Buying Beauty

Cosmetic Surgery in China

Wen Hua
# Contents

List of Illustrations ix  
Acknowledgements xi  

Introduction 1  

I. Cultural Background of Cosmetic Surgery  
1. The Cultural History of Plastic Surgery in China 25  
2. China’s First “Artificial Beauty” 51  

II. “Beauty Capital” in Social Transition  
3. “Being Good-Looking is Capital” 75  
4. From the “Iron Rice Bowl” to the “Rice Bowl of Youth” 99  

III. The Beauty Economy and “Beauty Diplomacy”  
5. The Commodification of the Body 125  
6. China’s Beauty Economy and Beauty Ideology 147  

IV. Globalization and the Changing Image of Beauty  
7. From Barbie Doll to the Korean Wave 167  
8. Between the Local and the Global 187  

Conclusion 205  

Glossary 215  
References 223  
Index 243
List of Illustrations

Figures
1. The number of hits for the key word “cosmetic surgery” in WiseSearch (1998–2007) 21
2. The increase of plastic surgery procedures in a Beijing plastic surgery hospital 42
3. The number of students in regular higher education sector 85

Plates
1. Plastic Surgery Hospital (CAMS and PUMC), the largest plastic surgery hospital in China
2. A high-end Korean cosmetic surgery clinic in Beijing
3. A plastic surgery clinic in Jianwai SOHO, the core of Beijing CBD
4. A private cosmetic surgery clinic in Beijing
5. Hao Lulu’s before-surgery photo
6. Hao Lulu in EverCare’s advertisement
7. Hao Lulu attending an event in 2006
9. The cover of Hao Lulu’s autobiography, I Made the Decision for Myself: Confessions of China’s First Artificial Beauty, 2004
10. Job fair at the China International Exhibition Center in Beijing, 2007
11. A want advertisement specifying gender, age, height and appearance of applicants in a job fair in Beijing, 2007
12. An exhibition of the magazines of the Trends Group at the 2009 China Clothing and Accessories Fair
13. An advertisement for breast augmentation in a taxi
15. Various brochures distributed by cosmetic surgery clinics and hospitals
17. A pink billboard featuring the Barbie image in the Joy City Mall in Beijing, 2009
18. A young Chinese girl looking at Barbie dolls displayed at a Barbie exhibition in Beijing, 2009
19. A Western woman’s image in a cosmetics shop in Beijing
20. Double-eyelid surgery: before and after look
21. Suture technique of double-eyelid surgery
22. An advertisement for a whitening lotion in a shopping mall in Beijing
Introduction

God hath given you one face, and you make yourselves another . . .

—Shakespeare, Hamlet, Act III, Scene I, 141–42

Prologue

During a casual conversation in December 2004, a German friend of mine asked me: “Did you see the BBC news reporting on China’s Miss Artificial Beauty Pageant? It says that a lady over sixty and a transsexual are in the competition. It’s really unbelievable! What’s going on in China?” I was speechless at his question. People outside China can hardly figure out how an ideologically “socialist” country could host such a beauty pageant. What struck me was not just the news itself but my friend’s shocked reaction to it: China, a “socialist” country which used to regard the quest for beauty as decadent bourgeois culture now offers the Miss Artificial Beauty Pageant—the first beauty pageant in the world exclusively for women who have undergone cosmetic surgery. My friend’s shock projects the disjuncture between China today, as a place where people freely pursue beauty by any and all means including cosmetic surgery, and the image that others may hold of China as a socialist country where the quest for beauty is suppressed. It is this disjuncture that aroused my curiosity about the Miss Artificial Beauty Pageant and the unprecedented boom of the cosmetic surgery industry in China, and inspired me to begin the research that led to this book.

The “Miss Artificial Beauty Pageant” (Renzao meinü xuanmei dasai) was held in Beijing in December 2004.1 Reportedly the idea of this pageant

---

1. Chinese words in this book are romanized in italics without tone markers, according to the standard pinyin system.
was born after an 18-year-old girl, Yang Yuan, was disqualified from the Miss International Beauty Pageant earlier in 2004 because the organizers discovered that Yang had undergone cosmetic surgery. In February 2004, Yang spent 110,000 yuan at a cosmetic surgery clinic in Beijing to undergo eleven cosmetic surgery procedures,\(^2\) including rhinoplasty (a “nose job”) (\textit{long bi shoushu}), “augmentation of the temple” (\textit{long nie shu}),\(^3\) “chin augmentation” (\textit{long xia ke}),\(^4\) “mandibular angle reduction” (\textit{xiahejiao qichu shu}),\(^5\) double eyelid blepharoplasty or double-eyelid surgery (\textit{shuangyanpi shoushu}),\(^6\) reconstruction of upper and lower lips, orthodontics and so on. Yang also made the decision to take part in the competition for the Miss International Beauty Pageant in 2004 in Beijing after her operations. She timed the surgeries so that she would be able to recuperate before the opening round of the contest in May 2004. The operations were successful. Yang passed the first and second rounds of the Miss International Beauty Pageant and became one of the thirty finalists. However, while she was preparing for the final round, she received a notice from the organizers saying that her candidacy was revoked because she was an “artificial beauty” (\textit{renzao meinü}). Since the cosmetic surgery clinic at which she had received her procedures used her before-and-after photos in advertisements and she had made no attempt to conceal this, the organizers of the beauty contest learnt of this fact. Out of anger and disappointment, Yang decided to defend her right to be in the competition which had no regulation against cosmetic operations. On June 1, 2004, Yang filed a lawsuit demanding a formal public apology from the organizing committee on the grounds that the committee had infringed her legal rights by disqualifying her and using the biased term “artificial beauty.” In addition, Yang argued that the organizers made no mention of any prohibition against cosmetic

---

2. Between August 2006 and July 2007, US$1 was roughly equivalent to 7.6 Chinese yuan.
3. Augmentation of the temple is often used to soften the harsh appearance of a sunken temple and oversized cheek bones.
4. Chin augmentation is a procedure that involves creating a more proportionate face and a stronger chin line with the help of chin implants.
5. Mandibular angle reduction refers to operations to reduce the width of the lower face and change a round or angular face into an oval-shaped or heart-shaped face.
6. Double eyelid blepharoplasty, more commonly known as “double-eyelid surgery,” is a surgery to create a superior palpebral fold. After a crease is formed on the upper eyelids, the eyes appear rounder and larger.
surgery in its contest rules. On July 20, 2004, the Beijing Dongcheng District People's Court ruled that Yang Yuan did not have adequate grounds for suing the beauty pageant organizers, for infringements upon her rights and dignity.

Although Yang lost the case, the event was extensively reported by the Chinese media and made her famous. Her story along with her photos appeared in many newspapers and magazines. A few months later, she published her autobiography, *I am an Artificial Beauty*, and became an “image ambassador” for the cosmetic surgery clinic where she received operations. Beyond this, and more surprisingly, the organizers of the Miss International Beauty Pageant which disqualified Yang Yuan from the contest soon announced that they would launch a new beauty pageant exclusively for women who had undergone cosmetic surgery. As a result, the Miss Artificial Beauty Pageant was held in Beijing in December 2004, with nineteen contestants aged from 17 to 62 years old, all with doctor's certifications that they had undergone cosmetic surgery. Not surprisingly, the sponsors of this beauty pageant included Chinese cosmetic surgery clinics and manufacturers of cosmetic surgery products. Triumphing over eighteen other contestants, Feng Qian, a 22-year-old student, was crowned China's first Miss Artificial Beauty in Beijing on December 18, 2004. The two high-profile participants—the oldest contestant, 62-year-old Liu Yulan, and transsexual Liu Xiaojing—shared a prize for Best Media Image.

When I first heard about Yang Yuan and the Miss Artificial Beauty Pageant from my German friend, I was both fascinated and confused. I had seldom heard much about cosmetic surgery before, but since 2003, reports on cosmetic surgery have increased by leaps and bounds. This new practice seems to have been spurred by a young Chinese woman, Hao Lulu, who was known in the Chinese and international media as China’s first “artificial beauty.” When opening the newspaper, surfing the Internet, or turning on the television, I found a surge of reports concerning stories of Chinese “artificial beauties.” On the one hand, there are stories describing women who have undergone cosmetic surgery as being finally bold enough to take control of their bodies in the quest for beauty—an act which they could not imagine during the Maoist era. On the other hand, there are stories about the huge number of women who had been disfigured, and some even killed, by cosmetic surgery. It has been extensively reported that at least 200,000 people in China have been disfigured by cosmetic surgery
in the last decade (Weaver 2003). The most prominent case reported was on women who suffered from infection and disfigurement after receiving breast augmentation through the injection of a chemical called hydrophilic polyacrylamide gel.

