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QUOTES *In the
News*

“The level of threat we face from foreign espionage and interference activities is currently unprecedented. It is higher now than it was at the height of the Cold War.”

ASIO Director-General Mike Burgess on the intelligence agency's annual threat assessment
AU | A4

“Does this virus have pandemic potential? Absolutely it has. Are we there yet? From our assessment, not yet.”

WHO director-general Tedros Ghebreyesus on the agency's decision against describing the coronavirus spread as a “pandemic”
WORLD | A5

“It would... supercharge China's ability to steal IP [intellectual property], and provide a perfect complement to China's efforts like the ‘Thousand Talents’ programme.”

Patent policy advisor James Edwards, on Beijing's move to secure the top position in the U.N. World Intellectual Property Organisation
US | A7

“Let the market, not politicians and environmental groups, choose the safest, cheapest, and most reliable energy source.”

Stephen Moore, economics journalist and author, writes on the future of clean energy
OPINION | A12

INSIDE

| | |
|--------------|-----|
| AU..... | A4 |
| World..... | A5 |
| US..... | A6 |
| China..... | A8 |
| Opinion..... | A11 |

| | |
|-----------------------|-----|
| FEATURES | |
| Arts & Tradition..... | B1 |
| Food..... | B10 |

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A passenger receives a temperature check before taking a flight bound from Haneda airport in Tokyo, Japan, on Jan. 31, 2020.

CORONAVIRUS

Only a Third of Virus Carriers who Left China Identified, Experts Say

Sources of human-to-human transmission potentially unchecked outside China

CATHY HE

A new study estimates that two-thirds of coronavirus cases exported from mainland China remain undetected worldwide. In less than two months, the virus has spread to 29 countries and territories outside of mainland China, with a total of more than 1,000 confirmed cases.

However, a Feb. 21 study by researchers at the Imperial College London, which collaborates with the World Health Organization (WHO) in infectious disease modeling, analyzed flight data from the virus epicenter Wuhan City, and found that “some countries have

We are starting to see more cases ... outside mainland China with no known travel history or link to Wuhan City.

Natsuko Imai, study co-author



Adam Bandt speaks to protesters in the Melbourne CBD on Jan. 10, 2020.

OPINION

It's Spreading! Marxist Australian Greens Leader Adopts 'Green New Deal'

TREVOR LOUDON

Adam Bandt, the newly elected Marxist leader of the Australian Greens, has committed his party to an Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez style “Green New Deal.” On Feb. 4 this year, Bandt, a long-time co-leader of the party,

was elected unopposed to the party leadership. The same day, he used his very first press conference to advertise the Greens’ brand new Green New Deal-themed website and commit the party to the new program. The Green New Deal concept has

ASSANGE

White House, Rohrabacher Deny Assange's Claim of Pardon Offer

PETR SVAB

Both the White House and former Rep. Dana Rohrabacher (R-Calif.) have denied offering WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange a pardon in exchange for his denying Russian involvement in stealing emails from the Democratic National Committee (DNC) in 2016.

One of Assange's lawyers, Edward Fitzgerald, said in British court on Feb. 19 that Rohrabacher made the offer on behalf of President Donald Trump when visiting Assange at the Ecuadorian Embassy in London in 2017.

White House press secretary Stephanie Grisham called it “complete fabrication and a total lie.”

“The president barely knows Dana Rohrabacher other than he's an ex-congressman,” she said. “He's never spoken to him on this subject or almost any subject.” Rohrabacher issued a statement on

CORONAVIRUS

China's Hospitals Are Releasing Coronavirus Patients Before They Fully Recover

EVA FU

She was still on oxygen support when the doctor declared she was ready to go home.

The patient (name omitted for safety reasons), a 56-year-old woman from coronavirus epicenter Wu-Continued on A10

NATURAL GAS

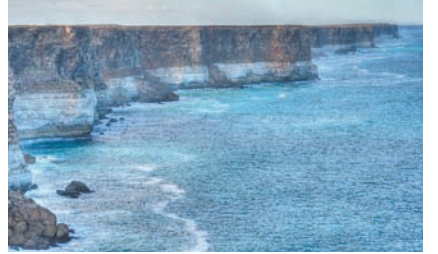
Equinor Ends Oil Exploration Project in Great Australian Bight

Planned oil exploration in the Great Australian Bight won't go ahead after Norwegian oil company Equinor pulled the plug on the \$200 million project.

Equinor said the proposed oil drilling was no longer deemed “commercially competitive compared with other exploration opportunities in the company.” “We will engage with the federal

Continued on A4

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Australia Faces ‘Unprecedented’ Threat of Foreign Espionage, Spy Chief Warns

ISABEL VAN BRUGEN

Australia’s domestic intelligence agency has warned the country faces an “unprecedented” threat of foreign espionage and interference, as it revealed it had uncovered a “sleeper agent” who spent years running spy rings and building business links.

Australian Security Intelligence Organisation (ASIO) Director-General Mike Burgess warned of the rise of espionage, interference and right-wing extremism in the country at ASIO headquarters in Canberra on Feb. 24 as he unveiled the agency’s annual threat assessment.

“The level of threat we face from foreign espionage and interference activities is currently unprecedented,” Burgess said. “It is higher now than it was at the height of the Cold War.”

“Indeed, some of the tactics being used against us are so sophisticated, they sound like they’ve sprung from the pages of a cold war thriller,” he added.

Burgess said several nations were working hard to influence lawmakers, government officials, media figures, business leaders and academics; however, he did not elaborate on the countries infiltrating Australia.

Burgess said espionage operations have been rife in Australia in recent years, and the agency has been consistently detecting and regularly disrupting activities. He said foreign interference and espionage laws were delivering dividends, with international intelligence services forced to change their tactics.



The new director-general of the Australian Security Intelligence Organisation, Mike Burgess, at a press conference in Brisbane on Aug. 8, 2019.

“Wherever possible, ASIO seeks to ‘detect and protect’ before damage is done,” he said.

He explained that when the agency had in the past identified foreign agents attempting to travel to Australia, it recommended visa cancellations and intercepted the individuals at Australian airports.

He referred to a “sleeper” agent sent to Australia by a foreign intelligence service. The agent lay dormant for several years, building business and community links before he started to supply information about expatriate dissidents. That information, Burgess

said, was used to harass the dissidents in Australia and their relatives overseas.

“In exchange for significant cash payments, the agent also provided on-the-ground logistical support for spies who travelled to Australia to conduct intelligence activities.”

ASIO disrupted the operation.

Visiting academics and scientists had been infiltrating universities to collect intelligence information, while foreign spies had entered Australia intending to set up sophisticated hacking infrastructure, he added.

“The intent is to engineer fundamen-

tal shifts in Australia’s position in the world, not just to collect intelligence or use us as a potential ‘back-door’ into our allies and partners,” he said.

Australia’s leading universities last year agreed to more transparency in financial dealings with other countries and to share cyber intelligence with security agencies in a bid to curb foreign interference.

Meanwhile, the threat of home-grown right-wing extremists had also increased, Burgess added.

“In suburbs around Australia, small cells regularly meet to salute Nazi flags, inspect weapons, train in combat and share their hateful ideology,” he said.

Responding to ASIO’s warnings, Home Affairs Minister Peter Dutton said they served as a “wake up call” for the country.

“Universities need to heed the message, we need to make sure people in business, in academia, across government, hear the message that they are being targeted,” he told 2GB radio.

“And we need people to take appropriate steps ... I think it’s a big wake-up call.”

Dutton added that individuals who pose a threat to Australia would be “dealt with” regardless of their background.

“Terrorism and extremism come in many different flavours and many different colours, and it’s important that all of our efforts are keeping Australians safe,” Prime Minister Scott Morrison told reporters.

Reuters contributed to this report.

Equinor Ends Oil Exploration Project in Great Australian Bight

CONTINUED FROM A3

and state authorities regarding our decision to discontinue the exploration program,” the company’s local boss Jone Stangeland said on Tuesday.

“We hold an exploration permit offshore Western Australia and will maintain other ongoing interests and activities in Australia.”

Federal Resources Minister Keith Pitt is disappointed by the decision and is encouraging other proponents to fill the void.

“I know many will find Equinor’s decision not to proceed with this oil exploration project in the Great Australian Bight extremely disappointing, and it is particularly hard for South Australia,” he said.

“The Liberals and Nationals Government remains committed to encouraging the safe development of Australia’s offshore petroleum resources, which is overseen by a world-class independent regulator in the National Offshore Petroleum Safety and Environmental Management Authority (NOPSEMA).”

“The Bight Basin remains one of Australia’s frontier basins and any proposals for new oil and gas fields in this area will be assessed fairly and independently.”

The Australian Petroleum Production and Exploration Association (APPEA) is also gutted, saying the project could have shored-up local energy supplies and eased Australia’s reliance on imported oil.

“Successful development could also boost our energy security. Australia’s oil production has fallen significantly over the last 10 years, and we now import over 80% of the oil we use,” APPEA’s South Australian Director Matthew Doman said in a statement. “While our energy mix is changing, all credible analysis shows Australia will use a lot of oil and gas for decades to come.

He added that “the proposed exploration activity had been subject to an extreme campaign of false and exaggerated claims that deliberately overstated the risks and ignored the potential benefits.

“Of course, any exploration and development have to be done in an environmentally safe manner,” he



A man holds up a board reading “Big oil don’t surf” during a surf demonstration, a so-called paddle-out, taking place on May 12, 2019, in the harbor pool outside the Opera House in Oslo, Norway, against a planned oil exploration of Norwegian multinational energy company Equinor in the The Great Australian Bight.

acknowledged. “We have to make sure there’s no negative impact on existing industries or coastal communities—and the industry remains committed to that.”

Australia’s independent regulator approved the oil drilling in December.

An earlier study found oil exploration in the Great Australian Bight could create 2,000 jobs and generate more than \$7 billion in annual tax revenues.

Greenpeace and others have welcomed the withdrawal as “a win for the environment.”

The Environmental Defenders Office (EDO) has been representing the Wilderness Society in a bid to overturn Equinor’s environmental approvals.

The EDO has hailed the legal action as a factor in Equinor’s decision, saying the company would have had to go back to the drawing board if the move was successful.

The case is due to appear in the Federal Court next week but may no longer be necessary.

BP, Chevron, and Karoon Gas have all withdrawn from the Bight, but Santos, Murphy Oil and Bight Petroleum still have plans to drill there.

By Daniel McCulloch and Katina Curtis. With additional reporting by The Epoch Times.

Australia’s oil production has fallen significantly over the last 10 years, and we now import over 80% of the oil we use.

Matthew Doman, APPEA’s South Australian Director

Australian University Offers Chinese Students Nearly \$1,500 to Return via Third Country

One of Australia’s leading universities said on Friday it is offering Chinese students \$1,500 if they travel through a third country as higher education providers seek to minimise the impact of a ban on foreigners arriving from mainland China amid an outbreak of the new coronavirus, also known as the COVID-19 virus.

Australia has since Feb. 1 barred entry to foreigners arriving directly from mainland China, citing a need to stop the spread of the flu-like virus that emerged in China late last year.

The ban was extended on Thursday until at least Feb. 29.

With the Australian academic year already underway, universities fear thousands of students will withdraw and look at international alternatives if they are unable to get to their classes within weeks.

Australia’s government has said that as long as the students are outside China for 14 days, they would be permitted to enter the country.

