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In the NEWS

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“I believe...that they [Navy SEALs] came in six times to try to get us, and that a number of times, they missed us only by hours.”

Timothy Weeks, a teacher from Wagga Wagga, on his ordeal in Afghanistan as a Taliban hostage

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There's no need for anyone other than New Zealanders to donate to our political parties or seek to influence our elections.

Andrew Little, New Zealand Justice Minister, on the recent ban of foreign donations to N.Z. politicians

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A weeklong
CRACKDOWN

on demonstrators in Iran has left over 200 people dead as Iran's security forces went on a “killing spree,” according to Amnesty International.

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With
A FLICK

of a switch, China could remotely turn off the Philippines energy grid, the president of Philippines' state-run National Transmission Corporation has confirmed.

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PHILIP FONG/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES



People take part in a march from Tsim Sha Tsui to Hung Hom in Hong Kong on Dec. 1, 2019.

HONG KONG PROTESTS

380,000 Hongkongers March to Renew
Calls for Freedom and Democracy

An estimated 380,000 take to streets to rejuvenate protest movement; police block the march

ANNIE WU & FRANK FANG

HONG KONG—Hundreds of thousands of protesters took to the streets on Dec. 1 afternoon, in an effort to rejuvenate their movement that started nearly six months ago. Under the theme of “Never Forget Why You Started,” protesters gathered at a landmark clock tower in the Tsim Sha Tsui neighbourhood. At around 3:30 p.m. local time, they began walking out and then

marched off along Salisbury Road to the Hong Kong Colosseum, which is located in Hung Hom, Kowloon. Protesters could be heard shouting slogans such as “disband the police force,” and “the heavens will eliminate the Chinese Communist Party, let the entire Party die.” The peaceful march, which was organised by a local netizen who

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Protesters could be heard shouting slogans such as “disband the police force,” and “the heavens will eliminate the Chinese Communist Party.”



SIMON DAWSON - WPA POOL/GETTY IMAGES

British Prime Minister Boris Johnson, Home Secretary Priti Patel, (L) and City of London commissioner Ian Dyson (R) visit the scene of yesterday's London Bridge stabbing attack in London, England, on Nov. 30, 2019.

TERROR IN LONDON

People Convicted of Terror Crimes Should
Serve Full Prison Terms, UK's Johnson Says

ZACHARY STIEBER

People in the United Kingdom imprisoned on terrorism convictions shouldn't be released early from their sentences, British Prime Minister Boris Johnson said, one day after a criminal who was let out early stabbed people at Fishmongers' Hall

near London Bridge. “It's clear to me this guy was out—he served half of his sentence, he was out on automatic, early release—and I have long said that this system isn't working,” Johnson told reporters on Nov. 30, standing near the scene of the stabbing.

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OPINION

Gratitude Versus Entitlement

PAUL ADAMS

Commentary
We have much to be grateful for. Developing and practicing gratitude as a habit and outlook on life is important to our well-being and that of society. So why do we teach children and young people the opposite: an attitude of entitlement and grievance, of resentment and victimhood?

Reasons for Gratitude
We may be grateful for our own life and for the fact of life itself; grateful that there is anything at all rather than nothing. We are grateful, if we pause to reflect on them, for our vision and other senses, for our mind and knowledge. We appreciate our mental and physical health, perhaps most when they are compromised.
We are born, live, and die, not as

Mainland Chinese
Lawyer Expresses
Hope That Hong
Kong Protests
Could Bring
Change to China

OLIVIA LI

While Hong Kong demonstrators were holding a rally and parade on Dec. 1 thanking the U.S. government for its support, a lawyer from mainland China said he hoped that Hongkongers' fight for freedom and democracy will bring a change in

Continued on A4

25 US Senators
Press for Probe Into
China's Corporate
Ranking System

EVA FU

A group of 25 senators is urging the U.S. administration to launch a probe into China's corporate social credit system, in “grave concern” for the threats it could pose to U.S. companies and workers.
In a Dec. 2 letter to trade representative Robert Lighthizer, the senators

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ANTHONY WALLACE/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES



A protester holds a poster at the Southorn Playground in Hong Kong on Oct. 15, 2019, during a rally in support of NBA basketball Rockets general manager Daryl Morey.

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Accuracy
& Integrity

The Epoch Times was founded in 2000 to provide honest and uncensored news coverage of China. Based in New York City, our newsroom is dedicated to restoring accuracy and integrity in media. We stand outside political interests and the pursuit of profit. And we stand against the systematic destruction of traditional culture by destructive ideologies such as communism.

HAGEN HOPKINS/GETTY IMAGES

New Zealand to Limit Foreign Political Donations on Interference Concerns

ISABEL VAN BRUGEN

New Zealand moved to ban foreign donations to politicians and tighten disclosure rules for political advertising, as concerns over foreign interference intensify ahead of an election next year.

News that the legislation was introduced to Parliament on Dec. 3 was announced by Justice Minister Andrew Little in a statement.

The bill prohibits foreigners from making donations to political parties and candidates of more than NZ\$50, a fraction of the current NZ\$1,500 threshold.

“There’s no need for anyone other than New Zealanders to donate to our political parties or seek to influence our elections,” Little said. “The risk of foreign interference in elections is a growing international phenomenon and can take many forms, including donations. New Zealand is not immune from this risk.”

Ahead of New Zealand’s next general election in late 2020, the legislation would also require the publication of the names and addresses of individuals funding election advertisements in all mediums—it’s a bid to minimise the “avalanche of fake news social media ads” that has marred elections overseas, Little said.

Party secretaries must also reside in New Zealand, “to make it easier to enforce parties’ compliance with the donations rules,” the government release states.

“The Justice Select Committee has

We need to protect the integrity of our elections. These changes will reduce the risk of foreign money influencing our election outcomes.

Andrew Little, New Zealand Justice Minister

New Zealand flags fly in front of The Beehive during the Commission Opening of Parliament at Parliament in Wellington, New Zealand, on Oct. 20, 2014.

HAGEN HOPKINS/GETTY IMAGES



Minister of Justice Andrew Little speaks during a press conference at Parliament in Wellington, New Zealand, on Aug. 5, 2019.

heard there are credible reports of interference campaigns in the elections of other countries, and these attempts are increasing in their sophistication,” Little said.

The justice minister argued that New Zealand must be protected from this “risk to our democracy.”

“We need to protect the integrity of our elections. These changes will reduce the risk of foreign money influencing our election outcomes,” he added. “We don’t want our elections to go the way of recent overseas examples where foreign interference appears to have been at play.”

Questions about New Zealand political donations were raised in 2018, after a lawmaker accused the leader of the opposition National Party of hiding a NZ\$100,000 donation from a Chinese businessman to avoid declaring it. The National Party leader rejected the charge.

The ban of foreign donations to political parties and candidates in New Zealand follows similar moves in Australia, which bans donations from foreigners of more than A\$1,000, while Canada bars those over C\$20, and the United Kingdom blocks those over 500 pounds.

New Zealand’s ban would cover those who aren’t citizens, those living outside New Zealand who aren’t eligible to vote, as well as unincorporated companies with a head office overseas.

Last year, the ruling Labour Party had received a total of NZ\$900 in foreign donations, while the Green Party collected a total of NZ\$510, according to figures from a Ministry

of Justice publication.

Bill Raises Concerns

News of the legislation in New Zealand has sparked concern from academics, who say more can be done to safeguard the region against foreign interference.

“A good start, more needs to be done to make our democracy resilient against foreign interference,” New Zealand professor Anne-Marie Brady said on Twitter.

Brady, who specialises in Chinese domestic and foreign politics at the University of Canterbury in Christchurch, shared a link to a document she authored and submitted to the Inquiry on Foreign Interference, New Zealand Parliament, Justice Select Committee, in April. The paper details what must be done to protect against foreign interference “seeking to undermine our political system.”

She highlighted that funding is “only one part of addressing the problem of foreign interference in the electoral process.”

“The CCP [Chinese Communist Party] united front work operates at all levels of targeted foreign politics,” she wrote.

The country must adopt comprehensive laws against corruption and to manage lobbying activities, Brady said. “It should establish an Anti-Corruption Commission and properly resource it.”

A “Conflict of Interest Legislation” should also be passed, which would push for financial transparency, Brady said, adding that it

should be required that an annual financial disclosure be submitted by members of Parliament, leaders of political parties, local politicians, and their spouses.

“They should also be required to provide an annual disclosure of paid overseas trips by foreign organisations,” Brady wrote, adding that due diligence on all donations should be a requirement for political parties.

Brady said the Electoral Commission should also make it a requirement that political parties provide evidence they have “vetted candidates” for political risk.

The professor also pushed for the strengthening of New Zealand’s cyber defence capacities against the hacking of candidates or political parties’ private emails by foreign powers in China.

When visiting China, Brady suggested that New Zealand local and national politicians and political parties “take only a burner phone, leave laptops and tablets at home or take a standalone device, set up a dedicated email for the China trip, avoid public wifi, use Tor or other secure browser, purchase a reputable VPN, utilise encrypted email and messaging services.”

Any devices taken to China should either be “rebuilt” or “discarded,” Brady said.

“Getting the China relationship right is going to be one of New Zealand’s greatest foreign and domestic policy challenges in the next few decades.”

Reuters contributed to this report.

Australian Freed by Taliban Believes US Navy SEALs Attempted Six Rescues

KATABELLA ROBERTS

An Australian teacher who arrived home last week after being held hostage by the Taliban in Afghanistan for more than three years believes U.S. Navy SEALs attempted to rescue him six times, he told a press conference on Dec. 1.

Timothy Weeks, 50, landed in Sydney on Nov. 28 after being released by the terror group last month as part of a prisoner exchange deal with the United States, Australia, and the Afghan government.

Weeks and his 63-year-old U.S. colleague, Kevin King, were exchanged for three high-profile members of the Taliban, including Anas Haqqani, the younger brother of the terrorist group’s deputy, Sirajuddin Haqqani.

“I believe, and I hope that this is correct, that they [Navy SEALs] came in six times to try to get us, and that a number of times, they missed us only by hours,” Weeks said, speaking publicly for the first time since his release.

Weeks, who is originally from Wagga Wagga in the state of New South Wales, described hearing explosions and machine-gun fire during one of the purported rescue attempts in April.

He said he was awakened at 2 a.m. by one of his guards, who told him they were under attack by “Daesh”

They missed us only by hours.

Timothy Weeks, Australian teacher held hostage by the Taliban

(an alternate acronym for the ISIS terrorist group), and was rushed into a tunnel under where he was being held.

Recalling the attack, he said: “I believe now that it was the Navy SEALs coming in to get us. I believe they were right outside our door. The moment that we got into the tunnels, we were one or two meters underground and there was a huge bang at the front door.

“And our guards went up and there was a lot of machine-gun fire. They pushed me over the top into the tunnels and I fell backward and rolled and knocked myself unconscious.”

Weeks and King were abducted at gunpoint in August 2016 outside the American University in Kabul, where they worked as teachers. The Taliban posted a video of the two hostages one year later in which Weeks can be seen pleading with Australia’s then-Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull to negotiate his release.

U.S. forces later confirmed that they had attempted to rescue men at a hideout belonging to a terrorist group in Afghanistan in September 2016, but the prisoners had been moved by the time they arrived.

Weeks said that during their captivity, he and King were regularly moved to new locations in Afghani-

stan and Pakistan, and that their lives were constantly at risk.

Weeks insisted he never gave up hope of being rescueded, telling reporters: “If you give up hope, there is very little left for you. I knew that I would leave that place eventually. It just took a little longer than I expected.”

The teacher thanked Australian Prime Minister Scott Morrison, and U.S. President Donald Trump for their help in securing his and King’s release. Weeks also thanked the leader of the Taliban and his Taliban guards, who he said treated

him well.

“I know a lot of people don’t admit this, but for me, they were soldiers and soldiers obey the commands of their commanders,” he said.

“They don’t get a choice. They were there because they were ordered to come and look after me. Some of them were so compassionate and such lovely, lovely people.”

Weeks reportedly underwent an extensive medical examination at an undisclosed location after his release and arrived home after being transferred from a U.S. military base in Germany.

MILITANT VIDEO VIA AP



An Australian identified as Timothy Weekes making a statement on camera while in captivity.

Amnesty Says More Than 200 Killed in Iran Protests Amid Brutal Government Crackdown

KATABELLA ROBERTS

At least 208 people have been killed during a security crackdown on protests in Iran, Amnesty International said on Dec. 2.

The human rights group said that the “alarming” death toll was based “on credible reports” it had compiled after interviewing a range of sources, including the families of victims.

It added that the real number of deaths attributed to the protests is “likely to be higher.”

According to the report, dozens of deaths have been recorded in the city of Shahrar in Tehran Province, making it one of the cities with the highest death tolls.

“This alarming death toll is further evidence that Iran’s security forces went on a horrific killing spree that left at least 208 people dead in less than a week. This shocking death toll displays the Iranian authorities’ shameful disregard for human life,” said Philip Luther, Research and Advocacy Director for the Middle East and North Africa at Amnesty International.

“Those responsible for this bloody clampdown on demonstrations must be held accountable for their actions,” he added.

Luther said Iranian authorities have been unwilling to carry out “independent, impartial, and effective investigations into unlawful killings” and use of force against protesters, and called upon the international community to help ensure they are held accountable.

Elsewhere in the report, Amnesty claimed it had gathered information from families of the victims who said they had been warned not to speak to the media and had even



An Iranian soldier stands guard overlooking a pro-government rally organised by authorities in Tehran, Iran, on Nov. 25, 2019.

At the time the protests began, Amnesty International said that although the protests had been triggered by the increased petrol prices, they were also due to the Iranian people being “sick and tired of all of the corruption and fanatic ideology” and wanting “a change.”

been banned from holding funeral ceremonies for their loved ones.

Other family members are reportedly being forced to pay excessive amounts of money to have the bodies of the victims returned to them, the group claims.

Widespread protests broke out in Iran on Nov. 15 after authorities announced a new petrol-rationing scheme which would see petrol prices hike up to 50 percent.

The decision means that private vehicles are now restricted to 60 litres of fuel monthly, while any fuel purchases in excess of this limit will incur an additional charge of \$0.25 per litre.

Authorities said the new scheme aims to redistribute money to the country’s neediest citizens, however it quickly faced backlash from citizens throughout the country who took to the streets to call for an end to the Islamic Republic’s government.

At the time the protests began, Amnesty International said that although the protests had been triggered by the increased petrol prices,



Iranian protesters gather around a burning motorcycle during a demonstration against an increase in petrol prices in the central city of Isfahan, on Nov. 16, 2019.

they were also due to the Iranian people being “sick and tired of all of the corruption and fanatic ideology” and wanting “a change.”

Amid the unrest, Iran shut down internet access, preventing those inside the country from sharing information with the outside world. However, it has now been restored in some areas, prompting multiple videos and photos to surface on the internet detailing the chaos.

Meanwhile, authorities in Iran have declined to specify the exact number of casualties or arrests made and claimed Amnesty’s figures on the national death toll were speculative.

In a statement to Al Jazeera, the Permanent Mission of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the U.N. in Geneva said that Tehran “has good reasons to suspect the credibility of the reports released by AI [Amnesty International] due to its past pattern of over-reliance on discredited and unreliable sources and because of certain in-built biases concerning Iran.”

It added that Iran “fully respects the right to peaceful assemblies”

and claimed that “hundreds of law enforcement and police forces plus innocent citizens were among the casualties” caught up in the protests.

They concluded that security forces had used “maximum restraint and care even in dealing with those who abused the protests to undermine public safety and damage public and private property is testimony to this.”

The Iranian regime was launched with a combination of Soviet-style subversion and the influences of Egyptian author, Sayyid Qutb, who was a founder of the Muslim Brotherhood.

Qutb merged socialist politics with Islam to create the ideology at the core of totalitarian governance, according to Dr. Zuhdi Jasser, president and founder of American Islamic Forum for Democracy.

Under this model, criticisms of the government become synonymous with attacks on the religion, allowing for socialist rulers to commit crimes, and even murder, against political opponents, while claiming to be defending their religion.



