

# Nature Asian-Pacific Correspondent David Cyranoski's "Brawl in Beijing" Is a Fraudulent and Malicious News Report

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【Abstract】 Mr. David Cyranoski's "Brawl in Beijing" (Nature 467, 511) is a 500 words long report about the "personal dispute" between Fang Shi-min, the so called "fraud buster," and Dr. Xiao Chuanguo, a renowned urologist. In the report, the author made numerous factual mistakes, or intentionally told lies. He also hid key information from his readers.



FANG SHIMIN

Former biochemist Fang Shimin has made enemies after scrutinizing scientists' reputations.

FRAUD

## Brawl in Beijing

Critics of Chinese researchers targeted in physical attacks.

BY DAVID CYRANOSKI

Science can be a rough game in China. On 29 August, on his way home from a tea house in Beijing, Fang Shimin was assaulted. The former biochemist — who for the past decade has run a website exposing scientific fraudsters — was chased by two men, caught and attacked with a hammer. "I believe they planned to kill me," he says. "The only way to shut me up is to kill me." He escaped with only minor cuts and bruises. In June, Fang Xuanchang, a journalist who had reported on corruption in science in China, was left with more serious injuries after two men assaulted him with steel rods.

On 21 September, police arrested Xiao Chuanguo, a urologist at Tongji Medical College in Wuhan, on suspicion of masterminding both plots. Xiao could not be reached for comment, but has confessed his involvement to Beijing's police. Fang Shimin says Xiao could face 3–10 years in prison — or more if the charges become attempted murder.

Xiao and Fang Shimin have never met or spoken, but their paths have crossed on the Internet — and in court. Xiao's clash with him, and with Fang Xuanchang, revolves around a surgical procedure devised by Xiao that aims to restore bladder and bowel function in patients with spina bifida or spinal-cord injuries. Xiao reported an impressive 87% success rate for the operation, which involves re-routing nerves<sup>1</sup>. In 2005, he was nominated for membership of the Chinese Academy of Sciences, the elite body of the Chinese scientific world.

Following his nomination, people started posting questions about Xiao's claims on

POLICY

## Science safe in Brazil elections

Next head of state unlikely to upset the status quo.

BY ANNA PETHERICK

**L**ike many other Brazilians, the authors of this article are hoping that the presidential elections of the October will bring as little change as possible. After nearly a decade of solid support for science from President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, his likely successor, Dilma Rousseff, has much to live up to.

Lula's own formal education may have been meagre, but during his seven years as president he has raised the status of science in Brazil by steadily increasing research funding (as a percentage of gross domestic product (GDP) — which itself has grown impressively, from 6.4% in 1994 to 7.7% in 2010). He has also elevated Brazil's scientific profile by writing numerous edicts on its science-development initiatives, including one in 2008 that set the agenda for 2008, and his science minister of the day, Sérgio Rezende, has published research about spin-neuro theory in *Physical Review Letters* and elsewhere.

The Lula government brought a very important increase in funding and did very important work in terms of policy-making and agenda setting, says Paulo Godinho, president of the Fundação de Amparo à Pesquisa em Medicina (FAPESP) in Ribeirão Preto. "It was the first time that we brought together the traditional areas related to industrial policy with those related to science funding, health and agriculture."

It has not all been good news, however. Lula's former environment minister, Marina Silva — who is now standing against Rousseff — resigned in 2008 because she did not think the government was doing enough to protect the Amazon. Despite her concerns, 2009 figures showed that deforestation plunged to

AN IMPRESSIVE RECORD

The Lula presidency has seen large increases in the science budget.



Year	Spending (US\$ billion)	Percentage of GDP
2001	~8	~6.4
2002	~8	~6.4
2003	~8	~6.4
2004	~10	~6.4
2005	~12	~6.4
2006	~15	~6.4
2007	~18	~6.4
2008	~20	~6.4
2009	~22	~6.4

1. Xiao, C.-G. *Proc. Int. Conf. Urol. Shanghai*, 2–4 July (2005).  
2. Xiao, C.-G. *Eur. Urol.* 49, 22–29 (2006).  
3. Cyranoski, D. *Nature* 441, 392–393 (2006).  
4. Peters, K. M. et al. *J. Urol.* 184, 702–708 (2010).

A fraudulent and malicious report by Nature

The fraudulent and malicious parts of the article are highlighted in yellow and analyzed and discussed below.

On Sept. 29, 2010, Nature published online a news report by their Asian-Pacific Correspondent David Cyranoski, entitled [Brawl in Beijing](#). The report appeared in journal Nature the next day. The article, telling the fight between Dr. Xiao Chuanguo and Fang Shi-min (or Fang Zhouzi) in China, was refuted and criticized, for its obvious one-sidedness and manifest bias, right after its publication<sup>[1]</sup>. However, Nature seems never wavered their belief in the article's truthfulness. On November 6, 2012, in their editorial, [John Maddox prize](#), Nature announced the news that Fang Shi-min was selected to receive the inaugural award. On the webpage, Nature listed [Brawl in Beijing](#) as the only supporting document to justify their selection. Before the selection, Mr. Albert Yuan, a Chinese journalist and one of Fang's closest friends, cited [Brawl in Beijing](#) as the key reference for his nomination of Fang Shi-min for the John Maddox Prize<sup>[2]</sup>. In other words, Mr. Cyranoski's report single-handedly made Fang win the John Maddox Prize. Therefore, it is necessary to revisit the issue and show the world how erroneous and deceiving the report really is.

Not counting the references, [Brawl in Beijing](#) contains exact 500 words, and they are distributed in 8 paragraphs. In the following, I will analyze the article paragraph by paragraph.

### **The First Paragraph:**

["Science can be a rough game in China. On 29 August, on his way home from a tea house in Beijing, Fang Shimin was assaulted. The former biochemist — who for the past decade has run a website exposing scientific fraudsters — was chased by two men, caught and attacked with a hammer."](#)

You might think that the first paragraph of the story, which contains nothing but factual statement, should be error-free, right? Wrong! Not to mention that the very first sentence was misleading - the Brawl was never about "science," as the John Maddox Prize judges have already acknowledged<sup>[3]</sup> - Mr. David Cyranoski got the very fact wrong: According to Fang's own recollection made right after the incident, he was never "caught" by the two men: he was indeed chased, but he escaped, and then one of the two men tossed a hammer at him, and according to Fang, that hammer caused his bleeding and three wounds on his back<sup>[4]</sup>. Mr. David Cyranoski needs to explain to his readers that based on what information he wrote the word "caught"?



### **Causing three wounds with one hit**

20 hours after being attacked, Fang showed to China's Justice Network (正义网) his wounds caused by a hammer tossed at him. Many theories have been proposed to explain the possible trajectory of the hammer which caused the three wounds by a single hit, and how could a hammer cause such mosquito-bite like wounds.