Reading these stories about Chinese “artificial beauties,” I wondered why more and more Chinese women are willing to undergo cosmetic surgeries despite a plethora of reports on their possible side effects and hazards. Who are these women? Why are they apparently so obsessed with their physical appearance that they would be willing to undergo surgery? What kinds of operations do they seek? How, if at all, does cosmetic surgery change their lives? More broadly, I have been curious to know why cosmetic surgery has suddenly gained popularity in China, a state that used to regard the quest for beauty as depraved until just a few decades ago. How can we explain the transition from wearing unisex gray Mao suits to purchasing a glamorous appearance through cosmetic surgery over just a few decades? To put it simply, as my German friend asked me, “What’s going on in China?” In this book, I will try to answer this question.

**Cosmetic Surgery as the Focus of the Research**

To begin with, let me explain two key words—“cosmetic surgery” and “artificial beauty.” People sometimes use the words plastic surgery and cosmetic surgery interchangeably, but there is an important difference between the two. Generally speaking, plastic surgery covers both functional reconstructive operations and cosmetic enhancements, but it is more often used to refer to the former. As defined by the American Academy of Cosmetic Surgery (AACS), plastic surgery is a surgical specialty dedicated to the reconstruction of facial and body defects due to birth disorders, trauma, burns, and disease, while cosmetic surgery is a subspecialty that restricts itself to the enhancement of appearance by surgical and medical means. While plastic surgery (reconstructive surgery) is medically indicated, cosmetic surgery (aesthetic surgery) is entirely elective and meant to enhance one’s appearance. The Chinese translation of “plastic surgery” is *zhengxing*, which also encompasses both “reconstructive surgery” (*zhengfu* surgery) and “esthetic surgery” (*ziying* surgery).

---

7. The definition is an extract from the AACS website’s “Frequently asked questions” page. More information can be found at www.cosmeticsurgery.org.
shoushu) and “cosmetic surgery” (zhengxing meirong shoushu). In this book I will use the term plastic surgery in a general way which covers both fields of surgical practice. The terms reconstructive surgery and cosmetic surgery refer, respectively, to these two fields; the focus of this book is on cosmetic surgery.

Another important term to address is “artificial beauty” (renzao meinü), which refers to a woman who has enhanced her appearance through cosmetic surgery. As a newly coined term, “artificial beauty” has gained currency since 2003. The popularity of this term in the Chinese media in recent years reflects an unprecedented boom in the cosmetic surgery industry in China. “Artificial beauties,” women who opt for cosmetic surgery to enhance their appearance, are a focus of this book. While the subjects in this study are Chinese women, it does not mean that men do not undergo cosmetic surgery. Actually, cosmetic surgery is no longer a female preserve, and Chinese men have been invading this territory in recent years. However, women are still in the great majority of those undertaking cosmetic procedures. Due to the constraints of my fieldwork, this book will only discuss Chinese “artificial beauties” and leave Chinese men’s surgical body alterations and the comparative studies of gender involvement in cosmetic surgery for the future.

Let me go back to Yang Yuan’s story and the Miss Artificial Beauty Pageant. I have used this beauty pageant as the starting point for my discussion because several interesting arguments have been raised from the reports on the event. Beauty pageants and cosmetic surgery in China have been looked at favorably by the mass media in recent years. When these two things come bundled together, it is not surprising that the story attracted intensive media coverage and worldwide curiosity. Three different perspectives emerged from the reports. One was offered by women who viewed receiving cosmetic surgeries as a matter of their “rights” and “liberation.” For example, when asked why she filed a lawsuit demanding a formal public apology from the organizers of the beauty pageant, Yang Yuan said, “I just want to get back my rights . . . I hope that in the future there will be a niche in society for [people like] me” (Yardley 2004). A similar account can also be found from the two Miss Artificial Beauty Pageant contestants highlighted in the media (Ang 2004; BBC 2004). One of them was Liu Yulan, the oldest contestant, who looked “at least a decade younger than her 62 years” (Ang 2004). Liu Yulan attributed
her youthful look to a facelift and blepharoplasty. She told the media, “Before, I couldn’t imagine that it was possible to have places where the old could become young and the ugly could become beautiful” (BBC 2004). She said that she was not participating for the sake of a prize. Instead, she wanted to show off her new-found confidence to herself as well as to those around her. Liu Yulan stated, “I wanted to convey a message to society—that the pursuit of beauty is ageless” (BBC 2004). Another contestant featured in the media was Liu Xiaojing, twenty-one years old, who had work done on her eyebrows, nose, chin and facial contour. It was revealed that Liu Xiaojing was a man until three years ago. She said that she did not tell organizers that she was a transsexual because no one asked. Yet if the organizers were to disqualify her, she would use legal means to seek justice. “Becoming beautiful is everyone’s wish . . . I am now legally a woman, and this contest is my first formal step toward womanhood . . . This is a turning point in my life” (Ang 2004).

It is obvious that Yang Yuan, Liu Yulan and Liu Xiaojing all felt strongly that it is their rights to pursue beauty, youth and femininity, and to express their sense of self by purchasing beauty and youth through cosmetic surgery. When they fulfilled their dreams through cosmetic surgery, they seemed to have transcended the boundaries of age, sex, and appearance, their bodies becoming flexible assets rather than given and unalterable fates. They seemed to regard their bodies as a collection of raw materials through which one can construct one’s own true self. Such a view legitimates body alteration as a source of autonomy and self-determination and explains the desire of some women for body alteration as a desire for liberation, perhaps in part from the “older” generation in the Maoist era in which individuals sacrificed their bodies and beauty for the sake of the state. However, we also see that the hospital where Yang Yuan received surgery and the organizers of the beauty pageant all gained publicity from the highly publicized lawsuit. Just a few months later, the same organizers held a beauty pageant for “artificial beauties.” In this sense, the personal freedom and subjectivity expressed by Yang Yuan through her cosmetic surgery and the lawsuit in effect served as a marketing strategy for the cosmetic surgery clinic and the organizers of the beauty pageant.

Not surprisingly, some Chinese scholars criticized women’s choice of cosmetic surgery as a submission to the male gaze (China Daily 2004b). This sort of criticism was in line with some feminists arguments. Many
feminists have argued that women who undergo cosmetic surgery submit to male-dominated ideals of beauty, and cosmetic surgery is just a means for the colonization of women’s bodies (Morgan 1991) and a conspiracy of the patriarchy and capitalism as the “beauty myth” (Wolf 1991). Therefore, the first question I will focus on in this book is: To what extent are the women who have cosmetic surgery passive victims of the “beauty myth” constructed by patriarchy and capitalism, and to what extent are they transforming themselves as powerful actors by taking control over their own bodies to achieve their sense of self? This study examines the discrepancies between the discourse of liberation and the discourse of subjugation, both of which are associated with the recent Chinese practice of body alteration through cosmetic surgery.

Another perspective on cosmetic surgery comes from the state-owned Chinese media, which characterize the phenomenon with a narrative of “evolution” or “marketization.” A typical way of reporting on the ongoing popularity of cosmetic surgery is the claim that with the improvement of Chinese people’s living standards, Chinese women pay increasing attention to their appearance and figure, for example, “following the rapid development of the social economy, people become much wealthier and have more money to chase after beauty. Thus, this artificial beauty craze is almost inevitable, as is this pageant for this group of women” (China Daily 2004c), and “plastic surgery has taken off in China in recent years as people become wealthier and more conscious of their appearance” (China Daily 2004b). This narrative claims that the increasing demand for beauty is a result of China’s economic growth. To put it differently, people’s appearance and figure are a product of their economic condition.

When a beautiful face and youthful figure can be easily purchased, there is no doubt that a “consumer revolution,” as it is widely acknowledged (Davis 2000), has been taking place over the past few decades in the world’s most populous country. However, is the pursuit of beauty merely a sign of economic prosperity? When women shop for cosmetic surgery, beyond beautiful faces and youthful bodies, they also pursue the symbolic meanings embodied in beautiful appearance and personal bodily practice. The pursuit of beauty cannot be interpreted only as a consequence of economic prosperity. Cosmetic surgery is a matter of consumer choice, but it also involves the power of the capitalist market in taking control of an individual’s life in its most intimate sphere, the body, which was still
tightly controlled by the state only a few decades ago in China. This leads us to analyze a new form of power of the capitalist market in controlling the female body. The Chinese capitalist market has had an extraordinary effect in shaping people’s views about beauty and the body. However, the market alone is not enough to account for people’s beliefs about what is beautiful, and what is not. The market, despite being a source of consumer choice, cannot completely be detached from the power of the state in controlling an individual’s body management and representations. This leads us to examine the role of the Chinese state in guiding or controlling China’s “beauty economy.” Thus the second question I will discuss is: When beauty has become a commodity that can be purchased and body alteration has become a matter of consumer choice, to what extent does the capitalist market take control of an individual’s life with commercial alterations to the body, and to what extent does the state negotiate and cooperate with the market to play a salient role in disciplining and shaping women’s body management? This book examines the complex relationship between the remaking of female body image through cosmetic surgery and the reconfiguration of state power and market forces in post-Mao China.

