooperative in the village.</p> <p>Segment 4 Mr. Li tells Erhu to get well-prepared for the assessment of the advanced village; Erhu explains to Xi about the importance of winning the advanced village title for Xijia village and requests him to say positive things about the village to the assessment team.</p>
<p>Episode 19</p> <p>Xi's success as a model farmer in Xijia village</p>	<p>Segment 1 The assessment team has come to Xijia village for assessment; Xi pretends to have hurt his throat and to have difficulty in speaking and keeps silent all the time until Xiulan and tells him that Li Erxian has been at their house to weep and cry, accusing Xi of cutting her means of earning money; and Xi says something that embarrasses the village: he is going to stop the fortune-teller Li Erxian's nuisance at their house.</p> <p>Segment 2 Erhu scolds Xi for spoiling Xijia village's chance of winning the best advanced village title; Xi argues with Erhu when Erhu calls him a traitor of the village; Xi goes to talk to the head of the assessment team; the village gets the advanced village title; Xi helps Sichuan girl..</p> <p>Segment 3 The Healthy Food Company comes to the village again for cooperation; Xi first refuses to cooperate with the company because of his previous unpleasant experience but agrees to sign a cooperation contract with company for the company's sincerity in cooperation; Mr. Niu, comes to visit Xijia village on his last day as county head; Xi welcomes Niu and takes Niu to the field on Niu's request; Xi sings a song for the first time.</p>

APPENDIX 9

Preliminary Narrative Analysis of Xi Gengtian's Story (Part 3)

This is a pilot narrative analysis of the serial TV drama *Xi Gengtian's Story*. The analysis follows and appropriates Silverstone's (1981) way of narrative analysis of a series TV drama *Intimate Strangers* in his work *The Message of Television Myth and Narrative in Contemporary Culture*. It consists of four steps: the plot summary of the TV serial (see Appendix 7: part 1), listing and description of the narrative functions of the TV serial (see Appendix 7: part 2), the morphological analysis of the TV serial, and structural analysis of the serial and the meaning represented by such a structure.

Brief Introduction of the TV Serial Xi Gengtian's Story

The serial is made up of 19 episodes with each episode lasting for 45 minutes. It was first broadcast in CCTV one in July, 2007. Scripted and directed by Niu Jianrong, the drama covers the changes taking place and the problems encountered in the countryside since the Party's formal launch of the new socialist countryside construction project from March, 2006.

There appear in the serial quite a few characters: lodger, Xi's family members including Xi, his wife Xiulan, his son Qingshan, his daughter Qingmei, technician Liu (Qingmei's first boyfriend), and Wensheng (Qingmei's second boyfriend and later her husband); Sangui; Erhu's family members including Erhu and Dongping; Ling'ai's family members including Ling'ai, her husband Pingchuan, their son Tiedan, their grandmother Granma Qi, and their cousin, Jianwen; Ma Cuilian's family members including Ma Cuilian, her two daughters Gaihua and Gaiping; Liuzi's family members including Liuzi, his girlfriend Sichuan girl (Ladi), his son Chouwa and his mother; Shuanzi's family members including Shuanzi's mother Wang, Shuanzi, his wife Jiuxian and their son; other villagers including Liushi, Li Shuancai, Cui Guangwen and Zhao Fugui; Xijia village committee members including Baoqing and Yingping; leaders from outside Xijia village including head of county Mr. Niu, city party secretary Mr. Qiao, county party secretary Mr. Li, head of Longwan town Mr. Li; Mr. Wang, general manager of the Provincial Healthy Food Company; head of judicial department of town etc. Some of the characters appear just once or twice in the serial like the lodger. The major characters are Erhu, Qingshan, Xiulan, Qingmei, Qingshan, Ling'ai, Jiuxian, Shuanzi's mother. Other characters like Chouwa, Mr. Liu, Mr. Qiao, Mr. Li, and head of the judicial department of Longwan town are the main characters of some episodes.

The serial is narrated by one of the main characters in the TV drama, Xi Gengtian. It is mainly about Xi's strenuous and perseverant attempts to grow crops in his contracted land in Xijia village. It covers the various problems or difficulties Xi has encountered in his attempts to grow crops. Some of the difficulties or problems relate to Xi and his family while some others relate to other villagers.

Morphological Analysis of the Serial

The narrative structure of Xi Gengtian's Story is a bit sophisticated one. The serial centers on the experience of the major character, Xi Gengtian, a countryman in Xijia village. The serial as a whole generally follows a rough chronological order, starting from Xi's accidental learning of the agricultural tax exemption policy from a lodger in a city guesthouse where he and his wife have come to spend their night, to his efforts to check the truth of the policy and to contract the land (Episode 1). After Xi has successfully contracted the land, the serial then continues, following a rough production cycle of growing crops (Episode 2 to 11): starting from preparing the land for the growth of crops (Episode 2 to 3), to sowing crops seeds (Episode 4), watching over the growth of the crops (Episode 5 to 9), harvesting crops (Episode 10), and finally selling the produced food crops (Episode 11). After the first production cycle is finished, another production cycle is followed i.e. the production of lavender (Episode 12 to 18). The lavender production cycle is similar to that of the grain production cycle and involves preparing land for its growth (Episode 13), sowing the seeds (Episode 13), watching over its growth (Episode 14 to 16); harvesting the seeds (Episode 17), and the sale of the seeds (Episode 18). The only difference between this lavender production cycle and that of grain production cycle is that lavender is grown in the greenhouse while the grain is grown in the natural open field. The end of Episode 18 shows another production cycle after the establishment of an agricultural economic cooperative in Xijia village. From the moment of Xi's intention to

contract the land, through the completion of the grain production cycle, on to the completion of the lavender production cycle and finally to the successful establishment of an agricultural economic cooperative in the village, Xi comes across various problems, some of which relate to his farming and his family and some of which relate to other villagers who relate to Xi one way or another. The story covers these problems and Xi's efforts to solve them sometimes on his own but mostly with help and support from others. Xi finally becomes a successful farmer.

The first episode is obviously a typical establishing episode which has a similar narrative function to Propp's initial situation (a) (1968). It introduces most of the characters that will appear in the drama. Most of the main characters appear in this first episode including Xi Gengtian, his wife Xiulan, his son Qingshan, his daughter Qingmei, Xi's brother Erhu who is also the village head, Ling'ai, Ma Cuilian, Sangui, Mr. Li who is head of the town, Liuzi etc. Some characters have not appeared in this episode but are implied through the words of characters appearing in the scene. Liuzi's son Chouwa and his mother are implied in the episode through what Liuzi has said. So are Pingchuan, Ling'ai's husband, and Gaihua, Qingshan's future girlfriend. This episode is a typical narrative in that it presents the cause of the story i.e. Xi Gengtian's desire to contract land and to grow food crops in the land. Unlike the classical narrative which presents the cause of the story e.g. the appearance of the villainy or the loss of something, the narrative of this drama is rather straightforward. It presents the cause of the story almost at the very beginning of the story. It then presents the main hero's efforts to seek desire right away. When Xi learns about the tax exemption policy, he starts his journey for the desire almost immediately. He leaves the city for his village to check the policy first with village head, Erhu and later with Mr. Li, head of town. He then decides to contract the 30 mu of land in the village. It seems that he is going to get the land right away as he has expected and then can start to work on the land. No, the first episode presents some obstacles Xi encounters unexpectedly. Sangui, a villager in Xijia village who has been doing business in the city and who is least likely to be interested in the land, comes back to the village to contract the land and he offers a high price for Xi's land. This is a very attractive offer to Xi's wife Xiulan and his son, Qingshan. Now, Xi is confronted with an unexpected competitor and the lack of strong family support due to the appearance of this unexpected competitor. The first episode has already presented some challenging problems to the hero.

The first episode also establishes a certain narrative pattern which runs through the drama from the first episode to the final one. Its narrative follows a dual chronological pattern i.e. events in each episode are presented in a chronological order but this order is not a single one but a syn-chronologic one since the events are presented happening chronologically at the same time in two different places i.e. in the city and in the Xijia village or in two different family settings.

The other episodes present the difficulties or problems Xi has encountered before he eventually becomes a successful farmer and Xi's strenuous efforts to overcome these difficulties and to solve these problems. The difficulties or problems covered by the serial include farming-related problems such as contracting land for farming, illegal use of arable land, the unsprouting of the grain seeds, raising fish in the village, experimenting first with the lavender seed project and later with an economic cooperative project to develop new mode of agricultural economic development in the village to increase farmer's income, eco-farming, applying science and technology to farming. The serial also covers difficulties or problems not directly linked to farming such as the educational problems of children in the countryside left behind by their migrant worker parents, the taking care of the childless aged people in the countryside, the superstitious practice in the countryside, the marriage of young people in the village, domestic discords of different villagers, the handling of relationship between grass root village cadres and the villagers, the copyright infringement of the folklore handcraft in the village, the city image projects, the burial practice in the village and the assessment of the village cadre's work in the village etc. Some of the difficulties or problems are directly related to Xi and his family members while other difficulties or problems are related to other villagers.

Most of the difficulties or problems encountered and the efforts to solve them are organized around Greimas' (1971) notion of the qualifying, the main and the glorifying tests. A certain character's desire to do something or character's problem is not solved once and for all with one attempt. It takes at least three attempts for a desire or a problem to be

solved. The first attempt is the qualifying test, the second attempt the main test and the third attempt the glorifying test. For example, Xi wants to establish an economic cooperative project in Xijia village. It takes him three attempts to materialize his project. The first attempt is initiated by him and fails. The second attempt, initiated by the villagers, also fails. The third attempt is mainly initiated by him, Sangui and the village committee and it succeeds. Another example is Chouwa's problem. Chouwa is left to the care of his grandmother since his father Liuzi has been at the city to work. Dropping out of school and receiving no proper parental guidance, Chouwa is idle and loiters in the town, doing something which is not supposed to be done by children of his age. He develops a habit of stealing things and is caught and sent to the police station. The first time Xi takes Chouwa back to the village from the police station; Chouwa does not change for the better. He steals things again and is caught and beaten by the shop owner's young son and is sent to the hospital by the police. Xi goes to the hospital to take him back. This is not enough to bring Chouwa back to the right track. Xi goes to see Erhu for suggestion and Erhu asks the village school to take Chouwa back to the school. After three attempts to be helped, first by Xi at the police station, second by Xi at the hospital and third by teachers at the village school, Chouwa undergoes the transformative change and becomes considerate of other people. Though Chouwa tells the school kids to blow up Xi's fishing pond to get fish, he does this in order to give the fish to the maths teacher who has come from the city to teach the village school children so that she can stay at the school to continue teaching them maths. The relationship between Qingshan and Gaihua succeeds only after several frustrations and their devotion to and perseverance in love.

The serial ends with Xi's singing loudly for the first time because of his success in his farming career.

To sum up, the narrative structure has the following features:

Narrative Structure on a Macro-level

To begin with, the general structure reveals itself to be closely identified with the classical narrative model proposed by Propp (1968): an initial situation and desire defined (Episode 1) is followed by a series of attempts to realize the desire which involves gaining help or support prior to Xi's ultimate realization of his major desire—to successfully establish his farming career with the establishment of an economic cooperative in the village (part of episode 1 to episode 18). In other words, the serial has a beginning, a middle part and an ending—the story is organized around the beginning-middle-ending logic. The attempts to realize the desire are organized around Greimas' notion of the qualifying test, the main test and the glorifying test. And the narrative functions of seeking help/support, offering help/support, and receiving help/support are repeated in the serial.

Secondly, the rough chronological order in the serial is not a single linear chronology but a dual chronology by which events are also presented as happening at the same time at different locations. This dual chronology or syn-chronology, which is established from the first episode, runs through the rest of the serial. Sometimes this dual chronology is shown visually and sometimes is implied verbally through what the characters say. For this reason, I call the narrative of this story a syn-chronologic narrative.

Thirdly, the narrative of the whole story is not a single narrative but a multi-narrative. As the title of the serial implies, the story seems to talk about Xi's story. To some extent, it is true because the story focuses on Xi's life and farming experience in Xijia village. To some extent, it is not since the story also shows the life and experiences of other countrymen besides Xi's. In fact, this synchronic narrative is a network narrative. It is not about the story of a single hero but about story of groups of heroes and thus is a multi-narrative. This multi-narrative has one major narrative i.e. Xi's narrative and the other narratives revolve around and are closely related to this major narrative. This major narrative runs through the whole story while other narratives may appear and disappear from time to time depending on the interaction of different characters with the main hero in different events. Some of these narratives may end earlier but when appearing in the story they are always related to the major narrative. The major narrative presents and highlights the difficulties or problems which Xi has encountered during the course of his farming career in the village while other narratives present and highlight the difficulties or problem(s) which other villagers have experienced and which Xi has helped to solve. Xi's major narrative is interwoven and interlocked with the narratives of other villagers. It is through such

a network narrative that different characters appear and perform their narrative functions and different events are presented naturally and in a life-like manner.

Narrative Structure on a Micro-level

The narrative structure as a whole has established some recognizable patterns. One such pattern is that the beginning-middle-ending logic organizing the whole serial also applies to each episode to some degree. Each episode covers an event and has a sense of closure at the end of the episode, but each episode also presents some elements to initiate another event which is covered by next episode. Usually one event spans at least two episodes and at the end of each episode some sense of suspense is created. For example, Episode 4 covers the illness of Shuanzi's mother and her relationship with her adopted son Shuanzi and his wife Jiuxian. Shuanzi and Jiuxian have not been looking after Shuanzi's mother for some years and they do not live with Shuanzi's mother. When Shuanzi's mother is ill in hospital, they don't even go to the hospital to see her. Towards the end of episode 4, Xi plays a trick on Jiuxian, telling her that Shuanzi's mother has potential property and her paper cutting handcraft can make big money. Xi's intention is to trick Jiuxian and her husband into doing their duty of looking after Shuanzi's mother. The end of the episode shows Jiuxian tossing a coin and then deciding not to go to the hospital to see her mother-in-law. But the beginning of next episode, Xi plays another trick, asking his daughter Qingmei to get Baoqing to announce through the village speaker the news of a Hong Kong company head's plan to purchase paper cut patterns from Xijia village. The trick works on Jiuxian. Upon hearing the announcement of the news by Baoqing, Jiuxian makes her decision to go to the hospital to see Shuanzi's mother and take her home to live with them. Here, the event of Shuanzi's mother's social security problem is initiated with Shuanzi's mother's illness towards the end of episode 4 and extends to episode 5 and other episodes.

Another pattern of the narrative is the use of the dispatchers to connect the narrative functions of the characters. Xi and Erhu are shown to move from one place to another because of the dispatchers' function in the narrative. In episode one, one villager comes to the village to tell Erhu that Ling'ai's son Tiedan has fallen into a deep hole. This villager is actually a dispatcher and performs the communicative narrative connective function. His communicative function brings Erhu and Xi from the village committee to the deep hole out of which Erhu, Xi and other villagers subsequently work together to save Tiedan. A frequent use of dispatchers connects narrative functions of different characters to form different events.

Next pattern is the use of Greimas' (1971) notion of communicative doing function. Greimas (ibid) distinguishes two types of narrative functions: active doing function and communicative doing function. The former describes different behaviors of performing an act while the latter describes an act of communication, usually verbal transmission of messages and sometimes active transfer of objects. In fact, a television drama is made up of more communicative narrative functions than active doing narrative functions. As John Ellis (1982) has written in *Visible Fictions: Cinema, TV, Video*, a lot of messages are actually expressed by what characters say rather than what they do. There are a lot of examples showing the use of this communicative narrative function. One example is in episode 11 when Wensheng arrives at Xi's family to work to pay for the 300 yuan he owes Qingshan. When Xi asks him why he has stolen the donkey, Wensheng tells how he was forced to steal the donkey because of his father's gambling habit. His act of telling Xi is an act of communicative narrative function. Another example is in Episode 9 when Xi goes to see Shuanzi's mother after Xi is confronted by Jiuxian who knows Xi's lying to her about a Hong Kong boss' intention to buy Shuanzi's mother's paper cut pattern. When Xi arrives at Shuanzi's mother's home, she tells him that the son of the former head of County Cultural Bureau has visited her, asked her to cut paper patterns for him and has paid her two thousand yuan for her patterns. This telling is an act of communicative doing function. Another example is in episode 18 when Xi goes to thank Mr. Niu, head of county with a lamb. During his visit, Niu's wife tells Xi about their visit to a vice-secretary Wang when the latter moved into a new house. She and Niu went to visit Wang on his invitation. When they entered the house, they were told to take off shoes. Niu told Wang that he takes off his shoes in order to get to a Kang. Since there is not a kang in Wang's house, he did not want to take off his shoes. Niu's wife teases Niu for being a countryman. Niu's wife's telling is another act of communicative narrative function. Sometimes the communicative functions serve the function of telling what has happened in the past and sometimes serve the function of bringing one character from one place to another. The latter

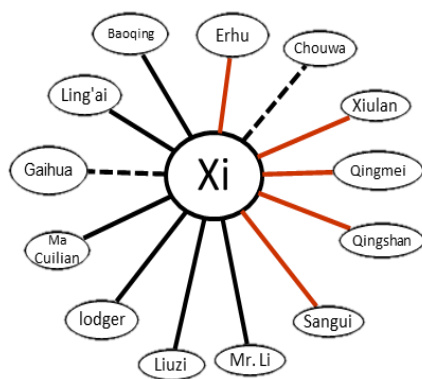
function is very similar to the function of a dispatcher just discussed.

Another pattern is that the solution to most problems in the series follows more or the less the same pattern of seeking-offering-receiving help/support pattern. This roughly corresponds to the narrative functions proposed by Propp (1968)—D (the function of potential helpers), E (the reaction of hero) and F (the acquisition of help). This DEF pattern is repeated in most of the narratives and emphasizes and conveys the pattern of solution to most of the problems encountered by different characters: during the character's efforts to solve his/her problem (seeking help/support), he comes across different people who are in trouble/difficulty and offers help/support to these people; in return he receives help/support from these people right away or sometime in the future and thus gets his problem solved.

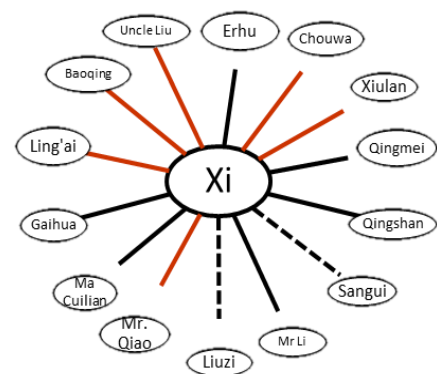
Through the communicative narrative functions, the use of dispatchers, the beginning-middle-and-end logic, the functions of different characters are connected to form different events. Through the use of Greimas' notion of qualifying test, the main test and the glorifying test, different events are organized into the main body of the story—the difficulties or problems encountered by different characters and the attempts by these characters to overcome the difficulties or to solve the problems. The DEF solution pattern highlights the mutual help and support people give to one another to solve various problems in a society. The network narrative and the syn-chronological order connect the different events to form a coherent story as the serial has presented.

To sum up, the series presents a syn-chronological network narrative. Through such a narrative, the serial presents different problems faced by the villagers in Xijia village and thus present the social problems that the countrymen face and the Party leadership encounter in their efforts to construct the new socialist countryside, and different reactions and response from the villagers represent their different interpretations of and solutions to the social problems and thus convey different messages and different values and practices. The network narrative highlights Xi's narrative as the core narrative while narratives of other villagers are presented as closely related to Xi's. Such a narrative presents Xi as a model farmer, highlighting Xi's strenuous efforts to realize his desire to farm the land successfully and to solve the problems of other villagers and thus highlighting the values and practices embodied by Xi's efforts to solve the problems of his own and those of other villagers. The narratives of other villagers are presented as the alternative to Xi's and the values and practices embodied by these narratives are similarly depicted as the alternatives to Xi's. In this way, the network narrative presents the diverse values and practices in China's countryside today.

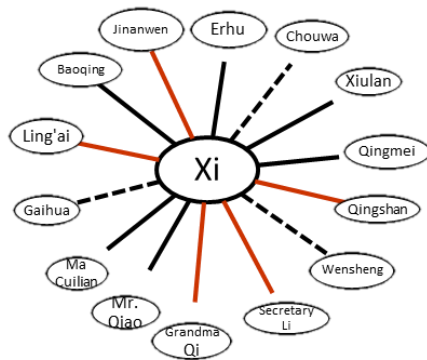
Diagram of networked narrative



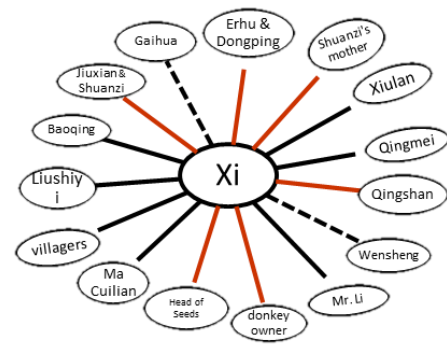
Episode 1



Episode 2



Episode 3



Episode 4

Xi is at the center of every episode. The color line indicates the main characters in an episode. The black bold line indicates the characters that appear in the episode. The broken line indicates the implied but not actual presence of the characters in the episode.

Binary Structural Theory VS Framing Theory

Before analyzing meaning of the serial, I would like to say something about binary oppositional theory. This theory was first proposed by Lévi-Strauss in his study of myths in 1955. It has been used by scholars to analyze structure and meaning of films as well as TV dramas (Wright, 1975; Silverstone, 1981; Swanson, 1982). I will give some brief discussion of Lévi-Strauss' binary theory and its appropriation by Wright (1975), Swanson (1982) and Silverstone (1981) to analyze westerns, Dallas and Intimate Strangers. I will then use the framing theory I have adopted to analyze the various relationships established by characters through their direct contact and interaction with each other in the events presented within an episode and across the episodes and the meaning represented by these relationships. I will then use the same framing theory to analyze narrative structure of the serial and the meaning or the message represented by such a structure.

Binary theory and its application

Binary oppositional theory was first proposed by Lévi-Strauss in his study of myths in the Structural Study of Myth (1955). Lévi-Strauss (1955) proposes that myth is made up of gross constituent units which are bundles of relations and that these units are combined in oppositional relationships and that the meaning of a myth derives from these oppositional relationships formed by the constituents units, not from the isolated constituent units. He proposes that a myth i.e. the collection of all its variants, is organized by a binary oppositional structure and the meaning of the myth should be read and interpreted by the oppositional relationships thus established. He first used the Oedipus myth and later all the then known versions of the Zuni origin and emergence myth to test this proposed theory, elaborating how the myth is organized by oppositional relationships and how the meaning of myth derives out of these oppositional relationships.

He lists 4 columns of events with regard to Oedipus myth. The first column includes the following events: "Kadmos seeks his sister Europa ravished by Zeus"; "Oedipus marries his mother Jocasta"; "Antigone buries her brother Polynices despite prohibition" (Lévi-Strauss, 1955: p.433). The second column includes: "The Spartoi kill each other"; "Oedipus kills his father Laios"; "Eteocles kills his brother Polynices" (ibid). The third column includes: "Kadmos kills the dragon"; "Oedipus kills the Sphinx". The fourth column includes: "Labdacos (Laios' father) =lame"; "Laios (Oedipus's father) =left-sided"; "Oedipus=swollen foot" (ibid).

Lévi-Strauss (1955) suggests that all the above listed events represent some relations and that all the relations belonging to the same column share one common feature. All the listed events in the first column for example “have something to do with blood relations which are over-emphasized, i.e. are subject to a more intimate treatment than they should be”(ibid, p.433). He calls the common feature of the first column “overrating of blood relations” (ibid). The second column shows the same feature of over-emphasized blood relations but of the inverted kind and he calls it “underrating of blood relations”(ibid). Thus the relations of the first column are in opposition with those of the second column. Lévi-Strauss goes on his elaboration saying the relations of the third column are also in opposition with the fourth column. “The third column refers to monsters being slain” (ibid). The fourth column shares the common feature i.e. “difficulties to walk and to behave straight” (1955:p.434). How can the relations of these two columns be oppositional one? Lévi-Strauss goes on with his explanation. “Column three refers to monsters. The dragon is a chthonian being which has to be killed in order that mankind be born from the earth; the Sphinx is a monster unwilling to permit men to live. The [second] unit of this column reproduces the first one which has to do with the autochthonous origin of mankind. Since the monsters are overcome by men, [he suggests] that the common feature of the third column is the denial of autochthonous origin of man” (ibid). He uses the universal character of men born from the earth in mythology to explain the common feature of the fourth column. In mythology, “at the moment [men] emerge from the depth, they either cannot walk or do it clumsily. This is the case of the chthonian being in the mythology of the Pueblo; Masauwu, who leads the emergence, and the chthonian Shumaikoli are lame. The same happens to the Koshimo of the Kwakiutl after they have been swallowed by the chthonian monster, Tsiakish; when they returned to the surface of the earth, ‘they limped forward or tripled sideways’. Then the common feature of the fourth column is thus the persistence of the autochthonous origin of man” (ibid). In this way, relationship between column three and column fourth is contradictory. This relationship is identical to that between column one and column two. Therefore Oedipus myth is organized by the oppositional relationships between the constituent units and its meaning has to be interpreted from this contradictory relationship (ibid).

Lévi-Strauss suggests that the binary oppositional structure is the structural law of the myth i.e. the binary opposition structure is the basic logical organizing principle of the mythical thought or basic logic organizing the mythical thought. The exhaustive analysis of all the known versions of the Zuni origin and emergence myth attempted in 1953-54 and other attempts at comparing myths confirm his binary structural theory. Lévi-Strauss suggests that “mythical thought always works from the awareness of oppositions towards their progressive mediation” (1955, p. 440). He suggests three main processes which are at the root of the mythical thought. He assumes that “two opposite terms with no intermediary always tend to be replaced by two equivalent terms which allow a third one as mediator; then one of the polar terms and the mediator becomes replaced by a new triad and so on” (ibid). With such main processes, the myth can create one opposition after another accompanied by a mediator between the two oppositional terms.

Lévi-Strauss' (1955) binary theory is very interesting and his elaboration is impressive. The theory has been used to analyze narratives of different forms ranging from novels, films to TV dramas (Larsen, 1991; Silverstone, 1981; Wright, 1975; Radway, 1987). It has been used to analyze the narrative structures and meanings of TV dramas by some scholars such as Janet Mary Miller (1987), Gillian Swanson (1981) and Roger Silverstone (Larsen, 1991). Mary Jane Miller (1987) has mentioned the usefulness of binary structural theory for analysis of meaning in TV dramas. Swanson has used Lévi-Strauss' binary oppositional structure to analyze meaning of Dallas. It has also been used by Will Wright to analyze the western films, the nearest relative of TV drama.

Wright (1975) has used Lévi-Strauss' binary opposition structural theory to discuss four types of oppositions between different characters i.e. inside society/outside society; good/bad; strong/weak; and wilderness/civilization and the conceptual or classificatory meanings represented by these two types of oppositions.

Wright (1975) considers the westerns to be myths. He agrees with Kenneth Burke that characters of a narrative myth including Westerns represent social types acting out a drama of social order. The interaction between the characters in a narrative is “never simply interaction between individuals but always involves the social principles that characters represent” (Wright, 1975: p.19). In other words, different characters in the westerns represent different social principles in

a certain era. "The image of a character (...) does not come to represent a concept (culture) because of any inherent properties of the image, but only because of the differences between it and the image or character (...) it is opposed to" (ibid, p.21). Thus, the meaning of a character derives from its opposition with another character. Of course, more than two characters can appear in a myth. But when three or more characters do appear, they appear as contrasting pairs, not as coequal representatives of alternative positions. In the classical westerns (Wright, 1975), a typical cast would include a wandering gunfighter, a group of homesteaders, and a rancher. Instead of representing equally valid, conflicting-styles, these characters would be presented as pairs of oppositions with each pair having a different meaning. The gunfighter is opposed to the homesteaders, a contrast representing individual independence versus social domesticity. The rancher, who is settled and domestic like the farmers, is opposed to them, but at another level or axis: the farmers represent progress and communal values in opposition to the rancher's selfish, monetary values—a contrast between good and bad.

Silverstone (1981) has similarly used the binary structural theory to discuss four types of relationships existent in the fictional world created in TV drama *Intimate Strangers* in terms of geographical code, physical codes, social code and techno-economic codes. Geographically, the action of the two main characters Harry and Joan is placed significantly in three areas—home, the garden and the city—with home and garden being opposed to city in terms of proximity. Socially, the relationships among the characters in the drama including those between Harry and Joan are presented in female-versus-male oppositions.

Both Wright's and Silverstone's application of the binary oppositionary theory to the analyses of oppositional relationships between different characters in the narratives are very impressive and very insightful. Indeed, binary oppositionary structure is found not only in the previously mentioned western works of narratives but in many other western works of narratives as well—in the cold war Hollywood films (Shaw, 2007), in the 1960s American films of the black people (Guerrero, 1993) and in the soviet novels of the 1930s (Lenoe, 2004). Binary oppositional structure is, of course, by no means unique to the western works of narratives. It is also found in the Chinese works of narratives produced in the Maoist era from 1940s to the 1970s (Q. Gong, 2011; Y. Li, 2006; D. D-W, Wang, 2000). The fact that binary oppositionary structure seems to have a ubiquitous presence in the narratives demonstrates the applicability of the binary oppositional theory to the analyses of narratives.

Limits of binary theory and use of framing theory

Both Wright's and Silverstone's analyses of oppositional relationships between different characters are very impressive and very insightful. After all, TV drama covers and presents conflicts of different kinds and binary structural theory highlights the conflicts represented by different characters in the TV drama. What Wright has argued may be true of the westerns and what Silverstone has argued may be equally true of the television series since in both most of the relationships between different characters are in sharp contrast. The oppositional structures which are valid in Wright's westerns and in Silverstone's analysis of *Intimate Strangers* are not necessarily valid in the novels or TV dramas where complex and realistic characters are created, just as Wright himself has pointed out (1975: p.23).

The meaning of a character does not necessarily derive from its opposition with other characters. However, the meaning of a character does inevitably derive from its relation with others including not only one character but usually more than one since one character is always connected somehow with a lot of other characters in different ways. One character is like one of the numerous nodes within the internet, connecting itself with and being connected with a lot of other characters (nodes) around it. Sometimes its relationship with others may be in direct opposition and thus oppositional; sometimes the relationship may be in cooperation and thus a collaborative one; sometimes may be above or below and thus a hierarchical one. There are still other kinds of relationship: neutral, reversal and converging. The relationships between characters tend to be interwoven and are shifting in different situations just like they are in real life in the real social world. The relationships formed by the different characters in the selected Chinese TV dramas are of such a type. At the beginning of the TV drama *Xi Gengtian's Story*, Sangui and Xi are of equal relationship, each wanting to contract some village land. This equal relationship is later transformed into an oppositional one when later Niu comes to stop

Sangui's sand-digging project and Sangui suspects that Xi has reported his project to Niu and thus argues and fights with Xi. Sangui and Xi later reconcile with each other under the persuasion and mediation of Mr. Li, head of Longwan town. This relationship then develops into a supportive relationship by which Xi first helps Sangui to organize a village gong-and-drum performance team to go to the city for performance and by which Sangui later helps Xi to find an expert to help treat Xiulan's lame leg though without success and Sangui helps Xi to get compensation for Shuanzi's mother from the fodder company which has used Shuanzi's mother's paper pattern illegally. The selected Chinese TV dramas are similar to the British social realist TV drama in the 1950s and cover a lot of social issues and presents and emphasize different relationships between different characters and their gradual transition and transformation of one kind of relationship into another. Such a complex relationship cannot be explained by Lévi-Strauss' simple binary oppositional structure.

Different from Wright's and Silverstone's use of Lévi-Strauss' binary structure, I will use framing theory to study the relationships through the functions of different characters in the TV dramas and the meanings embodied by the different kinds of relationships. The essence of framing theory is to select and highlight certain aspects of a thing to promote a certain interpretation and understanding of the thing. It can thus also select and emphasize the various relationships between characters to promote certain social conceptions or principles or meanings represented by these relationships depending on the specific actions of these characters in various particular situations or events. The relationships thus described and analyzed are no longer restricted to but go beyond the binary oppositional ones including oppositional ones, cooperative ones, oppositional-and-cooperative ones, hierarchical ones as well as interconnecting ones. In comparison with the simple oppositional structure of Lévi-Strauss, the framing theory thus allows a lot more freedom to accommodate different kinds of relationships between characters created in the TV dramas. It can select and highlight different kinds of relationships between different characters in different episodes and thus promote the social meanings embodied by these diverse relationships. Framing theory therefore is more flexible in accounting for the complex relationships between characters in the TV dramas.

Analysis of the message of the TV drama: Xi Gengtian's Story

In this section, I will use framing theory to give a narrative analysis of Xi Gengtian's story with regard to two main aspects: the different kinds of relationships established through the narrative functions of characters in the TV serial and the meaning represented by such relationships; the narrative structural patterns of the story and the meaning shown by such structural patterns.

Analysis of Xi's Story: geographical code and social code

Silverstone (1981) has used Lévi-Strauss's (1955) binary structure to explore and explain the oppositions expressed in *Intimate Strangers* in terms of the geographical code, social code, physical code and techno-economic code. I will use the sociological code and geographical codes to help explain the different kinds of relationships and the meaning represented by these relationships since these codes are the two basic important codes in the TV series through which the different kinds of relationships are expressed. I am going to argue that the different types of relationships other than oppositional ones are established through the narrative functions of characters in terms of these two main codes and that these relationships are interwoven with each other and transform themselves into each other from time to time.

Geographical code

In *Xi Gengtian's Story*, the geographical code does not convey opposition as some analysts have shown in their analysis of the western TV dramas or TV drama's close relative, film (Silverstone, 1981; Swanson, 1982; Wright, 1975). The narrative functions that make up all the events in the series happen at different places including city and countryside, different family settings and the field. The main characters travel between these different places but the places are not in opposition with each other. Rather the places are in a complementary relationship. In Xi's attempt at eco-farming with the use of his special mobile tractor-toilet, he travels between the provincial city and Xijia village, going to the city to collect human manure which is to be used as natural and organic fertilizer for the growth of crops in the field. In this sense, the

city is not against the countryside. Rather, the city helps the countryside because it provides the natural fertilizer the countryside needs. The countryside at the same time helps the city since it helps to dispose the human manure or waste produced by the city. In Xi's application for the contracting of the land, he goes to the village committee from which he gets information, confirmation, help and support and finally the land he longs for. Similarly, when he goes to the town, Xi gets help and support from Mr. Li, head of Longwan town. And he often turns to the head of judicial department at Longwan town for legal advice, first because of Erhu's self-indictment and later because Wensheng's case. And Xi moves between his family and other family, either to offer help or get help. Also because of his working experience in the city, Xi is a countryman different from those who have not worked in the city. He is more informed than his fellow villagers. He is ready to accept new things especially science and technology and he is more likely to come up with new ideas which modern society encourages, for example, his mobile toilet and his eco-farming and his attempts to fight for the intellectual property rights for Shuanzi's mother. These knowledge and awareness slip into him because of his working experience in the city and his association with his daughter who has been working in the town. Thus the town and city provide the science and technique that Xi needs for this farming in the village. Therefore, the geographical code expresses the cooperative and complimentary relationship rather than the oppositional ones.

Social code

Similarly, the social code conveys not just opposition but beyond. During the characters' journeys between the city and the village, between different family settings, between the village committee and the different family settings, the characters interact with each other and the relationships thus established are complex rather than simple oppositional ones. They include but go beyond the oppositional ones.

Xi's relationship with his family members

a. Xi's relationship with his family members with regard to farming

Xi's relationship with his wife Xiulan is mostly a supportive one though at times the relationship between them becomes a bit strained or confrontational. At the beginning of the TV series, Xiulan for some time is not very supportive of Xi's attempt to farm the land especially when Sangui offers a high price to contract the land that Xi intends to contract and when Sangui's sand-digging project promises a high profit. Thus her relationship with Xi is to some extent very confrontational. Toward the end of Episode One and at the beginning of Episode Two, Xiulan does not support Xi's effort to contract the land and she even threatens Xi at some point with a view to persuading Xi to give up the land to Sangui. When Xi does not take her suggestions, she neither does cooking nor talks to Xi. Similarly, after Xi refuses to take Xiulan's suggestion of starting similar but small-scale sand-digging project as Sangui's, Xiulan threatens to destroy all the crops grown in the field and has serious confrontation with Xi (towards the end of Episode 5). After Sangui's sand-digging project in the field is stopped because of Niu's intervention, Xiulan shows her full support to Xi with regard to farming of the land (Episode 6). This can be shown towards the end of Episode 6 when he tells Xiulan his decision to contract the land abandoned by Sangui. Xiulan tells him that he has the final say about the things related to the land in the future. He is so excited about his wife's support that he kisses her. Before she is finally persuaded by Xi, the relationship between Xi and Xiulan is a bit stressful and oppositional. Ever since Xiulan is fully persuaded by Xi at the end of episode 6, she has been supportive of Xi's efforts in farming. The confrontational relationship between Xiulan and Xi with regard to farming emphasizes different attitudes towards farming and different values and practices embraced by Xi and Xiulan: Xi's devotion to and perseverance in farming is contrasted with Xiulan's pragmatic way of earning money out of the land. The transformation of this confrontational relationship into a supportive one i.e. Xiulan's ultimate understanding and support of Xi's farming and the domination of such a supportive relationship highlight Xiulan's understanding of and appreciation of Xi's devoted and perseverant efforts on farming, thus promoting such traditional cultural values and practices as farmers' devotion to land and farming and Chinese people's hardworkingness and perseverance.

Qingshan is shown to be mostly supportive of Xi's efforts on farming, helping Xi to prepare the land, watering and taking caring of the crops, driving the mobile tractor-toilet to the city to collect human manure as organic fertilizer for the crops, selling the harvested crops, working on the lavender seed project etc. Throughout the series, Qingshan helps his father

with farming but he himself is not very keen on farming and wants to do something other than farming. For example, Qingshan wants to start a folklore tourism project, wants to raise dogs, and wants to start a methane project. Xi wants Qingshan to help him with farming and considers his son's projects and ideas unpractical. Xi's forcing his son to farm the land with him shows his patriarchal practices while Qingshan's helping his father despite his reluctance shows his filial respect to his father.

X's relationship with his daughter Qingmei is mostly a supportive one. Qingmei has helped to reconcile Xi and Xiulan when they have disagreement over Xi's farming in the land. Qingmei also tries to offer technical help and support to Xi with regard to his cooperative project. She has tried to gather the villagers to explain to them in detail the cooperative project. Her first attempt fails since no one turns up at the meeting. She later does offer lessons to the villagers elaborating to them on the cooperative project. Xi has helped Qingmei to contract the village fish pond for her when she wants to raise fish after she returns to the village because of her being laid-off. Qingmei's support to Xi embodies her appreciation of her father's devotion to and perseverance in farming and her filial respect to her father.

b. Xi's relationship with his family members with regard to other things

Xiulan disagrees with Xi with regard to Qingshan's relationship with Gaihua, to Xi's attitude towards Qingshan, and to Qingmei's relationship with Wensheng. Qingshan, Xi's son and Gaihua, Ma Cuilian's daughter, are fond of each other. At the very beginning, Xi does not object to their being together (in episode 4), but because of Ma Cuilian's meddling in the relationship, Xi begins to disapprove of their relationship. In episode 8, Xi agrees to give his consent to their relationship after Qingmei's persuasion and her attempt to talk to Ma not to meddle in the relationship. Ma, however, requests betrothal gifts from Xi to formalize the relationship between Gaihua and Qingshan. Xi is very angry at and refuses Ma's request because he considers betrothal gifts as the backward practice of the feudal society. Xiulan thinks it acceptable for Ma to ask for betrothal gifts. She tries to persuade Xi to give the betrothal gifts to Ma but fails. By this time, Xi is strongly opposed to the relationship between Gaihua and Qingshan. Later when Xiulan becomes lame because of the medical injection from Erhu, Gaihua gets her third Uncle to cure Xiulan's lameness and Xiulan recovers. Because of Gaihua's help, Xi gives his consent to the relationship between Qingshan and Gaihua again and asks Qingshan to thank Gaihua for her help. Ma, however, takes the opportunity to request betrothal gifts from Xi again. Xiulan persuades Xi to give betrothal gifts to Ma because of Gaihua's help, but Xi still refuses to give the gifts. Later when Xi learns from the furious Qingshan that Gaihua has become Sangu's girlfriend because of Ma's meddling again, Xi is very happy at the news while Xiulan shows her sympathy with Qingshan. After Xi learns about Gaihua's devotion to Qingshan during his trip to the city for Shuanzi's mother's compensation from the fodder company for its illegal use of her paper pig pattern as the trademark, Xi gives his consent again to Qingshan's relationship with Gaihua. Since then, Xi and Xiulan seem to have no strong disagreement with regard to Qingshan's relationship with Gaihua. The disagreement of Xi and Xiulan over Qingshan's relationship with Gaihua highlights different attitudes towards traditional Chinese marriage practices: Xiulan is more likely to accept the traditional Chinese marriage customs such as the betrothal gifts while Xi dislikes such customs. Xi and Xiulan's final agreement over Qingshan and Gaihua's relationship shows their appreciation of Gaihua's help and her devotion to and perseverance in love and thus highlights to some extent some traditional Chinese values and practices: perseverance, and the practice of returning hospitality and gratitude that one has received.

Xiulan also disagrees with Xi with Xi's attitude towards Qingshan. As previously mentioned Qingshan has his own interest other than farming: selling instant torches, folklore tourism project, raising dogs etc. Xi however disapproves of his son's ideas. Whenever Qingshan raises his tourism project, Xi does not hesitate to offer his objection. Xiulan, however, is more supportive of her son and she promises to offer financial help to Qingshan if Qingshan comes up with a detailed and careful plan about the thing he wants to do. Xi's dismissal of Qingshan's interest in other jobs and forcing Qingshan to farm the land with him highlight his patriarchal practices while Xiulan's sympathy to her son emphasizes her love for and her considerateness of her son.

As regards with Qingmei's relationship with technician Liu, Xi and Xiulan seem to agree with each other since they both think highly of Liu who is well-educated and has helped to save Qingmei's fish with the science and techniques he has

learned. But when it comes to the relationship between Qingmei and Wensheng, they have disagreement. Xi does not object to Qingmei's relationship with Wensheng because he has a good impression of Wensheng. On his arrival at Xi's family to pay off the debt he owes Qingshan because of the stolen donkey incident, Wensheng offers to carry water for Xi's family when Qingshan is reluctant to do so and he works very hard on the field. Wensheng also readily accepts Xi's request to build him a green house. Though Xiulan is friendly and nice to Wensheng after his arrival at the family and is sympathetic with Wensheng's experience of being forced to steal a donkey because of his father's gambling, she strongly opposes Wensheng's relationship with Qingmei. She thinks Wensheng is not as good as technician Liu and is not good enough for Qingmei—Wensheng is a countryman and has once stolen a donkey. Xiulan tries to ask Xi to get Wensheng to leave the family but fails because of Qingmei's intervention and her insistence in her relationship with Wensheng, and ultimately has to accept the relationship between Wensheng and Qingmei. Thus with regards to the relationship between Wensheng and Qingmei, Xi and Xiulan disagree with each other at the beginning and thus their relationship is a bit confrontational. Later, both Xi and Xiulan do not have any disagreement with regard to the relationship between Qingmei and Wensheng. When Wensheng is arrested because of his hurting the eyes of the head of his home village caused by the dispute on illegal agricultural tax collection, both Xiulan and Xi show their understanding of Wensheng's case and offer their support to him. The disagreement between Xi and Xiulan at the beginning over Wensheng's relationship with Qingmei emphasizes different attitudes towards people who have once erred: Xi's lenience to Wensheng and Xiulan's prejudice towards Wensheng.

On the whole, the relationship between Xi and Xiulan with regard to farming the land is a bit confrontational at the beginning but mostly supportive throughout the series. Their relationship with regard to Qingshan's relationship with Gaihua is sometimes confrontational and sometimes supportive. Xi and Xiulan agree with each other over Qingmei's relationship with technician Liu and disagree with each other over Qingmei's relationship with Wensheng at the beginning and but later they both support Qingmei and Wensheng's being together.

Xi's relationships with Wensheng are of diverse kinds. At the beginning when Wensheng appears at the serial, his relationship with Xi is confrontational (episode 11). On their return trip after selling the harvested grain to the grain station, Qingshan recognizes Wensheng as the young man who has sold the stolen donkey to him. Qingshan and Xi together chase Wensheng and want to report him to the police about his theft. Wensheng threatens to kill himself when they are about to catch him on the verge of a cliff. On Wensheng's request, Xi and Qingshan have given up the attempt to report him to the police and have accepted his offer to work for them to pay back the 300 yuan he owes Qingshan. After Wensheng arrives at Xi's family to pay back his debt to Qingshan, his relationship with Xi is one of protective one with Xi showing sympathy and understanding to Wensheng's being forced to steal a donkey and hiding the fact of Wensheng's theft from villagers. This protective relationship later develops into a supportive one with Wensheng helping Xi to build a greenhouse for the growth of crops. This relationship is further developed into a new kind of relationship when Wensheng becomes Qingmei's boyfriend and later her husband. The relationship between Xi and Wensheng underlie some of the traditional Chinese cultural values and practices: Xi's act of helping and protecting Wensheng embodies lenience to others and the practice of protecting the young while Wensheng's support to Xi emphasizes the traditional practice of returning hospitality and gratitude that one has received.

Xi's relationship with people outside his family

Xi's relationship with other people is sometimes confrontational but mostly supportive.

Xi's relationship with Sangui is one of coequal representative villagers in Xijia village or may be a bit confrontational or oppositional at the beginning since they are competitors for the contracting of the land in the village (episode1). Xi's relationship with Sangui becomes really confrontational or oppositional when Mr. Niu has come to the village to stop his sand-digging project (episode6). Suspecting that Xi has reported his sand-digging project to the county, Sangui argues and fights with Xi immediately after Niu leaves the village. It is Ma's admission of her reporting the sand-digging that has brought Xi and Sangui's argument and fight to a stop. With the mediation and persuasion of Mr. Li, head of town, Xi and Sangui reconcile with each other (episode 8). Thus the brief opposition and confrontation between Xi and Sangui soon

turns into reconciliation, later into one-dimensional support and finally into mutual support and cooperation. Xi helps Sangui to organize and lead a drum-and-gong performance team to give performance in the city (episode 9-10). Sangui later helps Xi to find an expert to help treat Xiulan's lame leg caused by the Erhu's injection in the wrong place (episode 11). Xi and Sangui later cooperate with each other in the lavender seed project. Xi is in charge of growing the lavender seeds while Sangui sells the seeds (episode 12-18). Sangui also helps Xi to fight the copyright of Shuanzi's mother's paper cut pattern which has been used as trademark by a food stock company without her permission (episode 14). In episode 18, Sangui and Xi together set up an economic cooperative with Xi being the board of governor and Sangui being the manager. Xi is responsible for the growth and production of food crops while Sangui is responsible for the marketing and the sale of the products. Thus the initial brief confrontation and opposition between Xi and Sangui has changed into support and co-operation and most of the series focuses on their supportive relationship and relationships of mutual support and cooperation. The confrontational relationship is the result of Sangui's misunderstanding of Xi. The transformation of the confrontational relationship into supportive and cooperative relationship conveys the mutual appreciation of each other between Xi and Sangui: Sangui considers Xi as an extraordinary countryman (episode 14) and appreciates his perseverance in and devotion to farming, his honesty and his generosity to help others while Xi appreciates Sangui's sense and awareness of marketing. The mutual support and mutual cooperation thus highlights the integration of traditional Chinese cultural values and practices with values and practices embodied by modernity.

Xi's relationship with Ling'ai is from the very beginning is a supportive one. Xi helps to get Tiedan out of the deep hole in the village in episode one (episode 1) and he helps Ling'ai to find Tiedan's lost Longevity lock (episode 2). In return for his help, Ling'ai helps Xi financially by lending him 3000 yuan to buy a tractor to build a mobile toilet (episode 7). Later because of Qingshan's scolding Tiedan for urinating on his tractor, the relationship between Xi and Ling'ai becomes a bit strained (episode 8). Ling'ai is angry at Qingshan's scolding of her son Tiedan and calls Qingshan stupid. This makes Xi unhappy and he scolds Ling'ai for her rude remarks. On their arrival at home after the unpleasant incident, Xi asks his wife Xiulan to return 3000 yuan to Ling'ai right away. Later when Ling'ai notices Xi has built a greenhouse and has grown lavender seeds in the greenhouse, she turns to Xi for help (episode 13). She wants Xi to ask Wensheng to help her build a greenhouse. Xi tells Ling'ai that he will need to talk to Xiulan about this. Ling'ai thus turns to Xiulan and apologizes to her about her previous rude remarks about Qingshan. Xiulan forgives her and promises to get Wensheng to help her to build a greenhouse. Thus the strained relationship between Xi and Ling'ai becomes a reconciliatory and a supportive one. This relationship later transforms into a somehow strained one when Ling'ai suspects Wensheng of stealing her husband's expensive wrist watch (episode 15-16). Eventually, the strained relationship once again turns into a supportive one. Ling'ai wants to join Xi's economic cooperative project (episode 18). This to some extent is a support for Xi since he has wanted to establish an economic cooperative since he has come back to Xijia village but the villagers refuse to join the economic cooperative project twice because of the risk involved in the sale of the products. The supportive relationship between Xi, Xiulan and Ling'ai highlights Xi's benevolence towards others and his generosity to help others, Xiulan's lenience to Ling'ai and the practice of returning help and support one has received both on the part of Ling'ai and Xiulan.

Xi's relationship with Chouwa is protective and supportive. He takes care of and protects Chouwa, Liuzi's son when Liuzi is working at the city. He goes to the police station to take back Chouwa when he is caught stealing (episode 2) and protects him in the longevity lock affairs (episode 3). He and Erhu together help to get Chouwa back to the right track (episode 6 & 8). Xi's supportive relationship with Chouwa highlights the traditional Chinese practice of attaching great importance to educating children and of protecting the young.

Xi's relationship with Shuanzi's mother is also a supportive one. Shuanzi's mother lives on her own because her adopted son, Shuanzi and his wife refuse to look after her. When she faints in the field and is sent to hospital, Xi tries to persuade Jiuxian and Shuanzi to go to hospital to see Shuanzi's mother and take her home and live with them (episode 4). When they refuse, Xi tricks the young couple into taking care of Shuanzi's mother, telling her that Shuanzi's mother has money and that her paper cut pattern can make big money. Xi also helps her to get compensation for Shuanzi's mother from a fodder company for the company's illegal use of her paper cut pattern as its trademark (episode 14). *Because of his help*

and support given to Shuanzi's mother, Xi's relationship with Jiuxian is mostly confrontational. When Jiuxian discovers that Xi has tricked her into taking care of Shuanzi's mother with a lie, she confronts him and argues with him (episode 9). Later it turns out that a young artist Bai Tianliang from the city has come and bought Shuanzi's mother's paper cut pattern and Shuanzi's mother indeed makes some money (episode 9). When Jiuxian finds out that Shuanzi's mother has asked Xiulan to help her deposit the money into the bank, she confronts Xi and asks him to give her Shuanzi's mother's money (episode 10). When Xi has successfully got the compensation money from the fodder company, Jiuxian charges Xi for taking Shuanzi's mother's mother and demands Xi to give the money to her and her husband (episode 10). When Jiuxian makes a false charge against Erhu accusing him of taking bribery from Xi, Xi punishes her by tricking her into digging the stubbles for Erhu (episode 15). Xi's supportive relationship with Shuanzi's mother and his confrontational relationship with Jiuxian emphasize the Chinese tradition of respecting and taking caring of the elderly. Xi's getting compensation for Shuanzi's mother also highlights Xi's sense of modernity.

Relationship between Erhu and villagers

Erhu's relationship with villagers is mostly supportive. He helps to solve all the problems in the village: mediating between Xi and Sangui with regard to land contracting, sand-digging project dispute, and getting Xi and Sangui to work on the economic cooperative project; getting Tiedan out of the deep hole and mediating between Ling'ai and Grandma Qi with regard to longevity lock dispute; the unsprouting of crops seeds; Chouwa's educational problem; the taking care of Shuanzi's mother, mediating between Xi's family and Ma Cuilian's family, mediating between Xi and Baoqing, assigning Xi to get compensation from the fodder company for the company's illegal use of Shuanzi's mother's paper pig pattern as the trademark on behalf of Shuanzi's mother etc. Erhu's one-dimensional supportive relationship toward villagers highlights the traditional cultural values and practices he represents: generosity to help others, protecting the young, a strong sense of collective interest, selfishness, lenience to others as well as the practice of taking care of the elderly. His helping Xi and Sangui to work on the economic cooperative and his assigning Xi to get compensation for Shuanzi's mother's paper cut pig pattern also highlights his awareness of modern values and practices.

Relationships between party leaders and villagers

The series presents different levels of leaders: Mr. Li, head of Longwan town, Mr. Li, county party secretary, Mr. Qiao, city major and party secretary and Mr. Niu, head of county. Party leaders' appearance in the series is minimized and when they appear in the series, they are shown to either to discover the social problems in the village or to help solve these problems.

The relationship between these leaders and Xijia villagers is both hierarchical and supportive. The former is the party leadership who establishes, promotes, and enforces the agricultural tax exemption policy while villagers like Xi are ordinary countrymen, the target of the policy. In this sense, the relationship between the party leaders and villagers is hierarchical.

