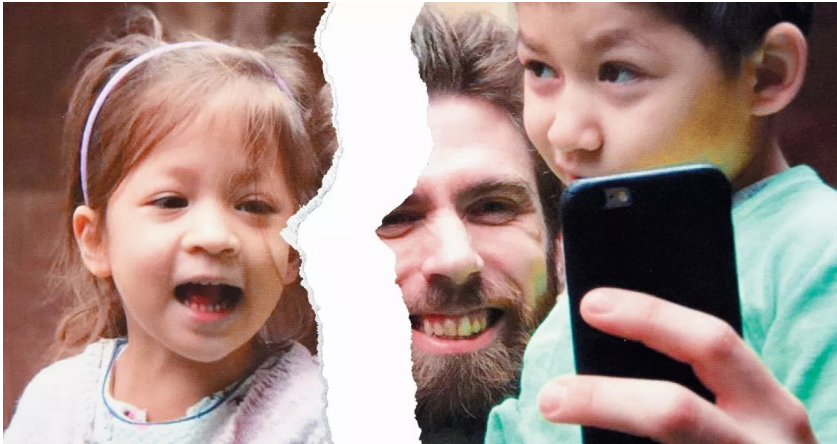


Transnational custody battle

British grandparents battle for custody of murdered son's children



Heartbroken British grandparents, who flew to China to fight for custody of their murdered son's children, recently won back their granddaughter but were forced to leave their grandson behind. Ian Simpson and his wife Linda recently agreed to a custody deal to bring their granddaughter Alice to the UK. After their son Michael Simpson, 34, was stabbed to death by his Chinese wife Fu Weiwei in their apartment in Shanghai in March 2017, 8-year-old Jack and 6-year-old Alice have been living with their maternal grandparents in Nanzhang county in Hubei province. However, the British grandparents fought for custody of the two children. "Bringing the girl back to her grandparents is the best result we could reach so far," Fang Jie, Simpson's lawyer, told the Global Times. The lawyer of the maternal grandparents refused to comment on the case.

Michael Simpson moved to China while working for the retail chain Next and met Fu, who used to run the company's shopping guide. They married in 2009, but after several years, the couple faced a crisis in their relationship and the marriage fell apart, according to Chengdu-based Red Star News. In March 2017, Fu showed up in Simpson's apartment about two years after the couple separated and found out he was with his new girlfriend. The Chinese woman stabbed the British man to death as he tried to defend his new girlfriend, who was left with lifelong injuries after the attack.
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THE ROSEATES NEWSLETTER

Your guide to human remains repatriation

The Roseates Newsletter aims to update our clients and contacts on various topics related to the death of foreigners in China and Chinese abroad. The target audience includes consulates, foreign funeral directors and insurance companies. We welcome our readers to provide questions, comments and insights.

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The children had lived an expatriate life in Shanghai, where Jack went to an international school. The family enjoyed holidays together in Europe and Thailand, and the children spent as much time with Ian and Linda as they did with their Chinese grandparents. In the days following the killing, Alice and Jack were spirited 1,000 km away by Fu Weiwei's family, to live in a flat in Nanzhang, with her parents. For nearly two years, as a custody battle raged, the children were denied all but the briefest contact with their British grandparents and were told that Michael and Weiwei were working abroad. To this day, neither child knows their father is dead and their mother is serving a life term in prison for his murder.

The case has sparked heated discussion on Chinese social networks. Some suggested that the British grandparents should bring the two children back to the UK for better education, as the maternal parents live in a remote county, but others say letting them go to the UK does not guarantee happiness to these two kids.

Much depends on the citizenship of the children. While Alice has British citizenship, Jack has Chinese citizenship and a *hukou*, or household registration where the Chinese grandparents live. In transnational marriage disputes and custody battles, judges are likely to put human factors aside and stick to laws and regulations, Liu Yafei, a lawyer at Lantai Partners told the Global Times. The best scenario is not keeping these two children apart, which requires more efforts from both British and Chinese families to reach agreement, the lawyer added. But the British grandparents, both 69, were ultimately forced to make a heartbreaking decision: bring Alice to Britain while leaving Jack behind or risk losing all contact with both grandchildren. Alice is now living in a village near Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk, England, while her brother Jack remains in Nanzhang, Hubei province, China. After the court case was settled in a Nanzhang courtroom, grandfather Ian said: "We are overjoyed to bring Alice home but it absolutely breaks our hearts to leave Jack behind."