Western media offer yet another perspective to this event. Western correspondents like to emphasize the contestants’ obsession with adding a palpebral fold to the upper eyelid and changing other features in order to approximate a “Caucasian” appearance. Indeed, the double-eyelid surgery has become one of the most requested cosmetic operations in Asia including China. Western media sometimes regard cosmetic surgery as a sign of the “Westernization” of the beauty ideal in China. For example, commenting on Feng Qian, who was crowned China’s first Miss Artificial Beauty, a correspondent from The Times says, “Her operations gave her Western-style ‘double eyelids’ and sculpted her face into its heart-shaped form, while liposuction made her thin” (Coonan 2004).

While some typically Caucasian features are desirable among Chinese women, a more culturally specific standard of beauty seems to be emerging in China. It cannot be denied that cosmetic surgery now flourishes in a climate heavily influenced by Western beauty ideals. However, Chinese women’s obsession with “double eyelids” (shuang yanpi), “big eyes” (da

8. For the purposes of this book, Western refers to Anglo-American and the West refers to West European and North American countries.
yanjing), “a high-bridged nose” (gao biliang), “big breasts” (fengman de xiong), and “fair skin” (bai pifu) may not be fully compatible with Western ideals of a beautiful woman. The emerging Chinese ideal of beauty may not be simply imitating the “global standard of white beauty” (Kawazoe 2004; see also Miller 2006). Thus, the third question I will discuss is: In an era of globalization, to what extent have beauty ideals and practices in China been influenced by globalizing forces such as the omnipresent Anglo-American ideals of beauty, and to what extent have Chinese women’s perceptions of beauty and their bodily practices taken on particular meanings within China’s historical and sociocultural contexts? Simply put, this book examines the tension between homogenization and heterogenization in terms of ideals of beauty and practices in the pursuit of beauty in an era of globalization.

In brief, the question this book aims to answer is: When Chinese women shop for a youthful, beautiful and sometimes “Caucasian-like” appearance by undergoing cosmetic surgery, to what extent does this bodily practice indicate a triumph of individualism over totalitarianism, the market over the state, and the West over China; and to what extent does it reveal something different from these common assumptions?

This book will mainly explore the role of the capitalist market, the state, and globalization in shaping Chinese women’s views about what constitutes a beautiful appearance and women’s body alteration practices in pursuit of a beauty. Using women’s body alteration by cosmetic surgery in contemporary China as a lens, this book aims to explore the relations among the remaking of female body image, the reconstruction of self identity, and the reconfiguration of state power and market forces with the expansion of global consumerism in post-Mao China. In other words, this book explores how the alteration of female physical features through cosmetic surgery reflects in microcosm the transition of China’s social nature from communism to consumerism with its own “Chinese characteristics.”

I hope that this discussion can contribute to a fuller understanding of the dilemma between agency and structure, the intersection between state power and market discourse, and the interplay between individual and globalization in terms of body regimes. From the analysis of Chinese women’s involvement in cosmetic surgery, I hope to arrive at insights into the tri-polar relationship between the state, the market and women of China.
Beauty and Women’s Body Images in China

Cosmetic surgery is of course not practiced exclusively by Chinese women, but with the transition of China from a Maoist regime to a post-Mao consumer society within a few decades, the meanings and implications of cosmetic surgery in China are particularly interesting. With this in mind, let me discuss some of the earlier studies on beauty and women’s body images in China.

Although scholars have done extensive research on the history and culture of cosmetic surgery (Blum 2003; Gilman 1999; Haiken 1997) and women’s involvement in cosmetic surgery in Western countries, there are few studies of China’s cosmetic surgery. In Chinese academic journals, among the few articles addressing cosmetic surgery, the analyses are primarily framed in mainstream feminism. Chinese scholars mostly view women who undergo cosmetic surgery as victims of the patriarchy and consumerism (Ding 2006; Jiang 2004; Long and Liu 2006; Tang 2005; Wang Y. M. 2005; Zhang M. 2004). A similar view is found in studies of beauty pageants, the beauty industry, and slimming culture and advertising, in which body beautification and adornment are criticized as women’s subjugation to a patriarchal beauty system and capitalist consumer culture (see Jiang 2003; Xu and Qian 2002; Xue 2005; Yang X. Y. 2005; Yang S. 2005; Zhang L. M. 2001).

Unlike the perspective held by these Chinese scholars, Susan Brownell (2005) examines China’s cosmetic surgery in relation to both Western influences and Chinese nationalism, discussing how the development of transnational cosmetic surgery has interacted with Chinese nationalism. Tracing the trajectory of cosmetic surgery from the West to China, from being an unwelcome bourgeois practice in the Maoist era to a source of national pride in the reform age, Brownell elaborates how cultural and political meanings are grafted on to the practice of cosmetic surgery. More specifically, focusing on the case of double-eyelid surgery, Brownell discusses how Chinese cosmetic surgeons claim technical superiority to their Western counterparts and how the Chinese claim double eyelids as an essential feature of the Chinese ideas of beauty rather than an imitation of the West. In so doing, Brownell illustrates that cosmetic surgery has been subtly appropriated as a part of the nationalist project in China. Brownell’s
work on China’s cosmetic surgery exemplifies how a transnational practice can be transformed by and imbued with local meanings.

With regard to the topic of cosmetic surgery, it is important to look at the politics of feminine ideals of beauty in China. Man Kit Wah’s (2000) historical investigation reveals that the notion of female beauty in Chinese culture came from both Taoist and Confucian traditions. Through an examination of classical Taoist and Confucian texts, Man points out that while women’s physical beauty and sexual attractiveness were emphasized in Taoist teachings, their moral virtue was stressed in Confucian beliefs. Man argues that despite this seeming contradiction, both the external sexual and inner moral dimensions contributed to the notions of feminine beauty in Chinese traditions. Man also discusses how, in Maoist China, the notion of female beauty became rooted not in external appearance, but in internal virtues defined by revolutionary and patriotic discourses. This situation changed only after China opened its doors in the late 1970s. With the political and economic changes of China, international fashion trends and beauty ideals infiltrated Chinese notions of female beauty. Man further argues that “fashion and looks became the necessary symbols of identity and classification” (2000: 190) and that the consumption of fashion and beauty products became a way to change personal identity. Man concludes that although Chinese women seem to pursue their desire for a new look freely and confidently, they might be enslaved by the fashion industry, “which merely repeats the bodily constraints of past times in a new form” (Man 2000: 194).

If Man’s inquiry into the notion of beauty in Chinese traditions reminds us that feminine ideals of beauty are a particular “cultural, social, and historical construction” (Man 2000: 189), Gao Yunxiang’s study (2006) of “robust beauty” (jianmei) in the 1930s is a good example for demonstrating how a certain beauty ideal comes out of a particular historical and social context. Gao focuses on the emergence of an aesthetic concept of “robust beauty” during China’s “national crisis” in the 1930s. According to Gao, under the atmosphere of foreign menace and national crisis in the 1930s, to strengthen the physical body became a part of the nation-building project in China. Therefore, the nationalist government implemented legal and administrative measures to enforce the development of “sports; physical education; physical culture” (tiyu) and encouraged women to participate in this to become physically strong. Thus, driven by tiyu, the Western
representations of “health” and “beauty” were translated into the Chinese local discourses as “robust beauty.” Through a study of Linglong [玲瓏], a Shanghai weekly women’s magazine published from 1931 to 1937, Gao illustrates how media representations displayed strikingly changed ideas of liberated women’s appearance and behavior, and promoted jianmei, the robust beauty of a healthy woman, as a new aesthetic fashion among urban Chinese women. Gao’s study demonstrates that to bolster the threatened nation into a strong nation, the female body, in terms of fitness and physical appearance, was reshaped, and the content of femininity was also redefined.

Taking into account that the body and the nation stand for and configure each other, a number of scholars have stressed the association of Chinese nationhood with the physical body (Brownell 1995, 1998–99; Li S. Q. 2006; Morris 2000). Brownell (1995) notes that during the encounter with the West in the nineteenth century and under the influence of social Darwinism, the meanings of physical activities changed from being ways of cultivating moral characters to ways of gauging the health and strength of the nation. The body, especially the female body, has been a useful site for understanding the modernization of China. As Hershatter writes, “in twentieth-century China, women were the site at which national modernity was imagined, often through a language of crisis” (2004: 1028).