Western Sydney University said it will offer Chinese students a one-off payment if they fulfill those requirements.

“Our students are keen to travel to Australia and start the new academic year as soon as possible,” said a Western Sydney University spokeswoman in an emailed statement.

“In recognition of the additional costs incurred in traveling via another country, the University has offered to assist students with a one-off \$1,500 subsidy payment.”

Foreign students are worth about \$35 billion a year to the Australian economy, with Chinese students accounting for about a third of that figure.

Australia’s largest eight universities, which have 105,000 Chinese students between them, said last week the coronavirus travel ban would cost the economy more than \$1 billion, and put at risk 7,500 jobs for each 10 percent fall in Chinese students.

Qantas Airways chief executive Alan Joyce said on Thursday it has been approached by Australian universities to ensure it can pro-

In recognition of the additional costs incurred in traveling via another country, the University has offered to assist students with a one-off \$1,500 subsidy payment.

Spokeswoman for Western Sydney University

vide enough flights for returning Chinese students once restrictions are lifted.

With the restrictions weighing on the Australian economy, Prime Minister Scott Morrison is under pressure to ease the restrictions.

Local media on Friday reported the government had discussed allowing some Chinese students from outside Wuhan to enter.

A spokesman for Morrison declined to comment. The prime minister on Friday said his government was working on easing the burden but it would not be through direct funding to universities.

“We are working on some projects with the education sector... but let’s not forget our universities are well capitalised,” Morrison told reporters.

By Colin Packham
From Reuters



Chancellor of Western Sydney University Prof. Peter Shergold on June 1, 2012.

WHO Declines to Declare Spread of Coronavirus a Pandemic

ZACHARY STIEBER

The spread of the new coronavirus hasn't met the level of a pandemic, the World Health Organization (WHO) said on Monday even as the number of cases and deaths continued rising sharply in Iran, South Korea, and Italy.

The "sudden increase" in cases in those three countries are "deeply concerning," WHO director-general Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus told reporters in Geneva, but said that experts at the agency have decided against describing the situation as a "pandemic."

"Does this virus have pandemic potential? Absolutely it has. Are we there yet? From our assessment, not yet," he said.

"Using the word pandemic now does not fit the facts, but it certainly may cause fear."

There are epidemics of the new virus in multiple countries, Tedros said.

WHO, an international agency that is supporting countries in trying to combat the new virus, declared a public health emergency of international concern in late January after cases were confirmed among patients with no history of travel to China, where the virus emerged in December 2019. The global emergency is defined as "an extraordinary event which is determined to constitute a public health risk to other States through the international spread of disease and to potentially require a coordinated international response."

According to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, an epidemic is "an increase, often sudden, in the number of cases of a disease above what is normally expected in that population in that area." A pandemic "refers to an epidemic that has spread over several countries or continents, usually affecting a large number of people."

Dr. Anthony Fauci, a top official at the U.S. National Institutes of Health, said during an appearance on CNN over the weekend that a pandemic features consistent, sustained person-to-person transmission in different places around the world.

"We are clearly at the brink of that," he said.

As of Monday, there were 2,074 cases of COVID-19 caused by the new virus in 28 countries outside China. Twenty-three people died outside China from the disease, a number that's quickly rising.

In addition to the spike in cases



DENIS BALIBOUSE/REUTERS

Director-General of the WHO Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, attends a news conference on the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) in Geneva, Switzerland, on Feb. 11, 2020.

We are clearly at the brink of that.

Dr. Anthony Fauci, U.S. National Institutes of Health



DENIS BALIBOUSE/REUTERS

A logo is pictured on the headquarters of the World Health Organization in Geneva, Switzerland.

in Iran, South Korea, and Italy, some half-a-dozen countries in the Middle East reported cases on Monday. Many of the cases were the first confirmed in those countries.

"Our decision about whether to use the word 'pandemic' to describe an epidemic is based on an ongoing assessment of the geographical spread of the virus, the severity of disease it causes and the impact it has on the whole of society," Tedros told reporters in Geneva.

"For the moment, we are not witnessing the uncontained global spread of this coronavirus, and we are not witnessing large-scale severe disease or death."

Nations, groups, and people should focus on trying to contain the virus but still must prepare for the possibility of a pandemic, he

added.

Dr. Mike Ryan, WHO's emergencies program director, told reporters that the word pandemic refers to the belief that the whole world's population would likely be exposed to the new virus, with a portion getting infected.

Pandemics of influenza can sometimes be called a lot earlier because the world has seen them before, he said.

"It's much easier to say a pandemic will occur in an influenza situation. What we don't understand yet in COVID-19 are the absolute transmission dynamics," he said, citing figures from the Chinese Communist Party—which are widely questioned by experts—that claim the number of cases in China are falling.



Iranian women wear protective masks to prevent contracting a coronavirus, as they walk at Grand Bazaar in Tehran, Iran, on Feb. 20, 2020.

Only a Third of Virus Carriers who Left China Identified, Experts Say

CONTINUED FROM A3

detected significantly fewer than would have been expected based on the volume of flight passengers arriving from Wuhan."

Researchers found that countries including Singapore, Finland, Nepal, Belgium, Sweden, India, Sri Lanka, and Canada have been more effective in their virus detection efforts. After taking into account these countries' air traffic from China, they appear to have detected relatively more cases of the virus carried by people from mainland China, the researchers said.

Using Singapore as a benchmark, the researchers estimated that there were likely 426 cases of the virus being exported from mainland China—as opposed to local cases of human-to-human contagion—leading them to conclude that "worldwide, two-thirds of COVID-19 cases exported from mainland China have not been picked up by surveillance programs," study co-author Christl Donnelly said in a press release. Globally, the current confirmed total of virus cases exported from mainland China is 156.

This potentially leaves sources of human-to-human transmission around the world unchecked, the study concluded.

"We are starting to see more cases reported from countries and regions outside mainland China with no known travel history or link to Wuhan City," co-author Natsuko Imai said. "Our analysis ... demonstrates the importance of surveillance and case detection if countries are to successfully contain the epidemic."

Chinese authorities locked down Wuhan on Jan. 23, when many experts said it was too late to stem the spread of the disease. Before then, 5 million residents had already left the city, serving as potential carriers of the virus to other cities and around the world.

Since then, dozens of countries have enacted travel restrictions and measures to screen for the disease among passengers arriving from mainland China.

Australia has barred foreign nationals who have visited China for the past 14 days from entering the country. Screening and quarantine measures apply to Australian citizens, residents, and their family members who have been in China within the past 14 days.

Outside of China, South Korea has the most confirmed infections with 1,146 cases. There were 22 patients known to Australian authorities that have tested positive for the virus as of Wednesday.

Robots With Ultraviolet Light Are Newest Weapon Against Coronavirus

CHRISS STREET

China's outbreak of a deadly coronavirus (COVID-19) is paving the way for robots beaming ultraviolet light as the newest weapon to kill communicable diseases in public spaces.

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention states that the top disease prevention technique is to avoid close contact with people who are sick. But that is impracticable where about 55 percent of the world's 7.7 billion people are now urbanized.

The newest weapon to combat the spread of communicable diseases in public interactions is a slice of sunlight's ultra-violet rays. In its "germicidal range" wavelengths from 200 to 280 nanometers (UVC), it is an effective disinfectant against pathogens, according to Klaran, a firm that specializes in UVC LED products.

According to Dr. Philip Tierno, Clinical Professor of Microbiology and Pathology at New York University (NYU), sunlight's ul-

traviolet rays already kill most harmful bacteria on exposed human clothing by interfering and destroying nucleic acids of bacteria and other microbes.

Most consumers are not aware that concentrated UVC light has been a disinfectant in the manufacturing of juices and beverage items, as well as grains, fresh fruits and vegetables cheese, baked items, frozen foods, and liquid egg products for 50 years.

After E. coli outbreaks involving unpasteurized apple cider and fruit juices in 2001, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) approved "cold pasteurization" that requires most juice-manufacturing companies to follow Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points (HACCP) that may include UVC irradiation. Although UVC is proven to reduce or eliminate E. coli, Salmonella, Listeria, and other foodborne pathogens, "irradiated food does not meet the U.S. Department of Agriculture's definition of organic."

UVC has been slow to be adopted as a food pathogen reducer due to higher costs and concerns

of the negative connotation between linking the irradiation process with food. But that may change with coronavirus already spreading from China to 29 other nations.

The Chinese regime announced on Feb. 15 that the nation's central bank would use ultraviolet light or high temperatures to disinfect its yuan currency bills, then seal and store the cash for 7 to 14 days—depending on the severity of the outbreak in a particular region—before recirculating them.

A 2017 study of \$1 bills circulating in New York City identified "397 bacterial species representing more than 20 bacterial phyla" in currency samples. Although it is still unclear regarding the survival period and transfer mechanism of the new COVID-19 coronavirus, the New York study found that "microbial communities" survived for up to 12 days and spread through human oral and skin transfers.

Entrepreneurs are cranking up for a massive increase in UVC disinfectant applications.

With studies finding pathogens present on 94.5 percent of personal mobile phones and 50 percent hospital employee keyboards, Orlando-based Seal Shield is offering ElectroClave cabinets that can disinfect 4 computers and 10 mobile phones at a time.

Los Angeles-based Dimer UVC Innovations has been offering its UVC germ-killing UV Hammer robots, a sanitizing device, that can disinfect up to 10 hospital rooms per hour. Dimer just announced that it will offer GermFalcon robots designed to autonomously navigate through airplane cabins and passenger terminal waiting areas to strategically "kill viruses, bacteria, and superbugs" on high-touch surfaces.

Co-founder Elliot Kreitenberg stated the Dimer germ-killing system will participate in the coronavirus emergency response efforts at the Los Angeles International Airport, San Francisco International Airport, and John F. Kennedy International Airport in New York.

White House, Rohrabacher Deny Assange’s Claim of Pardon Offer

CONTINUED FROM A3

Trump to pardon him,” Rohrabacher said. “At no time did I offer a deal made by the President, nor did I say I was representing the President.”

Upon his return, he said, he “spoke briefly” about the matter with Trump’s then-Chief of Staff Gen. John Kelly.

“I told him that Julian Assange would provide information about the purloined DNC emails in exchange for a pardon,” he said. “No one followed up with me including Gen. Kelly and that was the last discussion I had on this subject with anyone representing Trump or in his Administration.”

Rohrabacher denied speaking to Trump “about this issue at all” or being “directed by Trump or anyone else connected with him to meet with Julian Assange.”

The former congressman, who lost his seat to Democrat Harley Rouda in 2018, spoke to KCAL9 in 2017 about his meeting with Assange after his conversation with Kelly was leaked to The Wall Street Journal.

The KCAL9 report indicated it was Rohrabacher who was pitching a deal with Assange to the White House.

The DNC Emails

The FBI, CIA, and NSA concluded with “high confidence” that Russia was responsible for stealing the DNC emails and providing them to WikiLeaks, which released the emails starting in July 2016. Assange has repeatedly denied that Russia provided the emails. The only public evidence for Russia’s involvement comes from CrowdStrike, a cybersecurity firm hired by the DNC to examine its computer network. Former FBI Director James Comey testified to Congress that the DNC denied the bureau access to the



Rep. Dana Rohrabacher (R-Calif.) in Costa Mesa, Calif., on Nov. 6, 2018.

