PREFACE

It is sometimes jokingly said that academic conferences are beset by the contradiction between their function of promoting intellectually unsettling additions to knowledge and their equally important function as a scholarly solidarity ritual. The conference that produced the following chapters became an involuntary and peculiarly painful exercise in the reconciliation of these allegedly contradictory functions. It was held at La Casa de Maria, an ecumenical retreat and conference center in Santa Barbara, California, June 8 through 14, 1989, just four days after the armed repression of the student movement in China.

The nightmare of what was happening in China weighed very heavily on all of the conference's members. Obviously, it created a very different atmosphere for the conference from the one the editors had sought. Our first evening together was devoted to a discussion of the private clinics in Peking that might accept foreign blood donations and to a consideration of which Chinese intellectuals were in the greatest danger. Eventually, we found that our solidarity as a group lay in trying to create an image of affirmative scholarship as a contrast to the images of evil then on our television screens. At no time was it possible to conjure up a spirit of business as usual.

The conference had been planned by various people from about 1985. The original suggestion came from Professor Evelyn Rawski, acting as chairperson of the Joint Committee on Chinese Studies of the American Council of Learned Societies, and the editors wish to express their gratitude to her. The conference was in fact sponsored by that committee, and our thanks are also due to Jason H. Parker, its executive associate. Additional funding for the conference came from the Mellon Foundation and the U.S. National Endowment for the Humanities. While the University of British Columbia and the University of California, Los Angeles, were both involved in the conference's

preparation, making it a multinational affair, the UCLA Center for Chinese Studies was the matrix and the command center of the conference. For his help, the editors thank Professor Philip Huang, the center's director. We also owe a strong debt of gratitude to Richard Gunde, the center's assistant director, whose advice and assistance and heroic organizational skills in dealing with the continuing business of the conference were indispensable to us.

The members of the conference included Professor Suzanne W. Barnett of the University of Puget Sound and Professor Harriet Zurndorfer of the Sinologisch Instituut, University of Leiden. We are grateful to them for coming to the conference and for so generously sharing their ongoing research about Ch'ing dynasty education with us. Our discussants included a Sung dynasty scholar, an anthropologist of Africa, and a historian of modern Japan. For helping us to hold up a mirror to ourselves and offering stimulating guidance about our chapters, our thanks are due to Professors Peter Bol, Jack Goody, Tetsuo Najita, Peter Perdue, Frederic Wakeman, Jr., and Ying-shih Yü. The editors also wish to thank Adam Schorr and Regie Stites of UCLA for being such exemplary rapporteurs to the conference.

In addition to writing a somewhat cursory introduction to the volume, the editors have chosen to write a concluding chapter in which we offer our particular views, but not necessarily the views of the other conference members, about the conference's general subject.

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