The relationship between the party leaders and Xijia villagers is also a supportive one. They are shown to be mostly supportive of the farming of the villagers. Mr. Qiao's visit is shown not as an intervention to the life of the villagers but as an attempt to celebrate the festive occasions with villagers and to discover villagers' attitudes towards farming and the problems faced by the villagers through his informal talk with them (episode 2). Through his informal talk with Xi's family during his visit at Xijia village, Qiao happens to learn from Xi about the gambling habit of some village cadres such as Baoqing and Yingping. Qiao is later shown to read between the lines of the letter written by Erhu and signed by Xi denying the fact of Baoqing and Yingping's gambling habit. Qiao senses through the letter the strained relationship between villagers and village cadres and he visits the county party secretary Mr. Li to investigate the letter incident. Mr. Li invites Xi to have an informal talk with him and thus know the truth of the whole event—what Xi has said is true (Episode 3). The investigation keeps Xi's honesty and integrity intact. Mr. Liu is shown to solve social problems in the village. He stops Sangui's sand-digging project, the illegal use of the arable land (episode 6). He offers help and support to villagers like Xi, getting a special permit for Xi's tractor-toilet to enter the city to collect human manure (episode 14) and helping Xi to drive away the rogues during Xi's manure collection in the city (episode 17). Mr. Li, head of Longwan town, is shown to

mediate between Xi and Sangui, reconciling the two after the sand-digging project dispute and getting them to work together on an economic cooperative project to develop Xijia village's economy (episode 8 & 17). Mr. Li also talks to Qingmei to help Xi with his economic cooperative project (episode 12). The relationships between the leaders and Xijia villagers are thus supportive. The supportive relationship between the party leaders and villagers shows the benevolence practice of the government: minimizing their intervention into the affairs of the villagers and offering help and support whenever necessary to solve the various social problems for villagers.

As episodes move from one to another to present different events, characters interact with each other and their interaction has produced different kinds of relationships: oppositional, supportive, cooperative, hierarchical etc. Xi's relationship with Er Hu is sometimes supportive, sometimes confrontational and sometimes hierarchical. Erhu is supportive of his brother Xi's effort to contract and farm the land, but is confrontational when he forces Xi to sign the letter denying the fact of gambling habit by Baoqing and other cadres (episode 2 &3), and is hierarchical since he is the village head. Xi's relationship with his son is mostly hierarchical and oppositional in that Xi most of the time forces his son to do what Xi wants including using Qingshan's donkey to carry the manure, disapproving of his relationship with Gaihua and his tourism project. Xi does in the end approve of his son's relationship with Gaihua when he is moved by Gaihua's devotion to Qingshan.

Among these various kinds of relationships, Xi is the key character. Through his interactions with others, different relationships are presented and thus I call the relationship a network relationship with Xi being the central node connecting people with whom he interacts on different occasions. Different relationships are highlighted at different events at different episodes. One episode covers some relationships while other episode deals with some other relationships.

On the whole, the serial presents different kinds of relationships ranging from oppositional, supportive, cooperative, hierarchical, to familial ones. Often these relationships interlock with each other. For example, the relationship between Mr. Li and Xi is both hierarchal and supportive. With Mr. Li, being the town head and Xi being, an ordinary countryman, their relationship is of hierarchal one. Mr. Li helps to reconcile Xi and Sangui and tries to get them to work together, thus his relationship is one of supportive one. Erhu's relationship with Xi is of three fold: being Xi's brother, Erhu's relationship with Xi is one of kinship; being the village head, Erhu is above Xi and thus his relationship with Xi is a hierarchical one ; in the events covered in the series, Erhu's relationship with Xi is sometimes confrontational but mostly supportive. Erhu is angry with Xi when Xi accidentally tells the city party secretary Qiao about the gambling habit of Baoqing and Yingping, the other members of the village committee, when Xi complains to him about Sangui's sand-digging projects and wants to report Sangui's project to the country cadres, and when Xi can't help telling the assessment team for the advanced village assessment about Li Erxian's superstitious practice after being provoked by Li's nuisance behavior in his house. Erhu supports Xi in the latter's efforts to contract land and to establish an economic cooperative project. Erhu also relies on Xi to help him solve various problems: to help take care of Shuanzi's mother and to fight for Shuanzi's mother to get compensation from a fodder company for its illegal use of Shuanzi's mother's paper cut pattern.

Thus the relationships presented in the serial are diverse and are interwoven with each other. And there are some patterns of the development of different types of relationships: at the beginning of the story, the relationship between each other is neutral one, with each other being equal; then at some points usually very briefly comes the oppositional relationships which are shown to present social problems; next, the oppositional ones are neutralized with both sides reconciled by a mediator; this reconciliatory relationship then gradually develops into one-dimensional supportive one (i.e. with one side offering help and support to the other followed by receiving help and support back) and ultimately develops into a cooperative relationship of mutual help and support. Before the reconciliatory relationships, the oppositional relationship may alternate with other kinds of relationships.

With regard to the proportion of the relationships presented, the amount of opposition is small and the ones which dominate and are emphasized are those of supportive ones (either the one-dimensional supportive in terms of offering help and support to others or in terms of receiving help and support from others) and those of cooperation i.e. in terms of

mutual help and support. While the oppositional relationships are used to show the problems, those supportive relationships are presented as those developed in the attempts of the characters to solve problems. The oppositional relationships are usually very brief and do not last long. Once the problems are presented, the confrontational relationships quickly transform into those of one-dimensional support and ultimately those of mutual help and support. The series as a whole thus highlights and emphasizes the support and help one character offers to and receives from one another. In this way, the serial intends to show: that there are different social problems; that all these problems can be solved; that the solution of these problems depends on one's own efforts as well as the help and support from others. Framing thus highlights different kinds of relationships established through the narrative functions in different events and the meaning/message embodied by such relationships.

Analysis of the narrative structure and its meaning

The serial as a whole is a network narrative. The series highlights and emphasizes Xi's narrative as the core narrative while narratives of his family members and other villagers are presented to be closely related to Xi's narrative. Xi's core narrative is interwoven and interlocked with the narratives of other people in the village. Through such interweaving and interlocking network narrative, the serial presents the difficulties or the social problems encountered by various characters and the attempts or efforts to overcome the difficulties or to solve these problems. The series as a whole emphasizes the efforts or attempts to solve the various problems and thus highlight the meaning or messages embodied by these efforts. The attempts or the efforts to solve the various problems have some recognizable patterns and such patterns highlight some special meanings. This section is divided into two main parts: the first part examines the network narrative and the meaning conveyed by the network narrative; the second part covers some patterns of the narrative structures and the meanings conveyed by such patterns.

Xi's narrative and the problems covered by the narrative

Xi's narrative explores the problems encountered by countrymen who are growing grains and other crops in the field following a typical production cycle: from preparing the land, sowing grain seeds in the land, looking after the growth of the grain, harvesting the grain and finally selling the grain. In Xi's case, one more procedure is added: he contracts some land for his farming. Thus following the production cycle, Xi's encounters the following different difficulties or problems, some of which are directly related to him and his family members and other of which relate to people in the village either young or old.

Difficulties or Problems related to the land

Some problems are related to contracting of the village land and farming of the contracted land.

One such problem is Xiulan's uncommitted support or withdrawal of her support for Xi's farming when she is attracted by Sangui's high price to contract Xi's land and by Sangui's profitable sand-digging project. At the very beginning of his land-contracting effort, Xi's family supports him. And no villager raises any objection to the village committee's approval of Xi's application for the contracting of the remaining 30 mu of land in the village. It seems that Xi is going to contract the land he has intended to. Things change when another villager Sangui comes back to the village to contract the land. Sangui offers a high price to contract Xi's intended land. Xi's wife Xiulan and his son Qingshan could not resist the temptation of the good offer and try to persuade Xi to give up the land. When Xi refuses, Xiulan has disagreement with Xi and even threatens Xi by making known his past misbehaviors. This is a big problem for him. He needs family support for his farming. Xi turns to Qingmei for help. He asks her to find and read some newspaper articles about how countrymen become rich because of farming land and he records her reading with a tape recorder. Xi then talks to Xiulan about the contracted land again and plays her the recorded reading. Xi also tries to persuade Xiulan by re-telling the stories of his grandfather and his father. His grandfather lost his life when making a bet on land by swallowing 5 jin of rice cake at a time. His father was so hungry in the year 1960 that he ate dead mice. With a combination of his daughter's help and his persuasion, Xi manages to get his wife's support to farm the land with him. In the end, he and Sangui each contract 15 mu of land.

After Xi and his family have grown grain in contracted land and the crops have started to grow, Sangui starts his work on the land—digging sand out of his contracted land and selling the land to a highway express company to earn a high profit. Though Sangui's sand-digging project is actually a case of illegal use of arable land, the high profit from the project presents another temptation to Xiulan and Qingshan. They try to persuade Xi to start similar sand-digging project on their own contracted land. Again Xi refuses and again Xi's refusal leads to another disagreement. Xiulan threatens to destroy all the crops in the field and this infuriates Xi and they have a serious confrontation. Xi does not give up his farming and he does not want to anger his wife either. With some strenuous efforts, Xi manages to reconcile with his wife.

Then comes another problem – Sangui's sand-digging contracted has dried up Xi's crops adjacent to Sangui's land. Xi complains to Erhu about Sangui's sand-digging project and wants him to stop Sangui from digging sand. Erhu asks Xi to mind his own farming and does not stop Sangui's sand-digging project. Furious about Erhu's indifference to his complaint, Xi intends to report Sangui's sand-digging project to Mr. Niu, the county head but he gives up the attempt after learning from Erhu that the large sum contributed by Sangui's sand-digging project can help solve various problems in the village. Mr. Niu however comes suddenly to the village to stop Sangui's sand-digging project because another villager Ma Cuilian has reported Sangui's project to the county. Suspecting that Niu has come because of Xi's reporting, Sangui confronts Xi and fights with him until Ma's admission of her reporting stops their confrontation. With the halting of the sand-digging project, the drying-up problem gets solved and Xi also gets full support from his family for his farming.

Problems related to the growth of crops

Some problems Xi has encountered relate to the growth of crops. One of these problems is the unsprouting of the seeds—the grain seeds which Xi and other villagers have sown in the field do not sprout. Xi and Erhu go to the seed station for the unsprouting problem and wants the station to compensate for the seeds but the deputy head of the station ignores their complaint. Xi then comes back with his wife to grow the same seeds in front of the seed station and this makes the deputy head come to the village and check the seeds sown in the field. Confirming that it is the seeds' problem, the deputy head compensates for the seeds and gets seed station staff to re-sow seeds for all the villagers.

Another problem relates to Xi's greenhouse. A strong wind has destroyed the greenhouse which Wensheng has built for Xi because of the poor quality of the greenhouse framework. Xi goes to the greenhouse framework manufacturer to get compensation and the manufacturer compensates for the framework and has his greenhouse re-built.

Another problem is the villagers' lack of interest in establishing and joining an economic cooperative project in the village, the project which Xi has wanted to set up since his return to the village. Realizing it is too inefficient to farm the land on a family basis, Xi comes up with an idea of establishing an economic cooperative in the village with villagers cooperating on every aspect of farming, including preparing land for growing crops, sowing crop seeds, looking after crops, harvesting crops and selling the harvested crops. He tells his idea to Erhu and Baoqing. The latter two gather some villagers to discuss the establishment of such an economic cooperative project, but the villagers are not interested in joining the cooperative because there is no guarantee of selling all the crops grown (episode 4). Xi's first attempt at the cooperative project thus fails. Xi's second attempt at the cooperative, which is mainly initiated by the villagers themselves, also fails because the villagers believe that they will end up working for Xi rather than benefitting from the cooperative themselves (Episode 11). Xi, however, does not give up his efforts to establish the cooperative. Mr. Li, head of town and Erhu, head of the village try first to reconcile Xi and Sangui after the sand-digging project incident and later to persuade the two to work together to establish an economic cooperative in the village. Mr. Li also talks to Qingmei and asks her to help Xi with the project. Qingmei tries to hold a meeting with a view to discussing the project with the villagers but no villagers turn up at the meeting (episode 12). Qingmei later does manage to gather the villagers at the village committee to give them a detailed explanation of the cooperative project (episode 16). Still the villagers have some hesitation to join the cooperative and Xi has not yet established the cooperative he has longed for. Erhu tries to get Xi and Sangui to work together on a lavender seed project (episode 12). Though not very successful, the lavender project proves to the villagers that the cooperative is a workable practice. Towards the end of the Episode 18, Xi finally realizes his dream of establishing an economic cooperative project. He and Sangui are the two main shareholders of the cooperative and their

cooperative is joined by up to 50 households in the village beside the village committee as the third biggest shareholder.

There are some other problems related to the growth of the crops. Xi has built a mobile tractor-toilet and has been using this tractor-toilet to collect human manure in the city as the organic fertilizer for the crops in order to save money on the expensive chemical fertilizer (episode 13). This good practice however has to be suspended due to the city image project which forbids the tractor to enter the city for fear of its damaging the city image. Not knowing the city image project, Qingshan is stopped by a city traffic police on his way to the city to collect human manure and is asked to pay a fine of 200 yuan for violating the city image project traffic regulation. Though Xi manages to convince the head of the traffic police that his tractor-toilet is a mobile toilet and manages to get back the tractor-toilet without paying the fine, Xi is asked not to drive the mobile-toilet into the city again because his tractor-toilet will affect the city image. This puts Xi into a difficult situation. With the city image project, Xi is not allowed to drive the mobile toilet to the city to collect the human manure needed for his crops and he cannot afford the money on the expensive chemical fertilizers. He turns to Mr. Niu, head of the county for help (episode 14). Luckily he gets Niu's support and with the special permit Niu has got for him, Xi is able to continue to use the tractor-toilet to collect human manure from the city.

Problems related to his family members.

Xi's core narrative also covers problems which are related to his family members. The problems relate to Qingmei include Qingmei's being laid-off (episode 6), her fish getting sick (episode 8-9), Xiulan's disapproval of her relationship with Wensheng (episode 12) and Ma Cuilian's meddling into Wensheng's marrying into Xi's family (episode 17). Problems related to Qingshan include Qingshan's being hurt by the stolen donkey bought from Wensheng (episode 3), and Qingshan's getting trapped under the tractor-toilet after an accident (episode 8), Qingshan's quarrel with Ling'ai (episode 8) and Xi's disapproval of Qingshan's relationship with Gaihua because of Ma Cuilian's continuous and annoying meddling into the relationship. Problems relates to Xiulan include Xiulan's becoming lame after receiving an misinjection from Erhu (episode 10-11), Xiulan's disapproval of the relationship between Wensheng and Qingmei (episode 12), Xiulan's reluctance to give money to Xi to help Liuzi to start his lamb business (episode 12), Xiulan's disagreement with Xi with regard to Ma's request of betrothal gifts from the family to formalize the relationship between Qingshan and Gaihua (episode 11).

Xi is shown to try very hard to help solve the various problems for his family with an exception of Qingshan's relationship with Gaihua. He tries to watch over the fish the whole night when Qingmei's fish gets sick (episode 9). When Xiulan asks Xi to get Wensheng to leave the family because of her disapproval of the possible relationship between Wensheng and Qingmei, he does not do as his wife has told him since he appreciates Wensheng's hard work and his skills and experience of growing crops in a greenhouse and he knows Qingmei and Wensheng like each other (episode 12). He puts up a formal notice in the village to sever his relationship with Qingmei to give the appearance to Ma that Qingmei is no longer part of Xi's family. With the severing of the relationship between Xi and Qingmei, Wensheng's marrying into Xi's family no longer becomes a problem (episode 17). Wensheng and Qingmei get married as they have planned. When Xiulan's lame leg is not cured by the provincial hospital, Xi reassures her that he will take care of her for the rest of her life and he is shown to take away Xiulan's urine himself (episode 11). When Qingshan is kicked and hurt by the stolen donkey, Xi sends Qingshan to the hospital (episode 3). When Qingshan is trapped under the tractor-toilet after the tractor is upset, Xi rushes to the accident site, gets Qingshan out with the help of other villagers and then carries him home (episode 8). Though he disapproves of Qingshan's relationship with Gaihua because of Ma's meddling in the relationship and her gossiping big mouth, Xi finally gives his consent to the relationship after learning about Gaihua's devotion to Qingshan (episode 14).

Narrative of other characters and the problems Xi helps to solve for them

Xi's narrative is interwoven with narratives of other villagers and he encounters, gets involved in, and helps to solve a lot of problems which are related to other villagers.

Sangui's narrative covers his land-contracting efforts (episode 1), his sand-digging project (episode 5-6), his

organization of a gong-and-drum performance team (episode 9-10), his cooperation with Xi on lavender seed project (episode 12 & 18), his helping Xi to seek compensation for Shuanzi's mother from the fodder company (episode 14), his cooperation with Xi on the economic cooperative in Xijia village (episode 18) and his marketing efforts to get a provincial Healthy Food Company to cooperate with the economic cooperative (episode 19).

His sand-digging project is presented as abuse of the arable land and is halted by Niu's visit to Xijia village. His gong-and-drum performance team and his cooperation with first Xi on lavender seed project and later on the economic cooperative project esp. the cooperative project are depicted as practical ways to develop the village economy and thus to increase the income of the villagers after the implementation of the country's agricultural tax exemption policy.

Chouwa's narrative represents the problem of educating village children left behind by their parents who work at the city. He drops out of school and is left idle wandering through the town and developing a stealing habit. He is caught and sent to the police station. Xi takes him back and acts as his temporary guardian (episode 2). Chouwa still continues his idle life and has not changed the stealing habit. He is caught on the spot of stealing again and is beaten and wounded by a shop owner's young son and is sent to hospital (episode 6). Xi takes him back from the hospital and talks to Erhu for the solution of Chouwa's problem. Erhu talks to the village school and Chouwa gets back to school. The serial later show Chouwa getting other village kids to blow fish out of Xi's fishing pond (episode 8). It seems that Chouwa is causing trouble again. Puzzled, Xi goes to the school to ask Chouwa for his mischievous behavior. It turns out that one maths teacher from the city is not used to the harsh food in the village and is planning to leave the village school. Chouwa wants her to stay. He wants to get fish for her but he himself cannot do that since Xi has saved and protected him. Chouwa teaches and gets other kids to blow fish out of Xi's fish pond. Chouwa gets transformed and becomes considerate of others though in an inappropriate way. He is later shown to serve his grandmother with the food he has cooked her when she becomes ill (episode 12). The solution of Chouwa's problems relies on the help and support from Xi and Erhu, and education from the school.

Shuanzi's mother's narrative represents the problem of taking care of childless aged people in the village. Shuanzi's mother has not got a child and she has adopted the son of her brother as her son. After Shuanzi gets married, Shuanzi stops taking care of her because his wife does not want to look after Shuanzi's mother and he himself is a henpecked husband. Xi has tried to persuade the young couple sometimes resorting to tricks to take care of Shuanzi's mother but in vain (episode 4, episode 9). Eventually, the young couple severs their relationship with Shuanzi's mother and Shuanzi's mother is left to the care of the village committee as the childless aged person (episode 10). When Erhu discovers that a fodder company has used Shuanzi's mother's paper cut pattern illegally and tells her that she can get compensation money from the company, she gives Erhu her permission to get compensation from the company for her (episode 14). Erhu assigns Xi to get compensation for Shuanzi's mother from the company. After Xi manages to get compensation from the company, Shuanzi's mother donates all the compensation to the village committee (episode 15). The village committee later uses part of the compensation to build a home for the childless aged people in the village. The solution to her problem relies on help and support from Xi and Erhu and ultimately from the village committee.

Ling'ai's narrative covers some problems she faces. First her son Tiedan falls into a deep hole (episode 1). She herself is not able to get him out. Erhu, Xi and other villagers together manage to get Tiedan out of the hole, safe. Later, Ling'ai scolds harshly her over-90-year-old grand-mother-in-law, Grandma Qi after she discovers that Grandma Qi has given her son Tiedan a forgery longevity lock. Erhu and Xi come and mediate between Ling'ai and Grandma Qi (episode 3). When Ling'ai later wants to build a greenhouse to grow crops, Xi asks Ling'ai to turn to Xiulan and Xiulan gets Wensheng to help her with the greenhouse (episode 13). Ling'ai later suspects Wensheng of stealing her husband's expensive wrist watch after learning from Ma that Wensheng has once stolen a donkey and her suspect angers Xi's family especially Qingmei (episode 15-16). Ling'ai of course also offers help and support to Xi. Ling'ai lends him money without hesitation when Xi goes and borrows money from her to buy a tractor for his mobile toilet (episode 7). Ling'ai later offers to join Xi's cooperative project and her offer to some extent is a kind of support for Xi's cooperative (episode 18).

Erhu's narrative represents the typical problems a village cadre encounters. As a village head, he handles all the village affairs including: contracting land to Xi and Sangui, mediating between and reconciling Xi and Sangui after their confrontation with each other due to the sand-digging project, trying to get Sangui and Xi to work together to establish an economic cooperative project to develop a new mode of economic development to increase the income of the villagers, handling Chouwa's educational problem, getting Tiedan out of the deep hole, mediating between Xi and Baoqing after Xi incidentally tells Party Secretary Qiao about Baoqing's gambling habit during Qiao's visit to Xijia village to celebrate Spring Festival with Xijia villagers, taking care of Shuanzi's mother when her adopted son and his wife do not take care of her, accompanying Sichuan girl to the hospital when her baby gets sick, and assigning Xi to get compensation from a fodder company for its illegal use of Shuanzi's mother's paper cut pattern as the company's trademark, helping to solve the unsprouting of grain seeds for the villagers, the annual assessment of the advanced village title, handling the superstitious practice by Li Erxian, and doing mediation and reconciliation work for the household with domestic discord etc. Xi helps Erhu solve a lot of problems such Chouwa's problem, Shuanzi's mother's problem, the unsprouting of grain seeds etc.

Wensheng's narrative represents some existent social problems in China's countryside—the gambling practice in the countryside and the coercive tax and fee collection practice by village cadres. Wensheng's experience of stealing a donkey and his mother's killing herself are indirectly caused by his father's gambling habit (episode 11). He has learned the skills and technology of building a greenhouse and growing crops in it after his failure in the national entrance exam to college/university. He uses the greenhouse skills to grow crops for his family and has a promising beginning. His father's gambling habits destroys everything. His father owes a huge gambling debt and runs away to avoid the debtors but the debtors come to destroy Wensheng's greenhouse and all the crops grown in it. Wensheng's mother cannot stand this and kills herself by drinking insecticide. Wensheng's hurting village head Wang's eyes is caused by the confrontation between villagers and villager cadres resulting from the latter's forcing the former to pay tax and fees (episode 16). Ling'ai's distrust of Wensheng because of his experience of stealing a donkey represents people's prejudice towards people who have once erred but have changed. Wensheng's knowledge and skills of growing crops in a greenhouse represents the use of science and technology as one of the solutions to agricultural development in the countryside. Xi shows lenience towards Wensheng and gives up the attempt to hand over Wensheng to the police on his donkey theft. Xi also shows sympathetic understanding of Wensheng's being forced to steal a donkey. He protects Wensheng and does not tell the villager about the theft. Xi appreciates Wensheng's hard work and his knowledge and skills of growing crops in a greenhouse. He does not have prejudice towards Wensheng as his wife does and supports Qingmei's relationship with Wensheng. Xi also offers his help and support to Wensheng when Wensheng is arrested because of his hurting Wang's eyes. Xi accompanies Qingmei to Wensheng's home village to find the witness who has given a false testimony with regard to Wensheng's hurting Wang's eyes (episode 15).

Ma Cuilian's narrative represents the extreme case of a Chinese woman in the village who strictly sticks to the tradition of Chinese culture. Ma is not flexible with the tradition of the village. Ma requests betrothal gift from Xi to formalize the relationship between her daughter Gaihua and Xi's son Qingshan (episode 9 & 11). She does not back down from her request even if she knows this request may infuriate Xi. She opposes Wensheng's marrying into Xi's family because the village tradition forbids the son-in-law to marry into his fiancé's family when the family has a son (episode 17). She has constant conflict with Xi because of her inflexible sticking to practice of the Chinese tradition. Ma's narrative also represents different attitude towards farming. She is not devoted to farming like Xi is. If she has a better way of earning money, she will give up farming. After learning about Sangui's attractive offer to contract Xi's land and about Sangui's profitable sand-digging project, she has tried to offer her land to Sangui twice in vain since her land does not contain sand (episode 6). She has also tried to offer her land to Xi but Xi refuses her offer because he considers Ma's giving up farming as insensible (episode 5).

Li Erxian's narrative and Old Uncle Liu's narrative represent the existence of and the handling of superstitious practice in the countryside. At the beginning of the series, Qingshan digs Old Uncle Liu's ancestor tomb which is situated at Xi's contracted land and this angers him (episode 2). Later, Liu's family members have unpleasant experience: his

eldest driver son has had an accident; his second son has lost money in his watermelon business; the daughter of his daughter has failed in her National Entrance Examination with just one credit below minimum passing score; his eldest grandson has developed an athlete foot (episode 16). He blames Xi's growing the lavender on the contracted land for his family's bad luck because Li Erxian, the villager fortune teller tells him so. Xiulan and Xi fail to convince Liu that what has happened to his family is just a coincidence. Liu threatens to cut the lavender on Xi's land. Xi invites Li to his house and pays her to tell fortune with regard to his growth of lavender on the land. Li tells Xi that Liu's family's bad luck has nothing to do with his growth of the lavender. Xi records Li's entire fortune telling and gets Qingshan to play the recording to Liu. Liu is furious about Li's different fortune telling and becomes mad at Li. Xi thus gets Li punished and fewer and fewer people turn to Li for fortune telling (episode 16).

To sum up, Xi's narrative is highlighted as a major or core narrative while narratives of other villagers are presented as interwoven and interlocked with Xi's. Within Xi's narrative, the problems confronting him, both the problems related to him and his family members, and those related to other villagers, are shown but the attempts and efforts which Xi takes to solve the problems are highlighted and so are the values and practices embodied by such efforts. Others narratives are presented as alternatives to Xi's and so are the values and practices embodied by these narratives. Next session is the meaning or message embodied by the network narrative.

Meaning or message embodied by the narrative structure

A. Values and practices embodied by Xi's narrative

Xi is presented as a model and successful farmer after the implementation of country's agricultural tax exemption policy. He is shown to value and practice many traditional Chinese cultural values and practices.

He is devoted to and perseverant in farming. He rejects Sangui's attractive offer to contract his land with a high price and resists the temptation to dig sand out of his contracted land to earn quick and big money. Confronted first with the persuasion of his wife and his son to give up his contracted land to Sangui and to do similar sand-digging project to Sangui's, and later with their objection to his land contracting and land farming, Xi manages to persuade his wife to work with him on his farming.

Xi is also lenient to and tolerant of others and willing to give chances for others to improve and better themselves as evidenced by the cases of Wensheng and the deputy head of the seed station. He gives up his attempt to report and hand over to the police Wensheng who has stolen a donkey and sold it to his son Qingshan. He also helps the deputy head of the seed station to keep his job despite the fact that deputy head has provided Xijia villagers with unsprouting grain seeds and has dismissed Xi and Erhu's initial complaint to him about the unsprouting problem. He writes a letter certifying that the head has compensated for the unsprouting seeds, has re-sown the grain seeds for the villagers and has not caused any loss to the villagers, and requesting the head of the seed station not to remove the deputy head from his deputyship because of the unsprouting seed incident.

Xi values and practices the tradition of protecting the young and respecting the old as evidenced by the narratives of Chouwa, Wensheng and Shuanzi's mother. He helps Liuzi to take care of Chouwa while Liuzi is working in the city. He protects Chouwa in the longevity lock incident, refusing to tell Ling'ai that Chouwa has stolen the lock. He does not report Wensheng and hand him over to the police because of the donkey theft. He tries to persuade Shuanzi and his wife to take care of their mother-in-law Shuanzi's mother and tricks them into doing so when they refuse.

Xi is also a man with a sense of collective interest. When Sangui's sand-digging has dried up some of Xi's crops, Xi plans to report Sangui's misuse of the contracted arable land, but he gives up his plan when Erhu tells him that the large sum of money contributed by Sangui's sand-digging project to the village committee can be used to solve the various social problems in the village such as education, taking care of the widowed elderly and the construction of the irrigation system needed for the farming. Thus we can see that Xi is an ordinary man like every other countryman who is mostly concerned with his land and his interest but Xi is also a man of moral principles who is willing to give up his interest for the sake of the whole village.

Xi is a man of honesty. He tells city party secretary Qiao about Baoqing and other village cadres' gambling habit when Qiao visits Xijia village to celebrate the Spring Festival with the villagers there (episode 2). He tells the truth of Li Erxian's superstitious practice before the inspection team assessing and evaluating Xijia village for the advanced village title (episode 19). He refuses to sign a business contract with a provincial food company after he discovers that the company wants to use his fame to deceive customers (Episode 8). But he sometimes plays tricks on people or hides truth in order to protect the young and the old. Jiuxian and her hen-pecked husband Shuanzi have driven their mother-in-law Shuanzi's mother out of their house and have not looked after her as they are supposed to do. Xi tries to persuade the couple to take care of Shuanzi's mother. When the couple refuses to do so, he tricks the couple into inviting Shuanzi's mother back to live with them and thus taking care of her (episode 4 & 5). Xi refuses to tell Ling'ai that Chouwa has stolen Tiedan's longevity lock so as to protect him (episode 3).

Xi also has some other traditional Chinese cultural values and practices. Liuzi asks Xi to take care of his son Chouwa on his leave for the village at the very beginning of the series. His helping Chouwa is first of all a practice of keeping his word—one of the traditional cultural values and practices. His helping Chouwa also demonstrates the great tradition of attaching great importance to education besides the practice of taking care of and protecting the young. Xi offers his help and support to almost everybody in the village and this shows his benevolence to others.

Xi, of course, is not a man of perfection. He is critical of his son Qingshan most of time. He forces Qingshan to farm with him despite his son's reluctance. He disapproves of Qingshan's relationship with Gaihua because Gaihua's annoying and meddling mother and he often asks Qingshan to give up such a relationship (episode 5-14). Xi's attitude towards Qingshan shows his patriarchal practice.

We can see in Xi the embodiment of traditional Chinese cultural values and practices: patriarchal, perseverant, hardworking, pragmatic, benevolent, lenient to and tolerant of others, ready to help and protect others especially those who err, respectful of the elderly and having a sense of collective interest.

Xi, however, is a man embracing modern values and practices. He dislikes Ma Cuijian's request of betrothal gifts from his family to formalize the relationship between Gaihua and Qingshan (episode 9, 11,). He is furious at Ma's objection to Wensheng's marrying into Xi's family because the aged village tradition forbids a man to marry into his fiancé's family when his fiancé has a brother (episode 17). He hates these traditional practices and considers them as the evils of the bygone feudal society. He thinks it not right for people in modern China to keep such traditional practices. He supports Wensheng's marrying into his family and supports Wensheng and Qingmei's simple and modern marriage ceremony. He appreciates the application of science and technology to farming. When he learns Wensheng has the skills and experience of growing crops in a greenhouse, he asks Wensheng to build a greenhouse for him (episode 11-12). He grows lavender seeds in the greenhouse (episode 12-18) and the economic cooperative he and Sangui later establish adopts a large-scale greenhouse growing practice (episode 19). Inspired by his son's suggestion of modern farming (episode 4), Xi comes up with the idea of establishing an economic cooperative project in the village and he is shown to make strenuous efforts to establish such a project which integrates traditional green farming, science and technology and modern corporation management (episode 4-19). He has an awareness of copyright and fights on behalf of Shuanzi's mother for her copyright when her paper cut pattern has been used by a fodder company without her permission (episode 14 & 15). Xi's rejection of Ma's request of betrothal gifts and of Ma's objection to Wensheng's marrying into Xi's family, Xi's application of greenhouse growing skills to farming, Xi's idea of establishing an economic cooperative project, his strenuous efforts to establish such a cooperative and his eventual establishment of the cooperative as well as his attempt to get compensation for Shuanzi's mother from the fodder company are part of the modern values and practices.

Thus Xi's narrative embodies the integration or interaction of traditional Chinese cultural values and practices with those of a modernity society.

B. Values and practices embodied by Erhu's narrative

Erhu's narrative presents him as a model village cadre. He is the second most important character in the series and his

narrative runs through the serial from the very beginning to the end. As the village head, Erhu has helped solve all the problems in the village and his efforts to solve these problems also embody traditional Chinese cultural values and practices.

He has risked his life to get Tiedan out of the deep hole. He has helped to buy the crops' seeds for the villagers and to solve the unsprouting of the seeds for the villagers. He has sacrificed his time and energy to help Shuanzi's mother to re-sow the crops seeds. He accompanies Sichuan girl to the town hospital for her sick baby son because Liuzi cannot return to the village because of the severe snow. He assigns Xi to get compensation for Shuanzi's mother from the fodder company after his accidental discovery of the company's illegal use of Shuanzi's mother's paper cut pattern as the company's trademark. He talks to the village school and gets Chouwa back to the school to continue his primary school education. He sometimes makes mistakes for the sake of the whole village as evidenced by contracting the arable land to Sangui for his sand-digging project. He has a serious stomachache and is warned by the doctor against drinking any wine. In order to get more compensation for Shuanzi's mother from the fodder company, he drinks wine at the negotiation dinner with the representatives from the fodder company and he has part of his stomach cut because of his wine drinking. He tries to get Sangui and Xi to work together to develop a new mode of economic development for the village to increase the income of the villagers. He has devoted his time and energy to the affairs of almost every villager at the expense of his health, his life and his family. He continues to offer his generous help and support to others in spite of his wife's complaints about him. He is seldom seen to have any complaint about what he has been doing except when he is drunk. Underlying Erhu's efforts to help others are such traditional cultural values: benevolence, selfishness, generosity to help others, a strong sense of collective interest.

C. Values and Practices embodied by Sangui's narrative

Sangui's narrative presents one alternative way to develop the village economy and thus to increase the income of the villagers after the implementation of the country's agricultural tax exemption policy. On learning the agricultural tax exemption policy, he returns to the village to contract land but he does not farm the contracted land as Xi does. Instead, he is interested in business and he starts a sand-digging project with the land. This project is an illegal use of arable land and is later stopped because of Ma's reporting of the project to the county leadership. With Xi's help, he later helps organizes a gong and drum performance team out of Xijia villagers to give commercial gong and drum performance in the nearby city to increase the income of the villagers. He and Xi later cooperates on a lavender seed project with Xi responsible for growing lavender seeds and Sangui responsible for selling the harvested seeds. With the success of the project, he and Xi later establish an economic cooperative project in Xijia village. Xi is responsible for growing grains and other economic crops while Sangui is responsible for marketing and selling of the produced crops. Sangui's narrative embodies the integration of traditional Chinese cultural values and practices and modernity. He respects and trusts Xi because of his perseverance in farming, because of his eco-farming practice, because of his honesty, because of his generosity to help others. He cooperates with Xi on lavender seeds project and on the economic cooperative project in the village because of his appreciation of the same values and practices Xi has held. Sangui is also a man with a sense of modernity. He is interested in business and good at marketing and has the knowledge and skill of modern corporation management. He has brought back to the village a lavender seeds project and later a big company to cooperate with the economic cooperative he and Xi has established. Sangui's success is thus presented as due to the integration of traditional cultural values and practices and modern corporation practices.

D. Values and Practices embodied by Liuzi's narrative

Liuzi's narrative is another alternative response to farming after the implementation of the country's agricultural tax exemption policy. His wife is dead and he has young son Chouwa. He has been working in the city. He is not fond of farming. He does not return to the village straight away as Xi has done. When he returns to the village, he does not grow crops in the field as Xi does. Instead, with the money Xi manages to get from Xiulan, he starts a small business of selling lamb meat to people in the town and city nearby. Liuzi's business also embodies some of the traditional Chinese cultural values and practices. He is shown to be a filial son. He has brought with him a Sichuan girl to the village. Because of his

mother objection to his re-marriage, he dare not take Sichuan girl to his home for fear that his mother may be very angry. He gets Xi to talk to his mother and brings the girl home to talk to his mother only after Xi's mediation. Because of his mother's objection to his relationship with Sichuan girl, he breaks up with Sichuan girl. Later when Sichuan girl comes back to the village with his baby son, his mother objects to her stay with him. Though Sichuan girl stays with him after Xi's mediation and Liuzi's pleading, he and Sichuan girl are not married for fear their marriage may make his mother unhappy. Towards the end of the serial, episode 19, Xi has dictated to Erhu a letter certifying that Sichuan girl's baby son is Liuzi's son and requesting Liuzi and his mother to be nice to Sichuan girl and her son. It is only after this letter that Liuzi and Sichuan girl get married. Liuzi's mother trusts Xi because he has helped Chouwa and she will not object to Xi's suggestion.

E. Values and Practices embodied by Ma Cuilian's narrative

Ma's narrative also represents one of the many different responses to farming after the implementation of the country's agricultural tax exemption policy. She is a widow and needs to raise two daughters on her own, Gaihua and Gaiping. She has been growing crops in the field but she values money more than growing the crops in the field. This can be seen in her attempt to get Sangui to contract her land after she learns about Sangui's offer of a high price to contract Xi's land and about Sangui's profitable sand-digging project. Sangui, however, rejects her offer because her land does not contain sand.

Ma Cuilian's narrative also presents an extreme case of sticking to the traditional Chinese cultural values and practices. She requests betrothal gifts from Xi's family to formalize the relationship between her daughter Gaihua and Xi's son Qingshan. She objects Wensheng's marrying into Xi's family because the age-old village tradition does not allow a man to marry into his fiancé's family when the family has a son. Ma's inflexible sticking to the traditional Chinese cultural is presented in a negative light. Her request of betrothal gifts is opposed not only by Xi but also by her daughter Gaihua. Her request of betrothal gifts is presented as a big obstacle to the relationship between Gaihua and Qingshan. Her objection to Wensheng's marrying into Xi's family annoys Qingmei who is always supportive of Gaihua and Qingshan and who has been mediating between Xi and Ma with a view to getting their consent to the relationship between Gaihua and Qingshan. Ma, however, is also portrayed positively though not very frequently. When Mr. Niu comes to the village to stop Sangui's sand-digging project, Sangui suspects that Xi has reported his sand-digging project to Niu and thus confronts Xi, quarreling and arguing with Xi. It is Ma's admission of her reporting to the country leadership that has brought their quarrel and fight to a stop. Ma's admission thus embodies one of the virtues in traditional Chinese culture—honesty and the practice of daring to act and daring to bear responsibility.

F. Values and Practices embodied by Qingshan's narrative

Qingshan's narrative also presents an alternative response to farming after the country's agricultural tax exemption policy. He is not fond of farming because he does not think highly of farming and he does not consider farming as a decent job. He tells this opinion of farming to the city party secretary Qiao during Qiao's visit to Xijia village to celebrate the Spring Festival with Xi's family. He has his own interest rather than farming the land with his father. He has tried selling instant torches to the villagers though without much success because the villagers later return the faulty torches to him. He wants to work on a folklore tourism project along the Yellow River and has bought a donkey for such a purpose. He wants to raise dogs and wants to introduce methane project into Xijia village. He, however, ends up farming the land with Xi despite his reluctance because of Xi's objection to his ideas and because of his filial respect to his father. Qingshan's narrative thus also embodies part of the traditional Chinese cultural practices—filial to his parents.

G. Values and Practices embodied by Qingmei and Wensheng's narrative

Qingmei and Wensheng's narratives represent another alternative response to farming after the country's agricultural tax exemption policy—the application of science and technology to farming. Qingmei has learned modern farming and has the awareness of modern farming, applying science and technology to farming. She is not frustrated with her being laid-off. Instead, she returns to the village with confidence. She tries to help her father with his farming, but she herself

has her own idea with regard to farming. She wants to raise fish in the village and her plan gets Xi and Xiulan's support. Xi helps her to contract the village fish pond for her and Qingmei herself learns the science and technology to raise fish on her own. Qingmei's narrative also embodies some traditional cultural values and practices—being a filial daughter trying to mediate and reconcile between her mother Xiulan and her father when they have disagreement and trying to help Xi with his farming and the establishment of his economic cooperative project. Qingmei's narrative also embodies a break away from part of the traditional Chinese practice. She is independent and has her own thinking. She resists her mother's opposition to her relationship with Wensheng. She holds a simple marriage ceremony with Wensheng without holding a traditional luxurious wedding ceremony and Wensheng's marrying into Qingmei's family is a break away from the age-old village custom—son-in-laws are not allowed to marry into his fiancé's family when the family has a son.

Wensheng's narrative highlights the use of science and technology in farming. Wensheng himself has the knowledge, skills and experience of growing crops in a greenhouse. He has helped Xi build a greenhouse and Xi has grown lavender seeds in the greenhouse. Wensheng has also helped Ling'ai built a greenhouse for the growth of crops. His narrative also embodies some of the traditional cultural values and practices: Xi has helped him and protected him with regard to the donkey theft incident and Wensheng in return helps Xi with the building of a greenhouse and he shows respect to Xi. Wensheng's narrative also shows a sense of modernity. His marrying into Xi's family is a break away from traditional Chinese cultural practice—it is not customary for son-in-laws to marry into his fiancé's family when the family has a son.

H. Values and Practices embodied by Ling'ai's narrative

Ling'ai's narrative represents another alternative to farming. Ling'ai is shown to be a follower of Xi since she trusts what Xi has been doing. After she notices Xi has built a greenhouse and has grown lavender seeds in the greenhouse, she also wants to build a similar greenhouse and grows crops in it. She gets back to the village her husband who has been working in the city to help her with greenhouse farming. On Ling'ai request, Xiulan gets Wensheng to help her build a greenhouse. After Wensheng helps her to build a greenhouse, she grows vegetables in it. Ling'ai later tells Xiulan her desire to join Xi's cooperative project. By following Xi's practice, Ling'ai narrative also embodies some of the modern values and practices—applying science and technology and modern cooperation management to farming.

Ling'ai is disrespectful of her over-90-year-old grand-mother-in-law, Grandma Qi in the forgery longevity lock incident. She scolds harshly Grandma Qi for giving her son Tiedan a forgery longevity lock. She has prejudice toward Wensheng, suspecting Wensheng of stealing her husband's expensive wrist watch after learning from Ma that Wensheng has once stolen a donkey. Despite these, Ling'ai narrative also embodies some of the traditional values and practices. Her lending money to Xi without hesitation embodies the traditional practice of returning help and support which one has received. Xi has helped to save her son Tiedan out of the deep hole. In comparison with other villagers' refusal to join the economic cooperative, Ling'ai's interest in and her desire to join the cooperative is to some extent a valuable support for Xi's project.

I. Values and Practices embodied by Gaihua's narrative

Gaihua's narrative embodies some traditional values and practices in China. She is fond of Qingshan and is devoted to him from the very beginning to end. She goes to work in the city to earn the money which Qingshan needs to buy betrothal gifts requested by her mother. She is forced by Ma to agree to be Sangui's girlfriend because Ma has threatened to kill herself. She however explains to Sangui her love for Qingshan and promises to pay him back the betrothal money Ma has requested and accepted from him. She returns the betrothal money to Sangui with the help of Qingmei. She respects Xi and Xiulan and gets her third Uncle to cure Xiulan's lame leg despite their disapproval of her relationship with Qingshan because of her mother's meddling in the relationship. She is filial to Ma though she disagrees with what Ma has been doing: Ma's request of betrothal gifts from Xi's family, Ma's objection to Wensheng's marrying into Xi's family and Ma's forcing her to become Sangui's girlfriend. She eventually takes Qingshan's suggestion of pretending to jump into the well to stop Ma from further meddling into her relationship with Gaihua. In a word, Gaihua's narrative sees the embodiment of such traditional Chinese cultural values and practices as benevolence to others, respect for the elderly, filial duty to her mother as well as her devotion to and perseverance in love.

In conclusion, highlighting Xi's narrative as the core narrative and Xi's efforts to solve the various problems, either those related to him/his family or those to other villager, framing theory emphasizes Xi as the model farmer and highlights the values and practices embodied by Xi's efforts to overcome the various difficulties and to solve the problems: perseverance in farming, honesty, benevolence and lenience towards others, generosity to help others, awareness of modernity and the application of modern corporation management. Narratives of other villagers are presented as the alternatives to Xi's and similarly the values and practices embodied by these narratives as portrayed as the alternatives to Xi's. Together the core narrative and the narratives of other villagers form the network narrative and present the diverse values and practices in China's countryside today.

Meaning/message represented by features of narrative pattern

As previously summarized, the presentation of the events, the problems and the solution to the problems has some patterns: the attempts to solve these problems echo Greimas' notion of the qualifying, the main and the glorifying tests; the solution to most problems in the serial follows more or the less the same DEF pattern of seeking-offering-receiving help/support pattern. These patterns convey special meaning or message.

'First, most of the problems take at least three attempts to get them solved. These three attempts correspond roughly to Greimas' qualifying test, main test and glorifying test. Xi gets full support from his family for his farming after three attempts: the first attempt involves his resistance to Sangui's attractive offer to contract his land and his rejection of his wife and his son's suggestion of taking Sangui's offer; the second involves his resistance to his wife and his son's suggestion of starting a profitable sand-digging project similar to Sangui's; the third attempt involves the halting of Sangui's sand-digging project by Niu and thus proves his correct choice of farming. Chouwa's problem is solved after three attempts: Xi's getting Chouwa back from the police station; Xi's getting Chouwa back from the hospital; Chouwa's getting back to school. Xi's establishment of an economic cooperative also involves three attempts: the first attempt is initiated by him and fails; the second attempt, initiated by the villagers, also fails; the third attempt is mainly initiated by him, Sangui and the village committee and it succeeds. The relationship between Qingshan and Gaihua succeeds only after several frustrations and their devotion to and perseverance in love: Ma Cuilian's meddling into the relationship leads to Xi's disapproval of the relationship; Qingmei's persuasion of Ma not to meddle in the relationship leads to Xi's temporary tacit consent to the relationship; Ma's request of betrothal gifts from Xi's family lead to Xi's disapproval of the relationship again; Gaihua's getting her third uncle to help cure Xiulan's lame leg leads to Xi tacit consent to the relationship again; Ma's meddling into the relationship by asking Xi's family to prepare for Gaihua and Qingshan's marriage leads to Xi's withdrawal of his consent to the relationship while Ma's discovery of the forgery betrothal gifts from Qingshan leads to her disapproval of the relationship; Sangui's involvement in the relationship which results from Ma's meddling in the relationship endangers the relationship; Xi's discovery of and his being moved by Gaihua's devotion to Qingshan leads to Xi's consent to the relationship again; Qingshan's suspicion of Gaihua's relationship with Sangui endangers the relationship; Qingmei's help saves the relationship; Gaihua's pretending to jump into the well stops Ma from meddling further in the relationship and secures the relationship. Shuanzi's mother problem is solved after three attempts: Xi's attempt to trick Jiuxian and Shuanzi into taking care of Shuanzi's mother; Jiuxian and Shuanzi drive Shuanzi's mother out of their home after Jiuxian discovery of the trick; Shuanzi's mother earns money from her paper cut pattern; Shuanzi's mother is forced to sever her relationship with Shuanzi by Jiuxian and is left to the care of the village committee; Shuanzi's mother donates all the compensation to the village committee and lives on the Home for Childress Aged People built by the village committee. The solution to the problems echoes and repeats Gremial's notion of the qualifying test, the main test and the glorifying test. Such attempts emphasize the sophisticated time-consuming process of solving the problems and highlight the time and effort taken to solve the problems.

The solution of the problems covered by the network narrative has another pattern: it roughly follows the DEF pattern of seeking, offering, and receiving help/support Propp proposes and it emphasizes the help and support one offers to or receives from others to solve the problems.

As previously described, Xi's narratives are interwoven and interlocked with others. In Xi's efforts to solve the problems

related to him or his family, he also helped solve a lot of problems related to other villagers. For Xi's help and support to others, Xi not only earns others' trust and respect but also receives help and support from others to solve some of his problems.

Xi has helped to get Tiedan out of the deep hole for Ling'ai and this earns Ling'ai trust and respect for him. Later when Xi needs money to buy a tractor for his mobile toilet, Ling'ai lends him 3000 yuan without hesitation. With the money, Xi is able to buy a tractor and to use the mobile tractor-toilet to collect human manure from the city as the organic fertilizer for the growth of crops. Later when Ling'ai wants to build a greenhouse, Xiulan gets Wensheng to help her build one.

Xi helps and protects Wensheng. In return, Wensheng trusts and respects him. When Xi wants to build a greenhouse, Wensheng helps him to build one and helps to grow lavender seeds in it.

Xi helps Liuzi to take care of his son Chouwa and this earns Xi trust and respect from Liuzi and Chouwa. Xi also helps to get money from Xiulan for Liuzi to start his business of selling lamb. When Xi later needs lamb meat to thank Mr. Niu for helping him with the mobile tractor-toilet, Liuzi provides him with good-quality and nutritious meat.

Xi helps Sangui to organize the village gong-and-drum performance team from the villagers to offer performance in the city. Sangui later helps Xi to find an expert to treat Xiulan's lame leg though without success. Sangui also helps Xi to seek compensation for Shuanzi's mother from a fodder company. They two later cooperate with each other on a lavender seed project and on the economic cooperative.

The solution of the problems emphasizes not only the help from each other but also the cooperative efforts of the villagers. The saving of Tiedan, for example, relies on the cooperative efforts of the villagers. One villager comes to inform Erhu about the Tiedan's accidental falling into the deep hole. Erhu and Xi rush into the deep hole. Erhu wraps a rope around himself and the villagers pull him slowly down into the hole. When Erhu reaches the bottom of the deep hole and holds Tiedan, the villagers slowly pull them out of the deep hole. Tiedan is thus saved through the cooperative effort of the villagers. Shuanzi's mother's problem is solved by the help and support from Erhu and Xi, Bai Tianliang, Sangui and eventually the village committee.

The use of Greimas' notion of qualifying test, the main test and the glorifying test, and the use of Propp's DEF solution pattern convey and reinforce the message of the serial as previous discussion of different types of relationships has shown: there are different problems in China's countryside today; these problems can be solved but it takes time and efforts to get these problems ultimately solved; the solution to these problems depends on the help and support received from others besides ones' own efforts to solve them.

Summary of Analysis of Xi Gengtian's Story

The serial presents different kinds of social relationships established within an episode, across episode and throughout the serial as a whole. It also covers different social problems and the solutions to the problems. On a highest level of a story as whole, it emphasizes and highlights the cooperative and supportive relationship for example the cooperation within the village i.e. the cooperative project, cooperation and mutual support between Xi and Sangui as evidenced by the brief presentation of the gong and drum performance team, by the more detailed elaboration of lavender seed project and the ultimate establishment of the economic cooperative project. It also emphasizes the cooperation between traditional farming practice of using organic human or human manure as fertilizer, and modern science and technology e.g. the use of greenhouse growth technique and the use of marketing to promote the sale and to get farming production project. It also highlights the integration of traditional moral virtues and the awareness of modernity as evidenced by Xi.

With Greimas' notion of the qualifying test, the main test and the glorifying test, the serial emphasizes the gradual process of solving the various problems in the countryside, the various kinds of social relationships formed in the story to help solve the problems and thus the meaning or message embodied by such a process and such relationships. The strenuous efforts involved to solve the problems and the various social relationships formed during these efforts convey the message that there are different problems in the process of building the new socialist countryside and that the solution of the problems resides in ones' own efforts, the help and support offered to others, as well as the help and

support received from others.

Through the network narrative, framing presents the different response to farming after the introduction of the agricultural exemption tax policy. Some remain at the city to work while some like Xi return to the countryside to farm the land. Even when some return to the village, not everyone is farming the land. Liuzi is a good example. After he returns to the village, he does not farm. Instead, he starts a small business of selling lamb. Sangui does not farm but is interested in business and he does marketing for agricultural products.

The network narrative however highlights Xi's narrative as the core narrative which runs through the whole serial and which is interwoven into and interlocked with narratives of other villagers. Xi's narrative is presented as a practical way of becoming a successful farmer in modern China and a positive solution to three main issues related to agriculture i.e. agricultural economic development, countryside development and farmers. To be a successful farmer, one needs to have the good virtues embodied by traditional Chinese culture, being devoted to and perseverant in farming, be tolerant, hardworking, and at the same time have the awareness of modernity, applying science and technology to farming, and employing modern marketing strategy to market and sell the agricultural products. Xi's establishment of the agricultural economic cooperative in the village, which blends traditional organic farming and modernization of farming, is presented in a positive light and as a possible solution to the new economic development in the countryside. By highlighting Xi as a model farmer, the drama highlights the integration of traditional Chinese cultural values/practices and modern values/practices as the solution or key to China's project of constructing a new socialist countryside.

