

CANCER SURVIVORS SPREAD HOPE P.24 | BANKS TOO SUCCESSFUL P.28

BEIJING REVIEW

VOL.55 NO.14 APRIL 5, 2012

北京周報 WWW.BJREVIEW.COM



UNDER THE KNIFE

Pursuit of beauty in under-regulated clinics

RMB6.00
USD1.70
AUD3.00
GBP1.20
CAD2.60
CHF2.60

ISSN 1000-9140



9 771000 914123

JPY188 邮发代号2-922 · 国内统一刊号: CN11-1576/G2

CHINA AFRICA

中國非洲
A news monthly covering China & Africa



An Africa-oriented English monthly covering China and Africa published by BEIJING REVIEW, ChinAfrica is the only one in China featuring news, views and analysis for an African audience.

12 issues a year at a subscription rate of 180 yuan

Subscription hotlines: (8610) 6831 0644, 6899 6223, 6899 5808

Postal Distribution Code: 2-916

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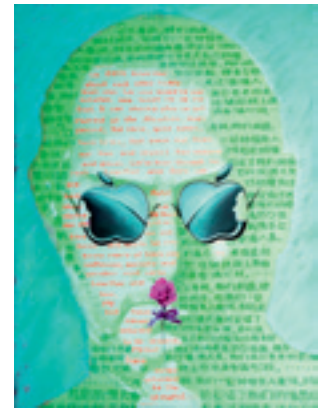
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Cool Down the Craze

Recently, news about plastic surgery has caught the attention of the public. A young woman with the Internet username “pink baby” has spent more than 4 million yuan (\$635,000) on over 200 cosmetic surgeries during the past 13 years. The first operation was done on her eyelids when she was 16. Since then, doctors have operated on nearly every part of her body, some parts more than once. Nonetheless, these expensive operations didn’t bring her beauty or the perfect figure that she desired, but have left her in constant pain.

Of the more than 200 plastic surgeries, 70 percent were repairs after failed operations. Despite that, she still couldn’t resist the lure of cosmetic surgery and became addicted. Worse still, due to substandard and often illegal operating procedures, the injected substances in her body are like bombs that could explode anytime, with disastrous consequences for her health.

The story of this woman reflects the worrying situation of China’s cosmetic surgery industry and the over-emphasis on appearance in Chinese society.

Alongside the economic boom, the quality of Chinese people’s lives has greatly improved, which gives them more ability to pursue beauty. Cosmetic surgery is appealing to many ordinary Chinese, not just stars in the entertainment business. Since the 1990s, a plastic surgery department has been established in almost every hospital in China. Entering the 21st century, the business is more prosperous than ever.

China saw over 3.4 million plastic surgeries from 2009 to 2010, among which 1.8 million are surgical operations, according to an investigation conducted by the International Society of Aesthetic Plastic Surgery. With this number, China ranks third in the world in terms of the number of plastic surgeries.

The total production value for China’s plastic surgery sector reached 300 billion yuan (\$47.58 billion) in 2010, with more than 20 million people working in the business. During the past decade, the industry has witnessed a 40-percent annual growth.

High demand in the market leads to the existence of some substandard plastic surgery institutions, increasing the risks of having cosmetic surgeries. According to the China Consumers’ Association, during the past decade there have been 20,000 consumer complaints annually because of failed plastic surgeries. The astonishing number tells us that about 200,000 Chinese people have been disfigured to some degree by plastic surgeries in the past 10 years.

Compared with other countries with developed plastic surgery industries, China has lax supervision on the industry or even none at all in some places. Some advertisements for plastic surgery make it sound “simple,” “painless” and “with no side effects at all.” It is hard for consumers to clearly apprehend the truth. The reckless pursuit of being good-looking and over reliance on plastic surgery make more and more people willing to risk their health to receive such operations. ■

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北京周报 英文版 2012年 第14期 ISSN 1000-9140 广告许可证 0171号
北京市期刊登记证第733号 邮发代号2-922 国内统一刊号: CN11-1576/G2 国内零售价: 人民币6.00元

CHINA...RMB6.00 U.S.A....USD1.70 AUSTRALIA....AUD3.00 UK....GBP1.20 CANADA....CAD2.60 SWITZERLAND....CHF2.00
JAPAN....JPY188 EUROPE....EURO1.90 TURKEY....YTL5.00 HK....HKD9.30 NEPAL....RS40



BEIJING REVIEW

A News Weekly Magazine
Published Since 1958

📱 iPad APP

<http://www.bjreview.com>

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Published every Thursday by

BEIJING REVIEW, 24 Baiwanzhuang Lu,

Beijing 100037, China.