It was a heartbreaking decision to separate the children, but grandmother Linda remarked that without the settlement "we would have had to leave both our grandchildren behind and we might have lost them forever." The custody case has cost the British grandparents more than 1 million yuan (130,000 euro), while the Fu family issued a series of demands for sums of up to 550,000 yuan (72,250 euro) to surrender both children. The Fuses at one point backed out of an agreement to accept 100,000 yuan (13,135 euro) and a declaration of forgiveness for Weiwei in return for giving up custody of the children. That deal could have halved their mother's jail term from 20 to 10 years, the Global Times and Red Door News reported.

Q&A

How many funeral urns were interred in Shanghai on dongzhi – winter solstice – on December 22?

About 14,000 urns were interred that day, which together with *Qingming*, is a day for remembrance of the deceased. On December 22, 997,000 people visited Shanghai's 44 cemeteries and 10 columbariums, up 19.3 percent from 2017.

How many people in Beijing have registered to give up their remains after death?

In Beijing, more than 21,100 people had applied to donate their remains by the end of 2017 since the city started a body donation registry in 1999. So far, over 2,600 donations have been used for medical research and education. According to Chinese traditional beliefs a person's body should remain intact because there is supposed to be an afterlife.

Are there military cemeteries in China?

Yes, but not many. However, the recently established Ministry of Veterans Affairs plans to set up dedicated cemeteries for military personnel to honor their service. Building and maintaining military cemeteries is a key mission for the ministry. The remains of more than 1.4 million martyrs are resting in around 4,200 protected memorials, ranging from cemeteries to columbaria, but some of them are not military personnel. The U.S. has 136 veteran cemeteries.

POLICIES

Program launched to support parents who have lost their only child

The China Family Planning Association will work with the country's health authorities to provide both moral support and financial aid for parents who have lost their only child or whose only child is severely disabled. The non-profit organization said it has invested 10.7 million yuan (1.41 million euro) to launch programs in 82 cities across the country that provide psychological relief and insurance services to families in such circumstances. "Eighteen areas, including Guangxi, Sichuan, Yunnan and Hunan, have implemented hospitalization insurance that covers more than 400,000 families who lost their only child," Yao Ying, deputy head of the association said. In August last year, the association released a notice requiring its regional bodies to offer insurance to cover fees for the hospital stays of parents older than 49 whose only child had died. It is an attempt to ease the financial strain arising from the fact that childless parents are often left with nobody to help when they are hospitalized. Yao added that the association is pushing for insurance plans with wider coverage for hospital stays and accidents to weave a stronger safety net for vulnerable families.

Tang Guangyi, deputy director of the family association in Chongqing, suggested also adding critical illness insurance to the medical package for parents whose only child had died. "It is reported that some childless parents in Chongqing fell into poverty after they were diagnosed with severe illnesses," Tang said. "Such real-life cases show the need to cushion hefty medical expenses when these families are hit with serious diseases." The association will also partner with the National Health Commission to establish an online database that aggregates information on all families whose child has died or was disabled. The number of families who lost their only child had grown to more than 1 million by the end of 2014, and it was estimated that it would reach 6 million by 2035, Wang Guangzhou, a researcher on population and labor economy at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, said in an interview in 2014. "The association should take advantage of its large number of members to shoulder the responsibility of providing comprehensive support for all families who lost their only child," said Lu Jiehua, professor of sociology at Peking University, the China Daily reported.

Number of organ donations showing continued growth

The number of organ donations continued to see fast growth in China last year, exceeding 18,000 in the first 11 months, an increase of 19 percent compared with the same period in 2017. The number of people who donated organs after death in China reached 5,810 by the end of November, about 13 percent higher than the number for the whole of 2017, Guo Yanhong, deputy chief for medical administration and supervision at the National Health Commission, said. The total number of donors was about 6,000 last year, keeping China in second place among the world's largest organ donors. "Organ donations in China have kept increasing quickly since 2015, with more and more organs being donated to save lives," Guo said. "Meanwhile, Chinese physicians are making progress in organ transplant technologies, and a number of world-class centers in transplant surgeries, covering major organs such as liver, kidney, heart and lung, have been established in China."