APPENDIX 10

Preliminary Narrative Analysis of Xi Gengtian's Story (Part 4)

Relationship between Xi and other characters in Xi Gengtian's Story

Xi Other characters	Types of relationships established
Xiulan	Confrontational, supportive
Qingmei	Mostly supportive; sometimes a bit confrontational
Qingshan	confrontational and supportive
Sangui	a bit confrontational at the very beginning but later mostly supportive or cooperative
Erhu	Sometimes confrontational but mostly supportive
Baoqing	Sometimes confrontational ; sometimes supportive
Shuanzi's mother	supportive
Jiuxian	Mostly confrontational
Li Erxian	Mostly confrontational
Mr. Li	Both hierarchical and supportive
Mr. Niu	Both hierarchical and supportive
Chouwa	Supportive (with Xi offering help and support to Chouwa)
Liuzi	Supportive (with Xi offering help and support to Liuzi)
technician Liu	Mostly supportive (with Liu offering help and support to Xi)
Shuanzi's mother	Supportive (with Xi offering help and support to Shuanzi's mother)

APPENDIX 11

Preliminary Narrative Analysis of Xi Gengtian's Story (Part 5)

Vladimir Propp's Narrative Functions

(Abridged from Morphology of the Folktale, pp. 149-55)

Preparatory section		
α	initial situation	
β	absentation	
Υ	interdiction	
δ	violation	
ε	reconnaissance	
ζ	information received	
η	deceit	
θ	submission to deceit	
A	villainy	
α	lack/insufficiency	
B	B ²	dispatch
	B ³	release; departure
	B ⁴	announcement of misfortune
C	consent to counteract	
↑	departure; dispatch of the hero from the home	
D	first function of the donor	
E	reaction of the hero	
F	the acquisition of (receipt of) a magical agent	
G	transference to a designated place, guidance	
H	the hero struggles with the villain	
I	victory over the villain	
J	branding or marking of the hero	
K	the liquidation of misfortune or lack	
↓	return of the hero	

Pr	pursuit of the hero
Rs	rescue of the hero
o	unrecognized arrival
L	claims of a false hero
M	difficult task
N	solution (resolution) of the difficult task
Q	recognition of the hero
Ex	exposure of the false hero
T	Transfiguration
U	Punishment of the false hero or villain
W	wedding and accession to the throne
§	connectives

The 31 functions exclude α and § and count A and α as one. Apart from B, which is a diffuse category, all functions have been noted only by their main headings in the Morphology of the Folktale. These are the classifications which accord Propp's analysis its generality; within each of these individual functions there may be as many as 19 variations which, of course, will be significantly more specific to the Russian folktales Propp used for his analysis.

APPENDIX 12

Preliminary Narrative Analysis of Xi Gengtian's Story (Part 6)

A. J. Greimas's Structural Model of the Narrative

(cited from Silverstone, 1981: p. 200)

		Propp's functions	
Rupture of order and alienation	\bar{p}	B?	Departure: it is not clear of whom
	\bar{A}	$\Upsilon \delta$	The contract broken
	\bar{C}_1	$\epsilon \zeta$	Knowledge (recognition) denied
	\bar{C}_2	$\eta \theta$	Power denied
	\bar{C}_3	A α	Object denied. (lack) (villainy)
	p		Arrival
	A ₁	BC	Agreement to act: a new contract
	\bar{p}_1	↑	Departure of the hero
	A ₂ F ₂ non c ₂	DE F	The qualifying test: A ₂ contract. F ₂ : combat. non c ₂ - : result (help: power)
Search	d non p ₁	G	Rapid journey: the arrival of the hero at the place of combat
	F ₁ c ₁ non c ₃	H I J K	The main test: the contract already entered into (A1 above). F ₁ : combat. c ₁ : branding (potential recognition). non c ₃ : receipt of object
New Search	non p ₁ d F ₁ p ₁	↓ Pr/Rs	Rapid return and pursuit

	A ₃ F ₃ non c ₁	MNQ	The glorifying test: A ₃ : contract F ₃ : combat. non c ₁ : recognition .
Reintegration and restoration of order	C ₂	T.(ex)	Power regained
	C ₃	W.(U.)	Object regained(wedding)
	A non c ₃	B.C. K	A new contract (with society) established and lack liquidated

APPENDIX 13

Preliminary Narrative Analysis of Xi Gengtian's Story (Part 7)

Serial Morphology following Vladimir Propp

Episodes	Events	Narrative Functions following Vladimir Propp		
1	seg 1	α	The initial situation : Xi, Xiulan, Qingmei, Qingshan and other main characters are established	
		a	Xi's desire to return to Xijia village for farming upon his accidental knowledge of the agricultural tax exemption policy	
		↓	Xi's journey back to Xijia village	
	seg 2	B	Confirmation of the agricultural tax exemption policy from Erhu and Mr. Li	
	seg 3	C	Xi's consent to act	
		DEF	Xi with Erhu, Sangui, Xiulan and Qingshan as potential helpers/opposers with regard to the contracting of land	
		DEF	Xi with Erhu and other villagers as helpers to get Ling'ai's son Tiedan out of a deep hole	
		F	Xi's success in contracting 15 mu of land	
	2	seg 1	DEF	Xi's involvement with Old Uncle Liu as potential helpers/opposers with regard to farming of the contracted land
		seg 3.	D	Xi's involvement with Xiulan and Qingmei as potential helpers/opposers with regard to farming of the contracted land
E			Xi's involvement with Xiulan and Qingmei as potential helpers/opposers with regard to farming of the contracted land	
F			Xi's temporary success in managing to persuade Xiulan to farm the contracted land with him	
seg 3		↑	X's journey to the village open market	
		DEF	Xi, as the potential helper/opposer. Xi's accidental encounter with Chouwa and takes Chouwa from the police station	
		K	X's temporary success in carrying out his promise to Liuzi of taking care of Chouwa	
		DEF	Xi's involvement with Ling'ai as potential helpers/opposers with regard to the Longevity Lock. Xi's success in getting the Longevity Lock for Ling'ai from Chouwa	
		DEF	Xi, as the potential helper/opposer. Xi's success in protecting Chouwa by not telling Ling'ai that Chouwa is the locker finder	
seg 4		C	Xi agrees to receive city party secretary Mr Qiao during Spring Festival	
		D EF-	Xi, as the potential helper/opposer, and his failure in the reception with his accidental revelation of village cadres Baoqing and Yingping's gambling habit	
		↑	Xi's movement to the village committee upon Erhu's call and upon Xiulan's persuasion	

			Q-	As a false hero, Xi's is scolded by Erhu for his revelation	
			C-	Xi's reluctance to write a letter denying his revelation of Baoqing and Yingping's gambling habit	
3	seg 1		C	Xi's reluctant consent to sign the letter written by Erhu denying his revelation upon Erhu's threat of withdrawing Xi's contracted land	
			↑	Ma Cuilian's journey to Xi's home to do matchmaking for Qingshan and Gaihua	
			DEF-	Xi's involvement with Ma Cuilian with regard to Qingshan's relationship to Gaihua, with each other as potential helpers/opposers. Xi's opposition to Qingshan's relationship to Gaihua	
			K-	Ma's failure in her matchmaking	
			↓	Ma's return	
			C	Xi's consent to see Mr Li, the party secretary of the county	
			↑	Xi's leaving for the city to see Mr Li	
			DEF	Xi, as a potential helper/opposer, and his explanation to Mr Li with regard to the letter denying Baoqing and Yingping's gambling habit	
			↓	Xi's return to the village	
			↑	Xi's going to explain to Erhu about his visit of Mr Li	
			Q-	As a false hero, Xi's scolded by Erhu for his telling the whole truth to Mr. Li about the letter denying Baoqing and Yingping's gambling habits	
		seg 2		C	Ling'ai's coming to see Xi about the finder of the Longevity Lock
				DEF	Xi, as a potential helper/opposer, his refusal to tell Ling'ai about the finder of the Longevity Lock, and his Xi's success in protecting Chouwa
				c	Ling'ai's sees Erhu for Xi's refusal to tell her the finder of the Longevity lock
				DEF-	Er, as a potential helper/opposer, his pretence to get drunk in front of Ling'ai and Ling'ai failure to get any information about Xi's refusal to tell her about the finder of the Longevity lock
				↑	Xi's goes to the village committee
				DEF±	Xi, as a potential helper/opposer, his explanation to Erhu with regard to Chouwa's involvement in the Longevity lock, his inability to tell whether the lock is genuine or not
				Q	Xi's complimented by Erhu for his protection of Chouwa
				K	Grandma Qi reveals the truth of the Longevity lock
		seg 3		↓	Xi's return to his house
			DEF	Xi's involvement with Xiulan as potential helper/opposer with regard to his farming. Xi's getting Xiulan's help with the preparation of the land	
			↑	Baoqing passes by Xi's field, requesting Xi to help him prepare his land since he has been asked by town cadres to write self-criticism about his gambling habit	

			DEF±	Xi's involvement with Xiulan as potential helper/opposer with regard to Baoqing's sarcastic request of Xi to help him prepare his land. Xiulan's criticism of Xi for his extreme honesty about Baoqing's gambling habit in front of Mr. Qiao & Xiulan's helping Xi out of the embarrassment posed by Baoqing's sarcasm
			↓	Xi and Xiulan on their way home
			DEF±	Xi and Xiulan, as potential helpers/opposers, their surprise and , to some extent, worry, at Qingshan's getting a donkey with a cheap price of 300 yuan
			DEF±	Xi's involvement with Qingshan as potential helper/opposer with regard to the use of the donkey, Xi's intention to use the donkey to carry manure to the contracted land, Qingshan's opposition to such a use. An ambitious result
			B	a villager come to Xi's house to get Xi to Ling'ai's house
			C	Xi consents to go
			↑	Xi's departure to Ling'ai's house
			DEF	Xi and Erhu, as potential helpers/opposers, Ling'ai's angrily and loudly accusing Grandma Qi of being partial toward Qi's eldest great-son outside Qi's room upon her knowledge of the truth of the Longevity lock. Xi and Erhu's success in calming down Ling'ai, their attempt to comfort Qi
			Q	Their recognition by Qi with her assurance that she is fine and their reward by Qi with a bottle of wine each.
			Q-	Qi dies later.
			DEF	Xi and other villagers, as potential helpers/opposers, Qi's elder grandson Jian Wen's stopping Qi's Coffin to the burial site, Jian Wen's playing the recording of Qi's wish to be cremated after her death. Jian gets Qi's remains to be cremated according to her wish.
			DEF	Xi's involvement with Qingshan as potential helper/opposer with regard to the use of donkey. Xi's intention to use the donkey to carry manure to the land; Qingshan disagreement over such a use for the possible spoilage of his tourism project. Xi gets Qingshan's consent to use the donkey to carry manure upon Xi's promise to clean and spray perfume over the donkey after its usage.
			DEF-	Qingshan, as a potential helper/opposer, his being kicked and hurt by the donkey. Qingshan's inability to carry manure with his donkey for Xi
			DEF	Xi, as potential helper/opposer , his carrying the hurt Qingshan to the hospital and his concern for Qingshan
			Q-	Xi is blamed by Xiulan for causing the accident.
			↓	Xi's departure to his home
			C	Xi's consent to take the police and the stranger villager to his house for Qingshan's donkey upon the request of Erhu who stops Xi on his way home

			DEF±	Xi's involvement with Erhu, the policeman, and the stranger villager as potential helpers/opposers with regard to Qingshan's donkey. The villager's confirmation of Qingshan's donkey as his lost donkey and his intention to take it home; Xi's arguing against returning the donkey to the villager because Qingshan has spent 300 yuan on it; Xi's telling the policeman about Qingshan's being hurt by the donkey upon the policeman's request of him to return the donkey to the villager and his promise to return 300 yuan to Xi after the solution of the donkey theft in the future. With no definite result yet.
4	seg 1		C	Xi takes the policeman and the stranger villager to the village hospital to see Qingshan
			DEF-	Xi, Qingshan and Xiulan's involvement with the policeman and the villager as potential helpers/opposers with regard to Qingshan's donkey. Qingshan's telling the policeman his unacquaintance with the villager and his having bought the donkey from a young man with 300 yuan. The villager and X's family arguing with each other over the donkey: the villager's intention to take the donkey; Qingshan's demand of the villager to pay him the medical fee resulting from the donkey's kicking him; the villager's insisting on Qingshan's finding the young man for 300 yuan and for the medical fee. Result: The policeman requests Qingshan to pay for the medical fee and to return the donkey to the villager.
			K-	Xi's family's failure to keep the donkey, the loss of 300 yuan and the payment of the medical fee
	seg 2		DEF	Xi's involvement with Qingshan and Xiulan as potential helpers/opposers with regard to Xi's farming. Xi's getting help from Qingshan and Xiulan with regard the preparation of the land. Xi's getting inspired by Qingshan's mentioning of the country's construction of a new socialist countryside and Xiulan's mentioning of the use of machines to modern agriculture. Xi's intention to talk with Erhu about the establishment of an agriculture economic cooperative in the village.
			↓	Xi's journey back home
			DEF J	Xi's involvement with Liushi as potential helper/opposer with regard to the village agricultural irrigation system. Liushi's demolishing the village agricultural irrigation facilities; Xi's stopping him from his demolition. Xi's success in stopping him. Xi's being hit by Liushi on the nose

			<p>C ↑ DEF</p> <p>Xi's intention to report Liushiyi's demotion to the village committee Xi's journey to the village committee Xi's involvement with Baoqing as potential helper/opposer with regard to the village agricultural irrigation system. Xi's reporting of Liushiyi's demolition to Baoqing. Baoqing agrees with Xi over the importance of the irrigation facilities and promises to report Liushiyi's demolition to Erhu and to discuss with Erhu about the solution to the demolition despite Baoqing's sarcastic comment on Xi's beaten nose. Xi's successful in his intention.</p> <p>Q Erhu's approval of Xi's prevention of Liushiyi's demolition upon his checking the site of demolition.</p>
			<p>↑ Q DEF</p> <p>Erhu and Baoqing's journey to Xi's field Erhu's approval of Xi's prevention of Liushiyi's demolition Xi's involvement with Erhu and Baoqing as potential helpers/opposers with regard to the establishment of an agricultural economic cooperative in the village. Xi's talk to Erhu about the benefits of an agricultural economic cooperative, Xi's request of Erhu to establish a cooperative in the village among the villagers; Erhu and Baoqing's agreement with Xi over the cooperative's benefits but telling Xi about the difficulty in establishing a cooperative in the village. Erhu and Baoqing accept Xi's suggestion that they gather some villagers and discuss the possibility of establishing a cooperative in the village.</p>
			<p>DEF</p> <p>Xi's involvement with some villagers as potential helpers/opposers with regard to the establishment of an agricultural economic cooperative in the village. Villagers' interest in the cooperative at the beginning but their reluctance to join the cooperative upon their knowledge of the risk involved in selling all crops produced. Xi fails to get villagers to support his cooperative project.</p> <p>K-</p> <p>Failure of Xi's first attempt to establish a cooperative in the village.</p>
	seg 3		<p>↓ DEF-</p> <p>Xi's journey back home from his field Xi's involvement with Ma Cuilian, with each other as potential helpers/opposers, with regard to the relationship between Qingshan and Gaihua. Ma's telling Xi about Qingshan's kissing Gaihua and asking Xi to tell Qingshan not to do so again. Both Xi and Ma are angry.</p>
			<p>DEF</p> <p>Xi, as potential helper/opposer, Xi's angry enquiry about Qingshan's relationship with Gaihua and Xi's telling Qingshan about Ma's warning Qingshan against kissing Gaihua again. Qingshan denies kissing Gaihua.</p>
			<p>B</p> <p>Erhu's informing villagers through the village speakers about the County Cultural Gallery's coming visit to Xijia village to promote and video record the folksong singing in the village; Erhu's request of volunteer folksong singing villagers to gather at the big locust tree in the village and his request of Xiulan to be well-prepared for and lead the coming folksong singing.</p>

			C DEF	Xiulan accepts the request Xiulan's involvement with Xi as the potential helper/opposer. Xiulan's request of Xi to get ready for his erhu fiddle and her threat to take down the strings of the erhu to make shoes upon Xi's refusal. Xi's reluctant consent to Xiulan's request.
			B ↑ ↑ DEF ↑ DEF ↓ K-	A villager's rushing to the big locust tree to inform Xi about the unsprouting seeds Xi leaves the big locust tree for the field to check the seeds Xi and the villager rushes to the village committee Xi, the villager, other villagers' involvement with Erhu as the potential helper/opposer with regard to the unsprouting seeds. Villagers' angry complaint to Erhu about the unsprouting seeds, Erhu's worry about the seeds. Erhu's slight anger at the villagers' complaint and Erhu's promise to solve the problem. Xi and Erhu's departure to the seeds company in the town Xi and Erhu's involvement with deputy head of the seeds company as the potential helper/opposer. Xi and Erhu's informing the deputy head of the unsprouting problem and request of compensation from the company, the deputy head's demand of a check on the seeds first and later of a consideration of the likely compensation, the deputy head's refusal of Erhu and Xi's request of an immediate check on the seeds. Failure in solving the unsprouting problem. Xi and Erhu's return to the village The unsprouting problem remains unsolved.
			DEF K	Xi and Xiulan's involvement with the deputy head as the potential helper/opposer. Xi and Xiulan's planting the ungrown seeds in front of the seeds company, the deputy head's coming to Xijia village to check the unsprouting seeds, his confirmation of the unsprouting seeds, his apology to the villagers, the company's provision of new seeds and getting seeds sown for the villagers with a seeder. The liquidation of the unsprouting problem.
			DEF	Xi's involvement with Qingshan as the potential helper/opposer with regard to farming. Qingshan's suggestion that Xi buy a tractor to practice efficient farming upon his witnessing the completion of seed sowing by a seeder within a short time. Xi agrees with Qingshan's suggestion and promises to do so in the future.
	seg 4		↓ DEF B ↑	Qingshan and Xi's departure to their home Xi, as the potential helper/opposer, Dongping's asking Xi about the whereabouts of Erhu, Xi's telling Dongping that Erhu is helping Shuanzi's mother with seed-sowing in the field. Xi's provision of Dongping with the information she needs. Information about Dongping's complaints about Erhu's always helping villagers except her and Dongping's intention to look for Erhu in the field to get a divorce from him Xi's following Dongping to the field

			DEF-/F	Xi and Shuanzi's mother as the potential helpers/opposers, Dongping's arguing and fighting with Erhu over the latter's helping others except her, Dongping's angry demand of a divorce from Erhu, Shuanzi's mother's initial failure to stop them from arguing and fighting with each other, Xi's failure to stop them from arguing and fighting with each other, Shuanzi's mother's success in stopping them from arguing and fighting with each other with her faint.
			↑	Xi and Erhu's journey to the village hospital
			DEF	Xi and Erhu, as potential helpers/opposers, their sending Shuanzi's mother to the village. Their success in doing so.
			B	(Xi's voiceover) Information about Shuanzi's mother: early death of her husband; no children of her own; living on her own; Shuanzi (her adopted son) and his wife Jiuxian's reluctance to take care of her
			DEF	Xi, as the potential helper/opposer, Erhu's request of Xi to persuade Shuanzi and Jiuxian to take care of Shuanzi's mother, Xi's acceptance of Erhu's request.
			C	Xi's consent to Erhu's request
			↑	Xi's journey to Shuanzi and Jiuxian's home
			DEF±	Xi's involvement with hen-pecked Shuanzi and Jiuxian as potential helpers/opposers, Xi's telling Shuanzi and Jiuxian to see and take care of Shuanzi's mother, Jiuxian's initial refusal; Xi's telling Jiuxian about Shuanzi's mother's potential property and about Shuanzi's mother's earning 2000 yuan out of cutting one single paper pattern. Ambiguous result about Xi's persuasion.
			↓	Xi's journey to his home
			DEF	Xi's involvement with Qingshan and Xiulan as potential helpers/opposers, Xi's telling Xiulan Shuanzi's mother and Erhu's staying at the hospital to take care of Shuanzi's mother, Qingshan and Xiulan's sympathy towards Erhu, Xiulan's offer to take the place of Erhu which Xi declines, Xi's offer to take the place of Erhu later, Xi's request of Qingshan to pick Erhu up which Qingshan refuses, Xiulan's offer to cook meals for Xi which Xi declines, Xi's request of her to get him some walnuts. Xiulan's full support for what Xi's done and Qingshan's partial support for Xi with his decline of Xi's request of him to pick up Erhu.
			DEF-	Jiuxian's involvement with Shuanzi as potential helper/opposer. Jiuxian's enquiry of Shuanzi about his grandfather's business and Shuanzi's mother-in-law's paper-cutting to check the truth of what Xi's has told her. Shuanzi's suggestion to Jiuxian that they see their mother-in-law Shuanzi's mother. Jiuxian's ambiguous response to Shuanzi's suggestion. Jiuxian's failure in checking the truth of what Xi has told her.
			(↑)	Xi's implicit journey to the village hospital to see Shuanzi's mother.
			DEF	Xi, as the potential helper/opposer, Xi's advice to Shuanzi's mother that she put on air when Jiuxian and Shuanzi come to see her, Shuanzi's mother's doubt that Jiuxian and Shuanzi will come to see her, Xi's

			DEF-	reassurance of Shuanzi's mother that Jiuxian and Shuanzi will come to see and take care of her, Xi's telling Shuanzi's mother what he has told Jiuxian, Shuanzi's mother taking Xi's advice despite her sadness. Jiuxian's involvement with Shuanzi as potential helper/opposer. Jiuxian's indecision as to whether to see Shuanzi's mother or not, Jiuxian's thinking about whether or not Shuanzi's mother's paper-cutting can make money in the future, Shuanzi's inability to provide her with an answer, Jiuxian's decision not to see Shuanzi's mother after tossing a coin.
5	seg 1		K- B C DEF K	Xi's temporary failure in getting Jiuxian and Shuanzi to see and take care of Shuanzi's mother Xi's dispatching Qingmei to make a call to Erhu, telling him the news that a Hong Kong businessman is coming to Xijia village to buy paper cut patterns at a high price and requesting him to get Baoqing to inform the villagers of the news through the village speaker Qingmei's consent to do as Xi has told her Qingmei as the potential helper, Qingmei's implicit success in informing Erhu about the news and in getting Baoqing to announce the news to the villagers through the village speaker, and Qingmei's success in getting Jiuxian and Shuanzi to come to the hospital to see Shuanzi's mother and to take her home to live with them. Xi's temporary success in getting Jiuxian and Shuanzi to take care of Shuanzi albeit with Xi feeling a bit guilty of his tricking Jiuxian into doing so
	seg 2		↓ DEF	Xi's return to his home Xi, some villager, and the villager's wife as potential helpers/opposers with regard to Erhu's integrity. Xiulan feeling unhappy for not receiving her deserved 20 yuan for her leading the folksong singing performance; Xiulan's thinking and her insistence that Erhu has taken her deserved 20 yuan, Xi's disbelief in what Xiulan has thought of Erhu and his warning her against wronging Erhu without any evidence; some villager's visit of Xi and Xiulan to give Xiulan her deserved 20 yuan for Erhu has given his wife, also named Xiulan, the 20 yuan, by mistake; Xiulan's reluctant admission of her misunderstanding of Erhu. Xiulan realizes her misunderstanding of Erhu.
	seg 3		↑ B C ↑ DEF	The deputy head of the seed company movement to Xijia village Xi's learning from the deputy head that the head of the seed company is going to dismiss the deputy head from his current position. Xi's consent to help the deputy head at the latter's request Xi's departure to the village committee Xi, and Erhu, as potential helpers/opposers. Xi writes and signs a letter on the behalf of all villagers in Xijia village certifying that the deputy head is a good man, is thoughtful of Xijia villagers, and has not brought any loss to them with the unsprouting seeds and requesting the head of seed company not to dismiss the deputy head from his post. Erhu's surprised at what Xi has done but stamps the letter with Xijia village committee seal at Xi's request.

		<p>↑ DEF</p> <p>K</p>	<p> Jiuxian's movement to the village committee Xi and Erhu, as the potential helper/opponent. Jiuxian comes to enquire when the Hong Kong manager is coming to buy the paper cut patterns. Xi tells her that the manager is coming soon and asks her to be patient since Hong Kong is far away from the village. Erhu has not told Jiuxian the truth about Hong Kong managers' prospective buying of paper cut patterns. After Jiuxian leaves, Erhu warns Xi against the trouble of lying to Jiuxian about the paper cut patterns.</p> <p>The fact that Jiuxian does not know that Xi has lied to her about the paper cut patterns implies that Jiuxian and Shuanzi still take care of Shuanzi's mother.</p>
	seg 4	<p>DEF</p> <p>C</p> <p>DEF-</p> <p>K</p>	<p>Sangui's involvement with Mr Niu as the potential helper/opposer. Sangui's not having enough money to buy the machine needed for his sand-digging project and his turn to Mr. Niu for help; Niu's agreement to lend money to Sangui; Niu's request of Sangui to help him find a young and beautiful fiancé from the village.</p> <p>Sangui's consent to Niu's request</p> <p>Sangui's involvement with Qingmei as the potential helper/opposer. Sangui considers Qingmei as a candidate for Niu's fiancé, invites Qingmei to the city on the pretext of helping him negotiate with a company and introduces Qingmei to Niu. Upon finding out Sangui's intention of doing matchmaking for her, Qingmei leaves him angrily with the Scientific and Technological Documents for Agriculture which Niu has sent her as gift but comes back to return the large sum of money which Niu has deliberately put into the documents.</p> <p>Sangui's success in getting the needed help from Niu despite his failure in finding a fiancé for Niu since Niu gives Sangui the money which Qingmei returns.</p>
		<p>↓</p> <p>B</p> <p>(DEF)</p>	<p>Qingmei's return to the village</p> <p>Xi and Xiulan's learning through Qingmei about Sangui's intention to find her a boyfriend</p> <p>Xi and Xiulan as the potential helper/opposer. Qingmei requests Xi and Xiulan to forget about her visit of Sangui in the city. Xi and Xiulan's implicit consent to Qingmei's request since they never mentions the visit again.</p>
	Seg 5	<p>B</p> <p>DEF-</p> <p>K-</p>	<p>Xi, Xiulan and Qingshan's knowledge of Sangui's sand-digging project in his contracted land.</p> <p>Xi's involvement with Sangui, Qingshan, Xiulan and Erhu as potential helpers/opposers with regard to Xi's farming. Sangui begins his sand-digging project in his contracted land and earns lot money out of it. Erhu ignores Xi's complaint about Sangui's illegal use of the arable land. Xiulan and Qingshan persuade Xi to dig sand out of their contracted land to earn money rather than farming the land. Xiulan threatens to destroy Xi's crops in the land when Xi objects to Xiulan's sand-digging proposal and refuses to make up with Xi. Xi's faces opposition to his farming from Xiulan and Qingshan especially from Xiulan.</p> <p>Xi's temporary lack of support from Xiulan and Qingshan for his farming.</p>

6	seg 1		DEF-	Xi's involvement with Sangui, with each other as potential helpers/opposers. Xi's asking Sangui not to be too noisy with his sand-digging machine and Sangui's asking Xi to stuff his ears with something to avoid the noise.
			↑ B	Ma Cuilian goes to the field Xi's learning from Ma her intention to get Sangui to dig sand out of her land and to earn money out of sand-digging rather than out of the crops
			↑ B C ↑	Xi's departure to the village committee on Erhu's request Xi's learning from the policeman that Chouwa has stolen something from a shop, has been caught and beaten by the young son of the shop owner, and has thus stayed in hospital for his wound. Xi's consent to Erhu's request of him to see Chouwa and to take him back to the village Xi and the policeman depart to the hospital
			DEF-	Ma Cuilian's involvement with Sangui as the potential helper/opposer. Ma invitation of Sangui to dinner at her house, Ma's request of Sangui to dig sand out of her land, Sangui's decline of her request, Sangui's telling her that there is no sand in her land. Ma fails to get what she wants.
			↓ DEF	Xi and Chouwa back to Xi's home Xi, and to some extent Xiulan, as the potential helpers/opposers. Xi takes Chouwa to his own house. Xiulan's surprised to see Chouwa bandaged and is worried. While preparing food for Chouwa in the kitchen, Xiulan murmurs to Xi that Xi should not have signed the temporary guardian contract in the police station. Xi tells Xiulan that he will call Chouwa's father Liuzi to come back to take care of Chouwa.
			(↑) (B) DEF	Qingshan and Gaihua's implicit journey to the big locust tree Qingshan's knowledge of Ma's invitation of Sangui to dinner Gaihua (and implicitly Sangui and Ma) as the potential helpers/opposers with regard to the relationship between Qingshan and Gaihua. Qingshan's worry that Ma wants to marry Sangui and Gaihua's telling Qingshan Ma's intention to get Sangui to dig sand out of her land. Gaihua clear away Qingshan's worry about their relationship.
			↑ DEF ↓ B DEF-	Xi's movement to the village committee Xi and Erhu, as the potential helpers/opposers with regard to Chouwa's problem. Xi's suggestion that Erhu call Liuzi to return to the village to take care of Chouwa. Erhu's telling Xi that he has called Liuzi and that Liuzi cannot come back at the moment. Erhu's offer to talk to the village school to find a place for Chouwa. Xi's movement to home Xi's knowledge through Qingshan of Ma's invitation of Sangui to dinner and of her intention to get Sangui to dig sand out of her land Qingshan as the potential helper/opposer with regard to Xi's farming. Qingshan's telling Xi Ma's intention to get Sangui to dig sand out of her land implies Qingshan's suggestion that Xi start similar sand-digging project in the contracted land and thus his opposition to Xi's farming.

		B DEF±	Xi's knowledge of Qingshan's kissing Gaihua upon Qingshan's admission Xi as the potential helper/opposer, Qingshan's telling Xi that he and Gaihua are fond of each other, and Xi's disapproval of Qingshan's relationship with Gaihua because of Gaihua's having a silly mother, Xi's saying nothing upon Qingshan's arguing for his relationship with Gaihua. Ambiguous result: Xi's saying nothing at the end of this segment leaves open whether Xi opposes Qingshan's relationship with Gaihua.
	seg 2	DEF ↑ DEF- ↑ DEF- ↑ DEF (↑) DEF- ↑ DEF	Xi's involvement with Qingmei as the potential helper/opposer. The land close to Sangui's land is dry and the crops above are dried up. Xi turns to Qingmei for the possible reason for the drying up. Qingmei tells them that their land and Sangui's land is an integral whole and shares the same underground system and that sand-digging by Sangui has caused the lowering of the underground water and thus has drained and dried the land close to Sangui as well as the crops above the land. Xi learns from Qingmei the reason for the drying-up of his crops. Xi's movement to the village committee Xi's involvement with Baoqing and Sangui as the potential helpers/opposers. Xi's complaint to Baoqing that Sangui's sand-digging has dried up part of his contracted land, Baoqing's disbelief in what Xi had said, Xi's telling Sangui that his sand-digging project has dried up his crops, Sangui's disbelief in what Xi has told him, Xi's request of Sangui to stop his sand-digging project, Sangui's insistence on his sand-digging project, Xi's turn to Baoqing for help, Baoqing's asking Xi to talk to Erhu for the solution of the problem. Xi's movement to Erhu's house Xi's involvement with Erhu as the potential helper/opposer. Xi's complaint to Erhu that Sangui's sand-digging has dried up part of his contracted land and that Baoqing has not helped him to stop Sangui from his sand-digging, Erhu's disbelief that Sangui's sand-digging has dried up part of his contracted land despite Xi's telling him Qingmei's explanation, Erhu's plan to check whether the sand-digging causes the drying up. Erhu's movement to Xi's field Xi's involvement with Erhu as the potential helper/opposer. Erhu's checking the land and his belief in what Xi has told him about the dry-up problem. Xi, Erhu and Sangui's implicit movement to the village committee Xi's involvement with Erhu and Sangui as potential helpers/opposers. Erhu gets Xi and Sangui to discuss the problem together. Sangui's insistence on his sand-digging project because he has signed contract with the high-way company and has invested a lot of money in the project, Sangui's offer to compensate for the loss caused to Xi's crops, Xi's telling Erhu that the contracted land is arable land and can only be used for farming, Xi's refusal of Sangui's offer for compensation, Xi's insistence that Sangui stop his sand-digging project, Xi and Sangui arguing with each other, Erhu's telling Xi that it is difficult to stop Sangui's sand-digging project. Xi's failure to get the drying-up problem solved. Xi's movement to the field Xi's involvement with Qingshan as the potential helper/opposer. Xi asks

			<p>Qingshan to borrow some water to water the drying crops while he goes to the town to report the sand-digging project. Qingshan suggests that Xi report the problem to Mr Niu the head of county not Mr Li, head of town since Li is friendly to Erhu. Xi's implicit acceptance of Qingshan's suggestion and Qingshan's consent to water the drying crops at Xi's request.</p> <p>↑ Baoqing's movement to Xi's field</p> <p>B Baoqing tells Xi Erhu's desire to talk to him</p> <p>C Xi's consent to see Erhu before reporting the problem to the county</p> <p>DEF Xi as the potential helper/opposer. Erhu's explanation to Xi the various problems confronted by the village after the implementation of Party's agricultural tax exemption policy, the village committee's difficulty in tackling these problems due to shortage of money, his intention to solve these problems with Sangui's sand-digging project's annual contribution of one hundred thousand yuan to the village committee, his confidence that Xi will be successful in reporting Sangui's sand-digging project, his intention to quit the village head upon Xi's success in reporting the sand-digging project to the country. Xi's giving up his intention, and his promise to Erhu not, to report the sand-digging project upon hearing Erhu's explanation.</p> <p>(↑) Gaihua's implicit movement to the well to carry water</p> <p>↑ Qingshan's movement to the well to carry water</p> <p>DEF Gaihua and Qingshan's involvement with each other as potential helpers/opposers with regard to their relationship.</p> <p>Gaihua's waiting for Qingshan to come to the well to carry water, Gaihua's turning down the water tap a bit so that she can spend more time with Qingshan, Qingshan's happiness upon his realizing Gaihua's intention, . Gaihua's request of Qingshan to take her around the city if he has time, Qingshan's promise to take Gaihua to the city in the future and to invite her to MacDonald, Pizza and lot of other food in the city. Result: the reinforcement of the relationship between Gaihua and Qingshan.</p> <p>(↓) Qingshan's implicit return to his house (since Qingshan consents to Xi's request of him to carry the water home upon Xi's passing by the well)</p>
	seg 3		<p>↑ Mr. Niu, head of the county, visits Xijia village</p> <p>DEF Mr Niu, as the potential helper/opposer.</p> <p>Mr. Niu's visit of Xijia village without informing Mr Liu and Erhu; Mr Niu's recognition of Xi at the village big locust tree; Mr. Li rushing from the town to the village; Erhu and the village committee members' rushing to receive Mr Niu, Erhu's intention to take Mr. Niu to the village committee; Mr Niu's intention to go and inspect the field; Niu's visit of Xi's field and his discovery of the dried and dying crops in the field and the sand-digging beside the crops on the other side; Niu's calling a meeting back at the village committee; Niu's severe criticism of first Mr. Li & later Erhu about the misuse of the arable land, Erhu's admission to Niu that it is he who has approved of the sand-digging and that Mr. Li knows nothing about it; Niu's ordering Erhu to stop the sand-digging right</p>

				<p>away; Baoqing's running to stop Sangui's sand-digging project. Result: Niu helps Xi solve the drying-up problem.</p> <p>(K) Implicit liquidation of the drying-up problem with Niu's stopping of Sangui's sand-digging problem.</p> <p>DEF Niu, as the potential helper/opposer. Niu's holding a meeting among the village representatives at the village committee; Niu expression of anger at the sand-digging project which is the misuse of arable land , Niu's informing the villagers of his severe criticism of Mr. Li and Erhu with regard to the project and of the stopping of the sand-digging project, Niu's talk about the benefits enjoyed by the villagers because of the agricultural tax exemption policy and the problems brought about by the policy including the shortage of funds for the development of the village collective economy due to the cancellation of taxes are cancelled, Niu's criticism of Mr Li and Erhu for their misuse of arable land to raise money needed for the solution of the various problems in the village; Niu's call on the village committee to think about other ways rather than misuse of arable land to develop economy to cover the various expenses needed for the work of the village committee, Niu's telling the villagers that the arable land is only for farming not for other purposes, Niu's suggestion that the village committee and the villagers think about other ways to develop the village economy; Niu's telling the villagers that he himself is a countryman and that countrymen used to be looked down upon because the countryside is poor; Niu's hope that the countryside develops the economy well and that countrymen become rich because of the economic development and the countrymen feels proud of being a countryman; Niu's wishing every villager a good harvest. Every villager except Sangui feels happy about what Niu has said in the meeting.</p> <p>K Niu's formal criticism and stopping of Sangui's sand-digging project and thus the formal and eventual liquidation of Xi's drying-up problem.</p> <p>↑ Niu's departure from the village</p> <p>DEF Ma, as the potential help/opposer. Sangui's expression of anger at being reported to Niu about his sand-digging, Sangui's accusing Xi of reporting his sand-digging to Niu, Xi's denial of his accusation, Sangui cursing Xi as a mule, Sangui's threatening to destroy Xi's crops, Xi's anger at what Sangui has said, Xi's slapping Sangui in the face, Sangui and Xi's fighting each other, the villagers' failure to stop Xi and Sangui from fighting each other, Ma's admission of having reported Sangui's sand-digging project, Xi and Sangui's ceasing their fight with each other, Xi's surprise at Ma's admission. Ma's reporting indirectly helps Xi to solve the drying-up problem and Ma's admission clears Xi's being misunderstood.</p>
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	seg 4		<p>↑ Q</p> <p>(↑) DEF</p> <p>↓ DEF</p>	<p>Xi is on his way to the field.</p> <p>Ma's apology to Xi's for being misunderstood because of her. Xi's thanking Ma for what she has done and Xi's promise to help her water her land when he finishes his busiest period of farming. Xi's recognition of Ma's help to solve the drying-up problem.</p> <p>Xi's implicit movement to the field.</p> <p>Xi and Erhu with each other as the potential helpers/opposers. Xi's seeing Erhu squatting near the land from which Sangui has dug sand and which Sangui has given up after being reported, Erhu's asking whether Xi stills wants to contract the land or not, Xi's initial hesitation but subsequently his decision to contract the land. Result: Xi helps Erhu with regard to what to do the land left behind by Sangui while Erhu helps Xi to get more land for his farming.</p> <p>Xi goes home earlier than usual.</p> <p>Xi's involvement with Xiulan as the potential helper/opposer. Xi's telling Xiulan his decision to contract the land abandoned by Sangui, Xiulan's telling him that he has the final say about the land, Xi's being so excited about Xiulan's support that he kisses her. Xi is successful in his getting support from Xiulan not only for his contracting of the land abandoned by Sangui but also for his farming in the future.</p>
			<p>↓ B</p> <p>DEF</p> <p>(↑) DEF-</p>	<p>Qingmei's arrival home earlier than usual.</p> <p>Qingmei tells Xi and Xiulan that the town is laying off staff and that Mr. Li has talked to every staff including her about the lay-off and she is among the laid-off.</p> <p>Qingshan, as the potential helper/opposer with regard to Qingmei's getting back her previous job. Xiulan and Xi are about to send chicken to Mr. Li as a gift with a view to get Qingmei back to her previous work. Qingshan tells them that it is not proper to send Mr. Li the chicken since the bird-flu is still prevalent. Xi thinks what Qingshan has said is quite right and then quits the plan. Qingshan's suggestion is accepted.</p> <p>Xi's implicit journey to the town</p> <p>Xi, as the potential helper/opposer with regard to Qingmei's getting back previous job. Xi goes to see Li empty-handed and explains to him about the truth of the reporting of sand-digging and what he has said about Baoqing during Qiao's visit. Li relieves Xi of his worry, telling that it is not right to misuse the arable land and that Xi is not wrong in telling Qiao during his visit to the Xijia village. Li asks Xi about his crops and the land left behind by Sangui. Xi tells him that his crops are good and that he has contracted Sangui's land. Li complements Xi on his initiative for farming and on his devotion to farming. Xi then asks Li whether Qingmei can get back her job in the town office and Li explains to Xi about the laying-off policy. Xi is persuaded about Li's explanation and comes back to tell Xiulan what Li has explained to him but his wife does not buy what Xi tells her. Xiulan and Xi argues with each other because of Qingmei's being laid-off. Xiulan blames Xi's not sending gifts to Li for his failure to get back Qingmei's job while Xi defends himself for his not sending gifts to others including Li. Qingmei comes to stop their argument and ask them not to</p>

				mind her business. Xi fails to get back Qingmei's previous job.
7	seg 1		DEF	Qingshan, as the potential helper/opposer with regard to Xi and Xiulan's making up with each other. Xi argues with Xiulan about Qingmei's job and Xiulan is so angry with Xi that she shuts him outside the house. Xi keeps thinking about ways to make up with her instead of beating her which he used to do when young. When Qingshan is home, Xi asks his son to pretend to beat him with a stick to attract Xiulan's attention and Xi succeeds. Qingshan's pretence helps his parents make up with each other.
			↑	Xi's family movement to the field
			DEF	Xiulan, Qingmei, Qingshan as the potential helpers/opposers. Xi's family goes to Xi's newly contracted land to fill the huge pit caused by the sand-digging.
			DEF	Qingmei gets inspiration from Qingshan's suggests that it is better to dig swimming pool out of the huge pit rather than filling it and intends to contract the fishing pond in the village to breed fish. Both Xi and Xiulan express their doubt about her plan. Qingmei explains to them that more and more villagers now can afford to buy fish as their living standard has been rising. Villagers now have to go to the city to buy fish and the fish they bring back from the city may still be fresh in winter but will surely go bad in summer because of the high temperature. If she raises fish, people in the villager can buy fresh and live fish and she can also sell the fish to people in the city. Right now it is the best time for her and the family since no one in the town has raised fish. Xi thinks what Qingmei has said is sensible but he tells her that she has not had fish-raising skills. Qingmei tells her father that she can go and invite technicians in the town to teach and supervise her and that it is not difficult to learn the fishing-raising skills. Qingmei has got the family support for her plan and she plans to contract the village fishing-pond with her re-employment allowance due to her being laid-off.
			(↑)	Xi's implicit movement to the village committee.
			DEF	Xi and Erhu as the potential helper/opposer. Xi tells Erhu about his intention to contract the fish pond in the village. Erhu approves of his plan and asks Xi to sign a contract when Baoqing comes back. Xi contracts the pond with a low annual rent of one thousand yuan. Xi succeeds in contracting the village pond for Qingmei.
	Seg 2		(↑)	Xi's family's implicit movement to the fishing pond
			DEF	Xi, Qingshan, Xiu, as potential helpers/opposers. Xi and Qingmei are busy with rebuilding the fish pond and building a watch pavilion. Xiulan also comes to help. Qingmei gets family support for fish-raising project.
			↑	Xiulan's movement to the fishing pond.
			B	Xiulan tells Xi Liuzi's return to the village with a young girl, Liuzi's mother's disapproval of Liuzi's relationship with the girl and her refusal to allow the girl to enter the house and Liuzi's request of Xi to help him out.
			C	Xi's consent to Liuzi's request
			↑	Xi's movement to Liuzi's house

			<p>DEF- Xi, as the potential helper/opposer. There is a big crowd outside Liuzi's house. Liuzi himself and the girl are also outside the house. Liuzi introduces Xi to the girl whom he has brought home and tells Xi that his mother does not allow them to go into the house. Liuzi wants Xi to talk to his mother and help him. Liuzi's mother lets Xi in and Xi takes Liuzi and his girlfriend into the house. Liuzi gives his mother the gift he bought for her in the city and the stationeries for his son. His mother scolds him for his being away from home and his negligence of her and his son in particular. His mother tells him how Xi and Erhu has helped to take care of Chouwa, his son. Liuzi's mother tells him to stay at the village to take good care of Chouwa and tells him her disapproval of Liuzi and his girlfriend being together. She tries to persuade Liuzi's girlfriend to leave Liuzi. What she has said has made Liuzi very embarrassed. Xi invites Liuzi and his girlfriend to stay at his house for a day or two. Result: Xi fails to persuade Liuzi's mother to approve of Liuzi's relationship with the girl.</p>
		(↓)	Sangui's implicit return to the village
		DEF-	Erhu's involvement with Sangui as the potential helper/opposer. In the meantime, Sangui comes back to the village committee and shows Erhu the land contract and asks Erhu to compensate for the loss caused by the stopping of his sand-digging project otherwise he will sue Erhu. Erhu explains to Sangui the difficulties of the village committee and tries to persuade him off the compensation scheme. Sangui insists on the compensation and threatens Erhu with a court case. Result: Erhu is confronted by a possible sue from Sangui.
		DEF-	Xi, as the potential helper/opposer, While having dinner that night at Xi's house, Liuzi asks Xi for advice and Xi tells him to make decisions himself. Liuzi's girlfriend tells Liuzi she will not stay at the village and will leave him if he stays at the village. Liuzi tells her that he will go to work in the city. Result: Xi is unable to give any advice to Liuzi on how to handle his relationship with the girl.
		B	Xi tells Liuzi about Chouwa and how Chouwa is going on in the village.
		↑	Chouwa's movement to Xi's house.
		DEF±	Liuzi's involvement with Chouwa as the potential helper/opposer. Liuzi apologizes to his son about his not taking care of him and Chouwa tells Liuzi that his grandmother misses him very much and asks him to go home and that she has asked him to give him the pancake she has prepared for him. Chouwa then goes home, leaving Liuzi holding and eating the pancakes in tears. Result: Chouwa's coming to see Liuzi makes it even more difficult for Liuzi to decide on his relationship with the girl.
		↑	Liuzi and his girlfriend leave the village the following day.
		B	Liuzi tells Xi that he will come back at the end of the year.
		↑	Erhu's movement to the town in the same day to consult the judicial office about the land contract and the likely court case with regard to the breaking of the contract.
		DEF	Erhu's involvement with the head of the Judicial Department as the potential helper/opposer. Erhu feels relieved when the head of the Judicial

		<p>↑ DEF</p>	<p>Department tells him that Sangui is not able to win the case since the contract signed is not a valid one. Result: Erhu feels relieved.</p> <p>Erhu's movement to Qingmei's fishing pond</p> <p>Erhu as the potential helper/opposer. Erhu gives Qingmei a bank card with her re-employment allowance at the request of the head of town Mr. Li.</p>
seg 3		<p>↑ DEF C DEF K ↓ DEF ↑ DEF DEF Q</p>	<p>Qingmei, Qingshan and Xi go to the city.</p> <p>Xi and Qingshan as potential helpers/opposers. Xi and Qingshan accompany Qingmei to buy fingerlings for the fish pond.</p> <p>Xi's need to go a toilet on their way back home.</p> <p>The security guard of a company, as the potential helper/opposer. Xi has great difficulty in finding a public toilet. When Xi rushes into a company to use the toilet there, he is stopped by the security guard. Although refusing Xi to use the toilet in the company, the guard shows Xi's the way to a public toilet. When Xi finds the toilet, he is asked to pay for his use of the toilet.</p> <p>Xi succeeds in finding a toilet albeit with difficulty.</p> <p>Xi, Qingshan and Qingmei return to the village.</p> <p>Xiulan, as the potential helper/opposer. Xi's inconvenience in finding a toilet in a city has led him to think about building a toilet in the city and using the toilet to collect human waste from people in the city. Xi tells Xiulan about his idea. Xiulan has a good laugh over his idea and tells him about the different bureaucratic procedures for building and running a toilet in the city. Xi later comes up with an idea of building a mobile toilet. Xi explains to Xiulan that he can take his mobile toilet to the most crowded part of the city and offer free use service to people. Xiulan thinks the idea feasible but reminds Xi of the long distance between the village and the city. Xi suggests that they buy a tractor to build his mobile toilet and he gets support from his wife. Result: Xi gets support from Xiulan for his idea of building a mobile toilet to collect human manure from city dwellers.</p> <p>Xi's movement to Ling'ai home</p> <p>Xi's involvement with Ling'ai as the potential helper/opposer. Xi has not enough money to buy a tractor. He turns to their neighbour Ling'ai for help. With the three thousand yuan which Ling'ai has readily lent him, Xi buys a tractor and builds a mobile toilet out of it. Xi's successful in building a mobile toilet with Ling'ai's help.</p> <p>Qingshan, as the potential helper/opposer. Xi and Qingshan go to the crowded part of the city with their mobile toilet and offer free toilet use to people. Xi's mobile toilet is novel and attracts a lot of people to use his toilet. Result: Qingshan helps Xi to collect human manure in the city.</p> <p>Success of, and recognition of Xi for, his mobile toilet project. Xi's mobile toilet even attracts the attention of the county TV station. When interviewed by the TV journalists from the station, Xi tells them: his idea of mobile toilet comes out of his previous experience of finding a toilet in a city with great difficulty; with the mobile toilet he no longer needs to spend money on the chemical fertilizer which is too expensive and does not produce tasty crops; with his mobile toilet he can collect the natural manure which is good for the growth of the crops and with which he can grow good and</p>

			organic healthy crops including vegetables.
seg 4		↑ B C B (↑) ↓ K (C) DEF (K) DEF	<p>Ma's movement to Xi's home.</p> <p>Ma Cuilian comes to ask him to whether he collects free manure from the city and asks him to get her a tractor of manure for her crops which do not grow well because of lack of fertilizer.</p> <p>Xi consents to Ma's request. Qingshan offers to get her two tractors of manure for her.</p> <p>Qingshan's partial knowledge of Xi's opposition to his relationship with Gaihua. Xi is not happy with what Qingshan has just offered to Ma. Qingshan senses Xi's unfriendly attitude towards Ma and asks Xi why he does not approve of him and Gaihua being together. When Xi tells his son that Gaihua's mother is foolish, Qingshan reminds his father that Gaihua is not. Xi tells his son that there are other reasons but he refuses to tell his son about them. Xi nods his head when Qingshan asks him whether Gaihua and her family members have body odour.</p> <p>Xi and Qingshan's implicit movement to the city to collect human manure for Ma the following day</p> <p>Qingshan's back to the village</p> <p>Xi and Qingshan bring to Ma's field a tractor of manure from the city at Mai's request.</p> <p>Qingshan's intention to check whether Ma has body odour or not.</p> <p>Xi and Ma, as the potential helpers/opposers with regard to Qingshan's intention to check whether Ma has odour or not. While Ma is unloading the manure, Qingshan tries to smell her to see whether Ma has body odour or not. Xi tries to stop his son.</p> <p>Implicit result of Qingshan's intention: Qingshan finds that Xi's claim about Ma's having body odour is not true.</p> <p>Xi, as the potential helper/opposer with regard to Qingshan's relationship with Gaihua. When they are having dinner at night, Xi scolds his son for smelling first Gaihua and later Ma. Qingshan explains to his mother that Xi has told him Gaihua's family has body odor and that he has done that in order to find out whether Ma and Gaihua has body odor or not and that what his father has said is not true. Xi tells his son not to smell Gaihua and Ma again. Xi also tells his son about his disapproval of his son's relationship with Gaihua. Qingshan feels unhappy about his father's disapproval. Result: Xi still disapproves of Qingshan's relationship with Gaihua.</p>
Seg 5		(↓) DEF	<p>Implicit arrival of city TV station reporters at the Xijia village.</p> <p>City TV station reporters as the potential helpers/opposers. Xi once again attracts the attention of TV Station. The reporters from the city TV station come to his field to interview him about the vegetables he has grown using the natural manure he collects from the city. At the beginning Xi answers the questions by the reporters. When Xi is asked questions more or less the same as those by the county TV Station reporters; he refuses to go on with the interview and asks them to interview Erhu. Erhu then takes TV reporters to the village committee to continue the interview. Later at night Xi and his family watch the interview program at home. Xiulan feels happy.</p>

			<p>Q So does Xi, Qingshan and Qingmei.</p> <p>City TV station's reporting of Xi and Xi's family's happiness at watching the reporting show recognition of Xi's growing vegetables with natural manure collected from the city.</p> <p>↓ The arrival of the manager and his assistant of a provincial healthy food company at the Xijia village the following day.</p> <p>DEF Xi's involvement with the manager and his assistant of a provincial healthy food company as the potential helper/opposer. When Xi is coming back home from the field, the manager and his assistant of a provincial healthy food company who have learned of Xi from the TV programs come to the village to meet him with a view to establishing business relationship with Xi. On their request, Xi takes them to the field and shows them the two mu of vegetables he has grown. They invite Xi to go to their company in the city on the same day. He tells them he has grown two mu of vegetables and the rest of the field is for the grain crops. Result: The company's intends to do business with Xi.</p> <p>↓ Xi's movement back home.</p> <p>↑ Xi's departure to the provincial city</p> <p>B Liuzi comes to the hotel to see Xi. Liuzi feels surprised. Xi tells him that a provincial company has invited him to the city and wants to buy up his vegetables. Xi finds Liuzi unhappy during their casual talk.</p>
8	seg 1		<p>B In the hotel where Xi stays, Liuzi tells Xi that he is not happy. He and the Sichuan girl he last took home had decided to separate and had already separated. Several days ago she came back to tell him that she is pregnant with his child and this is what worries him and makes him unhappy.</p> <p>DEF- Xi's involvement with the photographer, the company manager and the manager's assistant with regard to the X's establishment of business relationship with the company. Xi is asked to advertise vegetable for the food company. The photographer asks him to put on the dirty shirt he has worn in the field but Xi thinks it not proper to appear on TV with it. The photographer explains to him that he does not look like a farmer with the clean and formal shirt he wears. Xi argues with him that he is a farmer and that the photographer is uglifying a farmer by asking him to put on the dirty shirt. In order to mollify Xi's anger, the company manager, his assistant and the photographer ask Xi to hold a pipe.</p> <p>DEF- Xi's involvement with the company manager. Xi is asked to sign a contract after the advertisement,. When Xi reads the contract, he finds that the contract describes him as growing 500 mu of vegetable rather than the two mu which he has currently grown and he points out the mistake to the company manager. The manager asks Xi not to take that too seriously. He tells Xi that he can buy the vegetables grown by the villagers in his village and that can make up 500 mu. Xi insists that he has only two mu of land that is grown vegetable and that only his vegetables is grown with natural manure and all other villagers have grown vegetable with chemical fertilizers. Xi thinks that the company is deceiving people and refuses to</p>

