

Funeral Association recommends QR code tombstone



More eco-friendly ways of honoring the deceased are needed. [File Photo]

More eco-friendly ways of honoring the deceased are needed as traditional tombstones swallow natural resources and degrade the ecological environment. The answer, says an expert, is a QR code tombstone.

According to Wang Yanzhen, Vice-President of the China Funeral Association: "In modern times, people should commemorate their deceased loved ones in modern ways".

"The internet provides impetus for the transformation and upgrading of funeral modes. Thus, the QR code tombstone can play the same role as a traditional one in helping people offer sacrifices to their departed ones," said Wang.

Based on the QR codes and the mobile internet, the new type of tombstone uses digital data to store a biography, photographs and videos of the departed.

By scanning the QR code, one can gain access to all these memorial materials, helping make a commemoration interactive and far more educational. Made of bronze and pottery, the QR code tombstone helps save land and protect the environment, Wang argued.

He explained that China started to promote cremation in the 1950s in order to save land. However, after reform and opening up, the resurgent idea of "Being laid to rest" prompted people to build cemeteries and bury the bone ash from

cremation of their deceased relatives.

However, cemeteries, especially large, luxury ones, not only occupy farmland and forestland but also consume wood, stones and cement, leading to resource waste and environment degradation. Therefore, ways of honoring the deceased should be changed.

Statistics show that it takes 200,000 square meters of land to provide cemeteries for 70,000 dead people each year in Beijing alone. Without a change in thinking, the living would have to fight for land with the dead in the near future, Wang added.

Autopsy to shed light on death of student



A dormitory building in Taifu Town Middle School [Photo/Shanghai Daily]

An autopsy is being conducted on a middle school student alleged to have fallen to his death on Saturday, with no evidence having been found so far to suggest he was physically abused, officials in Luzhou, Sichuan province, said at a news conference on Thursday.

He Shaopeng, deputy mayor and public security bureau director of Luzhou, said the chest and belly of the student's body had been cut open and lacerations were found in his liver and spleen.

The publicity department of Luxian—a county under the administration of Luzhou—said on Wednesday that a 14-year-old male student of Taifu Middle School in Taifu town was found dead outside his dormitory building at about 6 a.m. on Saturday.

The department stated that local police did not think the boy had been

murdered after initial investigations, but this caused public outcry, with many people suspecting that the boy was beaten to death by five other students who are children of local officials.

Mao Handong, a police officer with Luzhou public security bureau, said at the conference that none of the officials' children were proved to have been classmates with, or to have known of, the deceased student.

Lyu Yugang, director of the Ministry of Education's basic education department, said at a conference in Beijing on Thursday that he felt sorry for the death of the student and had requested education departments in Sichuan to assist local authorities in discovering the cause of the student's death and reporting to the ministry in a timely manner.

A video obtained by Lyu Qingfu, a reporter at Xinhua News Agency, showed the mother of the deceased student visiting a crematory and cutting clothes off her son's body to expose a large purple area on his back and wounds on both hands and elbows, suggesting that the boy might have been beaten to death.

People's Daily, the official newspaper of the Communist Party of China, said in an opinion piece on its WeChat account on Wednesday that local governments should release information in a timely and accurately manner in emergency situations.

"Timely and accurate information, as well as an authoritative and convincing autopsy report, will help clarify facts and dispel rumors," it said.

[Reforms are a shot in the arm for capital's healthcare system](#)

A nurse at the China-Japan Friendship Hospital cares for an inpatient.
[Photo/China Daily]

Beijing will put a new medical care reform plan into effect on Saturday, which will bring an end to medicine price markups, according to local officials.

More than 3,600 medical institutions are involved in the reform and all of them will abolish the medicine price markups, according to Fang Laiying, head of the Beijing Municipal Commission of Health and Family Planning.

It is estimated that the cost of treatment per outpatient will be reduced by about 5 percent on average thanks to cuts in medicine prices, while there will be an average cost increase of 2.5 percent for inpatient treatment due to the growth of certain service charges, according to Fang.

Community hospitals and medical institutions will be given the same access to

the medicines usually prescribed in higher-level hospitals, so that patients will have more choices, Fang said.

Marking up medicine prices is a practice that has been adopted by most public hospitals in China since the 1950s. It allows hospitals to sell drugs with markups usually at a rate of 15 percent above the drugs' tag prices.