### **The Second Paragraph:**

“I believe they planned to kill me,’ he says. ‘The only way to shut me up is to kill me.’ He escaped with only minor cuts and bruises. In June, Fang Xuanchang, a journalist who had reported on corruption in science in China, was left with more serious injuries after two men assaulted him with steel rods.”

The importance of the first factual mistake is revealed in the second paragraph: Fang, who had been targeting Dr. Xiao since 2001 when the latter reported his plagiarism to Science magazine<sup>[5]</sup>, had tried desperately to fix Dr. Xiao as a murderer ever since Xiao’s arrested on Sept. 21, 2010<sup>[6]</sup>, and it seems that only being “caught and attacked with a hammer” could make the accusation sounds plausible. More on this later.

In the paragraph, Mr. David Cyranoski also hid a piece of key information from his readers: he didn’t tell his reader that Fang Xuanchang was, and still is, one of the most loyal and vicious confidants of Fang Shi-min’s, and they have been allies in almost every front, especially in the area of GMO, since 2004, and the retaliatory campaign against Dr. Xiao, masterminded by Fang Shi-min in August 2009, was implemented under Fang Xuanchang’s leadership, together with Mr. Jia Hepeng, a contributor to Nature, Nature Medicine, and Science magazine, in Chinese news media one month later<sup>[7]</sup>. The fact that the two Fangs are good friends is well-known in China, and even Fang Shi-min himself, who rarely acknowledges his friendship with others, because many of his former friends have turned into his worst enemies, openly admitted that Fang Xuanchang is his friend<sup>[8]</sup>. Then, the question is, why Mr. David Cyranoski hid such information from his English readers?



**Gang of Three for GMO**

In May 2010, Fang Shi-min, Albert Yuan, and Fang Xuanchang (from left to right) got together to promote GMO (none of them had training in plant science or food science). Fang Xuanchang was attacked one month later and he claimed that he bled about 2 liters of blood through the wound on his head<sup>[9]</sup>, yet he has not proof to substantiate his claim. Albert Yuan, who received his Master’s degree from Arizona State University in 1994, but known to his boss at Life Week magazine as “Dr. Yuan,” nominated Fang Shi-min for John Maddox Prize in 2012.

### **The Third Paragraph:**

“On 21 September, police arrested Xiao Chuanguo, a urologist at Tongji Medical College in Wuhan, on suspicion of masterminding both plots. Xiao could not be reached for comment, but has confessed his involvement to Beijing’s police. Fang Shimin says Xiao could face 3–10 years in prison — or more if the charges become attempted murder.”

Mr. David Cyranoski hid another piece of key information in this paragraph: since the arrest of Dr. Xiao on Sept. 21, 2010, Fang had been pushing the idea that Dr. Xiao should be charged with intentional murder, as mentioned above<sup>[6]</sup>. Fang also expressed his vehement hatred of Dr. Xiao publicly on Sept. 25, 4 days before the publication of [Brawl in Beijing](#): “My hatred to him won’t be resolved even if he is executed by shooting to death.”<sup>[10]</sup> Is anyone so stupid to believe that a scientific dispute could result in such intense animosity? As a matter of fact, coincidental with the publication of [Brawl in Beijing](#), Fang, and his gangsters revealed their plan to use the incident to destroy and eliminate Dr. Xiao’s family members and friends<sup>[11]</sup>. Also, on the same day of [Brawl in Beijing](#)’s publication in London, China’s Southern Weekend published an article by Chai Huiqun, a reporter who framed Xiao six months earlier by connecting a rotten heel to Xiao’s Procedure (it was later found out the Procedure used the nerves of the different leg of that person<sup>[12]</sup>.) In the article, Mr. Chai also accused Xiao of attempting to kill Fang by reiterating what Fang just said<sup>[13]</sup>.

Intentionally or not, Mr. Cyranoski’s report was an integral part of coordinated actions aimed at destroying Xiao completely.

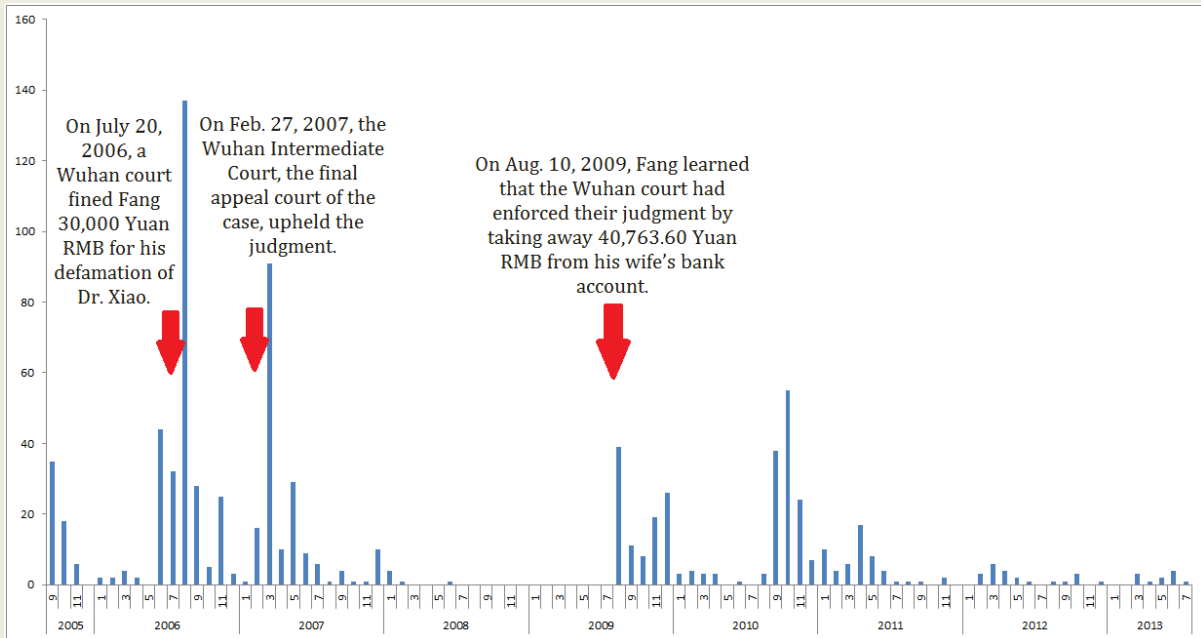
#### **The Fourth Paragraph:**

“Xiao and Fang Shimin have never met or spoken, but their paths have crossed on the Internet — and in court. Xiao’s clash with him, and with Fang Xuanchang, revolves around a surgical procedure devised by Xiao that aims to restore bladder and bowel function in patients with spina bifida or spinal-cord injuries. Xiao reported an impressive 87% success rate for the operation, which involves re-routing nerves<sup>1,2</sup>. In 2005, he was nominated for membership of the [Chinese Academy of Sciences](#), the elite body of the Chinese scientific world.”