No one followed up with me including Gen. Kelly and that was the last discussion I had on this subject with anyone representing Trump or in his Administration.

Dana Rohrabacher, former U.S. congressman (R-Calif.)

server.

Former FBI Director Robert Mueller, who was appointed as special counsel in the Russia probe, charged 12 Russian intelligence officers with hacking the email server and computer network of the DNC and also the computer network of the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee (DCCC) and an email account of former Clinton campaign manager John Podesta.

The indictment detailed evidence of the hacking of Podesta’s email and the DNC and DCCC computer networks. It identified the dates of the breaches, what methods the hackers used to gain access to the data (spear phishing), what tools and mechanisms they used to exfiltrate the data (X-Agent and X-Tunnel malware, leased server in Arizona), what key words they searched for to identify documents of interest (“hillary,” “cruz,” “trump”), and what kinds of documents they stole (opposition research, field operations, “Benghazi Investigations”).

The prosecutors, however, provided virtually no evidence for the hack of the DNC Microsoft Exchange email server, only alleging that it happened

sometime between May 25 and June 1, 2016, and that one of the alleged conspirators “researched” computer commands “related to accessing and managing” a Microsoft Exchange server during that time.

Russia has denied interfering in the election.

The indictment alleged no wrongdoing by WikiLeaks. It said the Russian agents used a fake persona, “Guccifer 2.0,” to mask their identity in communications with WikiLeaks.

Assange Charges

Assange was arrested in April 2019 in London and the United States has asked the United Kingdom to extradite Assange, who faces 17 charges in the United States under the Espionage Act and one count of conspiracy to commit computer intrusion. In a May 2019 indictment, prosecutors alleged that Assange encouraged the stealing of national defense information, including classified information, and unlawfully obtained such information from Chelsea Manning, a former Army intelligence analyst who leaked 750,000 classified or sensitive military and diplomatic documents.



WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange seen in a police van after he was arrested by British police outside the Ecuadorian embassy in London, Britain, on April 11, 2019.

Manning was court-martialed in 2013 and sentenced to 35 years in prison. On Jan. 17, 2017, three days before leaving office, President Barack Obama commuted Manning’s sentence. Since March 8, 2019, (with a brief pause in May 2019), Manning has been jailed for contempt of court after refusing to testify before a grand jury in the Assange case.

Assange, an Australian hacker, programmer, publisher, and anti-war activist, co-founded WikiLeaks in 2006 as a media to disclose information “of political, diplomatic, historical or ethical importance.” The organization has released more than 10 million documents, including those from Manning, the DNC, and Podesta emails.

WikiLeaks has an unstained reputation when it comes to the authenticity of its releases. It has also never disclosed any of its anonymous sources. It has faced allegations, however, of being influenced by Moscow. Assange hosted a television show aired on Russian state-funded RT network in 2012. WikiLeaks has denied bias in favor of Russia.

Reuters contributed to this report.



U.S. President Donald Trump leaves the room after speaking to the U.S. Conference of Mayors in the White House in Washington on Jan. 24, 2020.

Trump Says He Wants ‘No Help From Any Country’ During 2020 Election

JACK PHILLIPS

Amid questions over Russian interference in the 2020 election and the Democratic primary, President Donald Trump said he has not received any help from Russia and doesn’t want any assistance from foreign powers during his reelection bid.

“First of all, I want no help from any country, and I haven’t been given help from any country,” Trump told reporters Tuesday.

The White House and Trump over the weekend responded to news reports citing anonymous sources that the Kremlin is again waging a disinformation campaign to get Trump reelected, and later, other reports claimed Russia is also trying to secure Democratic rival Sen. Bernie Sanders’ election. Those reports were based on a House Intelligence Committee briefing from a Trump administration official earlier this month.

During a news conference in India, Trump said in a press conference that “somebody leaked it in intelligence, but nobody ever told me that.” Pointing to his na-

tional security adviser, Robert O’Brien, the president then said that “he can tell you that this was never discussed with us.”

In several Sunday television interviews, O’Brien disputed the new claims that the Russians are interfering in the 2020 election or are helping Trump.

“I haven’t seen any intelligence to support the reports that were leaked out of the House. But it’s just hard to comment on that because, again, I wasn’t there,” he told CBS News’s “Face the Nation” on Sunday morning.

Over the past several days, Trump also has highlighted new reports saying the official who briefed lawmakers might have exaggerated the assessment of Russian interference, including a CNN article, saying the “intelligence briefer appears to have overstated assessment of 2020 Russian interference.”

“They ought to stop the leaking from Intelligence Committee,” Trump said in the news conference. “And if they don’t stop it, I can’t imagine that people are not

going to go after them and find out what’s happening.”

But he’s also focused on reports suggesting the Democratic establishment is concerned about Sanders’ candidacy after wins in Nevada and New Hampshire, saying that Democratic officials are working to prevent the self-avowed democratic socialist from becoming their party’s nominee.

Legacy news outlets have added “Bernie to the list of Russian Sympathizers, along with @TulsiGabbard & Jill Stein (of the Green Party), both agents of Russia, they say,” Trump wrote on Twitter, “but now they report President Putin wants Bernie (or me) to win.”

The president also claimed that House Intelligence Chairman Adam Schiff (D-Calif.), a longtime foe, orchestrated a leak to media outlets. “It sounds to me like a leak from Adam Schiff because they don’t want Bernie Sanders to represent them. It sounds like it’s [2016] all over again for Bernie Sanders,” Trump told reporters on Sunday.

Schiff responded on Twitter by accusing Trump of “deflection” and again said Trump “welcomed Russian help in 2016, tried to coerce Ukraine’s help in 2019, and won’t protect our elections in 2020.”

Russia’s alleged interference triggered a two-year-long investigation headed by then-special counsel Robert Mueller. Last year, he found no conclusive evidence of coordination between Russia and the Trump campaign. As Mueller’s investigation was proceeding and during the impeachment inquiry months later, Trump said both were part of a Democratic-concocted effort to undermine his presidency.

Sanders, in a statement, said he doesn’t support the Kremlin’s alleged efforts to bolster his campaign.

“I don’t care, frankly, who [Russian President Vladimir] Putin wants to be president,” he said. “My message to Putin is clear: stay out of American elections, and as president I will make sure that you do.”

Former NYPD Commissioner ‘Emotional and Stunned’ After Trump Pardoning

KATABELLA ROBERTS

Former New York Police Department Commissioner Bernard Kerik revealed on Feb. 18 how he first learned President Trump was issuing him with a pardon for felony convictions that put him behind bars for three years.

Kerik, who served as the NYPD’s top cop under Mayor Rudy Giuliani during his tenure from 2000 to 2001, told ABC News that he was in Florida on Tuesday when he received an unexpected call around 12 p.m., telling him to “standby for the president.”

“He got on the phone and [said], ‘As I’m talking to you I’m signing a full presidential pardon on your behalf,’” Kerik said President Trump told him, adding, “This will expunge your record.”

The former NYPD commissioner said he had heard rumors that Trump might pardon him but that he had always “blown them off.”

“He thanked me for my service, told me to move on with my life,” Kerik told the outlet, adding that the whole event had left him “pretty emotional, kind of stunned.”

The former police officer said he felt “great” about the pardon and that “a lot of people don’t realize that with a federal conviction, you lose a lot of civil and constitutional rights. This president understands that,” he added.

Kerik, who was police commissioner during the Sept. 11 attacks, said he had “always had enormous respect for Donald Trump,” particularly following the devastating events of 9/11.

“He came down several times to the area and helped motivate the men and women who were working there. He sent people down there to help and donate.”

Army veteran Kerik pleaded guilty in 2009 to eight felonies, including tax fraud and lying to the White House while being vetted for the role of Homeland Security chief in 2004 under President George W. Bush’s administration.

Prosecutors said that between 1999 and 2000, when Kerik was

commissioner of the Corrections Department, he accepted more than \$255,000 in renovations to his Bronx apartment from city contractors, in exchange for speaking to city officials on their behalf.

He was also charged for providing “false and misleading answers” related to this when questioned by White House officials after President George W. Bush nominated him for the Homeland Security job.

The former police officer said he had previously applied for a pardon with the Obama administration but never heard back. He was released from federal prison in 2013 on good behavior after serving three years.

The White House announced on Feb. 18 that Trump signed an Executive Grant of Clemency granting a full pardon to Kerik, who it said “courageously led the New York Police Department’s heroic response to the horrific attacks of Sept. 11, 2001,” and who “embodied the strength, courage, compassion, and spirit of the people of New York and this great nation.”

According to the statement, Kerik has focused on improving the lives of others, including as a passionate advocate for criminal justice and prisoner reentry reform, since his conviction.

“His 30 years of law enforcement service and tenure as commissioner of the New York City Department of Correction have given him a unique understanding and perspective on criminal justice and prisoner reentry reform, and he remains an invaluable contributor to these endeavors.”

Trump also signed Executive Grants of Clemency granting full pardons to the following individuals on Tuesday: Edward DeBartolo, Jr., Michael Milken, Ariel Friedler, Paul Pogue, David Safavian, and Angela Stanton.

In addition, the president signed Executive Grants of Clemency granting commutations to Rod Blagojevich, Tynice Nichole Hall, Crystal Munoz, and Judith Negron.

US Accuses China, Iran of Suppressing ‘Vital Details’ Amid Coronavirus Outbreak

ISABEL VAN BRUGEN

U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo on Feb. 25 criticized China and Iran for allegedly covering up cases of the new coronavirus and warned that the possible suppression of information may hinder the global response to the outbreak.

“Had China permitted its own—and foreign journalists and medical personnel—to speak and investigate freely, Chinese officials and other nations would have been far better prepared to address the challenge,” Pompeo told reporters during a State Department news conference on Tuesday.

He accused the Chinese Communist Party of censorship and of hiding the severity of the deadly COVID-19 illness while condemning the government’s decision to expel three Wall Street Journal reporters last week. Pompeo said a free press was needed to ensure accurate information about the virus is available to the public and medical personnel.

“Expelling our journalists exposes once again the government’s issue that led to SARS and now the coronavirus, namely censorship. It can have deadly consequences,” Pompeo said.

Tens of thousands of people are believed to have been sickened by the virus, although outside medical experts have questioned the number of cases that are being reported by Chinese health authorities.

Pompeo also said Iranian authorities must “tell the truth” about the virus amid signs the outbreak there may be far wider than officially acknowledged.

The virus, which causes the disease COVID-19, emerged in the city of Wuhan, China in late 2019 and has since spread to dozens of countries. There has been a rapid increase in the number of cases in Italy, Iran, and South Korea this week, among other nations. Dozens of people have died around the world outside of China from the virus, which causes a disease that brings similar symptoms to influenza, including fever, headache, and difficulty breathing.

Iran currently has the second-highest number of deaths after China. Its government said Tuesday that 16 people had died nationwide from the new coronavirus. It had



U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo holds a press briefing at the State Department in Washington on Jan. 7, 2020.

Expelling our journalists exposes once again the government’s issue that led to SARS and now the coronavirus, namely censorship. It can have deadly consequences.

Mike Pompeo, U.S. Secretary of State

earlier rejected claims of a death toll of 50 people by a lawmaker from the city of Qom that has been at the epicenter of the virus in the country.

The lawmaker, Ahmad Amirabadi Farahani, claims the death toll dates back to Feb. 13. Iran first officially reported cases of the virus and its first deaths on Feb. 19.