Overseas Distributor: China International Book Trading

Corporation (Guoji Shudian), P. O. BOX 399,

Beijing 100044, China

Tel: 86-10-68413849 Fax: 86-10-68412166

E-mail: fp@mail.cibtc.com.cn

Website: <http://www.cibtc.com>

General Distributor for Hong Kong, Macao and Taiwan:

Peace Book Co. Ltd.

17/FI, Paramount Bldg, 12 Ka Yip St, Chai Wan, HK

Tel: 852-28046687 Fax: 852-28046409

Beijing Review (USPS 2812) is published weekly in the United States

for US\$64.00 per year by Cypress Books,

360 Swift Avenue, Suite 48, South San Francisco, CA 94080

News Postage Paid at South San Francisco, CA 94080

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to *Beijing Review*,

Cypress Books, 360 Swift Avenue, Suite 48,

South San Francisco, CA 94080



Chief Executive-Elect

Leung Chun-ying, a former Hong Kong government adviser, won the chief executive election of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of China on March 25.

Leung won 689 votes of the 1,132 votes cast by members of the 1,200-member Election Committee. According to the city's Electoral Affairs Commission, a candidate who obtains more than 600 valid votes will win the election. The whole process was under the supervision of the Electoral Affairs Commission, as well as the scrutiny of candidates, the public and the media.

Leung said that he will uphold Hong Kong's core values and will work to solve many issues of social conflict in order to maintain the prosperity and stability of Hong Kong.

Born in 1954 in Hong Kong, Leung graduated from the Hong Kong Polytechnic University. He later studied valuation and estate management in Britain for four years before returning to Hong Kong and joining a real estate firm in 1977.

In 1985, Leung was elected secretary general of the Basic Law Consultative Committee. He was the convenor of the Non-Official Members of the Executive Council of Hong Kong from 1999 until resigning the post in October 2011 to stand for election.

“In the current complex and ever-changing international situation, China and Russia should take a more active stance to implement major consensus on bilateral cooperation, maintain close high-level contacts and bolster political support for each other.”

Chinese President Hu Jintao, agreeing to promote China-Russia relations to a new level, during a meeting with Russian President Dmitry Medvedev on the sidelines of the fourth BRICS Summit in New Delhi, India, on March 28

“Continued growth in BRICS countries is the biggest contribution to speeding up global economy recovery.”

Liu Guojin, former Chinese Ambassador to South Africa and former Special Representative of the Chinese Government on African Affairs, speaking of the power of the five most dynamic emerging economies in Beijing on March 28

“China believes the acceptance of the six-point plan is helpful for promoting a political resolution to the Syrian issue. China hopes the Syrian Government and all parties concerned will seize this important opportunity, support and cooperate with Kofi Annan's mediation efforts, and therefore help ensure the effective implementation of the plan and promote a political resolution process for the Syrian issue.”

Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Hong Lei, applauding the Syrian Government's acceptance of the six-point plan put forward by UN-Arab League envoy Kofi Annan, at a regular press conference in Beijing on March 28

“I think we've come out of the financial crisis, that confidence is restored and we are in the process of economic recovery. Europe has an economic government which overcame the Greek crisis.”

French President Nicolas Sarkozy, stating that the eurozone's financial crisis has ended and that the economy of the single-currency bloc was recovering, in an interview with the regional daily *Ouest-France* on March 27

Scientific Input

The Chinese Government plans to allocate more than 15 billion yuan (\$2.38 billion) from the central budget to the country's National Natural Science Foundation, said Chen Yiyu, Director of the foundation, on March 27.

China's central budget has been steadily increasing its support for the foundation over the past few decades. In 1986, its earmark funds were only 80 million yuan (\$12.68 million).