This paragraph is the key part of the article where the most malicious distortion of fact occurs. According to Mr. David Cyranoski, the dispute between Xiao and Fang “revolves around a surgical procedure devised by Xiao.” The fact is, the “clash” started as early as in 2001, when Dr. Xiao reported Fang’s plagiarism to Science magazine<sup>[5]</sup>, and the “surgical procedure devised by Xiao” was never an issue in the clash before August 2009: as of today, July 16, 2013, there are 608 posts or articles containing the phrase “Xiao’s Procedure” (肖氏手术) on Fang’s New Threads, but only 16 of them, a whopping 2.6%, were published before August 10, 2009, and none of the 2.6% articles or posts questioned the efficacy of the procedure<sup>[14]</sup>. Therefore, Mr. David Cyranoski needs to tell us what did he mean by “revolves.”

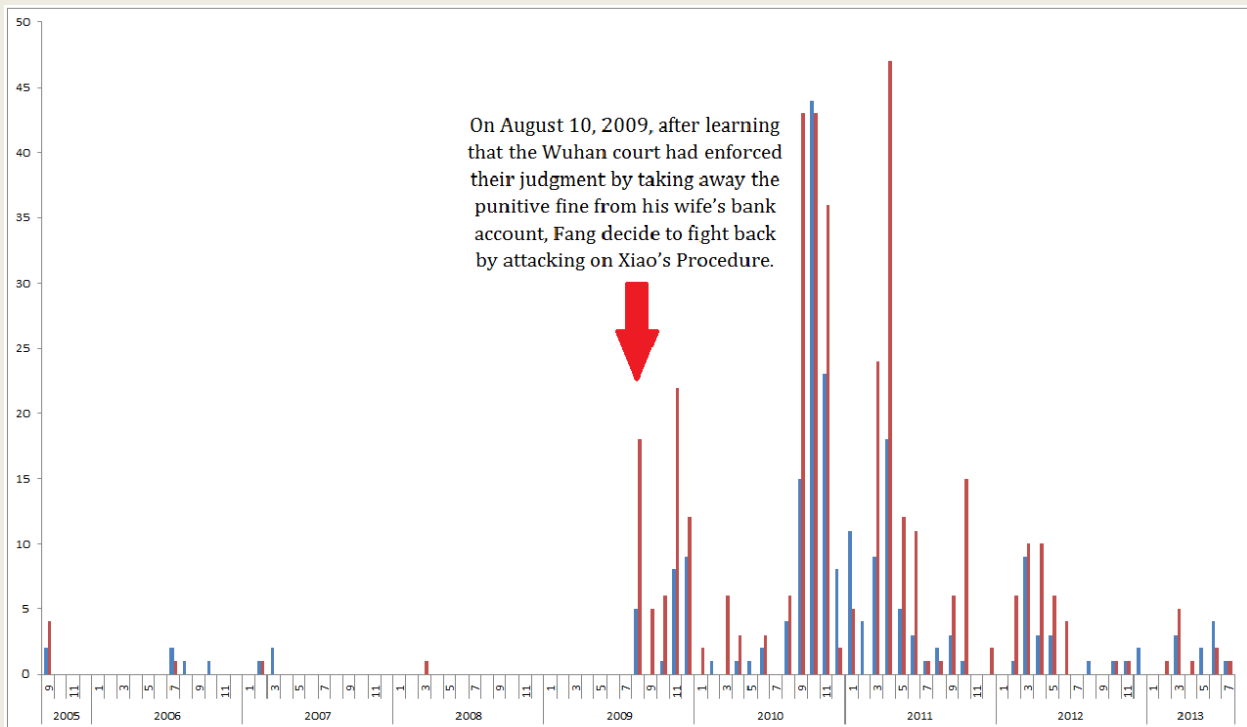
So, why August 2009 is so crucial? The reason is this: On August 10, 2009, Fang learned, via Xiao’s online posting, that a Wuhan court had just enforced their judgment made in 2006 by taking away 40,763.60 Yuan RMB from the bank account of his wife’s. Fang was hurt so much that he almost cried his heart out for the loss of the “large sum of money.”<sup>[15]</sup> And he vowed immediately: “Since the Wuhan court and Xiao want to continue the fight, then let’s fight.”<sup>[16]</sup> Hence the unilateral ceasefire lasted about two years, from early 2008 to August 2009, initiated by Fang in hoping that he could avoid the punitive fine ordered by the Wuhan court, abruptly ended. It was only after that fateful day that the “surgical procedure devised by Xiao” became the focal point of the fight - before

that time, Fang was trying to destroy Dr. Xiao by accusing him of CV fraud, and that attempt failed miserably in the Wuhan court.



### Dance with court

The numbers of anti-Xiao articles appeared each month on Fang's New Threads.  
 (Data was obtained from "The Xiao Chuanguo Incident" (肖传国事件) on Fang's New Threads website.)



### The strategic shift

The numbers of articles containing the phrase "Xiao's Procedure" published each month on the New Threads as "the Newly Arrived" (blue bars) which was solely controlled by Fang Shi-min, and the posts in the forum of

the New Threads (red bars), which was monitored by Fang, but posted by the internet users themselves . Please note that none of the 9 articles and 7 posts published before August 2009 questioned the efficacy of Xiao's Procedure. (See note [14] for the method of data collection.)

### **The Fifth Paragraph:**

“Following his nomination, people started posting questions about Xiao's claims on Fang Shimin's website (<http://fangzhouzi-xys.blogspot.com>). Then in September 2005, Fang Shimin published an essay in Beijing Sci-Tech Report, which said that Xiao was not an associate professor at New York University as he states in his CV, but only an assistant professor. Furthermore, the article said that only 4 of the 26 English-language publications Xiao listed were journal articles — the rest being abstracts from conference proceedings.”

The paragraph is full of mistakes or lies. Again, “people” didn't “start posting questions about Xiao's claims” about the efficacy of the procedure until August 2009, and the so called “Fang Shimin's website (<http://fangzhouzi-xys.blogspot.com>)” was not even in existence in 2005: the address belongs to a blog set up in 2007 by one of Fang's followers in the United States, Dr. Cheng E who had been in charge of Fang's fraudulent money-collecting machinery in the U. S., [The Organization for Scientific & Academic Integrity in China](#) (OSAIC), since its inception; who, without medical or biological training, no direct or indirect experience with Xiao's Procedure, reported the “fraud” of the Procedure to the NIH of the United States in March 2010; and who would defend Fang's plagiarism of Dr. Root-Bernstein in March 2011<sup>[17]</sup>. The tiny mistake Mr. David Cyranoski made revealed the big secret: how the one-sided and biased story was written.