The conflicting reports raised questions about the Iranian government’s transparency concerning the scale of the outbreak.

Pompeo said the United States is “deeply concerned by information indicating that the Iranian regime may have suppressed vital details about the outbreak in that country.”

The Secretary of State’s comments condemning the nations came as the head of an Iranian health minister, Iraj Harirchi, who had urged the public not to overreact about the spread of the virus tested positive for the illness himself.

Harirchi—the head of Iran’s task force to stop the spread of COVID-19—confirmed he was infected in a video posted online by the state-run Fars News Agency.

“I wanted to tell you that I got corona,” said Harirchi, according to a translation from The Guardian. “I had a fever yesterday. The tests came back positive last night. I isolated myself. Just a few moments ago, I was told that the final test came. I’ll start taking medicine. Generally, I feel fine. I just felt a bit tired, I had a fever, and it will drop.” Harirchi was seen wiping his forehead during a press conference on Feb. 24 before he tested positive for the virus.

The number of infections in Iran has risen to 95, according to its health ministry. First cases of the virus have also been reported in most neighboring countries, including Iraq, Kuwait, Oman, and Afghanistan, with all patients having links to Iran. Some infected by the virus traveled directly from a city in Iran where confirmed COVID-19 cases have not been reported by authorities.

In response to the outbreak in Iran, the UAE’s General Civil Aviation Authority said it would cut off flights to and from the country. The UAE is home to international carriers Emirates and Ethiad, and reports noted that Iranians are heavily dependent on using its airports. “Take care of yourselves,” said Harirchi. “This virus is a democrat virus! It does not differentiate between the rich and the poor or official and nonofficial and anyone could get it.”

Pompeo added that the number one priority is to protect the United States from further spread of the virus after new cases were confirmed in a number of countries this week. The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) on Tuesday said Americans should prepare for community spread of the disease.

The Associated Press and Jack Phillips contributed to this report.

Experts: US Must Stop China’s Takeover of UN Intellectual Property Agency WIPO

ALEX NEWMAN

Alarm is growing in Washington and other Western capitals about the prospect of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) taking control of the United Nations agency that oversees the international patent system, a development that experts say would have catastrophic economic and national security implications.

The threat of the UN World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) and all of the highly sensitive secrets it holds falling into Beijing’s hands is so serious that, if it were to materialize, the United States should even consider withdrawing from the patent treaty underpinning much of the agency’s work, James Pooley, a top former WIPO official, told The Epoch Times.

The Chinese regime’s candidate, Wang Binying, currently serves as deputy director-general of WIPO for trademarks and has been with the UN bureaucracy for almost three decades.

If the Chinese regime gets its way in the upcoming March election for director-general, though, Wang will lead the entire agency.

“Giving China WIPO is like giving the world’s largest fox the

world’s largest hen house,” said Christopher C. Hull, Ph.D., a senior fellow with Americans for Intelligence Reform and former executive vice president at the Center for Security Policy.

Like all communist Chinese officials working within the UN system, the CCP expects Wang to obey the party above all else.

In fact, one of the Chinese regime’s corruption charges against former Interpol leader Meng Hongwei, a Chinese official who was arrested upon returning to China, was that he allegedly did not follow Beijing’s orders.

“It is absolutely not allowed to make decisions without authorization, to do or say as you wish,” explained China’s Ministry of Public Security, saying Meng was “totally to blame” for his legal troubles because he failed to “follow Party decisions.”

At the helm of the WIPO, experts say Wang would be in a powerful position with access to an unfathomable treasure trove of secret information in patent applications.

These secrets range from economic innovations that could give Chinese companies an edge over Western industries, to military applications that could give Beijing an unprecedented military advantage.

Making the matter more serious is that the WIPO director-general position means having virtually unchecked authority at the agency, with no oversight, experts said.

Some insiders have referred to the top post as being akin to a dictatorship: Nobody has the power to overrule the director-general, regardless of how out of line his actions may be.

Because the Chinese regime is almost universally acknowledged to be the world leader in stealing intellectual property, having a Communist Chinese official running WIPO would throw the global system into total disarray, experts said.

In interviews with The Epoch Times, former WIPO executives and outside analysts sounded the alarm about the CCP’s ambitions with WIPO, as well as systematic problems with the UN organization that must be addressed.

They also called on the White House to do everything possible to neutralize the threat—and to prepare for the worst in case it is not stopped in time.

Ex-WIPO Leader Speaks Out
As the former deputy director-general of WIPO in charge of the international patent system, Cali-

fornia-based attorney James Pooley is one of the world’s top authorities not just on the UN agency, but also on the global intellectual property system.

“I know Wang,” he told The Epoch Times in a phone interview. “She is smart but will be a puppet for China. She will have no choice as a practical matter.”

The biggest problem, Pooley said, is that there is a massive storage of trade secrets at WIPO.

“There’s probably nowhere else in the world with a greater concentration of cutting-edge technology than the unpublished patent applications inside the computer systems of WIPO,” explained Pooley, who also previously served as president of the American Intellectual Property Law Association (AIPLA).

The UN agency receives about 250,000 patent applications each year. All of them are funneled into a computer system run by the sector that handles patents—a system Pooley used to lead during his time at WIPO.

The system itself is extremely secure, being housed in a separate building with a separate security system, Pooley explained.

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US Health Officials: Human Trials on Coronavirus Vaccine Will Start in 6 Weeks

JACK PHILLIPS

Testing trials of a potential COVID-19 coronavirus vaccine are expected to start in about six weeks, coming ahead of schedule, according to a top U.S. health official.

“We are on time at least and maybe even a little bit better,” Dr. Anthony Fauci, the head of the U.S. National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases (NIAID), told reporters on Tuesday. However, he cautioned about potential “further glitches.”

The National Institutes of Health has been working with Moderna, a biotechnology company, to produce a vaccine that uses the current strain of the coronavirus.

U.S. health officials are fast-tracking development on a coronavirus vaccine, Fauci suggested.

“The gene has been expressed in the platform, in this case, a messenger RNA. The material has been produced, it’s been put into mice. It’s immunogenic,” he said. “It’s now getting ready to go through the regulatory issues of getting it to go.”

Fauci noted that it’s possible the virus might be seasonal and said this vaccine may not solve any problems in the coming months. However, it would be “an important tool” in the future, Fauci said.

On Monday, Moderna confirmed that its vaccine, mRNA-1273, was sent to the NIAID, and the vaccination trial will start with 20 to 25 healthy subjects by the end of April, according to a report from the Wall Street Journal. That would mark a three-month period between the design of the vaccine and testing, with the first results becoming available by around July.

“It is possible it’s going to work, but we have to wait and see,” Moderna’s CEO Stephane Bancel told the news outlet.

An antiviral drug that was designed to treat Ebola patients, remdesivir, is now being subject to a clinical trial, said the NIAID on Tuesday, adding that testing has begun on patients who were evacuated from the Diamond Princess cruise ship currently being housed at the University of Nebraska Medical Center.

“This is the first clinical trial in the United States to evaluate an experimental treatment for COVID-19,” the agency said. Remdesivir, produced by Gilead Sciences Inc., has been tested on virus patients in China starting in early February, according to U.S. and Chinese officials.

Noting that the clinical trial is being conducted on a voluntary basis, the NIAID stated that participants have to have COVID-19 lung infection and “evidence of lung involvement,” and individuals who have mild, cold-like symptoms won’t be included in the study.

Earlier in the day, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention said schools and businesses will have to take preparatory measures if the coronavirus turns into a U.S. epidemic, while stressing that Americans should stay alert.

“We are asking the American public to work with us to prepare for the expectation that this could be bad,” Dr. Nancy Messonnier, with the agency, said in a conference call.

Government Staff in Virus Epicenter Are Getting Infected

NICOLE HAO

Many junior government staff who are on the frontlines in confronting the COVID-19 outbreak in the city of Wuhan, its epicenter, and Hubei Province have become infected with the virus, according to two recent internal documents that insiders provided to The Epoch Times. The government documents revealed that the province also currently lacks protective medical materials for staff.

In addition, due to the lack of human resources, many junior staff have to continue working despite that their colleagues have been diagnosed with the virus. According to safety rules, those who were in close contact with virus patients must be quarantined for 14 days to make sure they are not infected and won't spread the disease further.

Officially, tens of thousands have been infected, and more than 2,000 have died in China, the majority of them in Hubei. However, eyewitness accounts and experts' analyses show that the authorities have been underreporting cases.

Junior Staff

One type of document provided to The Epoch Times is the "daily inspection report," prepared by an agency within the Hubei government set up to combat the epidemic. These are reported to Ying Yong, the provincial Chinese Communist Party boss; Wang Xiaodong, the governor; and Huang Chuping, the vice governor.

On Feb. 6, Sun Chunlan, a vice premier of China, ordered Hubei authorities to screen every person's body temperature in order to detect



Medical staff members work at the Wuhan Red Cross Hospital in Wuhan, China, on Jan. 25, 2020.

As of Feb. 16, the stock of protective suits was 16,771 suits, but daily need was 77,704; the stock of N95 masks was 20,755, but daily need was 130,010; the stock of face shields was 6,758, but daily need was 15,540.

infected patients—by visiting each household in person.

The daily report on Feb. 19 noted that the Jianguo neighborhood on Ronghua Road, Wuhan, has 17 government staff members. "On Feb. 11, one staff member was diagnosed with the coronavirus and was treated at a hospital," it stated.

Days later, the CT scan results of the staff director and deputy director revealed that they may have been infected as well. On Feb. 16, the two leaders began their self-quarantine.

The report stated that now seven of the 17 staff have become infected. The other 10 are close contacts but have to continue their work screening residents' body temperatures.

A similar situation occurred with junior staff in charge of other neighborhoods: "The deputy director of the Water Factory neighborhood on Zongguan Road of Qiaokou district, Wuhan, started to have symptoms



A doctor puts on a protective suit before entering the isolation ward at a hospital in Wuhan in China's central Hubei province, China on Jan. 30, 2020.

on Feb. 3 and was diagnosed on Feb. 6. The other staff couldn't be quarantined or take a break due to lack of human resources."

Another staff member, a deputy director named Zhang Xinxin, had a family member who passed away at home after becoming infected.

"Zhang only wears a mask, without any other protective gear," the report said.

Lack of Supplies

Another type of document was prepared by the headquarters of Wuhan's epidemic control agency, which reports to the provincial government.

The document emphasized that the junior staff lacked the protective materials they needed to conduct body temperature screenings properly. This directly contradicts public statements by city officials that the city has enough supplies.

As of Feb. 16, the stock of protective suits was 16,771 suits, but the

daily need was 77,704; the stock of N95 masks was 20,755, but the daily need was 130,010; the stock of face shields was 6,758, but the daily need was 15,540.

The documents emphasized that the staff need more protective materials and disinfectant products.

Chaotic Management

The daily inspection report noted that in some quarantine centers, there's no isolation between patients with mild symptoms, the medical staff, and quarantined people who were in close contact with confirmed patients but have not shown symptoms yet. Quarantined people often visit each other to chat.

The report also said that at some quarantine centers, there are no medical staff or medicines available. Patients are not allowed to go back home to pick up medicines they bought before, nor do they receive any testing.