Its purpose was to make up for the shortage in healthcare funding from the government, and it became part of doctors' salaries, creating incentive for doctors to over-prescribe.

In 2015, incomes from checkups, tests and medical treatment materials accounted for about 66 percent of the city's medical services revenue, while the incomes from the intelligence and labor of medical personnel, such as diagnosis, surgery, treatment and nursing, which are closely related to the quality of medical services, only accounted for 34 percent, according to Fang.

"The core of this new reform is to separate the functions of medical services and drug sales so as to shut down the markup mechanism in public medical institutions in Beijing," Fang said.

"The separation will cut off the channel for making money through over-prescription and help medical practitioners provide better treatments and other services," Fang said.

"The reform will effectively motivate the medical staff to pay more attention to the medical service they are providing, and further improve the doctor-patient relationship," said Li Ruifeng, a medical reform expert from Beijing University of Chinese Medicine.

[Visit to Australia by Vice President of the United States, Mike Pence](#)

We look forward to welcoming the Vice President of the United States, Mike Pence, to Australia on April 22.

The Vice President's visit, so early in the term of the new Administration, underlines the strength of our alliance.

Vice President Pence will also visit the Republic of Korea, Japan and Indonesia. The Australian Government believes that United States engagement in the Asia Pacific remains absolutely crucial to the region's stability and prosperity.

Vice President Pence's visit provides an important opportunity to discuss the

depth and breadth of Australia's strategic, security and economic relationship with the United States, and to underline our commitment to work with the Trump Administration to advance our shared interests in our region and globally.

In addition to engaging with Government, Vice President Pence will also meet business leaders and representatives of the Australia-US community in Sydney.

BCC: Shortage of digital skills hampering business productivity and growth

Today the BCC releases the results of our digital survey on skills.

7 April 2017

Digital skills are increasingly important to the operation of businesses in the UK but companies are facing a shortage of skills in their workforce which is hampering productivity, according to a new survey by the British Chambers of Commerce (BCC), released today (Friday).

The survey of more than 1,400 businesses across the UK found that 84% of firms say digital and IT skills are more important to their business than two years ago, with half (51%) saying these skills are significantly more important.

However, the survey also found that more than three-in-four businesses are facing a shortage of digital skills in their workforce, with 52% reporting a slight shortage, 21% a significant one and 3% a critical shortage.

The key findings of the survey are:

- The skills most important to companies are **basic computer skills** (72%), **communicating and connecting through digital channels** (71%) and **management of digital information** (69%)
- Skills shortages are having adverse effects on many firms including, **increasing workload on existing staff** (52%), **higher operating costs** (29%), and causing **difficulties in meeting customer requirements** (28%)
- Businesses regard a **lack of time for staff training** (41%), **difficulty in identifying appropriate training** (32%), and the **high cost of training** (25%), as the **leading barriers to rectifying these shortages**.

Adam Marshall, Director General of the British Chambers of Commerce (BCC), said:

“The evidence is clear: better digital skills make firms more productive, and a lack of digital skills holds them back.

“Businesses themselves need to do a lot more to tackle the digital skills shortages they face, and their leaders need to be alive to the fact that a failure to tackle this issue will have an impact on their bottom line. Too many firms are stuck in an unproductive cycle, where the failure to take action has serious consequences.

“Training providers can give firms a helping hand, by engaging with companies on their digital needs and helping them to free up resources for growth. Government must help as well, by recognising that some of the high-level digital skills businesses need will come from overseas so a pragmatic immigration system needs to be in place to provide firms with access to the workers required to fill the gaps.”

Ends

Notes to editors:

The British Chambers of Commerce (BCC) surveyed 1,465 business people from all regions of the UK online in January 2017 to understand how businesses rate the overall reliability of their broadband connections, and how a more reliable connection could help their businesses. Of the businesses surveyed, 96% were SMEs, 22% operate in the manufacturing sector, and 78% operate in the services sector.

The British Chambers of Commerce (BCC) sits at the heart of a powerful network of 52 Accredited Chambers of Commerce across the UK, representing thousands of businesses of all sizes and within all sectors. Our Global Business Network connects exporters with nearly 40 markets around the world. For more information, visit: www.britishchambers.org.uk

Media contacts:

Allan Williams – Senior Press Manager

020 7654 5812 / 07920583381

Orla Hennessy – Press and Communications Officer

020 7654 5813 / 07825746812