Indeed, Mr. David Cyranoski's summary of Fang's “essay in Beijing Sci-Tech Report” (actually [Science Technology Weekly](#)) was entirely based on Dr. Cheng E's webpage, [The Fraud Case of Professor Xiao Chuanguo](#), which inaccurately summarized Fang's essay. For example, in his essay, Fang didn't say “Xiao was not an associate professor at New York University as he states in his CV, but only an assistant professor.” What Fang said was “whether Xiao Chuanguo was an associate professor in New York University's Medical School from very beginning is questionable.”<sup>[18]</sup> The reason behind Fang's trickery wording was, Fang's previous online and anonymous allegation against Xiao's supposed CV fraud was based on an outdated webpage on NYU's website, and the webpage was updated a few days before Fang published his “essay,” to Fang's great dismay, so instead of accusing Xiao of faking his academic ranking, Fang used another his favorite trick to hurt his enemies while trying to avoid libel lawsuits: casting doubts on their characters; and in this case, implying Xiao was a fraud.

Mr. David Cyranoski also paraphrased Dr. Cheng E's another summary, “Professor Xiao's resume claimed that he had published 26 papers written in English. However, there had been only 4 such publications. The others are abstracts submitted to conferences,” which was accurate translation of Fang's essay<sup>[19]</sup>, into his own: “only 4 of the 26 English-language publications Xiao listed were journal articles — the rest being abstracts from conference proceedings.” The problem is, this allegation was completely false: According to Xiao's CV, posted by Fang on his New Threads, Dr. Xiao never “claimed that he had published 26 papers written in English.” What he “claimed” was “PUBLICATIONS (As First and Corresponding author only),”<sup>[20]</sup> and he never said the “publications” were “journal papers” or “journal articles,” as Fang, or Cheng, or Mr. David Cyranoski claimed.

◇◇新语丝(www.xys.org)(xys.dxiang.com)(xys.3322.org)(xys.dyndns.info)◇◇

人不可貌相——读肖传国（昏教授）候选院士的简历有感

作者：水中划

昏教授的大名，在海外大凡关心中国科学尤其是生物科学并常上中文网的会有所知。昏教授的几篇关于中国生命科学的雄文，（比如：中国的科技发展不能被

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PUBLICATIONS (As First and Corresponding author only)

1. Xiao CG., Du M., Li B., Liu Z. Chen M., Xue XN. Shapiro and Lepor H: An Artificial Somatic-Autonomic Reflex Pathway Procedure for Spina Bifida Children to Gain Bladder Control J. Urol. In Press.

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25. Xiao, CG.:Advanced research on urolithiasis, Chapter 5 in ADVANCED UROLOGY IN CHINA, by T. J. Mu, 1st Edition, Shanghai Science and Technology press. Shanghai, 1988.

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◇◇新语丝(www.xys.org)(xys.dxiang.com)(xys.3322.org)(xys.dyndns.info)◇◇

### **Dr. Xiao's CV as posted by Fang on his New Threads**

In an article entitled *"You Can't judge People by His Looking——A Thought after Reading Xiao's CV"*<sup>[20]</sup>, authored by a person who called himself Shuizhonghua, Dr. Xiao's CV was attached as the evidence of fraud. It has been demonstrated that Shuizhonghua is one of Fang's many pseudonyms on his own New Threads<sup>[21]</sup>.

### **The Sixth Paragraph:**

"It is not known if Fang Shimin's article affected the academy's decision, but Xiao was not made a member and has since sued Fang Shimin for libel five times. Fang Shimin, whose site has been criticized for giving contributors a platform for unjustified attacks on their enemies<sup>3</sup>, lost one case and won two, with the other two undecided. Meanwhile, criticism of the 'Xiao procedure' has continued. Last year, Fang Xuanchang published a series of articles questioning its efficacy, which may have prompted the attacks on him."

This is another paragraph full of factual mistakes or malicious lies. First of all, it IS known that "Fang Shimin's article affected the academy's decision," not only Xiao believed so, Fang and his followers believed so too<sup>[22]</sup>. Secondly, Dr. Xiao sued Fang on Oct. 8, 2010, and the academy didn't make their final decision until Nov. 10, 2010, so it is a plain lie to say Xiao sued Fang after ("since") and because he "was not made a member" of CAS. Thirdly, as Fang admitted, Dr. Xiao sued him in China's civil courts five times, three in Wuhan, two in Beijing, and only in two cases the judges made their decisions<sup>[23]</sup>, so it seems that Mr. David Cyranoski made up another story by saying Fang "lost one case and won two." Fourthly, both judgments made by the primary courts in the two cases were

appealed, and the upper courts upheld the primary judgments in both cases, which happened in February and November of 2007, respectively<sup>[24]</sup>. As I have emphasized repeatedly, “Xiao’s procedure” wasn’t an issue in the clash until August 2009, so Mr. David Cyranoski lied again by saying “Meanwhile, criticism of the ‘Xiao procedure’ has continued,” because during that time, the “criticism of the ‘Xiao procedure’” had not started yet, how could it continue? Lastly, Mr. David Cyranoski again hid the key information about the relationship between Fang Shi-min and Fang Xuanchang, and the fact that the latter’s serial articles in 2009 were masterminded by the former.

### **The Seventh Paragraph:**

“Beijing-based lawyer Peng Jian says he has interviewed 20–30 patients who have experienced side effects after undergoing the Xiao procedure, and who are seeking compensation. This summer, the first US trial of the treatment reported ambiguous results in *The Journal of Urology*<sup>4</sup>, and two journal editorials said it should be considered experimental<sup>4</sup>.”

For the fourth time, Mr. David Cyranoski intentionally hid the key information in his article: the “Beijing-based lawyer Peng Jian” was, and still is, Fang’s personal lawyer, follower, body guard, and money laundering aid<sup>[25]</sup>. In December 2009, this lawyer, who had no medical training, had no medical knowledge, as a matter of fact, it seems that he has no knowledge in his own profession as well, told the news reporters from “Beijing Sci-Tech Report,” the co-defendant with Fang Shi-min in one of Xiao’s lawsuits:

“From the end of August 2006 to the late March 2007, I successfully telephone interviewed 74 patients or their parents who had received ‘Xiao’s Procedure’ treatment in Shen Yuan Hospital. Statistics showed that there are as many as 73% of the patients think the procedure ineffective, and as many as 39% of the patients developed other symptoms after the operation.”<sup>[26]</sup>

In other words, by the end of 2009, Mr. Peng had already had an affirmative number of “patients who have experienced side effects after undergoing the Xiao procedure,” which should be 29 people (74X39%, but actual number was 30, based on [the investigation results](#) Fang posted on his New Threads on Nov. 12, 2009, so you can see that this Big Fool Peng (彭大傻子) is even incapable of doing his math right), so why did he tell Mr. David Cyranoski 10 months later that the number was only 20-30?