			<p>sign the contract. Xi goes back to the village. Result: Xi's failure to establish business relationship with the company due to his refusal to sign the contract with the company upon his discovery of the company's attempt to deceive people.</p> <p>K- Xi's failure to establish business relationship with the company.</p> <p>↓ Xi's journey back to the village</p> <p>DEF Qingshan, as the helper/opposer. Qingshan picks up Xi with his tractor from the railway station and drops him near the big locust tree.</p> <p>↓ Xi's movement to home</p> <p>DEF- Xi's involvement with Ma as the potential helper/opposer with regard to Qingshan's relationship with Gaihua. Xi is stopped by Ma Cuilian. Ma angrily scolded him for saying that Gaihua has body odour but Xi denies saying so. Ma tells Xi that she has learned this from Qingshan. Result: Because of what Ma has done, Xi is angry with Qingshan and this potentially endangers Qingshan's relationship with Gaihua.</p> <p>↑ Xi arrives home angrily.</p> <p>B Xiulan's information about Xi's anger toward Qingshan. Xiulan asks him whether he is bothered by his visit to the city. Xi asks his wife for a needle so that he can seal Qingshan's mouth with the needle. Xiulan asks Xi what Qingshan has done to make him angry since Qingshan has not been to the city with him. Xi tells his wife what Ma has just told him on his way home.</p> <p>DEF- Xiulan, as the potential helper/opposer. Xiulan blames Xi for his making claims about Ma's body odor. Xi denies having ever made such claims and tells his wife that Qingshan has simply made a wild guess about what he meant when he nodded. Xiulan tells Xi that it is his own fault to nod. Xiulan asks Xi about his visit to the company in the city. Xi is still angry with what Qingshan has told Ma. Result: Xiulan fails to calm down Xi's anger toward Qingshan.</p> <p>B When Xiulan asks him again about the company, he simply tells her that what the company has promised is a lie and asks her not to ask him about his visit again.</p> <p>(C) Xiulan's implicit consent to Xi's request of her not to ask him about his visit .</p> <p>DEF- Xiulan, as the potential helper/opposer with regard to Xi's anger toward Qingshan. Xi talks to Xiulan about Qingshan again. Just then Qingshan arrives home. Xiulan tries to warn her son away, but it is too late. Xi beats Qingshan with his shoes. Qingshan is angry with his father too. He asks his father why he beats him. He has done nothing wrong but to offer one tractor to Ma. Xi demands his son to tell him what he has told Ma. Qingshan says that he has told Ma that his father makes claims about Gaihua's family having body odor to stop him from seeing Gaihua. Xiulan tries to stop Xi from beating Qingshan. Qingshan leaves home angrily. Result: Xiulan fails to help Qingshan with regard to Xi's anger toward Qingshan.</p>
	seg 2		<p>↓ Mr Li's movement to Xijia village</p> <p>B Erhu takes him to the village committee where Baoqing is repairing the</p>

			<p>village speaker. Li asks Erhu whether he has solved the problem with regard to Sangui's sand-digging project. Erhu tells Li that he has explained to Sangui about the invalidity of the land contract signed and Sangui's acquiescence about it.</p> <p>DEF± Li's involvement with Erhu and Baoqing as the potential helper/opposer with regard to Li's attempt to reconcile Xi and Sangui and to get Xi and Sangui to work together to develop a special mode of agricultural industry integrating Xi's unique farming and Sangui's marketing ability. Erhu and Baoqing explain to Li about the difficulty in getting Xi and Sangui to work together due to what has happened between them with regard to the drying-up of Xi's land and crops and the stopping of Sangui's sand-digging project by Mr Niu. Upon Li's persuasion, Erhu and Baoqing consent to Li's plan to reconcile Xi and Sangui. Li invites Xi and Sangui to a lunch meeting. Both Sangui and Xi feel surprised about the meeting. Li explains to them his intention to get them to work together for the village. Xi expresses his reluctance to work with Sangui and so does Sangui. Upon Li's persuasion and mediation, Xi and Sangui reconcile with each other. Mixed Result: Li fails to get Xi and Sangui to work together but succeeds in reconciling them.</p> <p>K Li succeeds in reconciling Xi and Sangui and this prepares for Xi and Sangui's future cooperation.</p> <p>B At night, Xi tells Xiulan about his reconciliation with Sangui and his plan to set up an economic cooperative project. Xiulan laughs at his plan but Xi takes the plan seriously though with some worry.</p>
	seg3	<p>↑ DEF</p> <p>Ling'ai's movement to her mother's home Ma Cuilian's involvement with Ling'ai as potential helper/opposer with regard to Sangui's friendly attitude toward Ma. Ma stops Ling'ai who is on her way to her mother's and asks her for advice. Ma tells Ling'ai that she is afraid of meeting Sangui since she last reported his sand-digging to the county head. She feels puzzled because Sangui is not angry with her when meeting her. Instead he behaves as if nothing happens and he is being more friendly than ever before. She asks Ling'ai for possible explanation. Ling'ai tells Ma that Sangui must be fond of her daughter Gaihua. What Ling'ai has said puzzles Ma and makes her thinking. Result: Ling'ai's analysis helps Ma to have some clue as to why Sangui is being friendly towards her.</p> <p>DEF</p> <p>Ma, as the potential helper/opposer with regard to Gaihua's relationship with Qingshan. At the night, Ma talks to Gaihua about marrying her off to Sangui because Sangui is rich. Gaihua is angry with her mother's suggestion and tells her that she is fond of Qingshan and that she will marry only Qingshan.</p> <p>↑ DEF-</p> <p>Sangui's movement to the village committee Sangui's involvement with Erhu as the potential helper/opposer with regard to Sangui's likely relationship with Gaihua. Sangui tells Erhu his willingness to work together with Xi because Erhu and Mr. Li have thought highly of him and have taken him seriously. Erhu finds it strange about Sangui's willingness to cooperate with Xi. Sangui asks Erhu to act as a matchmaker</p>	

			between him and Gaihua because he is fond of her. Erhu refuses to do so. He tells Sangui that Gaihua and Qingshan are fond of each other and that it is not proper for him to intervene. Result: Sangui does not get help from Erhu.
seg 4		DEF-	<p>Chouwa and some kids, as potential helper/opposer with regard to Qingmei's fish. Several kids try to blow fish out of Qingmei's fishing pond and Xi is helping her to chase them. One of the kids is caught by Xi. Xi asks him who has taught him to blow fish and why he has done so. The kid tells Xi that it is Chouwa who has taught him and has asked him to blow fish. He tells Xi that Chouwa cannot do this because Xi has saved him and that Chouwa wants the fish. Result: Kids have not caused any loss to Qingmei's fish.</p> <p>↑ DEF Xi's movement to the village school Xi's involvement with Ms Wang and Chouwa as the potential helper/opposer with regard to Xi's puzzlement at Chouwa's teaching the kids to blow fish out of Qingmei's fishing pond. Xi feels puzzled and goes to the village school to ask Chouwa about the fish blowing. Xi meets MS Wang , the village teacher and asks her how Chouwa is going on in the school. Ms Wang tells Xi that Chouwa behaves well at school and that he lacks and needs family education besides school education. Xi thanks Wang for educating him at the school and tells her about the fish blowing. Wang feels puzzled too because Chouwa is behaving well and performing well in the school. She gets Chouwa to see Xi and asks him whether he gets other kids to blow Xi's fishing pond. Hesitantly and timidly Chouwa admits asking other kids to blow the fish. Chouwa tells them that he wants to get the fish for Miss Yang who teaches them maths. Yang is from the city and is not used to the food in the village. Yang wants to go back to the city because she cannot have fish in the school and cannot stand eating the food in the village school. He wants to get fish to Yang so that she can stay and continue to teach them maths. There is no fish in the school but he knows Xi has raised fish. He has asked some kids to catch fish out of the pond but it is difficult to get one. Therefore he asks them to blow the fish out of the pond. He himself cannot do the fish-blowing since Xi has saved him. Result: Xi learns from Chouwa why he has taught the kids to blow fish out of Qingmei's fishing pond.</p> <p>TQ On hearing this, Xi feels upset and happy and leaves. He feels happy that Chouwa has transformed into a good boy and he no longer needs to worry about him. He feels upset about Yang's leaving the school and the village education.</p>
seg 5		(↑) B ↑ DEF	<p>Xi, Xiulan and Qingmei's implicit movement to the field.</p> <p>Xi, Xiulan and Qingmei are busy working in the field. Xi hears Erhu calling him through the village speaker to go to the Yabei Slope where Qingshan's tractor has been upset.</p> <p>Xi, Xiulan and Qingmei's movement to the slope.</p> <p>Xi, Xiulan, Qingmei and the villagers, as the potential helpers/opposers. Xi, Xiulan and Qingmei rush to the slope and find Qingshan trapped under the upset tractor. With the help of the villagers, they get him out. When</p>

			<p>B</p> <p>(↑)</p> <p>DEF</p> <p>DEF</p>	<p>Qingshan tells them that he feels no pain, Xi carries him home. Finding Qingshan ok, the whole family feels relieved. Xi and Qingmei go back to continue the work in the field, leaving Xiulan to take care of him at home.</p> <p>They meet Gaihua outside their house anxious about Qingshan. Xi tells Gaihua that Qingshan is ok and asks her not to worry. When Gaihua asks Xi whether she can go and see Qingshan, Xi does not reply. Qingmei feels that Gaihua loves her brother and promises to help her and Qingshan. Qingmei advises Gaihua not to go inside and see Qingshan then since her mother is taking care of Qingshan at the moment and her parents do not approve of their relationship but she promises to tell Qingshan to go and see her in two days' time.</p> <p>Xi and Qingmei's implicit movement to the field at night</p> <p>Qingmei, Xiulan and Qingshan as potential helpers/opposers with regard to Xi's farming. At night, Xi and Qingmei are watering the crops in the field and they are joined later by Xiulan and Qingshan.</p> <p>Xi, Xiulan & Qingmei, as the potential helper/opposers with regard to Qingshan's health. Xi asks Qingshan whether he is fine or not. Qingshan reassures his father that he is all right. Qingshan tells Xi that he may become unsilly because of the accident. Xiulan says that her son is not silly and that he appears silly because his father keeps repeating saying he is silly. Qingmei tells her brother a joke to test whether he is silly or not. Xi feels relieved because Qingshan is all right and he finds the moon that night extremely bright and the wind comfortable. He feels like singing and he listens to his family singing since he cannot sing himself.</p>
	seg 6		<p>DEF-</p> <p>K-</p>	<p>Qingshan, Ling'ai and Xi, as potential helpers/opposers with regard to the relationship between Xi's family and Ling'ai's family. The following day when Qingshan is cleaning his tractor he finds some kids urinating on his tractor. He gets them off the tractor and tells them off. Tiedan, Ling'ai's son is among the kids, eels scared and cries. Ling'ai comes over to ask Qingshan why Tiedan cries. Qingshan tells her what has happened and Ling'ai scolds Qingshan for scaring her son. Qingshan talks her back. Xi happens to pass by and reprimand Qingshan for speaking to her impolitely. Qingshan says that he is simply telling Tiedan off for urinating on his tractor. Ling'ai is angry with Qingshan and tells him that she will not let him off if Qingshan scares her son. Xi tries to pacify Ling'ai and asks her not to take what Qingshan says too seriously since Qingshan is still young. Ling'ai says that Qingshan is too wild. Qingshan is not angry with what she says and asks her to explain why he is wild. Qingshan says that she is trying to find fault with him because she lends his family money to buy the tractor. Qingshan says that he can return the money to her. Ling'ai tells him that she will not refuse it if he returns and says that Qingshan is silly. Hearing this, Xi thinks Ling'ai is going too far and tells her that she is not right to call his son silly. He promises to return the money to her within two days. Ling'ai angrily tells Xi that it is up to him to do so. Xi is angry with Qingshan for what has happened and kicked him. Qingshan argues with Xi on their way home that he is right in telling the kids off.</p> <p>The relationship between Xi's family and Ling'ai's family goes bad.</p>

		<p>↑ DEF</p> <p>K</p>	<p>Xi and Qingshan's movement home</p> <p>Qingmei, as the potential helper/opposer. Xi asks Xiulan to borrow three thousand yuan from her mother. Qingshan tells his mother that he argues with Ling'ai and they had better return the money to her. He tells his mother what has happened. Xi tells Xiulan that Ling'ai is a person who likes to find fault with others and suggests that they return the money to her as soon as possible. Qingmei offers to give her parents 3000 yuan to help them out. Result: Qingmei helps her parents to pay back 3000 yuan to Ling'ai.</p> <p>Xi returns to Ling'ai 3000 yuan.</p>
	seg 7	<p>↑ DEF</p> <p>DEF</p> <p>↑ DEF-</p> <p>↓ B</p> <p>DEF</p> <p>Q</p>	<p>Erhuo's movement to Xi's house.</p> <p>Erhuo, as the potential helper/opposer. Erhuo, a villager comes to tell Qingshan a way to earn money and tells Qingshan to come over to the riverside. Qingshan asks him what he needs to do. Erhuo explains to him that they will give a performance of towing a boat for foreigners and each person earns 500 yuan for its performance. Qingshan tells Erhuo he can ask all his family members to tow a boat, but Erhuo tells him that only men are needed not women. Qingshan tells Erhuo that he and his father will come to tow a boat at the riverside.</p> <p>Qingshan and to some extent Qingmei, as the potential helper/opposer. Xiulan asks Qingshan what he and Erhuo talk about. Qingshan tells Xi what Erhuo has told him and tells Xi that they each can earn 500 yuan in one day by giving a performance of towing a boat in the riverside to foreigners who are interested Chinese folklore culture. Qingmei also encourages his father to have a try. Xi agrees to go and tow a boat in the riverside.</p> <p>Qingshan and Xi's movement to the riverside next day.</p> <p>Xi and Qingshan go to the riverside. When they arrive, there are other villagers waiting there. The tourist guide give instructions to them and promises to give money to them after their performance. Then he asks the men there to take off their clothes. The men do as they are told until there is only underwear left. The tourist guide asks them to take off their underwear. Others take off their underwear but Xi refuses to do so and demands all others to put on their underwear. Xi thinks it indecent to tow a boat with nothing on and argues with the tourist guide. He leaves and goes home with Qingshan. Result: Xi and Qingshan do not earn money because Xi refuses to earn money in an indecent way.</p> <p>Xi and Qingshan's movement home</p> <p>When they arrive home, Xiulan asks him for the money they are supposed to have earned. He angrily tells his wife to ask Qingshan to tell her what has happened in the riverside. Qingshan tells his mother what has happened. He says that his father does not want to take off all the clothes and that he does not allow him to do so.</p> <p>Xiulan, as the potential helper/opposer. Xiulan reprimands her son for being silly.</p> <p>Xi feels happy about her reprimand of Qingshan because she is on his side for the first time and he gives her a special treatment by serving her food</p>

			DEF- Q-	<p>himself.</p> <p>Xiulan, as the potential helper/opposer. Xiulan tells her husband that she is always sensible, knowing what money should and should not be earned. Xi asks her to explain. She tells Xi that they should have earned money if they had accepted Sangui's offer to contract their land.</p> <p>Hearing this, Xi takes the food he has served her to Qingshan.</p>
	seg 8		(↑) DEF- DEF ↑ B DEF B	<p>Gaihua's movement to Xi's house</p> <p>Qingmei, as the potential helper/opposer with regard to Qingshan's relationship with Gaihua. Gaihua is talking to Qingmei outside Xi's house. Qingmei asks her to wait for Qingshan but she does not want her father to find out so she tells Xi that Gaihua has come to borrow books from her as Xi goes out for a walk. Qingmei tells Gaihua that if her mother is not at home she can go inside to talk to Qingshan. Xi has planned to go out but he happens to hear what Qingmei has said to Gaihua he returns. Qingmei is surprised that her father turns back home. Xi asks his daughter to follow him. Qingmei tells Gaihua to go home first and she promised Gaihua that she will talk to her father about her relationship with Qingshan. Result: Qingmei fails to help Gaihua with the latter's meeting Qingshan.</p> <p>Qingmei, as the potential helper/opposer with regard to Qingshan's relationship with Gaihua. Qingmei asks Xi why he does not approve of Qingshan's relationship with Gaihua. Xi tells her daughter that Gaihua's mother is silly and tends to tell everything to everybody regardless of whether it is proper or not. Xi asks his daughter to stop encouraging Qingshan and Gaihua to be together. Qingmei explains to her father that Gaihua is different from her mother and that Gaihua is a sensible girl. Xi agrees with her daughter but tells her that having an insensible mother will make a sensible daughter insensible. Qingmei offers to ask Gaihua to tell her mother not to intervene in the relationship between Gaihua and Qingshan. Xi implies to Qingmei that he will not oppose the relationship between Qingshan and Gaihua if Gaihua's mother stops meddling in the relationship. Result: Qingmei gets Xi's tacit consent to Qingshan's relationship with Gaihua if she succeeds in talking Ma out of meddling in the relationship.</p> <p>Xi's movement to the field the next day</p> <p>He meets Qingshan who riding the tractor out of the village. Xi asks his son what he is doing with the tractor. Qingshan tells him that he is going to transport coal for Liushi for forty yuan and he will be back in the afternoon.</p> <p>Xi, as the potential helper/opposer. Xi asks Qingshan to be careful and Qingshan consents to do so. Xi's emotional support for Qingshan and Qingshan's happy acceptance of such support.</p> <p>Just then Ma Cuilian comes to tell Xi that Gaihua has told her Qingmei's suggestion.</p>
9	seg1		B	<p>Ma tells Xi that Gaihua has passed on to her what Qingmei has told Gaihua and she promises Xi that she will stop meddling in the relationship between Qingshan and Gaihua. Ma also promises Xi that she will no longer mention what happened between them.</p>

			↑	Xi leaves for the field, still hearing Ma saying loudly to him her promises.
			↑	Xi goes to the fish pond
			C	Qingmei's discovery of some dead fish, her need to go to the county town to get a fish expert to come over to find out the cause for the death of fish, her request of Xi to keep an eye on the pond during her absence
			DEF	Xi, as the potential helper/opposer. Xi's consent to Qingmei's request.
			↑	Qingmei's departure to the town for help
			↓	Qingmei's journey back to the village
			DEF-	Qingmei, and, to some extent, her driver as the potential helper/opposer. Sangui's car has broken down in the road. He sees Qingmei in a car and hails her who gets off the car to meet him. Sangui asks Qingmei whether her driver can help him repair his car. Qingmei tells Sangui jokingly that he can repair fish not cars. Result. Qingmei cannot help Sangui to repair his car.
			B	Sangui asks Qingmei whether Qingshan and Gaihua are still in a relationship of boyfriend and girlfriend and Qingmei gives him a 'yes' answer.
			↓	Qingmei's journey to return to the village
			B	When Qingmei takes the fish expert Mr. Liu to the fish pond, Qingshan tells his sister that he has just two more dying fish. Liu asks Qingmei some questions and then tells her that her fish may have not got bacterial enteritis. Qingmei is worried and asks Liu whether there a way to save her fish. Liu gives her a positive reply but he tells her that he cannot guarantee that the way can prevent most of the fish from dying. Xi pleads with Liu to try whatever way possible to save the fish because the fish is all Qingmei has had after her laid-off.
			(C)	Liu's implicit consent to help
			(↓)	Qingmei and Liu's implicit movement to Xi's house
			DEF	Liu, as the potential helper/opposer. Liu and Qingmei are making some medicine for the fish while Xiulan is preparing dinner for them.
			B	Before dinner, Xi tells his wife seriously that the fish is dying. Xiulan feels surprised and asks her husband why but Xi tells her he does not know. When Qingmei and Liu come to dinner, Liu tells Xi and Xiulan not to treat him as a guest since he and Qingmei know each other. Xiulan asks Qingmei whether their fish dying. Qingmei looks worried and asks them not to ask her about the problem. Liu asks Xi and Xiulan not to worry since he and Qingmei are trying to work out some way to save the fish.
			↑	The following morning, Xi, Liu and Qingmei go to the fish pond.
			(DEF)	Qingshan, as the potential /opposer with regard to Qingmei's fish. Qingshan who has been keeping an eye on the fish since yesterday. Qingshan's help is implicit through Qingshan's telling Qingmei impatiently that he is exhausted and that he wants to go home.
			B	Qingmei's request of Qingshan to go home.
			DEF±	Liu, as the potential helper/opposer. Qingmei then feeds the fish with the medicinal fish food Liu has worked out. When Qingmei asks Xi to return home, Xi looks worried and asks Liu whether the fish can be saved. Liu tells him that he will need to see how the fish is coping tomorrow. The fish

			DEF	can be saved if there is no more death and if the fish is still alive tomorrow. Otherwise, the fish will all die. Result: whether the fish can be saved is not yet clear.
			↑	Xi, as the potential helper/opposer. Xi's request of Liu and Qingmei to go home, Xi's offer to keep an eye on the fish and Xi's insistence on staying at the fish pond to look after the fish despite Qingmei's request of him to go home. Qingmei and Liu return to Xi's house
	Seg 2		B	Information about Xi's mother and Xi's wish. Xi thinks of his mother who passed away that time ago. He was with her in the hospital for a night but she died the next morning. He hopes that this night is different from that night.
			↑	Xiulan, Qingshan, Qingmei and Liu movement to the fish pond early next morning.
			B/K	Xi is still asleep. They find the fish still alive. Xiulan is very excited while Qingmei cries. Liu is happy too. Qingshan says jokingly that his father has wasted a whole night on the fish. The liquidation of Qingmei's worry about the fish.
			DEF (LEx)	Qingmei, Qingshan, and Xiulan, as potential helpers/opposers with regard to Xi's being fooled. Qingmei teases her father by telling him that the fish has died. Xi looks sad and tells them that he has just dreamt of the fish, alive, jumping, big and colorful. He adds that the old saying is quite right in telling people that the dream is usually contrary to the reality. Qingmei asks his father what she should do. Xi tells her that she could do nothing. It is just fish anyway. It is not human. He then tells them about his father. He cried when his father died but he must go on with his life as usual and should try to live a better life. He then tells them about his life since the death of his father. He started to support the whole family at the age of sixteen and married their mother at about twenty. He tells them that he has survived a lot of tough times and can survive whatever confronts him. Fish is just fish. If it died, they can raise new fish. If it dies again, they can raise new fish again. He is sure that his family can live a better life if they can live a hard and difficult one. They are all moved by what Xi has said but at the same time all laugh at him. Qingshan tells his father that he has been fooled by Qingmei. They then tell him and show him that the fish is still alive. Xi feels relieved, happy and excited. They all have a good laugh over Xi's is fooled.
			(↓)	Xi, Xiulan, Qingshan, Qingmei and Liu's implicit return to Xi's house.
			Q	Xi, Xiulan and Qingmei see Liu off. Xi thanks Liu for what he has done to save the fish. Liu tells them it is what he should do and promises to come back if similar thing happens again. Qingmei tells him that she does not want him to visit them again because of the fish. Xi laughs mysteriously at what Qingmei has just said. Xiulan gives Liu some products they have grown and asks Qingmei to see Liu off.
			↓	Liu's movement back to the town
			DEF	Xi and Xiulan, as the potential helpers/opposers with regard to the possible relationship between Qingmei and Liu. Xiulan thinks highly of Liu. Xi asks

				<p>Xiulan to make a match between Liu and their daughter. Xiulan wonders whether Liu is fond of their daughter. Liu is from the city and has got a good job while their daughter is from and works at the countryside. Xi tells her that there is no need to worry about that and that Liu and their daughter must be fond of each other. Xiulan doubts what her husband has said. She doubts Liu and their daughter can be fond of each other within two days. Xi tells her that time is not that important. What is important is the feeling between two people just as the song 'Follow your feeling' has suggested...Xi considers Liu and Qingmei a good match and will give his consent to their relationship if they are fond of each other. Xi, however, is a bit worried because he is not sure whether Liu's parents will approve of their relationship.</p>
	seg 3	(↑)	<p>Xi, Xiulan and Qingshan's implicit movement to the land left behind by Sangui.</p> <p>DEF Xiulan, Qingshan and Qingmei, as the potential helpers with regard to Xi's farming. Xi, Xiulan, Qingshan and Qingmei are helping Xi to level the land left behind by Sangui.</p> <p>DEF Xi and Xiulan, as the potential helpers/ opposers with regard to Qingshan's plan to do things other than farming.</p> <p>Qingshan asks his father when they can finish levelling the land and asks his father whether they can give up the land. Xi asks him what he wants to do without land. Qingshan tells his father that his sister is now raising fish. He also wants to do something. He thinks it is not good enough to drive a tractor. Xiulan asks Qingshan to tell her what he wants to do and will support him. Qingshan tells his mother that he wants to raise dogs because he learns from Erhuo that raising dogs can make a lot of money. Xi thinks his son's plan not feasible. Xiulan accuses her husband of being prejudiced toward his son. She tells her son to think over his plan and promises to support him financially if he is sure he can make money out of raising dogs. Result: Qingshan gets Xiulan's support for but Xi's opposition to his plan to do things rather than farming.</p> <p>↑ DEF Gaihua's movement to Xi's field</p> <p>Qingmei, as the potential helper/opposer with regard to Qingshan's relationship with Gaihua. Gaihua tells Qingmei that her mother (Ma) promises not to meddle in her relationship with Qingshan but requests betrothal gifts from Qingshan. Qingmei tells Gaihua that Gaihua's relationship with Qingshan is not yet finalized and that her father may be unhappy if she demands betrothal gifts right now. Gaihua tells Qingmei that she has explained this to her mother but that her mother insists on getting the gifts because that can assure her of the relationship. Qingmei tells her to go back and tell her mother that Xi agrees to give betrothal gifts in the future. Qingmei gives Gaihua how to handle her mother's request of betrothal gifts from Qingshan.</p> <p>↑ B Gaihua's return to see her mother Ma Cuilian</p> <p>Xiulan asks Qingmei what Gaihua has told her. Qingmei tells her parents that Gaihua' mother requests betrothal gift.</p> <p>DEF Xi and Xiulan, as the potential helpers/opposers with regard to Ma's</p>	

			<p>request of betrothal gifts from Qingshan and thus to Qingshan's relationship with Gaihua. Xi is angry about Ma's request. Xiulan tries to calm her husband down by telling him that there is nothing wrong with Ma's request. Xi gets emotional. He explains to his wife that betrothal gift is the evil of the feudal society and that China has entered a modern era and it is not right to ask for betrothal gift. He refuses to give Ma the betrothal gift. Xiulan criticizes her husband's stubbornness. Xi says that giving betrothal gift means to regard a bride as goods and sell a bride as a commodity. He asks his wife that what betrothal gift he gave to her when marrying her. His wife tells him angrily that all she received was an autumn dress. Qingmei criticizes her father as contradictory, being traditional on the one hand and modern on the other. She thinks her father is traditional when he says that he married her mother because the word 'marry' reflects the meaning of being feudal. She suggests that her father should say he and her mother got married. Xiulan likes what her daughter has said and regards her daughter as educated. Xi is still angry with Ma's request of betrothal gift. He gets a rock in the field and strikes it repeatedly. He tells his wife and her daughter that rock is betrothal gift and that is his attitude toward it. His wife laughs at what he has done with the rock. Result: Xiulan's potential approval of Qingshan's relationship with Gaihua and Xi's disapproval of the relationship.</p> <p>(↓) DEF- Xi, Xiulan, Qingmei and Qingshan's implicit return home Qingshan's involvement with Xi as the potential helper/opposer with regard to Ma's request of betrothal gift and thus to Qingshan's relationship with Gaihua.</p> <p>At night Xi is playing his erhu fiddle in the courtyard. Qingshan comes over to ask him to stop playing the fiddle. He tells Xi that Ma asks Xi to give her part of the betrothal gift for fear that Xi changes his mind as to the relationship between Qingshan and Gaihua. Xi asks Qingshan who has promised to give Ma the betrothal gift. Qingshan tells his father that Qingmei has done so. Xi asks Qingmei about the betrothal gift. Qingmei tells her father that she has given the promise so as not to hurt Ma's feelings. Xi tells Qingmei angrily that he will not give betrothal gift to Ma even if he dies. Qingshan is angry with what his father said and accuses him of making him wifeless. Xi and Qingshan then quarrel with each other. Xi questions his son sarcastically whether he is afraid of being unable to find a wife without giving betrothal gift. Qingshan answers back that he is not as capable as his father. Xi tells his son angrily that Qingshan is not his son if he is unable to find a wife without giving betrothal gift. Qingshan retorts to Xi whose son is he if he is not Xi's son. Xi's answer that Qingshan is the son of his mother angers Xiulan. Xiulan comes over to question Xi whether he hates her. Realizing he has said something inappropriate, Xi leaves without saying anything. Xiulan scolds Qingmei and Qingshan for what they have talked to their father. Qingshan asks his sister for advice. Qingmei tells her brother that she dare not help him anymore. She tells him to talk to their father when he feels good. Qingshan feels sad. He comes close to the room and asks his father through the</p>
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			<p>window whether his father is giving Ma betrothal gift or not. Qingshan threatens to sell the tractor at Xi's refusal. Qingshan's threat makes Xi furious. Xi and Qingshan argue with each other through the window. Result: Qingshan can't get Xi's approval to give betrothal gift to Ma; Qingmei dare not help Qingmei because of Xi's strong opposition.</p>
	seg 4	<p>(↑) ↑ DEF DEF</p> <p>Xi, Xiulan, Qingshan and Qingmei's implicit movement to the fishing pond Technician Liu's arrival at the fishing pond.</p> <p>Xi, Xiulan and Qingshan, as the potential helpers/opposers with Qingmei's fish-raising. Xi, Xiulan and Qingshan help Qingmei with her fish-raising.</p> <p>Xi, Xiulan and Qingshan as the potential helpers/opposers with regard to Qingmei's relationship with Liu. Technician Liu comes to the fishing pond to see Qingmei. Liu tells the family that he comes to see the fish but Qingshan says that he comes to see Qingmei rather than the fish. Liu asks Qingmei about the fish and Qingmei tells Liu that the fish is all right and that her family is very grateful for his help with the fish. Liu asks Qingmei not to thank him because he will also help others if they have problems with their fish. Qingmei shyly asks Liu about his impression of her and is glad to learn that he likes her. Qingmei tells her mother to call technician Liu Xiaoliu from now then. On Xiulan's suggestions, Qingmei and Liu go home. Result: Qingshan's a bit jealous of Qingmei's relationship with Liu; Xiulan and Xi give their tacit consent to Qingmei's relationship with Liu.</p>	<p>Qingmei and Liu's movement to Xi's house</p>
		<p>↓ DEF</p> <p>Qingshan, Xi and Xiulan, as potential helpers/opposers with regard to Qingmei's relationship with Liu. Qingshan is jealous of Qingmei's relationship with Liu and complains to his father that the relationship between his sister and Liu is developing too fast and that his half-year-long-relationship with Gaihua has not had any result yet. His father asks him if he is blaming anyone. Qingshan tells his father that it is his fault because of disapproval of the relationship. Xi explains to his son that he has good reasons to disapprove of his relationship with Gaihua. Qingshan asks him whether he approves of Qingmei's relationship with Liu. Xi tells his son that Qingmei is different from him. Qingshan asks his father to explain the difference. Qingmei is to be married while Qingshan is to marry. Qingshan however sees no difference. Xiulan agrees with her husband and explains to Qingshan that Qingmei's children-to-be have the surname of her husband while Qingshan's take the surname of Xi. Qingshan retorts that he makes contribution to Xi's family with regard to what his mother has said and asks his mother why they do not give betrothal gift for him. Xiulan tells his son that his father is afraid of getting trouble by giving his consent to his relationship with Gaihua because her mother is silly. Qingshan complains that his parents always consider him as silly and warns them that he will get them fooled one day.</p>	<p>Qingshan, Xi and Xiulan, as potential helpers/opposers with regard to Qingmei's relationship with Liu. Qingshan is jealous of Qingmei's relationship with Liu and complains to his father that the relationship between his sister and Liu is developing too fast and that his half-year-long-relationship with Gaihua has not had any result yet. His father asks him if he is blaming anyone. Qingshan tells his father that it is his fault because of disapproval of the relationship. Xi explains to his son that he has good reasons to disapprove of his relationship with Gaihua. Qingshan asks him whether he approves of Qingmei's relationship with Liu. Xi tells his son that Qingmei is different from him. Qingshan asks his father to explain the difference. Qingmei is to be married while Qingshan is to marry. Qingshan however sees no difference. Xiulan agrees with her husband and explains to Qingshan that Qingmei's children-to-be have the surname of her husband while Qingshan's take the surname of Xi. Qingshan retorts that he makes contribution to Xi's family with regard to what his mother has said and asks his mother why they do not give betrothal gift for him. Xiulan tells his son that his father is afraid of getting trouble by giving his consent to his relationship with Gaihua because her mother is silly. Qingshan complains that his parents always consider him as silly and warns them that he will get them fooled one day.</p>
		<p>(↓) DEF</p> <p>Xi, Xiulan and Qingshan's implicit return home</p> <p>Qingshan, Xi and Xiulan, as the potential helpers/opposers with regard to Qingmei's relationship with Liu. At night, Liu is teaching Qingmei in her room the latest science and technology in raising fish while Qingshan is</p>	<p>Xi, Xiulan and Qingshan's implicit return home</p> <p>Qingshan, Xi and Xiulan, as the potential helpers/opposers with regard to Qingmei's relationship with Liu. At night, Liu is teaching Qingmei in her room the latest science and technology in raising fish while Qingshan is</p>

			<p>eating noisily beside them. Qingmei drives Qingshan out because he is interrupting them. Qingshan leaves them but tells Xiulan that Qingmei is having a stomach ache. Xiulan is worried about Qingmei and goes to check but is told by Qingmei to leave the room. Qingshan then tells Xi that there's a scorpion in Qingmei's room. After hearing what Qingshan says, Xi hurries to Qingmei's room and asks her about the scorpion but is pushed out of the room by Qingmei. Qingshan then tells Xiulan that Qingmei has hurt her leg. Anxious, Xiulan hurries to her daughter's room to check her leg. Qingmei is annoyed by being interrupted by her parents and complains to Xiulan that there is something wrong them and that they are being silly. Hearing what her daughter has said, Xiulan realizes that Qingshan has played a trick on her and her husband. Xiulan looks for Qingshan and asks him to explain what he has done. Feeling satisfied, Qingshan tells them jokingly that he just wants to fool them. Result: Qingshan's tricks on Xi and Xiulan succeed in interrupting Qingmei and Liu.</p>
seg 5		<p>B C ↑ (↑) DEF</p>	<p>Qingmei's intention to go to the town to observe others' fish raising the following day and her request of Xi and Xiulan to look after her fish</p> <p>Xi and Xiulan's consent to Qingmei's request</p> <p>Qingmei and Liu's departure to the town</p> <p>Xi and Xiulan's implicit movement to Qingmei's fishing pond</p> <p>Xi and Xiulan, as the potential helpers/opposers with regard to Qingmei's fish-raising and with regard to their being together. Xi plays his erhu fiddle at the pond while Xiulan does her needlework. Xi stops playing the fiddle and looks at his wife. Xiulan asks her husband why he stops playing his fiddle. Xi tells her that she looks more beautiful than usual and puts a flower into her hair. Xi tells her that she looks even more beautiful than twenty years ago. Xiulan feels happy though she says that her husband is kidding. Xiulan asks her husband to continue his fiddle-playing. She tells him that she likes to listen to his fiddle-playing. She adds that it is his fiddle-playing that made her fond of him when she was young. Xi asks his wife to sing. He tells her that he likes to hear her sing and that is her singing that made him fond of her when he was young. Xiulan clears her throat and sings 'Spring Water at the Frontier is Clear and Pure', the song requested by her husband. Xiulan suddenly stops her singing and is lost in thought of the hard time she and her husband had spent together twenty years ago. Together they recall what they had done, building river dikes and reclaiming land from marshes. They feel they have grown old. Xiulan tells her husband that he is still young because he has not changed much especially his stubbornness and his quick-temper. Xi also thinks he is still young and that he wants to do something ambitious. Result: Xi and Xiulan not only help Qingmei with her fish-raising but also reinforce their affection for each other.</p>
		<p>W (↓)</p>	<p>The day Xi and Xiulan spent on looking after the fish for Qingmei also reinforces their affection for each other.</p> <p>Xi and Xiulan's implicit journey back home</p>
seg 6		<p>↑ DEF-</p>	<p>Xi's movement to the well to carry water</p> <p>Xi, as the potential helper/opposer with regard to Shuanzi's mother's</p>

			<p>caring-taking problem. Xi goes to the well to carry water but he turns back when seeing Jiuxian getting water from the well. Jiuxian sees him and calls him back. She asks him about the Hong Kong manager who he has promised to buy paper-cutting pattern. She asks him whether the manager has died because of plane crash and whether he cannot come. Xi asks her how she has come to know the news. She tells him that she has learned this from a donkey. She accuses Xi of tricking her into supporting her mother-in-law and she asks him why he has done this to her. Xi admits that he has played tricks on her but he tells her that he has done nothing wrong. He tells her that Shuanzi's mother has raised Shuanzi although she is not his natural mother. It is the duty of her and husband to support Shuanzi's mother when she is too old to support herself. Jiuxian tells Xi that it is none of his business whether she and her husband support her mother-in-law or not. She tells Xi that he is neither village head nor president of a court. Xi replies that he is merely a countryman, but he tells her that she should know what it is a proper thing to do. She should see things through other people's eyes. She will also grow old one day and she needs to be taken care of then. It is her duty to take good care of her mother-in-law. She asks Xi to mind his own business and curses him. Xi is furious at what Jiuxian has said. He wants to slap her but he controls himself. He throws her bucket of water into the ground while Jiuxian throws his bucket into the ground. Result: Jiuxian's confrontation with Xi upon her knowledge of Xi's lie to her shows Xi's failure to help Shuanzi's mother with her caring-taking problem.</p> <p>K- Jiuxian and Shuanzi stop taking care of Shuanzi's mother.</p> <p>↓ Xi's return home</p> <p>B When Xi gets home with water leaking from the bucket, Xiulan asks him what has happened. Xi tells his wife what has just happened between him and Jiuxian.</p> <p>DEF- Xi's involvement with Xiulan as the potential helper/opposer with regard to Shuanzi's mother's care-taking problem. Xiulan criticizes her husband for meddling in other's business. Xi tells her that whoever does not take care of the elders is not a man. She asks him not to meddle in the affair of Shuanzi's mother otherwise next time Jiuxian will destroy the bucket completely. Xi stands up and leaves home. Xiulan asks what he is doing. Xi tells her that he is seeing Shuanzi's mother and that he will bring Jiuxian and Shuanzi to court for not taking care of Shuanzi's mother. Xiulan tries to ask Xi not to do that but she cannot stop her husband. Result: Xi's criticized by Xiulan for his helping Shuanzi's mother.</p> <p>↑ Xi's movement to Shuanzi's mother's home</p>
	seg 7		<p>B Xi tells Shuanzi's mother not to worry about Shuanzi and Jiuxian's not taking care of her. He tells her that he will bring the couple to court for not taking care of her. Shuanzi's mother asks him not to do that. Xi tells her that there is a law with regard to taking care of the elderly. She tells Xi that she does not want Jiuxian and Shuanzi to take care of her and that she can support herself and that she will live a better life than Jiuxian and Shuanzi.</p>

			(DEF)	Shuanzi's mother's involvement with the son of the former head of the Cultural Bureau as the potential helper/opposer with regard to Shuanzi's mother caring-taking problem. Shuanzi's mother tells Xi that she used to take part in paper-cut craft competition and that she came to know one of the judges, also the former head of the Cultural Bureau. She once cut window paper patterns for head in person and the head invited her to dinner because of that. The head's son visited her yesterday and gave her some gifts. She gives Xi some of the gifts but Xi asks her to keep them to herself. She tells Xi that the head's son asked her whether she could still cut window paper patterns. She cut some for him right away and he was very happy. He paid her a deposit of two thousand yuan for her window paper cut patterns. He asked her to cut as many paper window patterns as possible and promised to pay her some more money when he comes back to get them. Result: Shuanzi's mother's care-taking problem is solved temporarily with regard to the help from the son of the former head of the Cultural Bureau. This help is implied through Shuanzi's mother's account.
			Q	Xi feels happy for Shuanzi's mother. Shuanzi's mother feels overjoyed and thanks Xi for his help. She says that she has never dreamed of such a fortune. The beautiful lie initiated by Xi has become a reality.
			DEF	Xi, as the potential helper/opposer with regard to Shuanzi's mother's care-taking problem. Xi asks her to take good care of the money so that her money will not be coaxed out of her by Jiuxian and Shuanzi. Shuanzi's mother asks Xi to tell Erhu about her luck and asks Xi to keep it a secret just among Xi, Erhu and her. She is afraid of inviting trouble if Jiuxian and Shuanzi know about the head's son's recent visit. Xi promises Shuanzi's mother to keep the visit a secret.
			(↑)	Xi's implicit departure from Shuanzi's mother's home
			↑	Xi's movement to Erhu's field
			DEF	Xi, as the potential helper/opposer with regard to Erhu's farming. Erhu and his wife Dongping are working on the crops in the field. Xi comes to help them, jokingly telling them that he has already finished his work on the field, unlike his brother Erhu who always helps others first.
			B	Xi tells Erhu about what has happened to Shuanzi's mother recently and asks him not to worry about her. Xi asks Erhu to keep it a secret what he has just told him so that Jiuxian will not trouble Shuanzi's mother. Erhu is glad to hear what Xi has told him and makes a joke about Xi's power to turn a lie into a reality. Erhu asks Xi to fabricate a lie that his field can produce helicopter so that the villagers all follow him to grow crops in the field. Each villager can get a helicopter out of the field. Then Xijia village will become the richest village in the county, in the country and even in the world. Realizing Erhu is making a joke on him, Xi tells him that this lie is a very challenging one. The two brothers have a good laugh over the helicopter lie.
			↓	Sangui's arrival at Erhu's field
			B	Sangui comes to the field to look for Erhu. Erhu asks Sangui what has brought him back to the village. Sangui tells him that he has an important project and tells Xi who is standing behind Erhu that the project involves Xi.

			<p>↑ C</p> <p>Sangui tells Erhu that he will tell him the details of the project at night and invites Xi to come along with Erhu to dinner at the restaurant near the village bridge to discuss the project during dinner.</p> <p>Sangui's leaving the field</p> <p>Erhu's tacit consent to Sangui's request, Erhu's request of Xi to go to the dinner and Xi's decline of Erhu's request</p>
	seg 8	<p>↓ B</p> <p>↑ B</p> <p>DEF</p>	<p>Baoqing's arrival at Xi's house</p> <p>Baoqing comes to get Xi to the dinner but Xi does not want to go. Upon Baoqing's persuasion and Xiulan's gentle urging, Xi reluctantly goes to the dinner.</p> <p>Xi and Baoqing's departure for the dinner</p> <p>Sangui is thinking of gathering the villagers to establish a gong and drum team to give performance in the city to make money for the village.</p> <p>Sangui's involvement with Erhu, Baoqing and Xi particularly Xi, as the potential helpers/opposers with regard to Sangui's plan to organize the gong-and-drum team to give performance in the city. Erhu asks Sangui about the feasibility of the project. Sangui explains to Erhu that people in the city are rich and are travelling to see unique places in the countryside such Qiao's Grand Courtyard and Wang's Grand Courtyard in Shanxi province. Sangui adds that city people are not only interested in the traditional buildings but also interested in the folk art in Shanxi. Sangui plans to set up a gong-and-drum team and perform gong-and-drum to people in the city. When Baoqing asks him who will need the gong and drum performance, Sangui says that the team will provide performance for anyone who is need of service such as companies who are holding certain celebrations, people who are holding a luxurious wedding ceremony, tourist resorts which are giving performances to audiences. Sangui tells them that the gong and drum performances can be used in different occasions and that he has done some research about market of the performance. Xi asks Sangui who are going to grow crops if the villagers go out to the city for the performances. Sangui reassures Xi that the team will only go to the city when they are not busy with crops. Sangui says that Xi is well-known for his drumming performance and that he would like him to lead the team. Sangui turns to Xi for his opinion. Xi hesitates. Erhu tells Xi that Sangui's project makes sense and that it is good for the village. Erhu hopes that Xi can cooperate with Sangui and will lead the team. If not, Xi is being mean. Sangui proposes a toast to Xi by drinking three cups of wine and it is up to Xi to lead the team. Xi says to Sangui that he has done a good thing for the village and that he will support his project by leading the team. Xi drinks 5 cups of wine to show his support for Sangui. Result: Sangui succeeds in getting Xi's support for his plan to organize a gong-and-drum team among Xijia villager to give performance in the city.</p>
10	seg 1	B	<p>(Xi's voiceover)Shanxi is well-known for its impressive and magnificent gong-and-drum performance and has been invited to perform its famous gong-and-drum in Asian Games to celebrate the festive atmosphere. Xi has never thought of making money out of the gong-and-drum performance. When Sangui has suggested the idea of performing</p>

			DEF	gong-and-drum in the city to earn money, Xi shows him his full support. Xi, as the potential helper/opposer with regard to Sangui's gong-and-drum performance project. He is busy helping the villagers to get ready for their departure for the city performance.
			↑	Xi and Xijia villagers depart from the village to the city. They take the train to the city.
			DEF	Xi and Sangui, as the potential helpers/opposers with regard to the villagers' safety during their stay at the city. When they arrive, Sangui has already found a place for their stay. Xi tells the villagers to be careful about their safety. Xi asks Sangui to take good care of the villagers because safety is more important than earning money.
			(↑)	Xi and Xijia villagers' implicit journey for their performance in the city.
			DEF	Xi, as the potential helper/opposer with the gong-and-drum performance project. Next day Xi leads the villagers to start their gong-and-drum performance in the city.
			↑	In the meantime Mr. Niu, head of the county, goes to inspect the Longwan town government and Mr. Li, head of the town received Niu.
			B	Niu asks Li whether Sangui has been back to Xijia village. Li tells Niu that Sangui is a clever and capable young man and that he is enthusiastic about the village economic development. He tells Xi that Sangui has just established a gong-and-drum team from the villagers and taken the team to perform in the provincial city. Niu says that organizing the gong-and-drum performance is also a good thing but Niu thinks that is not Sangui's strength.
			DEF	Niu, as the potential helper/opposer with regard to Li's work in Longwan town. Niu hopes that Li tries to focus on the agricultural economic development. Niu tells Li that the provincial committee has recently put forward the plan of developing mountainous areas and revolutionary regions and that the issues of agriculture, rural areas and farmers are still the focus of Li's job. Niu tells Li that he has come to see whether Li has any new plan for the agricultural development in Longwan town. Li tells Niu about his recent efforts to persuade Xi and Sangui to cooperate with each other to develop a new type of agricultural economic development in Longwan town. Li tells Niu the difficulty in developing this new type of agricultural economic development. Li tells Niu that villagers are not confident of the new economic development and that they are worried about the risk involved in such a new mode of economic development. Li also says that the difficulty is also due to the fact that both Xi and Sangui are ordinary villagers and that they are not yet ready for such a cooperative economic project due to with their current cooperation awareness and their ability to run and manage a cooperation enterprise. Niu tells Li to be patient because it takes time to build a new socialist countryside. Niu stresses that the wishes of the villagers should be respected and that timely and ample guidance should be given to them during the course of building the countryside. Niu also suggests that Li not force the villagers to cooperate without thinking about the villagers' wishes. Result: Niu gives instructions

				and suggestions to Li with regard to his work in Longwan town.
			DEF	Sangui, as the potential helper/opposer with regard to Xi's stay in the city. In the meantime, Sangui and Xi are walking in the city street. Sangui tries to persuade Xi to get his feet cleansed and massaged in a professional feet cleansing shop. Xi refuses Sangui's offer, telling him that it costs money and it is not decent to get others wash his smelly feet. Sangui gets Xi to a professional feet cleansing shop to have their feet cleaned and massaged despite Xi's reluctance. Result: Sangui tries to make Xi's stay in the city enjoyable.
			B	While they are having their feet washed, Sangui receives a call telling him that one of the villagers Changgui is wounded and is now in hospital.
			↑	Xi and Sangui rush to the hospital when Changgui is now being treated for his wound.
			B	One of the villagers tells Xi and Sangui how Changgui has got his wound: he bargained with a shop owner on a shirt he intends to buy for his wife but refuses to buy the shirt since the bargained price is still too expensive for him and he gets beaten by the shop owner because of the refusal.
			DEF	Xi, and Sangui, as the potential helper/opposer with regard to the villagers' safety during their stay at the city. Xi tells the villagers to be careful next time to avoid the similar accident. Xi tells them that he or Sangui can accompany them if they want to do shopping in the city. Changgui wants to go home because of the accident but Xi persuades him to stay. Result: For the sake of their safety, Xi's offer to accompany the villagers or get Sangui to accompany them in their prospective shopping.
			DEF-	Sangui, and the City Cultural Market Inspection administrator, as the potential helpers/opposers with regard to Xijia gong-and-drum performance in the city. The following day Xijia gong-and-drum team is giving a performance for a company. An administrator from the City Cultural Market Inspection comes to talk to Sangui and asks him to show a performance license. Sangui tells the inspection team that he is applying for the performance license and will get the license soon. The administrator asks Sangui to stop the performance and tells Sangui that the City Cultural Market welcomes and supports the folk art performance in the city but he needs a performance license since his team is giving a commercial performance. He asks Sangui to apply for and get the license as soon as possible. Result: Due to Sangui's failure to apply for a performance license, Xijia villagers are warned against further performance in the future.
			DEF	Xi and villagers, as the potential helpers/opposers with regard to Sangui's failure to continue his gong-and-drum performance project. The villagers are having meals in a restaurant. Sangui tells his fellow villagers that he had planned to take them to the city to earn money by giving gong-and-drum performance but that he is afraid that he has to give up his plan now. He explains to the villagers that they need a performance license for their performance in the city. He has tried to get a friend to apply for the license but has been told that it is not possible to get a license within a few days. He apologizes to the villagers. Changgui relieves Sangui of his

				<p>embarrassment by telling him that it is not his fault. Other villagers also show Sangui their understanding. Sangui then apologizes to Xi for the failure. Xi reassures Sangui that it is not his fault and says that he only wants to help the villagers. Xi, however, advises Sangui to take everything into consideration in the future. Result: Xi and villagers all show understanding of Sangui with regard to his failure to continue the gong-and-drum performance project.</p> <p>K- The song-and-drum performance project is stopped for the time being.</p>
	seg 2		<p>↓ B</p> <p>Xi's return to the village Xiulan is surprised at Xi's early return to the village. Xi tells her what has happened. Xiulan says that Sangui should have taken everything into consideration when planning the performance project. He agrees with her. Xi asks his wife for his crops in the field. Xiulan tells him everything is all right with the crops but she is annoyed by Jiuxian. She tells Xi what has happened after he leaves the village for the city performance. Someone from the provincial city has come to collect the paper patterns but by Shuanzi's mother and given some money to Shuanzi's mother. Shuanzi's mother has asked Xiulan to take her to a credit cooperative to deposit the money there and asked Xiulan to keep the bankbook for her. When Jiuxian knows this, she comes to trouble Xiulan saying something not nice. Xi tells Xiulan to pay no attention to Jiuxian and to get her out of their house if Jiuxian comes again to annoy her.</p> <p>↑ DEF</p> <p>Jiuxian's movement to Xi's house Xi and Xiulan, as the potential helper/opposer with Shaunzi's mother's care-taking problem. Just then Jiuxian comes and hears what Xi has just said. Jiuxian tells Xi that she is not happy with Xi has said. Xi criticizes Jiuxian for her maltreatment of her mother-in-law and asks her to respect and take care of the elderly. Jiuxian wants to get her mother-in-law's money from Xi. Xi refuses and asks Jiuxian to stop thinking about getting her mother-in-law's money. Jiuxian accuses Xi of wanting to get her mother-in-law's money. Xiulan is angry with what Jiuxian has said and argues with her. Xi stops Xiulan from arguing with Jiuxian. Result: Xi refuses to give Shuanzi's mother's money to Jiuxian.</p> <p>↓ DEF</p> <p>Qingshan's return home Qingshan, as the potential helper/opposer. Qingshan comes in to tell Jiuxian that Shuanzi and Shuanzi's mother are arguing with each other and that Shuanzi's mother has just fainted because of anger. On hearing this, Jiuxian leaves Xi's house. Xi asks Qingshan whether what he has said is true. Qingshan denies and tells Xi that he does that to get Jiuxian away. Result: Qingshan helps his parents by getting Jiuxian away.</p> <p>DEF</p> <p>Xi, as the potential helper/opposer with regard to how to avoid Jiuxian's annoyance. Xiulan says that it is not possible to get rid of Jiuxian's annoyance and that Shuanzi's mother affair is a big trouble sooner or later. Xiulan asks Xi for a way to avoid being involved in the affair. Xi suggests that they give Shuanzi's mother's bankbook to the village committee. That way, Jiuxian will go to Erhu and Baoqing for the money.</p>	