Medical workers in protective suits attend to a patient inside an isolated ward of Wuhan Red Cross Hospital in Wuhan, the epicenter of the novel coronavirus outbreak, in Hubei Province, China, on Feb. 16, 2020.

Young Woman Infected With Coronavirus Forced to Make 'Confession' After Exposing Hospital's Negligence

ZOE HU

A female college student in Tianmen, Hubei Province became an internet celebrity for exposing the lack of care she received at a hospital while being treated for the coronavirus. However, her social media posts were later removed by authorities, and netizens believe that she was coerced into making a "confession" video in which she told her followers not to "spread false rumors" and to respect the country and its communist leaders. The video angered many social media users.

Hubei, the epicenter of the coronavirus outbreak, has the most number of infections and deaths in China and remains under lockdown.

Chinese netizen "Bomaner" was infected with the coronavirus on Jan. 24. She revealed in her blog post that she was diagnosed after being hospitalized with a fever.

Bomaner disclosed through live videos on Chinese video app TikTok and the Twitter-like so-

cial media platform Weibo on Jan. 29 that, despite her high fever and pain, medical staff at Tianmen hospital only offered two pills of oseltamivir every day. Oseltamivir, also known as tamiflu, is a common oral antiviral drug used to treat the symptoms of influenza. The hospital did not arrange for a CT scan and blood test. She began to feel physically weak and started to vomit and have loose bowels. On the brink of collapse, she even penned a farewell letter.

That same evening, Bomaner revealed in another post that police went to talk to her parents, accusing her of spreading negative information (on the coronavirus) on social media.

"I was in the hospital's isolation ward when this happened. Every word I said on social media was true. I really don't know which of my statements is considered a wrongdoing. Please come talk to me, instead of talking to my parents," she wrote.

At midday on Feb. 1, Bomaner again updated her post: "The doctors joined together to murder me by cutting off my oxygen supply. My parents still have no idea about this. The doctors promised to provide the best treatment solution for me, yet they did nothing ... I am sincerely asking for help desperately. I shall turn in my grave if I die!"

Bomaner's plight got a lot of attention on the Chinese internet. Her parents revealed on WeChat that they were threatened by authorities as a result of her post.

The Chinese regime has ramped up censorship measures to suppress information on the virus outbreak, and has hired trolls—known as the 50-cent army in China—to monitor online speech 24/7. This has led to local authorities cracking down on people for "spreading rumors" on the internet about the outbreak.

On Feb. 12, Bomaner posted a "confession" video as she laid down on a hospital bed. In front of the camera, she said, "I hope my followers on social media will not spread rumors. My family is waiting for me to go back home [after I fully recover from the virus]."

She continued, "We should also believe in our country and our government."

Chinese netizens expressed outrage when the video went viral.

One netizen shared the video on Twitter and commented: "She [Bomaner] was persecuted and forced by the Chinese Communist Party to pledge allegiance to the party and to the country, otherwise she would not be given medical assistance. She only said those things out of despair."

Another netizen believed that she was forced by authorities to make the "confession" video. "She [Bomaner] mentioned previously on her Weibo blog that she was under threat ... as a resident in the epicenter of the coronavirus outbreak, I understand how hopeless and desperate she was in struggling to survive."

The authorities deleted most of her social media posts.

Rights Group Calls on Beijing to Stop Censoring Internet Posts About Virus Outbreak

FRANK FANG

Reporters Without Borders (RSF), a nonprofit advocating for press freedom, has urged Beijing to free journalists and political commentators and stop censoring information about the novel coronavirus outbreak in China.

RSF pointed out that two citizen journalists, Chen Qiushi and Fang Bin, and two political commentators, Guo Quan and Xu Zhiyong, were arrested in early February in connection with their social media posts about the outbreak, in a statement published on Feb. 24.

"Censorship is clearly counterproductive in the fight against an epidemic and can only aggravate it or even help turn it into a pandemic," said Cédric Alviani, the head of RSF's East Asia bureau, in the statement.

"Only complete transparency will enable China to minimize the spread of false rumors and convince the population to follow the health and safety instructions recommended for curbing the epidemic."

Both Chen and Fang had been documenting the situation in Wuhan, the epicenter of the outbreak in China, before they went missing. One of Fang's videos, showing a funeral home van carrying eight dead bodies, went viral in China.

Fang's friends said police broke into his home and took him away on Feb. 10.

Chen, a 34-year-old lawyer-turned-video-blogger, had published more than 100 social media posts from Wuhan within a time span of roughly two weeks, before his mother appealed for help to locate him after he went missing on Feb. 7.

That same day, his friend and martial artist Xu Xiaodong said in a YouTube video that Chen had been forcibly quarantined for 14 days, even though he didn't have symptoms of the virus.

Guo, a human rights activist and a former assistant professor at Nanjing Normal University, was arrested on Jan. 31 after he posted about the



Passengers wearing protective face masks travel on the subway in Shanghai on Feb. 25, 2020.

coronavirus. He was then held at a detention center in Nanjing, the capital of eastern China's Jiangsu Province, according to Radio Free Asia.

Xu, a former lecturer at the Beijing University of Posts and Telecommunication, was taken away by police in China's southern city of Guangzhou on Feb. 15, after he wrote an essay blaming the Chinese leader for mishandling the outbreak response, according to The Guardian.

RSF lambasted authorities for having "significantly tightened their grip on social media and discussion groups where certain journalists and bloggers had dared to post independent reports."

Chinese censors have also ramped up propaganda efforts, including by hiring internet trolls to write social media posts that praise the government's efforts to contain the virus.

Zhang Xiaoguo, director of the news bureau at the Propaganda Department, announced during a news program on Feb. 3 that publishing propaganda about China's control and prevention measures is the department's top priority.

And on Feb. 4, Chinese news portal Sina reported that China's central propaganda department plans to send more than 300 journalists to Wuhan and Hubei Province to cover the disease.

RSF criticized the regime's efforts: "In recent weeks, Beijing has also instructed the media to cover the heroism of the responders rather than the suffering of the population or the shortcomings of the measures taken by the government."

No Medical Expert on China’s National Coronavirus Control Team

ZOE HU

Chinese authorities set up a nine-person national coronavirus control team on Jan. 25, which does not include any medical professionals, experts from the National Health Commission, or epidemic control specialists. A scholar pointed out that the goal of this team, comprised only of personnel from the Central Propaganda Department and the Ministry of Public Security, was not to prevent and provide treatment for the epidemic, but to focus on propaganda, arrest people, and block information dissemination.

Some Chinese netizens shared similar comments, and renamed the team the “uprising control team.”

Team Set Up After the First US Case Appeared

During an interview with the Chinese-language Epoch Times, Professor Tung Li-wen, a China expert and member of Taiwan Think Tank advisory committee, shared his opinion on why Wuhan City (the epicenter of the coronavirus outbreak) was locked down on Jan. 23 and why a national coronavirus control team was established on Jan. 25. Tung believes that once the first COVID-19 case was identified in Seattle on Jan. 21, the Chinese authorities couldn’t “hide elephants in mouse holes” any longer.

No Medical Professionals on the Team

According to Tung, of the nine members on the team, the leader is Li Keqiang, premier of the State Council, and the deputy leader is Wang Huning, China’s propaganda boss. The other members in the group include Ding Xuexiang, director of the General Office; Sun Chunlan, vice premier of the State Council; Huang Kunming, minister of the Publicity Department (formerly known as Central Propaganda Department); Cai Qi, secretary of the Beijing Municipal Party Committee; Wang Yi, foreign affairs minister; Xiao Jie, secretary general of the State Council; and Zhao Kezhi, minister of public security. However, there is no expert from the National Health Commission or any public health specialist in the group.

Tung explained that deputy team leader Wang was previously in charge of Communist Party ideology. The former position of another chief leader, Sun Chunlan, was head of the United Front Work Department. The other members came from either the Central Propaganda Department or



Workers set up beds at a Fangcang hospital in Wuhan, China, on Feb. 4, 2020.

This is not a group for coronavirus control, but a group for politics and publicity, and for precluding popular revolt.

Professor Tung Li-wen, China expert and member of the Taiwan Think Tank advisory committee



China’s Premier Li Keqiang (C) speaks with local residents as he visits a supermarket amid a deadly virus outbreak in Wuhan in China’s central Hubei province on Jan. 27, 2020.

the Ministry of Public Security. Tung pointed out that the coronavirus control team was not set up to combat the disease because there were no health authorities or medical experts in such an important leadership group. “This is not a group for coronavirus control, but a group for politics and publicity, and for precluding popular revolt.” Tung pointed out that such posturing is a major problem in the Chinese communist system, as well as the biggest problem in the fight against the coronavirus. In comparison, the epidemic control system and methods in Taiwan are totally different from those of the

Chinese Communist Party (CCP). Tung cited an example to illustrate his point. The commander of the inter-agency Taiwan Central Epidemic Command Center, Chen Shizhong, is also the head of the Ministry of Health and Welfare. In the meantime, Taiwan’s top public health experts and disease specialists are organized into different teams to prevent a coronavirus outbreak in the self-ruled island nation. **No Refinements in the Past 17 Years** The first decision made by this national team was to build the Huoshenshan (Fire God Mountain) hos-

pital, Leishenshan (Thunder God Mountain) Hospital, and a number of makeshift hospitals called Fangcang Hospitals, which were all constructed in a short period of time. Fangcang Hospitals were set up in over a dozen stadiums, school gyms, and exhibition centers to isolate patients with mild or moderate symptoms of COVID-19 infection. Tung explained that the CCP was still using the same epidemic control methodology it adopted 17 years ago. In 2003, the government built a makeshift hospital in 10 days to prove it was capable of controlling the SARS outbreak. This approach was used recently and remains unchanged. The CCP expected to divert global attention from the messy situation in Wuhan to construction of the hospitals by showing the buildings going up in live videos. It was obvious that almost half of the news coverage on the epidemic focused on the building of Huoshenshan Hospital. However, the hospital contained only simple and ineffective medical equipment, and was criticized by Chinese netizens as a “death concentration camp.” Many patients at the Fangcang hospitals have posted videos online showing the poor environment and pleading for help from those outside. In these videos, patient beds were closely lined up with no curtains for physical separation; those who arrived late had to sleep on the floor; it was even difficult to use the restroom and bathroom; and meals couldn’t be guaranteed. Moreover, there are no doctors, only nurses. Tung stated that next, a few “model wards” might be constructed and showcased internationally as being equipped with ECMO machines (extracorporeal membrane oxygenation, used to rescue critically ill patients) and other medical equipment needed in negative pressure isolation wards. On the other hand, the number of beds in Huoshenshan Hospital and Leishenshan Hospital add up to no more than 2,400 even though there are at least 100,000 confirmed cases in Wuhan. “It is still a big problem as to who will be selected to go to the hospital for diagnosis and treatment. The whole process is a war of publicity, not a war against the contagion,” Tung said. “Such concentration-camp style hospitals were not constructed for treating an epidemic at all. Patients are placed in close proximity and are left to die. This indicates that the CCP governance is facing total collapse.”