Brownell (1998–99) observes the importance of the female body, in both sportswomen and fashion models, to Chinese nationalism in post-Mao China. Using sportswomen and fashion models as examples, Brownell analyzes a shift of Chinese body culture from the 1980s to the 1990s, “a shift that can approximately be labeled as one from Communist nationalism to consumerist nationalism” (1998–99: 37). When sportswomen, especially the heroines of the Chinese women’s volleyball team, represented the nation in the 1980s, their obedience, their capability to “eat bitterness and endure hard labor” (chi ku nai lao), and their physical suffering and pain were much emphasized in the official press. Brownell argues that

9. Brownell defines “body culture” as follows: “Body culture as a broad term includes daily practices of health, hygiene, fitness, beauty, dress, and decoration, as well as gestures, postures, manners, way of speaking and eating, and so on. It also includes the way these practice are trained into the body, the way the body is publicly displayed, and the lifestyle that is expressed in that display” (1998–99: 37).
the images of sportswomen resonated with the century-long nationalist images of obedient female suffering and male importance. Brownell further discusses how, like sportswomen, Chinese fashion models in the 1990s were also made to represent official nationalism. But unlike the images of androgynous sportswomen, the sexualized and commodified images of fashion models represent the Chinese project of modernization. Moreover, with a discussion of the public debate about “what is the essence of being Chinese,” and the semiotic difference between “traditional oriental beauty” (oval face, arched eyebrows, long hair, a melancholic glance, and restrained movements) and a “Western” look (short hair, a direct and assertive glance, and energetic movements) represented by the winners of a Chinese supermodel contest held in Beijing in 1995, Brownell depicts an emerging conflict between a “new nativist-culturalist nationalism” and global capitalism in terms of body culture.

With images of masculinized heroic “comrade sisters” (Evans 1999) of the Maoist era replaced by the feminine, physically attractive consumer women (Evans 2000; Hooper 1994, 1998; Li 1998), there has been a clear trend toward the sexualization and commodification of women’s bodies in China in recent years (Brownell 2001; Schein 1994; Yang 1999; Xu and Feiner 2007). Using fashion as a specific site of investigation, Li Xiaoping (1998) observes the connection between the modernization of Chinese society and the practice of bodily adornment in post-Mao China. She argues that “modernization had reinscribed the Chinese body just as it had changed many women’s lives” (Li 1998: 71). Li states that changing fashion and bodily adornment form new beauty standards and a new femininity, offering new role models for Chinese women. Therefore, representing the ultimate archetype of beauty, fashion models spawned a beauty industry which includes the cosmetic industry, beauty salons and the cosmetic surgery industry (Li 1998: 80). Li also argues that the emergence of fashion-consciousness in post-Mao China reflects important changes in China’s aspirations and a growing sense of connection with the international community. In this narrative, the images of “new” and “modern women” are testimonies of Chinese modernization. As argued by Li, “From the very beginning, modernization in China has involved the construction of the ‘new’ or ‘modern woman’” (Li 1998: 71). Li is also concerned with the interplay of Western/global and Chinese/local forces manifested in the changes of fashion and aesthetic values. She concludes that the
transformation in fashion and the re-fashioned “modern woman” reveal how global and local forces converge in domains of bodily representation: “It is this mesh that turns the female body into a site on which patriarchy, party politics and consumer capitalism are played out” (Li 1998: 86–87).

As exemplified by Li (1998), the decline of state control and the growth of consumer culture have contributed to a redefinition of femininity and a reconstruction of the “modern Chinese women” in post-Mao China. One useful entry point of understanding the modernization in China is through an analysis of the female body and women’s mundane lives. Rofel (1999) provides an insightful discussion of the cultural politics of modernity among Chinese women. Based on her observation of women’s lives of three distinct generations in a silk factory in Hangzhou, Rofel suggests that the search for modernity in China cannot merely be seen as the universalizing of Western enlightenment values. Rather, modernity has been imagined, pursued, and experienced differently by these three cohorts of Chinese women. According to Rofel, the oldest generation of women who entered the factory during the 1950s constructed their identity in terms of work performance and portrayed themselves as having been liberated by the revolution, which enabled them to work. Inscribed with a Cultural Revolution discourse which completely destroyed gender differentiation, the second generation, the Cultural Revolution cohort, learned the politics of authority and performed their identity through challenging the power of cadres in the factory. Embodying a contemporary consciousness of seeking naturalized femininity, the youngest cohort—the post-Mao generation of women—defined themselves through their bodies. Rofel notes that in post-Mao China, the state actively participates in the re-establishment of the traditional gender roles by monitoring women’s sexual activity through birth control. Market forces also influence the young generation of women in their renewed interest in body images, sexuality and femininity. As shown in Rofel’s work, the different identities and experiences of these three cohorts of women indicate that the pursuit of Chinese modernity is a fluid, fragmentary, heterogeneous and even contradictory process among women positioned in different life-worlds. Rofel’s work sheds light on the ways in which the female body has been a site for the local imagination and representation of national modernity.

To understand women’s involvement in cosmetic surgery, marriage is an important dimension. Scholars have explored marriage in Chinese history
as well as the complex interplay between marriage and the social, political, economic, and gender inequalities that have characterized Chinese society (see Watson and Ebrey 1991). With the end of Maoist asceticism in the late 1970s, the everyday life of Chinese women has changed dramatically, and social norms and attitudes toward sexual life, love and marriage have been evolving rapidly in post-Mao China (Evans 1997; Farquhar 2002; Farrer 2002; Tam 1996; Yan 2003). Farquhar (2002) explores the everyday experiences of “carnal life” in terms of food and sexual life, and the emerging new ideologies of embodied pleasures in post-socialist China. Although people usually suggest that the relatively new forms of self-indulgent bodily pleasures involving food and sex in post-socialist China are a result of emancipating “natural” desires from the shackles of former political repression and Maoist asceticism, Farquhar argues that appetites and anxieties about bodily pleasure in post-socialist China are never completely outside of politics. According to Farquhar, the omnipresent nationalism of the reform period insures that the ideological legacy of Mao inhabits people’s mundane practices and embodied habits in post-Mao China. The study illustrates that economic reforms do not necessarily imply the retreat of the state from everyday life. While we should be aware of the continuing significant role of the state in shaping people’s bodily pleasure as Farquhar argues, she might be overestimating the role of nationalism in the reform period. As commented by Tan (2002: 144), “it is misleading to portray the Chinese in the reform era as generally nationalist, or to constantly look for the ‘national allegory’ in the Chinese embodiment of body linked to food and sex.”

Similar to Farquhar, Evans (1997) shows that sexuality in Maoist and post-Mao China has been a special target for state intervention. In her study of gender norms and female sexuality from 1949 to the 1990s, Evans (1997) examines the role of the state in shaping various discourses of female sexuality and argues that women’s sexuality has been consistently seen as a site for the regulation of sexual and social conduct. With the market orientation of the social and economic reform since the 1980s, the taboo of sex and the denial of sexuality have been rapidly replaced by an explosion of eroticism and desire for sexual pleasure (Evans 1997; Farquhar 2002). The changes in sex-related issues are evidenced in many ways. One apparent change is the bombardment of erotic female images in the mass media and the increasing concern about physical appearance and sexual
appeal among Chinese women (Evans 1997). Moreover, decades after the abolishment of concubinage in the Mao period, an undercurrent of “sexual liberation” has emerged, resulting in an increase in extramarital sexual relations and the return of concubines. In recent years, the keeping of mistresses and “second wife” (er nai) has become a rampant and pervasive phenomenon among the rich and the powerful in China (Lang and Smart 2002; Tam 1996). The changing practices of sexuality are also evidenced by the resurgence of prostitution in China since the 1980s (Evans 1997; Jeffreys 2004; Zheng 2004). With extramarital sex becoming common, a new culture of sexuality has emerged in China, within which attractive and sexualized female images are emphasized and the erotic female body is consumed. These studies on sexuality in China show how the images of women and of sexuality have been radically altered with the emergence of a new ethos of sexuality and a new behavioral model.

The above review shows that scholars have conducted fascinating studies of female body images and the gendered body in Chinese cultural and political context. Although the entry points vary, scholars have noted that beautiful and enticing young women have been used to portray China’s national modernity (Brownell 1998–99, 2001; Farhuhar 2002; Li 1998; Schein 1994; Zhang Z. 2001). These studies indicate that discourses of modernity, nationalism and consumerism are important perspectives to examine women’s perceptions of beauty and practices of cosmetic surgery in post-Mao China. As Gao argues, “The female body—its meaning and ownership—has long served as a signifier for competing nationalist and feminist discourses on womanhood in modern China” (Gao 2006: 546).