		DEF	Qingshan, as the potential helper/opposer with regard to his future cake-taking of his parents. Xiulan criticizes Shuanzi for being hen-pecked and manipulated by Jiuxian. Qingshan tells her parents that he will throw his wife out of the earth if his wife maltreats them. Xiulan laughs at what her son has just said.
		DEF-	Xi, as the potential helper/opposer with regard to the Qingshan's capability of taking care of Xi and Xiulan in the future. Xi says that it is ok if Qingshan finds a wife not beautiful but he may not be as good as Shuanzi if he finds a beautiful wife. Qingshan asks his father why he is not afraid of his mother who is also beautiful. Xi says that he is different from Qingshan. Qingshan retorts that he is Xi's son. Xi wished that Qingshan was like him. Xiulan feels angry and says that her husband and her son are talking nonsense again. Result: Xi's disbelief in Qingshan's capability in taking good care of Xi and Xiulan in the future.
seg 3		↑	Xi goes to see Erhu about the relationship between Jiuxian and Shuanzi's mother.
		B	Erhu asks him why he comes home earlier. Xi tells him that performing gong-and-drum in the city needs a license and that Sangui cannot get a license within a short time.
		DEF-	Xi's involvement with Erhu as the potential helper/opposer with regard to the relationship between Jiuxian and Shuanzi's mother. Xi turns to Erhu for help and advice as to how to handle the relationship between Jiuxian and Shuanzi's mother. Because Erhu gets drunk and keeps talking with Xi about the development of economy in Xijia village, Xi fails to get any advice from Erhu.
		↓	Dongping's return home
		B	Just then Dongping, Erhu's wife comes back and scolds Erhu for getting drunk again. Erhu is angry about Dongping's scolding of him. Xi tells Erhu that he will wait for him that night at the village committee to talk with him about the relationship between Jiuxian and Shuanzi's mother.
		↑	Xi and Shuanzi's mother go to the village committee.
		DEF-	Erhu, as the potential helper/opposer. The night Xi takes Shuanzi's mother to the village committee where Jiuxian and Shuanzi have been waiting for them. Erhu tries to reconcile Jiuxian and Shuanzi with Shuanzi's mother. Jiuxian and Shuanzi insist on getting Shuanzi's mother's money. Shuanzi's mother refuses to give them money because they have maltreated her. Jiuxian decides to repudiate all relationship with Shuanzi's mother and Shuanzi has to listen to his wife since he is hen-pecked. Feeling sad, Shuanzi's mother agrees on the repudiation of the relationship. Result: Erhu fails to reconcile Jiuxian and Shuanzi's mother and Shuanzi's mother was forced to repudiate all relationship with Shuanzi.
		DEF	Erhu, as the potential helper/opposer with regard to Shuanzi's mother's caretaking. Erhu incorporates Shuanzi's mother into the village five-guarantees-family-system where the aged, the childless, the infirm, old widows and orphan are supported and taken care of by the village in five ways i.e. food, clothing, medical care, housing, and burial expenses. Result: With Erhu's help, Shuanzi' mother is supported and taken care of

			<p>K B K ↑</p> <p>by the village's five-guarantees-family-system. The liquidation of Shuanzi's mother's care-taking problem. Sangui calls the village committee and requests Yingping who answers the call to tell Erhu and Xi that he has got the performance license and to ask them whether they are still available for the gong-and-drum performance in the city. Yingping consents to Sangui's request. The next day, Xi and the gong-and-drum team go back to the city to perform gong-and-drum. Sangui has already found quite a few clients who need the performance and the team can give performance in the city until it is time to harvest crops in autumn. Xi and villagers depart from the village to the city for the gong-and-drum performance</p>
	seg 4	<p>(↑) DEF DEF ↓ (↑) DEF ↓ DEF B ↑ DEF- ↑</p>	<p>Xi, Xiulan, Qingshan and Mei's implicit movement to the field Xiulan, Qingshan, and as the potential helpers/opposers with regard to Xi's farming. Qingmei Xiulan, Qingshan and Qingmei are helping Xi to harvest corn, sorghum and millet in the field. They have been harvesting the crops for three consecutive days. Xi, Qingmei and Qingshan, as the potential helps/opposers. On the fourth day, Xiulan is down with fever. Xi, Qingshan and Qingmei want to take Xiulan home. Xiulan asks Qingshan and Qingmei to help their father to harvest the crops. Xi takes her home. Xi and Xiulan's movement home Ma Cuilian and Gaihua's implicit movement to their field. Gaihua, as the potential helper/opposer with regard to Mai's scolding Qingshan for not coming over to help harvest her crops. In the meantime, Ma Cuilian and Gaihua are harvesting sorghum in the field. Ma complains to Gaihua that the harvest work is too tiring for her. She scolds Gaihua for being fond of Qingshan who cannot come over to help her with the harvest. Gaihua asks her mother to harvest crops rather than complaining. Result: Gaihua tacitly defends Qingshan by requesting Ma to stop complaining. Xi and Xiulan's return home Xi, as the potential helper/opposer. Xi serves Xiulan with medicine and scolds her for her insistence on harvesting the crops despite her knowledge of her discomfort. After Xiulan has taken some medicine, she sends Xi back to the field to help with the crop harvest. Xi's movement to the field Xi and Ma as the potential helper/opposers with regard to Qingshan's relationship with Gaihua. On the way back to the field, Xi meets Ma. Ma asks Xi his attitude towards the relationship between Gaihua and Qingshan. She asks Xi to send her the betrothal gift to formalize the relationship otherwise she will get Qingshan's leg broken. Xi tells Ma that he had disapproved of the relationship between Gaihua and Qingshan and that he will not give the betrothal gift to Ma. Result: Ma's request of betrothal gifts and Xi's refusal of Ma's request endanger Qingshan's relationship with Gaihua. Xi's departure to the field</p>

			DEF-	Qingshan, as the potential helper/opposer with his relationship with Gaihua. Xi returns to the field, angry. When Qingshan tells him that he plans to help Gaihua to harvest her crops after finishing the harvest in the field, Xi angrily tells Qingshan to break off his relationship with Gaihua, threatening to break off his father-son relationship with Qingshan. Result: Qingshan's offer to help Gaihua harvest her crops infuriates Xi and thus endangers his relationship with Gaihua.
			DEF	Qingmei, as the potential helper/opposer. Qingmei asks her father what has made him angry. Qingshan feels baffled and angry about his father's sudden anger at him. Qingmei tries to help calm her father and her brother down. Result: Qingmei manages to calm down her father and her brother.
			↓	Xi, Qingshan and Qingmei's return home
			B	On their arrival home, Xi, Qingshan and Qingmei find Xiulan still having high fever.
			DEF-	Qingshan, as the potential helper/opposer. Qingshan wants to take Xiulan to see a doctor but his mother refuses.
			DEF	Xiulan, as the potential helper/opposer with regard to Xi's farming. Xiulan asks him not to worry about her and ask him to help his father and his sister to harvest the crops as soon as possible for fear of the coming wind that may blow down the crops in the field. Xiulan tells them that she will go to the hospital if she does not feel better the next day. Result: Xiulan's support for Xi despite her illness
			(↑)	Xi, Qingshan and Qingmei's implicit movement to the field next day
			DEF	Qingshan and Qingmei, as the potential helpers/opposers. Qingshan and Qingmei go to the field help Xi to continue their harvest of the crops in the field.
			B	(Xi's voiceover) Autumn is the time when farmers are the busiest in a year and it is also the time when they feel the happiest. In autumn farmers harvest their crops as well as their happy mood.
			↑	Xiulan's movement to Erhu's house
			DEF	Xiulan's involvement with Erhu as the potential helper/opposer. Xiulan goes to see Erhu when he is about to go to the field to get in crops. Xiulan tells Erhu that she is having a high fever and asks him to give her an injection for her fever. Erhu tells her that he has not given injection for years and that he usually does not give injection for people except family members. Xiulan tells Erhu that Xi is too preoccupied with the crops in the field to send her to the village clinic and that she is Erhu's sister-in-law. On Xiulan's earnest request, Erhu gives her an injection. Result: Xiulan succeeds in getting help from Erhu.
			(↓)	Xiulan's implicit movement back home
			K	Xiulan gets better after the injection and prepares dinner for the family that night.
			B	At dinner, Qingshan is surprised to learn from his father that his mother goes to Erhu for an injection. Xi tells his son that Erhu had practiced medicine before he works as village head. Qingmei has some doubt for Erhu's ability because he has not practiced medicine for years. Xi tells her

				daughter that her mother has got better due to Erhu's injection. Xiulan tells them that Erhu tells her that he does not give injection to people except family members in order to avoid getting trouble. Xi says that it is just an injection not an operation.
			↓	Technician Liu's arrival at Xi's house
			DEF	Xi, Xiulan and Qingshan, as the potential helpers/opposers with regard to Qingmei's relationship with technician Liu. Technician Liu comes to visit the family. Qingmei is surprised at Liu's visit at night. Liu tells her that he has come to help her keep an eye on her fish pond since she is busy with the crops in the field these days. Qingshan teases Liu that he should go straight to the fish pond for the fish. Qingmei is annoyed by her brother's teasing. She and Liu then go to the fish pond for a walk.
			↑	Qingmei and Liu's movement to the fish pond
			DEF	Liu, as the potential helper/opposer with regard to his relationship with Qingmei. During the walk Liu express his feeling towards Qingmei by holding Qingmei's hands. Qingmei asks Liu whether his parents will approve of their relationship. Liu says that his parents do not interfere with his life and that he has right to choose a girlfriend. Result: Liu's expression of affection toward Qingmei is rewarded with Qingmei's affection toward her.
			W	the temporary establishment of relationship between Liu and Qingmei (since Liu and Qingmei break up later)
			DEF	Xi and Xiulan, as the potential helper/opposer with regard to Qingmei's relationship with technician Liu. While Xi is washing his feet, Xiulan asks Xi how he thinks of their daughter's relationship with Liu. Xi tells Xiulan that he is not confident in the relationship because Qingmei is a farmer. Xiulan is not happy at what her husband has said. She says that there are a lot of laid-off workers in the city and that city people may even come to work in the countryside in the future when the countryside is fully developed. Xi thinks highly of what Xiulan has said.
			B	When Xiulan helps Xi to throw out his foot-washing water, Xi notices that his wife has difficulty in walking and asks her why. Xiulan tells him that she feels pain in her leg. Xi assures her that she will be all right in a few days. When Qingshan comes back home later, he is surprised to see his mother walking lamely.
			L	Qingshan is worried that his mother's lameness may be caused by Erhu's injection in a wrong place.
			↑	Hearing what Qingshan has just said, Xi goes to see Erhu who has just come back from the field.
			B	After hearing what Xi has told him about Xiulan, Erhu goes to Xi's house to check Xiulan's injection site.
			↑	Erhu and Xi's movement to Xi's house
			DEF	Erhu, as the potential helper/opposer with regard to Xiulan's lameness.
			/(EX)	After checking, Erhu looks worried and tells Xi that he has given the injection in a site slightly away from the safe injection site. Erhu advises Xi to take Xiulan to see a doctor in a provincial hospital. Erhu's worry, his acknowledgement of having injected in a wrong site and his advice show

			<p>Erhu's self-exposure of himself to be the real villain in the case of Xiulan's lameness.</p> <p>Q- As a false-hero, Erhu is blamed by Qingshan for Xiulan's lameness. Qingshan is so worried about his mother that he blames Erhu for his mother's lameness.</p> <p>DEF Xiulan, as the potential helper/opposer. Xiulan stops Qingshan from blaming Erhu.</p> <p>DEF Erhu, as the potential helper/opposer with regard to Xiulan's lameness. Erhu offers to take Xiulan to the provincial hospital right away.</p> <p>B Xiulan tells him that they go to the hospital next day since it is too late at night.</p> <p>C Erhu's consent to Xiulan's request</p> <p>↓ Erhu's movement back home</p> <p>DEF- Dongping, as the potential helper/opposer. Erhu is worried after he goes home. His wife Dongping tells him not to worry. Dongping fails to relieve Erhu of his worry.</p> <p>B Erhu explains to his wife that he may have injected Xiulan in a site connected to the nervous system and that Xiulan may be lame for the rest of her life.</p> <p>DEF- Dongping, as the potential helper/opposer. Hearing what her husband's explanation, Dongping becomes worried and complains to him about his meddling in other's business in the future. Erhu is annoyed at his wife's complaint. Result: Dongping scolds rather than supports Erhu.</p> <p>↑ Erhu, Qingmei and Xiulan's train journey to a provincial hospital the following day.</p> <p>DEF Erhu and Qingmei, as the potential helpers/opposers. Erhu and Qingmei take Xiulan to a provincial hospital. When Erhu goes to check in with the registry for a neurologist, the registration staff tells him that all neurologists are fully booked and that he will need to register for an emergency care. When Xiulan learns from Erhu that she needs to register for an emergency care, Xiulan suggests that they come back tomorrow because of the likely high cost required by an emergency treatment. Both Qingmei and Erhu asks Xiulan not to worry about the cost and take Xiulan for an emergency treatment.</p>
11	seg 1		<p>(↑)</p> <p>DEF Qingshan, as the potential helper/opposer with regard to Xi's farming. Qingshan is helping Xi to get in the crops in the field.</p> <p>DEF- Xi's involvement with Baoqing as the potential helper/opposer. Baoqing is singing in the field. Xi is in a bad mood because of Xiulan's leg problem and asks Baoqing to stop singing but Baoqing refuses.</p> <p>(↑)</p> <p>B Xi is at the village committee waiting for Qingmei to call to tell him about Xiulan's treatment in the hospital. Qingmei tells him that her mother's case is serious and that the injection has affected her sciatic nerve and that her mother needs to see some other experts for treatment. Qingmei asks Xi to come to the hospital.</p> <p>C Xi's consent to Qingmei's request, telling her that he will arrive at the</p>

				hospital next morning.
		(↓)		Xi's implicit movement back home.
		B		(Xi's voiceover) Information about Xi's worry about Xiulan's lamb leg. That night, Xi becomes restless. He tosses and turns all night, thinking about Xiulan.
		↑		X's movement to the city the following morning and to the hostel where Erhu, Xiulan and Qingmei are staying.
		DEF		Xi, as the potential helper/opposer. Xiulan weeps on seeing Xi. Xi reassures her that she will be all right with the modern technology.
		B		Erhu apologizes to Xi for the big trouble he has caused to him. Xi does not scold Erhu. He tells Erhu that the most important thing is find another expert to treat Xiulan's leg. Xi does not feel like eating when Qingmei presents him some food. Erhu tells Xi that Sangui has helped contacted an expert. Xiulan tells Xi that they will see the expert the following morning.
		↑		Xi, Xiulan, Qingmei and Erhu's movement to the hospital the next morning
		DEF		Sangui, Xi, and Qingmei, as the potential helper/opposers with regard to the treatment of Xiulan's lameness. Xi thanks Sangui for finding an expert to treat Xiulan's lameness when Sangui arrives to meet them. Xi suggests that they invite the expert to lunch after treatment. Sangui tells them that the expert is unique and that he does not accept red packet from patients. Sangui agrees with Xi that they invite him to lunch to thank him for his help. When Xiulan learns from Sangui that a lunch will cost them about one thousand yuan, Xiulan refuses to see the expert. Xi tries to persuade his wife, explaining to her that it is more important to get her leg treated than to worry about the cost of the lunch. Qingmei also tries to persuade her mother to get the treatment, telling her that she will get her mother treated regardless of the cost.
		DEF-		The expert, as the potential helper/opposer. Just then, Sangui sees the expert back to his consultation room. They follow him to the room but are told to knock at the door before entering. Sangui, Xiulan and Qingmei enter the room, leaving Xi and Erhu waiting outside anxiously. When Xiulan comes out with the help of Qingmei and Sangui, Xi rushes forward to greet her and ask her what the doctor has said. Xiulan shakes her head. Qingmei tells her father the doctor's diagnosis. The injection has hurt the nervous system and Xiulan needs to recover naturally. Result: The expert cannot cure Xiulan's lamb leg.
		U		On hearing this, Xi is too upset to say any word. Unable to have Xiulan's lame leg cures, Xi feels defeated.
		DEF		Sangui, Erhu, and Xiulan, as the potential helpers/opposers. Sangui tries to comfort Xi and Erhu apologizes to Xi for what has he done. Xi Xiulan tells her husband to go home. Emotional support for Xi.
		DEF-		Sangui, as the potential/opposer with regard to Xi's request to thank the expert for the efforts to treat Xiulan's leg. In tears Xi carries his wife on his back to go back to the hostel, but he stops to tell Sangui that they invite the expert to lunch to thank him. Sangui tells Xi that he has done that but the expert has declined the invitation. Xi asks Sangui to invite the expert again but Sangui tells him that the expert will get angry at the further invitation.

			<p>↑ B DEF</p> <p>Xi's attempt to show appreciation to the expert for his efforts to treat Xiulan's leg fails. Xi, Xiulan, Qingmei and Erhu's movement to the hostel After getting back to the hostel, Xiulan asks Qingmei to check out at the hostel registry and asks Erhu to wash his face which has been washed for three days. Xi, as the potential helper/opposer. When Xi and Xiulan are alone, Xiulan weeps. Xi comforts her, telling her that she is still his wife and the mother of Qingshan and Qingmei and that he will take care of her for the rest of her life.</p>
			<p>↓ B</p> <p>Xi, Xiulan, Qingmei and Erhu's movement back to Xijia village When Xi, Xiulan, Qingmei and Erhu arrive at the village on Qingshan's tractor, Liushiyi tells Erhu that Ling'ai has got in his crops and that Erhu should talk to Ling'ai about this for him. Erhu tells him that he will do that later.</p>
	seg 2		<p>B DEF ↑ B C B ↑ DEF</p> <p>Ma Cuilian learns from Gaihua during dinner that Xiulan becomes lame because of Erhu's injection and that the experts in the provincial hospital cannot cure Xiulan's lameness. Gaihua suggests that she invite her third Uncle to treat Xiulan's lame leg with his acupuncture. Ma tells her daughter that she may as well invite her uncle to cure Xiulan's leg. That way Xi should be grateful for their help. Xi, as the potential helper/opposer. Xi cleans the urine basin for Xiulan. Dongping's movement to Xi's house Dongping comes to tell him what Erhu has been doing these days since he came back from hospital last night. He has thrown away his medicine kit, all the medicine and all syringes. He has got drunk again, crying and laughing. He has called Mr. Li, head of town and has told Li that he wants to quit his job as village head. When Li refuses Erhu's request, Erhu argues with Li over the phone. Erhu was restless the whole night. This morning Erhu has been to the town, intending to sue himself and get himself imprisoned. Dongping requests Xi to look for Erhu. Xi's consent to Dongping's request. Xi assures Dongping that he will go and look for Erhu in the town right away. Dongping wants to apologize to Xi for Erhu for what he has done to Xiulan. Xi stops her and tells her that he does not blame him for what has happened. When Xi leaves for the town, Xiulan asks him where he is going. Xi tells her that he is going to the town to look for Erhu and that he will explain to her why when he comes back. Xi's movement to the town. Xi's involvement with the head of Judicial Department as the potential helper/opposer. Xi goes to the Judicial Department to look for Erhu. The head of Judicial Department tells Xi that Erhu has been there. Xi tells the head of the station that Erhu had wanted to help Xiulan but has made a mistake. Xi asks the head not to try Erhu. The head explains to Xi that the case is a civil case and that he can help reconcile people involved in the case but that he has no right to try Erhu. With the head's explanation, Xi feels relieved and thanks the head.</p>

		<p>↑ (↑) DEF</p> <p>↓ DEF</p> <p>↓ DEF</p> <p>B</p> <p>K</p>	<p>Xi's departure from the Judicial Department</p> <p>Gaihua's implicit movement to fetch her third uncle to help cure Xiulan's leg Gaihua, as the potential helper/opposer. While Xi has been away to the town for Erhu, Gaihua invites and takes her third uncle to cure Xiulan's leg. Gaihua asks her uncle that he must cure Xiulan's leg. Her uncle tells her that he will try his best. Xiulan asks Gaihua not to give her uncle pressure.</p> <p>Xi's return to the village</p> <p>Xi, as the potential helper/opposer. When Xi gets back to village, he meets Erhu who has just come back on Qingshan's tractor. Xi scolds Erhu for suing himself. Erhu apologizes to Xi for his mistake. Xi tells Erhu that he does not blame him for what has happened to Xiulan and asks him not to blame himself any more.</p> <p>Xi and Qingshan's return home</p> <p>Xi, Qingshan and Qingmei, as the potential helper/opposer. When they cannot find Xiulan, they become worried that she may do something silly because of her lame leg.</p> <p>While they are still wondering where Xiulan is, she walks out of the house and tells them that she is not silly. Qingmei, Qingshan and Xi are surprised and excited to see Xiulan walking again. Xiulan tells them that it is Gaihua who has taken her uncle to have her leg cured. Qingshan is excited to hear that it is Gaihua who has helped to have his mother's leg cures. He talks to his father about his relationship with Gaihua.</p> <p>Xiulan's lame leg is cured.</p>
	seg 3	<p>↑ Q</p> <p>B</p> <p>C</p> <p>↓ (B)</p> <p>DEF-</p>	<p>Qingshan's movement to Gaihua's house later that night</p> <p>Qingshan goes to Gaihua's house to thank her for her help with some gifts. Both Gaihua and Ma are glad to see Qingshan. Gaihua tells Qingshan that she is worried about his mother and invites her uncle to try to cure his mother's leg with his acupuncture and that she is happy to see his mother able to walk again. Ma asks Qingshan whether his father sends him to their house. Qingshan tells her that his father asks him to come to thank Gaihua for her help. Ma asks Qingshan whether his father sends him to thank Gaihua or sends him to formalize his relationship with Gaihua. Qingshan tells Ma that his coming means both. As a heroine who gets Xiulan's lame leg cured, Gaihua is rewarded with Xi's recognition and with Xi's consent to her relationship with Qingshan.</p> <p>Ma tells Qingshan that she has accepted the thanks but not the second with the protest of Gaihua. Ma asks Qingshan to tell Xi that he should send her the betrothal gift to formalize and finalize Qingshan's relationship with Gaihua.</p> <p>Qingshan's consent to Ma's request of him to tell his father about the betrothal gift.</p> <p>Qingshan's movement back home</p> <p>It can be implied that Qingshan has told Xi and Xiulan about Ma's request of betrothal gifts</p> <p>Xiulan, as the potential helper/opposer with regard to Ma's request of betrothal gifts and thus to Qingshan's relationship with Gaihua. When Xi and Xiulan are arranging the harvested corns in their home the next day, Xi</p>

			<p>tells his wife his attitude towards giving the betrothal gifts. He will give Gaihua whatever she asks from him since she has saved Xiulan, but he will not give Ma the betrothal gifts. Xiulan scolds her husband for being as stubborn as a donkey. She tells her husband that Ma and Gaihua are mother and daughter. Giving Ma the betrothal gifts is no different from giving betrothal gifts to Gaihua. Xi insists that Ma and Gaihua are not the same. Xiulan complains to her husband that he is impossible. Xiulan fails to persuade Xi to give betrothal gifts to Ma.</p> <p>B Qingmei tells Xi and Xiulan that she is going to the city to discuss something with Liu.</p> <p>↑ Qingmei's departure for the city</p> <p>DEF Qingshan, as the potential helper/opposer with regard to Ma's request of betrothal gifts. Qingshan, who has been helping with the arrangement of the crops and has been listening to his parents' conversation, tells his father that he will marry into and live with Gaihua's family if he refuses to give Ma the betrothal gifts. Xi is angry at what Qingshan has just said and intends to hit him with one of his shoes. Qingshan threat fails to get Xi's consent to Ma's request of betrothal gift.</p> <p>↓ Baoqing's arrival at Xi's house</p>
			<p>B But instead of hitting Qingshan, the shoe hits Baoqing who has just come to see Xi. Baoqing tells Xi that villagers are interested in the economic cooperative project that Xi has talked about. Baoqing wants Xi to go to the village committee and discuss the economic cooperative project with the villagers. Xi is happy to hear what Baoqing has told him.</p> <p>↑ Xi and Baoqing's movement to the village committee</p>
	seg 4	DEF	<p>Xi's involvement with Baoqing and some villagers as the potential helpers/opposers with regard to the establishment of the agricultural economic cooperative. He goes to the village committee with Baoqing right away. When Xi and Baoqing arrive, the villagers are arguing with each other about the project. Xi suggests that they cooperate with each other in all aspects from ploughing of land, growth of crops to getting-in of crops. The cooperation saves time as well as labor and thus benefits everyone. One of the villagers advices Xi to lead the cooperative to plough all their land using Xi's tractor. Xi says that the villagers just want to use his tractor. Xi suggests that they should cooperate with each other not just in land-ploughing but in other aspects as well. Baoqing says that land-ploughing is just one simple form of cooperation. He suggests that they should cooperate in all aspects related to agriculture including seeds, fertilizers, agricultural chemicals, seed-sowing, getting-in of crops and sales of crops etc. and that all aspects should be unified and be professionalized so as to save labour. When one of the villagers asks who will lead the cooperative, Baoqing suggests Gentian. Gentian tells them that the cooperative involves everyone and he suggests that they should discuss with each other during the course of the cooperation. Liushiyi says that different people have different ideas and it is difficult to carry out the cooperative which is led by everyone. He backs out from the cooperative discussion.</p>

			DEF	Qingmei's involvement Liu with each other as the potential helpers/opposers with regard to their relationship. While Xi and villagers are discussing the cooperation project, Qingmei and Liu are discussing their future in the city. Liu tells Qingmei that his parents want Qingmei to work in the city and his father has already found her a job in the city. His parents think that the city is better than the village in many aspects including education, medical health care, social security and insurance services etc.
			DEF-	At the village committee, Xi and the villagers are still discussing the cooperative project. The villagers feel that they will end up working for Xi if they join the cooperative and that the cooperative benefits Xi rather than themselves. Xi is angry at what the villagers think of the cooperative and leaves. Baoqing scolds the villagers for being narrow-minded. The economic cooperative project is not yet set up.
			K-	The economic cooperative project is not yet establishment.
			DEF-	Meanwhile, Qingmei's discussion with Liu is not going well either. She tells Liu that she understands what Liu's parents have done for her. But she tells Liu that she is from the countryside and she prefers to work in the countryside. She does not have a sense of belonging in the city. Liu tries to persuade Qingmei to go to the city but Qingmei says that she will not leave the countryside since she is from the countryside. Due to their disagreement, the relationship between Qingmei and Liu fails.
			W-	Qingmei and Liu fail in their relationship.
			B-	That night Xi talks to himself in the living room about the importance of educating countrymen. Xiulan reminds him that he himself is a countryman. Xiulan wondered whether there is something wrong with Xi with his ceaseless talking about the importance of educating countrymen when Xi himself is a countryman.
			↓	Qingmei's return to the village
			B	Qingmei's request of a painkiller from Xiulan
			DEF-	Qingmei, as the potential helper/opposer. When Qingmei comes back home and goes to the living room for a painkiller from Xiulan, Xi is still talking to himself about the importance of educating his fellow countrymen. He asks Qingmei why his fellow villagers are not as clever as the city people and why they cannot see the benefits of his cooperative project. He considers them as silly. Qingmei is not happy to hear what her father has said about city people being better than countrymen. She angrily asks her father to go and live in the city rather than staying with countrymen like her. Result: Xi fails to get support from Qingmei with regard to his idea of city people being better than countrymen.
			↑	Qingmei's movement to her room angrily
			B-	Xi and Xiulan is surprised at Qingmei's anger and wonder what has happened to her daughter. Xi and Xiulan follow their daughter to her bedroom but she shuts them outside.

seg 5		<p>B</p> <p>↑</p> <p>DEF</p> <p>B</p> <p>(K)</p> <p>↓</p> <p>Ex</p> <p>Pr.</p> <p>K</p> <p>I</p> <p>B</p> <p>Pr.</p> <p>B</p> <p>C</p> <p>U</p> <p>B</p>	<p>(Xi's voiceover) The relationship between Qingmei and Liu fails and Xi's cooperative project is not yet established.</p> <p>Xi and Qingshan's movement to the Town Grain Shop to sell their grains.</p> <p>Xi's involvement with Qingshan as the potential helper/opposer. Qingshan helps Xi to sell the grains to the Town Grain Shop.</p> <p>When they arrive at the Grain shop, there is a long queue.</p> <p>Xi and Qingshan's implicit sale of the crops to the grain shop.</p> <p>Xi and Qingshan's movement home</p> <p>Qingshan see and recognize the young man who stole and sold the donkey to him. As a villain who stole and sold the donkey to Qingshan, the young man (Wensheng) is exposed.</p> <p>Qingshan gets off his tractor to chase the young man. Xi follows his son.</p> <p>Qingshan and Xi catch the young man.</p> <p>As the captured, the young man admits that he sold the donkey to Qingshan.</p> <p>Qingshan angrily tells the young man that the owner of the donkey has taken away the donkey and that the donkey has hurt him. The young man pleads with them not to send him to the police. He promises to give money back to Qingshan.</p> <p>When Qingshan and Xi say that they are going to hand him over to the police station, the young man runs away from them. Qingshan and Xi chase after him. The young man runs uphill and Xi and Qingshan chase him there.</p> <p>Qingshan's request of the young man to stop running; the young man's request of Qingshan and Xi not to hand him over to the police; the young's man promise to return 300 yuan to Qingshan.</p> <p>Xi and Qingshan's consent to the young man's request of them not to hand him over to the police.</p> <p>As a villain, the young man is asked by Xi to return 300 yuan. The young man gives all his money to Xi and Qingshan but it is not enough to make 300 yuan. He promises to return the rest of the money when has earned enough. Upon Qingshan's disbelief in him, the young man suggests to Xi and Qingshan that he can work for them and that they let him go when his work can pay for the rest of the money he owes them. If he is found dishonest during his work, he tells them that they can hand him over to the police station. Xi and Qingshan take the young man's suggestion.</p> <p>Qingshan asks young man his name. The young man tells them his name—Li Wensheng. Xi asks whether it is the first time that he has stolen and Wensheng gives him an affirmative answer.</p>
seg 6		<p>↑</p> <p>DEF</p> <p>B</p> <p>C</p> <p>↑</p>	<p>Xi, Qingshan and Wensheng's movement back to the Xijia village</p> <p>(Voiceover) Xiulan and Qingmei, as the potential helpers/opposers. Xiulan and Qingmei tell Xi that Wensheng does not look like a thief. When Xi tells them that Wensheng did steal the donkey, Qingmei tells her father that there must be reason for it.</p> <p>Qingmei's request of Xi to ask Wensheng why he stole the donkey.</p> <p>Xi's consent to Qingmei's request.</p> <p>Xi and Qingshan's movement to Wensheng's temporary room</p>

		B	Wensheng tells Xi he was forced to steal the donkey. Years ago Wensheng failed in the National Entrance Examination to College. He went back to the village. He did not want to find work in the city because his family does not have good human resources. He wanted to grow crops in the contracted land. He learned the skills of establishing big wooden cabin for the growth of food crops indoors but his father is in the habit of gambling and owed a huge debt due to gambling this spring. The creditor not only took everything away from his home but also uprooted all the vegetables in the field and destroyed the wooden cabin for the growth of crops. What happened was too much for his mother. She drank farm chemicals and died. His father has disappeared since then. He went out to find some work. He worked for a coal-cleansing company in Longwan town for a month but he did not get any pay for his work because the company owner ran away due to his wrong doing. He had not had any food for several days. He was so hungry that he came up with an idea of stealing. He went to steal a donkey from a neighboring village.
		DEF	Xi, as the potential helper/opposer. Wensheng feels embarrassed about what he has done. Xi believes what Wensheng has told him. Xi hates Wensheng's father for what has happened to Wensheng and he is sympathetic with Wensheng. He thinks Wensheng's mistake is understandable and forgivable. He is confident that Wensheng will be a good man since he is young and educated.
	seg 7	↑	Xi, Qingshan and Wensheng's implicit movement to the field
		DEF	Xi, as the potential helper/opposer. While working in the field, Xi asks Wensheng whether he has learned the skills of growing crops in greenhouse. Wensheng tells Xi that he has indeed learned the skills. Qingshan says that Wensheng is simply bragging. Wensheng tells Qingshan that he is telling the truth. Xi asks him to help set up a greenhouse in his field to grow the crops after they finish loosening the soil in the land. Wensheng gives Xi his promise. Qingshan tells Wensheng that his father has got quick temper and advises him not to lie to him and threatens to hand him over to the police if he tells lies. Xi scolds his son for being rude. Wensheng tells Qingshan that he does not lie and that he can wait and see whether he can establish a greenhouse for his family and grow crops in the greenhouse. Xi reassures Wensheng that he believes what he has said.
		DEF	Chouwa, as the potential helper/opposer, In the meantime, Liuzi's mother is ill and Chouwa is helping his grandmother to take medicine for her illness.
		B	After taking the medicine, Liuzi's mother tells Chouwa that she may not recover from her illness and asks him to tell Xi to call his father back from the city.
		(↓)	Xi, Qingshan and Wensheng's implicit movement back to Xi's house
		DEF	Wensheng, as the potential helper/opposer. Xiulan asks Qingshan to carry water but Qingshan tells her that he is too tired. Qingshan suggests that his father go and get the water. Xiulan is angry at her son and insists that

			<p>DEF Qingshan carry water. When Qingshan does not go, Xi takes the bucket to get water. Wensheng hurries over to Xi, takes the buckets from his hand, and get the water for the family.</p> <p>DEF Xi, Xiulan, and Qingshan, as the potential helpers/opposers. Xi has good impression of Wensheng. Qingshan tells his parents that they should make good use of him for his stay in their family. Xiulan suggests that Wensheng eat with them at the same table later. Qingshan is jealous of his parents' attitude toward Wensheng and accuses them of being friendlier to Wensheng than to him. Qingshan says that Wensheng has stolen a donkey after all. Xiulan says that she has learned from his father that Wensheng was forced to steal the donkey. Xi compliments his wife for what she just said and for being on the same side with him on Wensheng. Qingshan jokes about his parents' temporary agreement, saying that they will soon argue with each other on other things. While Qingshan distrusts Wensheng, Xi and Xiulan are friendly to Wensheng.</p> <p>DEF Chouwa, as the potential helper/opposer. Chouwa takes care of Liuzi's mother.</p> <p>(T) Chouwa's taking care of his grandmother shows his transformation.</p> <p>↑ Xi's movement to Liuzi's mother's house</p> <p>DEF Xi, as the potential helper/opposer. Xi goes to see Liuzi's mother and asks her whether she feels better. She tells him that she has a headache and feels dizzy. Everything is turning round and round. Chouwa tells Xi he has cooked food for his grandmother. Xi tells Liuzi's mother not to worry. Xi tells her that Liuzi is coming home that day. She tells Xi that she does not worry about herself but Chouwa. She is worried that her illness will keep Chouwa from going to school.</p> <p>DEF Chouwa, as the potential helper/opposer. Chouwa tells his grandmother that his schooling will not be affected if she recovers soon.</p> <p>Q That Xi feels happy about Chouwa's progress shows Xi's tacit recognition of Chouwa.</p>
12	seg 1		<p>↓ Liuzi's movement back to the Xijia village.</p> <p>B Liuzi's mother cries when she sees her son comes back. Liuzi tells his mother that he decides to stay at home and will not leave her again. He tells her that she is right in telling him that there is no better place than home.</p> <p>↓ Qingmei's return home</p> <p>B She tells Wensheng that she has learned from her father that he has learned the skills of establishing solar greenhouse for growing crops indoors and asks him whether that is true. Wensheng gives her an affirmative reply. Qingmei asks him whether he has learned some other skills. Wensheng says no.</p> <p>DEF Wensheng, as the potential helper/opposer.. When Qingmei asks him about the income out of the greenhouse crops, Wensheng tells her that the income from greenhouse crops are several times more than that from the ordinary crops. She asks him to establish a greenhouse for her family.</p>

				Wensheng tells her that her father has already told him to do so. Qingmei asks him whether it is feasible for the whole village to practice greenhouse crops. Wensheng gives her a positive reply but tells her about her father's plan to experiment with the greenhouse crops. If the plan is successful, her father will encourage other villagers in the village to do similar practice. Wensheng gives the information Qingmei needs with regard to the growth of plants in the greenhouse.
			DEF	Qingmei, as the potential helper/opposer. Qingshan comes over to ask his sister to stop interrupting Wensheng so that he can go and carry water. Taking the buckets from Wensheng and give them to Qingshan, Qingmei asks her brother to carry water despite Qingshan's protest.
			B	Qingmei then asks Wensheng to follow her since she has something to discuss with him.
			C	Wensheng's consent to Qingmei's request
			↑	Xi, Qingshan, Wensheng and other villager's implicit movement to Xi's field
			DEF	Wensheng, as the potential helper/opposer. Wensheng is building a greenhouse in the field for Xi to grow crops.
			DEF	Xi, as the potential helper/opposer. The practice of growing crops in a greenhouse is not novel. Some villagers in Xijia village have practiced it before but without good result. Xi has full trust in Wensheng since has learned the skills in growing crops in a greenhouse.
			B	Qingshan tells Xi that his sister will come to help him soon and that he wants to leave the field early and go to the city with Erhuo to find out whether there is an opportunity to earn money there.
			C-	Xi does not think highly of Erhuo ever since the boat-towing incident and tells Qingshan not to mingle with Erhu in the future. Qingshan disagrees with his father, saying that mingling with Xi he has to work on the field all day.
			DEF	Xi, as the potential helper/opposer. Xi replies to Qingshan, saying that Wensheng is educated and knows how to establish a greenhouse for the growth of crops. Xi says that Wensheng is a promising young man. Qingshan jokingly criticizes himself as silly as a donkey. The word 'donkey' makes Wensheng comfortable since it reminds him of his unpleasant experience of having ever stolen a donkey. Sensing Wensheng's sensitivity to the word, Xi asks Qingshan not to mention 'donkey' in the future but he himself scolds Qingshan for being as silly as a donkey and this makes Qingshan laugh.
			↑	Qingshan's departure for the city
			↓	Qingmei's arrival at the field
			B	Qingmei tells her father that she has something to tell him. She tells Xi that Mr. Li, the town head has talked with her and asked her to help Xi to establish an economic cooperative in the village.
			DEF-	Xi, as the potential helper/opposer. Xi doubts whether Qingmei can help him. Qingmei, as the potential helper/opposer. When Qingmei tells her father that she can offer any help he needs, Xi says that she is bragging.
			DEF	Qingmei, as the potential helper/opposer. Xi tells her that several villagers want to establish an economic cooperative with him to earn more money

				<p>but they fear the likely loss and risk that may be caused by the cooperative. Qingmei asks her father who the villagers are and Xi tells her they are the villagers whose fields are adjacent to theirs. Qingmei tells her father that his failure to establish a cooperative results from his lack of impatient persuasion and his assumption of an air of superiority despite his readiness to help others. Qingmei helps her father analyze his failure to establish a cooperative in the village.</p>
			B	Xi challenges his daughter to persuade the villagers.
			C	Qingmei readily accepts the challenge.
			↑	Qingmei's departure from the field
			(↓)	Xi, Qingshan, Qingmei and Wensheng's implicit movement home.
			B	When Xi, Xiulan, Qingshan, Qingmei and Wensheng are having their dinner that night, they hear Erhu calling through the villager speaker asking Liushi yi, Li Shuancai, Cui Guangwen and Zhao Fugui to go to the village committee for a discussion on matters of importance after supper. Xi asks Qingmei whether she has asked Erhu to call the villagers to the village committee. Qingmei gives a positive reply and asks Wensheng to go with her. When Xiulan asks her daughter why she asks Wensheng to go with her, Qingmei explains to her mother that Wensheng can help her to explain how the growth of crops in a greenhouse works to the villagers.
			↑	Wensheng and Qingmei's movement to the Xijia village committee
			DEF	Xi and Xiulan, as the potential helper/opposer with regard to the Qingmei's possible relationship with Wensheng. After Wensheng and Qingmei leave, Qingshan tells his parents that Wensheng and Qingmei are fond of each other. Xiulan is angry at what Qingshan has said about Wensheng and Qingmei. Xiulan tells his son that what he has suggested is to disparage Qingmei. Xi disagrees with her. Xiulan says that Wensheng is a good young man but she thinks it impossible for Wensheng and Qingmei to be together. Xi tells her that it all depends on how Wensheng and Qingmei feel about each other. Xiulan doubts Xi's feeling theory. She tells him what he has felt about Qingmei and technician Xiaoliu has turned out to wrong. She asks him not to foster any 'feeling' about Qingmei and Wensheng. Xi tells her that having a feeling it is not a bad thing but following that feeling is. Qingshan laughs at what his father has said about feeling. Xiulan scolds Qingshan for his laughing and asks him to help clear the table. Xi murmurs to himself the popular song Follow One's Feeling and this annoys his wife who is clearing the table. Xiulan strongly disapproves of Qingmei's possible relationship with Wensheng while Xi approves of the relationship.
			↑	Liushi yi's movement to the village committee
			DEF-	Qingmei, as the potential helper/opposer with regard to Xi's establishment of a cooperative project in the village. Qingmei and Wensheng are waiting for the villagers at the village committee. When Liushi yi comes, Erhu tells him that Qingmei and Wensheng have something to discuss with him. Liushi yi asks Qingmei for her father, she tells him that she comes to discuss on behalf of her father. Liushi yi refuses to talk with her without Xi's presence and leaves. Qingmei feels disappointed. Erhu feels embarrassed

		↓ DEF±	<p>and apologizes to her for Liushi's rudeness. The others villagers meet Liushi in front of the village committee. They ask Liushi what the meeting is for. Liushi tells them that Qingmei and Wensheng want to discuss something with them without Xi's presence. He thinks that a discussion without Xi will come out nothing and asks the villagers not to attend the meeting. Erhu, Qingmei and Wensheng have been waiting for the villagers for a long time but no one comes. Erhu then uses the village speaker to call them again. Still no one comes. Result: Qingmei fails to help Xi with the establishment of a cooperative in the village.</p> <p>Qingmei and Wensheng movement back to Xi's house</p> <p>Xiulan, as the potential helper/opposer with regard to Qingmei's possible relationship with Wensheng. Xiulan feels that Qingmei and Wensheng are fond of each other. She does not approve of their relationship. She suggests to Xi that Wensheng leave their home the following day. Xi tells her that Wensheng is educated and knows how to grow crops in a greenhouse and that he needs Wensheng to help him. Xiulan tells Xi her disapproval of Qingmei and Wensheng being together because Wensheng once stole a donkey and he is a countryman. Xi disagrees with her, saying that she herself is a farmer. Xiulan insists that Wensheng leave the next day. She asks Xi to tell Wensheng to leave next day and will do so herself if Xi does not. She tells Xi to find another person to help him to grow crops in a greenhouse. Xiulan's intention to let Wensheng leave next day is met with Xi's opposition.</p>
	seg 2	DEF-	<p>Xiulan, as the potential helper/opposer with regard to Qingmei's possible relationship with Wensheng. When they are having breakfast the next morning, Xiulan reminds Xi to tell Wensheng to leave by stepping heavily on his foot. Qingmei notices her mother's strange behaviour and asks her mother why. Xiulan tries to cover up her embarrassment, saying that she is all right. Qingmei asks Wensheng to have more food and rice. Qingshan asks Wensheng whether his sister is nice to him. Wensheng replies that everyone in the family is nice to him. Xiulan tells Wensheng that he has already helped them for fourteen days and that he had helped them a lot and that he can leave after breakfast. Wensheng tells her that he will keep his promise of working 15 days for them and he will work for them for two extra days because the whole family has been nice to her ever since his coming to their home. Xiulan insists that Wensheng leave after breakfast because what he has been working is worth far more than 300 yuan. Wensheng insists that he work for two more days for them while Xiulan insists that Wensheng leave because what he has done is enough. Qingshan tells her mother to accept Wensheng's offer if he is willing to do so. Qingmei suggests that Wensheng's work for the family be over after that day and that her family pay him for his work after that day if he is willing to stay. Qingmei suggests that her family pay him 25 yuan a day. Wensheng tells her that he will not stay to work for them because the payment is too high. Xiulan is glad to hear Wensheng's refusal to stay and work for the family. Qingmei and Xi are surprised at Wensheng's refusal to stay and work for the family because of high payment. Wensheng explains</p>

			<p>to the family that he feels grateful to them for helping and protecting him and that he does not want to work for them for money. Glad about what Wensheng has said, Xi asks Wensheng to stay at the family and work for them and that he knows how much to pay for him. Xiulan insists that Wensheng leave since he may miss home. Sensing that Xiulan dislikes him, Wensheng stands up and says that he will leave if she does not want him to stay. Qingmei tells Wensheng not to be angry because her mother does not mean that. Qingshan also asks Wensheng to stay. Wensheng goes to the field to work immediately after his breakfast. Xiulan expresses her anger by putting her bowl heavily on the table. Qingmei asks her mother whether she does not want Wensheng to stay, Xiulan admits. Qingmei tells her mother that she thinks highly of Wensheng and that she may want Wensheng to be her boyfriend as well. Xi sneezes when hearing what Qingmei said. Xiulan is annoyed by her husband's sneeze and scolds him for shocking her. Xi tells that he is shocked and moved by what Qingmei has said. Result: Xiulan fails to get Wensheng leave Xi's family.</p>
seg 3	(↑) B	<p>Liuzi's implicit movement to the village committee</p> <p>Liuzi goes to see Erhu at the village committee. Erhu asks Liuzi whether he has broken up with the Sichuan girl he last brought home. Liuzi tells Erhu that his relationship with the girl is ambiguous. The girl once asked Liuzi to give her money. When Liuzi did not, she hired 3 people to beat him and he stayed in hospital because of that. She came to the hospital to see him but has never asked him for money ever since. She insists that she is pregnant with his child. Liuzi tells Erhu that he cannot understand her insistence. After some pause, Liuzi adds that he will feel guilty if the child is really his. Erhu asks Liu not to think about the thing anymore now that he has come back to the village.</p>	
	DEF-	<p>Liuzi's involvement with Erhu as the potential helper/opposer. He asks Liuzi about his plan in the future. Liuzi tells Erhu that he cannot grow crops as Xi does. He wants to do some small business. He wants to sell lamb in the winter. Erhu asks him how he is going to sell lamb. He explains to Erhu that he will get lamb from Xijia village and neighbouring villages and then sell them to the city restaurants which need lamb for their hotpot dish. Liuzi tells Erhu that he can earn at least 30 to 40 yuan with one lamb and that he plans to sell 10 lambs for a time and thus can earn 300 to 400 yuan. Erhu thinks the plan feasible. Liu wants to borrow some money from the village committee because he does not have money to start his business. Erhu tells Liuzi that the committee is too poor to lend him money and that he himself cannot help him either. Liuzi assures Erhu that he will think out some other way. Result: Liuzi fails to borrow money from Erhu although Erhu approves of his lamb business.</p>	
	↑ DEF	<p>Liuzi's departure from the village committee</p> <p>Liuzi's involvement with Xi as the potential helper/opposer. That night Liuzi invites Xi to supper at his home and wants to borrow money from him to start his lamb business. Xi tells Liuzi that he has just contracted the fish pond, bought a tractor and is building a greenhouse to grow crops in the field and that these have cost him a lot of money and that he himself has</p>	

			<p>borrowed money. Liuzi says that Xi is better than him and he asks Xi to help him. Xi promises to help him. Result: Liuzi gets Xi's promise to help him.</p> <p>(↓) DEF Xi's implicit movement back home Xi, as the potential helper/opposer with regard to Liuzi's lamb business. When Xi arrives home that night, he helps his wife to make up her bed, prepare and take away the foot-cleaning water for her. Xiulan is surprised at his help. Xi tells her about Liuzi's plan to sell lamb and that they can have lamb this winter because of Liuzi's lamb business. Xi asks Xiulan whether they can help Liuzi with his lamb business. Xiulan asks how they can help Liuzi. Xi asks Xiulan whether she can lend Liuzi some money but his wife refuses. Xi tells his wife that he has promised to lend Liuzi money and that he will lose face if he breaks his promise. Xiulan tells him that his face is not worth any money. Xi tries to persuade his wife to lend him money but Xiulan does not listen to him. Xi then exposes himself to freezing wintry weather by having as little clothes as possible. Xiulan tries to escape her husband's tricky behavior by going into Qingmei's room. Xi follows Xiulan into Qingmei's room. When Qingmei knows Xi needs some money to help Liuzi, she offers to give her father some money. Xi insists on getting money from his wife. Xiulan has to give her husband money for fear that he really gets a cold because of his stubborn behavior. Result: Xi succeeds in getting money from Xiulan to help Liuzi start his lamb business.</p>
	seg 4	<p>B DEF (↓) DEF ↑ DEF-</p>	<p>(Xi's voiceover) Wensheng stays and helps to build the greenhouse in the field Xi needs to grow his crops. Qingmei does not want Wensheng to leave when the greenhouse is almost completed. Wensheng tells her that he can stay provided that no one in the family mentions the word—donkey. Qingshan, as a potential helper/opposer. Qingmei and Wensheng become fond of each other. Witnessing the relationship developed between his sister and Wensheng, Qingshan tells Xi that he wants to steal a donkey too because Wensheng has stolen his sister's affection because of his stealing of a donkey.</p> <p>Xi, Qingmei, Wensheng and Qingshan's implicit return to Xi's house Qingshan's involvement with Xi as the potential helper/opposer. While Xi is watching TV at night, Qingshan tells his father that he is going to the city the next day to find a project to earn money. When Xi doubts his son's ability to get a money-earning project, Qingshan protests to his father. Xi warns his son against doing anything illegal. When Qingshan gives Xi his promise of finding a project in a legal way, Xi gives his permission to Qingshan's project-finding city adventure, but he asks Qingshan to take back some natural manure from the city with his tractor in spite of Qingshan's reluctance.</p> <p>Qingshan's movement to check the tractor Xiulan, as the potential helper/opposer with regard to Qingmei's relationship with Wensheng. While Qingmei and Wensheng are talking to each other, Xiulan gets her daughter out and asks her not to be too intimate with Wensheng and she will not give her consent to her</p>

				<p>relationship with Wensheng. Xiulan tells her daughter that Wensheng is not as educated as technician Liu, is a farmer and has once stolen a donkey. Annoyed at what her mother has said to her, Qingmei tells her that she wants to be Wensheng's girlfriend. Xiulan sighs but has no way to persuade her daughter.</p>
			DEF	<p>Xi, as the potential helper/opposer. Qingshan leaves for the city early next morning without having breakfast although Xi asks his son to have breakfast before his leave. Qingshan tells his father that it does not matter since he does not go to work in the field. Xi cares for his son.</p>
			↑	<p>Qingshan's departure to the city</p>
			DEF-	<p>Xiulan, as the potential helper/opposer with regard to Qingmei's relationship with Wensheng. Xi asks his wife to make breakfast but she refuses to do so because she is still angry with what Qingmei said to her yesterday. Xi asks his wife not to take Qingmei's words too seriously, but his wife is still worried. Xiulan tells Xi to be on her side and asks Xi to tell Wensheng that the police man has come to investigate his stealing of the donkey. Xi refuses his wife's request, telling her that he cannot tell lies. Result: Xi refuses Xiulan's request of him to get Wensheng leave the family.</p>
			DEF-	<p>Xiulan, as the potential /opposer with regard to Qingmei's relationship with Wensheng. Xiulan wants to do so herself but when she goes to Wensheng's room she cannot find him. She finds it strange and asks Xi. Xi and Xiulan go to Qingmei's room and Qingmei is not in her room either. Xiulan is worried that Qingmei and Wensheng may have run away together, but Xi does not believe his daughter will do so. He guesses that they may go and work in the field. Xiulan asks Xi to climb to the top of the house to check whether they are in the field. At first Xi could see no one in the field, but later he sees Qingmei and Wensheng walking to the field. When Xiulan does not believe Xi, he asks his wife to come to the top of the house to see for herself. When Xiulan sees for herself that Qingmei and Wensheng are indeed working in the field together, she sighs and has to accept her daughter's relationship with Wensheng though she disapproves of it. Result: Xiulan fails in her attempt to stop Qingmei's relationship with Wensheng and has to accept the relationship. Xiulan's acceptance of the relationship shows her tacit recognition of Wensheng.</p>
			↑	<p>Xi's movement to the field</p>
			DEF (Q)	<p>Xi, as the potential helper/opposer with regard to Qingmei's relationship with Wensheng. Xi brings the breakfast to the field for Qingmei and Wensheng. Qingmei asks Xi whether her mother has cooked the breakfast. Xi tells her that her mother is too angry with her to cook and have the breakfast. Qingmei asks her father to go home to comfort her mother and Wensheng apologizes to Xi for the trouble he has brought to the family. Xi assures Wensheng and asks him to take the family as his family from then on. Result: Xi gives his support to Qingmei's relationship with Wensheng. Xi's tacit approval of Qingmei's relationship with Wensheng is Wensheng's recognition by Xi.</p>

				methane project.
			↑	Xi's movement to the town
			DEF-	Xi, as the potential helper/opposer. Xi goes to the Judicial Department in the town and asks the head of the department whether Qingshan has come to sue Erhu or not but he could not get any information.
			↑	He then goes to other places for Qingshan.
			B	He happens to meet Qingshan who has just got out of a shop. When Xi asks Qingshan what he has come to the town for, his son tells him that he has come to buy some gifts for Erhu. Xi tells his son that Erhu has told him about his plan to sue Erhu. Qingshan says that he only wanted to scare Erhu by saying that.
			C	Xi tells Qingshan that Erhu is not a man who will accept gifts and asks his son to return the gifts to the shop. Qingshan has to do what his father has told him to despite of his reluctance to do so.
			DEF-	Xi and Qingshan's involvement with the shop assistant as the potential helper/opposer. The shop assistant refuses to refund Qingshan money but allows him to exchange other goods in the shop for the same value.
			DEF	Xi, as the potential helper/opposer. Qingshan gets a set of forgery wedding rings and bracelets and wants to send them to Ma Cuilian as betrothal gifts. Xi gives his consent to Qingshan's choice.
			↓	Sangui's return to the village with his car
			B	While Xi goes to the town for Qingshan, Sangui returns to the village with his car. Erhu is surprised at his return and asks him why he has returned. Erhu tells Erhu that he has come back to help the village this time.
			↑	Sangui and Erhu's movement to the village committee.
			DEF	Sangui's involvement Erhu with each other as the potential helpers/opposers. Sangui tells Erhu that he has a grass-growth project. It is a cooperative project between him and a businessman in Guangdong province. It involves growing lavender seeds. Sangui tells Erhu that he is very confident that lavender can make great profit and he suggests that the plant be grown right away. Erhu tells Sangui that winter is not the right season for the growth of lavender and that he has to wait for next year for the growth. Sangui tells Erhu that lavender can be grown in a greenhouse. Xi asks Sangui to wait for Xi and discuss with him about the lavender project. Sangui agrees. Sangui's lavender project is an act of support for Erhu's work as the village head while Erhu helps Sangui to get Xi to carry out his lavender project.
			↓	Qingshan and Xi's return to the village
			B	When Qingshan and Xi arrive back at the village, they meet Gaihua who is on her way home. Qingshan asks his father to go home first. Xi consents to Qingshan's request.
			DEF	Qingshan's involvement with Gaihua as the potential helper/opposer. Qingshan then stops and talks to Gaihua. He tells Gaihua that he has just been to the town and that has got the betrothal gifts her mother requests. Gaihua does not believe that Qingshan can afford to buy the gifts which her mother demands. When Qingshan shows her the forgery rings and bracelets, Gaihua says that it costs too much to buy them. When she