Figures show that the foundation granted a total of 18.28 billion yuan (\$2.9 billion) to 34,836 projects out of 153,800 applications it received in 2011.

According to Chen, the foundation will increase the average financing amount for main projects that are led by senior scientists and researchers. Meanwhile, more support will be given to local scientific projects and those led by young scientists.

Fishing Ban

A two-month fishing ban on south China's Pearl River took effect on April 1, in an effort to protect the area's fish stocks.

All fishing activities are banned during the period on the main stream of the Pearl River, as well as on all tributaries and lakes connected to it, the Fishery Bureau of the Ministry of Agriculture said on March 27.

The Pearl River is the second largest river in China in terms of run-off volume, exceeded

only by the Yangtze River.

The fishing ban in the Pearl River was initiated by the Ministry of Agriculture in 2011. More than 29.05 million fish fry were released into the river during the previous ban and monitoring data showed that the average density of the fish fries in May 2011 had grown by 23.2 percent from the year earlier period.

Panda Census

Forestry authorities in northwest China's Shaanxi Province said on March 26 that they had begun combing forests for giant pandas in order to determine how many of the endangered animals are living in the wild.

The census in Shaanxi, one of the major

habitats of giant pandas, is part of a once-a-decade nationwide panda census ordered last year by the State Forestry Administration.

This is the fourth nationwide giant panda census since the program was launched in the 1970s.

Field research in Shaanxi is expected to finish by October 2013.

The previous census counted 1,596 wild pandas in China. At that time, 273 of them lived in Shaanxi and a majority of the rest lived in neighboring Sichuan Province.

Sichuan started the census last October.

Rural Services

China has formed a nationwide network to provide agricultural science and technology

FRESH FASHION A model walks down the ramp at the Mercedes-Benz China Fashion Week on March 24



AIR SHOW

The Asian Business Aviation Conference and Exhibition kicks off in Shanghai on March 26, with the participation of 150 exhibitors from around the world



Youngest Professor

Liu Lu, a senior undergraduate at Central South University in central China's Hunan Province, was hired as a professor-level researcher by the university in March for his talent in mathematics.

Liu, 22, became the youngest of his kind and was awarded 1 million yuan (\$158,900) by his university to upgrade his experimental facilities and improve his living conditions. The university has also given him special approval for successive postgraduate and doctoral programs of study to help him make greater contributions to science.

In 2010, Liu won international acclaim by solving a problem of reverse mathematics, namely the Seetapun Enigma, a conjecture put forward by English logician David Seetapun in the 1990s concerning the Ramsey Theorem of Pairs.

During the past two decades, countless mathematicians have made efforts to solve the problem but without any results. Liu solved the open question and provided a negative answer to Seetapun's conjecture.

Liu first knew about this conjecture in August 2010. After reading many papers on the issue, he was suddenly struck with an idea that could solve the problem. He finished a paper in a night and sent it to the *Journal of Symbolic Logic*, an internationally prestigious academic journal on mathematical logic, using his pen name Liu Jiayi.



services in rural areas, according to the China Rural Special Technique Association.

There are now 133,000 primary-level organizations for promoting agriculture technology across the country, with 11.3 million members.

Since 2006, the Chinese Government has invested 1.05 billion yuan (\$166.9 million) in rewarding organizations and personnel for providing agriculture technology services and supporting primary-level service units.

Cabin Entertainment

Chinese and French companies on March 27 agreed to set up a joint venture to develop cabin entertainment systems for China's homegrown C919 passenger planes.

The joint venture will be set up in Chengdu, southwest China's Sichuan Province, in the third quarter this year with an initial investment of 300 million yuan (\$48 million), according to the deal signed between the France-based Thales and China Electronics Technology Avionics Co. Ltd.

The new company will provide cabin entertainment systems for the C919 and other China-made business and large passenger jets.

Test flights of the C919, China's first independently developed passenger jet, are scheduled for 2014 and the aircraft is expected to hit the market two years later. So far, at least 235 orders have been placed for the single-aisle jet.

Sustainable Development

A seminar entitled Combat Desertification and Sustainable Development in Inner Mongolia of China—Maowusu Biomass Thermolectric Project was held at the UN Headquarters in New York City on March 26.