(L-R) London mayor Sadiq Khan, Britain’s Prime Minister Boris Johnson and opposition Labor party leader Jeremy Corbyn take part in a vigil at the Guildhall in central London to pay tribute to the victims of the London Bridge terror attack on Dec. 2, 2019.

People Convicted of Terror Crimes Should Serve Full Prison Terms, UK’s Johnson Says

CONTINUED FROM A1

“It does not make sense for us as a society to put terrorists, people convicted of terrorist offenses, out on early release. We argue that people should, that terrorists serve the term of their sentence. That’s my immediate takeaway from this and why we’re working on increasing the sentences for serious, violent offenders.

“I think that the practice of automatic early release, where you cut a sentence in half and let really serious, violent offenders out early, simply isn’t working. You’ve some very good evidence of how that isn’t working, I am afraid, with this case.”

Usman Khan, the man who allegedly stabbed five people on Nov. 29, was convicted for terrorism offenses in 2012 and sentenced to 16 years in prison, but was released last year “on license,” London police said.

“A key line of inquiry now is to establish how he came to

carry out this attack,” Assistant Commissioner Neil Basu said in a statement. Khan was shot dead at the scene by police officers.

“The circumstances, as we currently understand them, are that the attacker attended an event earlier on Friday afternoon at Fishmonger’s Hall called ‘Learning Together.’ We believe that the attack began inside before he left the building and proceeded onto London Bridge, where he was detained, and subsequently confronted and shot by armed officers,” Basu said.

Khan’s conviction came after he and eight other men plotted to blow up London’s Stock Exchange in 2010.

Khan was initially sentenced to an undetermined length of time in prison, but he appealed the sentence and a court of appeal revised it to 16 years, while mandating that he spend at least eight in prison. Lord Justice Leveson, one of the appeal

judges, said the case should be reviewed after eight years.

“There is no doubt that anyone convicted of this type of offense could legitimately be considered dangerous,” Leveson said at the time.

“There is an argument for concluding that anyone convicted of such an offense should be incentivised to demonstrate that he can safely be released; such a decision is then better left to the Parole Board for consideration proximate in time to the date when release becomes possible.”

But the Parole Board said in a statement that it hadn’t reviewed Khan’s case at all.

“The Parole Board can confirm it had no involvement with the release of the individual identified as the attacker, who appears to have been released automatically on license (as required by law), without ever being referred to the Board,” the board stated.

Of 90 terrorism-related sentences handed down from 2006 to 2016, more than 40 percent were served by the end of 2018, the Guardian reported.

Richard Walton, who was head of Scotland Yard’s counter-terrorism command from 2011 to 2016, told the outlet that releasing convicted terrorists early places a burden on law enforcement.

“Terrorist prisoners released on license place a resource burden on both specialist counter-terrorism detectives and on mainstream policing. A risk-management process is used to monitor those released on license, and the monitoring of high-risk offenders is extremely resource-intensive,” he said.

“In essence, however, former convicted terrorist offenders are a worrying risk pool for MI5 and counter-terrorist policing. Intelligence is often insufficient to gauge whether they have any intent to re-offend owing to their recent incarceration. Those intending to re-offend also often ‘lay low’ for a period as they know that there will be close attention on them after release.”

Taliban ‘Ready to Restart’ Peace Talks After Trump’s Afghanistan Visit

JACK PHILLIPS

Following a surprise by President Donald Trump to visit troops, the Taliban said Friday they are ready to restart peace talks with the United States amid the 18-year-long conflict in Afghanistan.

“The Taliban wants to make a deal. We’ll see if they want to make a deal. It’s got to be a real deal, but we’ll see,” Trump said after he arrived in Afghanistan on Thanksgiving.

The Taliban, he said, only want to resume peace talks because American troops are “doing a great job” in the country.

“That’s the only reason they want to make a deal. So I want to thank you, and I want to thank the Afghan soldiers for really—I’ve spoken to a lot of you today, and you say they’re really fighting hard. I was very impressed with that, actually. So I want to thank you,” the president said.

Speaking to reporters, Trump also said that “we are meeting with them,” referring to the Taliban. “We say it has to be a ceasefire and they didn’t want to do a ceasefire and now they want to do a ceasefire, I believe. It will probably work out that way,” he added.

Earlier this year, the White House cancelled peace negotiations and Trump declared the talks were

“dead” after the terrorist organisation claimed responsibility for a bombing that left a dozen people dead, including one American, in Kabul.

But on Friday, Taliban spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid said the group is “ready to restart the talks.”

“Our stance is still the same. If peace talks start, it will be resumed from the stage where it had stopped,” Mujahid told the Reuters news agency.

Taliban leaders have been involved in meetings with U.S. officials in Doha, Qatar, for the past week or so and said formal peace talks could resume, the report said.

“We are hoping that Trump’s visit to Afghanistan will prove that he is serious to start talks again. We don’t think he has not much of a choice,” said a senior Taliban commander.

There are currently about 13,000 U.S. forces as well as thousands of NATO troops in the country.

During Thursday’s visit, Trump met with Afghan President Ashraf Ghani, who wrote on Twitter that the two leaders had “discussed the important progress we have jointly made in our military efforts in the battlefield” as well as the necessity of a ceasefire with the Taliban.



Afghan’s President Ashraf Ghani speaks to U.S. soldiers as U.S. President Donald Trump listens during a surprise Thanksgiving day visit at Bagram Air Field in Afghanistan on Nov. 28, 2019.

Parents, Children Standing Side-By-Side Demand Hong Kong Police Stop Using Tear Gas

ANNIE WU & FRANK FANG

Yellow balloons with the words “No More Tear Gas” were flying high as many parents and their young children held a rally at a public square in the heart of Hong Kong’s business district on Dec. 1.

Hundreds of protesters showed up at the rally under the theme of “Children Don’t Want Tear Gas” at Edinburgh Place. At around 11 a.m. local time, they marched to the government headquarters, shouting slogans such as “No tear gas, return the city’s parks for me to play in.”

Many protesters then tied their yellow balloons on the rails outside the headquarters building.

Among those attending the rally was pro-democracy lawmaker Lam Cheuk-ting, who took to the stage to criticise how the city government has refused to publicly reveal the content of the tear gas fired by police or the impacts of the gas on human health.

The rally was organised by the local group Social Worker Home School.

Organisers called on Hong Kong police to stop using tear gas since the oppressive tactic has failed to restore calm to the city since mass protests broke out in June.

Additionally, organisers said many children have had allergic reactions to the gas, including rashes and sore throats after going to places that had previously been the sites of police clearance operations. They also expressed worries about the long-term health effects for their children as a result of be-



A girl holds a sketch showing no to tear gas at a rally at Edinburgh Place in Hong Kong, on Dec. 1, 2019.



Protesters put up drawings voicing their opposition to the police' use of tear gas on the railings outside of the Hong Kong government's headquarters, on Dec. 1, 2019.

Don't ruin the next generation.

Ms. Lee, protester

ing exposed to tear gas.

Parents have called on the city government to invite a third party to carry out chemical tests to find out the tear gas’s composition and alleviate parents’ concerns.

Hong Kong’s security secretary John Lee said at a legislative council (LegCo) session on Nov. 27 that police had fired a total of around 10,000 rounds of tear gas since June, Hong Kong media reported.

Lee refused to answer when he was asked whether Hong Kong police had purchased tear gas from countries other than China. He refused to comment on the chemical compositions and health impacts of the purchased tear gas.

One of the protesters at the rally, Ms. Ho, 32 who lives in the Chai Wan area, told The Epoch Times that her 7-year-old daughter’s eyes are swollen and often become teary. The daughter’s condition worsened

particularly after the police siege on City University of Hong Kong (CUHK) on Nov. 12. Ho added that she also has a one-year-old baby but she is afraid to take her out of the house.

Another protester, Ms. Lee, 39, said she was worried about the health of her 4-year-old daughter from all the tear gas.

“Don’t ruin the next generation,” Lee said, while calling on the city government to stop using tear gas.

Ms. Chau, 30, a resident in Tsuen Wan, recalled how she and her 3-year-old daughter were tear-gassed while they were out having food on a recent Sunday. She explained that at the time, most people near her were just normal citizens, not protesters with gas masks on.

Her daughter now coughs and has a lot of phlegm, and is taking a doctor’s prescription. However,

Chau said the doctor did not really know how to relieve the phlegm symptoms.

“The government should disclose the tear gas components so doctors know how to treat,” Chau added.

Chau stated that her daughter sometimes loses her appetite because she doesn’t know how to cough up the phlegm and almost vomits.

On Nov. 27, U.S. President Donald Trump signed a bill (S.2710) into law that will prohibit U.S. companies from exporting crowd control equipment to Hong Kong police.

U.N. High Commissioner for Human Rights, Michelle Bachelet, in an op-ed published in the South China Morning Post on Nov. 30, appealed to the Hong Kong government to conduct an “independent and impartial judge-led investigation into reports of excessive use of force by the police.”



A lawyer from Mainland China who visited Hong Kong saw a pro-democracy parade on Dec. 1, 2019. He said he hopes the Hong Kong protest movement will bring a change in China.

Mainland Chinese Lawyer Expresses Hope That Hong Kong Protests Could Bring Change to China

CONTINUED FROM A1

the mainland.

On Nov. 27, President Donald Trump signed two Hong Kong bills into law. One of the bills, the Hong Kong Human Rights and Democracy Act, requires the U.S. Secretary of State to annually review whether the former British colony is “sufficiently autonomous” from mainland China to justify its special economic privileges granted under the United States-Hong Kong Policy Act of 1992. It also authorises sanctions on both Chinese and Hong Kong officials responsible for human rights violations in Hong Kong.

Approximately 6,000 people marched in the Dec. 1 parade, which started in Chater Garden, a public park in the Central District of Hong Kong, and ended at the U.S. Consulate with a rally to thank President Trump and U.S. lawmakers for their support.

American flags, pro-democracy slogans, and thousands of enthusiastic rally participants created a mind-blowing sight for any Chinese national from the mainland where parades and rallies initiated by non-gov-

ernmental organisers are only granted in the constitution but never in reality.

A Chinese lawyer who had brought along his young child for vaccination in Hong Kong was deeply impressed after watching the parade. Speaking on the condition of anonymity, he told the Chinese-language Epoch Times that he is not misled by China’s fake news about the Hong Kong protests.

He said that many of his friends accept the Chinese state media’s labelling of Hong Kong protesters as “rioters.” But he has come to realise that the Chinese regime’s mouthpieces are by no means objective in their reporting, because he often reads overseas media by using special software to circumvent China’s internet firewall.

“Most Chinese people lack logical reasoning because certain parts have been missing in their education since childhood,” he said. “Think about it, if more than 2 million people participate in a movement, how can all of them be rioters? Moreover, it’s been over five months since

Hong Kong protesters started this movement. It is very unlikely that a group of rioters would persist for this long. Therefore, I know that China’s media propaganda uses poor logic.”

He said China’s education system deliberately turns people into confused individuals who lack the ability to reason logically. “Within that education system, it is very difficult for a person to grow up having normal thinking and opinions,” he said.

He speculates that more than 90 percent of mainland Chinese are unable to see through the deceptive propaganda. “They really don’t have the ability to see the truth. Many believe the protesters are indeed rioters, and that they are the cause of serious social unrest,” he said.

“Even when I talk to some of my acquaintances who have received higher education and have earned advanced degrees, it is very difficult to help them understand that China’s propaganda about the Hong Kong protests is all lies. It may take a lot of time and patience to change their views. Or when they have a chance to travel abroad, they may gradually realise that China’s media is always very different from the outside world.”

In spite of mainland Chinese being victims of media censorship, brainwashing and disinformation, this lawyer is still hopeful that Hong Kong’s pro-democracy movement will spill into mainland China, and bring some changes, “because at present, China is doing very poorly in regards to freedom, especially freedom of speech,” he said.

As to parades, it’s impossible to organise a grand parade in the mainland like the one he had just witnessed, he said. Although China’s constitution stipulates that citizens have the right to hold parades, local law enforcement always apply criminal and administrative laws to deny citizens the right to express their grievances this way.

“As a result, as for China’s constitution, it’s as good as not having it,” he said.

With reporting by Sarah Liang.

China Can Switch Off Philippines’ Power Grid, Official Says

NICOLE HAO

A Philippine senator has urged for a probe into the implications of China’s part-ownership of the national grid after an energy official said China could remotely switch off the country’s power supply.

A Chinese state-run company, State Grid Corporation, has owned a 40 percent stake in the National Grid Corporation of the Philippines (NGCP) since 2009.

Senator Risa Hontiveros filed a motion on Nov. 25, saying Beijing should not be able to destabilise a neighbouring country “with the flick of a switch,” Reuters reported.

“Imagine a foreign country, which is an unrepentant trespasser and aggressor in our seas and territories, controlling our national electricity grid,” Hontiveros said in a statement, the outlet reported.

“It could sabotage our elections, shut down our access to television, the internet, and other communication technologies, cause the collapse of our economy and undermine our national security,” she added.

The move came less than a week after the head of the Philippines’ state-run National Transmission Corporation (TransCo) confirmed that China has the capability to remotely switch off the nation’s grid.

The two countries are involved in a territorial dispute over parts of the South China Sea.

According to the BBC, during budget deliberations on Nov. 19, Hontiveros asked energy officials: “Is it possible for our power grid to be taken down remotely?”

In response, Sherwin Gatchalian on Nov. 20, chair of the Philippines Senate Energy Committee, referred to advice from Melvin Matibag, president of TransCo.

“Given the technological advancement right now in telecommunications as well as in software, that is possible,” he said.

Gatchalian said in certain situations such as war, disasters, and rebellion, the president can order a takeover of the grid and electricity can be restored in 24 to 48 hours,



Workers install cables on the Transco power transmission line in Santa Rosa town south of Manila as the Chinese-led consortium officially took over a 25-year concession of the Philippines' national electricity grid as part of the government's privatisation programme on Jan. 15, 2009.

the outlet reported.

Recent local media reports have said that only foreign engineers are able to troubleshoot, operate and control the grid’s power transmission network because its remote operating system is located in Nanjing, China.

Hontiveros asked about this issue and also about reports that grid operating manuals have appeared in Chinese.

Gatchalian said Filipinos were in control of the transmission line and that manuals had been translated to English.

An internal report to lawmakers also said the Chinese regime has the power to shut off the power grid “with a single switch,” CNN reported on Nov. 26.

On Nov. 26, the NGCP denied the claims, saying it was “baseless” and “purely speculative.”

NGCP spokeswoman Cynthia Perez-Alabanza said on national television that the system was not connected to the internet and could not be accessed by remote users, the South China Morning Post reported.

However, local media have reported NGCP CEO Anthony Almedia saying that the head of the company could be granted remote access to the grid in emergency scenarios by using the system’s virtual private network.

LAM YIK FEI/GETTY IMAGES

Chinese City Halts Plan for Crematorium After Clashes Between Locals and Police

NICOLE HAO

Authorities in a southern Chinese city have withdrawn plans to build a crematorium after days of protests by locals which prompted comparisons with the ongoing protest movement in Hong Kong.

Last week, residents in the town of Wenlou in Guangzhou Province clashed with riot police during protests against plans to build a large crematorium in an area officials had previously said would become an “ecological park.”

Footage shared on social media shows riot police apparently firing tear gas, and beating protesters with batons. Other videos show residents throwing firecrackers at police and flipping over a car.

Residents started protesting on Nov. 28 and continued over the weekend even after local authorities announced a suspension of the project on late Nov. 29. Demonstrations ceased after officials announced the withdrawal of the plan on Dec. 1.

On the afternoon of Nov. 30, local authorities released all the detained protesters and sent them back to the town, according to Hong Kong media Apple Daily. But some released protesters told the outlet that police told them they were released on the status of “bail pending trial,” and could be subject to legal proceedings.

While small-scale protests against chemical plants, crematoriums, and

The protest in Wenlou—located about 100km north of Hong Kong—came amid fears by Chinese authorities that pro-democracy demonstrations in Hong Kong now approaching their sixth month would spillover into the mainland.

China’s riot police during a drill in Guangzhou, southern China’s Guangdong province, on Dec. 20, 2004. Protests in China have increased markedly amid blatant corruption and a lack of political and judicial reforms.

