Lesson 11

13 December 2013

**Stretch my legs, Doc!**

*Adapted from: http://fullspate.digitalcounterrevolution.co.uk*

1.

Swee Jing paid more money that most Chinese people earn in a year to have both her legs broken and stretched. The pretty college graduate is now lying in a hospital bed, in pain, after the doctors **sawed** through the **flesh** and bone of both legs in eight places. Each leg now has eight steel **rods** sticking out of it below the knee and connected to a steel cage surrounding each leg. Once the broken bones start to **heal** the doctors will begin to turn the screws on the cage pushing the steel rods apart and so stretching the leg. It is a slow and painful process that will take 18 months to add 8cm to Swee Jing's height.

2.

Despite the agony and the cost, the 23-year-old says she does not regret a thing. "It hurts, but it will be worth it to be taller. I'll have more opportunities in life and a better chance of finding a good job and husband."  Her parents, who **financed** the operation, agree. "It's an investment in our daughter's future. Because she was short, she was shy and depressed, but this should change now."

3.

Kong Jing-wen is one of a growing number of perfectly healthy Chinese young men and women who are willing to have their legs broken in order to be taller. In part, the popularity of such surgery can be explained by the growing interest in fashion and beauty in China. Shops and magazines in the cities show images of long-legged western models. Also, height is one of the criteria required on job advertisements. To get a job in the foreign ministry, for instance, male applicants need to be at least 5ft 7in, while women must be at least 5ft 3in. Chinese diplomats are expected to be as tall as their foreign colleagues. Other examples of height **discrimination**: air stewardesses have to be over 5ft 5in. In some places, people under 5ft 3in are not allowed to take a driving test! To get into many law schools, women students need to be over 5ft 1in and men over 5ft 5in. Also, height is often mentioned in personal advertisements on dating portals.

4.

Even successful operations cause a lot of pain. "During the final weeks of the stretching, I was in so much **discomfort** that I couldn't sleep at night," says one young woman from Beijing, Susan. The 27-year-old is in hospital recovering from an operation to remove the steel rods that have been inside her legs for the past 18 months. Now that she is 8cm taller than before, Susan says she would recommend the operation to her friends. "It hurt at first and I couldn't walk for a long time. But it has worked, and I feel very good about that. Before, nobody paid any attention to me because I was short, but now they'll look at me."

*Match the words on the left with their definitions on the right*

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| 1. to saw  2. flesh  3. rod  4. to heal  5. to finance  6. discrimination  7. discomfort | a. to get better, e.g. a wound  b. to cut with a large tool  c. long, thin cylinder  d. an unpleasant feeling of pain  e. skin, muscle, etc.  f. saying one thing is better than another  g. provide the money for something |

*Match these headings with the right paragraph of the text*

1. It was painful but I don’t regret it.
2. We want to give our child a better future.
3. 18 months of agony to be taller.
4. Short people are disadvantaged.

*Are these sentences true or false?*

1. Leg stretching operations are financed by the Chinese government.
2. It takes about 18 months to stretch legs by 8 cm.
3. Young Chinese people want to be taller in order to live and work in western countries.
4. Tall Chinese people have more chances of finding a good job than short ones.
5. Long-legged girls are considered to be attractive in China.

**Plastic Surgery in the USA and Great Britain**

According to Plastic Surgery Research (<http://www.cosmeticplasticsurgerystatistics.com/statistics.html>):   
Over 2 million people a year have plastic surgery in the USA.   
The top five surgical procedures for women are (in order of popularity):

1. liposuction,

2. breast enlargement,

3. eyelid surgery,

4. tummy tuck,

5. facelift.

Plastic surgery is most popular among people aged 35-50.

According to the BBC [(<http://www.bbc.co.uk/radio1/onelife/health/healthy_body/cosmetic_surgery.shtml>)]:   
In Great Britain, 92% of all plastic surgery procedures are carried out on women   
The most popular procedures for women are (in order of popularity):

1. breast enlargement,

2. breast reduction,

3. face or neck lift,

4. nose job,

5. liposuction.

And for men:

1. ear surgery (large ears are pinned back),

2. liposuction,

3. eyelid surgery.

According to surgeons at the Hurlingham Clinic, the most popular cosmetic procedure for UK teenagers is a nose job. Currently, anyone over the age of 16 can have any kind of cosmetic surgery. You need parental permission if you are under 16.