On the other hand, in November 2009, Mr. Peng launched a plan to instigate 40 patients who had received “Xiao’s Procedure” treatment to sue Dr. Xiao “seeking compensation” individually<sup>[27]</sup>, so how come the number shrank to 20-30 in Mr. David Cyranoski’s article 11 months later?

The more puzzling thing is, on August 14, 2009, three days after learning that Wuhan court had taken away more than 40,000 Yuan RMB from his wife’s bank account, Fang posted on his New Threads the following message:

“I have just learned from the Fraud Busting Fund that in the past two years they had followed more than 150 patients of ‘Xiao’s Procedure.’ Most of these patients are poor, living in countryside, they spent tens of thousands Yuan for the surgery, and none of them was effective, and some patients’ conditions deteriorated after the operation.”<sup>[28]</sup>



It has been mysteries ever since that how the 150 patients were reduced to 74, and why did Fang hide from Chinese public for more than two years the critical information about the harmfulness of Xiao's Procedure to the patients. It is a shame that Nature's report not only didn't give us the answers, it even didn't ask the questions.

从打假资金小组那里了解到，他们两年来追访过150多名“肖氏手术”患者

[所有跟贴](#) · [加跟贴](#) · [新语丝读书论坛](#)

送交者：方舟子 于 2009-08-14, 00:47:08:

这些患者大部分属于农村贫困人口，花了几万元手术费，无一例有效，有的手术后病情还恶化了。

#### **A voluntary confession**

The screen image of [Fang's post on August 14, 2009](#)<sup>[28]</sup>. In the post Fang revealed that his so called "Fraud Busting Fund" had been secretly investigating Xiao's Procedure by illegally collecting the patients' data (the majority of the patients were not treated by Dr. Xiao.) The post also revealed that Fang had been intentionally hiding the investigation results in the past two years, and he revealed the results only when he determined to continue his fight against Dr. Xiao.

The fact is, some spina bifida patients will develop deformities with or without the treatment of Xiao's Procedure. According to [an NIH webpage](#):

"A myelomeningocele can usually be surgically corrected. With treatment, length of life is not severely affected. Neurological damage is often irreversible.

"New problems within the spinal cord can develop later in life, especially after the child begins growing rapidly during puberty. This can lead to more loss of function as well as orthopedic problems such as scoliosis, foot or ankle deformities, dislocated hips, and joint tightness or contractures."

**Doesn't Mr. David Cyranoski, as a reporter for a prestigious science journal, have the responsibility or obligation to tell his readers the scientific truth?**



**The Three Chief Evils**

On Nov. 1, 2010, Fang Shi-min posted the above photo on his microblog, entitled: “The three chief evils according to Xiao Chuanguo.”<sup>[29]</sup>



### **The Good, the Bad and the Ugly**

Left: On March 30, 2012, Mr. Luo Yonghao (right), a frequent contributor to Fang’s “Science and Technology Fraud Busting Fund,” confronted Fang (left) with the question: “Why don’t you make (the fund’s expenditure) public as promised?” Peng Jian (middle) blocked Mr. Luo’s access to Fang, who, pretending to play with his cell phone, never dared to look at Mr. Luo eye-to-eye, and never spoke a word.

Right: Fang finally escaped the embarrassment by taking an elevator, under the protection of Peng Jian. Previously, Mr. Peng had announced that the Fund had spent 590,000 Yuan RMB for Fang’s personal safety in a timespan about one year, an astronomical price in Beijing, but they have been refusing to reveal the details<sup>[30]</sup>.

Mr. David Cyranoski’s ill-intention was fully revealed in the second half of the 7<sup>th</sup> paragraph. According to what he wrote, it seemed that the results of “the first US trial” of Xiao’s Procedure justified Fang’s attack on the Procedure, because they were “ambiguous.” However, if you click the link Nature’s website provided, you’ll see the following “Conclusion”:

“At 1 year a novel reflex arc with stimulation of the appropriate dermatome was seen in the majority of subjects. Improvements in voiding and bowel function were noted. Lower extremity weakness was mostly self-limited, except in 1 subject with a persistent foot drop. More patients and longer followup are needed to assess the risk/benefit ratio of this novel procedure.”<sup>[31]</sup>

If this kind of results is “ambiguous,” then Mr. David Cyranoski needs to tell us what percentage of unambiguous results is there in the PubMed database.

### **The Eighth Paragraph:**

“Fang Shimin, meanwhile, is unfazed by the attack. ‘It won’t stop me,’ he says. ‘I will continue to do what I am doing.’”

It seems that this is the only error-free, ill-intention-free paragraph in the entire article. However, Mr. David Cyranoski should have told his readers that “fraud busting” is “fraud buster” Fang’s only job and his income source. If not hurting other people, he has no other way to make a living.

### **The References:**

In his article, Mr. David Cyranoski listed 4 references, the first one is “Xiao, C.-G. Proc. Int. Conf. Urol. Shanghai, 2–4 July (2005).” It is doubtful whether Mr. David Cyranoski had really seen the reference, because that reference was THE most wanted reference by Fang and his gangsters, and on Feb. 27, 2010, the chief expert of Xiao’s Studies on the New Threads, who has never had the guts to reveal his/her true identity, but uses Yush or Yushi (羽矢), as his/her web ID, declared, apparently after exhaustive search, that the reference doesn’t exist<sup>[32]</sup>. Therefore, Mr. David Cyranoski needs to show us that he did see the reference when he wrote his article. Otherwise, he is a suspect of fabrication.

## Conclusion and Discussion

It is really astonishing that Mr. David Cyranoski can make so many mistakes, or tell so many lies, and hide so many dirty secrets in the less-than-half-page article. True, it is not easy to tell careless mistakes from intentional lies. However, the very fact that all these mistakes were arranged in a perfect array and towards the same direction – in favor of Fang Shi-min and to the disadvantage of Xiao Chuanguo – strongly suggests the purposefulness of their maker. As a matter of fact, had the article been written by Fang Shi-min, he could not have done the job better.

On the other hand, Mr. David Cyranoski’s previous records support the notion that the mistakes, at least part of them, were made intentionally. On May 24, 2006, Mr. David Cyranoski’s [Named and shamed](#) was published in Nature as a Special Report. I have pointed out five months ago that there are at least 17 factual mistakes in the report, and among them, the author wrongfully, and possibly intentionally, attributed the downfall of Chen Jin, the major character in the notorious Hanxin scandal, to Fang Shi-min and his website, who not only didn’t contribute to the incident in any positive ways, but tried his butt off to cover up the outbreak<sup>[33]</sup>.