STR/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES



Riot police gather in the city of Shenzhen, China, on Sept. 18, 2012.

other industrial facilities are not uncommon across China’s rural areas, news of such events are heavily censored by the regime. The protest in Wenlou—located about 60 miles north of Hong Kong—came amid fears by Chinese authorities that pro-democracy demonstrations in Hong Kong now approaching their sixth month would spillover into the mainland.

Footage shared on Twitter and other social media show Wenlou residents wearing masks and adopting slogans similar to those used by protesters in Hong Kong.

Protesters can be seen shouting, “Liberate Mao Ming [the city where Wenlou is located], the revolution of our times,” an adaptation of a popular slogan used by Hong Kong protesters: “Liberate Hong Kong, the revolution of our times!”

Like Hong Kong demonstrators, villagers also had “five demands” for local authorities. These included: stopping the crematorium project, investigating the police over its use of force in quelling the protests, releasing the detained protesters, and rehabilitating the construction site.

Discontent

A local resident who declined to be named for fear of reprisals, told the Chinese-language edition Epoch Times that days before the protest officials from the Huazhou city government visited Wenlou and

informed locals that an ecological park would be built in the town.

“At that time, our villagers were very supportive. A lot of senior villagers [whose lands would be occupied by the garden] signed the paper [allowing the project to go ahead],” the resident said.

However, on Nov. 27 Huazhou city government released a statement which said the project included a crematorium.

“We had fellow villagers who searched online and found out that the emissions from a crematorium is harmful to the environment,” the resident said.

On the morning of Nov. 28, locals planned to gather in front of the township government’s offices, but were faced with about one thousand riot police, according to the resident.

“We have never seen riot police in our town before,” the resident said. “They [the government] deployed thousands of riot police, as well as ambulances, drones, and riot vehicles [in the town on Nov. 28].”

The resident said that police controlled the roads inside the village, and blocked locals from going to the local government office.

“Only people who lived in the town centre went to the township government office... There were about 100 people,” the resident said.

Before 11 a.m. local time, an elderly villager was beaten to the ground by

the riot police, an incident recorded by villagers on-site and shared on WeChat, a popular Chinese social media similar to Facebook.

This police beating angered locals, who then stormed into the town government offices before being chased out by police, the resident said. Then both sides started throwing rocks at each other.

The resident said he witnessed two students and two senior villagers injured from the clashes. He also saw police detain a student, a woman, and an elderly man.

“They [police] mobilised more than one dozen riot trucks from Maoming City, and [we had] more and more villagers join [in the protest],” said the resident.

During the conflict, police fired tear gas and water cannons, he said.

When the protests escalated, villagers found that they couldn’t share videos and photos of the clashes online, and no Chinese media agreed to report the event, according to the resident.

“The crematorium’s pollution will harm our people,” he said.

The resident added that the Huazhou City government had previously planned on building a crematorium in another town, but failed after the villagers in that town protested intensely.

Cindy Zhan contributed to this article

380,000 Hongkongers March to Renew Calls for Freedom and Democracy

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identified himself as Swing, had been granted police approval. But soon after it took off, police interrupted the scene. A sizable force had gathered, with at least nine police vans in the area.

At around 4:50 p.m. local time, riot police suddenly charged at protesters at an area near the intersection between Salisbury Road and Nathan Road, which is right before Salisbury Garden.

The police fired pepper spray and tear gas, before making at least two arrests.

The police then put up a blue flag, declaring that people are engaging in an illegal assembly.

Amid the chaos, protesters could be heard shouting insults at the riot police. Others said, “The United States will sanction you guys” and “Hong Kong people have the right to free assembly.” At around 5:15 p.m., an organiser called off the march.

A stand-off between police and protesters followed, with the former occasionally rushing forward attempting to make arrests. Eventually, at around 6:30 p.m., riot police at Salisbury Garden pulled out of the area.

At 5:52 p.m., the Hong Kong government released a press release, stating that police had responded with tear gas after protesters threw bricks at police officers at an area near Mody Road Garden, which is several blocks away from the Hong

The whole world is resisting the Chinese Communist Party. And we [Hong Kong people] are fanning the flames.

Protester

Kong Colosseum.

Swing spoke to the press at around 7 p.m., saying that about 380,000 people turned up for the march. He added that he got a call from the police at around 4 p.m., telling him that the assembly was illegal and needed to be called off.

On Nov. 27, U.S. President Donald Trump signed two Hong Kong bills into law, one of them the Hong Kong Human Rights and Democracy Act, which stipulates sanctions on both Chinese and Hong Kong officials who have violated human rights in the city.

Since then, two separate Hong Kong rallies were held to thank Trump and U.S. lawmakers for passing the bills.

Before the parade was called off, Ms. Chan, a middle-aged woman, told The Epoch Times that she came to the protest because she had to do her part to support the movement.

“Since the beginning of the movement, the government has never responded to [our] demands,” Chan said.

She believed that the current protest movement will keep going because of “everyone’s persistence and bravery.”

A female protester, who only identified herself as a student at the City University of Hong Kong (CUHK), was seen helping another protester write red graffiti on a road with the Chinese words,

“Remove the [Chinese] Communist Party.”

Asked about the message, the female protester said, “Hong Kong is still being controlled by the Chinese Communist Party (CCP). No matter who the chief executive [top Hong Kong official] is, the CCP will be the puppet master.”

When asked if the protesters’ demand for universal suffrage could be achieved, given that the CCP has clearly stated in the past that it

would not grant true free elections, the female protester admitted that the demand would be hard to meet.

However, she added that the CCP is now experiencing challenges internally and externally.

“The whole world is resisting the Chinese Communist Party. And we [Hong Kong people] are fanning the flames,” she said.

She concluded: “The world and Hong Kong have to keep up the momentum.”

NICOLAS ASFOURI/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES



People take part in a march at the Tsim Sha Tsui district in Hong Kong, China, on Dec. 1, 2019.

Trump Praises, Defends NATO Alliance at Summit

ELLA KIETLINSKA

At the 70th-anniversary NATO summit in London President Donald Trump praised the organisation's leadership and defended it against criticism from the president of France.

In the morning Trump met with the Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg at a Working Breakfast. Speaking after the meeting Trump praised Stoltenberg for "doing a fantastic job."

Trump said that the contribution of NATO allies to the alliance's budget had been decreasing over the last 20 years and that a continued decrease would have had a detrimental effect on NATO.

He also said that the United States was spending much more on defence than other allies and it amounts to between 4 to 4.3 percent of its GDP, the largest GDP in the world. By contrast, "Germany is paying 1 to 1.2 percent ... of a much smaller GDP." However, Trump said, NATO protects all regardless how much they pay.

In 2014 all NATO members reached an agreement that each of them should spend 2 percent of their GDP on defence, but not all members have complied with this requirement.

Stoltenberg said that since "2016, Canada and European allies have added \$130 billion more to the defence budgets, and this number will increase to 400 billion U.S. dollars by 2024," which makes NATO stronger.

New Directions for NATO

NATO today is stronger and able to adapt to the changing world and "address a wide range of other issues, including the fight against terrorism, arms control, our relationship with Russia, the rise of China," Stoltenberg said. "NATO is the most successful alliance in history because we have been able to change when the world is changing."

Stoltenberg also said, "historically, NATO has been focused on the Soviet Union and Russia," and although it is not new, the impact of the rise of China on NATO's security has to be addressed as well.

"China is now the second-largest defence spender in the world, after the United States," Stoltenberg said. "[China] recently displayed a lot of new advanced military weapons systems, including new intercontinental ballistic missiles able to reach the whole of Europe and the United States ... and they also deployed hundreds of intermediate-range missiles that would have violated the INF Treaty, if China had been part of that treaty," Stolten-



Jens Stoltenberg, Secretary General of NATO, speaks with U.S. President Donald Trump ahead of the NATO Leaders meeting at the NATO HQ in Watford, England, on Dec. 3, 2019.

When speaking about Russia, Trump said that "NATO should always be in dialogue with Russia ... [and] can have a very good relationship with Russia."



France's President Emmanuel Macron, Britain's Prime Minister Boris Johnson, Turkish President Tayyip Erdogan and German Chancellor Angela Merkel pose as they meet at Downing Street ahead of the NATO summit in London, Britain, Dec. 3, 2019.

berg said.

NATO does not plan moving into the South China Sea, but the fact that China is getting closer to the NATO region cannot be ignored, he said. China is present in Arctic, Africa, cyberspace, and heavily in European infrastructure.

When speaking about Russia, Trump said that "NATO should always be in dialogue with Russia ... [and] can have a very good relationship with Russia."

Stoltenberg added that "we will strive for a better relationship with Russia. But we do that based on what we call the dual-track approach by NATO. We have to be

strong and we have to provide a credible deterrence and defence, combined with dialogue."

Both Trump and Stoltenberg see the importance of focusing on Arms Control and would like to see progress on it with Russia as well as find a way to include China in arms control agreements.

Is NATO Suffering 'Brain Death'?

In the afternoon Trump met with France's President Emmanuel Macron.

In Early November Macron criticised NATO and described it as suffering from "brain death" in his interview with the Economist.

In responding to a reporter's question, Trump said Macron's comment was unfair to "a lot of different forces, including the man that does a very good job in running NATO."

Macron stood by his statement but agreed with Trump that "the U.S. overinvested, decade after decade, and it is number one, by far [in defence spending]."

France is investing 1.9 percent of its GDP in defence and is increasing its spending.

Macron said of NATO that he needs "strategy clarification."

"We have to put money, we have to put soldiers. We have to be clear on the fundamentals of what NATO should be. And this is not the case today. What about peace in Europe? I want clarification about that," said Macron.

He also expressed his concern about the termination of the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty, that put at risk Germany, France, and a lot of European countries, that are now exposed to "new missiles coming from Russia."

Macron also directed criticism at NATO member Turkey.

He said that the Alliance objective is to "protect our partners against external threats. And France will do it, and we will have full solidarity vis-à-vis eastern and northern states in Europe."

However, Turkey is now "fighting against those who fight with us, who fought with us, shoulder to shoulder, against ISIS. And sometimes they work with ISIS forces. This is an issue, and this is a strategic issue," said Macron.

Trump said "we have a very good relationship with Turkey... We pulled our soldiers out. We said you can patrol your own border now.... We put some of our soldiers around the oil, where we have captured the oil."

Macron also said, that they "have a lot of cooperation with Turkey, on security, trade, migration," but "we need clarification from the Turkish side."

"How it is possible to be a member of the Alliance, to work with our office, to buy our materials, to be integrated, and to buy S-400 [missile systems] from Russians? Technically it is not possible," said Macron.

Macron added that Turkey would like to "block all the declarations of this summit if we do not agree about their definition of terrorist organisations—qualifying [the Kurdish] YPG and the others as terrorist groups, which is not our definition."

Trump answered that he would meet with Turkey's President to discuss this and also the United States is looking into sanctioning Turkey for purchasing the S-400 missile system.

25 US Senators Press for Probe Into China's Corporate Ranking System

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tors said that China's social credit system "raises fundamental questions about whether promised market openings and regulatory reforms on paper will yield a level playing field in practice for American firms doing business in and with China."

The corporate social credit system, initiated in 2014 and set to be fully functional in 2020, will use an algorithmic system that collects and evaluates corporate data to grade both domestic and international firms on their compliance to roughly 300 state-determined rules.

Companies with scores that fall below a certain threshold will face penalties, including restrictions on business licenses and procurement opportunities, higher tax rates, and even loss of market access.



A man walks past an advertisement for scheduled exhibition games in China between the LA Lakers and Brooklyn Nets, at the National Basketball Association (NBA) store in Beijing on Oct. 9, 2019.

The first round of evaluation has assigned a score to around 33 million companies, according to a September statement from China's National Development and Reform Commission, a macroeconomic planning agency under the cabinet-like State Council.

The lawmakers asked the U.S. administration to prioritise research about the impact of such a system, and present the analysis in

future reports concerning China and bilateral trade relations.

"Our American values are not for sale—and that's why we should track China's efforts to coerce American companies into complying with their flawed system," said Sen. Cory Gardner (R-Colo.) in a Dec. 2 press release.

Sen. Michael Bennet (D-Colo.) said in a statement, "China's Corporate Social Credit System is a potentially alarming development given the country's escalating censorship of the media, internet, and arts in recent years."

In the letter, the senators made special note of the recent controversy surrounding the National Basketball Association, which saw the organisation bowing to Beijing pressure and apologising for a tweet by the Houston Rockets' general manager that showed sup-

port for the ongoing Hong Kong protests.

The incident was the "latest in a litany of attempts by China to deploy its state and economic power to bend American entities to its will," the senators wrote.

The senators also expressed concern that with a corporate ranking system in place, the Chinese Communist Party could further exert pressure on American businesses and force them to endorse its political positions.

In 2018, China's aviation regulator sent letters to 44 international airlines, including American Airlines, Delta, and United Airlines, demanding them to drop references to Taiwan as a country.

The Chinese regime has regarded the self-ruled island as a renegade province to be reunited with the mainland by military force

if necessary, despite Taiwan having its own independent government, rule of law, and military.

"American companies need to decide how to respond to Chinese attempts to stifle freedom of speech," Sen. Chris Coons (D-Del.) said in a statement.

The senators also warned that given the regime's "disregard for the rule of law, checks and balances, transparency, and a free press," the corporate social credit system could bring "a broad array of unjustified punishments."

"As a punishment for individuals representing companies deemed 'untrustworthy,' the Chinese government envisions levying travel restrictions, tax discrimination, personal sanctions, and other retributions. In this respect, there are few punishments that can be ruled 'off the table,'" they wrote.

Trump, Commerce Secretary Send Signal That China Deal Can Wait

EVA FU

U.S. Secretary of Commerce Wilbur Ross on Dec. 3 backed President Donald Trump’s remarks earlier today that a trade deal with Beijing might have to wait until after the 2020 presidential election.

Waiting until the election in November 2020 to sign a trade agreement “takes off the table something that they [Beijing] may think gives them some leverage,” Ross told CNBC’s “Squawk on the Street.”

“Once the election occurs—and the president seems to be in very good shape for the election—once it occurs and he’s back in, now that’s no longer a distraction that can detract from our negotiating position,” he added.

Ross’s comments came hours after Trump said that he had “no deadline” on the trade deal.

“In some ways, I like the idea of waiting until after the election for the China deal. But they want to make a deal now, and we’ll see whether or not the deal’s going to be right; it’s got to be right,” Trump said Tuesday ahead of a meeting of NATO leaders in London.

The president added that Washington is in a stronger negotiating position than the Chinese regime, given China’s weak economic performance.

China reported its slowest economic growth in 27 years in October as the trade tensions with the United States hit its manufacturing sector.

“The China trade deal is dependent on one thing: do I want to make it,” Trump told reporters.

In an interview with Fox Business on Tuesday, Vice President Mike Pence said that the president is leveraging the strong U.S. economy in trade negotiations with China and around the world.

“What President Trump envisions with tariffs is a means to an end, and the end ... is free trade,” he said.

On Dec. 2, Trump reinstated tariffs on steel and aluminium from Brazil and Argentina in response to recent currency devaluation in those countries, which were negatively impacting American farmers, he said.

Ross said he was optimistic about a fruitful trade negotiation with Beijing, given the economic problems in China, “particularly the hollowing out of supply chains.”

A steady string of international firms, including Apple, Dell, Google, Amazon, toymaker Hasbro have announced plans to shift part of their U.S. bound production from China to neighbouring countries, such as Vietnam, Malaysia, and Bangladesh.

“That’s a trend that is going to continue, especially as long as there’s the trade uncertainty,” Ross said.

Objective Unchanged

Ross said that the tariffs scheduled to take effect on Dec. 15 will stay in



U.S. Commerce Secretary Wilbur Ross (R) speaks before U.S. President Donald Trump signed a presidential memorandum aimed at what he calls Chinese economic aggression in the Roosevelt Room at the White House on March 22, 2018.

In some ways, I like the idea of waiting until after the election for the China deal. But they want to make a deal now.

Donald Trump, President of the United States



Senior Chinese and U.S. officials attend trade negotiations in the Diplomatic Room at the Eisenhower Executive Office Building in Washington on Jan. 30, 2019.

place unless “enough substantive progress has been made” in trade talks.