Methodology and Fieldwork

The fieldwork on which this book is based was carried out from August 2006 to July 2007 in Beijing, China. Before that, I also conducted a month of preliminary research in Beijing from July to August 2005. I chose Beijing as my field site because it is a political, cultural, educational, and medical center of China. In 2003 and 2004, several influential events, such as the emergence of China’s first “artificial beauty” and the first beauty

10. Shortly after taking power in 1949, the Communist Party of China embarked upon a series of campaigns that purportedly eradicated prostitution from China by the early 1960s.
pageant exclusively for women who had undergone cosmetic surgery, happened in Beijing. These events exemplified the significance of Beijing in China’s cosmetic surgery industry. During my fieldwork, I conducted participant observation, in-depth interviews, semi-structured interviews, and text analysis.11

To conduct fieldwork in a big city like Beijing was quite a challenge, especially when the topic is sensitive and concerned with business secrecy and personal privacy. It was hard to get the access to carry out my fieldwork in the beginning. I sometimes felt very frustrated when I was turned away by surgeons and women who underwent surgeries. It was also quite usual that I was treated as a “spy” by owners or surgeons of privately-owned cosmetic surgery clinics when I tried to discuss sensitive issues with them. Under such circumstances, my social network in Beijing was valuable in helping me find sites to investigate cosmetic surgery. By mobilizing all kinds of social networks, I came to know three “gatekeepers” of the cosmetic surgery industry in Beijing: people with remarkable connections in the cosmetic surgery industry. Building rapport with these gatekeepers had greatly helped me access cosmetic surgery clinics/hospitals as well as women who underwent cosmetic surgery. Using snowball sampling, I tried to contact as many informants as possible and identified several key informants.

Hao Lulu, China’s first “artificial beauty,” who has been in the spotlight of the Chinese and international media since 2003, was one of the most important gatekeepers. In my preliminary study in July 2005, I came to know Hao Lulu through a friend. I spent a lot of time with her and was able to have a deep look into her life. Sometimes, I assisted Hao in doing newspaper interviews and talk shows on TV, and also accompanied her to present at some commercial activities. As Hao is a celebrity in China’s cosmetic surgery industry, her social network helped me over time enter into the network of cosmetic surgery business. Introduced by Hao, I interviewed some plastic surgeons and women who underwent cosmetic surgeries. Moreover, as Hao was a hostess of a cosmetic surgery reality

11. All names of interviewees except one are pseudonyms for the sake of protecting privacy. The name of a key informant, Hao Lulu, is real because she is a public figure and her story has been widely circulated. She has allowed me to use her real name. All the interviews were conducted in Chinese, and the excerpts cited in this book were translated from Chinese.
Buying Beauty

TV show called *Cinderella and the Swan* in 2006 and 2007, I was able to observe much of the production of the reality show made by the Shandong Qilu TV channel. With Hao’s help, I visited the cosmetic surgery hospital, interviewed finalists of the TV show, chatted with the program coordinator and plastic surgeons, and observed one of the operations and the making of some of the episodes.

Through Hao’s introduction, in December 2006, I came to know Ms. Li, a famous consultant and manager in the cosmetic surgery business circle in Beijing. When Ms. Li was invited by a privately-owned cosmetic surgery clinic to give training courses to its staff on cosmetic surgery consultation, I temporarily worked as her assistant in January 2007. During that time, I chatted with the boss of the clinic, nurses, clients and surgeons. This experience offered me a good chance to get a closer look at the cosmetic surgery business.

In the summer of 2005, I came to know Ms. Shi, who had a wide network in the cosmetic surgery business in Beijing. Ms. Shi has undergone various kinds of cosmetic surgeries since the 1980s. At the time when I conducted my fieldwork, she owned a cosmetic surgery hospital in Beijing where I constantly visited to observe changes in the business. Ms. Shi was helpful in providing me with valuable information, allowing me to observe the consultation process of cosmetic surgery in her hospital, and introducing informants to me.

In order to better observe the business of cosmetic surgery, I also visited some plastic surgery clinics/hospitals and beauty salons during my fieldwork. There were some three hundred plastic surgery clinics/hospitals in Beijing between 2006 and 2007, which can be generally divided into three types: military, public and privately-owned. I visited forty-two of them, comprising three military hospitals, six public hospitals/clinics, thirty-two private hospitals/clinics and one joint-venture hospital. During my visit to these hospitals/clinics, I sometimes pretended to be a client to discover the strategies hospitals/clinics used to persuade people to undergo cosmetic surgery, to check the prices of various cosmetic surgeries among different hospitals/clinics, and to determine the major differences among these public/private hospitals/clinics. In the waiting rooms or wards of hospitals/clinics, I observed and chatted with clients, and listened to their experiences, grievances, and opinions on surgeries they wanted to undergo or had undergone. I carried out further interviews with some of these
women. I also visited twelve beauty parlors to observe how they were illegally involved in cosmetic surgery operations. Moreover, in order to get a closer look at some of these beauty parlors, I joined some facial programs and a weight loss program. In so doing, I chatted with beauty consultants and other clients about various topics related to beauty and the body.

During my fieldwork, I particularly concentrated on “listening to women” (Davis 1995) who had undergone cosmetic surgery. Through the different methods mentioned above, I interviewed fifty-eight of these women. I identified several of them as key informants, and constantly chatted with them in person, via phone calls or online messaging. Two thirds of the interviewees were from Beijing and the others came from other cities and provinces such as Shanghai, Chongqing, Sichuan, Yunnan, Liaoning, Heilongjiang, Shandong, Guizhou, Hubei, Henan, and Guangdong. The social profiles of the women I interviewed were diverse. They included high school students, college students, waitresses, freelance writers, manicurists, staff members of cosmetic surgery clinics and beauty salons, bar singers, models, businesswomen, office ladies, managers, sales representatives, market directors, journalists, and housewives. While some of them were primarily middle-class and upper-middle-class women who were successful in their careers, others were lower-class women in service sectors who did not hold jobs seen as “respectable.” The age range of the interviewees was sixteen to fifty-five and their incomes roughly ranged from 800 yuan to 40,000 yuan a month. Actually, as age and income were two sensitive topics which sometimes caused discomfort among interviewees, in some cases, I could not find out the individual’s exact age and income. However, I still tried to get an estimate of their age and income through observation as well as their indirect answers to some of my questions.

In order to obtain the overall statistical and demographic data of recipients of cosmetic surgery in China, I also interviewed an officer from the Chinese Society of Aesthetic and Plastic Surgeons and six surgeons from different cosmetic surgery clinics/hospitals in Beijing. However, all of them stated that precise statistics about China’s cosmetic surgery market were

12. All the interviews conducted in hospitals and elsewhere were based on informed choice. I explained to my interviewees that I was doing research on cosmetic surgery for my Ph.D. and also assured them that all interviews would be disguised with pseudonyms in writing to protect their privacy.
not available. I cross-checked many sources and confirmed that there were indeed no precise official statistics available concerning issues such as the number of cosmetic surgery procedures taken place every year and the demographic features of cosmetic surgery in China.

Due to the lack of government statistics, in order to obtain a broader picture of Chinese women’s involvement in cosmetic surgery, I tried to extend my vision by consulting many written sources including newspapers, magazines, biographies, and advertisements. As cosmetic surgery has been a hot topic in China in recent years, there is much to be found in the Chinese media. In addition to reading extensively news and reports on the Internet, I visited the National Library of China many times during my fieldwork to search various databases and read piles of newspapers and magazines. I searched with key words such as “cosmetic surgery,” “artificial beauty,” “Hao Lulu,” and “Miss Artificial Beauty Pageant” in different databases to locate reports about cosmetic surgery in Chinese newspapers and magazines dated from 1998 to 2007. For example, when I performed a key word search with the Chinese term “cosmetic surgery” (zhengxing meirong shoushu) in the database, WiseSearch, it became apparent that the Chinese media coverage of cosmetic surgery increased dramatically and continuously from 1998 to 2007 (see Figure 1). This rising media attention reflects the growing popularity of cosmetic surgery in China.

To observe how information and tips about beauty and cosmetic surgery were presented in women’s magazines, I have read the Chinese editions of various glossy fashion and lifestyle magazines such as Cosmopolitan, Elle, Harper’s Bazaar, Fashion Housekeeper, Rayli She Fashion, Beauty, and Shanghai Style. In addition, I have watched around 50 Chinese TV programs concerning cosmetic surgery, including talk shows, news reports, and documentaries on China Central Television (CCTV) such as Topics in Focus, Weekly Quality Report, News in 30 Minutes, and News Probe, as well as reality shows dealing with cosmetic surgery such as Cinderella and the Swan, Angels Love Beauty and See My 72 Changes produced by local

---

13. The two databases I primarily used are China Journal Net (CJN) and WiseSearch.
14. WiseSearch is a Chinese and English database of more than 75 million articles from hundreds of media sources aggregated by Wisers Information Ltd. (Hong Kong). WiseSearch claims to be one of the largest Chinese databases of published information from Greater China.
Introduction

TV Stations. Information gathered from these sources appears at points throughout this book.