On December 3, 2008, Nature published an editorial, [Culture clash in China](#), apparently written by Mr. David Cyranoski. The article described the internal dispute between Mr. Cui Keming, a retired biology professor at Peking University, and Rao Yi, the dean of the College of Life Sciences at the same University. Not only the partiality and bias of the article was so obvious, as shown in the title of the article, the characteristics of Mr. David Cyranoski’s reporting, simple and stupid mistakes, were prominent<sup>[34]</sup>. The problems didn’t stop there: Professor Cui was so irritated by Mr. David Cyranoski’s deceptiveness that he publicly criticized and denounced him<sup>[35]</sup>. As I mentioned before, Rao Yi had been Fang’s ardent follower since early 2000s, and he was so loyal to Fang that he risked his career to cover-up one of Fang’s academic misconducts committed in 1990s<sup>[36]</sup>. Of course, Professor Cui was viciously attacked by Fang on the New Threads<sup>[37]</sup>.

In 2010, right after the publication [Brawl in Beijing](#), I wrote a long letter<sup>[1]</sup> to Nature to criticize the bias and one-sidedness of the report. Nature’s editor Mark Peplow forwarded my letter to Mr. David Cyranoski, and then we had a several exchanges. At first, Mr. David Cyranoski cited space limitation as the excuse for his one-sidedness. Not only that excuse is no a reason or excuse for wrong doing at all, it is a plain lie: the space for the report was so ample that Nature had to fill the blank with a huge photo of Fang’s (see the image at the beginning of this article). And after I demonstrated my points exhaustively, Mr. David Cyranoski defended himself this way:

“I’m curious as to how you would respond to the following:

“Did Xiao overstate his record on his resume (including publications and positions held)?

“Did Xiao overstate the value of the “Xiao procedure” and push it into the clinic before suitable amounts of evidence had been accumulated?

## “Was Xiao responsible for the violent attack on the two Fangs?”

Apparently Mr. David Cyranoski already had his own answers to his own questions, and his answers were unshakable, no matter how many contradictory evidences you show him. It is obvious that he forgot that he was supposed to pretend to be fair, neutral, and impartial. The most unbelievable thing was, after I answered the every question Mr. David Cyranoski asked, he refused to answer my single simple question: assuming everything I wrote is true, do you still think your report is not biased? I have no doubt that his answer was a big YES: I am always right, I never apologize! Ironically, that’s exactly how Fang behaves.

Just about a month ago, Nature.com published David Cyranoski’s another report: Disturbing rumours embroil GSK China. The report was soon deleted from Nature’s website for unknown reason, but you still can find it on the New Threads. Why? Because in the article, Mr. David Cyranoski touted Fang and his infamous website again, so Fang salvaged the trashed article and published on his website as a Nature report, to show his followers and his bosses: See, I am still a Nature-certified fraud fighter!<sup>[38]</sup>

Does anyone still believe that Mr. David Cyranoski’s “mistakes” were made by his carelessness or incompetence?

I believe that Nature should investigate the matter, or ask a third party, such as [British Association of Journalists](#) and [the Association of British Science Writers](#), to do the investigation for them. Nature should also take appropriate actions to prevent such ugly things from happening again. Before doing that, I don’t think Nature has enough credit and capital to report or judge Chinese matters remotely related to Fang Shi-min. As I told Mr. David Cyranoski nearly three years ago, you don’t have to report or judge everything, however, if you do, it is your responsibility and obligation to do it right. I think the rational is too simple to be elaborated any further.

## Notes

<sup>[1]</sup> See the comments on the webpage of [Brawl in Beijing](#), and my letter sent to Nature on Sept. 30, 2010: [Shamelessness Shouldn’t Be Anyone’s Nature —An Open Letter to Nature \(Part I\): Appendix](#).

<sup>[2]</sup> See: [Mr. Yuan’s blog](#), Nov. 8, 2012.

<sup>[3]</sup> See: Xin Ge. [A Response to the Statement by Ms. Tracey Brown, Dr. Philip Campbell, and Dr. Colin Blakemore, 3 Judges of the John Maddox Prize](#). (Sent to Nature on July 9, 2013.)

<sup>[4]</sup>Fang’s original Chinese: “5 点左右，采访结束，我把两位记者送上出租车，转身才走两、三步路，只见一名男子突然窜到我面前，朝我的脸喷射气雾，我闻到一股刺激性味道，头晕脚软，几乎要倒下，我立即屏住呼吸，向路的对过跑去，后面另一个人追着我，手持铁锤要砸我头部，我拼命往前跑，此人在后面追，没能追上，就把铁锤向我扔出，连扔两次，第一次朝我的头部扔，没有砸中，我听到铁锤落地的声音，边跑边回头看了一下，此人又捡起铁锤扔过来，这次击中了我的腰部，流了一些血。我跑了有一两百米，歹徒未再追赶。我跑进小区后，报了警，警察很快来了。”(方舟子：《[我遭遇两名歹徒袭击的详细经过](#)》，XYS20100829.)

<sup>[5]</sup> Xin Ge. [Shamelessness Shouldn’t Be Anyone’s Nature—An Open Letter to Nature, Part XVI: Fang’s Plagiarism History: The Science Case](#). (Sent to Nature on March 3, 2013.)

[6] For example, on Sept. 22, 2010, the day after Xiao's arrest, Fang posted on his microblog: "Xiao Chuanguo said that he only wanted to find people to teach me and Fang Xuanchang a lesson. If that was true, a few thousand Yuan would be more than enough, how could he spend 100,000 Yuan? That much money should be the price to pay an assassin to kill people." (Original Chinese: "[肖传国说只是想找人'教训教训'我和方玄昌, 那样的话几千元就够了, 用不了十万元吧? 十万元应该是买凶杀人的价钱吧。](#)"). On Sept. 23, 2010, Fang posted again: "The authorities should charge [Xiao Chuanguo] with 'intentional homicide,' instead believing the suspect's admitted 'intentional harm' which was his excuse to alleviate his guilt." (Original Chinese: "['司法机关应当以'故意杀人'的罪名立案, 而不能听信在押犯罪嫌疑人为了减轻自己的罪责而承认的'故意伤害'的辩解。](#)") On Oct. 7, 2010, Fang published on his blogs an article, Why Xiao Chuanguo Should be Charged with attempted intentional homicide? (方舟子: [《为什么肖传国等人应以故意杀人\(未遂\)罪起诉?》](#), XYS20101007.)