Phasing out of existing tariffs has “always been part of things,” but the core issue is whether the two sides can work out a “total package” that is in the interests of both, he said, noting that “the president made clear he’s under no time pressure to get it done.”

Ross added that the president is “perfectly happy” to continue with the current tariffs on Chinese goods if the right deal is not reached.

Both Trump and Ross said that the rising tensions in Hong Kong, where anti-government protests have persisted for nearly six months, has complicated the trade talks.

Beijing recently vowed to react strongly to Trump’s signing of two human rights bills backing the Hong Kong pro-democracy movement a week earlier.

On Monday, the Chinese regime said they would suspend U.S. Navy visits to the port of Hong Kong.

The regime also announced unspecified sanctions against at least five U.S.-based non-profit organisations, saying that they “played an egregious role in the Hong Kong

amendment bill disturbance” and were “much to blame for the chaos in Hong Kong,” he said.

Ross said the regime’s retaliation barring U.S. port calls was “fairly modest.”

“That’s not a big deal, we can very well live without the port of Hong Kong,” he said.

Earlier on Monday, Trump said the Hong Kong legislation didn’t help trade negotiations with the regime.

The law “doesn’t make it better, but we’ll see what happens,” Trump said before departing for the London NATO summit.

When asked whether the crisis in Hong Kong and the persecution of Muslim minorities in the north-western Chinese region of Xinjiang will be addressed as part of the trade deal, Pence told Fox Business that United States had spoken out clearly with respect to these two issues.

“The president has used essentially the economic dialogue that’s happening between China and the United States and say: look, it’s going to be very difficult for us to do a deal if China doesn’t deal with Hong Kong peaceably and humanely,” Pence said.



U.S. President Donald Trump and First lady Melania Trump arrive at Stansted Airport in Stansted, Essex, ahead of the NATO Leaders Summit on Dec. 2, 2019.

Trump, Pompeo Fault Democrats for Having Impeachment Hearings During NATO Meetings

President Donald Trump and Secretary of State Mike Pompeo criticised Democrats for holding the first House Judiciary Committee impeachment hearing at the same time as his London meeting with other NATO members.

“The do-nothing Democrats decided when I’m going to NATO... that was the exact time—this is one of the most important journeys that we make as president,” Trump told reporters before he left Washington for the United Kingdom on Monday.

Previously, Trump wrote on Twitter that he will be representing the United States at the NATO meeting “while the Democrats are holding the most ridiculous Impeachment hearings in history.”

“The Radical Left is undercutting our Country. Hearings scheduled on same dates as NATO!” he added.

Pompeo said during an appearance on “Fox & Friends” that he felt the move to hold a hearing in the House while Trump is abroad is without precedent.

“I regret that they’ve chosen to hold these hearings at the same time that the president and our entire national security team will be travelling to Europe to London to work on these important matters,” Pompeo said. “It’s very unfortunate.”

The president is expected to attend a meeting with NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg and French President Emmanuel Macron. He will also attend a NATO leaders reception hosted by Queen Elizabeth II.

Later in the week, he will partake in a NATO ceremony before meeting German Chancellor Angela Merkel and will have lunch with representatives from Estonia, Greece, Latvia, Poland, Romania, Lithuania, Bulgaria, and the UK, Fox reported. He will have two bilateral meetings with Italian Prime Minister Giuseppe Conte and Danish Prime Minister Mette Frederiksen.

Trump has long complained that European nations have to pay their fair share for U.S. military protection.

“The European Union, for many years, has taken advantage of us on Trade, and then they don’t live up to their Military commitment through NATO. Things must change fast!” he wrote last week.

A week ago, Macron complained that the United States is contributing to the demise of NATO.

“So as soon as you have a member who feels they have a right to head off on their own, granted by the United States of America, they do it,” Macron told The Economist.

However, his comments were panned by Merkel, who viewed them as extreme.

The chancellor, calling Macron’s statement “drastic words,” said it “is not my view of cooperation in NATO and I think that such a sweeping blow is not necessary, even if we do have problems, even if we must pull together.” Stoltenberg also rejected the French president’s claim.

Newsweek Demotes Editor Responsible for Inaccurate Trump Thanksgiving Story

ZACHARY STIEBER

Newsweek demoted an editor who was involved with an erroneous story that claimed President Donald Trump was “tweeting” and “golfing” on Thanksgiving when he was actually in the Middle East visiting American troops.

“The editor was demoted,” a Newsweek spokesperson told TheWrap on Dec. 2.

Newsweek didn’t immediately respond to a request for comment.

The editor was not named. Jessica Kwong, who wrote the piece, was terminated.

Reports began emerging that Trump was in Afghanistan at 1:56 p.m. EST on Nov. 28. At the bottom of the Newsweek story, it

says that the story was “substantially updated and edited at 6:17 p.m. EST to reflect the president’s surprise trip to Afghanistan.”

The piece still claims in the headline that Trump was golfing on Thanksgiving even though there is no evidence the president golfed at all on the holiday. Trump left Florida late Wednesday. Inside the story, it says the president golfed the day before Thanksgiving.

It also says Trump was tweeting on Thanksgiving. The White House said Trump’s tweets were pre-scheduled to send while he was on his way overseas.

Newsweek said in a statement to the Washington Examiner that

“the story has been corrected.” Inside the story, it’s termed as “an update,” not a correction.

“Newsweek investigated the failures that led to the publication of the inaccurate report that President Trump spent Thanksgiving tweeting and golfing rather than visiting troops in Afghanistan,” a Newsweek spokesperson said. “The story has been corrected, and the journalist responsible has been terminated. We will continue to review our processes and, if required, take further action.”

Kwong said what happened was an “honest mistake” in a statement posted on Twitter, adding that the article “was

written before knowing about the president’s surprise visit to Afghanistan.”

She has not yet commented on her termination.

Trump and his son, Donald Trump Jr., both commented on the piece.

“It wasn’t an ‘honest mistake’ you tried to dunk on Trump and ended up dunking on yourself because you couldn’t resist,” Trump Jr. wrote in a statement. “Notice how there’s never been a story that broke in Trump’s favour & had to be corrected the other way? These aren’t mistakes, they are a very consistent pattern.”

“I thought Newsweek was out of business?” Trump added.

THE WORLD

In Pictures



(From top L-R) **A koala named Paul** from Lake Innes Nature Reserve recovers from his burns in the ICU at The Port Macquarie Koala Hospital on Nov. 29. Volunteers from the hospital have been working alongside National Parks and Wildlife Service crews searching for koalas following weeks of devastating bushfires across NSW and Queensland. An estimated 1,000 koalas have been killed, along with other wildlife. **Bondi Beach** in Sydney is renamed 'Mango Beach' to celebrate the first day of summer and the return of the annual mango festival, Mess-tival. From Nippers tucking into the juicy fruit, to messy mango eating competitions, the festival saw thousands of beach-goers celebrate the nation's favourite fruit on Dec. 1. **A male southern white rhinoceros**, born on Nov. 25, is pictured in its internal enclosure at the Pairi Daiza animal park in Brugelette, Belgium, on Dec. 2. **Protesters in Hong Kong** hold posters of U.S. President Donald Trump during a rally at in Hong Kong on Nov. 28. Protesters gathered to say thank you after Trump signed legislation to encourage China to respect Hong Kong's autonomy under the 'One Country, Two Systems' agreement. **A man looks on at foamy discharge** caused by pollutants mixed with surf at Marina beach in Chennai, India, on Dec. 1. **Members of the public** enjoy the interactive light installation 'Illumaphonium' at Royal William Yard in Plymouth, England, on Nov. 27. The light festival on the eve of American Thanksgiving in 2020 will mark the 400th anniversary of the Mayflower ship that carried puritan separatists setting sail from Plymouth for the 'new world' of America in September 1620. **Firefighters try to contain spot fires** near the Tallaganda National Park outside of Braidwood in Canberra, Australia, on Nov. 30.

NATHAN EDWARDS/GETTY IMAGES; BRENDON THORNE/GETTY IMAGES FOR AUSTRALIAN IMAGES; KENZO TRIBOUILLARD/GETTY IMAGES; CHRIS MOORE/GETTY IMAGES; ARIUS SANKAR/AP/WIDEWORLD IMAGES; FINBARR WEBSTER/GETTY IMAGES; TRACEY NEARMY/GETTY IMAGES

A Climate of Ignorance: How Schools are Failing Our Children

RYAN MOFFATT

As a father to two children just entering the school system, I often ask myself how well they will be prepared for the world they will inherit. Will they be given the tools they need to solve complex problems? Will their minds be developed enough to discern truth from fiction? Will they learn to be measured and moral in their actions? I hope so, but I am not entirely convinced.

The best efforts of parents to produce accountable and effective global citizens can be hindered or aided by the education system. When the two work in harmony toward truth and empowerment, the next generation will have both the knowledge and mindset necessary to survive and thrive in uncertain times. But there's increasing evidence that young people today are finding themselves ill-prepared for the existential challenges they must face as adults.

Education by Omission

The school system is no longer the primary source of knowledge. The lineage of generational education took a quantum leap when the internet made the whole of mankind's knowledge available at the tap of a screen. Every viewpoint on any issue, from one extreme to the other, is available for consumption. Despite its initial promise, however, mass information has not resulted in mass wisdom.

Perhaps out of a genuine but misplaced sense of morality, educators are increasingly presenting a carefully crafted version of accepted truths while dismissing hard and uncomfortable facts, shielding students from ideas that challenge the "accepted" side of an argument. To their detriment, educational institutions have become purveyors of their own—usually progressive—ideals rather than conscientious disseminators of knowledge.

There are growing examples from the education system at all levels where certain topics are treated as untouchable, or where an incomplete set of facts lead to a foregone conclusion. A case in point is the conversation around climate change, which has veered heavily into the realm of conformist and alarmist thinking.

The so-called fight to curb climate change has spurred many youth to action, motivated by teen activist Greta Thunberg. Mobilising to bring about positive change is commendable and teaches young people to be more than passive observers when it comes to important issues.

As for the climate debate, however, relevant facts that conflict with the prevailing narrative go unacknowledged and are even attacked.

Dr. Susan Crockford is an expert



JUSTIN SULLIVAN/GETTY IMAGES

A new four-story-high mural of 16-year-old Swedish climate activist Greta Thunberg is nearing completion on the side of a building near Union Square in San Francisco, California, on Nov. 11, 2019.

in animal bone identification and polar bear researcher who has written five books on the animals. She suspects her May 2019 dismissal from the University of Victoria was because her findings that polar bears are not facing extinction runs contrary to the claims of climate change activists.

The loss of her position as assistant professor in the Anthropology Department followed her expulsion from the roster of UVic's Speakers Bureau, where she once delivered a lecture to high school and elementary students titled, "Polar Bears: Outstanding Survivors of Climate Change."

Crockford's research found that, despite broad assumptions to the contrary, polar bear populations are on the rise and actually thriving. Instead of being a cause for celebration and intrigue, this news threatened the status quo. If Crockford's suspicions about her expulsion are right, her research was deemed too politically incorrect for students. She suggests on her blog that "someone with influence (and perhaps political clout) intervened to silence my scientific criticism."

Because Crockford poked a hole in the prevailing narrative, she had to be silenced. This kind of reaction does not serve students well.

Petteri Taalas, the secretary-

general of the World Meteorological Organisation, recently voiced concern that the climate change conversation has been hijacked by climate extremists and their calls for radical action.

"Now, we should stay calm and ponder what is really the solution to this problem," Taalas told the Talouselämä magazine in Finland. "It is not going to be the end of the world. The world is just becoming more challenging. In parts of the globe, living conditions are becoming worse, but people have survived in harsh conditions."

His statement, along with his denunciation of "doomsters and extremists" who "make threats," was a call for rationality in the climate debate. Instead, he was vilified by radicals in the environmental movement.

The point is not to argue about the science of climate change but to reinforce the crucial need for keeping an open mind when thinking through important issues. Holding to a factually incomplete, politically correct side of an argument despite conflicting evidence leads to irrational decisions.

The school system should recognise that and not be afraid to present students with balanced facts and perspectives around issues like climate change so that they can make informed decisions and

The school system should recognise that and not be afraid to present students with balanced facts and perspectives around issues like climate change so that they can make informed decisions and come to their own conclusions.

come to their own conclusions.

Like all parents, I have an intrinsic desire to protect my children from the hard truths of the world, but I know that those same hard truths hold the key to the realisation of their full potential.

Given the trend toward indoctrination in schools, one can only hope that teachers and educators will bear the burden of their position wisely and help forge a generation of empowered critical thinkers and moral actors.

Ryan Moffatt is a journalist based in Vancouver.

Views expressed in this article are the opinions of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of The Epoch Times.



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Japan’s Prime Minister Shinzo Abe attends the 22nd ASEAN-Japan Summit in Bangkok on Nov. 4, 2019.

The Real Lessons From Japan’s Monetary Experiment

DANIEL LACALLE



Commentary
A recent article in the Financial Times, “Abenomics provides a lesson for the rich world,” mentioned that the experiment started by Prime Minister Shinzo Abe in the early 2010s should serve as an important warning for rich

countries.
Unfortunately, the article’s “lessons” were rather disappointing. These were mainly that the central bank can do a lot more than the European Central Bank (ECB) and the Fed are doing, and that Japan is not doing so badly. I disagree.
The failure of Abenomics has been phenomenal. The balance sheet of the central bank of Japan has ballooned to more than

100 percent of the country’s GDP. The central bank owns almost 70 percent of the country’s exchange-traded funds and is one of the top 10 shareholders in the majority of the largest companies of the Nikkei index.
Government debt to GDP has swelled to 236 percent, and despite the record-low cost of debt, the government spends almost 22 percent of the budget on interest expenses. All of this to achieve what?

None of the results that were expected from the massive monetary experiment, inventively called QQE (quantitative and qualitative easing), have been achieved, even remotely. Growth is expected to be one of the weakest in the world in 2020, according to the International Monetary Fund, and the country has consistently missed both its inflation and economic growth targets, while the balance sheet of the central banks and the country’s debt has soared.
Real wages have been stagnant for years, and economic activity continues to be as poor as it was in the previous two decades of constant stimulus.

The main lessons that global economies should learn from Japan are the following:
No country can offset the problem of demographics and productivity with higher debt and money printing. It simply kicks the can further but leaves the economy weaker and in permanent stagnation.
The technology and productivity challenges cannot be solved by incentivising malinvestment and government spending. It’s a massive constant transfer of wealth from the productive to the unproductive, which makes high-productivity sectors stall and crony and obsolete sectors remain zombified.
Doing the same with different names will not generate a different outcome. Calling the same policy something different will not make citizens get excited about the economy.
The wrong diagnosis will lead to worsening outcomes. When the government is surrounded by economists who tell them that the problem with the economy is that there are too many savings, the government will decide to raise taxes and create a larger problem attacking consumption.
With private debt at 221 percent of GDP,

Government debt to GDP has swelled to 236 percent, and despite the record-low cost of debt, the government spends almost 22 percent of the budget on interest expenses.

Japan has many issues, none of them being a “savings glut.”
If you abandon structural reforms, the results will be worse. The QQE programme was based on three “arrows”: monetary policy, government spending, and structural reforms. Guess which arrow they forgot to implement? Exactly. Structural reforms never happened, and when they did, they came in the form of higher taxes and more interventionism, the opposite of what the economy needed.
The biggest lesson from Japan is not that the central bank can buy equities and keep kicking the can further. The biggest lesson from Japan is that monetary and fiscal policy is not designed to kickstart the economy and improve growth or productivity but to perpetuate the imbalances created by excessive government intervention and transfer wealth from salaries and savings to the government and the indebted crony sectors.
The lesson from Japan is that no government can make two plus two equal 22, but they can prolong budget imbalances for much longer than logic would dictate.
The true lesson from Japan is that central planners will continue to prefer to gradually nationalise the economy before even considering a moderate reduction in government size and control of the economy. The result will be almost no growth, poor productivity, and rising discontent, but the bureaucratic machine will be safe.

Daniel Lacalle is chief economist at hedge fund Tressis and author of “Escape From the Central Bank Trap,” published by BEP.
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People passing a 7-Eleven convenience store along a street in Tokyo on April 17, 2019.

