

## 9. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

At the end of my thesis I would like to thank all those people who made this thesis possible and an unforgettable experience for me.

First of all, I would like to express my deepest sense of **G**ratitude (with a capital and bold g) to my supervisor Dr. Manfred Gossen at the MDC, who offered his continuous advice and encouragement throughout the course of this thesis. I thank him for the systematic guidance and great effort he put into training me in the scientific field. Like a charm!

I would like to express my very sincere gratitude to Prof. Niemitz and Miss Austen from the Free University for the support to make this thesis possible.

I acknowledge my gratitude to the Max-Delbrueck-Center for Molecular Medicine in Berlin for the absolute support to the thesis. Special thanks to Peter for giving me the absolute access to the FACSorter and the technical assistance.

I am thankful to my colleagues Drs. Katrin Engel, Mathias Hampf and Maren Mieth for the help and support during my stay in Germany, to Frau Marion Papst and Frau Daniela Tabor for their technical assistance to my project. I also wish to thank Mariam Honarmand, Anand Ranjan, Tina Baldinger, Dr. Pierre Debs and Vishal Agrawal for the fun time I had in AG Dr. Gossen at the MDC.

I am thankful to Dr. Maolian Gong and Yongke Yu for the support and encouragement whenever I was in need. My gratitude also to Drs. Wei Shi, Jiong Tao and Yanyan Sun for their care and precious friendship during my stay at the MPI. I also want to thank Dr. Sarah Schoiet for the friendship and spiritual support.

I am indebted to the College of Animal Science at HZAU for the education during my stay there. I give my sincere thanks to Profs. Xiong Yuanzhu, Deng Changyan, Jiang Siwen, Peng Jian, Su Yuhong and Dr. Zheng Rong for the encouragement. I thank Drs. Li Fenge, Liu Tao and Zhang Chang for the happy

time we spent together during my study at HZAU. I also would like to give my gratitude to my lovely roommates, Liu Meiyong, Yang Min, Pan Peiwen and Dai Bojie, for the time with laughter, mutual encouragement, and love I had at HZAU, also for their care and love despite my current location. I am also indebted to Dr. Zhu Ximing for her mother-like care given to me, even now.

My very sincere thanks to Helen & Frank Netzer for their parent-like support, generous care and the home feeling whenever I was in need during my stay in Germany. I will miss you both very much!!!

I am thankful to Dr. Christopher D. Kaufman for his selfless support, encouragement, and love given to me during the course of this thesis, and also for his flawless grammatical editing of my thesis.

Finally, I take this opportunity to express the profound gratitude from my deep heart to my beloved parents, grandparents, and my siblings for their love and continuous support – both spiritually and materially. I also would like to thank my nephew, Wang Lishan, and the niece I've not yet seen, Liu Tairan, for the laughter gifted to me with your cute and tender voice on the phone calling me Auntie Liu Weimin.