[7] On August 14, 2009, Fang revealed that he had asked several news media to publish their investigation results of Xiao's Procedure, but the news media showed no interest. (Fang's original Chinese: "[我联系过几家媒体, 他们都不感兴趣, 认为这种事情全国太常见, 没有新闻卖点。](#)") Starting from Oct. 26, 2009, Science News, where Fang Xuanchang was the newly hired Executive Editor-in-Chief, and China Newsweek, where Fang Xuanchang was the director in the science and technology division before taking the Science News job, launched attacks on Xiao's Procedure. In June 25, 2010, one day after Fang Xuanchang was attacked, Fang Shi-min admitted voluntarily: he was involved in Fang Xuanchang's investigation of Xiao's Procedure. (Fang's original Chinese: "[方玄昌有可能是被我连累了。\]他揭露的.....肖传国'肖氏手术'\(2009年\).....都和我有关系。](#)") "From now on, I would not ask editors and reporters to do follow-up reports, it is not worth it if they lose their life for that." (Fang's original Chinese: "[我以后不想再主动找编辑、记者做追踪报道, 若为此付出生命代价不值。](#)")

[8] For example, in an interview conducted in July 2010, Fang said: "my friend Fang Xuanchang" (original Chinese: "特别是我的朋友、《财经》杂志编辑方玄昌前段时间被人打了以后, 他很可能是因为跟着我们一起打假被牵连的。" He Lidan. Fang Zhouzi: I Want to Knock down the Fake Idol. Xinmin Weekly, 2010, issue 28. (贺丽丹: [《方舟子: 我要打掉这个虚假的偶像》](#), 《新民周刊》2010年28期)。

[9] Hepeng Jia and Tao He. [Academic controversy leads to bloodshed](#). *Chemistry World China*, October-December, 2010.

[10] Fang's original Chinese: "[枪毙都不能解恨!](#)" Please note that Fang pretended that the article was a repost from other source, but it has demonstrated that the article was originally written and posted by Fang himself under a fake name. (See: Yi Ming. Fang Zhouzi's Source of Power is Evilness. 亦明: [《方舟子的力量源泉是邪恶》](#)).

[11] On Sept. 29, 2010, Fang posted the following on his microblog: "Xiao Chuanguo admitted that in a family party, [they] discussed how to beat up Fang Zhouzi and Fang Xuanchang. Which family members participated in the party? Should they be considered conspirators? We are their family enemies, which reminds us the scenes in God Father, really horrific." (Original Chinese: "[肖传国供称在一次家族聚会上, 商量如何殴打方舟子和方玄昌。参与聚会的都有哪些家族成员, 这些人是否都可算同谋? 我们都成了家族敌人了, 让人想起《教父》里的场景, 恐怖啊。](#)") On the same day, one of Fang's hardcore followers under the fake name Yuan Jiang (元江) said that any persons who had had dinner with Xiao should be questioned by police for possible participation in the conspiracy. (See: [http://www.chinagonet.com/main/view\\_post.php?pid=2340155](http://www.chinagonet.com/main/view_post.php?pid=2340155)).

[12] See: Xiao Chuanguo. [Left foot or right foot? That's the question](#). Xiao's blog on sciencenet.cn, 2010-5-11 ( [《左脚, 还是右脚? 鹿, 还是马? 这是个问题—肖氏答问》](#) ). Also see: Yi Ming. *The Feud between Drs. Fang Zhouzi and Xiao Chuanguo*. Appendix: Questions and Answers between Yi Ming and Xiao Chuanguo, pp.414-415. (亦明: [《方舟子陷害肖传国始末·亦明、肖传国问答》](#) 414-415 页).

[13] Chai's original Chinese: “因为十万元钱其实是个买命的价，而且凶手行凶所用的钢管、羊角锤等物，亦不可能仅仅‘打得鼻青脸肿’。” Chai Huiqun. Who Manufactured Xiao Chuanguo? Southern Weekend, Sept. 30, 2010. (柴会群：《[谁成就了肖传国](#)》，2010年9月30日《南方周末》)。

[14] The numbers were obtained by searching the New Threads with key words “Xiao's Procedure” (肖氏手术) on this website: <http://xys.textx.net/search.php?section=bbs> or <http://xys.textx.net/search.php?section=xindao>.

[15] Fang's original Chinese: “如果不是原告自己洋洋得意地在网上宣布其指挥武汉法院为其报仇的战绩，我妻子还不知道存折少了一大笔钱。” (Fang Zhouzi. Wuhan Court Became Xiao's Reflex Family? XYS20090811. 方舟子：《[武汉法院成了肖氏反射户？](#)》)

[16] Fang's original Chinese: “既然武汉法院、肖氏想要继续折腾，我就奉陪好了。” (Fang Zhouzi. Wuhan Court Became Xiao's Reflex Family? XYS20090811. 方舟子：《[武汉法院成了肖氏反射户？](#)》)

[17] OSAIC was established in 2006, right after Fang Shi-min lost his Wuhan court battle. Dr. Cheng E was the founding member of OSAIC, and served as the secretary till early 2013, when he was elected vice Chairman. (See: [OSAIC 理事会](#)). For Dr. Cheng's reporting Xiao's “fraud” to NIH, see: [2010-03-01 23:49:53](#). For Dr. Cheng's background and his defense for Fang's plagiarism, please see Xin Ge. [Shamelessness Shouldn't Be Anyone's Nature — An Open Letter to Nature, Part XXV: Fang's Plagiarism History: The Michigan State University Case](#). (Sent to Nature on May 19, 2013.)

[18] Fang's original Chinese: “肖传国是不是一开始就在纽约大学医学院任‘副教授’，也是很成问题的。在纽约大学医学院的网页上，他的头衔一直写的是比副教授低一级的‘助理教授’，直到几天前才改成‘临床副教授’。”(方舟子：《[脚踏两只船的的院士候选人](#)》，XYS20050921.)

[19] Fang's original Chinese: “他在简历中洋洋洒洒列了自 1982 年以来发表的 26 篇英文论文。仔细一看，他竟是把参加学术会议的文章摘要也都当成论文给列进去了。”(方舟子：《[脚踏两只船的的院士候选人](#)》，XYS20050921.)

[20] Shuizhonghua. [You Can't judge People by His Looking——A Thought after Reading Xiao's CV](#). XYS20050915. (水中划：《[人不可貌相——读肖传国（昏教授）候选院士的简历有感](#)》). Note: Shuizhonghua is one of Fang's many pseudonyms on his own New Threads. (See below).

[21] The demonstration is lengthy, in Chinese, but very convincing. See: Yi Ming. *The Feud between Drs. Fang Zhouzi and Xiao Chuanguo*. Chapter 2: Framing. (亦明：《[方舟子陷害肖传国始末](#)》第二章).

[22] On Nov. 10, 2005, Fang announced joyfully and before the official announcement by CAS: “Xiao Chuanguo wasn't elected academician.” (Original Chinese: “[肖传国没有当上院士](#)”). Many Fang's followers congratulated Fang on the achievement. (See the posts in the thread.)

[23] See: A List of Lawsuits Filed by Xiao Chuanguo against Fang Zhouzi. (《[肖传国诉方舟子各案件情况一览表](#)》，XYS20070921.) The list was prepared by Peng Jian, posted on the New Threads by Fang Shi-min on Sept. 21, 2007. There have been no new developments in the lawsuits since then, as far as I know.