As a side event of the Third Intersessional Meeting of the UN Conference on Sustainable Development, the seminar highlighted the public-private partnership in China for exploring low-carbon development, combating desertification, utilizing biomass for energy and even producing nutritional supplements.

The Maowusu Biomass Thermolectric Project is an integrated management system to combat desertification while developing a sustainable green economy, which is characterized by the Tri-Carbon green economy to serve the carbon absorption (planting shrubs in the desert to fix sand dunes), carbon emission reduction (biomass power generation) and carbon sequestration (capture the CO₂ emission to produce spirulina in green houses), in addition to generating employment and income for people of ethnic groups to reduce poverty.

Luc Gnacadja, Executive Secretary of the UN Convention to Combat Desertification, suggested at the seminar that the integrated approach to combating desertification could be introduced as a good model for African and other developing countries' sustainable development initiatives.



THE REAL STEEL The Mr. Iron Robot Theme Park, which features about 600 robot-shaped sculptures, opens in Jiaxing, east China's Zhejiang Province, on March 24



QUAKE PRECAUTION Students learn self-preservation skills during an earthquake drill at Wenhualu Primary School in Zaozhuang, east China's Shandong Province, on March 26, the country's 17th National Safety Awareness Day for Middle and Primary School Students



SEA OF TEA Farmers harvest tea at Lushan Mountain, Jiangxi Province. Due to rising temperatures, the local tea leaves have been growing quickly

Banking in China

The London-based Standard Chartered Bank expects to expand its outlets on the Chinese mainland from the current 83 to 100 by the end of 2012.

Standard Chartered will continue to recruit in China this year, as it seeks to open more branches and sub-branches across the country, said Peter Sands, CEO of the lender.

“We will continue investing significantly both on the Chinese mainland and Hong Kong. We remain very excited by the opportunities in greater China,” he said.

In addition, Sands said the bank will play a leading role in the use of the renminbi in London

and in supporting the authorities from both Hong Kong and London in considering London’s role as a potential offshore renminbi center.

Joining Hands

The German auto giant Daimler AG and China’s BYD Co. Ltd. will introduce a new brand for their jointly developed electric vehicles in March, accelerating their efforts to ride on China’s green vehicles trend.

The two companies also plan to unveil the first electric vehicle model at the upcoming 2012 Beijing International Automotive Exhibition in April.

Both companies agreed to invest 600 mil-

lion yuan (\$95 million) to build a joint venture on electric vehicles in China in 2010. The Shenzhen BYD Daimler New Technology, which incorporates BYD’s experience in battery technology and e-drive system and Daimler’s know-how in design and safety, aims to commercialize its first model by 2013.

Expanding Property Tax

China will extend trials of a property taxation program to cover more cities this year as part of its efforts to regulate the real estate sector.

The tax, currently in operation in Shanghai and Chongqing, is considered a heavy tool to curb soaring housing prices. When it rolled out the levy early last year, the Ministry of Finance said all provinces would adopt the tax “when conditions are ripe.”

Jia Kang, Director of the Fiscal Science Research Center of the Ministry of Finance, said that the government will sum up lessons learned from the trials in Shanghai and Chongqing and map out an expansion plan, but he added that it is still too early to apply property taxes to the entire country.

Invigorating E-commerce

The Ministry of Industry and Information Technology released a development plan on March 27 for the electronic commerce sector, pledging vigorous efforts to double transaction value of e-commerce to 18 trillion yuan (\$2.86 trillion) by the end of 2015.

“E-commerce has expanded into various industries such as agriculture, trading, transportation, finance and travel industries and it is merging with China’s real economy,” said the ministry.

“Still, the industry faces many intractable problems, such as a low level of services, weak regulatory system and infringement of intellectual property rights,” it added. “So more efforts will be made to propel technology innovation, foster professional talent, and encourage venture capital to invest in this emerging sector.”

Numbers

606 billion yuan

China’s industrial enterprises above the designated size—those with sales revenues exceeding 20 million yuan (\$3.17 million)—generated 606 billion yuan (\$96.2 billion) in profits for the first two months of 2012, dropping 5.2 percent year on year, said the National Bureau of Statistics.