			<p>learns from Qingshan that they are not real ones, she thinks they may as well serve the purpose of satisfying her mother's request for the time being and thus get her formal consent to their relationship. Result: Qingshan gets Gaihua's consent to give the forgery rings and bracelets to Ma as the betrothal gifts.</p> <p>↑ Qingshan then takes the crops for Gaihua and accompanies her home.</p>
seg 6		(↑) DEF	<p>Xi's implicit movement to the village committee Sangui, Erhu and Xi with each other as the potential helpers/opposers. That night, Xi goes to the village committee. Sangui tells him about the project of growing lavender and assures him that it is profitable. Xi finds the project interesting but is worried about the selling of the lavender seeds. Erhu tells Xi that Sangui will be responsible for the sale of the seeds and Sangui confirms what Erhu has said. Erhu thinks the plan feasible and suggests that they can take this opportunity to establish an economic cooperative. The villagers have hesitated to form and join the cooperative because they worry about the selling of the products produced. Now that Sangui is responsible for the selling of the projects, all the villagers are willing to join the cooperative. Sangui, however, disagrees with Erhu's suggestion that the whole village grow the lavender for its seeds. He explains to Erhu that too many people growing lavender may cause the supply to be greater than demand and that will prevent the project from being profitable. Sangui suggests that Xi's 30 mu of land is enough to grow the lavender for its seeds. If they form an economic cooperative, they need to do market investigation to decide what unique crops to grow. Erhu thinks Sangui's suggestion practical. If their lavender project turns out to be successful and thus works out a feasible way for an economic development, Erhu suggests that Sangui come back to the village and form an economic cooperative with Xi. They can then set an example for the whole village and thus lead the whole village to develop the village economy. Xi agrees. Sangui learns from Xi about the completion of his greenhouse and gladly tells the latter that they can start the project right away with the completed greenhouse. Result: Xi's agreement to grow the lavender helps Sangui, the potential success of the lavender project can help Xi with the establishment of a cooperative in the village, and the establishment of the cooperative helps Erhu's work.</p> <p>B Xi tells Sangui to take Qingshan to the city to get the lavender seeds and sign the lavender contract.</p> <p>C Sangui's consent to Xi's request.</p> <p>↑ Sangui's movement to the city the following day, taking Qingshan and Gaihua with him</p> <p>↑ Ma's movement to Xi's house</p> <p>B Immediately after Qingshan and Gaihua leave with Sangui for the city, Ma Cuilian comes to tell Xiulan and Xi that Qingshan has taken Gaihua to the city.</p> <p>DEF Ma's involvement with Xi and Xiulan as the potential helpers/opposers with regard to Qingshan's relationships. Qingmei tells Ma that it may be good for Gaihua and can help her to open her eyes for she has never been to</p>

				<p>the city before. Ma agrees with Qingmei to some degree but she is worried that Qingshan and Gaihua are not yet married and that it is not proper for her and Qingshan to go together to the city before their marriage. Ma asks Xiulan and Xi to start preparation for the marriage of Qingshan and Xi before their return. She tells Xi and Xiulan about her plan for the preparation and this annoys Xi. Ma tells him all she is doing is for the good of the two young people. She worries about Qingshan and Gaihua's living together and having children before their marriage.</p>
13	seg 1		<p>DEF-</p> <p>K- ↑ B</p> <p>C</p> <p>DEF</p> <p>↑ B DEF</p>	<p>Ma's involvement with Xi and Xiulan with each other as the potential helpers/opposers with regard to Qingshan's relationship. Ma asks Xi why he is angry every times she talks to him. She tells him that she is simply doing something for the two young people in case they live together before marriage and have children before marriage. She suggests that Gaihua and Qingshan get married as soon as possible. Xiulan is surprised at Ma's suggestion and tells her that the relationship between the two young people has not been finalized yet. Xi tells her that he had disapproved of the relationship from the very beginning. He has changed his mind and has not stopped Qingshan from seeing Gaihua because Gaihua has recently helped to cure Xiulan's leg. He had wanted to give and has given Ma a chance to change her annoying habit of meddling in the relationship. Xi tells Ma that she has not changed for the better but for the worse. Xi angrily tells Ma that he will not give his consent to the relationship. Ma tells Xi that she has expected that Xi will change his mind and that she will not return the betrothal gifts to him. Xi denies sending her any betrothal gifts and asks her to ask Gaihua for the gifts. Ma feels puzzled by what Xi has just said and asks Xiulan whether the gold ring and silver bracelet sent to her are the forgery ones. Xiulan tells Ma she knows nothing about the betrothal gifts. Ma goes home angrily. Result: Ma's request of Xi and Xiulan to prepare for the marriage of Qingshan and Gaihua annoys Xi and Xi withdraws his consent to the relationships between Qingshan and Gaihua.</p> <p>Once again, the relationship between Qingshan and Gaihua is likely to fail.</p> <p>Ma's departure from Xi's house</p> <p>Xi tells his wife the truth of the betrothal gifts and asks Qingmei not to meddle in the relationship between Qingshan and Gaihua anymore. Xi cannot put up with Ma and does not want to invite any further trouble from Ma.</p> <p>Qingmei's tacit consent to Xi's request</p> <p>Qingmei, as the potential helper/opposer. While they are still talking, there starts a strong wind. Xi is worried about the newly established greenhouse but Qingmei tells her father that the greenhouse will be all right since Wensheng has told her so.</p> <p>Xi, Qingmei and Wensheng's movement to the field</p> <p>Xi, Qingmei and Wensheng find the greenhouse has collapsed.</p> <p>Wensheng, as the potential helper/opposer. Wensheng checked the collapsed pieces and tells Xi that the collapse results from poor quality of the main framework.</p>

		<p>↑ DEF</p> <p>↑ DEF-</p> <p>↓ B</p> <p>↑ DEF</p> <p>K</p> <p>DEF-</p> <p>(↑) DEF-</p> <p>DEF</p> <p>(↑) DEF</p> <p>↓</p>	<p>Xi's movement to the village committee that night</p> <p>Xi's involvement with Baoqing as the potential helper/opposer. Xi talks to Baoqing about the collapse of his greenhouse because Xi has bought the framework from Baoqing's friend. Baoqing calls his friend, Jianping, about the collapse of the framework. Jianping asks him to tell Xi to go to the factory to get refund or get a new framework if the collapse is confirmed to be caused by the poor quality of the framework.</p> <p>Xi's movement to the factory the following day.</p> <p>One of the staff and the head of factory as the potential helpers/opposers. Xi shows part of the collapsed framework to the factory staff that is in charge of the quality. The staff admits that there is a problem with the framework. Xi asks for a compensation of all the cost caused by the poor quality of the framework but the staff tells Xi that he can only get partial compensation. Xi argues with the staff about full compensation but the staff refuses.</p> <p>the arrival of the head of the factory</p> <p>Xi's brief complaint to the head about the poor quality of the framework and the head's invitation of Xi to his office to discuss the compensation</p> <p>the head of the factory and Xi go to the head's office</p> <p>(Xi's voiceover) Xi's involvement with the head of the factory as the potential helper/opposer. The head scolds the quality staff for his attitude towards Xi, sends factory workers to transport a new framework to Xijia village and to rebuild a new greenhouse for Xi.</p> <p>The liquidation of the problem caused by the poor quality of the framework</p> <p>Sangui, as the potential helper/opposer with regard to the relationship between Qingshan and Gaihua. Sangui is showing Gaihua and Qingshan around the city. Sangui is fond of Gaihua and tries to be close to her but Gaihua sticks to Qingshan closely.</p> <p>Sangui, Qingshan and Gaihua's implicit movement to Sangui's office</p> <p>Sangui, as the potential helper/opposer with regard to the relationship between Qingshan and Gaihua. In order to be Gaihua along, Sangui sends Qingshan to buy food despite Qingshan's reluctance. Sangui asks Gaihua to stay at the city and work as his sectary but she refuses his offer.</p> <p>Gaihua's involvement with Sangui as the potential helper/opposer. Gaihua tells Sangui that she wants to stay at the city and asks him to help her find some other job. Sangui promises to find her a job.</p> <p>Qingshan and Gaihua's implicit departure from Sangui's office</p> <p>Gaihua's involvement with Qingshan as the potential helper/opposer. When Gaihua's involvement with Qingshan as the potential helper/opposer. Gaihua later tells Qingshan about her plan to work at the city, Qingshan wants her to go back to the village with him. Gaihua manages to persuade Qingshan to let her stay and work at the city with her explanation that she wants to avoid her annoying mother.</p> <p>Qingshan's train journey back to the village</p>
	seg2	<p>↓ B</p>	<p>Qingshan's return to the village two days later</p> <p>Ma is waiting for him at the village locust tree. Qingshan tells her that</p>

			<p>DEF- Gaihua stays and works at the city.</p> <p>Ma, as the potential helper/opposer with regard to the relationship between Qingshan and Gaihua.</p> <p>Ma scolds Qingshan for giving her the forgery betrothal gifts. Qingshan tells her that he was forced to do so, but he promises to give her the real ones in the future. Ma tells Qingshan that she does not believe him or his father and that her daughter Gaihua will have no more relationship with him from then on. She tells him that she will go to the police to charge him with sexual harassment if he tries to seduce her daughter again. Ma intends to stop Qingshan from seeing Gaihua in the future by first scolding Qingshan for giving her forgery betrothal gifts and later threatening Qingshan with sexual harassment.</p> <p>LEx Qingshan is angry at Ma's rude and false accusation that he seduces Gaihua to the city and argues with her. Ma insists that Qingshan has seduces her daughter to the city. Qingshan denies her charge and tells her that Gaihua herself wants to go to the city. She wants to stay at the city to avoid her silliness.</p> <p>DEF Xi, as the potential helper/opposer. Xi has been hiding behind the locus tree, watching what has happened between Ma and Qingshan. He signals to his son, asking him to leave, but he is found out by Ma who angrily challenges him to get out to face her. Qingshan runs away home while his father runs to the field.</p>
	seg3		<p>(↑) Xi, Qingmei, Qingshan and Wensheng's implicit movement to the field</p> <p>DEF Qingmei, Qingshan and Wensheng, as the potential helpers/opposers with regard to Xi's growth of lavender. Qingmei, Qingshan and Wensheng are helping Xi with the growth of lavender in the field.</p> <p>↑ Xiulan's movement to the village committee at the request of Erhu</p> <p>DEF- Ma's involvement with Erhu, as the potential helper/opposer. Ma goes to the village committee to complain to Erhu about Qingshan's taking Gaihua to the city and requests Erhu to get X's family to get Gaihua back to the village. Erhu asks Xiulan to come over to the village committee about the matter. Xiulan comes over to ask her not to worry about Gaihua since her daughter is a grown-up. Xiulan tells Ma that Gaihua's going to the city is not Qingshan's fault. Ma insists that Qingshan seduces her daughter to the city and that her daughter will not know where to take the bus to the city without Qingshan's seduction. Since Ma insists on getting Gaihua back to the village, Erhu suggests that Ma go to the city herself and that Xi's family pay Ma the transportation fee. Xiulan agrees with Erhu's suggestion. Ma insists that Xi's family go and get Gaihua back to the village and threaten to stay at Xi's house if Xi's family refuse to do so. Xiulan handles Ma's threat in a friendly way, telling Ma that it is ok if Ma wants to come and stay with her family. Xiulan tells Ma that they can do the washing and other housework together. Ma is angry with Xiulan's suggestion and says something humiliating to Xiulan. When Ma goes too far, Erhu stops her. Xiulan cannot stand Ma's rudeness anymore and leaves the committee angrily. Erhu tells Ma angrily that she herself will have to go to the city and get Gaihua back to the village. Result: Ma fails to get support</p>

			<p>from Erhu for her request of Xi's family to get Gaihua back to the village.</p> <p>DEF Qingshan, as the potential helper/opposer. While Xiulan is at the village committee, Xi and others are still busy growing lavender seeds in the field. Xi asks Qingshan to go to the city the following day to get a tractorful of organic human manure for their lavender. Qingshan suggests that they could use chemical fertilizer for the lavender. Xi tells his son that chemical fertilizer costs a lot of money. Qingshan agrees to go to the city to get human manure to lower the cost of growing lavender.</p> <p>(↑) Ling'ai's implicit movement to Xi's field.</p> <p>DEF± Xi, as the potential helper/opposer with regard to Ling'ai's of Xi to get Wensheng to help her build a greenhouse.</p> <p>Ling'ai comes over to Xi's field . Ling'ai asks Xi whether Xi can get Wensheng to help her to build a greenhouse for her. Xi tells her that he needs to discuss with Xiulan since she is an important part of the family and has a final say with regard to family matters. Ling'ai jokingly tells Xi that anyone who marries him will surely enjoy a happy life like Xiulan has. Xi returns her joke, saying that Xiulan does not since she almost gets lame and that Xiulan needs to enjoy her life now in case she has arm broken one day. Ling'ai scolds Xi for talking non-sense. Result: Xi's ambiguous with Ling'ai's request of him to get Wensheng to help her build a greenhouse.</p> <p>↑ Ling'ai's leaving Xi's field</p> <p>B Qingmei feels puzzled when her father tells Ling'ai that he needs to discuss with Xiulan when Ling'ai wants Wensheng to help her build a greenhouse. After Ling'ai leaves the field, Qingmei asks her father why. Xi tells her that her mother has got the money the family needs from Ling'ai and has returned the money to Ling'ai and that what he has just done is to make Ling'ai know the importance of her mother in their family and thus make her mother feel honored. Hearing her father's words, Qingmei teases her father for being naughty.</p>
	seg4		<p>↓ Pingchuan's return to the village</p> <p>B Pingchuan hurries home from the city when he learns that his wife Ling'ai has broken her arm. When he arrives home, he finds Ling'ai intact. Feeling strange Ling'ai has lied to him, he asks Ling'ai why she has got him back. Ling'ai tells him about Xi's recent establishment of a greenhouse to grow crops. She wants to build a similar greenhouse and wants her husband to come back to help her with the building of the greenhouse.</p> <p>DEF- Pingchuan, as the potential helper/opposer. Pingchuan is a bit annoyed about his wife's getting him back for the greenhouse.</p> <p>(↓) Qingmei, Qingshan, Wensheng and Xi's implicit movement back home</p> <p>B At night Xiulan tells Xi that Ma has been to the village committee during the day and that the committee has asked her to the committee. When Xi asks his wife what Ma has wanted from her, his wife tells him that Ma wants her to get Gaihua back to the village. Xi tells his wife to pay no attention to Ma, saying that Ma has to go to the city to find Gaihua herself.</p>

		DEF	Xi, as the potential helper/opposer. Xi tells Xiulan that Ling'ai has come to the field and talked to him during the day. Ling'ai is interested in building a greenhouse and wants Wensheng to help her with the greenhouse. Xiulan tells Xi that Wensheng can go and help her. Xi tells his wife that he has not given her a reply right away and that it is up to her to decide whether Wensheng should go and help Ling'ai with the greenhouse. Xiulan is glad about Xi's respect for her with regard to Ling'ai request.
		DEF	Pingchuan, as the potential helper/opposer. The following morning Pingchuan tells Ling'ai that they have built a greenhouse before but with failure. Ling'ai tells her husband that the failure was due to lack of the skills needed to build and use the greenhouse. She wants her husband to come back to the village and they together can build a greenhouse with the help of Wensheng. Pingchuan is not very interested in her plan. He shows his doubt about Wensheng's skills. Ling'ai tells Pingchuan her conviction for what Xi has been doing. She says that they should follow Xi's suit. Pingchuan wants to go back to the city to work, but he gives in to his wife's aggressive persuasion despite his reluctance to stay at the village. Result: Ling'ai manages to get Pingchuan's support for her intention to practice the growth of crops in a greenhouse.
		B	Pingchuan asks Ling'ai to talk to Xiulan about Wensheng's helping them.
		↑	Ling'ai's movement to Xi's house
		DEF	Ling'ai's involvement with Xiulan as the potential helper/opposer. Ling'ai comes to see Xiulan with a bar of cigarette for Xi. Xiulan tells Xi about Ling'ai's coming but Xi pretends to go to the toilet. Xiulan asks Ling'ai about Pingchuan. Ling'ai tells Xiulan that she has got Pingchuan back to the village and that she wants to build a greenhouse and grow crops in it. She wonders whether Xiulan can tell her son-in-law Wensheng to help them with the greenhouse. She apologizes to Xiulan for her rude remarks with regard to Qingshan's tractor. Xiulan says she has already forgotten the unpleasant happening and asks Ling'ai to forget it too. Xiulan thanks Ling'ai for lending her family the money needed to buy the tractor and she gladly promises Ling'ai that Wensheng will go to help her to build a greenhouse. Result: Ling'ai gets Xiulan's promise to get Wensheng to help her build a greenhouse.
		↓	Ling'ai's movement back to her home
	seg5	↑	Qingshan's journey to the city
		DEF-	Qingshan's involvement with the traffic police as the potential helper/opposer. When Qingshan is on his way to the city to collect human manure with his tractor, he is stopped by a traffic policeman and his tractor is detained because it has affected the city image.
		(↑)	Wensheng's implicit movement to Ling'ai's field
		DEF	Wensheng, as the potential helper/opposer. Meanwhile Wensheng is helping Ling'ai to measure the land for the establishment of the greenhouse.
		DEF-	Pingchuan, as the potential helper/opposer with regard to Ling'ai's intention to practice greenhouse growth. Pingchuan is smoking nearby and is

				<p>obviously not interested in the greenhouse. He has no confidence in the greenhouse since he has failed once. Wensheng tells Pingchuan that he can help him with the knowledge and skill but still not draw Pingchuan's interest in the greenhouse. Ling'ai is angry with her husband's rudeness and tells him off. Pingchuan tells her that he is not interested in the greenhouse and does not want to come back to the village. Ling'ai doubts her husband has an affair in the city and argues with him and they fight with each other in the field. Result: Pingchuan does not support Ling'ai's intention to practice greenhouse growth.</p>
			DEF	<p>Wensheng, as the potential helper/opposer. Wensheng manages to separate them and stop them fighting against each other. Ling'ai scolds her husband for doing nothing when coming back. Pingchuan leaves the field.</p>
			DEF-	<p>Qingshan's involvement with the traffic policeman as the potential helper /opposer. In the city, Qingshan rushes to a shop to buy some cigarette to send them to the traffic policeman and asks him to let him go, but the traffic policeman refuses his gifts and asks him to drive his tractor to the side of the road.</p>
			B	<p>In the field, Ling'ai apologizes to Wensheng for what has happened, asks him to go home first and says that she will come to thank him later for his work. Wensheng asks Ling'ai to talk over the building of greenhouse with Pingchuan.</p>
			C	<p>Wensheng goes home at Ling'ai's request</p>
			↓	<p>Wensheng returns to Xi's house</p>
			DEF	<p>Erhu, as the potential helper/opposer. Qingshan calls Erhu, asking him to tell his father to come to the city as soon as possible because his tractor has been detained by the traffic police.</p>
			↑	<p>Erhu's movement to find Xi</p>
			DEF	<p>Erhu, as the potential helper/opposer. Erhu runs to find Xi and meets Xi on his way to the field. Erhu tells Xi about the detention of Qingshan's tractor by a traffic police and has called to ask him to get to the city as soon as possible. Erhu has given Xi an introductory letter in case he needs it.</p>
			↑	<p>Xi's journey to the traffic police station</p>
			B	<p>Xi rides a bike to the traffic police station. When Xi arrives, Qingshan has been waiting for him for quite a while. Xi asks Qingshan why the tractor has been detained. Qingshan tells him that the city is improving the city image these days. The traffic police tells him that signs have been put up showing the tractor is not allowed to enter the city. Qingshan has missed the sign and thus gets his tractor detained. Xi tells his son that they will have to do what the traffic police tell them to do since they have violated the traffic regulations. Xi is shocked when Qingshan tells him that they need to pay a fine of 200 yuan. Qingshan tells him that 200 yuan is not big and that he has been asked to write a self-criticism, promising not to violate the same rule again.</p>
			C	<p>Xi goes to talk to the head of the traffic police about the detention of the</p>

				tractor.
		(↑) DEF-		<p>Qingmei and Xiulan's implicit movement to the fishing pond</p> <p>Qingmei, as the potential helper/opposer with regard to her relationships with Wensheng. In the meantime, Qingmei and Xiulan are feeding the fish in the fish pond. Qingmei talks to her mother about Wensheng. Qingmei says that Wensheng has never talked about his home. She has told him several times that she wants to go to his home but he always find some excuses to refuse her request. Qingmei thinks there must be some problem with Wensheng's refusal. She is afraid that Wensheng has a wife at his home and does not want her to find that out. Xiulan says that her daughter is talking non-sense and that Wensheng is not a person she thinks. Xiulan tells her daughter what she has learned from Wensheng about his family. Wensheng's mother is dead and his father has disappeared. Xiulan thinks it is understandable that Wensheng does not want to go home. Qingmei insists that Wensheng should have the desire to go home since that is still his home despite the fact her mother has just mentioned. Qingmei thinks that Wensheng may have some brother or sister besides his parents. She thinks that Wensheng must have something that she does not know. Result: Qingmei is suspicious of Wensheng despite Xiulan's reassurance that Wensheng is a good man.</p>
		DEF		<p>Xi's involvement with the head of the traffic police as the potential helper/opposer. Xi is talking to the head of the traffic police. He explains patiently to the head about his mobile tractor-toilet which is used to collect human manure in the city. His mobile toilet has been reported by TV stations. Qingshan has ridden this tractor-toilet to the city to collect human manure. The head tells Xi that his son has violated the traffic regulation that forbids the tractor to enter the city because of the city image project and insists that Xi pay a fine of 200 yuan for the violation. Xi tells the head that a farmer has great difficulty earning money and that 200 yuan is a huge sum for a farmer like him. On Xi's explanation, the head tells Xi that he will go and check his tractor-toilet and then decide that whether he pays the fine or not. If it is a toilet, the head will let Xi off and if not, Xi pays the 200-yuan fine. Xi agrees. The head takes a look at the tractor-toilet and tells Xi that it is a tractor while Xi insists it is a toilet by showing him the toilet attached to the tractor. It is the first time that the head has seen such a combination of a tractor and a toilet. The head tells Xi that it is indeed a good practice for farmers to go and collect human manure from the city. He decides to let Qingshan off but he requests them not to ride the tractor-toilet into the city again. Qingshan and Xi are glad of the fine exemption and readily accept the head's request. Xi and Qingshan ride the tractor immediately out of the traffic police station. Result: Xi succeeds in getting the tractor back from the traffic police without paying any fine.</p>
		↓ B		<p>Xi and Qingshan's movement back to the village</p> <p>(Xi's voiceover) On their way back to the village, Xi keeps thinking about the city image project and his manure-collection in the city. It is all right to</p>

			<p>have the city image improved but it is not wrong for him to go and collect human manure in the city. He thinks it is feasible for him to use a tractor to do the manure-collection work. He cannot think of using others better means to do the job. He cannot use a car to do the job.</p> <p>↓ B Xi and Qingshan's arrival home When Xi and Qingshan come back home, Xiulan tells Xi that Qingmei has some doubts about Wensheng. Xi reassures Xiulan that Wensheng is good and there is nothing wrong with him. Xi, however, tells Xiulan that he is a bit worried about Qingshan. He explains to his wife that Qingshan is always fond of Gaihua and Gaihua is fond of him too. He is worried that Gaihua may change her mind during her stay in the city. Sangui is fond of Gaihua too and has helped to find a job for Gaihua. It is easy for Sangui to see Gaihua while she is in the city. It is very likely that Gaihua may become of fond of Sangui. When that happens, Qingshan will have no more relation with Gaihua.</p> <p>DEF Xiulan, as the potential helper/opposer with regard to Qingshan's relationship with Gaihua. Hearing Xi's explanation, Xiulan feels sorry for her son.</p> <p>DEF- Xi, as the potential helper/opposer with regard to Qingshan's relationship with Gaihua. Xi does not feel sorry for Qingshan. Xi does not want his son to become the son-in-law of Ma Cuilian.</p> <p>B DEF Ma's intention to go to the city to look for Gaihua Gaiping as the potential helper/opposer. Ma asks Gaiping for Sangui's telephone number. Gaiping tells her that she has written it on her arm.</p> <p>DEF- Ma herself as the potential helper/opposer. Ma looks at her own arm for Sangui's number but it has already been washed away by soap. Ma complains to herself about the soap, saying that the soap is effective in washing away what should be remained and is not effective in washing away what should be cleaned.</p> <p>DEF Pingchuan, as the potential helper/opposer with regard to Ling'ai's intention to practice greenhouse growth. Pingchuan reconciles with his wife Ling'ai and gives his support to Ling'ai with regard to her plan to practice greenhouse growth.</p>
	seg6		<p>↑ ↑ B DEF ↑ Sangui's movement to the railway station to pick up Ma Cuilian Sangui and Ma's movement to his office. Sangui is excited and surprised when Ma tells him that she wants to marry Gaihua to him. Ma tells him about Qingshan's giving her the forgery rings and bracelets as betrothal gifts. Ma's involvement with Sangui as the potential helper/opposer. Ma asks Sangui about Gaihua and he calls Gaihua about her mother's coming and Ma speaks to her daughter over the phone. Sangui helps Ma to find Gaihua. Liuzi's movement to Xi's house.</p>

			<p>Q In the meanwhile, Liuzi sends some lamb meat to Xi and Xiulan to thank them for lending him money to start his lamb business. When Liuzi returns 1000 yuan to Xi, Xi gives the money to Xiulan who feels happy.</p> <p>↓ Liuzi's movement back to his home</p> <p>↑ Gaihua's movement to Sangui's office to meet her mother</p> <p>↑ Sangui's departure from his office</p> <p>DEF Ma, as the potential helper/opposer with regard to Sangui's relationship with Gaihua. Ma tells Gaihua that she and Qingshan are over and asks Gaihua to forget Qingshan. When Gaihua tells Ma that she will go home, Ma tells her that there is no rush for her to go back the village. Ma tells Gaihua that she has found a new boyfriend for her. Gaihua is angry with Ma and asks her not to intervene in her marriage. Gaihua wants to have the freedom to choose her boyfriend. Ma asks Gaihua to be Sangui's girlfriend. Gaihua refuses right away but has to give in to her mother who plays on familial love and who threatens to kill herself if Gaihua does not take her advice. Result: Ma manages to get Gaihua's consent to her relationship with Sangui.</p> <p>K- Ma's success in forcing Gaihua to be Sangui's girlfriend endangers Gaihua's relationship with Qingshan.</p> <p>(↑) Sangui and Ma's implicit movement to a restaurant</p> <p>DEF Ma's involvement with Sangui. Ma is very impressed by the dinner Sangui has invited her to. She compliments Sangui on his generosity and requests betrothal gifts from him.</p>
14	seg 1		<p>DEF Sangui happily consents to Ma's request.</p> <p>K- Ma's success in getting betrothal gifts from Sangui to formalize Gaihua's relationship with Sangui endangers Gaihua's relationship with Qingshan.</p> <p>DEF Qingshan as the potential helper/opposer. Qingshan tells his father that they will need to spend a lot of money buying chemical fertilizers without using the tractor to collect human manure in the city. He asks his father to talk to Mr. Li, head of town to get them a permit for their tractor-toilet to go to the city for manure-collection. Xi doubts whether Li is in charge of the traffic police. Qingshan then suggests that Xi turn to Mr. Niu, head of country for help. Xi takes his son's suggestion.</p> <p>(↑) Xi's implicit movement to Xi's home</p> <p>↓ Niu's arrival home</p> <p>DEF Xi's involvement with Niu as the potential helper/opposer. Niu is surprised to find Xi waiting for him outside his house. Xi tells him that he cannot find him at this office and thus waits for him there. Niu invites Xi to his house, introduces Xi to his wife and tells her to invite him to the house if Xi comes for him again in the future.</p> <p>DEF Xi's involvement with Niu as the potential helper/opposer. Niu says that he does not want other people think that he looks like an officer. Xi tells Niu that he is in fact an officer. Niu tells Xi that an officer has a good job if people feel that the officer does not look like an officer. Niu says that he wants to be a good officer. Xi tells Niu that he is indeed a good officer. If he</p>

			DEF	is not, a farmer like him will not dare come to visit him. Niu asks his wife to prepare meals for him and Xi. Xi's involvement with Niu as the potential helper/opposer. Niu asks Xi what he has come to visit him for. Xi tells Niu about his tractor-toilet. He has been using it to collect human manure in the city. It has brought convenience to city people, and at the same time has provided him with the organic human manure needed for the growth of crops. The manure collected is much better the chemical fertilizer and has helped to grow green crops for him. He has been praised for his novel practice and has been reported by TV stations. Niu tells Xi that he has heard about this and has talked about it in an agricultural meeting. He did not know it was Xi that has come up with such a good idea and he compliments Xi on his innovation. Xi tells Niu that he cannot carry out his practice anymore because the traffic police division does not allow his tractor-toilet to enter the city for fear that it will affect the city image. He has contracted a lot of land and needs a lot of organic human manure. Xi wonders whether Niu can call the traffic police division to give him a special permit for his tractor-toilet so that he can still go and collect human manure in the city. He tells Niu that his tractor is not only a tractor but a toilet as well. Niu thinks for a while and promises to get Xi a special permit but he asks Xi to beautify the appearance of the toilet so that it will not affect the city image. Xi gladly accepts Niu's advice. Niu then gives a call to Director Li and asks Li to communicate to the traffic police division to give Xi a special permit for his tractor-toilet. Xi is overjoyed with what Niu has done for him.
			K	With the special permit, Xi's mobile tractor-toilet can go to the city again to collect human manure
			↓	Xi's movement back to the village
	seg2		↓	Ma's return to the village
			B	Ma Cuilian meets Ling'ai at the village locust tree. Ling'ai asks Ma whether she has found Gaihua and why Gaihua has not come back. Ma tells Ling'ai that Gaihua has found a boyfriend in the city and stays there.
			DEF	Qingshan's involvement with Ma as the potential helper/opposer with regard to his relationship with Gaihua. Knowing that Qingshan is walking nearby, Ma tells Ling'ai that her boyfriend is a company head. Hearing what Ma has said to Ling'ai, Qingshan stops and asks her not to talk non-sense in case other villagers laugh at her. Ma tells Qingshan that Gaihua's finding a boyfriend in the city has nothing to do with him. Qingshan tells Ma that he and Gaihua are still boyfriend and girlfriend. Ma retorts that Gaihua and he have no more relationship otherwise Gaihua will not have become Sangu's girlfriend. Qingshan is angry at what Ma has said and asks her to get Gaihua back to the village and he will ask Gaihua about their relationship. Ma refuses Qingshan's request. Qingshan rebukes Ma for being silly and for being only interested in money. Qingshan argues with Ma and Ling'ai tries to stop them from arguing. Result: Ma's deliberately letting Qingshan know about Gaihua's having a new boyfriend

		↓ DEF	<p>has jeopardized the relationships between Gaihua and Qingshan.</p> <p>Qingshan's return home</p> <p>Xiulan and Xi, as the potential helpers/opposers with regard to Qingshan's knowledge of Gaihua's relationship with Sangui. Qingshan arrives home, angrily throwing the water bucket onto the ground. Xiulan comes over and asks him whether he has any hatred toward the buckets. He tells his mother that he has hatred toward people and that he wants to kill people. He tells his mother that Sangui has seduced Gaihua and that he will not let him off. Xi, who has just come back from his visit from Niu, tells Qingshan that he could do nothing to Sangui since he is in the city. Qingshan threatens to uproot the lavender in the field. Xiulan reminds her son that the lavender is not Sangui's but theirs. Qingshan threatens to kill Sangui when he returns to the village. Xi ironically suggests to his son that he should crash Sangui with a plane. Xiulan asks her husband to stop inflaming Qingshan's anger. Qingshan blames his father for what has happened to him today. Xi tells his son that it is not a bad thing for him and asks him not to worry. Qingshan tells Xi that it is the best thing for Xi but the worst thing for himself. Xi scolds Qingshan for being good-for-nothing. Qingshan retorts to his father and spits on to his father, saying that he is good-for-nothing and that he is not Xi's son. Xi laughs at Qingshan's behaviour while Xiulan feels worried. Result: Xiulan is sympathetic with Qingshan while Xi feels happy about Qingshan's likely failure in his relationship with Gaihua.</p>
		DEF	<p>Erhu and Dongping as the potential helpers/opposers with regard to Sangui's relationship with Gaihua. Dongping thinks that Sangui is a trouble-maker. Whenever Sangui comes back, something unpleasant will surely happen. Erhu tells his wife that Sangui has helped his brother Xi with regard to his relationship to Gaihua. Otherwise Xi will have great trouble. Dongping disapproves of Sangui's relationship with Gaihua while Erhu approves of Sangui's relationship with Gaihua.</p>
		DEF	<p>Dongping as the potential helper/opposer with regard to the truth of Sangui's relationship with Gaihua. When Erhu tells Dongping that he has learned of the relationship between Gaihua and Sangui from Ma not from Gaihua, Dongping tells Erhu that it is really difficult to tell what things may be like because Ma's words cannot be trusted.</p>
		DEF	<p>Dongping, as the potential helper/opposer. Erhu feels a burst of stomach ache again. Dongping gives Erhu some medicine for stomach ache and asks him to go to the county hospital tomorrow instead of working.</p>
	seg 3	↑ DEF	<p>Dongping and Erhu movement to the county hospital the next day</p> <p>Qingshan, as the potential helper/opposer. Qingshan sends Erhu and Dongping to the county hospital with his tractor.</p>
		↑ DEF	<p>Xiulan and Xi's implicit movement to the lavender field.</p> <p>Xiulan, as the potential helper/opposer. Xiulan is helping Xi to weed the lavender field. She asks Xi when the lavender will bear seeds. Xi tells her that the lavender will bear seeds at the end of the year. Xiulan tells Xi that</p>

			<p>they need to keep an eye on the lavender during the seeding period in case someone comes to steal the seeds out of jealousy. Xi does not think that any one will steal the seeds since the seeds are not edible and that the seeds can only be sold to businessmen who are interested in purchasing them. In spite of Xi's explanation, Xiulan still insists that they keep an eye on the lavender in case someone destroys the seeds in purpose. Xi does not think that anyone will come and destroy the seeds since they have not offended anyone. Xiulan reminds Xi that he has offended Ma Cuilian but he does not think Ma is cruel because Ma is from the same village. Xiulan tells her husband that she does not know Ma as well as he does.</p> <p>DEF Erhu's involvement with the doctor. The doctor tells Erhu that his stomach ache is very serious and advises him to have meals regularly. The doctor also tells Erhu to stop drinking wine in the future otherwise his life will be in great danger. Erhu tells the doctor that he is head of a village and that he cannot solve a lot of problems without drinking wine. The doctor tells Erhu that work is important but it is not worthwhile if the work endangers his life. The doctor prescribes some traditional Chinese medicine for Erhu and asks Erhu to get and take the medicine accordingly.</p> <p>↑ DEF Qingmei's movement to the field. Qingmei, as the potential helper/opposer. Qingmei goes to the field to help her parents.</p> <p>B Xiulan asks her about Wensheng and Qingmei tells her mother that he has gone to help Ling'ai with their greenhouse.</p> <p>(↑) B Dongping and Erhu's implicit movement to a noodle restaurant. After leaving the hospital, Dongping and Erhu have some noodles in a noodle restaurant. While having their noodles, Erhu and Dongping recognize the trademark on a fodder bag as the paper cut pattern by Shuanzi's mother.</p>
	seg 4		<p>↑ B Erhu's movement to Shuanzi's mother's home Upon his return to the village, Erhu visits Shuanzi's mother at night. He shows her the rice bag with the same trademark he has seen in the city and asks her whether she can recognize the pattern. Shuanzi's mother tells her Erhu that it is the pattern she has cut but does not know why the pattern has been there. When Erhu learns from her that she has only given her paper patterns to the son of the former head of the Cultural Bureau of the county, he realizes that Shuanzi's mother's paper cut pattern has by a fodder company as the trademark without her permission.</p> <p>DEF Shuanzi's mother as the potential helper/opposer. Shuanzi's mother asks Erhu whether there is something wrong with her paper pattern on the bag, he explains to her that the fodder company has no right to use but has used her paper pattern as their trademark and that the company has infringed on her intellectual property right for doing so and that she can sue the company for their doing so and ask the company to pay money to her</p>

			<p>for their usage of her pattern. Erhu asks her whether it is ok for the village committee to sue the company on behalf of her. Shuanzi's mother tells Erhu that she has total trust in Erhu and that Erhu can do what he thinks it is right for her. She adds that she will give all the money to the village committee if she can get money from the company. Erhu says that the village committee will not take the money since it is related to her. He suggests to her that they get the money from the company first and then she decides how to use the money. She agrees with Erhu. Result: Erhu gets Shuanzi's mother's permission to sue the fodder company on her behalf for its illegal use of her paper-cut pattern and her offer of the likely compensation to the village committee upon the success in getting money from the money.</p> <p>↓ Erhu's return</p> <p>B The following morning Erhu uses the village speaker to call Xi to go to the village committee.</p> <p>↑ Xi's movement to the village committee</p> <p>B When Xi arrives, Erhu tells Xi that a fodder company has used the paper pattern cut by Shuanzi's mother as the company's trademark without her permission and that Shuanzi's mother can sue the company for their illegal use of her pattern and she can get compensation money from the company. She has given him Erhu the right to sue the company on her behalf and that she has offered to contribute all the prospective money to the village committee. Erhu tells Xi that the compensation money can amount to a big sum of as much as one million at most and hundreds of thousands at least.</p> <p>DEF (M) Erhu's involvement with Xi as the potential helper/opposer. Erhu tells Xi that Shuanzi's mother considers him as her family and that he wants Xi to do the suing job for Shuanzi's mother since he is intelligent, has been to work in the city and knows how to handle different situations. Erhu wants to Xi to go to talk to the fodder company first and find out how much compensation the company is willing to pay for the use of Shuanzi's mother's paper pattern. When Xi declines, Erhu tells him that he can allocate a portion of the compensation as a special fund to start his economic cooperative if they get the compensation from the company. Xi is highly motivated by Erhu's offer and readily accepts the task to sue the fodder company for Shuanzi's mother. Result: Erhu succeeds in persuading Xi to sue the fodder company on Shuanzi's mother's behalf for its illegal use of Shuanzi's mother's paper cut pattern. Erhu's request is also a task for Xi (M).</p>
	seg 5		<p>↑ Xi's train journey to the city</p> <p>B (Xi's voiceover) Xi does not fear arguing or fighting with others, but he has never had the experience of bringing other to court.</p> <p>↑ Xi's movement to the fodder company</p> <p>DEF Xi, as the potential helper/opposer. Xi goes to the fodder company right away. Xi talks to the head of the company about his company's illegal use of the paper pattern by Xijia village.</p>

			<p>↑ DEF-</p> <p>Gaihua's movement to Sangui's office</p> <p>Gaihua's involvement with Sangui as the potential helper/opposer with regard to her relationship with Qingshan. In the meantime, Gaihua goes to see Sangui. She tells Sangui that she has not promised him anything and asks him why he has given betrothal money to her mother. Sangui tells her that her mother has asked him for the betrothal money. Gaihua tells him that the betrothal money are not real betrothal gifts but be considered as money he has lent to her mother. Sangui is a bit angry asks Gaihua why he should lend money to her mother. Gaihua tells him that she is grateful for his kindness to her, but she only likes Qingshan. She asks him not to put her in a difficult situation. Sangui tells her that he only like her. Gaihua requests him not to think it that way. Sangui asks her in which way he is not as good as Qingshan. Gaihua tells him that people are not things and thus cannot be compared. Sangui asks her in what way Qingshan is good. Gaihua says that she likes Qingshan whatever he is, for better and for worse. Sangui is frustrated by what Gaihua has said. Result: Sangui's doesn't consent to Gaihua's request of him to be out of Ma-arranged relationship between him and Gaihua.</p> <p>K-</p> <p>The relationship between Gaihua and Qingshan is at the risk of failure.</p> <p>DEF</p> <p>Xi and the head of the company are still talking. The company head tells Xi that the paper pattern his company has used as the trademark is part of the folk paper cut art and that it is difficult to tell who has cut the paper pattern. The head tells Xi that he did not know where the paper pattern came from. Xi tells the head that he should have known the source of paper pattern since he is the company head and that he should be responsible for the pattern now that the pattern has become the trademark of his company. The head asks whether the pattern has been cut by Xi. Xi tells him that the pattern has been cut by an old woman in Xijia village and that she has given him her permission to ask the company to pay compensation for the company's illegal use of her pattern. Xi tells the head that Xijia village, part of Qi county has the folk tradition of cutting paper patterns and that the paper pattern the company has used as the trademark is cut by Wang Daniang(Aunt Wang). Xi tells him that someone from the provincial city came to collect paper patterns from her that summer. Xi guesses that the company may have come to know the pattern from him. The head thinks Xi's guess may be right. He asks Xi to wait for him while he goes to the company office to check the source of pattern.</p> <p>↑</p> <p>The head's movement to the company office</p> <p>↓</p> <p>The head's return</p> <p>DEF</p> <p>Xi's involvement with the head.The head comes back later to tell Xi that the trademark of his company has been designed by a cultural company and that Xi should go to talk to the cultural company for compensation.</p> <p>↑</p> <p>Xi's departure from the fodder company to Sangui's company</p>
	seg 6		<p>DEF</p> <p>Xi, as the potential helper/opposer After Xi leaves the fodder company, he goes to Sangui's company. When Xi arrives, he hears from outside that</p>

			<p>↑ DEF DEF B</p>	<p>Gaihua is trying to get away from Sangui. Xi enters and asks whether Sangui has done anything to Gaihua. Gaihua's departure from Sangui's office Xi, as the potential helper/opposer. Xi asks Sangui not to take advantage of Gaihua. Sangui denies taking advantage of Gaihua. Xi, as the potential helper/opposer with regard to Sangui's relationship with Gaihua. Xi asks him whether his relationship with Gaihua is finalized. Sangui tells him that Gaihua's mother has finalized their relationship but Gaihua has not given her consent yet. Xi is annoyed at what Sangui has told him. Sangui explains that Gaihua's mother has taken betrothal gifts from him but Gaihua does not even allow him to touch her hand because she is still fond of Qingshan. Xi asks Sangui to be patient and to take his time with regard to his relationship with Gaihua just as the city people do. Sangui disagrees with Xi's suggestion, reminding him of the fact that Gaihua and Qingshan has been with each other for a whole year and that Xi still has not given his consent to their relationship. Xi changes their talk and tells Sangui that he has come to see him for something important.</p>
	seg 7		<p>↑ DEF DEF</p>	<p>Xi and Sangui's movement to find Bai Tianliang Sangui, as the potential helper/opposer. Xi tells Sangui why he has come to the city for. Sangui goes with Xi to the Cultural Company. On their way to the cultural way, Sangui tells Xi that it is a bit difficult to sue the fodder company for infringement upon property right and that he has watched similar cases on TV stations. The design company and the company using the trademark by the design company usually push the responsibilities of infringement upon intellectual property to each other. Xi agrees with Sangui. Xi suggests that they first go and talk to the person who has come to collect the paper patterns by Shuanzi's mother and asks him how the paper pig pattern has passed from him to the fodder company. Xi tells Sangui that it will be difficult to sue the fodder company if the person has given the fodder company the permission to use the pattern or the fodder company has paid the person for the use of the pattern because Shuanzi's mother has received money from the person. Sangui agrees with Xi. Sangui and Bai Tianliang as the potential helpers/opposers. Sangui accompanies Xi go to the Folk Art Gallery to find, Bai Tianliang, the person who has collected Shuanzi's mother's paper cut patterns. Bai gladly receives them. When Xi tells Bai what he has come to the city for, Bai tells him that he has never taken part in any commercial activity. Bai tells them that he has never given Wang's paper pattern to anyone. He has selected several of Wang's paper patterns and put them in a book of folk paper cut patterns which he later shows them. Xi and Sangui look through the book and recognize the pig pattern collected in the book. Bai adds that he has paid Aunt Wang some money for her paper patterns before the publication of the books and that he himself has given her some money given her difficult situation. Xi thinks that the fodder company must have got the pattern from the book. Bai thinks it very likely because the book is</p>

			published and available in the market. Sangui tells Bai that he and Xi wants to sue the fodder company for its illegal use of Aunt Wang's pig pattern and asks whether he is willing to help them as a witness if necessary. Bai readily accepts their request. He thinks that the fodder company should be providing service for the farmers and should not infringe on the interests of the farmers. He, however, suggests that Xi and Sangui go and talk to the fodder company again for the compensation and sue the company if it refuses to compensate. Bai also give Sangui and Xi the book with Shuanzi's mother's paper cut pig pattern .
seg 8	(↑) DEF	Xi and Sangui's implicit movement to the fodder company. Sangui, as the potential helper/opposer. Sangui accompanies Xi to talk to the head of the fodder company ain about his company's illegal use of Wang's pig pattern, but the head denies having any responsibility and insists that they turn to the cultural company for compensation. Xi tells the head that his company has infringed on the copyright of Aunt Wang's paper pig pattern and his company should pay compensation to Aunt Wang. If the company refuses to pay compensation, Xi tells the head that he will sue the company for copyright infringement on behalf of Aunt Wang. The head tells Xi to go ahead with the sue.	
	DEF	Sangui, as the potential helper/opposer. When Xi and Sangui are leaving, the head calls them back to discuss the compensation. The head offers to compensate by giving them the fodder. Sangui tells the head that the village does not raise pig. The head suggests that they can sell the fodder to get money. Xi tells the head to pay compensation by cash. The head tells Xi that his company is in financial difficulty and that he can only pay compensation by fodder and asks Xi to show understanding. Xi tells the head that he should show his understanding to the farmers. Xi says that farmers have a lot of difficulty in farming and that country leaders have thus given a lot of preferential policy to the farmers. The farmers are called on to build a new socialist countryside. Xi urges the head to understand the difficulty of farmers and contribute to the building of the new countryside. The head compliments Xi on his eloquence. Sangui tells the head that Xi is a well-known farmer among the city and county leaders and that Director Wang of the Provincial Economic Committee is Xi's uncle-in-law. Sangui says that Xi is a person who likes to keep a low-profile. When the head asks Xi whether Director Wang is his uncle-in-law, Xi nods despite Sangui's lie. Xi tells the head that he and his uncle-in-law are different and that his uncle-in-law has nothing to do with the case.	
	DEF	Sangui, as the potential helper/opposer. The head invites Xi and Sangui to lunch and suggests that they go on their discussion during lunch. During lunch, Xi talks to the head about the compensation. The head asks Xi to suggest the amount of compensation and Xi suggests five hundred thousand yuan. The head requests Xi to introduce him to Director Wang and then give him the compensation. Sangui insists that the head pays the compensation before being introduced to Director Wang. The head worries that he cannot see Director Wang after paying the compensation and Sangui equally worries that the head does not pay the compensation after	

				<p>seeing Director Wang. Xi suggests a compromise. Xi suggests that the head sign a compensation contract with them and that they will then introduce him to Director Wang. The head agrees after some hesitation. He says that he will get the contract drafted and then sign the contract with Xi tomorrow.</p> <p>(↑) DEF Sangui and Xi's implicit departure from the company</p> <p>(Voiceover) That night, Xi does not sleep well. Xi complains to Sangui about his telling lies about Director Wang. Sangui tells Xi that it is not possible to have the compensation without the lie.</p> <p>↑ DEF Xi and Sangui's movement to the fodder company the following morning</p> <p>Sangui, as the potential helper/opposer. Xi and Sangui go to see the company head to sign the compensation contract with him. They are shocked when the head angrily demands them to stand up. The head tells them that they have almost fooled him. He tells them that he has worked as a policeman before and that he did not believe them. Xi apologizes to the head for lying to him but says that it is he who has forced them to do so. The head asks Xi for an explanation. Xi tells the head that he has infringed on the copyright of Aunt Wang but refused to pay compensation for the infringement. The head tells them that he has promised to give them the fodder. Sangui tells the head that they want money instead of the fodder. The head refuses to pay compensation in cash. Sangui tells the head that they will sue him for the infringement.</p> <p>K- Xi fails to get compensation from the fodder company for its illegal use of Shuanzi's mother's paper cut pattern.</p> <p>↑ Xi and Sangui's leaving the fodder company</p> <p>Q- Xi and Sangui blame each other for the failure to get compensation from the fodder company. Xi blames Sangui for his lie. Sangui tells Xi that they can only blame the head for his vigilance. Xi says that they have no other choice but to sue the company now. Sangui had thought that they should have brought the case to the court from the very beginning.</p> <p>DEF Sangui as the potential helper/opposer. Sangui suggests that they go to talk to a lawyer for an indictment first and then go to the court to file a lawsuit against the company. Xi takes Sangui's advice.</p> <p>↑ Sangui and Xi's movement to a law office</p> <p>DEF (Xi's voiceover) Sangui, as the potential helper/opposer with regard to Xi's attempt to get compensation for Shuanzi's mother. They go through a series of annoying court procedures like filing a complaint, paying money and the application of the case. Xi regrets having accepted the task of fighting the compensation for Shuanzi's mother from Erhu. Since he has accepted the tasks, Xi feels he needs to try his best to do the job well.</p> <p>↑ Sangui and Xi's departure from the law office</p>
	seg 9		(↑) DEF	<p>Sangui and Xi's implicit movement to a restaurant for a brief lunch</p> <p>Sangui, as the potential helper/opposer with regard to Xi's attempt to get compensation from the fodder company on Shuanzi's mother behalf. At lunch, Sangui tells Xi to return to the village and wait for further information about the lawsuit against the company. Sangui tells Xi that he is too busy</p>

		DEF	<p>with his company work at the city to go back to Xijia village.</p> <p>Sangui, as the potential helper/opposer with regard to Xi's establishment of the economic cooperative project in the village.</p> <p>Xi asks Sangui to find time to think about their economic cooperative project in the village. Sangui tells Xi that it is difficult to establish a cooperative in the village since it involves farmers in the village and he finds it troublesome to communicate with farmers. Realizing that he has offended Xi with what he has just said, Sangui says that Xi is an extraordinary farmer. Xi tells Sangui that he wants to establish a company because of this extraordinariness. Sangui promises Xi that he will return to the village for the establishment of the economic cooperative once he finishes the lavender project. Result: Xi gets Sangui's promise to return to the village for the establishment of the cooperative project.</p>
		DEF	<p>Xi, as the potential helper/opposer. Xi advised Sangui to stop going after Gaihua since she does not have any affection for him at all otherwise he may give people an impression of taking an advantage of her. Sangui reassures and promises Xi that he will not do anything that annoys Gaihua again in the future. Result: Xi helps Gaihua and to some extent Sangui to get out of the difficult situation caused by Ma.</p>
seg10		↓	Xi's train journey back to the village
		DEF	<p>Gaihua, as the potential helper/opposer. On the train, Xi meets Gaihua and Gaihua offers her seat to him.</p>
		DEF	<p>Xi, as the potential helper/opposer with regard to Gaihua's relationship with Qingshan. Xi asks Gaihua whether she hates him for not sending betrothal gifts to her mother. Gaihua tells him that she does not since it is not his fault. Gaihua apologizes to Xi for her mother's demand of betrothal gifts from her but she requests Xi to do her a favour by giving her mother the betrothal gifts. Gaihua promises to pay him back the betrothal money in the future. When Xi asks her whether she does not like Sangui at all, Gaihua tells him that she is not fond of anyone else except Qingshan. Gaihua adds that she has come to work in the city for the sake of Qingshan and help him earn the betrothal money he needs. Xi asks what she is going to do with the betrothal money Sangui has given to her mother. Gaihua tells him that she will get her mother to return it to Sangui. Gaihua is overjoyed and thanks Xi when Xi asks her to tell her mother that he will send the betrothal gifts to her in two days. Result: Xi accepts her request of him to give Ma betrothal gifts.</p>
seg11		(↓)	Xi's implicit arrival home
		DEF	<p>Xi, as the potential helper/opposer. On his arrival home, Xi tells Qingshan that he has decided to give his consent to his relationship with Gaihua. Qingshan is excited and asks Xi why he has suddenly changed his mind. Xiulan asks Qingshan not to ask his father for any explanation and asks him to go and see Gaihua. When he asks Xi where Gaihua is, Xi tells him that he and Gaihua have been on the same train back to the village.</p>
		DEF	<p>Qingshan, as the potential helper/opposer with regard to his relationship with Gaihua. Qingshan is about to see Gaihua when he stops and turns</p>