Organization of the Book

The chapters that follow are divided into different thematic sections. Each section consists of two chapters. The first section outlines the historical and cultural background of cosmetic surgery in China. I first review how plastic surgery, a Western medical specialty, was transmitted from the West to China and adopted into China’s social and political settings from the early twentieth century to Republican China, Maoist China and then to contemporary China. Moreover, by detailing the story of Hao Lulu, China’s first “artificial beauty,” and the controversial debates concerning her surgery, I seek to offer a quick yet telling glimpse into the burgeoning cosmetic surgery industry in China and women’s involvement in it.

In section II, I examine the impact of economic and social transformation on women’s bodily practices of cosmetic surgery by delineating changes of women’s lives in employment and marriage, as reflected in the
women I interviewed. I discuss the phenomenon that Chinese high school and college students, girls especially, have rushed to cosmetic surgery clinics and hospitals over summer and winter holidays to improve their looks in order to get an edge in a tough job market. I also discuss how the obsession with the female beauty in workplaces and in the marriage market is rooted in traditional Chinese gender norms. Using ethnographic cases of a laid-off woman, an upper-middle-class woman, and a rural-to-urban migrant woman, I highlight the diverse motivations for undergoing cosmetic surgery of women positioned differently in the power-laden social hierarchy.

The focus of section III is the commodification of female appearance in China’s flourishing beauty industry and its profound socio-cultural and political implications. I explore how the media plays a pivotal role in creating the desire to buy an “ideal beauty” through cosmetic surgery, and how the consumption of beauty has become a way of life for some Chinese women. Furthermore, I discuss how the female body image and bodily alteration practices have become not only a reflection of personal identity, but also a site of ideological contestation, where state power and market forces reconfigure their power structures to form a new body regime.

In section IV, I explore beauty ideals and cosmetic surgery in China from the perspective of globalization. Taking the expansion of Barbie sales in China’s market as an example, I discuss how the process of globalization has integrated China into a global market economically as well as culturally under the influence of the omnipresent Western beauty ideals and consumer culture. Moreover, I study the significant influence of Korean pop culture on Chinese women’s perception of beauty and practices of cosmetic surgery to stress the multiple directions of globalization. Through a discussion of Chinese women’s preference for double eyelids and fair skin and their bodily practices to pursue these features, I examine the tension between cultural homogenization and cultural heterogenization in relation to the globalization of the standards of beauty and women’s pursuit of these standards through cosmetic surgery.

In the final chapter, I conclude that the growing desire for cosmetic surgery in China is a product of a complex combination of forces, which are both individual and sociocultural, micro and macro, and national and transnational. The changing image of Chinese women who have undergone cosmetic surgery represents the changing face of a “new” China that has undergone a dramatic and drastic social transition.
Index

advertisements for cosmetic surgery 133–6
agency 68
“agency within” 205–7
women as 68, 141
See also Kathy Davis
Ai Fumei 161–2
Ai, Mini 157
All-China Women’s Federation 64
American Academy of Cosmetic Surgery (AACS) 4, 78
American Bureau for Medical Advancement in China 28
American Society for Aesthetic Plastic Surgery 170
Angels Love Beauty 20, 133, 179
Annual Report of China’s Beauty Economy, first 151–2
Anti-Rightist Movement 36–7
Appadurai, Arjun 212
artificial beauty 2, 51–72, 208, 210
defined 5
first 16, 21, 51–72, 85
See also Miss Artificial Beauty Pageant
artificial handsome man 57
See also Zhang Yinghua
Asian economic crisis 84
autonomy of cosmetic surgery clients 65, 69–72
Ba Shusong 151
Bao Huai 53–4, 56
Barbie doll 22
Chinese 173–4
ethnic 173
as fashion icon 174–5
first flagship store 175–6, 184
sales in China 167, 177, 184
sameness of 174
unhealthy shape 172–3
as Western beauty ideal 170–7
Baudrillard, Jean 129, 136
beauty
Anglo-American ideals of 9
diplomacy 156–9
hyperreal 136
imperative 137, 140
myth 7, 67–8, 207
parlors 19, 46–7, 113–4
politics 11, 156–7
symbolic meanings of 7
See also global standard beauty; robust beauty
beauty capital
cosmetic surgery as 72, 75–98, 121, 206
See also employment policy transition; job recruitment; university enrollment growth
Beauty Dreamworks Project 53–5
beauty economy 7–8, 147–64
beauty ideal
changes in China 167–70
fantasy fulfillment 67
hyperreal 136
impact of capitalism 9
impact of Korean Wave 183–4
inner virtue vs outer beauty 64–6, 114
media promotion of 125–30
superficial nature 66
Western 9, 22, 170–7, 202
See also ideal woman
beauty industry 112–20, 142, 151, 210
employment statistics 152
exploitation of women 145
men and 153–6
state control of 9–10, 147
Beauty magazine 20, 134
beauty pageants in China 5, 10, 157–9
See also Miss Artificial Beauty Pageant; Miss International Beauty Pageant; Miss World Pageant
beauty services
everyday beauty services 46–7
medical aesthetic services 46–7
Beckham, David 153
Beijing Ethnic Cultural Palace 43
Beijing Huangsi Aesthetic Surgery Hospital 41, 48
Beijing Xishan Plastic Surgery Hospital 42, 50
Belk, Russell 32–3
Belkin, Lisa 177
Blair, Dr. 28
bodily autonomy 69–70
body
anxiety 121, 146
commodification of 8, 13, 125, 137–46
control by state 7–8, 12–3, 147, 207–8
culture 12
docile 140
maintenance 140–2
as nationalist signifier 16
as personal asset 6
as project 141, 209
self-regulation of 140–1
sexualization of 13, 15–6
site of power struggle 207
two bodies concept 207
as vehicle of self-expression 141
See also carnal life
body image
anxiety about 121, 129–30, 146, 208
growing concern about 107, 109–10, 125–6, 146, 208
media influence 126–30
body politics
control over female bodies 72, 191
Bordo, Susan 173
Botox 60, 110, 112
Bourdieu, Pierre 80
See also capital
bourgeois vanity, beauty as 38–40
breast augmentation surgery 4
in 1930s 30–2, 35
breast wrapping 31
Brothers Grimm fairytales
gender portrayals 177
Brown, Dr. 28
Brownell, Susan 10, 12, 37–9, 62
Cai Fuchao 162
Cai He 89
Cai, Ms. 179
calendar posters 33–4
capital 80
erotic 81–2
physical 80
sexual 80–1
See also beauty capital
capitalism, impact on beauty ideal 9, 167
Cardin, Pierre 43
carnal life 15
Caucasian features 187
See also beauty ideal; Westernization of Chinese women
Chan, Dr. Henry 56
characteristics theory 148
Chen Ci 157
Chen Hong Ping 92
Chen Huanran 61
Chen Jing 79–80, 167
Chen Ling 70–1
Chen Wen 152
Chen Yu 153
Chen, Tina Mai 38
Cheng Xiusheng 151
chin augmentation 2
China Aesthetic and Plastic Surgery Journal, The 41
China Beauty and Fashion Daily 152
China Beauty and Fashion News 180
China Central Television (CCTV) 20, 57
China International Beauty Week 151–2
China Medical Board of the Rockefeller Foundation 26
China National Consumers’ Association 47
Chinese Aesthetic Medical Journal, The 41
Chinese Communist Party
cat theory 148
characteristics theory 148
legitimacy 148–50
pragmatic ideology 147–53, 163
rhetoric of transition 148
socialism with Chinese characteristics 148
soft power 159–60
Chinese Medical Aesthetics and Cosmetology Journal, The 41
Chinese Medical Association 64
Chinese Plastic Surgery Journal 41
Chinese Society of Aesthetic and Plastic Surgeons 19, 46
Choi Chanj Ik 181
Chu, Godwin C. 149
Cinderella and the Swan 18, 20, 133, 177–85
comrade sisters 13
concubinage 16, 110–1
Confucianism
beauty ideal of 11
harmony 66
See also filial piety
cosumerism 7
beauty as reflection of 9, 207, 209
body as consumer object 137–43, 147
with Chinese characteristics 9
consumer revolution 137
creation of desire 138
redefinition of femininity 13
Shanghai as center of 32–3
as social palliative 155–6
See also Barbie doll
cosmetic surgery
advertisements 133–6
agency of clients 68–72, 205–7
boom in twenty-first century 46–50
as consumer choice 7, 209–11
debate 66–8
defined 4–5
development of market 153
disfigurement from 3–4, 47, 143–6
emergence in China 30–5
employment prospects and 22
as “fast food” 132
gift from parents 75–82
growth after Cultural Revolution 45
image ambassadors 56–7; see also Beauty Dreamworks Project; Hao Lulu
increase in popularity 4
Index

individualism and 71–2
in Maoist era 38–40
as investment 72, 75–98; see also
beauty capital
leg-stretching surgery 143–6
link to growing surgery 86–93, 99–107
link to increased university enrollments 85–6
lunchtime procedures 132–3
marriage prospects and 14–5, 93–8, 104
media view of 5
men 155, 169
motivations for 99–121, 149
normalization of 125, 127–37
pain 58, 63–4
as part of nationalist project 10
political context 72, 147–53, 163, 209–11
rhetoric of choice 209–11
as right 5
rise of middle class 107–13
risks 58–64
rural migrant women 22, 116–8
social meanings 205
as source of self-determination 6, 7
students 22, 75–82
as submission to male gaze 6–7, 205–7
top five body parts for 170
in the United States 170
See also body as asset; cosmetic
surgery clinics; cosmetic
surgery procedures; economy;
plastic surgery; reality TV
shows