[24] See: 《[武汉报纸报道：武汉中级肖氏法院终审判决肖传国胜诉、维持一审判决](#)》(XYS20070315), and 《[北京市高级人民法院终审判决肖传国诉 tom 网、方舟子案肖传国败诉](#)》(XYS20071130).

[25] Fang initially said Mr. Peng Jian worked for him free of charge, but in November 2006, after Wuhan court battles, Peng, together with Fang, asked OSAIC to pay 38,108.20 Yuan (\$4,842.58) for his fees and expenses. In November 2009, Peng asked OSAIC again for 120,000 Yuan to launch 40 lawsuits against Xiao's Procedure. In February 2011, Peng asked OSAIC for the third time for 40,754.60 Yuan, the same amount of money the

Wuhan court took away from Fang's wife's bank account (see: [OSAIC 资助项目](#)), which has been returned back to Fang's wife by the court. Yet neither Fang nor Peng has returned the money to OSAIC yet. At the same time, Mr. Peng Jian has been controlling Fang's fund in China, the so called "Science and Technology Fraud Busting Fund," which has collected nearly 3 million Yuan donations (See: [捐款公示](#)). Fang and Peng have been refusing the demand for making the expenditure public.

[26] Peng's original Chinese: "从 2006 年 8 月末至 2007 年 3 月下旬, 我通过电话成功访问了 74 位在神源医院接受'肖氏反射弧'治疗的患者或患者家长。统计结果显示, 患者认为手术无效率的比例高达 73%、手术后出现其他病症的人数高达 39%。" (Cai Hong and Tan Na. Investigating Shen Yuan Hospital. Science and Technology Weekly, Dec. 7, 2009. 蔡虹、谭娜: 《[调查神源医院](#)》, 北京科技报 2009 年 12 月 7 日。)

[27] Osaic. Asking for Donations to the Special Fund of the Victims of Academic Misconduct. (《[中国科学与学术诚信基金会呼吁为“扶助学术不端受害人专项基金”捐款](#)》, XYS20091113.) OSAIC. Funding announcement. (《[中国科学与学术诚信基金会资助通告](#)》, XYS20091117.)

[28] Fang's original Chinese: "从打假资金小组那里了解到, 他们两年来追访过 150 多名'肖氏手术'患者 [。] 这些患者大部分属于农村贫困人口, 花了几万元手术费, 无一例有效, 有的手术后病情还恶化了。" (See: [2009-08-14, 00:47:08](#)).

[29] Fang's original Chinese: "肖传国心中三'首恶' (彭剑、方舟子、方玄昌)". (See: <http://photo.blog.sina.com.cn/photo/6c17b4d0g7532724dca7b>).

[30] The complete process of the confrontation was recorded in the video clip, 《[罗永浩拦截方舟子和彭剑当面对质](#)》. The story was also widely reported in Chinese news media, even in English: [Global Times: Anti-fraud activist accused of fraud](#).

[31] Peters, KM., et al. 2010. [Outcomes of Lumbar to Sacral Nerve Rerouting for Spina Bifida](#). The Journal of Urology 184(2):702-708.

[32] On November 17, 2009, Yush asked his/her New Threads friends for the reference (See: [2009-11-17, 15:20:30](#)). On Feb. 27, 2010, Yush confirmed the existence of the conference and the conference preceding, but he/she concluded that the reference doesn't exist (Original Chinese: "文献数据库中并不存在这篇会议报告[25]。确实有个'首届临床泌尿外科杂志国际学术会议'(上海 2005 年 7 月 2-4 日), 主办单位就是肖传国任主编的《临床泌尿外科杂志》; 文献数据库中也确实有这次会议的论文集, 却不见肖传国那篇会议报告的踪影。" (Yushi. How Come Xiao's Procedure Is Used in the Clinical Studies in the United States. XYS20100227. 羽矢: 《[“肖氏术”何以在美国开始临床试验](#)》).

[33] Xin Ge. [Nature's Special Report Contains Numerous Factual Errors](#). (sent to Nature on February 04, 2013); Xin Ge. [Shamelessness Shouldn't Be Anyone's Nature — An Open Letter to Nature, Part X: A congenital liar has Nature as his amplifier](#). (Sent to Nature on Dec. 16, 2012.)

[34] Keming Cui. 2009. [Culture clash in Chinese university: a response](#). Nature 457:379.

[35] Cui Keming. Let's Take a Look at how Nature's Asian-Pacific Correspondent David Cyranoski Investigate the Truth. Cui's blog on sciencenet.cn, 2008-12-10. (崔克明: 《[请看 Nature 亚太通讯员 David Cyranoski 的查实真相](#)》). What Mr. David Cyranoski did was, in the afternoon of Dec. 2, 2008, Beijing time, he asked Professor Cui to comment on his finalized report about the "clash" involving the latter. The report was published online on Dec. 3, London time, so basically he left no time for Professor Cui to respond (Professor Cui told Mr. David Cyranoski he was not good at English.) This kind of trick, offering you the opportunity to refute the report involving you, but leaving you no time to refute, is also used by some evil-minded Chinese journalists.

[36] Xin Ge. [Shamelessness Shouldn't Be Anyone's Nature —An Open Letter to Nature, Part II: Shameless "standing-up."](#) (Sent to Nature on Nov. 9, 2012.)

[37] On Jan. 29, 2009, Fang commented on one of Prof. Cui's blog articles, saying "he doesn't have essential knowledge in biology, lack of basic training in science, incapable of differentiate the rights from the wrongs in the matter of biological common sense, [therefore] letting such a person to be a biology professor is purely wasting the talent of other people's children. He, his disciples, and his disciples' disciples, should be fired without any discussions." (Fang's original Chinese: "这位生物系教授居然会把徐的伪科学广告当成'有道理的理论'反复引用, 表明他不具有必备的生物学知识, 也缺乏基本科学素养, 没有明辨生物学常识性问题真伪的能力, 让这种人担任生物系教授, 纯属误人子弟, 他及其徒子徒孙都应该直接辞退, 没什么可争的。" (See: [XYS20090129](#)).

[38] Mr. David Cyranoski's "Disturbing rumours embroil GSK China" was published on Nature.com on June 6, 2013, and was deleted in less than two days. On June 8, Fang asked on the New Threads: "who has saved the article?" One follower said he had it in his "[apple nature journal app](#)." One day later, Fang bragged on his microblog that he was interviewed by Nature. (See: [06-09 18:46](#)). The next day, Fang published the article, together with its Chinese translation, apparently translated by himself, on his New Threads. (See: [XYS20130610](#)). Obviously, Fang puts his last hope of resurrection on Nature's support, and Mr. David Cyranoski is doing everything he can to help Fang realize his dream.