				<p>back. He thinks it unusual that Gaihua is still fond of him. He thinks Gaihua has been in the city for quite a long time and he is not sure whether Gaihua and Sangui has developed any affection for each other during Gaihua's stay in the city. Xi explains to Qingshan that Gaihua has been thinking about him all the time and he has decided to approve of their relationship because he is moved by her devotion to him. Xi asks his son not to have any doubt about Gaihua. Xi tells his son that Gaihua is not fond of Sangui. Despite Xi's explanation, Qingshan still think that something has happened between Gaihua and Sangui, saying that Gaihua is not fond of Sangui but Sangui is fond of her. Xiulan asks Qingshan to stop his doubt.</p>
			(↓) DEF	<p>Gaihua's implicit arrival at home</p> <p>Gaihua's involvement with Ma as the potential helper/opposer with regard to her relationship with Qingshan. Gaihua tells Ma that Xi has given consent to her relationship with Gaihua. Angry with Xi, Ma tells her daughter that she disapproves of her relationship with Qingshan. Gaihua angrily scolds her mother for being unreasonable and cries and threatens to kill herself if Ma doesn't give consent to her relationship with Qingshan. Seeing her daughter really upset, Ma tells Gaihua that she will approve of her relationship with Qingshan provided that Xi sends her the betrothal gifts equivalent to what Sangui has given her and that she will forget the unpleasant happenings between her family and Xi's. Result: Gaihua manages to get Ma's approval of her relationship with Qingshan</p>
15	seg 1		(↑) B Q LEx (↑) DEF-	<p>Xi's implicit movement to the village committee</p> <p>Xi tells Erhu about his visit to the fodder company at the city. Xi tells Erhu that they can do nothing but wait for the notice from the court.</p> <p>Erhu tells Xi that Sangui has given him a lot of support with regard to the case. Xi agrees with Erhu, telling him that Sangui has helped to find a lawyer, file the lawsuit against the fodder company etc.</p> <p>Erhu adds that Sangui has also helped Xi with regard to his relationship with Gaihua. Xi disagrees and tells Erhu that he has agreed to send betrothal gifts to Ma Cuilian and this surprised Erhu.</p> <p>Qingshan and Gaihua's implicit movement to the village locust tree.</p> <p>Qingshan, as the potential helper/opposer. Qingshan sees Gaihua at the village locust tree. Qingshan asks Gaihua about her relationship with Sangui. Gaihua tells him that she has been thinking about him all the time and she is fond of nobody but him. Qingshan asks Gaihua why her mother has accepted betrothal gifts from Sangui. Gaihua tells Qingshan that she did not know that she had accepted the betrothal gifts and that her mother has agreed to return the betrothal gifts to Sangui. Qingshan says that he does not believe that nothing has happened between Gaihua and Sangui since she has been in the city for a long time. Gaihua asks Qingshan to stop his nonsense and his unreasonable guess. She reassures him that she is not fond of Sangui. Qingshan says that Sangui is fond her and he does not believe that Sangui did not pursue her. Gaihua tells Qingshan that Sangui did pursue her but that she has not accepted his pursuit. Still</p>

		<p>↑ K- ↑</p>	<p>Qingshan does not believe Gaihua and Gaihua is angry with Qingshan's doubt about her. She tells Qingshan to ask his father if he does not believe her. Gaihua angrily asks Qingshan whether he still wants to maintain their relationship with each other. Qingshan tells her that he has no confidence in their relationship before finding out what has happened between her and Sangui. Gaihua angrily scolds Qingshan for his distrust in her. She tells Qingshan that she has seen through him with his suspicion of her. She thinks Qingshan is not a real man. He will still be suspicious of her even if she marries him. Angry, Gaihua leaves Qingshan.</p> <p>Qingshan and Gaihua's departure from the village locust tree</p> <p>Due to Qingshan's suspicion of Gaihua, his relationship with Gaihua fails.</p> <p>Gaihua's departure from the village</p>
seg 2		<p>↓ DEF-</p> <p>DEF</p>	<p>The representatives of the fodder company arrive at the village committee. Erhu and Xi's involvement with the representatives of the fodder company. Erhu and Xi are waiting for the representatives of the fodder company who will come and discuss with them the compensation with regard to the company's infringement of copyright of Shuanzi's mother's pig pattern. The company representative and its lawyer get down to business immediately after their arrival at the village. Both sides agree to solve the dispute in peaceful and friendly way rather than in hostile way. The lawyer suggests that the fodder company admitted to having used the village paper pattern mistakenly, thus resulting in the infringement of copyright right of the pattern, and that the fodder company agree to pay the village the compensation thus incurred. The lawyer suggests a payment of two hundred thousand compensation fees for the infringement. Xi and Erhu disagree on the suggested payment. Erhu tells the company representative and its lawyer that the village cannot accept the sudden fall of compensation to two hundred thousand from five hundred thousand and that the village can only accept a reduction of one hundred thousand yuan. The representative tells Xi and Erhu that their suggestion is not possible and that the head of the company has promised to pay twenty-five hundred thousand at most. Erhu tells them that the suggested compensation is too far from their expected compensation. Erhu says that they are the village's guests and suggests that they have lunch first and then go on with the discussion. The representative and the lawyer decline their invitation due to the unsuccessful settlement of the dispute. Xi tells them that the head had invited him to lunch when Xi visited the company last time and that the village should invite them to lunch in return. The representative and the lawyer decline again but Erhu and Xi insist that they stay for lunch. Erhu and Xi tell them that they should show them their gratitude and hospitality in spite of the failure in settling the infringement dispute. Result: The first round of negotiation fails due to the disagreement between both sides.</p> <p>Erhu and Xi's involvement with the representatives of the fodder company. Xi and Erhu entertain the representative and the lawyer with food and drink. Xi serves wine to the representative. The representative declines to have more wine after several cupfuls of wine for fear that the head will get</p>

			<p>him fired. Xi suggests that they just drink wine and put aside the discussion of the compensation. The representative suggests that if he drinks one cupful of wine Xi deduct twenty thousand yuan from two-hundred-and-fifty-thousand yuan compensation. Xi suggests that the representative add ten thousand yuan to the same compensation amount if Xi himself drinks one cupful of wine. The representative says that Xi has advantage over him with regard to wine drinking capacity. The representative suggests that Erhu rather than Xi drink wine and offers to add ten thousand yuan to two-hundred-and-fifty-thousand-yuan compensation. In order to get more compensation for the village, Erhu agrees to drink wine despite Xi's attempt to stop him from doing so. He prepares 10 cups and fills them all with wine and starts drinking them, but as the doctor has suggested, drinking wine is dangerous for his life and he falls into the ground. Erhu is sent to the hospital for his stomach starts bleeding because of his drinking too much wine. Result: With Erhu's drinking 10 cupfuls of wine, the Xijia village is supposed to get three hundred and fifty thousand yuan compensation from the fodder company.</p> <p>↑ Q- Erhu's is being sent to the hospital.</p> <p>DEF Dongping cries in the hospital. Xi apologizes to her for his failure to stop Erhu from drinking wine. Mr. Li, head of town comes over to the hospital. Xi tells Li that Erhu needs to have part of his stomach cut. Li asks Xi why this has happened. Xi tells him that Erhu wants to get more compensation for the village. Li scolds Xi for getting money at the expense of Erhu's life.</p> <p>↑ DEF Dongping as the potential helper/opposer. After the operation, Dongping asks Erhu whether he still feels pain in the cut of his stomach. When Erhu tells her that he does, Dongping scolds him gently for his having drunk wine again. Erhu asks Dongping to get him a cup of water.</p> <p>↑ DEF Xi's movement to see Erhu</p> <p>DEF Xi, as the potential helper/opposer. When Xi comes in to see Erhu, he struggles to get up from the bed. Erhu asks Xi whether he has signed the compensation contract with the fodder company. Xi scolds him for still thinking about the contract in the hospital. Xi tells him that he has not yet signed the contract and asks him to take care of himself first. Erhu asks Xi to sign the contract with the company as soon as possible in case there is a change. Xi tells him that Baoqing has been to the company and will be back that day. Erhu tells Xi that the cut he has suffered from is worthwhile so long as they can get the agreed compensation.</p> <p>↑ B Xi's movement to receive the call for Erhu</p> <p>C The nurse in the hospital comes to tell Erhu that he has a call. Baoqing tells Xi through the call that the company refuses to sign the compensation contract with him.</p> <p>C Xi tells Baoqing that he will go to the company right away.</p>
	seg3		<p>↑ DEF Xi's movement to the fodder company</p> <p>DEF Xi's involvement with the representative of the fodder company. When Xi arrives, the representative tells Xi that the head has agreed to pay compensation but not the agreed amount during the lunch. Baoqing reminds the representative of his promise during the lunch. The</p>

			<p>representative says that the promise offered while drinking should not be taken too seriously Baoqing says that the promise should be kept for Erhu has drunk wine for his offer at lunch. Baoqing blames him for getting Erhu into drinking wine and thus resulting in the cut of his stomach. The representative replies that Erhu has been having stomach trouble. Baoqing angrily asks the representative why he has challenged Erhu to drink wine despite their knowing his stomach trouble. Xi asks Baoqing to leave him and the representative alone for a while. After Baoqing leaves, Xi asks the representative to come near him. Xi explains to him that the compensation money is not from him but from the company. Xi asks him to help him with the compensation and then thrust a bracelet into his hands. The representative declines Xi's offer and tries to give the bracelet back to Xi. Xi refuses to take it back. Between the return-and-refuse-to-take-it-back attempts, the bracelet falls onto the ground, broken. Xi says that he has just lost another thirty thousand yuan with the fall of the bracelet. The representative is surprised and worried about the fall of the bracelet. Xi tells him about negative influence of the incident on him if the incident is known by other people. Xi tells the representative that he is not afraid of being charged with bribing him. What Xi has said makes the representative anxious and he asks Xi for suggestion. Xi, feeling lost, turn to him for suggestion. The representative asks Xi to wait for him while he himself goes to talk to the head of the company. Xi laughs to himself after the representative goes to talk to the head of the company. Baoqing notices and feels mysterious about Xi's laughing to himself. Xi assures Baoqing that the representative will help them to get the compensation he has promised at lunch. Baoqing has some doubt about Xi's assurance. Very soon, Xi and Baoqing sign the contract with the company and get the agreed compensation, as Xi has just assured Baoqing. Result: With a trick, Xi manages to get from the fodder company the compensation the representative promised at lunch.</p>
		K/N	Xi has successfully got the compensation from the fodder company on behalf of Shuanzi's mother. Xi's success is also the completion of the task assigned to him by Erhu (N).
		↓	Xi and Baoqing's train journey back to the village
		Q	On the train back to the village, Baoqing talks to Xi but finds him asleep. Xi has played a trick on the representative with a false bracelet. He says that Xi is a man of ability, sometimes kind and sometimes mischievous.
		(↑)	Xi and Baoqing's implicit movement to the hospital to see Erhu
		B	Erhu tells them that Shuanzi's mother has donated the money to the village and that they should start to build the Home for the Childless Aged People in the village.
		DEF	Erhu, as the potential helper/opposer with regard to Shuanzi's mother's caretaking problem. Erhu suggests that Shuanzi's mother will be the first candidate to live in the home once it has been completed.
		DEF	Dongping as the potential helper/opposer with regard to Erhu's health. Dongping threatens to send Erhu to the home if he ever drinks wine again.
		DEF	Baoqing, as the potential helper/opposer with regard to Erhu's work.

			Noticing the falling leaves outside the window, Erhu tells them that they should get the foundation of the home completed by the coming winter solstice. Baoqing gives Erhu his promise to finish the task by then.
	seg4	B	(Xi's voiceover) Erhu recovers and go out of the hospital very soon. When the village committee is about to start the project of the home for the Childless Aged People in the village, something happens with regard to the copyright of Shuanzi's mother paper pattern.
		↑	Erhu and Xi's implicit movement to the village committee
		B	While Erhu and Xi are talking at the village committee, Erhu receives a call which says that Jiuxian has sued him and Xi. Both Erhu and Xi are surprised.
		(↑)	Erhu and Xi's implicit movement to the town Judicial Department
		DEF	X's involvement with Jiuxian as the villain, the head of the Judicial Department as the mediator. At the Judicial Department, the head asks first Jiuxian and later Xi whether they accept conciliation. Jiuxian tells the head that she does not know about conciliation. It is ok with her so long as she can to invite her mother-in-law back to live with her family and get back her mother-in-law's copyright. Xi tells the head that he will accept conciliation as long as it is sensible and reasonable.
		LEx	Jiuxian says that she herself is reasonable that Xi has been well-known in the village for his mischievous tricks on her mother-in-law. Xi says that what she has said is all lies and that no one will believe her.
		L	The head asks Jiuxian to explain her reasons for charging Xi. She tells the head that she and her mother-in-law had been getting on well with each other. Although the do no live together, she and her husband come to look after her mother-in-law from time to time, especially when her mother-in-law is not comfortable. She and her husband later invite her mother-in-law to live with them. Her mother-in-law later lives alone because she feels it inconvenient to live with them, but they still support her mother-in-law. She charges Xi for damaging their good relationship with her mother-in-law because of Xi's interest in the copyright of her mother-in-law's paper cut pattern. Her mother-in-law thus breaks up relationship with her and her husband. Later, Xi tricks her mother-in-law into giving him the copyright of the pattern. With the copyright of the pattern, Xi went to the provincial city to sue the company and get the money for himself. Jiuxian says that the copyright is not Xi's but should belong to her and her husband. Jiuxian strongly request that she wants to get back the copyright from Xi and that she and her husband want her mother-in-law to live with them again.
		Ex	While Jiuxian is saying all these, her husband Shuanzi feels embarrassed, her mother-in-law is upset and Xi is furious. The head of the judicial department asks what he thinks of Jiuxian's statements. Xi stands up furiously and tells him that Jiuxian's statements are total non-sense and complete lies. Xi then tells the head what has happened. That spring, Jiuxian and her husband Shuanzi stopped taking care of Shuanzi's mother

				<p>and Shuanzi's mother had to work in the field on her own. Xi and Erhu, head of village had helped Shuanzi's mother with the field work. When Shuanzi's mother became ill later, Xi tried to persuade Jiuxian to invite Shuanzi's mother to live with them and to take good care of her. Jiuxian did not take his suggestion so he lied to her, telling her that Shuanzi's mother had a lot of property and that a Hong Kong business wanted to buy a lot of paper patterns cut by Shuanzi's mother. Jiuxian was interested in Shuanzi's mother's mother, believed his words, and took Shuanzi's mother to her home to live with them. Two months later, Jiuxian discovered that Shuanzi's mother had no property, that no businessman had come to buy the paper patterns, and that he has lied to her. She drove Shuanzi's mother out of their home. Until Now, Shuanzi's mother has lived on her own. Later, an artist from the provincial art gallery came to collect the paper patterns cut by Shuanzi's mother and paid her money for the patterns. The artist himself paid an extra two thousand yuan to Shuanzi's mother for her poor living condition. The recent copyright case has nothing to do with Xi himself. Erhu, head of the village has assigned him the task to get compensation for Shuanzi's mother. Xi asks the judicial head whether Erhu can say something about the copyright case. The head asks Erhu to give his evidence.</p>
			Ex	<p>Erhu tells the head that Shuanzi's mother Wang Kuihua has become one of the childless aged people in the village and has been supported and taken care of by the village ever since her son Wang Shuanzi and her daughter-in-law broke their relationship with her. Several days ago he happened to discover that a fodder company has used Wang's paper pattern as the trademark. If the same thing happened in the past, no one would mind its use, instead would feel happy about its use and would not even realize that the use is an infringement on the copyright. He himself has learned from some other people that Wang can ask the company to pay compensation for its use of the paper pattern. He later went and talked to Wang about the use of her paper pattern by the fodder company. Wang does not know the copyright infringement either. She has given her copyright to the village committee and the committee in turn has asked Xi to talk to the fodder company about the compensation. Erhu says that the copyright infringement case has nothing to do with Xi and that Erhu himself is responsible for the case. If Wang has now changed her mind and wants to give her copyright of the paper pattern to Jiuxian, he himself and the village committee have no objections.</p>
			Ex	<p>Shuanzi's mother says that she does not want to give her copyright to Jiuxian. The judicial asks her to express her opinions. Shuanzi's mother tells the head that what Erhu and Xi have said are right while Jiuxian is lying. Shuanzi is her nephew and has been adopted as her son. She has treated him as her son, but Shuanzi is hen-pecked. On his wife's suggestions, he stops respecting and taking care of her. She is now supported and taken care of by the village, by the collective and by the</p>

		Q	country. She should be grateful for what the village has done for her. She gives the village the right to handle the copyright infringement compensation. The village can use the money to introduce tap water to the village or to establish a home for the Childless Aged People in the village. They are good things for the village. She agrees on what Erhu has done with the compensation. All the villagers except Shuanzi and show support to Wang's decision.
		U	That Jiuxian feels embarrassed and leaves in dejection implies Jiuxian's being defeated and her punishment as the villain.
		↑	Jiuxian's departure from the Judicial Department with embarrassment and dejection
	seg5	↑	Qingshan and Xi's movement to the construction site
		DEF (Q)	(Xi's Voiceover) Erhu, as the potential helper/opposer. The village committee starts to build the foundation of the Home for the Childless Aged People in the village. Erhu assigns the task of transporting stones to Qingshan. Erhu's assignment of the task of transporting stones to Qingshan is also form of recognition of what Xi has done in his attempt to get compensation from the fodder company on the behalf of Shuanzi's mother.
		↓	The arrival of Mr Tian, Director of the Discipline Inspection Bureau of the Longwan town, and Mr Li, his assistant, at the Xijia village
		B	Mr. Tian, and Mr. Li come to the village for an investigation. Tian asks Erhu to get Xi to the village committee.
		C	Erhu's consent to Tian's request
		↑	Erhu's movement to the construction site
		↑	Xi's movement to the village committee
		DEF	Xi, as the potential helper/opposer. When Xi arrives at the committee, Tian tells Xi that he and Li have come to investigate Erhu. Xi is surprised and tells Tian that there is no problem with Erhu. Xi gives Tian a positive answer when he is asked whether Erhu has assigned the task of carrying stone materials to his family in the project of building the home for the Childless Aged People in the village. When asked what benefit Erhu has got from his family by this assignment, Xi tells Tian that he has given Erhu a red trousers belt made of cloth by his wife Xiulan. His wife tells him that the red belt can bring good luck to Erhu since that year is Erhu's year of birth. Tian asks Xi whether he has given money or anything else to Erhu. Xi feels strange about his question. Tian tells Xi that someone has reported to the Discipline Inspection Bureau that Erhu he has taken bribes from him and he has come to investigate this. Xi asks Tian whether they can investigate Erhu on what he has done for the village. Erhu has saved a child from a deep well and has been working for the village at the expense of his family. Tian tells Xi that the things Xi mentions are not part of their job. Xi scolds them for believing a malicious accusation about Erhu. Tian explains to Xi that it is part of their job to investigate whatever report they receive. Xi asks Tian who has reported to them on Erhu's alleged bribery. Tian refuses Xi's request, telling him that it is a principle not to reveal the

			reporter. Result: Xi clears Erhu of the false charge that Erhu has taken bribes from Xi.
seg6	(↓) DEF	Xi's implicit movement home Xi's involvement with Xiulan as the potential helper/opposer. That night, Xi tells Xiulan about Tian's investigation of Erhu and wonders who has reported Erhu. Xiulan tells him that it must be Jiuxian who has done the reporting. Xi agrees with Xiulan on her reasoning. He wants to go and ask Jiuxian for her reporting. Xiulan stops him from doing so and warns him against Jiuxian's tricks on him. When Xi suggests that Erhu punish her, Xiulan explains to Xi that it will put Erhu in a difficult situation if Erhu does that. Xi tells his wife that he will punish Jiuxian for her malicious behaviour. Xiulan tells Xi that he cannot punish her since he is not a village cadre. She says that he can only play tricks on Jiuxian and that Jiuxian will not be fooled again since she has been fooled by him once. Xi does not agree with his wife. He reassures Xiulan that he will get Jiuxian fooled again.	
	C ↑ DEF	Xi's intention to punish Jiuxian Xi's movement to Jiuxian's home Xi's involvement with Jiuxian. The following day Xi visits Jiuxian. Jiuxian is hostile to Xi and asks him what he has come to her for. Xi tells her that he has some good news for her. Jiuxian doubts whether Xi has any good news for her and tells Xi that she will not believe him anymore. Xi scolds her for bearing a grudge towards him. Xi tells her that Erhu has had a discussion with him about the copyright infringement compensation. Erhu feels it inappropriate not to give any money to her. Xi suggests that she write an application to Erhu. She may probably get some money with Erhu's approval. Jiuxian is excited at Xi's suggestion and asks Xi whether he is telling her a truth. When Xi pretends to be hurt with her distrust in him and pretends to leave, Jiuxian invites him to her house. Jiuxian asks Xi what has happened. Xi tells her that someone from the town came to investigate Erhu and Erhu was upset with the investigation. What Erhu has been doing is for the whole village and he does not want to disappoint villagers. Erhu wants to give part of the compensation to her and Xi feels it understandable for him to do so. Xi thus comes to tell her. Jiuxian is happy about what Xi tells her. She says that Xi is kind to everyone and wants to invite him to tea. Xi declines her invitation. Xi tells her that Erhu has just thought about giving her some part of the compensation but has not yet made a decision. He suggests that she and Shuanzi go to see Erhu and then go to Erhu's field to dig out the stubble for him. Erhu is too busy to do so these days. She readily accepts Xi's suggestion. When Xi leaves, Jiuxian asks Xi to tell Erhu not to change his mind with regard to giving her some part of the compensation. Xi reassures her that he will do so for her and asks her to go to Erhu's field to dig out the stubble for him. Jiuxian is fooled once again by Xi. Xi does not mean to do her any harm. Xi simply wants to educate her.	
	↑ U	Xi's movement to the village committee Xi climbs to the top of village committee building to check whether Jiuxian	

				and Shuanzi are in Erhu's field. There in the field, they have are digging the stubble out for Erhu. As a villain, Jiuxian is fooled by Xi into digging out the stubble for Erhu as a punishment.
			B	Xi asks Erhu to climb to the top of the building. When Erhu climbs up the top, he finds it strange that someone is digging the stubble for him. Xi tells him that he has got Jiuxian to do the digging for him because of what Jiuxian has done to him. He tells Erhu that he simply wants to play tricks on Jiuxian and wants to educate her about her.
			DEF	Xi, as the potential helper/opposer. Xi asks Erhu to tell Jiuxian that he is responsible for everything if she gets Erhu some trouble.
			↑	Jiuxian's movement to Erhu's house later
			U	Jiuxian comes to Erhu's house to help Dongping carry water. Dongping finds it strange and tries to stop Jiuxian from doing so. Just then Erhu comes back home and asks Jiuxian why she is trying to help his family first to dig out the stubble in the field and now to carry water. Jiuxian tells Erhu that she has known about his plan to give her some part of her mother-in-law's compensation and that carrying water and digging out the stubble in the field are what she should do. Erhu asks her who has told her that he is going to giving the compensation to her. Jiuxian says that Xi has told her his plan.
			EX	Erhu tells her that Xi is telling her a joke. It is impossible to give the compensation to her since the compensation case has been over. She asks Erhu not to make jokes with her. Erhu tells her that he is not joking. Erhu tells Jiuxian that she is too shrewd about everything to be shrewd. He asks her to use her head when doing things in the future.
			U	Realizing that she has been fooled again by Xi, Jiuxian is too embarrassed to say anything and runs to Xi's house.
			↑	Jiuxian's movement to Xi's house
			DEF	Erhu as the potential helper/opposer. Dongping gets Erhu to carry water and Erhus consents to do so.
			Ex	Jiuxian's involvement with Xi. Jiuxian curses Xi for fooling her the second time and asks him why he has done to her. Xi tells her that he has not done any harm to her. She instead has tried to offend Erhu and him. She has made false charge against Erhu and him. Xi tells her that what he has done that day is for Erhu. Her digging the stubble for him is what she has owed Erhu. Xi warns Jiuxian against making any further false charges against other people. If she does so in the future, he will bring her to the court. As a false villain, Xi exposes to Jiuxian his intention to punish her.
			U	That Jiuxian says nothing and leaves somehow shows Jiuxian's being punished and being defeated.
	seg7		(↑)	Wensheng's implicit movement to Ling'ai's greenhouse.
			DEF	Wensheng, as the potential helper/opposer. Wensheng is helping Ling'ai

			<p>↑ DEF</p> <p>DEF</p> <p>(↑) ↓ DEF-</p> <p>↓ DEF-</p>	<p>and Pingchuan in their greenhouse. He is giving them instructions with regard to the handling of the temperature in the greenhouse and the watering of the vegetable there.</p> <p>Wensheng then leaves them for Xi's field to see Qingmei.</p> <p>Qingmei, as the potential helper/opposer. When he arrives, Qingmei tells him to be careful when helping Ling'ai and Pingchuan because Ling'ai tends to find fault with people.</p> <p>Ling'ai as the potential helper/opposer. Ling'ai asks Pingchuan to check his watch for the time to see whether she needs to go home to prepare meals for her son. Pingchuan searches his pocket for the watch but could not find it. Ling'ai is suspicious that Wensheng may have taken it since no one else except Wensheng has been to their greenhouse. Pingchuan scolds his wife for her suspicion since Wensheng has come to help them. Ling'ai asks her husband to search the watch again.</p> <p>Ma's implicit movement to the well to carry water</p> <p>Ma's movement back home.</p> <p>Ma, as the potential helper/opposer. On her way home, Ma meets Ling'ai and asks her about her greenhouse. Ling'ai tells Ma that vegetables grow in the greenhouse but Pingchuan's watch is missing. She tells Ma that the watch costs five to six hundred yuan. Ma asks her to look for the watch again, but Ling'ai tells her that she has searched all over the greenhouse for the watch but in vain. Ma asks Ling'ai where she has lost the watch. Ling'ai tells Ma that the watch has been lost in the greenhouse. Ma asks her whether someone else has been to her greenhouse. Ling'ai tells Ma that no one except Wensheng has been to the house but he has been to help them. Ma tells Ling'ai that Wensheng has once stolen a donkey and has come to Xi's family because of the donkey. What Ma has told her makes Ling'ai think that Wensheng has stolen the watch. Result: What Ma has told Ling'ai about Wensheng confirms Ling's suspicion that Wensheng has stolen Pingchuan's watch.</p> <p>Qingmei and Wensheng's movement back home.</p> <p>Ling'ai as the potential helper/opposer. On their way home, Qingmei and Wensheng meet Ling'ai. Ling'ai asks Wensheng whether he saw Pingchuan's watch in the greenhouse. Wensheng tells Ling'ai that he did not see Pingchuan's watch and asks her to look for the watch in the greenhouse. Ling'ai tells him that she has searched all the over the greenhouse but can't find the watch. Qingmei tells Ling'ai that her husband's watch has nothing to do with Wensheng since he did not see it. Ling'ai says that no one except Wensheng has been to the house. Qingmei is angry with what Ling'ai has implied. She tells Ling'ai that Wensheng has been to help her and scolds her for her suspicion of Wensheng. She asks Ling'ai to get the police to find her watch. Result: Ling'ai's suspicion of Wensheng infuriates Qingmei.</p>
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			<p>↓ DEF±</p> <p>Qingmei and Wensheng's arrival home Qingmei, as the potential helper/opposer. When she comes back home, Qingmei asks Wensheng not to go and help Ling'ai again. Wensheng is not happy about Ling'ai's suspicion of him. Qingmei says that she will ask her to turn to police for her watch if Ling'ai does not stop her suspicion of him. The word police makes Wensheng anxious. Mixed Result: Qingmei intends to protect Wensheng but her mention of police makes Wensheng nervous.</p> <p>DEF</p> <p>Qingshan, as the potential helper/opposer. Xi asks Qingshan whether he has talked to anyone about the donkey. Qingshan tells his father that he has talked about it once and that he has never talked about it ever since Wensheng and Qingmei are together. Xi tells his son not to talk about the donkey to anyone in the future. Qingshan gives Xi his promise.</p> <p>DEF-</p> <p>Pingchuan, as the potential helper/opposer. In the meantime, Ling'ai tells her husband what Ma has said to her. Pingchuan thinks Ma's words are not to be trusted. He does not believe his wife's suspicion. He thinks Wensheng is a good young man. If not, he will not stay at Xi's family and Qingmei will not be fond of him either. Wensheng is not a man as his wife has expected. He thinks his wife's suspicion will hurt Wensheng. Ling'ai insists on her suspicion because Wensheng has stolen a donkey. Result: Pingchuan tries to talk Ling'ai out of her suspicion of Wensheng but in vain.</p>
16	seg 1		<p>DEF±</p> <p>Pingchuan, as the potential helper/opposer. Ling'ai tells Pingchuan that Qingshan once told her about Wensheng's stealing a donkey. Pingchuan tells his wife that he does not believe Qingshan's words either. He will believe it if Xi and Xiulan tell him so. He asks his wife not to talk about the missing watch again to other people. Result: Pingchuan asks Ling'ai not to talk to others about his loss of watch again but it not sure whether Ling'ai will do so or not.</p> <p>↑</p> <p>Qingmei's movement to Wensheng's room</p> <p>B</p> <p>The following day, when Qingmei asks Wensheng to have breakfast, she cannot find him in his room. Instead, Qingmei finds a letter by Wensheng, telling Xi's family that he is leaving them for the time being for fear the police come and investigate Ling'ai's missing watch and thus investigate the donkey incident.</p> <p>C</p> <p>Qingmei shows the letter to Xi, Xiulan and Qingshan. Xiulan thinks that Wensheng has just left and asks Qingmei to get him back.</p> <p>↓</p> <p>Pingchuan's arrival at Xi's house</p> <p>Ex</p> <p>Just then, Pingchuan comes to tell them that he has found his watch and he wants to apologize to Wensheng for his wife.</p> <p>Q-</p> <p>Ling'ai is scolded by Xi for her suspicious inclination which results in Wensheng's leaving.</p> <p>↑</p> <p>Pingchuan's departure</p> <p>↑</p> <p>Qingmei's movement to get Wensheng back</p> <p>B</p> <p>(Xi's voiceover) Wensheng runs away on hearing the word police. Wensheng's running away is easy to cause people's suspicion of him.</p>

			<p>DEF Qingshan suggests that Wensheng's fear of police is not as simple as the donkey incident has shown. Qingshan's suggestion invites Qingmei to scold him for being silly.</p> <p>↓ Qingmei as the potential helper/opposer. Qingmei finds Wensheng waiting at the bus station. She tells Wensheng that Pingchuan has found his watch. Wensheng comes back to Xi's family with her.</p> <p>(↑) Qingmei and Wensheng's return to Xi's house</p> <p>DEF Qingmei's implicit movement to the village committee</p> <p>↓ Qingmei, as the potential helper/opposer with regard to Xi's intention to establish an economic cooperative in Xijia village. Qingmei is explaining to the villagers what an economic cooperative is and the benefits of joining an economic cooperative at the village committee.</p> <p>B ↓ The arrival of the police to the village committee</p> <p>The policemen have come to the committee for Wensheng. Qingmei tells the police that donkey incident has been solved but the policeman tells her that they have not come for the donkey but for events related to people. Before Wensheng leaves with the policeman, he apologizes to Xi and Qingmei for not telling them what has happened at his hometown. He tells Qingmei that he is not guilty and that he would like her to find a lawyer for him if she is willing to do so.</p> <p>↑ The police and Wensheng's departure</p> <p>DEF Erhu, as the potential helper/opposer. Qingmei asks Erhu what has happened. Erhu tells Xi and Qingmei what he has learned from the police station. Wensheng has hurt the eyes of a village cadre back at his home village. It happened because of tax and fee payment. The village cadre forced Wensheng's family to pay tax and fees while Wensheng refused to do so. The cadre and Wensheng then fought with each other and Wensheng hurt the cadre's eyes. Erhu asks Qingmei not to worry about Wensheng too much because he thinks Wensheng hurt the cadre's eyes by accident. He asks Qingmei to go to Wensheng's home village to find out what exactly has happened. Result: Erhu tells Xi and Qingmei with regard to Wensheng's arrest and advise them to go to Wensheng's home village to find out what exactly has happened.</p> <p>↓ Qingmei and Xi's return home</p>
	seg2		<p>B (Xi's voiceover) That night Xi does not sleep well. He keeps thinking about the relationship between farmers and land.</p> <p>↑ Xi's movement to the Judicial Department at the Longwan town the following morning.</p> <p>DEF Xi's involvement with the head of Judicial Department as the potential helper/opposer. Xi turns to the head of judicial department at the Longwan town for help. He explains to the head the situation similar to Wensheng's incident and asks the head how the judge will decide on the situation. The head tells Xi that the defendant is not guilty if he can find evidence to prove four things: the cadre has collected tax and fees in an illegal way; the defendant has not initiated violence; the defendant has not hurt the cadre's eyes on purpose; the tool the defendant has used has not directly touched</p>

		<p>↓ DEF</p> <p>C</p>	<p>the cadre's eye. Hearing the judicial head's explanation, Xi feels relieved.</p> <p>Xi's movement back home</p> <p>Xi, Xiulan and Qingmei, as the potential helpers/opposers. At the same night, Xi, Xiulan and Qingmei are discussing the four things the head has suggested. Xiulan thinks that the cadre must have collected the tax and fees illegally, using the Xijia village as an example, forcing people to pay pig-raising fees even if they have no pigs and forcing people to pay family planning fees even when they do not have children. Xi thinks it is impossible for Wensheng to initiate violence because generally a group of cadres not a cadre go to do the tax and fee collection. Qingmei thinks it impossible for Wensheng to hurt the cadre's eye intentionally for he is kind-hearted. Xi also thinks it impossible for Wensheng to hurt the cadre's eye with a tool because the fight must involve several people struggling with each other and the cadre would also try to avoid being hurt.</p> <p>Qingmei suggests that she go to Wensheng's home village to find out what has exactly happened and Xi tells her that he will go with her.</p>
seg3		<p>↑ DEF</p> <p>(↑)</p> <p>DEF</p> <p>DEF</p> <p>↑ DEF</p> <p>DEF</p>	<p>Xi and Qingmei's train journey to Wensheng's home village the following day</p> <p>Qingmei and Xi, as the potential helper/opposer. Qingmei and Xi go to the county police station and is told that a villager at Wensheng's home village has said that Wensheng used a carrying pole to hurt the cadre's eye. Qingmei is worried. Xi suggests that they go and talk to the villager to see whether he is telling the truth or not.</p> <p>Qingmei and Xi's implicit movement to the villager's home to find the witness</p> <p>Xi and Qingmei's involvement with the humpback villager. When they arrive at the villager's home, they find him a humpback. Qingmei asks the villager whether he really sees Wensheng has hurt Wang, the village head, with a carrying pole. The villager gives a positive answer. Xi tells the villager to think about what he said because Wensheng may be found guilty or not guilty because of his words. The villager tells Xi that he has thought it over before giving evidence. Xi warns the villager about getting imprisoned if he is found to have commit perjury. The villager insists that he has seen Wensheng hurt Wang's eyes with a carrying pole. Xi somehow feels that the villager is not telling the truth but he is sympathetic with the villager for his difficult life because of his humpback. Xi chats with him about his life. During their chat, Xi finds that villager was blind and that he was forced to give false testimony. Result: Xi and Qingmei find that the witness has been forced to give a false testimony.</p> <p>Xi, as the potential helper/opposer. The villager is worried that the police will punish him for his perjury. Xi reassures him that he will be ok and promises to help him to get support for him from his village. Xi leaves him two hundred yuan for his difficult situation.</p> <p>Xi and Qingmei's movement to the county police station at the same night</p> <p>Xi and Qingmei, as the potential helper/opposer. Xi and Qingmei go to the police station to check some facts with Wang, the village head.</p> <p>Wang, as the potential helper/opposer. Xi asks the policeman whether</p>

			<p>Wang, the village head, has come to the police and that he wants to check some facts with him. The police tell Xi that Wang has come to withdraw the lawsuit and Wensheng will be released within two days. Xi and Qingmei feel relieved.</p> <p>↓ B Sichuan girl's arrival at the village committee with her baby. In the meanwhile, the Sichuan girl goes to Xijia village with her baby. Liuzi is surprised at and worried about her visit. The Sichuan girl tells Liuzi that she has taken his son to see him. She tells Liuzi's mother that she has brought her a grandson.</p> <p>DEF- Liuzi's mother, as the potential helper/opposer with Sichuan girl's coming to stay with Liuzi. Liuzi's mother is not happy at Sichuan girl's coming and because of this, Liuzi scolds Sichuan girl for her coming to see him. Sichuan girl wants to stay with Liuzi but Liuzi's mother wants her to leave. Liuzi begs his mother to let her stay. Liuzi's mother has to give her consent in spite of her reluctance. Liuzi's mother cries, mentioning Liuzi's dead wife.</p> <p>↑ DEF- Liuzi's movement to the village committee Chouwa, as the potential helper/opposer. Chouwa is not happy about Sichuan girl's stay with his father either. He does not come home at night. Liuzi looks anxiously for him the whole night. He goes to the village committee wanting to ask Erhu about Chouwa's whereabouts but he finds the committee empty and dark. He finds Chouwa standing outside the village committee. Chouwa tells him that he wants to use the village speaker to tell the villager about his affairs with Sichuan girl. Liuzi scolds and beats his son for his disappearance and for his plan. Chouwa's cry makes Liuzi regret having beaten him. He takes Chouwa home.</p> <p>↓ Liuzi and Chouwa's movement home</p> <p>↑ KQ Xi and Qingmei's movement to the country police station the following day. Wensheng is released. He is happy to find Qingmei and Xi waiting for him and thanks them for saving him.</p> <p>Ex Xi tells Wensheng that they had planned and wanted to save him but Wang, the village head, has done that faster than they. Wensheng feels surprised. Xi explains to him that they have planned to ask Wang to withdraw the lawsuit against him but Wang himself has done the withdrawal.</p> <p>↓ B Xi's train journey home on his own. (Xi's voiceover) Xi goes home on his own because Wensheng wants Qingmei to meet his family. Xi thinks both Wang and the humpback villager are good and kind-hearted men.</p>
	seg4	(↓) B Q	<p>Xi's implicit arrival home</p> <p>Qingshan asks Xi why Qingmei and Wensheng have not come back with him. Xi tells his son that Wensheng wants to Qingmei to meet his family.</p> <p>Qingshan compliments his father on his successful attempt to save Wensheng. Xi feels happy at his son's compliment.</p>

			<p>↑ B</p> <p>Liuzi's movement to Xi's home</p> <p>Liuzi comes to tell Xi that he is in great trouble because Sichuan girl has come to find him. He asks Xi to come over his home to help him solve the problem.</p>
			<p>↑ DEF</p> <p>Xi and Liuzi's movement to Liuzi's home</p> <p>Xi, as the potential helper/opposer. When Xi arrives at Liuzi's home, Xi finds Liuzi's mother upset by Sichuan girl's coming. Xi goes to see Sichuan girl. She complains to Xi that Liuzi does not accept the child as his son. She tells Xi that she will stay with Liu and will not leave him. She asks Xi to persuade Liuzi to accept the child. She does not feel happy when Xi asks her whether the child is Liuzi's. She says that Xi does not believe her. Xi tells her that he does not believe Liuzi. She asks Xi to come over to see the child and tells Xi that the child looks like Liuzi. Xi tells her that it is difficult to tell whether the child is Liuzi's because it is too young to identify. Liuzi does not know whether the child is his or not.</p>
			<p>↓ DEF-</p> <p>Old Uncle Liu's arrival at Xi's home.</p> <p>Old Uncle Liu and Li Erxian as the potential helpers/opposers with regard to Xi's growth of lavender. While Xi is at Liuzi's house, Old Uncle Liu comes to Xi's home to look for Xi. Xiulan tells Liu that Xi is at Liuzi's house. Liu tells Xiulan that he will wait for Xi until Xi comes back. Xiulan tries to get Liu to talk to her about what has happened and why he feels angry. Liu complains to Xiulan that everything in his family turns wrong ever since Qingshan dug the tomb of his ancestors. First his eldest driver son had an accident. Then his second son lost money in his watermelon business. Later, the daughter of his daughter failed in her National Entrance Examination with one credit below minimum passing score. Now his eldest grandson has developed an athlete foot. Li Erxian, the fortune-teller in the village, tells him that the bad luck results from the problem with his ancestor's tomb. He blames Qingshan's digging of the tomb for his family's bad luck. Xiulan tells her that what has happened to his family is a coincidence and has nothing to do with Qingshan's digging of the tomb. Xiulan asks Liu not to believe what Li Erxian has said because that is superstition. Despite Xiulan's persuasion, Liu insists that the bad luck of his family results from Qingshan's digging of his ancestor's tomb. He asks Xiulan to uproot all the grass in the land which Xi has contracted and tells Xiulan that her family can only grow the vegetable in the land otherwise his family will continue to have bad luck. Xiulan feels surprised at Liu's suggestion. She serves Liu with a cigarette and asks him to wait for Xi while she goes to get him back home.</p>
			<p>↑ DEF</p> <p>Xiulan's movement to Liuzi's home</p> <p>Xi, as the potential helper/opposer. When Liuzi sees Xi off, Liuzi asks Xi whether there is a way to solve his problem. Xi tells Liuzi that the only way is to have a paternity test. Liuzi asks Xi about the test. Xi tells him it costs a lot of money and advises Liuzi to accept the child since the money needed for the paternity test is far enough to raise two children.</p>

		<p>↓ B DEF-</p> <p>↓ C</p>	<p>Xi's movement to his home</p> <p>When Liuzi wants to ask Xi for further explanation about the test Xiulan comes to get Xi, telling him about Liu's complaint.</p> <p>Old Uncle Liu and Li Erxian, as the potential helper/opposer. When Xi comes home, he tells Liu not to believe Li Erxian's words. Liu takes Li's words seriously. He scolds Xi for growing grass rather than vegetables. Xi explains to Liu that the grass is now tall and cannot be uprooted. Xi tells him that he will need to harvest the grass seed first before uprooting it and that he will need to wait until next year to grow vegetable in the land. Hearing this, Liu tells Xi that he will need to go and ask Li Erxian whether Xi's suggestion is ok or not. Liu then leaves for Li. Result: Xi's lavender is in danger.</p> <p>Old Uncle Liu's departure from Xi's house</p> <p>Xiulan is angry with Li, saying Li is a nuisance. Xi agrees and wants to punish her for her nuisance.</p>
seg5		<p>DEF</p> <p>↑ ↓ DEF</p>	<p>Xiulan, as the potential help/opposer. Xiulan asks Xi how to punish Li. Xi asks Xiulan to prepare some good dishes and get Qingmei's recorder ready for him. Xiulan feels puzzled by Xi's request but she does as Xi tells her to do.</p> <p>Xi's movement to invite Li Erxian</p> <p>Xi's return home with Li Erxian</p> <p>Xi's involvement with Li Erxian as the potential helper/opposer. Xi invites Li Erxian to lunch at his home. Li is surprised at his invitation. When Xi asks Li whether he can grow grass in his contracted land, Li thinks for a moment and asks him whether his grass is used to feed a cow or a sheep. When Xi tells Li that his grass is for neither purpose, Li reassures him that he can surely grow grass and will become rich with the grass. Xi then asks Li that whether his growth of grass will do any harm to Liu's ancestors' tomb. Li sighs, thinks for a longer while and says nothing. When Xi gets one hundred yuan note and puts it near her fortune-telling hands, Xi feels the note and tells Xi immediately that his growth of grass does not affect the tomb at all. She adds that Xi can even the tomb if he feels the tomb prevents him from growing grass. The tomb is very old and there remains almost nothing in the tomb and therefore Xi need not be too particular about it. Xi tells Li that Liu's family, both the young and the old, have had unpleasant experiences. Xi asks Li whether their unpleasant experiences have anything to do with the tomb. Li sighs again and closes her eyes to predict. When Xi puts another one hundred yuan note directly into Li's fortune-telling hand despite Xiulan's reluctance, Li opens her eyes and tells Xi that both the young and the old in Liu's family are silly and that their unpleasant experiences have nothing to do with the tomb. Xi and Xiulan are glad at what Li has said and asks her to have some dishes and drink some wine. While Li is having the dishes and drinking the wine, Xiulan gets Xi to the kitchen and tells him not to give Li any more money. Xi reassures her that he will not give Li any money. Li checks the money and then happily leaves Xi and Xiulan.</p>

			↑	Li Erxian's departure from Xi's house
			↓	Qingshan's return home
			DEF	Qingshan, as the potential helper/opposer. Just then Qingshan comes back hungry and wants to have something. Xi asks him to give and play the recording they have just done to Old Uncle Liu before he has something. Qingshan asks his father what it is. Xi asks his son to listen to the recording together with Old Uncle Liu. After Qingshan leaves, Xi hums his favourite tune. Xiulan asks him to sing a song but Xi tells her that he cannot sing.
			↑	Qingshan's movement to Old Uncle Liu's home
			DEF	Old Uncle Liu as the potential helper/opposer. When Qingshan arrives at Old Uncle Liu's home, he find Liu is sharpening a sickle. Qingshan feels strange and asks what he is going to do with the sickle. Liu tells him that he is going to cut the grass in his greenhouse.
			↓	Qingshan's return home
			B	On hearing this, Qingshan rushes back to tell his father about Liu's plan to cut the grass in their greenhouse.
			C	Xi tells Qingshan to go back to play the recording and assures him that Liu will never talk about cutting the grass in their greenhouse again in the future.
			↑	Qingshan's movement to Old Uncle Liu's home again
			DEF	Qingshan, as the potential helper/opposer. When Qingshan goes back to Liu's home, Liu is about to leave for their greenhouse for the grass. Qingshan plays the recording to him. Liu feels furious after hearing the recording.
			K	Xi's lavender is not in danger for the time being.
			↑	Old Uncle Liu goes to see Li Erxian with a rod in his hand. Qingshan follows Liu.
			↓	Qingshan's movement back home
			B	While Xi is still humming his favourite tune, Qingshan runs back to tell him that Liu has gone to look for Li Erxian after hearing the recording. He tells his father to go to Li's home in case something serious happens since Liu has carried with him a rod.
			↑	Xi's movement to Li Erxian's house
			B	When Xi rushes to Li's quart yard, Liu is challenging Li Erxian to come out. Li is hiding in her room, scared and signals Xi to help her.
			DEF	Xi, as the potential helper/opposer. Xi tells Liu that Li may have run back to her mother's home and that he will get back his ten yuan from her. Xi tells Liu not to be fooled by Li again in the future.
			↓	Old Uncle Liu's return home
			U	Li comes out after Liu leaves the courtyard. Xi asks Li to give him back the money. When Li gives Xi ten yuan, Xi tells her that the ten yuan is for Liu. Li realizes that Xi has fooled her but has to give back two hundred yuan to him. Xi tells her that what he has done is the best way to punish her nuisance. Everyone in the courtyard laughs at Li's embarrassment.
			↓	Xi's return home

	seg6		(↑) U	Li Erxian's implicit movement to the village committee Erhu and Baoqing call Li Erxian to the village committee. Erhu scolds her for her practice. Erhu tells her that the central government is now calling on the whole country to build a new socialist countryside. One of the tasks is to promote advanced socialist culture and new moral virtues in the village. Baoqing asks Li whether she knows President's concept of honor and disgrace and the Eight Honours and Eight Shames. Li shakes her head, saying that they are for the cadres, the students and the soldiers. It is still too far away for the villagers to follow them. Baoqing is angry at Li's reply and asks her to come over to the blackboard to read the Eight Honors and Eight Shames written on it. Erhu asks Li to repeat the first honor 10 times and then pay a fine for her superstitious practice in the village.
			(↓)	Li Erxian's implicit movement back home
	seg7		DEF	Qingshan as the potential helper/opposer. Qingshan is about to go to the city to collect human manure.
			DEF	Xi's involvement with Qingshan with each other as the potential helpers/opposer. Xi comes over to ask him to be careful while Qingshan asks his father to look after their grass in the greenhouse.
			↑	Xi's movement to the field to look after the grass.
			B	(Xi's voiceover) When he gets there, five goats are eating the grass. He is so worried about their eating of the grass that he kills one of the goats when he tries to drive them out of the greenhouse.
			(↑)	Qingshan's implicit movement to the city
			↓	Qingshan's movement back home.
			DEF-	Qingshan, as the potential helper/opposer. On his way back from the city to the village, Qingshan sees Gaihua. He gets off his tractor and wants to give her a ride, but she pays no attention to him.
			K-	Qingshan's relationship with Gaihua is not settled yet.
			(↑)	The villager shepherd and Xi's implicit movement to the village committee
			DEF	Erhu, as the potential helper/opposer. The shepherd and Xi go to see Erhu for the settlement of Xi's accidental killing a goat and of the shepherd's goats' eating Xi's lavender. The shepherd wants Xi to compensate the killed goat while Xi wants the shepherd to compensate his grass. When Xi learns from the shepherd that some of the goats may belong to Ma Cuilian, he gives up his compensation for the grass. He tells Erhu to decide on how much compensation he needs to pay to the shepherd.
			↓	Xi's departure from the village committee to home
			↑	Ma's movement to the committee
			(↓)	Qingshan's implicit arrival home
			B	When Qingshan comes back home, he tells his mother his worry that Gaihua may want to marry Sangui. Xiulan asks him whether he is still fond of her.
17	seg 1		DEF±	Xiulan, as the potential helper/opposer. Qingshan tells his mother that he keeps thinking about Gaihua and misses her very much. Xiulan scolds his

			<p>son for being silly. Gaihua has always been fond of him and his father has finally given his consent to their relationship. But then he suspected Gaihua. It was really silly of him to do so. Qingshan tells his mother that he couldn't help being suspicious. Qingshan wants his mother to ask Gaihua whether she will marry Sangui or not. Xiulan tells her son that she needs to have a discussion with his father when he comes back. Ambiguous result: It is not sure whether Xiulan can help Qingshan with regard to his relationship with Gaihua.</p> <p>DEF- Erhu, as the potential helper/opposer. At the village committee, Erhu is mediating between Ma and Xi. Ma wants Xi to compensate her dead goat. Erhu explains to her that her goat first ate Xi's grass and then is killed by Xi. He thinks both she and Xi have suffered losses and suggest that they settle the matter without asking each other for compensation. Ma does not agree. She insists that Xi pay compensation to her. When Ma requests a compensation of eight hundred yuan from Xi, Xi disagrees and leaves the committee angrily, saying that eight hundred yuan can buy a cow. Result: Erhu fails to settle the dispute between Ma and Xi.</p> <p>↓ DEF Xi's movement back home Xi, as the potential helper/opposer. Xi is angry when he comes home from the village committee. Xiulan tells Xi about Qingshan's request of her to ask Gaihua whether she wants to marry Sangui or not. Xi angry at what Xiulan has told her. Xiulan asks Qingshan to go back to his room but Qingshan refuses.</p> <p>(↓) B Ma's implicit movement home. After Ma comes back home, Gaihua tells her mother that she has returned betrothal money to Sangui and that she does not owe Sangui anything. Ma is angry with what Gaihua has done and asks her daughter who has helped her to pay the money. Gaihua does not want to tell her but on Ma's promise not to tell anyone she tells her that Qingmei has given her money.</p>
	seg 2		<p>↓ B Qingmei and Wensheng's return to the village (Xi's voiceover)Qingmei and Wensheng have come home. Wensheng feels released of pressure while Qingmei is happier than before.</p> <p>DEF Xi and Xiulan, as the potential helper/opposer. Xi feels happy about their coming back. Xiulan and Qingmei prepare some special dishes to celebrate Wensheng's coming back.</p> <p>DEF Qingmei, as the potential helper/opposer. Qingshan, however, is unhappy. Xi asks Qingshan to be happy for Wensheng's sake. Qingshan, however, could not feel happy. He wants to go to the greenhouse to look after grass. Qingmei runs after him and asks him whether he is still thinking about Gaihua. He gives his sister a positive answer but worries that Gaihua may have already become fond of Sangui. Qingmei tells her brother not to worry about his relationship with Gaihua. She promises to help him and Gaihua. She asks Qingshan to wait for Gaihua in their usual meeting place, the locust tree. Qingmei gets Qingshan back to the table to celebrate</p>

				Wensheng and her coming back.
			B ↑ K	(Xi's voiceover) Immediately after their supper, there comes snow and it is the first spell of snow in that winter. Qingshan goes to meet Gaihua at the locust tree. Qingshan's movement to the village locust tree to see Gaihua Qingshan and Gaihua make up with each other under the locust tree.
	seg3		↑ DEF ↑ ↑ B ↑ DEF ↓ DEF	Sichuan girl's movement to Erhu's house early next morning Erhu, as the potential helper/opposer. When Dongping is sweeping the snow in front of her house, Sichuan girl comes to look for Erhu. She tells Dongping that her son has been having a diarrhea since last night and that she wants Erhu to accompany her to the village town hospital since Liuzi has not come back home yet because of the slippery road caused by the heavy snow. Dongping tells her that Erhu is still in bed for he had a meeting later last night. She asks Sichuan girl whether she can turn to other people for help. Sichuan girl tells her that she does not know other people in the village except Erhu and Xi and that she cannot always go to bother Xi. Erhu wakes up on their talking outside. Hearing what Sichuan girl has told him, Erhu accompanies her to the town hospital. Erhu and Sichuan girl's movement to the hospital Ma's movement to Xi's house Ma comes to Xi's house to thank Xiulan and Xi. Xiulan feels surprised. Ma explains to Xiulan that Qingmei has given Gaihua twenty hundred yuan and that Gaihua is able to return Sangui the betrothal money Ma has accepted from him. Xi is surprised at what Ma has said and wants to go and ask Qingmei about the money. Xi's movement to see Qingmei Ma, as the potential helper/opposer. Ma tries to stop him but fails. Ma tells Xi to give his consent to the relationship between Gaihua and Qingshan. Ma feels embarrassed and frustrated because Xi and Xiulan ignore her. Ma's return home Qingmei, as the potential helper/opposer with regard to Qingshan's relationship with Gaihua. Xi goes to the village committee to ask Qingmei whether she has given Gaihua twenty hundred yuan. Qingmei admits giving Gaihua the money. She tells her father that Gaihua does not like Sangui at all, but Ma has requested and accepted betrothal money from Sangui. Gaihua wants to return the betrothal money to Sangui but does not have money. Gaihua turns to her for help. The money which she has given Gaihua is from Wensheng's Uncles and Aunts. They have given Wensheng and her money when learning that she and Wensheng are getting married. Qingmei then borrows the money from Wensheng. Xi worries that Qingmei cannot get the money back in the future. Qingmei says that she will then treat it as gift to Qingshan if she cannot get it back and that she wants to help Qingshan. Xi sighs for what Qingmei has done. Qingmei tells her father that Gaihua loves Qingshan very much and that