Cosmetic Surgery Times 56, 179–80
cosmetics
return after Cultural Revolution 45
Cosmopolitan magazine 20, 44, 127–9
craze for certificates 85
craze for cosmetic surgery 85
craze for going abroad 85
craze for graduate study 85
cultural dope 58, 68
cultural heterogenization 9, 22, 212
cultural homogenization 9, 22, 212
Cultural Revolution 36
political campaigns against doctors 37–9

Da S, see Hsu Hsi-Yuan, Barbie
Davis, Dr. John Staige 28
Davis, Kathy 58, 68, 72, 121, 205–6
Deng Xiaoping 41, 147–8
cat theory 147–8
Ding Jun 190–1
Ding, Ms. 59
Dong Bingqi 27–8
double-eyelid surgery 2, 8–10, 138, 167–70
in 1930s 30–2, 35
among students 79–82
history of 188–9
in Maoist China 38–40
myth of 187–97
reasons for 189–97
rural migrant women 15, 116–7
in the United States 188–9
See also Caucasian features;
   Westernization of Chinese women
Douglas, Mary 207
Du, Ms. 88
Duan Congxin 59

economy
growth of 7, 75, 108, 121
market reform 149
privatization 108
transition of Chinese 7, 75, 121
See also beauty economy
Elle magazine 20, 44, 128
employment policy transition 82–5,
   208
bilateral or mutual selection 83
gendered employment trend 99–106
link to cosmetic surgery 85–93
personal responsibility for job search
   83
redundancies 99–101
Re-employment Service Centers 101
state planned job assignment 83
state-owned enterprise reform
   99–101
unemployment rate 101
work units 83
See also iron rice bowl; job recruit-
   ment; rice bowl of youth;
   university enrollment growth
employment prospects
cosmetic surgery and 22
enlightenment values, see Western values
Evans, Harriet 15–6
EverCare Cosmetic Surgery Hospital
   53–5, 61
See also Beauty Dreamworks Project
Extreme Makeover 178

facial contour reshaping 169
fair skin
cultural reasons for 200–1
desirability of 197–202
medical treatments 198, 204
whitening injections 198–200
Fairclough, Gordon 183–4
Fan Bingbing 115, 169
Farquhar, Mary 15
Fashion Housekeeper magazine 20, 128
fashion industry 11
   fashion trends in seventh Five-Year
      Economic Plan 44
growth in 1980s 43–4
   See also fashion magazines; fashion models; fashion shows
Fashion magazine 44
fashion magazines 20, 44
   impact on body image 126–30
   normalizing of cosmetic surgery
      127–37
Rayli magazines 128
Trends Media Group 128–9
unrealistic ideal beauty 22, 129–30
use of image-manipulation programs
   129
fashion models
   influence of 13–4
fashion shows
   after Cultural Revolution 43
Featherstone, Mike 135, 140–1
Feiner, Susan 156, 159
female body, see body
feminism 16
feminist 6–7, 58
   debate on cosmetic surgery 67–8,
      205–6
Feng Lizhe 55
Feng Qian 3, 8
filial piety 65, 75
Fine Goods Shopping Guide 134
floating population 113
See also rural migrant women
foot binding 31–2
Foucault, Michel 140–1

Gang of Four
overthrow of 40–2
Gao Lin 96–7
Gao Yunxiang 11–2, 16, 34–5
Gavard, Sandra 129
gender
employment discrimination 89–93, 113, 121
female body images and 16, 129, 202
norms 15–6
occupational segregation based on 86–93, 102, 106, 124
roles, stereotypical 93–8
Gilman, Sander L. 188
global standard beauty 34–5; see also globalization
globalization 22, 167
cosmetic surgery reality TV shows and 178–80
impact on beauty ideal 9, 130, 184, 212
national sentiment and 202–4
oriental beauty and 211–2
See also Barbie doll; Cinderella and the Swan; double-eyelid surgery; Korean Wave; skin whitening
Good Housekeeping magazine 131
Great Leap Forward 36–7
Green, Adam 81
Guangzhou Far East Cosmetics Hospital 143–4

hair studios 113–4
Hakim, Catherine 81–2
Hang Zhiying 33–4
Hao Lulu 3, 17–8, 20–1, 51–72, 210
autobiography 60–4, 69–70
Confucian justifications for surgery 65–6

criticisms of 56
as face of EverCare Cosmetic Surgery Hospital 55
The Making of Beauty book 63
“People of 2003” list 57
post-surgery lifestyle 52–3
reality TV show 57
reasons for double-eyelid surgery 192
surgical procedures 54, 59–60, 192
Harper's Bazaar magazine 20, 128, 131–2
He Fan 151
Hello Kitty 176
Hollywood movies, influence of 34–5
Hsu Hsi-Yuan, Barbie 198–9
Hu Die 169
Hu Jintao 160
Huang, Dr. 183
Hundred Flowers Campaign 36
hydrophilic polyacrylamide gel 4
hymen repair surgery 119

ideal woman
changing perceptions of 33–5
See also oriental beauty;
Westernization of Chinese women
Ilizarov, Gavril 143
Inda, Jonathan 184
individualism
as motivation for cosmetic surgery 71–2
iron rice bowl 82–3, 99, 101, 106–7
See also employment policy transition; rice bowl of youth
“iron women” 38, 197
Ivy, Dr. Robert H. 28

jawline reshaping 2, 170
Jésus, Attilio 187
Jewel in the Palace, The 182
Ji Shaoting 161–2
Index

Jiang, Ms. 107–13
Jiang Zemin 150
job recruitment, 99
    age discrimination 102
    by airlines 91
Body Shaping Plan 91
discrimination against women 88–92, 102
job advertisements 89–90
posters 87–8
role of beauty 86–8, 90–1, 208
See also employment policy transition; Olympic Games; university enrollment growth
Johansson, Perry 191, 201–2
Journal of Plastic and Burn Surgery 41