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SPECIAL SERIES

How the Specter of Communism Is Ruling Our World

How Communism Sows Chaos in Politics

The Epoch Times here serializes a translation from the Chinese of “How the Specter of Communism Is Ruling Our World,” a new book by the editorial team of the “Nine Commentaries on the Communist Party.”

Chapter Eight (Cont.)

4. Violence and Lies: The Primary Methods of Control in Communist Politics

In communist doctrine, no means are considered too excessive. Communist parties publicly proclaim that violence and lies are their tools for conquering and ruling the world. From the first appearance of the communist regime in the Soviet Union to today, within only a century, communism caused the deaths of around 100 million people. Communist Party members murdered, burned, abducted, and lied. They used every extreme method possible. The degree of their evil is shocking. Furthermore, most participants have no regrets.

The lies fabricated by the evil specter of communism vary in magnitude, both in communist countries and in the West. A hoax, fake news, or the framing of a political opponent—these are relatively small lies. Creating a series of systematic lies of considerable scale through complex operations could be considered mid-scale lies. For instance, to incite hatred against Falun Gong, the CCP concocted the Tiananmen Square self-immolation incident, a staged hoax.

The Big Lie is also used, and this is the hardest to manage because the Big Lie is almost equivalent to the essence of the evil specter. Its scale is so enormous, its operations so multifaceted, its duration so long, and the people it touches so numerous—including some who are sincerely dedicated to the cause—that the reality that it is all part of a Big Lie is lost.

The communist specter fabricated the lie that “great unity” was the goal of communism. Because the claim could not be disproven, at least not in the short term, this was the Big Lie on which the entire communist project was based.

The previous chapter analyzed the notion of progressivism as usurped by communism, and this is also part of the Big Lie. In the past few decades, communism has hijacked a number of social movements and brought people to turmoil and revolution, which the evil specter wants. One example is the environmental movement, which will be discussed in Chapter Sixteen.

a. Violence and Lies Under Communist Totalitarianism

Communist parties encourage class conflict—and such conflict is a struggle to the death. As “The Communist Manifesto” says: “The Communists disdain to conceal their views and aims. They openly declare that their ends can be attained only by the forcible overthrow of all existing social conditions.”

Lenin also wrote in “The State and Revolution”: “We have already said above, and shall show more fully later, that the theory of Marx and Engels of the inevitability of a violent revolution refers to the bourgeois state. The latter cannot be superseded by the proletarian state (the dictatorship of the proletariat) through the process of ‘withering away,’ but as a general rule, only through a violent revolution.”

During the process of seizing power—such as during the Paris Commune, the Russian Revolution, or the Worker-Farmer Movement instigated by the CCP—communist parties use extremely violent and bloody methods. Regardless of whether their enemies are old and weak, they burn, rob, and murder, exhibiting a wickedness that shocks the soul. So numerous are the crimes that have been committed under violent communist regimes that they are almost impossible to count.

The communist cult employs lies and violence to maintain power. Lies are lubricants for the violence and also a way of enslaving the public. Lying is necessary for punctuating the violence; and while the violence is suspended sometimes, continual lies are the norm. Communist parties are willing to promise anything, but never consider making good on their promises. To satisfy their needs, they can change their stories as much as they like, with no moral baseline and no sense of shame.

Communists claimed that they were establishing a heaven on earth, but this is precisely their greatest lie, and the only fruit it has borne is a hell on earth.

Mao Zedong of China, Ahmed Ben Bella of Algeria, and Fidel Castro of Cuba all claimed that they would never establish totalitarian regimes. But once in power, they immediately initiated high-pressure totalitarianism, purging within the party and persecuting dissidents and members of the public.

Communist parties also cunningly distort their own languages. Language manipulation is one of the main methods the communist cult uses to deceive people—that is, altering the meanings of words, and even turning words into their opposites. As the altered language is repeatedly used, its distorted meanings become deeply rooted in people’s minds. For example, “god” is equated to “superstition”; “tradition” is equated to “backwardness,” “foolishness,” and “feudalism”; “Western society” is equated to “hostile” or “anti-China forces”; and the “proletariat” becomes “the masters of state-owned assets.” Though the public has no power under communism, the communists say that “all power belongs to the people”; pointing out injustices is “inciting subversion of state power”; and so on. Therefore, when talking to those who have been deeply poisoned by the communist evil cult, people tend to find that the two sides often lack a shared basis for communication because the meanings of words have been so altered.

The cult of communism not only tells its own lies, but also creates an environment to make the entire population join it in lying—including through forced political study, expressions of one’s political stance, and political vetting. This is meant to force people to say things they don’t believe and thus demoralize them and degrade their sense of doing the right thing. The Ten Commandments warn that one “shall not give false testimony.” Confucius said, “If the people have no faith in their rulers, there is no standing for the state.”

After people become aware of the fabrications of the communist cult, they respond with further lying. The communist evil cult knows that people are lying to it, but this is acceptable because lying itself is part of the game. What’s dangerous for communists is when people start telling the truth.

The enforcement of a culture of falsehood is a means of moral degeneration, engineered by the communists. This series has noted repeatedly that the Chinese regime desires not only to kill the physical body, but also to engender extreme moral corruption. In this regard, the regime has partially achieved its goal.

b. How Communism Instigates Violence in the West

The communist evil specter is composed of the elemental force of hatred, and its theories are suffused with hate. It promotes class struggle and attributes the root of every problem to traditional social structures. It talks about the rich exploiting the poor in order to incite grudges and hatred against the rich and incite revolution and violence. With the expansion of communist movements, the manipulation, violence, and lies of the specter have become commonplace in the West and have filled society with hate and rancor.

In addition to communist parties’ widespread and explicit promotion of violence, various para-Marxists have also, under the control of the communist evil specter, advocated violence. Saul Alinsky, favored by the Left in the United States, was originally in a gang before he joined the Left and became a political leader. He denied being a communist, but his political ideology and approach to conflict is identical to those of communism.

Alinsky’s “Rules for Radicals” is taken as a textbook by U.S. street-movement advocates. Alinsky wrote that his book is specifically for the have-nots who adopt a Machiavellian view of the world

and want to seize from the rich and give to the poor, and turn the United States into a communist country.

Alinsky seems to emphasize gradual infiltration rather than a bloody revolution—but in fact, he was a fan of violence. He was simply more subtle about it. The Black Panther Party, a violent revolutionary group, espoused Maoist beliefs and used the Maoist slogan “Political power grows out of the barrel of a gun.” However, Alinsky first favored using the ballot box, with guns perhaps to be put to use later. His approach is thus similar to that taken by the Chinese Communist Party: maintaining a low profile before finally striking. One of his rules encourages radicals to use aggressive approaches to intimidate their opponents and eventually achieve the goal of disruption and destruction.

David Horowitz, an author and former radical who has a deep understanding of Alinsky, said that Alinsky and his followers have no view of reforming the current system. They know very well that their goal is to thoroughly destroy it, and that they regard the process as a war. Therefore, they will try every possible means to attain their goal, deciding when to employ violence, what kind of violence to use, and what kind of lies to tell.

In American society, some politicians and political operatives attack their enemies by unscrupulous means, like deception, personal attacks, and the like. Like communists, they also often resort to violence. A society with a greater tendency toward violence will become less stable and more divided. These days, the relationship between the major left-wing party and the major right-wing party in the United States seems identical to the confrontation between the communist bloc and the free world during the Cold War. They are as incompatible as fire and water, due to irreconcilable differences.

After the new president was elected in 2016, leftist extremists known as Antifa began engaging in violent disruption. Antifa activists locked onto their target—the new president’s supporters and other conservatives—and went after them at rallies and elsewhere. Antifa activists stopped the president’s supporters from making statements and even directly attacked them.

In recent years, an influx of immigrants from the Middle East and Africa have brought many social problems to European countries. Due to “political correctness,” the leftist elite in these nations have scolded and verbally abused opponents of the current immigration policies.

In June 2017, Steve Scalise, a member of the Republican Party and the House of Representatives majority whip, was shot and gravely wounded while attending a baseball practice, by a supporter of another party. A politician on the Left even said he was “glad” that Scalise was shot. That official was soon removed from his post as a committee chairman at the state level of his party.

Behind these violent conflicts are factors of the communist specter. It’s not that everyone wants conflict—but it only takes a few core communist activists to stir things up.

Under the influence of the communist specter, when certain parties and politicians are weak, they claim that they’ll protect the rights of the people and follow the regulations of a democratic society. But when they get power, they use all methods to suppress dissent and arbitrarily deprive others of their rights.

In February 2017, during a Senate session in a Western state of the United States, a Vietnamese-American state senator addressed the chamber to speak out against the praise afforded to Tom Hayden, a former radical and anti-Vietnam War activist who became a senator. However, her microphone was abruptly turned off, and she was forced out of the Senate chamber by deputies. If things keep going in this direction, the end result will be a communist autocracy.

See next edition for the next installment.

Gratitude Versus Entitlement

CONTINUED FROM A1

that enable us to think rationally, the technology that enables us to sustain and improve our lives materially, and the wisdom and faith traditions that enable us to discern meaning and purpose in our lives.

Gratitude reflects and recognises reality—the truth about our human condition that escapes the self-centred child or narcissistic adolescent, but that adults learn with maturity and experience. We depend on what we are given but haven’t earned, don’t control, and aren’t entitled to on the basis of our own merit.

Benefits of Gratitude
Parents and religious and spiritual teachers across cultures and traditions have long emphasised the benefits of gratitude for human well-being. They have received growing scientific study and support in recent years. The habit of gratitude, the research indicates, can be cultivated at any age and benefits adults, children, school and university students, and employees, as individuals and in groups.

In my family, we incorporated into our daily spiritual practice our own variation of the age-old advice to count our blessings, not (directly) from an ancient wisdom tradition, but from the Three Blessings exercise tested and recommended by psychologist Martin Seligman.

Gratitude, a wide range of studies suggest, is associated with increased positive mood, greater resiliency, better physical health, less fatigue, and better sleep. It fosters the development of other virtues such as patience, humility, self-control, and wisdom.

Dr. David Rosmarin of Harvard Medical School found, along with his fellow researchers, that “religious gratitude—toward God—was associated with additional reductions in anxiety and depression and increases in well-being.”

In addition to such benefits for individuals, gratitude seems to improve groups—increasing job satisfaction, strengthening relationships, and encouraging kindness, helping, and giving.

Some research emphasises—in addition to the benefits associated with “general gratitude,” of less anxiety, less depression, and greater well-being—that further benefits accrue from the “religious gratitude” taught and practiced in almost every world religion.

Dr. David Rosmarin of Harvard Medical School, and author of a practical, evidence-based guide for clinicians on integrating spirituality, religion, and cognitive-behavioural therapy, found, along with his fellow researchers, “that religious gratitude—toward God—was associated with additional reductions in anxiety and depression and increases in well-being.”

Given the extraordinary increases, especially among children and young people, in anxiety, depression, and suicide in this millennium, we should expect that those involved in the teaching and learning of children and young people would give great prominence, as previous generations did, to cultivating the habit of gratitude.

Entitlement and Ingratitude
We find instead, just the opposite. Cultivating habits of gratitude is a challenge when young people learn to respect all cultures but their own, all faiths but the one they have grown up with.

When love of country isn’t nurtured in schools and colleges but treated with contempt, it’s hard to feel gratitude for the sacrifices

that previous generations have made and the traditions they have learned, contributed to, and passed on.

Even arriving, as many do, with moderate politics and the traditional values of their family and community, students absorb the message that the country was rotten from the start—its whole history, its founders, and its Constitution are sources of shame and guilt.

Increasingly, young people are encouraged to approach college not in a spirit of gratitude for the opportunity they have to share in the rich body of knowledge, wisdom, and skills opening up for them, but often in a spirit of entitlement.

An army of administrators, eager to maintain the diversity (except intellectual or viewpoint diversity) of its student body, creates an environment of hypersensitivity to any transgression of accepted ideology of cultural and political leftism shared by a large majority of faculty and administrators. Anything that might make a student feel “unsafe.”

Talk of snowflakes is unfair because it blames the students for what administrators perpetrate—the “coddling of the mind,” protecting it from views, arguments, and evidence that might challenge received opinion.

Entitlement involves exaggerated feelings of superiority and deserving more than others. As a psychological trait, it may lead to chronic unmet expectations and a habitual, self-reinforcing cycle of behaviour with dire psychological and social costs. It’s the opposite of humility and gratitude, cultivating which may protect against

the trait. Some research has suggested that it has increased in frequency among millennials. As a cultural phenomenon, expressed in student rage at a speaker or professor who says, or is expected to say, something they disagree with, it’s widespread on campuses and even, in the violent form of Antifa, on the streets.

In short, gratitude is based in the reality of the human person and our place in the world and universe. It fosters other virtues such as humility and wisdom that enhance happiness. It has many physical, psychological, spiritual, and social benefits. No individual, family, or society can thrive without it.

Entitlement is delusional and destructive. It misperceives reality and our place in it. It fosters other negative traits and vices, such as anger, resentment, self-righteousness, a sense of superiority, emotional fragility, and of course, ingratitude. Entitlement has many negative effects.

In all those areas where gratitude builds and protects, entitlement damages and destroys.

Paul Adams is a professor emeritus of social work at the University of Hawaii and was a professor and associate dean of academic affairs at Case Western Reserve University. He is the co-author of “Social Justice Isn’t What You Think It Is,” and has written extensively on social welfare policy and professional and virtue ethics.

Views expressed in this article are the opinions of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of The Epoch Times.



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Dealing With Life’s Difficulties

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See B2

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What Pasta-Making and Parenting Have in Common

At the crack of the first egg, my 2-year-old heard me and ran in. “Can I help you, Mommy?”

See B10

LIFE

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MONIKA WISNIEWSKA/SHUTTERSTOCK

Food can change our DNA but we’ve hardly begun to deal with this groundbreaking discovery

SAYER JI

Food, a precondition for the possibility of life as we know it, is rarely appreciated for its true power. Far beyond its conventionally defined role as a source of energy and building blocks for the body-machine, new discoveries on the frontiers of science reveal that food is also a powerful source of information. We are all hardwired to be deeply concerned with food when hungry, an interest that rapidly extinguishes the moment we are satiated. But as an object of everyday interest and scientific inquiry, food often makes for a bland topic. This is all the more apparent when juxtaposed against its traditional status in

Until we understand the true nature of food, and its profound impact on our consciousness, we will not be able to understand our own nature and destiny.

ancient cultures as sacred; or in contemporary religious traditions like Catholicism, in which a cracker still represents the body of Christ (Eucharist). But as my previous investigations into the dark side of wheat have revealed, food is one of the most fascinating and existentially important topics there is. And in many ways, until we understand the true nature of food, and its profound impact on our consciousness, we will not be able to understand our own nature and destiny.

How We Got Here
Modern Western concepts of food are a byproduct of a centuries-old process of intense secularization. Food is now largely conceived of in terms of its economic value as a commodity and its nutritional value as a source of physical sustenance. In the nutritional regard, its value is quantified through the presence and molecular weight of macro- and micro-

nutrients, or its “fat-inducing” calories. In the process of reducing food’s value to these strictly quantitative dimensions, it has lost its soul. Food is no longer believed to possess a vital life force, much less a sacred one. But the very etymology of sacred, namely, to make holy, and the etymology of holy, which connects to heal, whole, and health, points us toward food’s ability to make us whole.

Food as Nourishment on All Levels
If talk of food as “sacred” and “whole-making” sounds pseudo-scientific, consider how nature designed our very first experience of nourishment (if we were fortunate enough to not have been given a bottle full of formula): breast milk taken from the mother’s breast was simultaneously a nutritional, physical, thermic, emotional, genetic, and spiritual form of nourishment.

Continued on B4

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THINK WELL, WORK WELL

Coping Strategies for When Bad Things Happen

Challenges can lead us toward meaningful thought and action if we know how to cope

JEFF GARTON

If you can't control a difficult situation, how do you cope with it? Coping involves applying your mental and emotional energy to manage the strain associated with challenges.

Psychologists have identified three coping strategies people commonly rely on. But before we get to those, consider the order in which humans normally make things happen.

1. We self-motivate through thinking in an attempt to achieve our best performance.
2. This thought creates the emotional energy we need to move ahead and stay the course.
3. We take action in response to how we made ourselves feel and repeat steps 1 and 2 as necessary.