China stopped using organs retrieved from executed prisoners for transplants and in 2015 made voluntary donations the only legitimate source. About 2,700 people donated organs after death that year. "With the increasing number of donations and surgeries performed every year, authorities have also established a computerized supervision system that covers the entire sector, including organ donation, retrieval, distribution and transplant to ensure oversight" by health officials, Guo said. Chen Jingyu, a lung transplant surgeon at Wuxi People's Hospital, in Wuxi, Jiangsu province, which houses one of the biggest lung transplant centers in China, said such transplants are the only hope for many patients with terminal lung disease. The chances of success of such surgeries can reach 90 percent if a patient does not have problems with other major organs, Chen said. Liu Xiuqin, secretary-general of China Organ Transplantation Development Foundation, said

the number of registered organ donors in China has continued to rapidly increase over the past few years, and more than 840,000 people had registered by December 2, 2018. Huang Jiefu, former vice-minister of health and chairman of the foundation, said despite progress in organ donations and transplantation, China still faces great challenges to meet demand for organ transplant surgeries. Every year about 300,000 patients with terminal diseases potentially need organ transplant surgery in

China, but only around 20,000 surgeries can be completed due to shortage of organs, he said, adding that more measures should be adopted to encourage organ donations by the public. Huang also suggested coverage of the costs of organ transplant surgeries by basic medical insurance programs, so that more people can afford such surgeries, which are very costly. There are 178 hospitals certified to perform transplant surgeries, but this is far from enough, considering demand, the China Daily reported.

CULTURE

Is it killing for kindness or convenience? China debates euthanasia

A judge's heart-wrenching account of a euthanasia trial has triggered a renewed debate in China about an emotive subject which sharply divides the country. The case involved a woman, surnamed Leng, from Taizhou city in Zhejiang province, who was suffering from an autoimmune disease. Leng had asked her son-in-law to buy rat poison to help her end the pain of her illness. The court heard that Leng swallowed the poison with her husband, daughter and son-in-law, surnamed Zhang, gathered around her bed to bid her a tearful farewell. The three were charged with murder and sentenced to jail terms of two to five years, despite the moving accounts from other relatives of the loving care they had given Leng and their financial struggles to keep her alive.

In an article published in the Hangzhou Daily, trial judge Guo Jing acknowledged that euthanasia was a very sensitive topic. "If the defendant is given a mild penalty, society might mistake it as an encouragement of such acts. If they are given a heavy penalty, it defies the spirit of prudence and kindness," he wrote. This is not the first time a Chinese court has treated an euthanasia case as murder. In 2009, a woman named Hu Qing collapsed into a coma at home. A week after

she was hospitalized Hu's husband Wen Yuzhang, unable to bear her suffering, disconnected her breathing tube. Hu died an hour later. In 2010, the court sentenced him to three years in prison for premeditated murder.

A survey in 2013 by the public opinion research center at Shanghai Jiao Tong University of more than 3,400 residents from 34 Chinese cities found about 70 percent did not object to euthanasia. "Theoretically, patients who suffer from extreme pain have the right to die with dignity. But in reality, euthanasia is not only a legal problem but also a social and moral problem," Yan Sanzhong, a law professor at Jiangxi Normal University told Legal Daily. Yan said China was not ready to legalize euthanasia, adding that the lack of a comprehensive social system was the major reason why the public had not been given the choice. China's medical resources were too concentrated in developed cities, which made it difficult for rural hospitals to be qualified to make such decisions. Patients may also choose to die just to save money for their children, while people may be tempted to kill their parents to escape the responsibility of caring for them, the South China Morning Post reported.

Hospice care can break death taboo in China

In China, most people are reluctant to talk about death. They generally perceive death as an ominous and hideous state of presence. Everyone wishes others longevity and an everlasting life, and death is not a topic

people talk about in daily conversation. This mindset of fearing and detesting death could lead to severe mental breakdown when the inevitable finally happens. In 2013, more than 3.68 million people in China were newly

Diagnosed as cancer patients, which accounts for 21.8 percent of the total number in the world, according to World Health Organization (WHO) data. The most common type of cancer is lung cancer, which accounts for roughly 50 percent of the mortality rate. To some degree, cancer has become the synonym of death. To many patients, being diagnosed with cancer is like a death sentence, jeopardizing the mental condition of the patients and their families. Miracles seldom happen. Patients are forced to accept the harsh reality that death is coming and no one can stop it. If the stress caused by the impending termination is not properly relieved, patients can live in endless fear of leaving this world, and their last days will be a constant struggle. Hospice care could be the solution because it could appease the patients' emotions and escort them from the world serenely, the Global Times reported.