Chinese Authorities in Virus Epicentre Are Shutting Down the Internet

NICOLE HAO

“The internet connection in my home was cut off for several days. I kept on calling the mayor’s hotline, but nobody is taking care of us,” said a resident of Wuhan City, Hubei Province, where the coronavirus (COVID-19 virus) outbreak began. Since Feb. 11, more and more Wuhan residents reported that their home internet connections were down. Wuhan authorities have issued strict quarantine measures to contain the outbreak, including allowing only one person per household to leave their homes. The Chinese-language Epoch Times (CET) spoke with several Wuhan residents and found that some neighborhoods, where there are large numbers of reported COVID-19 virus infections, have had their internet cut off. Commentators believed that the authorities are using this method to restrict netizens’ ability to talk freely about the situation on the ground.



A man is cycling in the empty street at Optical Valley in Wuhan, China, on Feb. 16, 2020.

Since the outbreak in early December 2019, about 70 percent of the officially reported cases of infection are in Wuhan. **No Internet Connection** Several interviewees told the CET that their residential areas began broadcasting messages via loudspeakers installed on lampposts that their internet connections would be cut off soon, starting from the evening of Feb. 10. A Wuhan resident who lives on Jiangdi Zhong Rd. in Jiangnan district posted on

social media that his home internet connection was cut off on the afternoon of Feb. 11. He checked with other neighbors who lived nearby and confirmed that their home internet connections were also cut off. “Where I am, it’s close to the makeshift hospital at the Wuhan International Expo Center. It looks like everyone in our community lost their internet connection,” the resident complained. A Wuhan resident who lives in Jiang’an district told the CET on Feb. 19 that his internet connection has not been restored. He has resorted to using his cell phone to surf the internet. Zeng Jieming, a U.S.-based Chinese activist, told the Chinese-language Epoch Times on Feb. 19: “I have two friends who live in Wuhan. One lives in Caidian district, and the other lives in Jiangxia district. Both of them said their internet connections were down ... They were told [by the communist regime] that there were too many rumors online, which [the regime

claimed] severely interfered with the outbreak relief efforts.” According to Zeng’s friends, the outbreak in Caidian and Jiangxia districts is severe. Local authorities are afraid that people will expose the truth about the outbreak to the outside world by posting videos online, they said. **Purpose** Gu He is an observer of internet censorship in China. He told the Chinese-language Epoch Times that such tactics are par for the course for the Chinese regime. “As early as 2009, the Chinese government cut off the internet in the whole Xinjiang region, [and confined it] to a local area network for 312 days,” Gu said. “It uses this method to control people’s speech.” The internet blackout in Xinjiang, home to 25 million people—many of whom are Uyghur Muslim minorities—was reported by several human rights groups and media at the time. Chinese authorities acted in July 2009 after

a series of violent riots took place in Xinjiang’s capital city Urumqi. The internet was restored in May 2010. Since Wuhan was locked down on Jan. 23, netizens have begun making social media posts exposing the actual situation on the ground. They are exposing the different symptoms the COVID-19 virus causes. They are showing poor medical conditions in local hospitals, highlighting skyrocketing food prices, showing dead bodies being collected from people’s homes. There are videos of police forcibly sending people to quarantine centers and exposing the poor conditions at those quarantine centers, including lack of food, water, and medical treatment; and people hopeless about their possibility of recovering from the illness attempting to end their lives. Internet sensors have since begun cracking down on such posts, even deploying a troll army to write positive posts about the authorities’ outbreak-fighting efforts.

China’s Hospitals Are Releasing Coronavirus Patients Before They Fully Recover

CONTINUED FROM A3

han City, couldn’t stop coughing. Too much fluid was filling up her lungs because of the viral infection, causing chest pains and making it hard for her to breathe.

“Her limbs were so weak that she would fall when going to the rest-room. She couldn’t walk out of her room,” her daughter, Zhang, wrote in a social media post pleading for public attention.

Despite that, her nucleic acid test results—the official diagnostic test for the coronavirus—came out negative, and to the hospital, that was enough reason to discharge her. On Feb. 16, they stopped giving her any treatment, apart from some cough medicine, according to Zhang. Four days later, they dispatched a car, and she was on her way.

“The government said they will ‘hospitalize anyone who should be hospitalized,’” Zhang said, citing the slogan from a recent COVID-19 outbreak control campaign in Hubei Province, where Wuhan is the capital, to locate all coronavirus patients.

“You may have admitted them, but then you discharge those who haven’t recovered.”

By then, her mother had stayed in Wuhan’s Zhongnan Hospital for 25 days.

“Will these people carry the virus with them? What if they spread it out further?” Zhang told The Epoch Times, noting that her mother’s CT scans have shown “clear fibrosis in the infected spot” and pleural thickening—that is, lung infection.

Zhang said that a lot of patients were similarly discharged, casting doubt over the reliability of official infection figures. At least a few of them got reinfected, according to Zhang.

There are “a lot of half-truths in the recovery data,” she said.

When reached by phone, a doctor on duty at Zhongnan Hospital did not directly respond to questions about the criteria for discharging patients, but said that it was dependent on individual circumstances. The in-patient department could not be reached for comment.

China’s National Health Commission advises hospitals to release patients or transfer them to the appropriate department for other disease if all of the following conditions are met: their temperature has returned to normal over a period of more than three days; the patient has shown a clear improvement in respiratory symptoms; there’s a significant reduction in lung inflammation; and their respiratory swab samples have tested negative to the virus twice, over the period of two or more days.

Cases Going Under The Radar

Chinese officials, media reports, and studies have noted cases where patients had the virus despite being discharged from the hospital or initially testing negative to the disease.

A 20-year-old woman from Wuhan initially tested negative to the virus on Jan. 26, but a follow-up test on Jan. 28 returned positive. She tested negative again for two subsequent tests on Feb. 5 and Feb.



KEVIN FRAYER/GETTY IMAGES

8 respectively, according to a case study published in the Journal of the American Medical Association on Feb. 21.

All five of her relatives became sick with the virus after meeting with her. But as of Feb. 11, the woman did not exhibit any typical signs of infection, such as fever, gastrointestinal symptoms, cough, or sore throat, suggesting that she might be an asymptomatic carrier.

On Feb. 19, a patient considered to have recovered from coronavirus in Chengdu, the capital of southwestern Sichuan Province, was hospitalized again upon testing positive for the virus, according to local news outlet Red Star News. The person left the hospital on Feb. 10 and since then has stayed at home under self-quarantine.

Lei Xuezhong, vice director of infectious disease center at West China Hospital and an expert assisting with outbreak control in Sichuan, told the outlet that the case demonstrated a need for stricter lab testing standards. Health workers will increase the frequency of diagnostic tests from two to three to increase accuracy, he added.

When asked if the patient had a relapse of the disease, Lei dismissed such a possibility, saying it was likely a result of a small amount of remaining virus manifesting in the body, and thus should not cause public panic.

A patient surnamed Tang in Hunan, located south of Hubei, left the hospital on Feb. 4 after testing negative to the virus, according to local media. CT scans found small shadows in her lung area. Three days

A Chinese woman wears a protective mask as she walks in a nearly empty and shuttered commercial street in Beijing, China, on Feb. 7, 2020.

Will these people carry the virus with them? What if they spread it out further?

Zhang, daughter of a COVID-19 patient.

later, she was hospitalized again after complaining of low fever and dry coughs. Her lung infections had gotten worse. She tested positive on her fourth test, on Feb. 9.

In Jingzhou, Hubei, the first patient declared to have recovered was recently hospitalized, according to Caijing, a Beijing-based Chinese magazine. The patient had two negative test results prior to his discharge.

The first two coronavirus cases in Ontario, Canada, a couple in their 50s, also found traces of virus from testing of nasal and throat swabs even after having recovered, Ontario health officials said on Feb. 13.

Seven Australians evacuated from the Diamond Princess cruise on a flight to Darwin, Australia, who initially tested negative before boarding, later returned positive tests upon a second health screening conducted after reaching Australia on Feb. 21.

The Chinese National Health Commission has warned that negative nucleic acid test results does not necessarily mean the patient is virus-free. A variety of factors, such as quality of samples and the timing and handling of them, could have an impact and lead to possible false-negative results.

Confusion Over Official Data

A lack of consistency in how infections are counted in China has resulted in growing mistrust in official data on the outbreak. The government of Hubei has shifted the case count methods two times over the past two weeks, in response to guideline changes issued by China’s top health authority.

The changes drew confusion on Feb. 20, when Wuhan City reported 615 new confirmed cases—hundreds more than the provincial total of 349. The officials said that the higher Wuhan numbers arose because the National Health Commission advised the province to no longer account for the numbers of patients who showed lung infections in CT scans (also known as “clinically diagnosed patients”), and only include those who tested positive in nucleic acid tests.

Hubei said that in applying this methodology revision, it subtracted 279 cases from the total tally as those cases were of clinically diagnosed patients.

The change in counting method was a reversal of the previous

guideline. When the previous guideline took effect on Feb. 12, it led to a ten-fold rise in the case tally to 14,840, with over 13,300 of them being clinically diagnosed patients

However, on Friday Hubei’s health commission announced that they would add back the 279 cases it subtracted the day before, saying it was a mistake to remove cases that were already counted. It added those who removed the cases would be held responsible.

Nowhere to Turn

Zhongnan Hospital, the largest hospital in Wuhan, has recently built extra capacity to take in virus patients.

On Feb. 19, one day before Zhang’s mother was discharged, the hospital added another 2,000 beds for coronavirus patients. It has for several consecutive days had more beds than patients, according to a Feb. 22 report from China News Service, the second-largest state-owned Chinese news agency.

Before Zhang’s mother was released, the doctor suggested that she self-quarantine at home and avoid close contact with family members. But Zhang said this was hardly realistic in their tiny two-room apartment—shared by the family of three.

Her case remains in limbo. The makeshift hospitals, known as fangcang, which take in suspected patients and those with light symptoms, have refused to admit her, saying that her condition was too severe. The neighborhood committee that’s in charge of arranging hospitalization of residents said they couldn’t do anything because the hospital was not within their jurisdiction. Nor did the hospital in their district of Qiaokou have any additional capacity.

The city’s health commission similarly turned them away, because they did not have oversight over provincial hospitals like Zhongnan, Zhang said.

The Epoch Times has spoken with families of patients who jumped to their deaths from buildings after being denied treatment. Zhang said she also knew of at least four or five infected locals who attempted suicide in sheer desperation.

“Of course, the medical resources are limited, but you can’t only pursue a recovery rate and ignore patients’ needs,” Zhang wrote in a now-deleted post.



AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES

Medical personnel walking among patients with mild symptoms of COVID-19 resting in the temporary hospital set up in a sports stadium in Wuhan in China’s central Hubei province on Feb. 18, 2020.

OPINION

TRACEY NEARMY/GETTY IMAGES



New Greens Leader Adam Bandt speaks to media in Canberra, Australia, on Feb. 4, 2020.

It’s Spreading! Marxist Greens Leader Adopts America’s ‘Green New Deal’

CONTINUED FROM A3

been around in some form or another for many years, but the latest version is a very new creation.

The Green New Deal document was written over a single December 2018 weekend by the staff of New York Congresswoman Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez and three far-left groups, described by the New Yorker as: “the Sunrise Movement, a grassroots climate organization; the Justice Democrats, which recruits and supports leftist candidates; and an upstart policy shop called the New Consensus.”

The Green New Deal wasn’t written on the back of a restaurant napkin—but it was almost as amateurish.

Just about everyone involved was new to lawmaking.

“We spent the weekend learning how to put laws together,” Ocasio-Cortez’s chief of staff, Saikat Chakrabarti, told New Yorker journalist Benjamin Wallace-Wells. “We looked up how to write resolutions.”