20.21 billion yuan

Lottery sales in China rose 79 percent year on year in February to hit 20.21 billion yuan (\$3.21 billion), according to data from the Ministry of Finance.

Air China Loses Shine

Air China Ltd., one of China's carrier giants, reported net profits of 7.48 billion yuan (\$1.2 billion) for last year, tumbling 38.75 percent from a year ago, because of rising fuel prices and intensifying market competition.

Its revenue rose 20 percent from a year earlier to 97.14 billion yuan (\$15.4 billion).

The Beijing-based company said it transported 59.39 million passengers on its domestic routes last year, up 18.34 percent year on year. It had 432 planes at the end of last year.

"The global aviation market still faces looming uncertainties due to slumping demand for international passenger and cargo transport," it said in a statement.

Fairing Well

The 23rd Harbin International Fair for Trade and Economic Cooperation (HIFTEC) will be held on June 15-19, 2012, in Harbin, capital of northeastern Heilongjiang Province.

In the past 22 years, the HIFTEC has played a significant role in facilitating investments and trade ties between China and neighboring nations, such as Russia, South Korea and Japan.

"This year's fair will attach greater importance to trade and investment cooperation between China and Russia because Russia's recent WTO entry provided a good opportunity to expand the economic tie-up of the two countries," said Sun Yao, Vice Governor of Heilongjiang Province. "More than 10,000 foreign business people and 100,000 domestic ones are expected to participate in the fair this year."

BRIDGING NINGXIA An airplane waits for passengers at the Yinchuan Hedong Airport. On March 24 the South Korean carrier Korean Air started a passenger route linking Seoul and Yinchuan, capital of Ningxia Hui Autonomous Region, the first international route to Ningxia

Retired Chairman

Wang Jianzhou, Chairman of China Mobile Communications Corp. (CMCC), China's largest mobile service provider, retired in March.

Founded on April 20, 2000, the company currently has the world's largest mobile phone network and largest customer base, competing for subscribers with its two major domestic rivals, China Unicom and China Telecom, in a nation with nearly 1 billion cell phone users.

Wang, 64, was born in Wenzhou, east China's coastal Zhejiang Province. He graduated from Zhejiang University with a master's degree in engineering, and holds a doctoral degree in business administration from Hong Kong Polytechnic University.

Wang has three decades of experience in the industry. He started to work for CMCC in 2004 as general manager and has been chairman of the company since 2010. Under his leadership, the total income of CMCC increased from 192.4 billion yuan (\$30.51 billion) in 2004 to 528 billion yuan (\$83.74 billion) in 2011, with the number of the company's subscribers reaching 650 million in 2011, three times that in 2004. Wang was selected one of the best CEOs in the world by *BusinessWeek* magazine in 2007.



FENG ZHAOZH

71.7 billion yuan

Sinopec Corp., China's largest oil refiner, said that its net profits grew only 1.4 percent year on year to reach 71.7 billion yuan (\$11.38 billion) in 2011.

\$1.27 billion

China imported a record \$1.27 billion worth of bottled wine in 2011, up 94 percent year on year, according to figures released at the First China Worldwide Wine Summit Forum.



Serbian President Boris Tadic lays a wreath at a monument in Aleksinac on March 24 during a ceremony commemorating those killed in NATO bombings in 1999 during the Kosovo War

SERBIA



U.S. President Barack Obama looks through binoculars toward North Korea from an observation post in the Demilitarized Zone near Panmunjom on the border between North Korea and South Korea on March 25

SOUTH KOREA



Representatives of the victims of the bombing of Chongqing protest in Tokyo on March 21 for compensation. During World War II, the Japanese military launched more than 200 air raids on the southwestern Chinese city, causing huge casualties

JAPAN



A Russian rocket carrying a U.S. *Intelsat-22* satellite blasts off from the Russian-leased Baikonur Cosmodrome in Kazakhstan on March 25

KAZAKHSTAN



Penguins at the Edinburgh Zoo prepare to move to temporary quarters on March 21 before the renovation of their usual home

BRITAIN



An Afghan National Police (ANP) trainee holds a fake gun at a German-sponsored training center in Mazar-i-Sharif on March 22. Around 200 German police officers train the ANP in Afghanistan

AFGHANISTAN



COVER STORY

COSTS OF FACE CONSCIOUS

More beauty seekers choose to ignore risks in China's plastic surgery craze
By Li Li

Ancient Chinese philosopher Confucius (551-479 B.C.) said, "Your body, hair and skin are a gift from your parents, and you do not dare to harm them. That is the beginning of filial piety."