Problems arise when you get out of order; when you act without thinking first or allow the wrong emotions to get in your way. In either case, you'll later regret not thinking first to create the most appropriate emotion to help you.

And that emotion needn't be a potent passion. A calm and clear heart can be the most powerful

starting point for any meaningful action.

So, now to the three was of coping

Meaning-Focused Coping

This is the most reliable strategy. It's based on the premise that thoughts, not circumstances, create emotions. Whatever happens to you is meaningless until you assign it meaning and react. Scientists (and ancient sages) believe you may never need the second or third strategies if you make the best use of your thoughts.

You cope by thinking first to assign better meanings to your circumstances. The purpose of this is to intentionally create emotional ease or a self-empowering emotion to help you cope well. In many cultures, this means broadening your mind to consider the wider implications of an event, or to align your thoughts about it with deeper values, like kindness and faith. Psychologist Abraham Maslow referred to this as meta-motivating to self-transcend your circumstances. You rise above your circumstances.

- Recognize what's most important and then assign a better

- meaning to the situation.
- Avoid being judgmental.
- Think in a non-negative manner (realistic + optimistic).
- Look for the agreeable middle ground between what is and what's ideal.

People who use this strategy might appear from the outside as if they're aloof or unaffected by challenges. But on the inside, they're caring for themselves by relying on the emotions of joy, optimism, enthusiasm, gratitude, confidence, and contentment. We admire these people for their calm resilience.

Emotion-Focused Coping

People who rely on this strategy first typically have no knowledge of meaning-focused coping. It involves changing or ignoring how you feel when a difficult situation occurs. It's like numbing yourself to the evolving world around you.

When this strategy was popular, people wrongly assumed their unwanted emotions were caused by their circumstances.

This led to largely ineffective approaches, like denial (ignoring the situation or avoiding reality), procrastinating, distraction (TV, drugs, etc), and wishful thinking.

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A calm and clear heart can be the most powerful starting point for any meaningful action.

seemingly rational steps.

- Plan how you will address the situation.
- Problem-solve to identify the best approach.
- Seek help from others who have experience in dealing with your situation.
- Assert your opinions about what you would rather see in this situation.
- Establish boundaries so the same situation does not occur again.

When you take action first, you may end up with the wrong solution, solving the wrong problem, or wasting your emotional energy on what you might later realize was not a serious issue.

People who cope in this manner have good intentions and are more optimistic in their problem-solving abilities than they should be. So when things don't go their way they become impatient and frustrated. We might cheer these people on for their enthusiasm in the face of adversities.

Hands down, the most efficient coping strategy is meaning-focused. Think first to energize your motivation to cope using the most helpful emotions. Not only does this improve how well you feel, but it also enhances your problem-solving abilities.

It's like this Keanu Reeves quote. "You don't struggle with depression you struggle with the reality we live in." The meanings we assign create what we think is real and that's how we can avoid depression. By first changing how we think.

Jeff Garton is a Milwaukee-based author, certified career coach, and former HR executive and training provider. He holds a master's degree in organizational communication and public personnel administration. He is the originator of the concept and instruction of career contentment.

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MICHELE GONCALVES

To most people, the word vacation usually brings to mind images of beautiful beaches, relaxation, and fruity drinks with umbrellas in them. But have you ever considered building a vacation around learning a new skill? While exploring this idea, I found the journey to be fun and exciting.

Since I have very sensitive skin, I wanted to learn how to make my own soap. So, I started researching online to find individuals who teach this subject. What I found was a very diverse list of possibilities, including a specialty soap shop in San Diego, California, and a small bed and breakfast on a family farm in West Virginia.

By using this approach, I let my interest in this subject provide the destination ideas for me. This has led to new choices that I would not have ordinarily considered on my own.

I truly believe this type of vacation twist could be an interesting idea for anyone to try, from retirees looking to get into a new hobby to families with older school-age children who get bored easily. Here are a few tips to get you started if this approach interests you:

Define the Skills You Want to Learn

Sit down with your family (or yourself) and put a list together of at least five things you would like to learn how to do. Look over all the options and take a vote on what skill interests everyone.

Set Ground Rules

Define any criteria you may want to stick to before setting off on your research. Perhaps you want to only pick a destination within a three-hour drive, or are only interested in a day trip. Let your family know what the

Define any criteria you may want to stick to before setting off on your research.

limits are before the suggestion to take water-skiing classes in Hawaii comes up.

Research Your Options

Type the skill you want to learn and add the word “classes” when you begin your Internet search. This method has gotten me on the right track fairly quickly. This may be a great task to delegate to a few members of your family who are expert online researchers. They could then present their results to the family for a vote.

Call to Confirm

If you are considering a visit to a small shop or family-run business, it would be best to contact them first to confirm if they are still in operation or will be offering classes during the timeframe you need. Websites may not always be up-to-date, or availability may be limited.

As always, I wish you the happiest of travels!

Looking to learn a skill? Make it part of your next vacation.



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Why Food Is Actually Information

Food can change our DNA but we’ve hardly begun to deal with this groundbreaking discovery

Continued from B1

Food, therefore, can’t and shouldn’t truly be reduced to an object of biochemistry.

And so, as we dig deeper, we discover that the topic of food is a highly cerebral one. And this begins with any simple act of eating, albeit in a slightly different way.

It’s called the cephalic phase of nutrition, “in your head,” which reflects how you are actually experiencing the food. Is it delicious? Does it give you pleasure? These “subjective” aspects profoundly affect the physiology of digestion and assimilation.

My colleague Marc David has dedicated many years to awakening people to this amazing process. Food, therefore, begins in a context that transcends merely physiochemical conditions and concerns.

The nocebo and placebo effects, which are powerful forces in the setting of clinical medicine, also apply to the field and experience of nutrition. And therefore, it is hard to ignore how this important layer of nutrition—the firsthand experience, and even our intention and level of gratitude—has been lost in the fixation on the chemistry and reductionism of food science.

But the inquiring mind wants more specific scientific answers to the question: How does food make us whole? How does its arrangement of atoms possess such extraordinary power to sustain our species? Why can’t we answer the most rudimentary questions that go back to ancient times, such as the still timeless mystery and miracle of how bread is transmuted into blood and flesh?

Perhaps, the information (and intelligence) within food will help explain some of this mystery. After all, information literally means “to put form into.” This understanding will add much-needed depth and nuance to conventional nutritional concepts where food is still conceived as a bunch of essentially dead and uninteresting atoms and molecules.

The Old Story of Food as a Thing

Our concept of food is still generally constrained to the Newtonian view that all things are comprised of atoms, externally related to one another, and built up from there into molecules, cells, etc.

The story goes that when we eat things, digestion breaks them down into their constituent parts and our bodies then take these parts and build them back up into our blood and bones.

This very mechanical, simplistic view, while valid in limited ways, no longer holds true in light of the new biology and science. Along with this view of food as matter, is the correlate perspective, that food can be “burned” for energy and that, like a furnace or a car, our body uses food for “fuel” measured by calories to drive its engines along.

Of course, this is reinforced by nutrition labels that make it appear that food is as simple as caloric content and the presence or absence of a relatively small set of essential nutrients such as carbohydrates, fats, proteins, vitamins, or minerals.

I will call this reductionistic view of food “the old story of food,” in recognition of Charles Eisenstein’s thinking. This narrative focuses on two primary dimensions: food as matter and food as energy.

Food as Matter

If we are looking at the “material” aspects of food, we are looking at the physically quantifiable or measurable



elements.

You could not, for instance, objectively measure taste, as it differs qualitatively from person to person. It is a subjective experience. And so, nutritional science focuses on what is presumably objective, namely, quantities like the molecular weight of a given substance, e.g., 50 mg of ascorbic acid, 10 grams of carbohydrate, or 200 mg of magnesium.

These material aspects, while providing information, are not considered to be “informational” in the sense of giving off distinct messages to the DNA in our body, which can alter gene expression. They are considered part of the physical world. Therefore, while providing building blocks for our body, including its DNA, they are not understood to alter or control the expression of the DNA in a meaningful way.

Food, therefore, is considered “dead,” and not biologically meaningful beyond its brick-and-mortar functions in building up the body-machine.

Food as Energy

Energy is commonly defined as the power derived from the utilization of physical resources, especially to drive machines.

In this view, food provides the fuel to power the body-machine. Food energy is conventionally defined in chemical terms. The basic concept is that humans extract energy from food and oxygen through cellular respiration.

That is, the body joins oxygen from the air with molecules from food (aerobic respiration), or creates energy without oxygen (anaerobic respiration) through reorganization the molecules.

The system used to quantify the energy content of food is based on the food calorie. One food calorie is the amount of heat required at a pressure of one atmosphere to raise the temperature of a gram of water by 1 degree Celsius.

The traditional way to ascertain the caloric content of a sample of food is using a calorimeter, which literally burns the food sample to a crisp, measuring the amount of heat given off (its caloric content).

In order to account for the varying densities of material within a sample, e.g., fiber, fat, water, a more complex algorithm is used today, but either way,

▲ New insight into the impact food has on our genes raises questions about our connection with something larger through the food we eat.

The system used to quantify the energy content of food is based on food calorie.

food isn’t an informational substance in the biological sense (e.g., DNA), but simply a source of energy that can fuel the body-machine.

The New Story: Food as Information

The new view of food as replete with biologically important information, is based on a number of relatively recent discoveries in various fields of scientific research.

For instance, the discovery that food contains methyl groups (a carbon atom attached to three hydrogen atoms (CH3) capable of methylating (silencing) genes, brought into focus the capability of food to profoundly affect disease risk as well phenotypal expression.

If folate, B12, or Betaine—three common food components—can literally shut off gene expression with high specificity, food becomes a powerful informational vector, one which may actually supervene over the DNA within our body by determining which sequences find expression.

This discovery of nutrition’s prime role in epigenetics opened up an entirely new realm of research, including the disciplines of nutrigenomics, which looks at nutrient-gene interactions, and nutritional genomics, which looks at gene-based risks that provide individualization of nutritional recommendations.

Suddenly, almost overnight, food became infinitely more interesting to geneticists, biologists, and medical professionals. It’s newly discovered information role could affect, and, in some cases, control, the expression of the DNA—biomedicine’s holy grail.

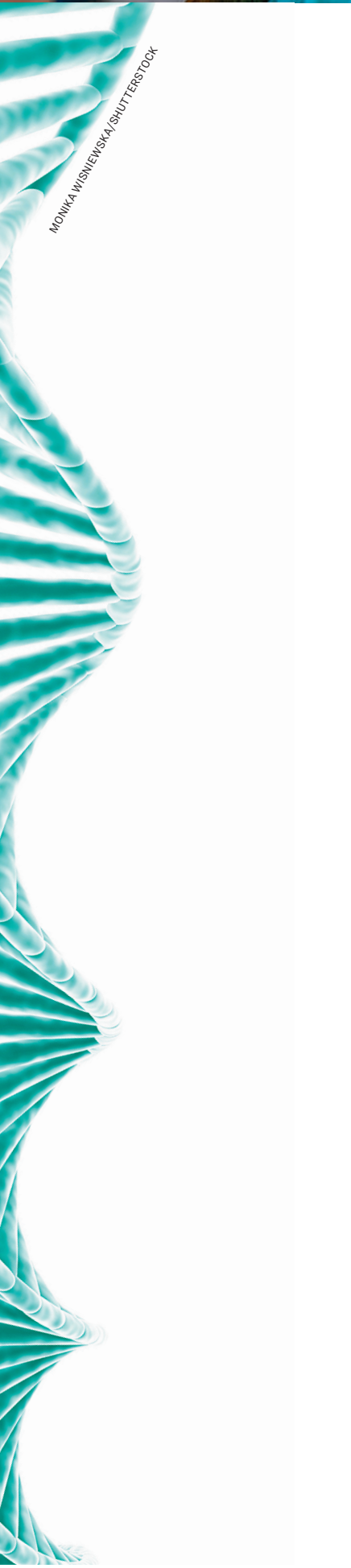
Food’s role as a source of methyl group donors capable of epigenetic modulation of DNA expression is a powerful demonstration of its informational properties, but this is not the whole story.

Food also contains classical genetic information vectors, such as non-coding RNAs, which—like methyl donors—have the ability to profoundly alter the expression of our DNA. In fact, there are estimated to be somewhere in the range of 100,000 different sites in the human genome capable of producing non-coding RNAs, far eclipsing our

Food’s role as a source of methyl group donors capable of epigenetic modulation of DNA expression is a powerful demonstration of its informational properties.



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20,000 to 25,000 protein-coding genes. Together, these RNAs orchestrate the expression of most of the genes in the body. They are, therefore, supervening forces largely responsible for maintaining our genetic and epigenetic integrity. These RNAs are carried by virus-sized microvesicles called exosomes found in all the food we eat. They are secreted by all plant, animal, and fungal cells, and survive ingestion to significantly alter our gene expression.

In 2012, a groundbreaking study titled, “Exogenous plant MIR168a specifically targets mammalian LDL-RAP1: evidence of cross-kingdom (plant, animal, fungi, etc) regulation by microRNA,” found that exosomal miRNA’s from rice altered LDL receptors in the livers of Chinese subjects, effectively proving cross-kingdom regulation by microRNA exists and is occurring on an ongoing basis through the food we eat.

Another study, this time in animals, found that exosomes in commonly consumed foods, like grapefruit and oranges, affect important physiological pathways in the animal’s bodies.

Essentially, these food components “talk” to animal cells by regulating gene expression and conferring significant therapeutic effects.

Food is considered ‘dead,’ and not biologically meaningful beyond its brick-and-mortar functions in building up the body-machine.

The ability of exosomes to mediate the transfer of miRNAs across kingdoms redefines our notion of the human species as genetically hermetically sealed off from others within the animal, plant, and fungi kingdoms.

In this sense, foodborne exosomes are the mechanism through which all living things in the biosphere are intimately interconnected, perhaps even adding a new explanatory layer to how the Gaia hypothesis could be true.

Another important though overlooked mechanism through which food components may carry and transfer energy and information is through so-called prionic conformational states (protein folding patterns).

Prions have been primarily looked upon as pathological in configuration and effect. A classical example is the beta-sheet formation of brain proteins in Alzheimer’s. These secondary protein conformations act as a template through which certain deleterious folding states are transferred laterally between proteins.

But prions aren’t always pathological. For instance, naturally forming prions are essential for the health of the myelin sheath in the brain, and likely perform many other important though still largely unknown functions. So, when we look at the phenomena neutrally, the fact that the conformational state (folding state) of a protein can hold and laterally transfer information es-

sential to the structure and function of neighboring proteins, without needing nucleic acids, indicates just how important the morphology of food may be.

It’s possible, therefore, that food grown and prepared differently, will have vastly different protein folding patterns. This will carry radically different types of biologically vital information.

This is another example where one can not exhaustively assess the value of food strictly through quantitative methods, e.g., measuring how much protein there is by weight. We need also to account for qualitative dimensions, e.g., the vast amounts of information contained within secondary, tertiary, and quaternary conformational states of these proteins.

‘Microbiome of Food’ Full of Information

Acknowledging the role the microbiome plays in the food we eat further deepens our understanding of food as information.

In fact, the microbiome could be considered food’s most profound informational contribution. When we consider the genetic contribution of all the bacteria, fungi, and viruses naturally found in food (especially raw and cultured varieties) this represents a vast store of biologically meaningful information.

Some of this microbial information can even “jump” laterally from these micro-organisms into our body’s microbiome, conferring to us significant extra-chromosomal “powers,” essentially extending our genetic capabilities by proxy. For instance, a recent study identified a marine bacteria enzyme in the gut of Japanese people, presumably a byproduct of having consumed seaweed naturally colonized by it.

This marine bacteria enzyme is capable of digesting sulfated polysaccharides—a type of carbohydrate that humans aren’t equipped to digest because it is marine-specific.

This indicates that the genes provided by these microbes represent a genetic library of sorts, whose contributions may vastly extend the genetic capabilities of our species.

Indeed, the human genome only contains genetic templates for 17 enzymes, whereas the gut bacteria contains genetic information capable of producing hundreds of different enzymes. And these are capable of degrading thousands of different carbohydrates.