The Green New Deal is basically a plan to completely centralize economic planning in the name of tackling “climate change.”

The draft text called for a congressional committee, which would be “fully funded and empowered to draft legislation ... to map out a ‘detailed national, industrial, economic mobilization plan’ capable of making the U.S. economy ‘carbon neutral’ while promoting ‘economic and environmental justice and equality,’” according to The Intercept.

In other words, socialism.

Ocasio-Cortez is a member of the 55,000-member strong Marxist group Democratic Socialists of America (DSA). With strong backing from the DSA and the Communist Party USA, the Green New Deal soon became ubiquitous in the Democratic Party’s dominant left wing and is now endorsed by nearly 100 U.S. congressmembers and several Democratic presidential candidates.

Bandt fully understands the ori-

Bandt fully understands the origins and intent of the Green New Deal that he’s now promoting.

gins and intent of the Green New Deal that he’s now promoting.

In an article in the DSA-aligned magazine Jacobin, published just days before assuming the Greens leadership, Bandt laid out his vision for an Australian Green New Deal:

“We need government intervention on the scale of the Apollo program. We need a Green New Deal for Australia, a transformative plan to get us out of the overlapping crises of climate emergency and economic inequality.

“With a Green New Deal, we can break free from the false dichotomy that we must choose between tackling the climate crisis and delivering better outcomes for workers. ...

“Taking the urgent action we need to transform our society is an opportunity for equality and justice. This is our chance to shift Australia to a clean, renewable economy while building a more caring and equal society.”

In March 2018, SEARCH Foundation hosted Bhaskar Sunkara, a DSA comrade, Green New Deal advocate, and Jacobin editor, at Sydney Trades Hall for a talk entitled “Corbyn, Sanders and the next left.” The Sydney-based SEARCH Foundation, which works closely with the Greens, is the continuation of the now defunct “moderate” wing of the Communist Party of Australia (CPA).

Former Greens Sen. Lee Rhannon, once a high-ranking pro-Soviet communist, is a close ally of Bandt and is also a SEARCH Foundation committee member.

Sunkara also addressed a major Marxism conference in Melbourne the same month.

Writing in the Guardian, Bandt made it clear that he sees the Green New Deal as a vehicle for putting his personal values into action:

“The two elements of a Green New Deal – government taking the lead to create new jobs and industries, and universal services to ensure no one is left behind – are the values I have been fighting for

my whole adult life.”

And those values are undoubtedly socialist.

In 2010, Bandt became the first Greens member to be elected to the Australian parliament—the House of Representatives—in a federal election.

Bandt had started out in politics as a teenage member of the Australian Labor Party but moved to the far-left while studying law at Perth’s Murdoch University in the early 1990s.

At Murdoch, Bandt was a leader of the Left Alliance. Active in several Australian universities for more than a decade, the Left Alliance was a coalition of the Socialist Youth League, the youth wing of the CPA, and Resistance, the youth wing of the Democratic Socialist Party (DSP), a grouping with Trotskyist roots.

By the time Bandt became a leader of Left Alliance, Resistance had left the organization after a proposed CPA–DSP merger had foundered. In 1991, the CPA dissolved and re-formed as the short-lived New Left Party. In 1992, the Australian Greens were formed out of several smaller state-based Green parties.

In 1995, while he was a student, Bandt described the newly founded Greens as a “bourgeois” party, writing in a memo on a Marxist student website that “Communists can’t fetishise alternative political parties, but should always make some kind of materially based assessment about the effectiveness of any given strategy come election time,” according to The Australian.

In other words, the Greens could be a useful way to promote socialism.

In 2008, Bandt completed a Ph.D. at Monash University in Melbourne with his thesis titled “Work to Rule: Rethinking Marx, Pashukanis and Law.” His supervisor, Andrew Milner, was a former member of the British Socialist Workers Party turned Australian Greens supporter.

In December 2010, the first “Union and Community Summer

School” was held in Melbourne.

Called “Winning Our Rights,” the school bought together “experienced labour activists from different generations and most left political traditions, to discuss the way forward for the union movement,” according to Green Left Weekly.

Union activists from the Greens, the DSP-initiated Socialist Alliance, the re-founded CPA, the pro-China Communist Party of Australia (Marxist-Leninist), and SEARCH Foundation took part.

A public meeting themed “Reviving the union movement under the Gillard government” opened the school. Speakers included brand new Greens Member of Parliament Adam Bandt.

Discussion on the second day focused on “unions’ role in the climate action movement and building the union fightback.”

The Greens are a minor political party, holding only a few seats in the two federal chambers of government. However, they sometimes hold the balance of power between the larger Labor and Liberal parties. This can give the tiny party a disproportionate influence on Australia’s political direction.

Under the much further left Bandt leadership, the Greens will be much more aggressive in promoting their socialist agenda. We may hear much more about the Green New Deal from them in the next months and years.

Trevor Loudon is an author, filmmaker, and public speaker from New Zealand. For more than 30 years, he has researched radical left, Marxist, and terrorist movements and their covert influence on mainstream politics. He is the author of a soon-to-be published book “White House Red: Communist, Socialists and Security Risks Running for U.S. President, 2020.”

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

Natural Gas Is Crushing Wind and Solar Power in America

STEPHEN MOORE



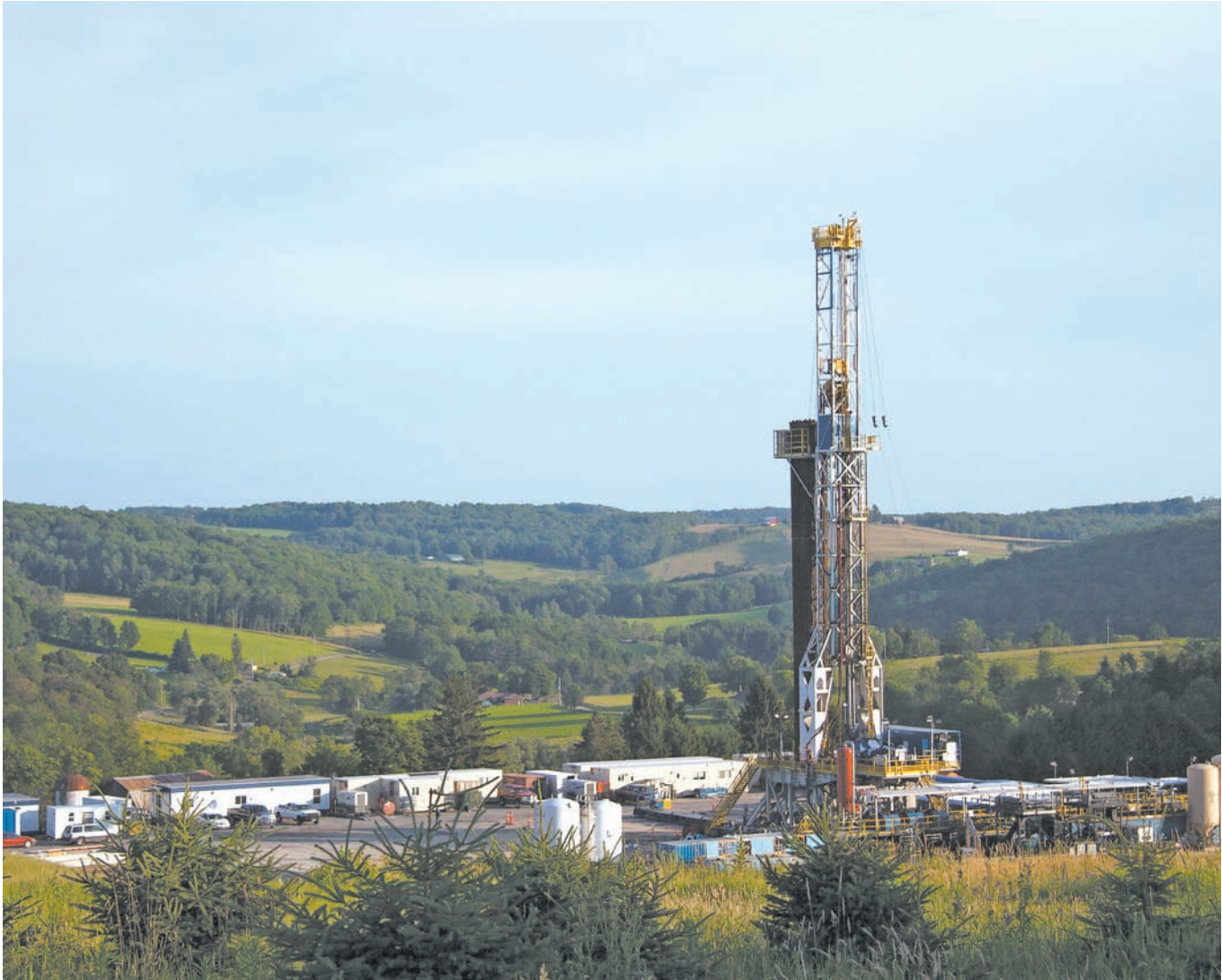
The U.S. Energy Information Administration just announced some spectacular news that should be banner headlines across the country: The price of natural gas has fallen to its lowest February level in 20 years.

The data shows that natural gas prices fell to \$1.77 per million British thermal units. In inflation-adjusted terms, the price of gas has plunged by some 80 percent since its high of \$13.60 12 years ago. The price is down 90 percent since 2005, when prices hit nearly \$20. (Quick: Can you think of anything else that now costs one-tenth of what it did 15 years ago?)

The Energy Information Administration also reports that U.S. natural gas production has hit an all-time high this year.

The shale oil and gas revolution keeps rolling on—but no one is talking about it. This boom in production has affected the economy of every state, from Ohio and Pennsylvania to Texas, Oklahoma, Colorado and the Dakotas. By the way, oil prices have also fallen considerably, bringing gas prices at the pump to nearly \$2 a gallon in some states. Prices are so low now that the drillers aren’t making any money and are starting to shut down wells. They are victims of their own success.

Today’s bargain-basement prices are partly due to moderate temperatures on the East Coast this winter, but this has been a long-term trend of cheaper and cheaper energy. America is now the Saudi Arabia of natural gas, and we are exporting more throughout the world than at any previous time in our history. It’s hard to believe that a decade ago, we were importing natural gas. Thanks to



A fracking rig in rural country, Pennsylvania, on July 11, 2013.

In inflation-adjusted terms, the price of gas has plunged by some 80 percent since its high of \$13.60 12 years ago.

fracking and horizontal drilling technologies that keep getting more and more efficient, we now have hundreds of years of supply of this fuel.

This spectacular tumble in natural gas prices has been a multibillion-dollar godsend to consumers, homeowners, manufacturers, and other businesses. Just last week, a major Texas utility announced it would be sending homeowners cash-back checks because electricity and home heating costs are falling so rapidly. Expect more to do the same in the coming months.

Meanwhile, the United States continues to reduce its carbon emissions into the atmosphere at a faster pace than virtually any other country in the world. This is because natural gas is not just cheap. It is one of the cleanest ways to produce scalable and dependable electric power for a nation of 329 million people. We don’t need brownouts in America as we saw in California, and natural gas is an excellent way to make sure the lights don’t go out.