However, the sage's words have been brushed off by a growing number of prosperous and self-conscious Chinese people, who are willing to pay big money and undergo enormous pain to become more beautiful by going under the knife.

According to the International Society

of Aesthetic Plastic Surgeons, China ranked third in the world in the number of cosmetic procedures performed in 2010, after the United States and Brazil, with 588,880 surgical procedures and 1.265 million non-surgical procedures performed in the country.

Considering that the industry was virtually nonexistent merely 30 years ago, the extent of current demand is testament to the enormous boom China's plastic surgery has undergone in the past decades.

According to national broadcaster CNR,

the total revenue of China's plastic surgery market reached 300 billion yuan (\$47.6 billion) in 2010 and more than 20 million people were employed by the industry. Extraordinarily, the industry has a projected annual growth rate of more than 40 percent.

Ups and downs

"Well-performed surgeries can totally change people's appearance and their lives. For example, women who remove extra fat from



SNESS

CREASE CRAZY: A woman lies on an operating table to receive double eyelid surgery, which is intended to make eyes appear larger by adding a crease in the eyelid, in a hospital in Beijing

YANG GUANG

their waists, hips and thighs through lipoplasty regain beautiful body curves, which gives them more self-confidence,” said Wang Shujie, a plastic surgeon at the Plastic Surgery Hospital at Peking Union Medical College.

The 46-year-old surgeon wears flattering black eye shadow and looks years younger than her age. She said that her own body has gone through double eyelid surgery, an operation to make eyes appear larger by adding a crease in the eyelid, lower eyelid surgery to alleviate puffiness and lipoplasty. She also conducted double eyelid surgery on one of her two elder sisters.

Wang, who has been a plastic surgeon for 15 years, said she spent a lot of time in front

of a mirror when she was a child and was determined to become a plastic surgeon when she graduated from high school.

“When selecting a major for my studies in medical school in 1985, I had to choose oral and maxillofacial surgery, the closest thing to a plastic surgery major that was available at the time,” Wang said.

Apart from elective cosmetic procedures, plastic surgery also includes reconstructive plastic surgery, which repairs deformities or disfigurements caused by injuries, disease or birth defects.

Despite the massive popularity it enjoys at present, the development of plastic surgery in China has not been smooth.

Plastic surgery became established in China after 1949 to treat severely wounded and burned soldiers in wars. But it almost disappeared during the “cultural revolution” (1966-76), as it was considered an unnecessary technique. After the reform and opening-up process began in the late 1970s, plastic surgery gradually revived and the industry has since experienced a boom.

Wang’s hospital, the largest plastic surgery hospital in China, was founded in 1957 by Professor Song Ruyao, who is known as the “father of plastic surgery in China.” Receiving his master’s degree in oral surgery from the University of Pennsylvania in the United States in the 1940s, he became China’s first professor of plastic and maxillofacial surgery.

The hospital was closed down in 1966-76 and reopened at a new site in Beijing’s western suburbs in 1978. After reopening, the hospital operated on a large number of cleft lip and palate patients. But over time demand for more complex and more cosmetic procedures began to rise and following the 1980s demand for plastic surgery expanded exponentially. The number of ward beds in the facility has grown from 24 in 1979 to 324 today, and around 20,000 plastic surgeries are conducted every year. The hospital has also opened two cosmetic clinics in downtown Beijing since 2001.

“Speaking from my personal practice, the two fastest growing groups of beauty seekers are young adults who feel they need to look better to increase their chances of finding better jobs and spouses and middle-aged women who want to look younger,” Wang said. While plastic surgery has long been a woman’s domain in China, she revealed that more and more young men come to her for double eyelid surgery, nose enhancement and Botox injections for slimmer faces.