There are actually many other capabilities provided by these “germs,” including the ability to produce vitamins (including vitamin C) and other essential bio compounds.

The microbiome of our food could, therefore, be considered an information storehouse. To learn more about how this ancient information (even millions of years old) is preserved in raw foods like honey, read my article: “Could Eating Honey Be a Form of Microbial Time Travel?”

Water as Information Carrier in Food

Another extremely important element is the role of water in food. Not only



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Once we understand the true implications of food as information, our entire worldview should change.

A mother’s breast milk is simultaneously a nutritional, physical, therapeutic, emotional, genetic, and spiritual form of nourishment.

We’ve learned that food can affect our genes, and that means we need to relearn everything we thought we knew about eating.

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has water been found to carry energy and information, but water has also been identified as an instrument of biosemiosis.

The water component of food, therefore, could contribute biologically important information—even genetic and epigenetically meaningful information—without needing nucleic acids to do so.

To learn more about how water has “memory,” and can store and transmit genetic information, read about the DNA teleportation experiment performed by Nobel laureate Luc Montagnier.

As discussed above, conventional food science starts on a completely dehydrated basis, focusing almost exclusively on the “dry” measurable material aspects of the food, or the amount of energy it contains, which ironically requires burning off the water to obtain measurements.

All readily edible food is hydrated. Were it not, it would be dehydrated food, which is generally not considered ready to eat. As such, we can’t talk about biomolecules without considering their hydration shells as integrally and inseparably bound to the dry components, e.g., amino acids, fatty acids, and sugars.

Water has the capacity to carry information and to determine the structuration and therefore functions of the biochemicals and biopolymers it surrounds.

Water, which is capable of taking in free energy from the environment (Pollack’s infrared heat), has its own information and energy. This means, therefore, that food qua water content has the potential to carry relatively vast amounts of information beyond what is found in its material composition itself.

As science progresses, both the quantitative and qualitative elements of water will increasingly be revealed to be vitally important in understanding food as information.

Powerful Implications

When food is looked upon as a vital source of biologically important information that can inform the expression of our genome, it’s much easier to understand how our ancestors considered its creation, production, harvesting, cooking, and consumption sacred.

We can also understand how the seemingly poetic relationships between foods and the organs they nourish may have emerged, via the informational bridges described above (RNAs, prions, water).

Today, as a wide range of industrial farming technologies change the quality (and informational component) of our food, it is no longer sufficient to look at only the material aspects of these changes.

Irradiation, genetic modification, pesticides, soil quality, processing, and a wide range of other factors may greatly alter the informational state and quality of a good without being reflected in overt changes in grosser qualities like caloric and materially defined dimensions.

No longer can we look at the difference, say, between infant formula and breast milk, strictly through the material or energetic lens of conventional nutritional analysis.

On an informational level, they are qualitatively light years apart, even if they have so many similarities in crude nutritional metrics, e.g. similar carbohydrate and caloric content.

This will be true for all areas of food production and nutrition where an essentially dead ontology governs the way we understand and interact with the things we eat.

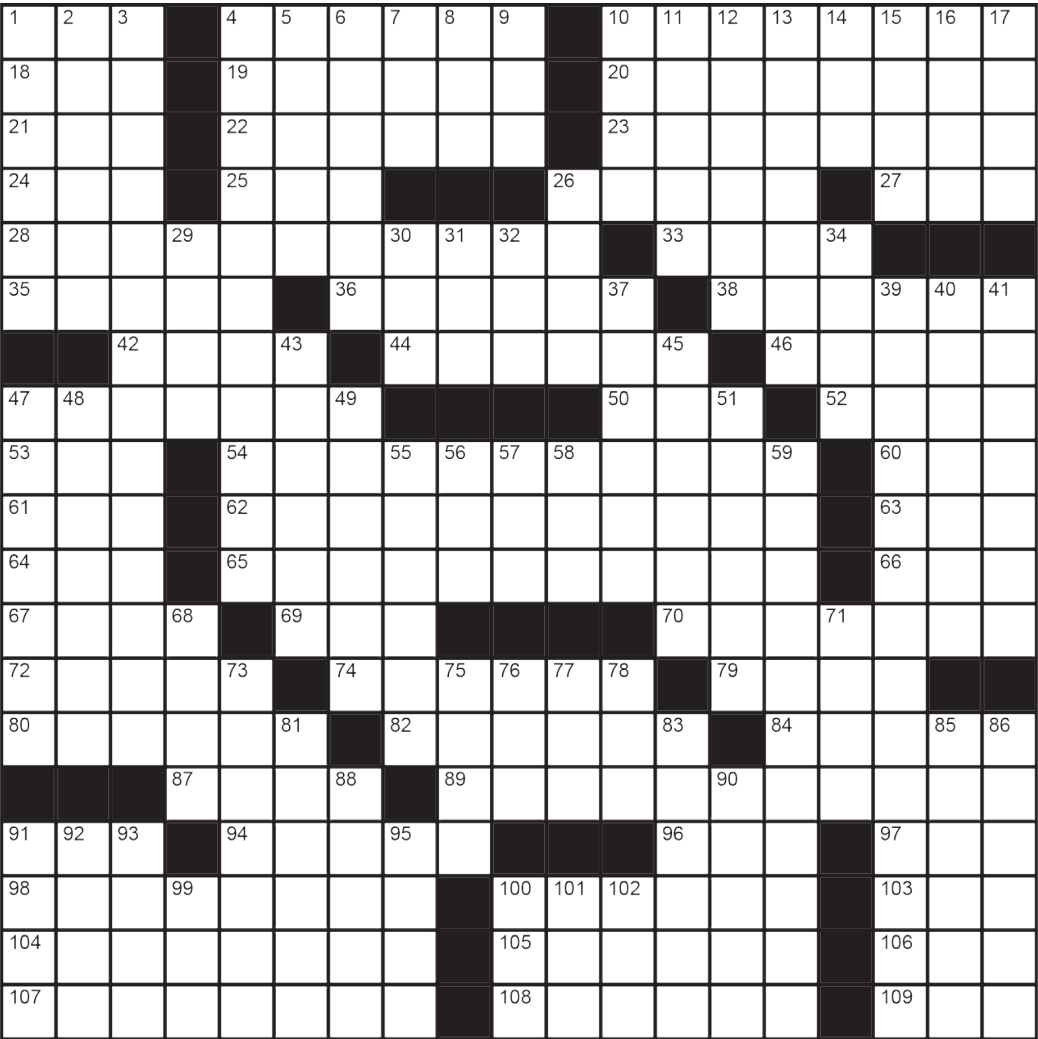
Once we understand the true implications of food as information, our entire worldview should change. Learn more by reading Sayer Ji and co-writer Ali Le Vere’s chapter in the recently published clinician’s primer textbook: *Revisioning Cellular Bioenergetics: Food As Information and The Light-Driven Body*.

Sayer Ji is the founder of *Greenmedinfo.com*, a reviewer at the *International Journal of Human Nutrition and Functional Medicine*, co-founder and CEO of *Systome Biomed*, vice chairman of the Board of the *National Health Federation*, and steering committee member of the *Global Non-GMO Foundation*. This article was originally published on *Greenmedinfo.com*

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How Romance Created Clay Bas-Relief Portraiture

Wright was commissioned to paint ‘The Corinthian Maid’ by the pioneering potter Josiah Wedgwood.

Behold the Beauty

LORRAINE FERRIER

“Parting is such sweet sorrow,” said Shakespeare’s Juliet, expressing in a few short words a romantic sentiment that endures. In ancient Greece, a Corinthian maiden must have felt such sadness when her loved one was about to leave. According to the ancient Greek writer Pliny the Elder, she traced the shadow of her beloved’s face on the wall behind him as he slept. On seeing the outline, her father, the potter Butades of Sicyon, used the outline to build a portrait of his daughter’s beloved by pressing clay onto the surface of the wall, creating the first clay model portrait called a bas-relief sculpture. Joseph Wright’s painting “The Corinthian Maid” takes us back to the moment when the young lady delicately traces the outline of her beloved on the wall as he sleeps slumped in a chair. She uses a stylus, normally used for writing on wax tablets. She’s unsure when she will see him again and doesn’t want to forget him. It’s a tender moment. It almost feels as though we, the viewers, are intruding. She tentatively perches on the edge of his seat, stretching out toward the wall while being careful not to wake him, just as one might stroke the face of a beloved while he or she sleeps. The tension is palpable; you almost want to hold your breath with her.

Ancient Inspiration

Wright was commissioned to paint “The Corinthian Maid” by the pioneering potter Josiah Wedgwood, the founder of the famous Stoke-on-Trent pottery, Wedgwood. Established in 1759, Wedgwood pottery was, and still remains, world-renowned for echoing the shapes, styles, and motifs of the ancients—and for its decorative work using low reliefs. Everything in Wright’s painting was carefully composed to acknowledge the ancient scene and the traditional craft that came long before Wedgwood put his hands to clay. When Wright painted “The Corinthian Maid,” he was well aware of ancient artifacts, having spent nearly two years in Italy, from 1773 to 1775, studying and sketching archaeological sites. He used this firsthand knowledge of the ancient art and architectural sites, along with ancient Greek pottery from Wedgwood’s private collection,



(Above) The creation of clay bas-relief portraiture as seen in “The Corinthian Maid,” 1782–1784, by Joseph Wright. Oil on canvas. Paul Mellon Collection.

(Below) A cast of relief showing Endymion and his dog, possibly 18th century. Plaster cast. Capitoline Museums, Rome.



to correctly reference the painting. Wright used a color palette which echoes that of clay. The room is sparsely furnished. On the left, a curtain hides the light source that casts the shadow. Wright used this light source to evoke intimacy. The young man in Wright’s painting is modeled on Endymion. Wright referenced a study he’d made in Rome of a sculptural relief featuring Endymion. The pose Wright chose for the youth is similar to a cast of Endymion at London’s Royal Academy of Art from the Capitoline Museums in Rome, although Wright painted the youth’s head upright in his painting. In the cast, Endymion also has his staff and dog; the dog

perhaps symbolizes faithfulness. Legend has it that Endymion was cast into an eternal sleep, although accounts vary as to why. One common account is that the moon goddess Selene, with whom Endymion had 50 children, asked Zeus to put him to sleep so she could enjoy his beauty forever. Endymion seems a fitting choice for the young Corinthian maiden’s love, for her intent seems similar: to remember her beloved in that moment, just like portraiture. “The Corinthian Maid,” by Joseph Wright is on display at the National Gallery of Art in Washington.

Deliverance From the Nightmare

Interpreting John Henry Fuseli’s ‘Nightmare’

ERIC BESS

A nightmare can be an overwhelming experience. It can be so lucid as to be daunting, even horrific and terrifying. It can cause one to wake in a panic, in cold sweats, and with the heart racing; we awaken relieved that it was “only a dream.” John Henry Fuseli, an 18th-century German Romantic painter, attempted to capture the atmosphere of the nightmare in his 1781 painting with that very name. His “The Nightmare” was exhibited at the Royal Academy in London in 1782 and created quite a stir. According to David Blayney Brown in his book titled “Romanticism”: “The Romantics believed that dreams were a second life, lived on another plane; they connected the dreamer with eternal unities lost to the rational mind, and transcended time by recalling a spirit past or foretelling the future.” Fuseli has depicted a certain type of second life here: a dark, oppressive one. Using his study of classical art and folk literature, Fuseli gave form to the horror of



“The Nightmare,” 1781, by Henry Fuseli. Oil on Canvas, 40 inches by 50 inches, Detroit Institute of Arts.

nightmares yet refused to provide a definitive interpretation of this painting. Interpreting ‘The Nightmare’ On top of the dreamer’s chest sits an impish figure shrouded in shadow. This figure is often referred to as an incubus. In Latin, “incubus” means nightmare and “incubare” means to lie upon, weigh upon, and brood upon. The incubus is a type of demon that weighs upon a dreamer’s body and can even cause a sense of oppression and suffocation.

The incubus also tempts the dreamer with sexual advances. According to Walter Stephens in his book “Demon Lovers,” some traditions hold that repeated sexual intercourse with an incubus (or its female counterpart, succubus) will result in devastating consequences for the dreamer, including physical illness, mental illness, and death. The horse in the background is also shrouded in shadow, like the incubus. The shadowy horse may be an addition to the painting as a play on words: mare. The mare

that appears from the shadows at night refers both to night and mare in the word “nightmare.” Mare or “mara” also, however, refers to a sleep demon that rides people’s chests in Anglo-Saxon and Icelandic traditions. Surmounting Temptation and Oppression But what can this painting mean for us today? How might we interpret it in such a way that we turn our gaze inward and look closely at ourselves and who we are as people? The dreamer is dressed in white and reclining on her bed. Her white dress may represent her purity. Heavy with sleep, her head and upper torso hang off the edge of the bed. With her arm raised overhead and her head cocked restfully to one side, she possesses a somewhat similar pose to images of the sleeping Ariadne. Ariadne was the daughter of King Minos of Crete. She fell madly in love with Theseus and helped him defeat the Minotaur and escape the labyrinth. Theseus, however, abandoned her on the island as she was sleeping. The god Dionysus awakened her, rescued her, and married her. In Fuseli’s painting, the weight of the incubus presses down on the dreamer’s chest, but the white of her dress suggests that

she maintains her purity despite its presence. Her face is the face of a dreamer and not the face of someone who is experiencing either terror or sensuality. Is it possible that she has, in her dream, overcome the oppression and the sexual temptation inaugurated by the incubus? If we look at the incubus, it seems almost as if it has lost interest in the dreamer, perhaps because of its lack of success. It has instead stopped attempts to victimize and seduce the woman and has turned its head to look outward. Does it scan the room in search of a more willing victim, weak enough to succumb to its temptations and oppression? Does it look at us? How we respond in dreams can say a lot about who we are as people. Our actions and thoughts, even in dreams, may reveal our character. I ask myself upon seeing this painting, “Am I strong enough, is my character solid enough, to resist the temptation and overthrow the oppression of the nightmare? Can I, like Ariadne, be awakened and rescued by God?” Eric Bess is a practicing representational artist. He is currently a doctoral student at the Institute for Doctoral Studies in the Visual Arts (IDSVA).

Jay Huang placed first in the adult male division of New Tang Dynasty Television's 2016 International Classical Chinese Dance Competition.

I hope that through our performances, people can get in touch with that part of themselves again ... [to] experience the beauty of culture and find, beyond the beauty, a link to tradition.

Jay Huang

How Art Can Teach Us How to Live

An interview with Shen Yun dancer Jay Huang

CATHERINE YANG

MIDDLETOWN, N.Y.—Despite being one of possibly only a few hundred artists in the world carrying on an ancient art in its pure form—and at a world-class caliber—award-winning Shen Yun Performing Arts principal dancer Jay Huang is unexpectedly humble.

The classical Chinese dance he specializes in is an art form built on foundations 5,000 years old, intertwined with the semi-divine culture of ancient China itself. Famously athletic and strikingly expressive, the art has seen a sort of renaissance in recent years. Schools like Fei Tian Academy of the Arts and Fei Tian College, where Huang trained, are now restoring the full repertoire of styles and movements through a structured methodology.

In 2016, Huang won first place in the adult male division of New Tang Dynasty Television's International Classical Chinese Dance Competition, after receiving an honorable mention in the same competition in 2014.

Huang admits he started dancing only because his brother is a dancer—he wasn't prepared for how much work it would take, at least not initially.

Early on, in the middle of some particularly difficult stretching—the first step to attaining

that impossible flexibility these dancers seem to be born with—he thought of giving up.

Huang had been working every day to improve his flexibility, but despite the work he was putting in, he didn't feel like he was seeing the improvement he wanted. He felt like quitting.

But later, at a recital of his peers, he was inspired and made a decision to commit himself to his goals. Somehow, along the way, he'd likened the process of mastering dance to that of the journey of life.

“Frankly, it's like learning to be a human being,” he said. One can't just give up entirely because of a difficult or unpleasant moment. Life requires asking bigger questions, and perhaps weighing one's values.

The flawless flips and sky-high leaps may seem effortless when Huang performs onstage, but they are only made possible through deep dedication and perseverance.

“[Dancing] has changed ... how I view the world and my circumstances,” he said. “Just because I make a decision lightly doesn't necessarily mean I'll give up lightly. You learn how to contend with difficulties.”