Hospice care is considered an integral part of the cancer treatment process, according to the World Health Organization(WHO). Hospice care is focused on providing relief from the symptoms and stresses of a serious illness in

a patient's last days. The goal is to improve quality of life for both patients and their families. Hospice care will not guarantee to prolong a patient's life expectancy, but it is effective in relieving the anxiety of patients and also those who are close to them. It can ensure they will spend their last days in the world in a peaceful and harmonious way.

The superstitious mindset of many Chinese people prevents the development of hospice care in China. They tend to insist that no matter what the result might be, the patient should always receive medical treatment, until the last minute, to keep them alive. However, in most cases, miracles don't happen: cancers don't yield to medical treatments, especially those in the final stages. The side-effects of the treatment can be a torture for patients. It is understandable that no one is willing to give up a single chance of keeping their close relatives alive, but sometimes rather than being alive and suffering from endless pain, a peaceful farewell to the world might be the better solution, a student from the Holderness School in the U.S. wrote in an opinion piece in the Global Times.

BUSINESS

For Hong Kong undertaker, every working day is a matter of life and death

January has been a busy month for undertaker Ogden Chan Yan. "It's peak season for us because more people are dying due to the fickle weather, and many families don't want to wait until after the Lunar New Year to bury their dead," the 36-year-old says. Rows of cardboard boxes containing the ashes of his clients' loved ones line the shelves of Chan's shop in Hung Hom, Hong Kong. His clients have left the ashes for safekeeping until their deceased are assigned columbarium niches. Chan reckons there are almost 200 of these boxes. "It's the typical Hongkonger's fate: the living can't afford homes, and the dead can't find final resting places." It has been seven years since Chan joined the industry as an apprentice. Although he applied for the apprenticeship "out of curiosity", his interest in the funeral sector began in his early teens. "I wanted to be a mortuary makeup artist because I was under the impression that people in the funeral business made a decent living because there's always going to be a

demand for the service, and I liked how it was something of a craft." But that initial perception was somewhat misguided. Chan says that his business has only recently become profitable. Before, he was barely getting by. He now oversees everything from preparing documents and booking cremation services to planning religious ceremonies. As a nod to his childhood dream, he also acts as a makeup artist for his clients' loved ones. "I talk to the remains when I put makeup on them because I believe that our consciousness remains even after we die." After a while, he adds: "That said, I've never seen a ghost."

What impressed Chan when he saw human remains for the first time was not their appearance, but the smell of decay. It was something Chan had to get used to as soon as he became an undertaker's apprentice, as was staying detached from clients and their grief, the South China Morning Post reported.

THE LAST WORD

- A man named Song, who claimed to be a tomb salesman and swindled 11 people out of more than 700,000 yuan (92,085 euro), has been charged with fraud in Shanghai. The cemetery, where the man showed the victims a plot of land, said he did not work for the cemetery and there was no plan to build tombs in the area.
- A man in Henan province, who was jailed for seven years for killing a neighbor who vandalized his parents' grave, is at the center of an appeal battle with a member of his victim's family, who requested a prison term of 10 to 15 years and a fine of 153,000 yuan (20,130 euro), compared to the seven years and 25,014 yuan (3,290 euro) fine handed out by the court.
- A demobilized soldier who was assigned the job of mortician remarked: "A soldier needs to take courage onto the battlefield, and working with the dead demands that quality too." He also believes a mortician requires a sense of responsibility and spirit of perseverance.
- Customs in Jiangmen said they intercepted a fishing boat in September 2018, and found 2,674 pangolin carcasses hidden in 414 cool boxes weighing about 11.5 tons as a tomb-raiding themed drama drove Chinese customers to purchase pangolin-made amulets to exorcise "evil spirits". Pangolin claws are crafted into an ornament called "mojinfu". Some believe wearing *mojinfu* can exorcise evil spirits as depicted in the fantasy novel *Guichuideng*, also known as Ghost Blows Out the Light. February 16 was World Pangolin Day.
- With about one month to go before the Qingming Festival, tomb-sweeping day, people are already eager for a taste of the seasonal delicacy – *qingtuan* (sweet green glutinous rice balls). Restaurants are taking an innovative approach to the traditional taste with new flavors like shredded chicken and bacon, and creamy custard fillings.

FIXED GUIDELINES IN CASE OF DEATH

- Provide the complete name, date of birth and nationality of the deceased.
- Provide the name and telephone number of the person in China who first reported the death (hospital, public security bureau, embassy, travel agent, friend,...)
- Provide the place of death: district, city, prefecture and/or county and province.
- Indicate, if known, whether the deceased was covered by an insurance policy.

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THE ROSEATES NEWSLETTER

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