Kahn, Joseph 92
Knight, John 101
Kong Fanku 30, 39–40
Koo, Kathryn S. 207
Korean pop culture
    influence of 22
Korean War
    influence on plastic surgery in1950s 35–6
Korean Wave 177, 182–4
    impact on beauty ideal 183–5, 211–3
Kraemer, Heike 191
kuozhao, 83–4
    See also university enrollment growth
laid-off workers 99–107
Lan Xinzhen 181
Lanlan 118–9
Latham, Kevin 148, 155–6
lawsuits for botched cosmetic surgery 47
Lee Young-ae 183
leg-stretching surgery 143–6
    ban on 145
    therapeutic reasons for 143
Li, Eric P.H. 202
Li Fei 62–3
Li, Ms. 18, 110–1
Li Wenren 28
Li Xiaoping 13–4
Li Yongjie 56
Li Ziye 163
Light, Richard 80
Lin Fang 125–8
Linglong magazine 12, 34–5
lip reconstruction 2
liposuction 108–9, 138, 169
Liu Bohong 64
Liu Jia 193–6, 200–1
Liu Xiaojing 3, 6, 43–4
Liu Yulan 3, 5–6
living standards in China
    improved 7
    See also economy
lunchtime cosmetic surgery 132–3
Ma, Ms. 60
magazines, see fashion magazines
male gaze
    beauty as result of 6–7, 10, 205–7
mammoplasty, see breast augmentation surgery
mandibular angle reduction, see jawline reshaping
Mao Zedong 71–2
Margaret Williamson Hospital (Shanghai) 28
Marie Claire magazine 128
market reform in China, see economy
marriage
    advertising for a wife 95
    appearance and 14–5, 93–8
    motivation for cosmetic surgery 14–5, 95–8, 104
    traditional views of 93–4
mass media, see media
Mattel, see Barbie doll
McDonald, Robert 198
media
images of China in Western  55
impact on body image 126–30
normalization of cosmetic surgery 127–37
promotion of beauty ideal 125–30
See also advertisements for cosmetic surgery; fashion magazines; reality TV shows
medical cosmetology 46
See also cosmetic surgery
men
artificial handsome man 57
beauty industry and 153–6
city jade man 154
cosmetic surgery 155, 169
cosmetics sales 154
flowery man 154
grooming 154–5
metrosexual 153–6
neuter pretty man 154
post yuppie 154–5
middle class
body image concern 107, 109–10, 125–6
increased purchasing power 110
rise of 107–13, 142
Mikamo, K. 188
Miller, Laura 193
Miss Artificial Beauty Pageant 1–3, 5, 16–7, 20
Miss China Pageant 156
Miss International Beauty Pageant 1–2
Miss World Pageant, in China 156–9
mistresses 16, 110–1
modern woman
construction of 13–4
modernity 14, 43, 151, 209, 212
Chinese women’s experience of 13
female body and 30–5
modernization
bodily adornment and 13–4
female body and 12–3, 32
My Star 2008
promotion of 135
nail art salons 113– 5
national sentiment 197, 202, 204, 212
nationalism
appropriation of female body 12–3,
146
Chinese 10, 12
conflict with globalization 13
cultural 204, 212
Ni Baochun, Dr. 28
Nie Fudong 91
nose job, see rhinoplasty
nüqiangren, see “super women”
Nye, Joseph 160
Olympic Games, Beijing 2008 158–63
oriental beauty of hostesses at 159–63
open-door policy 11, 42
oriental beauty 13, 164
at Beijing Olympics 159–63
growing national sentiment towards 202–4, 211–3
“look Chinese” view 203
Oriental Horizon TV program 96
orthodontics 2
Pan, Ms. 196
Peking Union Medical College (PUMC) 26–7
Division of Plastic Surgery 36
physical culture 11–2
plastic surgery
clinics 18, 36
defined 4
development in China 27–9
during Cultural Revolution 37–9
increase in after Cultural Revolution 40–2
introduction to China 21, 25–7
journals 41
medical indicators for 4–5
rennaissance in modern China 40–2
skill of Chinese surgeon 61–2
transnational adaptation 62
See also cosmetic surgery
Plastic Surgery Hospital, Chinese Academy of Medical Sciences
36–7, 39, 41, 48, 75–6
post-Mao China 8–9, 12–6, 147–8, 156
prostitution 16, 111, 118–9
changing attitudes towards 119–20
cosmetic surgery and 118–20

Rayli Dress Beauty magazine 128
Rayli Fashion Pioneer magazine 128
Rayli Lovely Pioneer magazine 128
Rayli She Fashion magazine 20, 128
reality TV shows
  cosmetic surgery 17–8, 133, 177–82
talent 179
  See also Angels Love Beauty;
  Cinderella and the Swan; See My 72 Changes
reconstructive surgery 4, 27
  in Korean War 35–7
  in Sino-Japanese War 28, 35
  See also plastic surgery
Red Guards 38
Regulations on Enhancing
  Administration of Beauty Services 46
Regulations on Services in Medical
  Cosmetology 49
Rein, Shaun 176
Reischer, Erica 207
renzao meini 51
  See also artificial beauty
rhinoplasty 2, 138–9
  in 1930s 30–1, 35
  among students 79–82
rice bowl of youth 99, 105–7
  See also employment policy transition; iron rice bowl
Ritzer, George 136
robust beauty 11–2, 34
Rofel, Lisa 14
Rong Jiaojiao 92
Rosaldo, Renato 184
Ruili magazine 45
rural migrant women
  beauty industry and 113–20
  body refashioning 114
  cosmetic surgery and 22
  employment in beauty salons 114–20
  scorn towards 116–8
Saint Laurent, Yves 43
Schilling, Chris 141–2
second wives 16, 110–1
See My 72 Changes 20, 133, 179
Self-Strengthening Movement 26
sex industry
  changing attitudes towards 119–20
  See also prostitution
sexuality
  extramarital sex 16
  female 15–6
  See also mistresses; prostitution;
  second wives; sex industry
Shanghai
  as center of beauty culture 32
  as center of consumer culture 32–3, 35
Shanghai Kinway Plastic & Cosmetic
  Surgery Center 57
Shanghai Ninth People’s Hospital 50
Shanghai Style magazine 20, 128
Shi Guanghui 105
Shi, Ms. 18
Shilling, Chris 209
Shizhuang 44; see also Fashion
  magazine
Simpson, Mark 153
Sino-Japanese War
  influence on plastic surgery 28, 35
### Index

- **SK Aikang Hospital** 48, 180–3, 185; see also *Cinderella and the Swan*
- **skin whitening** 198–201, 204
- **skin, fair,** see *fair skin*
- **slimming centers** 113
- **social mores, changing** 110–1
- **socialism with Chinese characteristics** 148
- **soft power** 159–60
- **Song, Mr.** 46–50
- **Song Ruyao, Dr.** 28–9, 36, 41, 188 during Cultural Revolution 37–8
- **sportswomen** images of 12–3
- **Spring of Science** 41
- **St. Luke’s Hospital (Shanghai)** 28
- **state,** see Chinese Communist Party
- **state-owned enterprise reform,** see employment policy transition
- **state power** 8–9, 22, 147, 156, 213
- **students** growth in cosmetic surgery on 22, 75–82
- **Sullivan, Deborah** 128
- **“super women”** 112
- **Swan, The** 179
- **Swedlund, Alan C.** 172–4

**Tan Chee-Beng** 15

**Taoism**
- **beauty ideal of** 11
- **temple augmentation** 2
- **tiyu,** see physical culture
- **Tong, Ms.** 76–7, 82–3
- **Trends Media Group** 128–9
- **Tung, P. G.,** see Dong Bingqi

**unemployment**
- **increase in** 82–6
- **university enrollment growth** 82–6

**Urla, Jacqueline** 172–4

**Virchow, Rudolph** 25

**Vogue China magazine** 45, 128

- **Wang Feng** 114
- **Wang Kuiran** 144–5
- **Wang Liangneng** 28, 36
- **Wang Lianzhao** 42
- **Wang, Ms.** 71–2
- **Wang Ning** 162
- **Wang Wei** 30, 40
- **Wang Xiaohua** 89–90
- **Wang Zhen** 106, 114
- **Watson, Rubie S.** 207
- **Webster, Dr. Jerome P.** 27–9
- **Weekly Quality Report** 144–5
- **Wen, Chihua** 92
- **Western dress codes**
  - acceptance of 44
- **Western medicine**
  - cultural meaning in China 25–7
  - introduction by missionaries 26
- **Western values** 14
- **Westernization of Chinese women,** 170–7, 202
  - ambivalent view of 191, 211–2
  - impact of Western beauty ideals 8–10, 13
  - perspective of Western media ideals 8
  - See also *Barbie doll; beauty ideal; double-eyelid surgery*
  - white flags 37
  - Wijsbek, Henri 206
  - Wolf, Naomi 7, 67–8, 206
  - Women’s Studies Center, Peking University 93–4
  - Wu Mei 137–43, 145
  - Wu Xiaoping 89
  - wuguan duanzheng 103

- **xigang,** see laid-off workers
- **xiahai jingshang** 107
- **Xiao Juan** 76–7
- **xiaokang society** 150–1
- **Xiaomel** 144–5
Xie Cheng 181
Xu, Gary 156, 159
Xu Lishan 199
Xu, Ms. 99
Xue Xinjun 101

Yang Lan 197
Yang Nianqun 26–7
Yang Shuying 30
Yang Xu 162
Yang Yuan 2–3, 5
  autobiography 3
  disqualification from Miss
  International Pageant 2–3
  surgical procedures undergone 2, 6
Yang Yuhuan 168
yangqi look 190–1

Zeng Yiding 33–4
Zhang Disheng, Dr. 28–30, 32, 36, 39–41
Zhang Lin 86–7
Zhang, Ms. 100–5, 113
Zhang Ping 175

Zhang Rui 199
Zhang Xianlin 27–8
Zhang Xiaomei 152–3, 202–3
  China Beauty book 202–3, 212
Zhang Yinghua 57
Zhang Zilin 159
Zhao Dongming 161
Zhao Feiyan 168
Zhao Jin 193
Zhao, Ms. 64–5
Zhao Wei 118
Zhao Xiao 151
Zhao Xin 32–3
Zhao Ying 113–20
Zheng Mantuo 33–4
Zhong Wei 151
zhongchan jieji, see middle class
Zhou Fang 168
Zhou Gang 61
Zhou Xiaozheng 66–7
Zhu Hongyin 28, 35
Zhu Rongxuan 180
Zhu Xia 192–3