According to a survey conducted by the *China Youth Daily* on the cause behind China’s recent craze for plastic surgery, 71.5 percent of respondents believe that the primary reason is the excessive emphasis on a person’s outer beauty in today’s popular culture, 49.4 percent attributed it to the popular belief that one can change his or her fate by altering personal appearance, and 38.5 percent believe the culprit is the “too alluring advertisements.”

Wang said it is not unusual for a teenager ▶▶

to produce a pop star's photo in her office and require looking exactly like the star after the operation. "I have to tell them that plastic surgery can only improve the appearance of one's existing features, it cannot turn one face into a different one," she said.

Risky operations

While some people manage to fulfill their dreams after plastic surgery, some beauty seekers find themselves having to live with results which can be a long way from their fantasies. China's plastic surgery market remains under-regulated and many patients make hasty decisions or choose risky options, which can be life-threatening.

The tragic death of Wang Bei, a 24-year-old pop singer, as a result of a respiratory failure after a "jawbone-grinding surgery" in November 2010, focused the whole country's attention on the dangers of plastic surgery.

Wang allegedly received the operation for a slimmer face. While she was having the surgery that would prove fatal, instead of waiting anxiously for her daughter outside the operating theater, her mother was undergoing the same procedure in another room at the same facility.

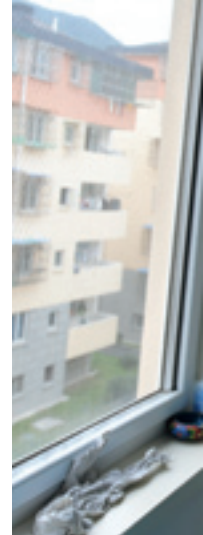
Without an autopsy available, an investigation by the Bureau of Health in Wuhan, capital of central Hubei Province, where the incident occurred, concluded that the jaw surgery caused bleeding, which blocked Wang's windpipe and caused her to suffocate.

Netizens expressed concern and questioned why a girl as pretty as Wang would feel the need for plastic surgery. Her beauty had already made her a popular contestant on the smash television hit *Super Girl*, China's version of *American Idol*.

"I hope the tragedy will raise people's awareness of the slack supervision of the plastic surgery industry," said an online post.

After Wang's death, Zhang Huabin, a professor of plastic surgery at Guangdong Medical College, told Xinhua News Agency that as demand for plastic surgery soars in China, some doctors not trained in the field are carrying out plastic surgery, which is risky and irresponsible.

Li Qingfeng, head of the Plastic Surgery Department of Shanghai No.9 Hospital, said that the aspiring pop singer was killed by technical negligence as much as by an ill-regulated plastic surgery industry. He said that



1
R. COOPER

several other women also fell victim to deadly surgical errors in 2010, although they did not make the headlines like Wang.

At a conference in November 2010, Vice Minister of Health Ma Xiaowei said that during a random inspection on clinics and hospitals offering cosmetic or plastic surgery in a provincial capital city, fewer than half met national standards. He admitted that the main problems were unqualified employees and subpar equipment and materials.

Dr. Li said that the fundamental cause behind the surge of plastic surgery-related accidents in China is that medical schools and hospitals cannot produce qualified plastic surgeons as fast as the booming market demands. This shortage means that for many unscrupulous doctors, the plastic surgery has become simply a means to make money.

"In other countries, the study and training to become a plastic surgeon usually take seven to eight years while in China, some surgeons of other specialties receive just a few months' training before they start to cut into people's faces," Li said.

Wang, the Beijing plastic surgeon, said that although the incisions made during plastic surgeries are smaller than those in most other

surgeries, they require a high degree of care and precision. "Even the smallest mistakes during plastic surgery, although not fatal, could lead to disfigurement and thus lifelong psychological pain," she warned.

According to Wang, there are a lot of patients who cannot fully close their eyes after eyelid surgeries, during which too much of their skin was cut. The necessary corrective surgeries are more complicated and expensive while the results are often less than satisfactory. "While it is easy to paint a beauty on a blank piece of cloth, it is not so easy when the painting has already been messed up," she said.

Some of Li's patients also fail to realize the risks associated with plastic surgeries. He said he often had to persuade patients who want to go home only hours after a major plastic surgery to stay at the hospital longer. "I tell them that this is surgery, not doing your hair," Li said.