Learning From History

Everything Huang does, as a performer and as an interpreter of this grand culture, hinges on a deep understanding of historical context, he said.

Huang, on top of taking history and culture classes, also spends his free time reading up on ancient literature and legends, like those of the “Romance of the Three Kingdoms,” and getting a feel for China's myths and folklore as well.



Shen Yun Performing Arts principal dancer Jay Huang.

“Without that context, how are any of these heroes we portray different from those of any other culture?” he said. “You have to understand their background, how they lived, what their personalities were like—every movement and gesture has character, and should reflect their time and place.”

In the style, or rhythm, of movement as taught by Shen Yun, an apparently simple step is far from it. There's a reason the body moves in one direction before the arms do, or that the hips lead the leg movements, he said. Thousands of years of understanding back up these different

technical instructions, in a way that is difficult to articulate but immediately clear when seen in action.

“Classical Chinese dance is really about content,” Huang said. One of his favorite things about the art form is its sheer depth. “It externalizes a person's inner world. ... This aspect really allows us to bring alive these characters of the past.”

Huang says the age-old stories told through dance have helped him to shape his own character. Often, he said, there will be a character who must make a choice between good and evil. Sometimes these stories hit home, causing Huang to reflect on his own choices, such as whether there is a right or wrong choice in what he is doing.

A day-to-day example, Huang said, is when he is rehearsing by himself and might have the thought to take the easy way out. “Then I have to think, ‘Is this [extra effort] really something that's good for me? Which choice reflects my values, and will have a good outcome?’” he said.

Cultivating character is important, he said, because a dancer's own character is on display when he or she performs, even when playing someone else.

“Are you the sort of person who minds the details? Are you a straightforward sort of communicator, or indirect, maybe

a bit snide?” he said. “Your personality will come through when you dance.”

Wisdom Through Tradition

Shen Yun, a New York-based performing arts company, was formed in 2006 with a mission to revive traditional Chinese culture through music and dance. This is something that is, again, easier to show than to explain, Huang said.

There's a moment on stage, at the very end of each performance, when the curtain lifts and Huang can feel whether the audience is moved or inspired. It's always gratifying.

“We're not just reviving Chinese culture specifically, but really tradition in general,” Huang said. “Tradition is something that's lost to people today. But I hope that through our performances, people can get in touch with that part of themselves again ... [to] experience the beauty of culture and find, beyond the beauty, a link to tradition.”

That way lies a wealth of virtues, values, and clear ways to treat others—things fundamental to being a human being, Huang said.

The wisdom of traditional culture, expressed through dance, “gets at the heart of what it means to be human,” he said, optimistic in his hope that people will be inspired to discover these fundamental truths.

ALL PHOTOS BY GIULIA SCARPALEGGIA



Tortelli di zucca e patate.

FROM THE TUSCAN TABLE

Fresh Pasta, a Feast for the Senses

Make these handmade potato and pumpkin tortelli to honor the season—and a timeless Italian ritual

GIULIA SCARPALEGGIA

When I teach a cooking class, there's one dish that never fails: fresh pasta.

It's the cornerstone of the entire morning. My grandma taught me how to make fresh pasta as she would have passed down a ritual, so I try to do the same with my guests. It's through ancient and wise gestures that you can acquire the skills to make fresh pasta at home.

I take the jars of flour from the shelf, dust them off, and place them on a wooden board.

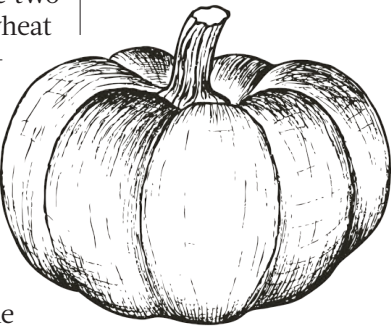
Here, always, comes the first question: Why a wooden board, if there's already such a beautiful marble table here? Can't we make the dough on the table? This is the moment to awaken their senses.

I invite them to touch both the marble and the wooden board, as the senses don't lie. The marble is cold and smooth; we can make a pie crust here because you won't overheat the butter with the work of your hands. The wooden board is instead rough and porous. Warmth passes between the wood and your hands, turning a few handfuls of flour and some eggs into an elastic and versatile dough.

When you cook, you have to keep all your senses alert. Take a pinch each of the two flours, a soft wheat flour and durum wheat semolina, and sniff them, rub them between your fingers to figure out the differences. In my family, fresh pasta follows this rule: half and half. My family has always imposed on me just a few essential rules, and those rules were usually related to the ingredients to use in a specific recipe.

When my students feel comfortable

Warmth passes between the wood and your hands, turning a few handfuls of flour and some eggs into an elastic and versatile dough.



COOKING WITH KIDS

Precious Messes: What Pasta-Making and Parenting Have in Common

On the messy joys of teaching a 2-year-old to make fresh pasta

RACHAEL DYMSKI

My kitchen was coated in a layer of white: flour that had somehow managed to float to every surface, including the tight curls on my 2-year-old daughter's head. Our house was filled with the nutty smell of Alfredo sauce, and our matching rolling pins sat in the sink, each caked in a layer of hardened dough.

I was teaching my girls the art and enjoyment of real pasta.

Homemade pasta is one of my favorite foods to make. I love it because of the work; because of the earthy, rich smell; because of the way that all the folding and resting, all the time, work together to create an experience for the taste buds that can never be pulled from a box.

Truth be told, I was going to make pasta by myself that afternoon. I had a hankering for it, one I had tried to satisfy with the premade ravioli at the grocery store, with spaghetti and meatballs on the restaurant menu, with red sauce and "zoodles" during my husband's slow-

carb diet kick. All these did was make me crave the real thing. And as much as I was craving the pasta, I was also missing the act of making it.

Made From Scratch

In the days before we had children, I put passion, time, and creativity into my weekly menu. On Sunday nights, I pored over recipe books with a glass of wine, planning elaborate meals for friends and for ourselves.

My husband taught me to cook—when I got married, I could hardly be trusted with a toaster—and over the years, meal prep became a sacred space for us.

With glasses of wine in hand, we made things like pomegranate-glazed grilled pork, roast chicken with chimichurri sauce, buttermilk fried chicken, chocolate flourless torte. We were not specialty cooks by any means, but the act and work of cooking together was a slow, enjoyable experience.

Currently, we have two children under the age of three, which means meals these days look a little different. I have a lot less time to put into gourmet meals,



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Homemade fettuccine Alfredo.

Pasta and parenting are messy, slow progress, full of hard work and cleaning up and care.

and by necessity, we rely on a handful of simple, delicious staples to feed our family. The repetitive nature of our meals provides a sense of stability for our weekly routine, and ensures that we have time to eat together as a family, something that's important to me.

But I was missing that other part of me; the part that thrives in making good food from scratch, in putting in the amount of time needed

Find the joy in the mess.

to make a special meal.

A Little Helper

I decided to make homemade fettuccine Alfredo. I pulled out the eggs, salt, and flour while my children seemed occupied, poured myself a glass of wine, and began making a well in my flour for the eggs. At the crack of the first egg, June, my older daughter, heard me and ran in.

Continued on B12



enough kneading the dough, the second question comes, as timely and expected as pumpkin in autumn: So, Italians don’t buy dried pasta? Do you always make fresh pasta? And they look at me with a mixture of disbelief and respect, as they finally come to understand the effort, including the physical, behind a bowl of tagliatelle with meat sauce.

I smile, remain silent for a moment, pondering the answer, and then admit that no, we mainly buy dried pasta, which is very good, even here in Tuscany. Fresh pasta is usually left for special occasions, when you want to celebrate something.

Then I keep thinking about it to myself as we continue with the lesson, and I realize that I don’t make enough fresh pasta, that more and more of our special occasions have lost the scent of semolina and the large wooden tray where Grandmother would neatly arrange nests of tagliatelle to dry.

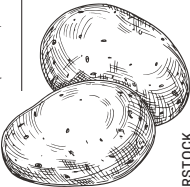
So, a few Sundays ago, I pulled down the two jars of flour and placed the wooden board onto the table. Even without an audience, I felt like making fresh pasta, my personal miracle of flour and eggs. I made potato and pumpkin tortelli for lunch, just for my husband, Tommaso, and me.

An Autumnal Pasta

When Tommaso and I started to live together, I would brag to everyone about how I managed to bring this Florentine guy to the countryside. Actually, he’s not a pure city boy; his family is from Mugello, a hilly, mountainous area above Florence, and these roots emerge in his food tastes.

While I have always had a soft spot for ravioli maremmani with ricotta and spinach,

▲
(Left) Use a scalloped pastry cutter or wheel to cut out your tortelli.
(Middle) Roasted pumpkin.
(Right) Pasta ‘confetti’ made from excess dough.



ALL ILLUSTRATIONS FROM SHUTTERSTOCK

he would rather eat, every day, for lunch and dinner, tortelli mugellani, filled with potatoes and a hint of garlic and parsley.

So I made him tortelli, though I tried to sneak some pumpkin in, previously roasted with olive oil, salt, pepper, and a generous pinch of nutmeg. It’s autumn, and I want every dish I make to reflect the colors and scents of these misty days, lit by the flames of the yellow and red leaves of the trees in the woods.

How, then, to dress the tortelli? Brown butter and crispy fried sage are a winning pair, but this time I added also a handful of pine nuts. Melt the butter over low heat with sage and pine nuts, and cook it until golden brown and heavenly toasted, with a slight hazelnut aroma. In the meantime, the heat will turn the sage leaves into crispy bits and the pine nuts into golden nuggets.

Zero-Waste Tip

When you make tortelli, you might have some leftover sheets of pasta. I usually cut them with a pizza cutter or a fluted pastry wheel into small pieces that resemble tiny stamps or even confetti, and coat them with semolina flour. I lay them on a tray and freeze them, then gather them into a plastic bag and stash it in the freezer. When I make a vegetable soup, I love to add a handful of this pasta in the last minutes of cooking.

Giulia Scarpaleggia is a Tuscan-born and -bred food writer, food photographer, and author of five cookbooks, including “From the Markets of Tuscany.” Find her online at her blog, JulsKitchen.com. Reprinted with permission from JulsKitchen.com

POTATO AND PUMPKIN TORTELLI WITH BROWN BUTTER, SAGE, AND PINE NUTS (TORTELLI DI ZUCCA E PATATE)

SERVES 4 TO 6

FOR THE FRESH PASTA:

- 1 cup (150 grams) all-purpose flour
 - 3/4 cup (150 grams) semolina flour
 - 3 eggs
 - 1 teaspoon extra virgin olive oil
 - Salt, to taste
- FOR THE FILLING:
- 1 small pumpkin
 - 3 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil
 - Salt and pepper, to taste
 - Pinch of nutmeg
 - Freshly ground black pepper
- 2 small potatoes
- 2 tablespoons pecorino Toscano, grated, plus extra for serving (or pecorino Romano)

FOR THE DRESSING:

- 1/4 cup butter
- A dozen sage leaves, cut into strips
- 1/2 cup pine nuts

First, make the fresh pasta. Sift the all-purpose flour with the semolina flour, pile them onto a wooden board or a large working surface, and make a well in the middle.

Crack the eggs into the well and add a good pinch of salt and a teaspoon of olive oil.

Mix the flour and the eggs with a fork until crumbly, then knead the dough, adding cold water if needed. Keep on kneading, more and more, as to develop the gluten that will give strength to the sheets of pasta. Use the same motions as for kneading bread: Hold the dough with one hand while you roll it away from you with the other, using the heel of your palm.

After a while, the dough should reach the right consistency: smooth, velvety, and no longer sticky. Wrap it in plastic wrap and let it rest for 30 minutes at room temperature.

Now, make the filling. Peel the potatoes and place them in a pot of cold water. Bring to a boil and cook the potatoes until you can easily pierce them with a knife, about 15 minutes.

In the meantime, preheat the oven to 390 degrees F and line a baking tray with parchment paper. Peel and slice the pumpkin into 1/2-inch-thick slices and arrange on the tray. Brush the pumpkin slices with olive oil, then season with salt, pepper, and nutmeg. Bake for about 20 minutes, until soft and slightly caramelized on the edges.

Remove pumpkin from the oven and transfer about 14 ounces to a large mixing bowl to use for your filling; save the rest for another use. Add the boiled potatoes, then mash everything together. Add the grated pecorino cheese, season with salt and pepper, mix well, and set aside.

Now, roll out the pasta dough. Flour your wooden board and a large baking tray.

The most important thing to remember, whether you’re using a classic long rolling pin or a pasta machine, is to roll it out over and over again, rolling and stretching it as much as you can. Make a paper-thin sheet of pasta, and lay it on the floured wooden board.

Place little mounds of filling, about one teaspoon each, at regular intervals on one half of the sheet of pasta. Fold the other half of the sheet over to cover the dotted fillings, and press the dough gently with your fingers all around the fillings to seal. With a scalloped pastry cutter, cut the pasta into squares—forming your tortelli—and put them onto the floured tray in one layer.

To cook the tortelli, bring a large pot of water to a boil, salt the water, and pour in a tablespoon of extra virgin olive oil—this will prevent the tortelli from sticking to each other.

Cook the tortelli in batches, according to the size of the pot, for a few minutes each, until the pasta is soft but still al dente.

In a large pan, melt the butter with the sage and pine nuts and cook until the butter is golden, with a delicate, toasty smell.

Drain the tortelli and toss them in the pan with the butter, just enough to coat them evenly. Serve them right away, possibly with more grated pecorino.

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COOKING WITH KIDS

Precious Messes: What Pasta-Making and Parenting Have in Common

Continued from B10

“Can I help you, Mommy?”
Before I could answer, she pulled a chair across the kitchen, right up to the counter. She climbed up onto it, trying to keep hold of her tiny wooden rolling pin. My baby, Rosie, came crawling in the room at that moment, a smile on her face like she always has when she comes into a room to discover us, like she’s come across a national treasure.

I set my wine glass out of reach, put Rosie in her jumper, and decided today was as good a day as any for my daughter to learn how to make homemade pasta.

We built our flour mounds, cracked in the eggs, folded the dough into a ball. We held up hands to each other to see whose were messier. While the dough rested, she helped me melt the butter and garlic for the Alfredo sauce, and we set the table with the cloth napkins. We measured out a rectangle and rolled the dough to fill it, slicing our pasta carefully into long, dangly strips.

The afternoon was filled with interruptions, diaper changes, Cheerios, and Daniel Tiger playlists, but it was also filled with an air of celebration. June ran around the kitchen yelling, “We’re having a party!” while Rosie clapped and cheered for her.



Embracing the Mess

As we rolled, sliced, and lay noodles down on trays together, I thought about how making pasta feels like a reflection of motherhood.

Someday, I know I’ll cook again in a clean kitchen, without stepping on toys or getting flour into every crevice, with a glass of wine I’ll be able to actually keep within reach. But, looking at my two girls—a huge smile on

Making fresh pasta.

Rosie’s face, June trying to carefully lay slices of pasta onto a tray—I think maybe there is something meaningful in the mess of it all.

Pasta and parenting are messy, slow progress, full of hard work and cleaning up and care. But the joy when we sat down at the table and took a bite of the pasta, when June proclaimed proudly, “Daddy, I made this!” seemed to make the mess matter.

“There’s not enough time,” I say so often these days when I think about my creative life. Not enough time to write or cook or paint, not when there are so many urgent, practical, little demands clamoring for my immediate attention.

I am not unproductive for lack of ideas; motherhood in itself packs my brain full of sentences, desires, and pictures. But the ideas always seem to come when my hands are uncompromisingly full, and so I must give them wings and let them go and hope they return to me when my hands are empty.

But maybe they aren’t going anywhere. Maybe they’re still here, somewhere, in the thick of these hidden years. Maybe the words and the energy will come again when the physical work slows down, and maybe they will be richer, more seasoned, full of more perspective because of the mess and because of the work.

And maybe I’ll find that the words, the food, and the paintings, the creative endeavors I thought meant so much, are not nearly as precious as what I raised.

Rachael Dymski is an author, florist, and mom to two little girls. She is currently writing a novel about the German occupation of the Channel Islands and blogs on her website, RachaelDymski.com



Little hands in the kitchen.



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