			<p>↓</p> <p>Q</p> <p>K</p>	<p>Qingshan feels the same towards Gaihua. She asks him not to oppose the relationship between Qingshan and Gaihua because of Ma's annoying behavior. Xi says nothing more about Qingmei's giving Gaihua money for her to return the betrothal money to Sangui.</p> <p>Xi's movement back home</p> <p>(Xi's voiceover) Xi thinks Gaihua is a girl devoted to her love for Qingshan and Qingshan is honest and kind. Xi thinks highly of and is moved by their devotion to each other and gives no more objections to their relationship.</p> <p>Gaihua and Qingshan are working together to sweep away the heavy snow that have fallen on the roof of the greenhouse. The relationship between Gaihua and Qingshan is finalized.</p>
	seg4		<p>↑</p> <p>W</p> <p>BC</p> <p>↓</p> <p>DEF-</p> <p>↓</p> <p>(↑)</p> <p>DEF-</p> <p>DEF</p>	<p>Wensheng and Qingmei's implicit movement to the town government</p> <p>Qingmei and Wensheng go to the town government to get marriage certificate. They meet Li who comes to congratulate them on their marriage.</p> <p>Qingmei apologizes to Li for not doing a good job in helping her father with the economic cooperative project. Li tells Qingmei to take her time and asks her to be patient. Qingmei promises to do more work to familiarize the villagers with the cooperative project. Li expresses his confidence in Qingmei.</p> <p>Qingmei and Wensheng's movement back to the village</p> <p>Qingmei's involvement with Ma as the potential helper/opposer with regard to Wensheng's marrying into Xi's family. On their way back to the village, Ma stops them and asks whether they have registered their marriage today. Qingmei gives her a positive answer, telling her that she has registered her marriage before Qingshan since she is older than Qingshan. When Qingmei tells her that Wensheng will marry into and live with Xi's family, Ma is not happy. It is not customary for a son-in-law to marry into and live with his fiancé's family when his fiancé has a brother since the couple's presence is considered to have a negative effect on the brother. Ma wants to talk to Xi and express to him her disagreement with Wensheng's marrying into Xi's family. Qingmei stops her and tells her that she will marry into Wensheng's family for fear that she bothers her father again. Result: Wensheng's marrying into Xi's family meets Ma's opposition.</p> <p>Qingmei and Wensheng's movement home</p> <p>Qingmei's implicit movement to see Gaihua</p> <p>Qingmei's involvement with Gaihua as the potential helper/opposer with regard to Wensheng's marrying into Xi's family. Qingmei is not happy about Ma's interference in Wensheng's marrying into her family. Qingmei talks to Gaihua about Wensheng's marrying into her family and about her mother's opposition to this. Qingmei tells Gaihua that she wants to change the traditional practice of opposing the son-in-law marrying into his fiancé's family with her marriage. Gaihua tells Qingmei that she dare not go against her mother for fear that her mother meddles in her relationship with Qingshan again. Qingmei tells her that she has to turn to her father to solve this problem then. Result: Qingmei can't get help from Gaihua.</p> <p>Qingmei as the potential helper/opposer with regard to Qingshan's</p>

			<p>relationship with Gaihua. Gaihua is worried that Xi will oppose her relationship with Qingshan once he knows her mother's objection to Wensheng's marrying into Xi's family. Qingmei reassures Gaihua that she will help her and Qingshan.</p> <p>(↓) DEF Qingmei's implicit arrival home Qingmei's involvement with Xi as the potential helper/opposer. That night when Qingmei tells Xi about Ma's opposition to Wensheng's marrying into their family, Xi is angry with Ma again. Qingmei tells Xi that she turns to him for suggestion not for his anger. Xi tells her there is some way to handle Ma's objection but asks her to wait and see. Result: Qingmei gets X's promise to handle Ma's objection to Wensheng's marrying into Xi's family.</p> <p>W Ling'ai and Pingchuan. In the meantime, Ling'ai asks Pingchuan how much they should give to congratulate Wensheng and Qingmei on their marriage. Pingchuan suggests one hundred yuan, a bit more than the village practice of fifty yuan. Ling'ai thinks one hundred is too little and suggests three hundred yuan since Xi has helped save their son Tiedan and Wensheng has helped them with their greenhouse. Pingchuan feels surprised at his wife suggestion and asks her whether something is wrong with her. For some while, she thinks about the bad side of Xi's family and for other while, she thinks about the benefits that Xi's family has given her. Ling'ai laughs at Pingchuan's comments on her. She tells him jokingly that she is a good woman otherwise he would not have married her. Pingchuan suggests one hundred while Lingai suggests at least two hundred. Ling'ai and Pingchuan's discussion about sending gifts to congratulate on Wensheng's marriage with Qingmei shows their good marital relationship.</p> <p>(↑) DEF Xi's implicit movement to the village locust tree the following morning. Xi, as the potential helper/opposer. Xi puts up a notice on the locust tree, informing the villagers of the severing of his relationship with Qingmei. The villagers ask Xi why he breaks up with his daughter and Xi tells them to ask Ma.</p> <p>Q- Ma is happy about Xi's breaking up with Qingmei. Gaihua scolds her mother for her gloat and blames her for what has happened. Ma tells her daughter that it is the village custom for the son-in-law not to marry into his fiancé's family when the family has a son. Gaihua asks her mother when she can become wise.</p>
	seg5		<p>B (Xi's voiceover) Xi chooses a lucky date, the 17th of the lunar month for Qingmei and Wensheng to have their formal wedding ceremony. Xiulan wants to give them a traditional Chinese wedding ceremony while Qingmei wants to have a modern simple wedding ceremony. The mother and daughter have argued with each other for half a day over the wedding ceremony but Qingmei wins her mother over.</p> <p>DEF- Wensheng's father as the potential helper/opposer. While Xi and Xiulan are preparing for their wedding ceremony, Qingmei comes to tell them to stop</p>

			<p>DEF their preparation because she is not holding a wedding ceremony. Xi and Xiulan feel strange and ask their daughter what has happened. Qingmei asks her parents to ask Wensheng. Wensheng tells them that his father has come and has suddenly changed his mind, disapproving of Wensheng's marrying into Xi's family. Xi is angry at Wensheng's father.</p> <p>Q- Qingshan, as the potential helper/opposer. Xi asks Qingshan whether he has a way to solve the problem. Qingshan tells them that Wensheng's father must have gambled again and have lost all his money. He must have come to ask Wensheng for money. He does not really disapprove of Wensheng's marrying into their family. He suggests that Xi cover Wensheng's face with hen blood to give an impression of being beaten and then take him to Wensheng's father, asking him to take Wensheng back. Xi and Xiulan think it a good idea and do as Qingshan has suggested. Qingshan's suggestion works and Wensheng's father has indeed come to Wensheng for money because of losing money again with his gambling.</p> <p>W Xi scolds Wensheng's father for his gambling. Wensheng's father feels sorry and wants to leave but Xi invites him to stay for the wedding.</p> <p>(Xi's Voiceover)Qingmei and Wensheng's wedding go on as planned. There is neither wedding feast nor a sedan chair to carry the bride. Instead, Qingshan uses his tractor to carry Qingmei and Wensheng for them to send their wedding candy and the scientific agricultural pamphlets to the villagers. Their wedding is well received by the majority of the villagers except for a very small number of old villagers.</p>
	seg6	<p>DEF- Gaihua, as the potential helper/opposer. Ma, who has just witnessed Qingmei and Wensheng's wedding ceremony, comes back home to ask Gaihua whether Xi and Xiulan have really broke up with Qingmei and Wensheng. Gaihua gives her mother a positive answer but Ma does not believe her. She wants to ask Xi for an explanation. Gaihua asks her mother not to do so. Ma goes to talk to Erhu instead. Gaihua tries to stop her mother but in vain.</p> <p>↑ Ma's movement to the village committee</p> <p>DEF- Baoqing, as the potential helper/opposer. Ma arrives at the village committee but cannot find Erhu. Baoqing plays a trick on her, telling her that Erhu has been to the toilet. Ma waits outside the toilet for Erhu for a long while but Erhu still has not come out. Realizing she has been fooled by Baoqing, she is angry with him but could do nothing to him since Baoqing shuts himself in the committee.</p> <p>↑ Qingshan's movement to the village locust tree that night</p> <p>DEF Qingshan, as the potential helper/opposer. Gaihua meets Qingshan at the locust tree as usual. She tells him that her mother begins to meddle in her life again. She asks Qingshan to come up with a way to solve the problem of her mothers' nuisance once and for all. Qingshan tells her a plan and asks her to do what he has suggested.</p> <p>↑ Qingshan accompanies Gaihua to her home.</p> <p>DEF Gaihua, as the potential helper/opposer. The following day, Gaihua sits</p>	

			<p>upon a village well, crying that her mother has pushed her too far and that she does not want to live any more. Gaihua's crying draws the attention of the villagers and her mother. When one villager tries to come near to stop Gaihua from jumping in the well, Gaihua threatens to jump into the well if he comes nearer. The villager thus stands back. Witnessing her daughter's threat, Ma apologizes to Gaihua and promises not to push her any more. Gaihua then comes off the well and cries with her mother. Result: Qingshan's advice succeeds in helping Gaihua to get Ma's promise not to meddle in her life again.</p>
seg7		<p>DEF</p> <p>Qingmei, as the potential helper/opposer with regard Xi's establishment of an economic cooperative in the village.</p> <p>At lunch, Qingmei tells Xi that she met Li when she and Wensheng went to the town to register their marriage. Li asked her about Xi's cooperative project and she tells Li about her father's strong interest in the project and the lack of motivation by the villagers. Qingmei tells Xi that Li has asked her to do some more work to get people interested in the cooperative. Qingshan says that the villagers do not deserve their help. Xiulan says that Xi wants to become a model. Xi feels proud and teases his wife, telling her that she does not have a chance to be a model even if she wants to. Xi tells his son to go to the city after lunch to collect two tractorfuls of human manure for the villagers to move them. Qingmei tells her father that this is the best way to motivate the villagers to join the cooperative. Result: Qingmei gives her father encouragement and advice in his establishment of the cooperative.</p> <p>DEF</p> <p>Xi, as the potential helper/opposer. Qingshan tells Xi that several vagrants have come to cause trouble his toilet and city people are afraid of using their tractor toilet. Xi tells Qingshan he will go to the city with him.</p> <p>↑</p> <p>DEF</p> <p>Niu, as the potential helper/opposer. When Xi and Qingshan arrive at the city, the same vagrants come near them to ask them for money. Qingshan warns them to go away they refuse. Xi tries to reason with them but they start to beat Xi. Qingshan shouts loudly to get help. Mr. Niu, happens to pass by and scolds the vagrants for their behaviour. The vagrants want to beat Niu too.</p> <p>DEF</p> <p>(Rs)</p> <p>Xi, as the potential helper /opposer. Xi stops them, telling them that they cannot beat Niu and that Niu is head of the county. The vagrant humiliates Niu by claiming that his father is the mayor. Niu is so furious at the vagrant's rudeness that he has a burst of cerebral hemorrhage and falls in a faint. Xi carries Niu to the hospital in a hurry. Niu stays in the hospital.</p> <p>↓</p> <p>B</p> <p>Xi and Qingshan's movement back home (Xi's voiceover) Niu is out of danger but the doctor says that Niu may suffer from the side effects of cerebral hemorrhage. Xi feels upset about Niu's illness because Niu illness results from his attempt to help him.</p>	
seg8		<p>↑</p> <p>B</p> <p>Erhu's movement to the town to see Li Li, head of Longwan town gets Erhu to the town and talks to him about the coming annual work assessment in Longwan town by the county above at the end of 2006. Li tells Erhu that the country will assess the work of the</p>	

			<p>DEF Longwan town and Longwan town will assess the work of the villages within the town and Xijia village will be the focus of the town assessment.</p> <p>Erhu's involvement with Li as the potential helper/opposer. Er tells Li that Xi's family is the focus of the Xijia village. Erhu tells Li that Xi has been thinking of establishing an economic cooperative with the villagers ever since his return to the village at the beginning of 2006 and has not yet set up the cooperative yet. Li tells Erhu that the failure to establish the cooperative results from the villagers' worry about the risk involved in the market and Xi himself does not have the marketing ability. Li suggests that Erhu get Sangui to join the cooperative. With Sangui in charge of marketing the agricultural products, the villagers need not worry about the selling of the products. Li takes the Sangui's lavender project as a good example. Only through this way will the corporation-plus-farmers production mode come into existence. Erhu tells Li that he will put Li's suggestion into practice as soon as possible and that he wants to get a best village title for Xijia village in the coming annual assessment. Result: Li advises Erhu to get Sangui to join Xi's cooperative and Erhu takes Li's advice.</p> <p>↓ Erhu's movement back to the village</p>
	seg9	<p>↑</p> <p>DEF Xi's family is on their way to the greenhouse to harvest the lavender seeds Qingshan, Qingmei, Wensheng and Xiulan as the potential helpers/opposers with regard to Xi's lavender project. Qingshan reading them the instructions about how to harvest the seeds. Xi tells his son that they will harvest the seeds carefully, treating the seeds as gold. Xi is happy and is humming his favorite tune again. They finish the harvest within a day.</p> <p>B That night Qingshan comes to tell Xi that he cannot get through to Sangui's mobile. Xi tells his son he will go to the village committee to phone Sangui again the following day.</p> <p>↑</p> <p>DEF Xi's movement to the village committee.</p> <p>DEF Erhu, as the potential helper/opposer. Xi goes to the committee the following morning and wants to ask Erhu for Sangui's other phone numbers. When Xi tells Erhu that he has already harvested the lavender seeds, Erhu tells Xi to contact Sangui as soon as possible for the selling of the seeds and get Sangui to come back to the village once the seeds are sold.</p> <p>DEF- Sangui as the potential helper/opposer. When Erhu tries Sangui's other phone numbers, Sangui's phone has been turned off. Xi is worried and wonders whether something has happened to Sangui. Result: Xi cannot reach Sangui with the number Erhu has given him.</p> <p>B Erhu suggests that Xi go and take the seeds to the city to find Sangui.</p> <p>↓</p> <p>DEF Xi's movement home</p> <p>DEF Xi, as the potential helper/opposer. On his way back home from the village committee, Xi meets Sichuan girl who is on her way to the village committee to complain to Erhu about Liuzi's beating her because Liuzi does not believe the son is his. Xi asks her not to bother Erhu with such a thing.</p>	

			<p>B ↑ DEF- ↑ DEF ↑ Q- ↓</p>	<p>Sichuan girl then gets Xi to talk to Liuzi. Xi's movement to Liuzi's home . Xi as the potential helper/opposer. When Xi arrives, Liuzi is drinking wine. Xi scolds Liuzi for beating Sichuan girl since she has come a long way to see him and has had a baby son with her. Liuzi is drunk and argues with Xi. Xi realizes that Liuzi has lost money in his lamb business. Result: Xi fails to help Sichuan girl since Liuzi is drunk to take his advice. Xi' departure from Liuzi's home Xi, as the potential helper/opposer. Before going home, Xi tells Sichuan girl to forgive Liuzi because Liuzi has suffered losses in his business. Xi advises her to do a paternity test for her son in the future when they can afford the test otherwise she will not have a happy life with Liuzi for the rest of her life. Sichuan girl is offended by Xi's distrust in her. Xi tells her that his trust in her has no use and that she has to get Liuzi to trust her. Qingshan's movement to Liuzi's house to get Xi Just then Qingshan comes to ask him whether he has contacted Sangui or not. Qingshan scolds his father for minding other people's business when Xi tells him that he can't reach Sangui with the call. Xi and Qingshan's movement back home</p>
18	seg 1		<p>↓ BC ↑ ↑ DEF- LEx DEF- ↑ DEF ↑ DEF</p>	<p>Qingshan and Xi's arrival home Qingshan gathers the whole family to discuss as to how to handle the seeds and Xiulan suggests taking the seeds to the city to find Sangui. Wensheng disagrees for fear that they cannot find Sangui in the city. Qingmei supports her mother's suggestion. Xi feels that they have no other way but to take the seeds to the city for Sangui. Xi and Qingshan's movement to the city the following morning Xi and Qingshan's movement to Sangui's company Xi and Qingshan take the lavender seeds to the city for Sangui. Xi is a bit worried when he cannot contact Sangui by phone. When they go to Sangui's company office at the city, the office is closed and Sangui is not there. A middle-aged woman working in the building tells them that there has not been any one working in Sangui's company for quite a long time. Her account makes Xi worried. Result : Xi and Qingshan can't find Sangui. Xi is upset and says that Sangui has deceived them. Qingshan disagrees with his father, reminding his father that Sangui himself has bought the seeds. Sangui as the potential helper/opposer. They wait in the building for Sangui for a while, but Sangui does not return. Xi and Qingshan's movement to the hotel Qingshan, as the potential helper/opposer. Xi later takes Qingshan to the hostel where he and Xiulan stayed last time and stay there for a night. Qingshan gets his father to go and have something with him at a small restaurant, but Xi is too upset about Sangui's disappearance to feel like eating anything. Qingshan and Xi's movement to a restaurant Qingshan, as the potential helper/opposer. At the restaurant, Qingshan reads some information about seeds companies from a newspaper and</p>

			<p>↑ DEF-</p> <p>↑ DEF</p> <p>B</p> <p>C</p> <p>Q-</p> <p>DEF</p> <p>↑ DEF</p> <p>B</p> <p>BQ-</p>	<p>suggests that they go to the companies to sell their seeds.</p> <p>Qingshan and Xi's movement to a seed company</p> <p>The head of a seed company as the potential helper/opposer. Later, they go to one of the seed companies to sell their seeds. The company head asks them for a seed contract. When he learns that they have not signed a seed contract, he refuses to buy their seeds, telling them that they only buy the seeds from those who have signed a contract with the company. Result: Xi and Qingshan fail to sell their lavender seeds.</p> <p>Xi and Qingshan's movement to the hotel</p> <p>Xi, as the potential helper/opposer. Qingshan feels frustrated and feels that they have wasted over half a year on growing the unsalable seeds. Xi tries to comfort Qingshan with the difficulties he has encountered during his life. Xi tells Qingshan that money is something to be desired. Use it when you have it and do not worry about it when you do not have it. He suggests that they have a good bath and a good rest that night and that they go home the following day.</p> <p>That night, Xi calls Erhu about his plan to return to the village since they cannot find Sangui. Xi tells Erhu that Sangui has deceived his family.</p> <p>Erhu asks Xi to stay at the city while he will get someone find Sangui for him.</p> <p>Qingmei, who is at the committee, scolds Sangui for deceiving the fellow villagers.</p> <p>Erhu, as the potential helper/opposer. Erhu gets Gaihua to the village committee and asks her to go to the city to find Sangui for Xi. Qingmei tells Erhu that Gaihua has not been in contact with Sangui for quite a long time. Erhu tells her that Gaihua has known Sangui's friends and that through Gaihua they can find Sangui. Erhu asks Qingmei not to worry about Gaihua since Qingshan and her father are in the city. Qingmei tells Erhu that she is afraid that Gaihua is not willing to find Sangui. Erhu says that Gaihua has to go and find Sangui since the seed project is of great importance to the whole village. Gaihua is surprised at Erhu's request but she leaves for the city that night. Result: Erhu gets Gaihua to go to the city to find Sangui for Erhu.</p> <p>Gaihua's departure to the city</p> <p>Xi's involvement with the same lodger who he met last time in the hostel. That night, Xi meets the same lodger who he met last time in the hostel. The lodger invites Xi to his room for a meal. The lodger also goes back to his village to contract land. He has contracted 20 mu of land and has got a good harvest from the land. Through their meeting, Xi learns that the lodger also grows the lavender that year just as he himself has done.</p> <p>In the meantime, Gaihua meets Mr. Zhang on the train to the city. Gaihua asks Zhang whether he has met Sangui recently. Zhang tells her that he met him two days ago and drank wine together.</p> <p>Gaihua arrives at the city the following day. When she is about to make a phone call, she recognizes a passer-by as Sangui. She scolds Sangui for deceiving Xi's family into growing the seeds for him.</p>
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		<p>DEF Sangui, as the potential helper/opposer. Sangui asks Gaihua to take him to see Xi and Qingshan. When Sangui tells Xi and Qingshan how he has used tricks to get his investment from his seed- project partner, Xi feels relieved and tells Sangui his anxiety during his stay at the city. Xi sells the seeds that day. Xi, Qingshan and Gaihua go back to the village on the same day. Result: Qingshan and Xi sell the lavender seeds.</p> <p>↓ Xi, Qingshan and Gaihua's movement to the village.</p> <p>(↑) Xi's implicit movement to the village committee that night.</p> <p>DEF Xi, as the potential helper/opposer. Xi goes to the village committee that night after he returns to the village. Erhu scolds Sangui for not coming back to the village. Xi tells Erhu that Sangui will be back in a few days. Erhu is worried about the coming annual assessment of the village by the town. He is worried that Sangui's delay in coming back to the village may postpone the establishment of the economic cooperative project in the village. Xi promises to call Sangui to come back soon.</p> <p>DEF Xi as the potential helper/opposer. Xi asks Erhu how Niu is recovering from his illness. Erhu tells Xi that he is too busy with the village work to ask about his recovery. Erhu says that Niu is county head and that he is not in a position to ask about his recovery. Erhu suggests that Xi go and see Niu on behalf of himself and on behalf of the whole village. Xi asks Erhu who is going to cover the expense for visiting Niu. Erhu suggests that Xi cover the cost himself since he has just earned money from selling the lavender seeds. Xi readily accepts the task Erhu has just assigned him.</p> <p>↓ Xi's movement back home</p>
	seg2	<p>↑ Xi's movement to Liuzi's house</p> <p>DEF Xi's involvement with Liuzi as the potential helper/opposer. Xi goes to see Liuzi and asks him to get him a best-quality lamb. Liuzi gets a good quality lamb at Xi's request.</p> <p>DEF Qingmei, Wensheng, Qingshan and Xiulan as the potential helpers/opposers. When Xi gets the lamb from Liuzi, he asks the whole family to clean the lamb thoroughly, cutting very wool off the lamb. Xi has never sent gift to other people, but he is going to break this practice of his for Niu since Niu is kind to farmers.</p> <p>↑ Xi's movement to Niu's home</p> <p>Q Xi comes to see Niu with the thoroughly cleaned lamb. Niu scolds Xi for spending money on the lamb. Xi tells Niu that he has not spent money about the lamb and that he has raised the lamb himself. Niu's wife asks Xi to take back the lamb to the village since it is not easy for him to have lam. Xi tells Niu that there are several lambs still at home. Xi thanks Niu for helping him first with the land and later with the collection of human manure from the city.</p> <p>B (Q) Niu tells Xi that there is no need to thank him. Niu tells Xi that he has been thinking about the work in the countryside while he is ill in bed. He feels that the key to the work related to agriculture, village and farmers depends on the feeling the cadre hold towards farmers. When the carders go to the countryside, the villagers invite them to their Kang to have food without</p>

		<p>↓ Ex (Q)</p>	<p>asking them to take off their shoes, take out the best things they have to serve the cadres. When the villagers go to the city, they do not enjoy the same and equal treatment from the cadres. Very few cadres invite them to their home to have meals or to drink. The villagers are required to change their shoes before entering their house. Niu thinks that the problem the villagers face is not of the simple personal relationship but related to the political social status of the villagers. He thinks it unfair to the villagers. Xi is moved by what Niu has said. Niu's wife scolds Niu for his stubbornness. She then tells Xi a story about their visit to a vice secretary, Wang, when the latter moved into a new house. She and Niu went to visit Wang on his invitation. When they entered the house, they were told to take off shoes. Niu told Wang that he takes off his shoes in order to get to a kang. Since there is not a kang in Wang's house, he did not want to take off his shoes. She teases Niu for being a countryman. Niu reminds her that he is indeed a countryman. The account makes Xi laugh. What Niu and his wife have been telling Xi show their affection toward farmers and thus their recognition of farmers.</p> <p>Xi's movement back to the village (Xi's voiceover) On his way to the village, Xi keeps thinking about Niu. Xi does not like telling lies and his parents have taught him not to tell lies. But he has lied to Niu with regard to the lamb for fear that Niu will ask him to take the lamb back to the village. He does not feel guilty about his lying to Niu today. Xi's self-exposure of himself lying to Niu and his not feeling guilty by doing so shows Xi's appreciation of what Niu has been doing for his family and for farmers.</p>
seg3		<p>↑ DEF (↓) ↓ (↑) DEF</p>	<p>Ling'ai's movement to Xi's house Xiulan and Ling'ai with each other as the potential helpers/opposers. Ling'ai comes to see Xiulan. She learns from Xiulan that her family has sold out all the lavender seeds and has earned money from the seeds. Ling'ai asks Xiulan whether she can follow her family's suit when growing crops in the field, Xiulan tells her that there is no problem. Ling'ai asks Xiulan whether her family can join the economic cooperative project Xi wants to establish, Xiulan gives her a positive answer. Xiulan's consent to Ling'ai's following Xi's family suit and to Ling'ai's request to join Xi's cooperative is a form of support to Ling'ai while Ling'ai following suit and her request is a form of support to Xi.</p> <p>Ling'ai's implicit return home Sangui's return to the village Xi's implicit movement to the village committee Sangui, Erhu, Baoqing, and Xi with each other as the potential helpers/opposers. Sangui comes back to the village. Erhu, Baoqing, Xi and Sangui discuss the establishment of an economic cooperative project. Erhu tells Sangui and Xi to establish the cooperative project as soon as possible so as to be in time for the coming annual advanced village assessment in 2006. Xi tells Sangui that some villagers like Ling'ai offer to join in the cooperative through their joint project of lavender growth. Sangui suggests that the cooperative project should concentrate on growing the organic</p>

				<p>crops Xi has initiated. Baoqing asks Erhu about the investment of the project. Erhu tells Xi and Sangui that the village committee will invest some money in the cooperative as a collective shareholder while Sangui and Xi will be the two main shareholders of the cooperative. The villagers can join in the cooperative of their own free will. Xi humbly suggests that Sangui be the biggest shareholder of the cooperative. Xi had not expected and feels a bit disappointed about Sangui's ready acceptance of his suggestion.</p>
		(↓)	DEF	<p>Xi's implicit movement back home Xiulan as the potential helper/opposer. When Xi comes back home that night and tells Xiulan about Sangui's acceptance of his suggestion that the Sangui be the biggest shareholder of the cooperative, Xiulan is angry with Xi. Xi also regrets his own suggestion but he feels it is not proper to change his mind now that he has already offered the suggestion. Xiulan asks Xi to come up with a way to make up for what he has done. Xiulan suggests that Xi tells Sangui that Qingmei and Qingshan disagree with his being the biggest shareholder of the cooperative because Xi has their money to invest in the cooperative. Xi considers Xiulan's suggestion as feasible but he tells her that he himself cannot go and tell Sangui about this.</p>
		↑	DEF	<p>Qingshan's movement to the village committee the following day Qingshan, as the potential helper/opposer. Qingshan tells Erhu and Sangui that their family's investment in the cooperative is also contributed by Qingmei and him, not just by his father. Qingshan tells them his disagreement with Sangui being the largest shareholder of the cooperative and suggests that Erhu be the largest shareholder of the cooperative. Erhu feels surprised. Sangui has no objections and asks Erhu to prepare money for the cooperative. Erhu tells Sangui that the village can only be a minor shareholder because of shortage of money. He says that Xi's family and Sangui will be the two main shareholders. Sangui explains to Qingshan that the biggest shareholder of the cooperative is different from a village head and is not selected by people but by the amount of money the shareholder has invested in the cooperative. Whoever invests the largest sum in the cooperative will be the biggest shareholder of the cooperative. Sangui offers no objections when Qingshan asks him whether he could be the biggest shareholder if he invests more money in the cooperative.</p>
		↓	B	<p>Qingshan's movement back home Qingshan comes back to tell Xiulan and Xi that Sangui has agreed to let Xi's family to be the biggest shareholder of the cooperative but tells them that they need to invest more money in the cooperative. Xiulan feels surprised but Xi tells her that they will need to sacrifice money for being the biggest shareholder of the cooperative.</p>
		(↑)	DEF	<p>Xi's implicit movement to the Qi County Administrative Bureau of Industry and Commerce Xi soon goes to the Qi County Administrative Bureau of Industry and Commerce to register the cooperative.</p>
			K	<p>(Xi's voiceover) The village committee holds a formal opening ceremony to celebrate the establishment of the cooperative project which is named the</p>

			Prosperous Agricultural Economic Cooperative. Xi is the president of the cooperative while Sangui is the general manager. Qingmei and Wensheng provide the scientific and technologic support for the cooperative. Up to fifty households in the Xijia village have joined the cooperative. With the establishment of the cooperative, Xijia village begins to grow the crops in the greenhouse on a large scale.
	seg 4	(↑) Q B C ↓ (DEF) DEF (↑) B DEF (M)	<p>Erhu's implicit movement to the town to see Li, the town head</p> <p>Erhu tells Li about the establishment of the cooperative in Xijia village and Li is happy about the news. Li's happiness shows his recognition of Erhu's work in the village.</p> <p>Li tells Erhu that the Advanced Village Assessment Team from the county will go to the village to assess the work of Xijia village the following Tuesday. Li asks Erhu to get well-prepared for the coming assessment of the work in the village including the agricultural economic development as well as other aspects of the work in the village. Li tells Erhu that Xijia must win the Advanced Village Title in the assessment.</p> <p>Erhu goes back to the village to start preparation for the coming assessment.</p> <p>Erhu's return to the village</p> <p>Erhu's implicit preparation for the coming assessment</p> <p>Dongping, as the potential helper/opposer. While Erhu is writing the summary of the village work for 2006 the day before the assessment work, Dongping tells him that he must go to the hospital to have his stomach rechecked the following day. When Erhu tells her that he needs to be at the village to receive the assessment team, Dongping insists that he go to the hospital for the recheck because she has already made an appointment with the doctor. She tells Erhu that he can leave the reception work to Baoqing and Yingping, who are also the village carders. Erhu has to listen to Dongping's suggestion despite his reluctance because Dongping threatens to spoil the assessment if he does not go for a recheck the following day.</p> <p>Xi's implicit movement to the village committee at Erhu's request that night</p> <p>Erhu tells Xi about his recheck at the hospital.</p> <p>Erhu's involvement with Xi as the potential helper/opposer. He asks Xi to help receive the coming assessment team. He asks Xi to be cautious about what he is going to say to the assessment team. Xi asks him for advice as to what he can and cannot tell the assessment team. He tells Xi to tell truth with regard to what his family has done in the field including his coming back to the village to contract land, his greenhouse project and his economic cooperative. Erhu also reminds Xi to tell the assessment team how he has helped Chouwa because that is about the education of adolescents in the village and the county has attached great importance to the education of adolescents. Xi tells Erhu that he will tell the team as he has just suggested but Erhu asks him to be flexible. Xi feels very anxious about the likely talk with the assessment team. Erhu tells him not to be worried. Xi asks Erhu what things he cannot tell the team and should be cautious when asked about. Erhu tells Xi not to talk to the team about such</p>

			<p>things as Liushiyi's beating people after getting drunk and Li Erxian's superstitious practice. Xi thinks that Erhu is asking him to tell lies. Erhu explains to Xi that the village may be awarded with a sum of money as much as one hundred thousand yuan if the village gets the advanced village title and the award can help the village to solve a lot of problems. Erhu tells Xi that he is only telling harmless lies and requests Xi to do so for the sake of the whole village and to do him a favour. Xi gives Erhu his promise reluctantly. Result: Erhu manages to get Xi's reluctant consent to his request of him to be cautious about what to say to the assessment team in the coming assessment. Erhu's request is a difficult task for Xi since Xi does not want to tell lies(M).</p> <p>↓ DEF Xi's movement home</p> <p>Xiulan, as the potential helper/opposer. Xi feels it a great pressure for him to tell lies and he is very anxious about the assessment. Xiulan suggests that he leaves the village for a while to avoid getting involved with the assessment work.</p>
19	Seg 1	<p>DEF-</p> <p>↑ B</p> <p>DEF-</p> <p>B</p> <p>↑ (↓) DEF</p>	<p>Xi's involvement with Xiulan as the potential/opposer with regard to Xi's anxiety about the coming assessment. Xiulan suggests that he leave the village for a while. Xi tells Xiulan that he cannot avoid the assessment work because Erhu tells him that he has now become well-known among the cadres in the county and in the town. Xiulan suggests that he only tell something good and avoid telling something bad. Xi finds it difficult to decide what is good and what is bad. Xi feels anxious and worried because of the coming assessment. Result: Xiulan's suggestion cannot help reduce Xi's anxiety.</p> <p>Xi's movement to the well to carry water the following morning</p> <p>Xi meets Baoqing who is on his way to see him. Baoqing tells Xi that he is the acting village head that day since Erhu has been to hospital for a re-check.</p> <p>Xi's involvement with Baoqing as the potential helper/opposer with regard to Xi's anxiety about the coming assessment.</p> <p>Baoqing asks Xi to be careful when talking to the assessment team. Baoqing tells him about the importance of the advanced village title for Xijia village. Xi tells Baoqing that Erhu has also talked to him about the importance of the title for the village. Xi asks Baoqing whether he can be excused from the assessment because he is very anxious of the assessment. Xi is worried that he will say something improper. Baoqing tells Xi that he is too famous and too important to be excused from the assessment. Result: What Baoqing has told Xi has made Xi even more anxious.</p> <p>Baoqing tells Xi that he will call him through the villager speaker and asks him to get to the village committee on the call. He then goes to check the cleanness of the village</p> <p>Baoqing's movement to check the cleanness of the village</p> <p>Xi's implicit movement back home</p> <p>Xi himself, as the potential helper/opposer with regard to his anxiety about the coming assessment. Afraid of saying something improper during the</p>

				coming assessment and thus spoiling the village's opportunity to get the advanced village title. Xi asks Xiulan to get him the cupping glass and then asks her to apply the heated cup to somewhere near his throat. With the cupping done, Xi gives the appearance of having a hurt throat and thus of having great difficulty in speaking. Result: Xi himself has come up with a way to avoid saying anything improper in the coming assessment.
		(↑)		Baoqing's and the assessment team's implicit movement to Xi's Greenhouse
		DEF		Baoqing, as the potential helper/opposers with regard to Xijia village's chance of winning the advanced village title in the assessment. Baoqing shows the assessment team Xi's greenhouse and tells the team Xi's influence on the villagers to establish similar greenhouses. Baoqing also tells the team that Xi is the model of Xijia village—Xi being the first to have come back to the village on learning the agricultural tax exemption policy, Xi's contracting some land in the village to grow crops, Xi's contrasting the village fishing pond to raise fish, Xi's establishment of an economic cooperative project in the village, Xi's being a talented farmer. Xi accompanies the team and gets complimented on what he has achieved ever since his return to the village from the city. When the head of the team asks Xi to say something, Xi shows the head his hurt throat and his inability to speak. Qingshan speaks on his behalf, expressing thanks for the country's preferable agricultural tax exemption policy and for the support his family has got from the county, city and the town.
		C		Baoqing takes the team head to the Home for the Childless Aged Villagers and the village primary school at the request of the head.
		↑		Baoqing and the assessment team move to the Home for the Childless Aged Villagers and the village primary school
		Q		Xi compliments Qingshan on what he has just said.
		↓		Baoqing turns back to Xi's green house
		Q		Baoqing compliments Xi and Qingshan on what they have just done.
		B		Baoqing requests Xi and Qingshan to do likewise when the team goes to the village committee for further assessment.
		C		Xi's tacit consent of Baoqing's request
		↑		Xi's movement to the village committee
		(↑)		Baoqing and the assessment team's implicit arrival at the village committee. When the team arrives at the committee, the representatives of villagers have been waiting for them.
		B		Baoqing briefly introduces Yang, head of the team and Li, his assistant to the representatives.
		C		Baoqing tells the representatives to tell the truths when Yang and Li ask them questions. Yang requests Xi to sit closer to the assessment team, which Xi consents to do after brief hesitation. Yang also asks the representatives to tell truths about the village to so as to support their work as well as to further develop the new socialist construction of Xijia village.
		DEF		The representatives of villagers as the potential helpers/opposers with regards to Xijia village's chance of winning the advanced village title. When asked whether there are any quarrels or fights in the village, one

			<p>representative tells Yang that there used to be but not now this year since everyone is preoccupied with their work in the field. When asked whether the village cadres work well with each other or not, the representatives Yang that Erhu is fair and just while others are also good. Baoqing confirms the representative's account. Yingping tells Yang about the achievement of the adolescent education in the village, citing Chouwa's case as an example. When Yang asks Xi whether there is anyone practicing superstition in the village, Baoqing gives a negative answer for Xi and Xi confirms by nodding his head. Result: The representative villagers' responses give the assessment team a favourable impression of Xijia village. So far Xijia village is closer to the winning of the advanced village title.</p> <p>(↑) DEF- Xiulan's implicit movement to the village committee Xi and to some extent Xiulan, as the potential helper/opposer with regard to Xijia village's chance of winning the advanced village title. Xiulan comes to tell Xi that Li Erxian has come to cry at their house, accusing Xi of cutting off her sources of earning money. Xi apologizes to the assessment team for his leaving for his home, telling them that Li Erhu the fortune teller has come to his home to cause trouble and that he has to go home to stop her nuisance. Yang is strange at what Xi has just said. He asks Xi why he says there is a fortune teller in the village since he has just denied the existence of superstitious practice in the village. Xi tells Yang that there is indeed a fortune teller in the village. He has been asked not to tell him this. He tells Yang that he has been pretending to be unable to speak for almost the whole day. Everyone in the room is shocked and embarrassed by what Xi has just said. Feeling extremely embarrassed, Xiulan pulls her husband away from the room. Result: Telling the truth about Li Erxian and about his pretending to be unable to speak during the assessment spoils Xijia village's chance of winning the advanced village title.</p> <p>K- Xi's fails to keep his promise to Erhu to be careful about what to speak during the assessment and spoils Xijia village's chance of winning the advanced village title.</p> <p>C (↑) DEF Xi's intention to stop Li Erxian's nuisance Xi and Xiulan's implicit movement back home Xi's involvement with Li Erxian. When Xi arrives at his home, Li Erxian is blubbering in Xi's courtyard over Xi's cutting off her means of earning money. Xi tells her that the county carders are assessing the village work that day and threatens to take her to them if she does not stop her nuisance. Learning about the assessment team, Li stops her nuisance and runs away quickly. Xi asks the villagers who have gathered at his courtyard to watch Li's nuisance not to believe Li's superstitious practice and asks them to go home. Xi's succeeds in stopping Li's nuisance.</p> <p>K Xi's intention to stop Li Erxian's nuisance is accomplished.</p>
	seg 2		<p>↓ (↑) B Erhu and Dongping come back to the village at night. Baoqing's implicit journey to Erhu's house Baoqing comes to enquire about Erhu's re-check. Erhu tells Baoqing about recovery from his stomach trouble. Erhu's learning from Baoqing what has</p>

				happened during the assessment that day.
			↑	Angry, Erhu leaves immediately for the village committee, followed by Baoqing.
			B	Erhu calls Xi to go to the committee through the village speaker
			C	Xi's reluctant consent to go to the village committee upon Xiulan's persuasion.
			↑	Xi's movement to the village committee
			U	As a false hero, Xi is scolded by Erhu for his spoiling Xijia village's chance of winning the best advanced village title.
			L	(Xi does not argue with Erhu until) Erhu falsely accuses him of being Xijia village's traitor.
			Ex	Xi angrily exposes to Erhu the real cause for his telling the truth about Li Erxian's superstitious practice. He angrily blames Erhu and other cadres in the village for what has happened that day. Xi scolds Erhu and other village carders for not stopping Li Erxian's superstitious practice in the village. If they have stopped her, he would not have said what he has said that day.
			Q	That Erhu could not say anything with regard to Xi's scolding shows Erhu's tacit acknowledgement of the rightness of Xi's scolding. Erhu's suggestion that Xi run for village head at the village head election toward the end of the year shows Erhu's recognition of Xi's ability. Xi's subsequent mild scolding that Erhu is too busy to take care of his health, not to mention Li Erxian's case, shows Xi's tacit recognition and appreciation of what Erhu has done as the village head.
			DEF	Xi, as the potential helper/opposer. Erhu asks Xi whether the village head is an officer or not. Xi thinks that village head is actually a director of the village committee rather than an officer. Erhu says that Xi can make a village head since he knows this. Xi suggests that Erhu be director of the village committee if he himself works as the village head. Erhu smiles and nods his agreement with Xi's suggestion. Xi then asks Erhu about his re-check and Erhu tells him that the re-check shows all right. When Xi is about to leave, Xi asks Erhu whether he wants him to do something to make up for what happened during the assessment. Erhu declines.
			↓	Xi's movement back home
			B	When Xi comes back home, Qingshan asks his father why Erhu has called to see him. Xi tells his son that Erhu scolds him and later he scolds Erhu back.
			DEF	Xiulan and Qingshan, as the potential helper/opposer with regard to what Xi has said about Li Erxian's superstitious practice. Xiulan scolds Xi for his scolding Erhu. She thinks that is it Xi who has said something inappropriate during the assessment. Qingshan asks Xi what he has said. Qingshan does not think what his father has said is something serious. Xiulan tells Qingshan that the village will not get the advanced village title because of that. Qingshan thinks that his father does not need to worry about that since he is the president of the cooperative. Xi admits that he had made a mistake in that day's assessment.
			DEF	Xiulan and Qingshan, as potential helper/opposers with regard to whether

				<p>Xi should do anything to remedy his mistake or not. Xiulan thinks Xi should do something to make up for his mistake while Qingshan thinks that the remedy may make matters worse. Xi decides to make up for his mistake.</p> <p>C Xi's intention to go to talk to the head of the assessment team the following day</p> <p>↑ Xi's movement to the town the following day</p> <p>DEF Xi, as the potential helper/opposer.</p> <p>Xi goes to the town to see Li, hoping that he can talk to Yang through Li's help. When he arrives, Li tells him that he is about to see him too. When he enters Li's office, Yang is also there, and wants to see him too. Yang asks Xi whether there is someone in Xijia village practicing superstition. Xi explains to Yang that Li Erhu used to practice superstition. Xi has stopped her superstitious practice and no one in the village goes to see her for her superstitious practice. During the assessment day, she came to his home to cause him trouble and he went home to solve the trouble. Xi tells Yang that this shows that no one in the village practice superstition. Yang is convinced of Xi's explanation. Xi asks Yang whether Xijia village can still get the advanced village title. Yang's affirmative answer makes Xi released. Xijia village is going to get the advanced village after all. Result: Xi's remedial attempt succeeds in getting the advanced village title for Xijia village.</p> <p>(↑) Xi's implicit movement to the village committee</p> <p>Q The village committee's invitation of Xi to drink wine to thank him for what he has done for Xijia village's winning the advanced village title shows the recognition of Xi by the village committee.</p> <p>↑ Sichuan girl's coming to the village committee to ask Erhu for help</p> <p>B While Xi and the village cadres are having their drinks, Sichuan girl comes to see Erhu. She tells Erhu that Liuzi no longer beats her and that he no longer argues with her over her baby son. But Liuzi's mother threatens to kill her son because she does not believe that the baby is Liuzi's son. Sichuan girl asks Erhu to help her and provide evidence that her baby is Liuzi's son.</p> <p>DEF Erhu and Xi, as the potential helper/opposer. Erhu feels it difficult to help Sichuan girl since she is not married with Liuzi and that Liuzi has not yet admitted that the baby is his. Erhu asks her to get Liuzi to the committee. Xi stops Erhu's attempt to get Liuzi to the committee. He tells Erhu that he knows Sichuan girl's situation and that even the judge cannot solve her problem. Xi offers to solve her problem for him. Xi dictates to Erhu a certification for Sichuan girl, Ladi, on behalf of the village committee, certifying that Ladi's baby son is Liuzi's son and requesting Liuzi and Liuzi's mother to be nice to Ladi's son rather than beating him. Ladi is very grateful to Xi for helping her. Result: Xi provides the evidence Sichuan girl wants.</p> <p>K/W Ladi and Liuzi get married later. It can be implied through their marriage that Liuzi's mother approves of Liuzi's relationship with Ladi because of the certification provided by Xi since Xi has helped take care of Chouwa and Liuzi's mother trusts Xi.</p>
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		Q	On the second day of Ladi and Liuzi's marriage, Xijia village is formally announced as the advanced village. On the day, the whole village organizes a folk singing performance at the village locust tree to celebrate the village's getting the advanced village title at the assessment. The celebration praises Xi's efforts to grow crops in the land and his achievements and calls on the villagers to follow his suit. The folk singing performance not only celebrates the village's getting the advanced village title but also shows a formal recognition of Xi's achievements among the Xijia village.
	seg 3	B	(Xi's voice over) On the last date of 2006, Qingmei gets a phone installed at the family because she wants to use the internet. Xi knows nothing about the internet.
		↓	On the same date, Sangui returns to the village and takes Mr. Wang, the general manager of the Healthy Food Company in the provincial city to the village committee to see Erhu.
		↑	Sangui and Mr Wang go to the village committee.
		B	Wang apologizes to Erhu for what has happened in the past and for making Xi unhappy with their inappropriate way of using Xi's fame to promote their company's products.
		DEF	Erhu, as the potential helper/opposer. Erhu reassures Wang that they should forget about the unpleasant happening in the past and look into the future cooperation.
		↑	Since there is something wrong with the village speaker, Erhu goes to Xi's house to get Xi to the village committee.
		B	Erhu arrives at Xi's house and tells him that Sangui has come back with a big cooperation project. Xi is excited at the news but he is unhappy when Erhu tells him that the company which is going to cooperate with his cooperative is the same company that invited him to the city to advertise its products that summer.
		DEF-	Xi, as the potential helper/opposer with the cooperation between the cooperative and the provincial Healthy Food Company. Xi refuses to cooperate with the company because the company is deceiving customers. Erhu explains to Xi that everything is changing and so is the company. The company has a new president. Erhu tries to persuade Xi to go to the village committee to meet and talk to the company's president but without success. Result: Xi's initial refusal to cooperate with the Healthy food company.
		K-	Temporal failure to establish cooperation between the cooperative and the provincial Healthy Food Company.
		↓	Erhu comes back to the village committee without Xi.
		B	Sangui is a bit angry with Xi's refusal but Wang tells Sangui to be patient. Sangui suggests that they go to talk to Xi with the drafted contract.
		↑	Erhu, Sangui and Wang go to Xi's house
		DEF	Xi, Erhu, Sangui and Wang as the potential helpers/opposers with regard to the cooperation between the cooperative and the provincial Healthy Food Company.

				<p>Sangui, Wang and Erhu arrive. Wang greets Xi but Xi is not friendly. Sangui asks Xi to take a look at the drafted contract and then make a decision. When Xi reads the contract, he is surprised to find that the Healthy Food Company promises to pay two hundred thousand yuan in advance to the village cooperative. Wang explains to Xi that the prepayment is offered by the new president of the Healthy Food Company and proposed by Wang himself since the company has given Xi a very negative impression. Wang tells Xi that his company wants to establish sincere and honest cooperation with the village cooperative and to rebuild its new image. Learning from Wang the Healthy Food Company's sincerity in cooperation, Xi agrees to cooperate with the company. Xi invites Wang, Sangui and Erhu to lunch at his house. Wang tells Xi that they have signed a six-hundred mu contract and is not sure whether Xi's cooperative can provide the vegetables needed. Xi reassures Wang that their cooperation is centred on his economic cooperative and extends to the whole village. Erhu confirms Xi's promise, telling Wang that the cooperative is the village's leading industry and will use this cooperative to lead and promote the development of other projects in the village.</p>
			K	The cooperative signs its first and also an important business contract.
			B	While they are still discussing the cooperation on the table, Qingmei receives a phone call from Mr. Li, head of Longwan town. Li tells Qingmei that Niu, head of the county is coming to visit the village and asks her to tell her father to prepare for his coming. Qingmei tells Xi what Li has told her.
			↑	Xi, Erhu, Sangui, Wang, Qingmei and others go to the locust tree to welcome Niu's coming.
			B	When Niu arrives, he tells Xi that this is his day as head of the county. When Xi is surprised, Niu explain to him that he has reached retirement age and that it is time that he retires.
				Erhu tells Niu that farmers will get more support if he works longer as head of county. Niu says that whoever works as head of county will support their work in the village. Niu tells them that issues related to agricultural development, countryside and farmers are too important to be ignored. Li suggests that Niu go to the village committee. Niu, however, wants to go to the field and he asks Xi to take him there.
			B+Q	Xi introduces Wang to Niu. He tells Niu that Wang is the president of provincial food company and has come to sign a contract with his cooperative and provides prepayment to his cooperative. Niu is glad at the news. Niu also tells Xi good news that Xijia village have been assessed as the model village in Qinxian county in the course of constructing new socialist countryside. Everyone is excited at the news. Xi's introduction of Wang to Liu and Xi's telling Niu about Wang's signing a contract with Xi's cooperative shows Xi's success
			B	Niu asks Xi to take him to the field.
			↑	Xi, Niu and others go the field.
			DEF	Niu, as the potential helper/opposer. In the field, Niu asks Xi whether he has any problem that he wants him to solve. Niu promises Xi that he will take the opportunity of his last day as head of county to help him to solve

			<p>K</p> <p>Q</p> <p>↑</p> <p>T+Q</p>	<p>the problem.</p> <p>Xi tells Niu that everything is fine now (This shows the liquidation of all problems encountered by Xi).</p> <p>Niu goes first to Xi's greenhouse and later to the greenhouse of other villagers. Niu feels happy about what he has seen and tells Xi that he will come to Xijia village frequently after his retirement. (Niu's happiness reinforces Xi's success, Xijia village's success, and implicitly the success of the Party's construction of the new socialist countryside project).</p> <p>When Niu is about to leave, Xiulan runs to see Niu off with a bag of dates.</p> <p>Niu's leaving Xijia village.</p> <p>Transformation of Xi in spirit with Xi's singing. After Niu leaves, Xiulan asks Xi whether he is happy that day. Xi tells her that he is not just happy that day but throughout the whole year. Qingshan asks his father why he does not sing if he is happy all the year. Qingmei also suggests that her father sing. Otherwise he has not lived up to the expectation of 2006 since the following day will be 2007. Xiulan asks Xi to sing just for that day. Xi feels shy and embarrassed to sing, but on the request of the whole family, he sings loudly and proudly. Xi's singing shows Xi's transformation in spirit and reinforces Xi's success.</p>
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APPENDIX 14

Preliminary Narrative Analysis of Xi Gengtian's Story (part 8)

Serial Structure (following A. J. Greimas)

\bar{A}	The initial situation: the implicit breaking of a contract for the core character Xi Gengtian	
\bar{C}_3	The object desired: Xi's desire to return to Xijia village for farming upon his accidental knowledge of the agricultural tax exemption policy	
A_1	Xi's consent to act	
A_2 non c_2^- non c_2^+	<p>His involvements with various helpers/opposers in various events which cover various problems either farming-related or non-farming related</p> <p>His failures</p> <p>His own, momentary success (in solving the problem encountered)</p>	The qualifying tests
F_1 non c_3	<p>Xi's temporary success in solving various problems</p> <p>The temporary liquidation of various problems as a result</p>	Main tests
A_3 F_3 Non c_1^- /non c_1^+	<p>Xi's involvement with various helpers/opposers</p> <p>His reaction.</p> <p>The non-recognition or recognition of Xi for Xi's eventual failure or success in solving the various problems</p>	Glorifying Tests
C_2	Xi's transformation in spirit	
C_3	Xi's success in his farming career	
A_1	The new contract	

Notes	<p>From the moment of Xi's intention to contract the land, through the completion of the grain production cycle, on to the completion of the lavender production cycle and finally to the successful establishment of an agricultural economic cooperative in the village, Xi comes across various problems, some of which relate to his farming and his family and some of which relate to other villagers who relate to Xi one way or another. The story covers these problems and Xi's efforts to solve them sometimes on his own but mostly with help and support from others. Xi finally becomes a successful farmer.</p> <p>The difficulties or problems covered by the serial include farming-related problems and non-farming related problems.</p> <p>Farming related problems: contracting land for farming, illegal use of arable land, the unsprouting of the grain seeds, raising fish in the village, problems with the lavender seed project, difficulties in the establishment of an economic cooperative project in the village, problems related to the practice of eco-farming and to the application of science and technology to farming etc</p> <p>Non-farming related problems: the educational problems of children in the countryside left behind by migrant worker parents, the taking care of the childless aged people in the countryside, the superstitious practice in the country side, the marriage of young people in the village, domestic discords of different villagers, the handling of relationship between grass root village cadres and the villagers, the copyright infringement of the folklore handcraft in the village.</p> <p>Some of the difficulties or problems are directly related to Xi and his family members while other difficulties or problems are related to other villagers. Events covering these problems interweave with one another.</p>
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