Besides unqualified practitioners, problematic materials and prostheses used in surgeries are also causing beauty seekers lifetime regrets.

In April 2006, the State Food and Drug Administration banned the production, sale and use of Aomeiding, a gel injected into



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1. **HOT STUFF:** A silicone breast implant is shown at a plastic surgery clinic in Shenzhen, south China's Guangdong Province
2. **EYE OPENING:** A girl looks in a mirror at home days after a double eyelid surgery
3. **ALL JOBS ARE DONE:** Known as Aunt Qiangwei among Web users, this middle-aged woman has become a phenomenon on the Internet after going through 18 plastic surgeries to look younger and more beautiful
4. **DYING TO BE PRETTIER:** Wang Bei, a popular contestant on the smash television hit *Super Girl*, died of respiratory failure after a "jawbone-grinding surgery" in November 2010

the breast for augmentation purposes produced by a Chinese company, after it had been used on more than 300,000 women around China.

The administration found that more than 8 percent of users reported harmful reactions, which ranged from pain caused by the gel

moving to other parts of the body to cases of women having to have breasts removed.

Psychological problems

"Being anxious and insecure people nowadays are trying to seek quick ways to success and many believe plastic surgery is one of the

most convenient paths to success," said Xu Kaiwen with the Psychological Counseling Center at Peking University. "It's actually self-denial. Most of them do not recognize that they actually need psychological help."

Xu suggests that people should be evaluated by psychologists before opting for plastic surgery, though this safeguard is always ignored given the commercial incentive for immediate surgery.

An even more extreme case of plastic surgery addiction reported in the media recently is a woman in her 20s from Nanjing, east China's Jiangsu Province, who, starting at the age of 16, spent over 4 million yuan (\$634,900) on more than 200 plastic surgery procedures in beauty saloons. Born into a wealthy family, the woman never worked and once spent a whole year in the Republic of Korea to undergo a series of operations.

Unsatisfied with the results of previous surgeries, she chose to have more and more reconstructive procedures, which resulted in constant pain. During a check-up in March, doctors found that almost every part of her body had been operated upon, and some surgeries, such as wrinkle treatment, were inappropriate for her age. Doctors said that it would take two to three years of treatment for her body to recover while the full recovery of her breasts and heel bones is impossible.

Fei Junfeng, a professor at the Psychological Health Education and Research Center of Nanjing University, said that plastic surgery addicts tend to be extremely concerned about their image in the eyes of others, and often worry about the surroundings.

Many addicts keep coming back to doctors to fix so-called "failures." "I have patients who started the conversation by telling me her eyelids had been ruined by her last surgeon even though I couldn't see anything wrong with her eyelids," said Wang, the plastic surgeon in Beijing.

Cui Qing, a public relations manager of Wang's hospital, said that in the hospital doctors don't operate on beauty seekers who are uncertain about what they need and ask doctors to recommend a surgery.

"All a surgeon can change is the appearance. They cannot add confidence to people who have zero confidence in themselves," Cui said. ■

Facts and Figures:

- In 2010, the revenue of China's plastic surgery industry reached **300 billion yuan** (\$47.6 billion) and more than **20 million** people worked for this industry, which had a projected annual growth rate of more than **40 percent**.
- In 2010, China ranked third in the world in terms of the number of cosmetic procedures performed, after the United States and Brazil.
- In 2010, a total of **588,880** surgical cosmetic procedures and **1.265 million** non-surgical cosmetic procedures were performed in China.
- In 2010, the five most common surgical cosmetic procedures in China were lipoplasty, rhinoplasty, blepharoplasty, breast augmentation and abdominoplasty. Meanwhile, the five most common non-surgical cosmetic procedures were botox dysport, hyaluronic acid injection, laser hair removal, autologous fat injection and intense pulsed light laser treatment.
- The China Consumers' Association received an average of **20,000** complaints related to cosmetic procedures annually over the last decade.

(Sources: CNR and International Society of Aesthetic Plastic Surgeons)

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Published by New World Press
Produced by BEIJING REVIEW
Sales hotline: (8610) 68996289 68996288
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