It would be hard to find anything NOT to like about this great American success story. We’ve achieved energy independence; reliable and inexhaustible supply; low prices; reduced power of the Middle East, Russia and other OPEC nations; and cleaner air than at any other time in at least a century.

Yet liberal environmentalists are grouching about this good news. A recent Bloomberg news story exclaims in its headline: “Cheap Gas Imperils Climate Fight by Undercutting Wind and Solar.”

“Gas is such a bargain that it’s being viewed less as a bridge fossil fuel, driving the world away from dirtier coal toward a clean-energy future,” the story tells us, “and more as a hurdle that could slow the trip down. Some forecasters are predicting prices will stay low for years, making it tough for states, cities, and utilities to achieve their goals of being zero-carbon in power production by 2050 or earlier.”

Ravina Advani, head of renewable energy at BNP Paribas, complained: “The fact that there’s an abundance of it makes the move to complete decarbonization much harder ... (Gas is) reliable, and it’s cheap.”

And that is bad news, why, exactly? It’s like saying a cure for the coronavirus is bad for hospitals and doctors.

Maybe it’s high time we admit we have found, for now, the great energy source of the next few decades and celebrate that America is endowed with a vital resource that is abundant and affordable—just like our best-in-the-world farmland. The left talks about eradicating “poverty,” but “energy poverty” is a primary source of deprivation around the world.

Now, there is an obvious solution: Natural gas could easily be the primary source of power production for the world

as a whole, slashing costs for the poor everywhere on the planet, from sub-Saharan Africa to Bangladesh. Instead, politicians and government bureaucrats around the world are trying to force-feed the world expensive, unreliable, and unscalable wind and solar power. The African Development Bank, for example, is only financing “green energy” projects, not coal or natural gas. It is substituting a cheap form of clean energy for a costly “green” alternative. Why?

In the United States, this foolishness is happening every day as the federal government, in addition to state governments, is massively subsidizing wind and solar power—even though they are, in most places, only niche sources of fuel. With more than \$100 billion spent already, less than 10 percent of our energy comes from the wind and the sun, with most of the other 90 percent coming from good old-fashioned fossil fuels.

For all the talk about the falling costs of solar and wind power—and yes, they are falling—without billions of dollars of cash subsidies and tax breaks for the “renewable” energy sector, along with mandates requiring utilities to buy the power at any cost, wind and solar energy would be hopelessly expensive in most areas of the country. As a result, they would quickly surrender market share to natural gas and clean coal. (Don’t look now, but coal prices are falling, too.)

It’s time to get smart about energy and climate change and throw asunder taxpayer subsidies doled out to all forms of energy production. Let the market, not politicians and environmental groups, choose the safest, cheapest and most reliable energy source. Everyone is making a big bet on battery-operated cars and trucks. But who’s to say that trucks and buses fueled by natural gas won’t be the wave of the future? No one knows what makes the most sense or where the future will lead us. Nuclear power has great promise.

But for now, the markets are shouting out for natural gas on a grander scale.

Fifteen years ago, no one would have thought we would have a superabundance of this wonder-fuel today. But we do. No one is more surprised than politicians. Why do we let them keep betting the farm on the wrong horse?

Stephen Moore is an economics journalist, author, and columnist. The latest of many books he co-authored is “Trumponomics: Inside the America First Plan to Revive Our Economy.” Currently, Moore is also the chief economist for the Institute for Economic Freedom and Opportunity.

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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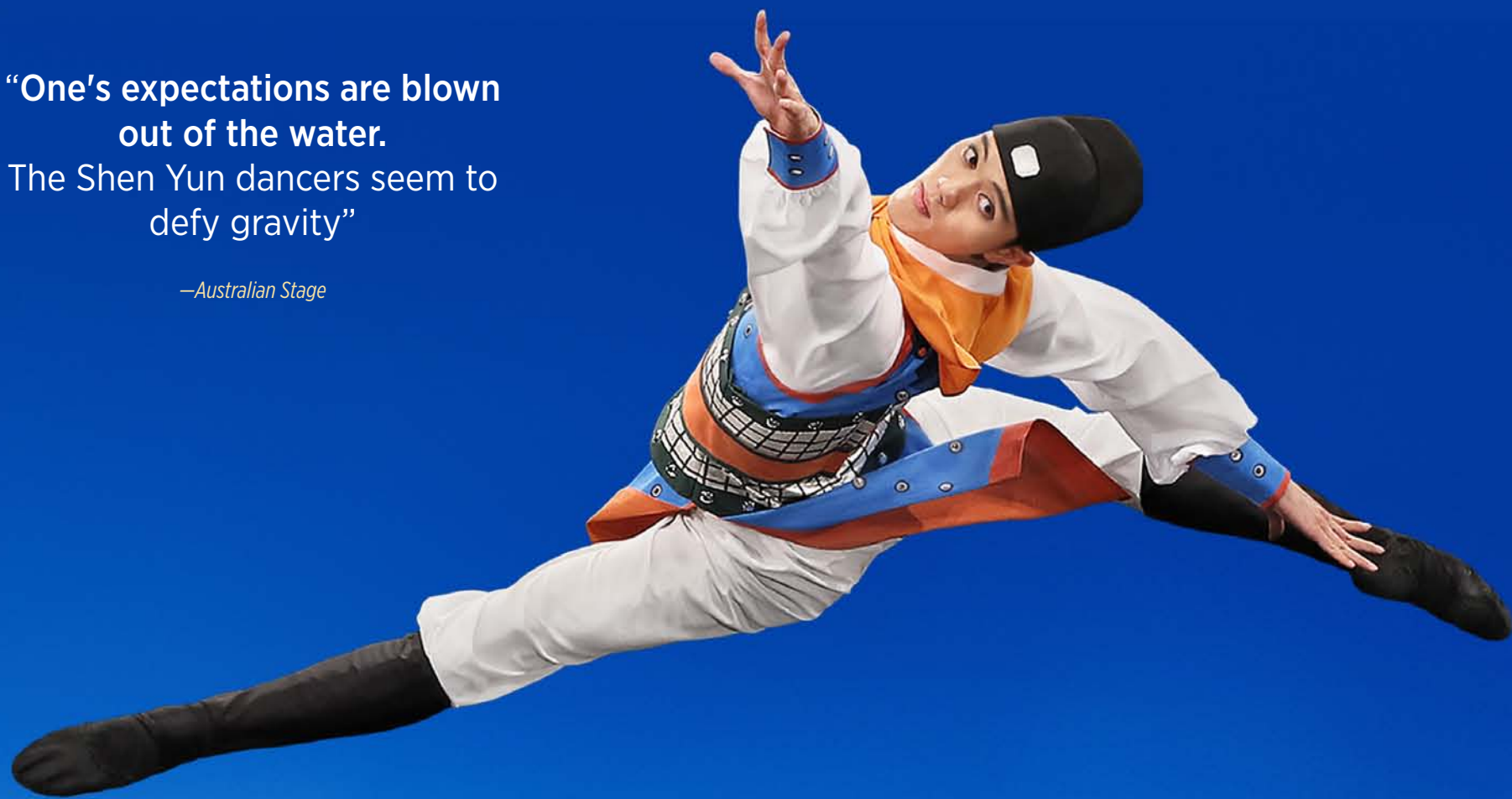


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LIFE

THE EPOCH TIMES

KEITH SWEENEY/NATIONAL MUSEUMS LIVERPOOL



Two works by Taki Katei: “Deer,” paper, pigment, and ink, 65 9/16 inches by 21 7/8 inches; and “Receiving Heaven and One Hundred Rewards,” paper, pigment, and ink, 62 7/8 inches by 24 inches.

FINE ARTS

Taki Katei: A Champion of Tradition in a Time of Immense Change

The drawings of a Japanese master

LORRAINE FERRIER

In the 1890s, Japanese artist Taki Katei (1830–1901) was at the height of his career, honored with professional accolades and inundated with commissions. In 1893, he was honored as “Imperial Household Artist,” an accolade awarded for his work for Japan’s imperial court.

Despite Katei’s fame, you’ve probably never heard of him.

The reason Katei is “not famous now, even in Japan,” is because in the early 20th century, Katei’s style of painting was seen as out-of-date, wrote curator Rosina Buckland in an email. Buckland, who authored “Painting Nature for the Nation: Taki Katei and the Challenges to Sinophile Culture in Meiji Japan”

in 2012, said that artists associated with the government-sponsored Toyko School of Fine Arts “were regarded as innovative and more worthy of attention.”

Buckland also acted as a guest curator, alongside curator Alex Blakeborough, for the exhibition “Drawing on Nature: Taki Katei’s Japan” at the World Museum in Liverpool, England. Blakeborough is the World Mu-

seum’s assistant curator of ethnology.

A total of 82 drawings, consisting of preparatory works for commissions, studies of paintings, and teaching aids for Katei’s students, are on show from the collection of the National Museums Liverpool, a group of museums and galleries that includes the World Museum.

Continued on B4

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How SHEN YUN IS REVIVING THE CLASSICAL ARTS



Artistic group brings beauty, tradition, and innovation on stage

MADALINA HUBERT

The past centuries have shown incredible innovation, bringing technological and scientific progress that people in the early days of our civilization could not even imagine.

In the arts, however, we have seen a steady decline. Much of the body of classical art, including the most beloved works of symphonic music, opera, ballet, and painting, was completed by the 19th century with few acknowledged masterpieces after that.

I had often wondered why these traditional arts, which are respected and honored as some of the greatest achievements of humanity, experienced such a steep decline.

It is not that there was no artistic creation. The 20th century saw plenty of new works and talented companies and artists, but very few of these pieces have had the enduring appeal of their forebears. They've come and gone with trends, often becoming a vehicle for venting despair and the dark side of human nature.

A Rebirth on Stage

As we entered the 21st century, however, a new phenomenon emerged with the appearance of Shen Yun Performing Arts. Established in 2006, this little-known company, created in New York by overseas Chinese artists, emerged on the world stage and awed audiences with performances of profound beauty and goodness, rooted in the classical arts.

The company's mission was to revive 5,000 years of China's divine culture. It rapidly grew in size, reaching hundreds of cities and millions of audience members around the world. Many of them said they had found inspiration in the artistry and values Shen Yun portrayed on stage.

In interviews, these audience members, including renowned artists, repeated the words "perfection," "beauty," and "divine." Some were surprised at the flawless music, others were amazed at the coordination and athleticism of the dancers, and many were taken by surprise by the otherworldly beauty of the backdrops, which interacted with the artists on stage in perfect synchronicity.

As I watched the performances of Shen Yun Performing Arts and the concert performances of the Shen Yun Symphony Orchestra, I experienced the grandeur of the dance pieces and the virtuosity of the orchestra. I started to realize that the 21st century has actually brought us a revival of the classical arts, a revival that generations of people in the artistic community had been seeking.

In watching the combination of beauty and tradition with cultural and techno-

By blending the distinct sensibilities of Chinese music with the power of a Western orchestra, Shen Yun has achieved a feat of musical harmony.

logical innovation, I felt it was almost as if the essence of humanity's achievements had become embodied in Shen Yun's performances. The artistic company was presenting Chinese dance and history, but the language and meaning were universal.

Knowing of the darkness that often manifested in other dance performances, I watched as divine inspiration was presenting itself on stage with Shen Yun. I was humbled and impressed at the same time.

Below are some of the aspects that make Shen Yun's performances outstanding and innovative.

Dance

In the West, ballet has long been considered the most elegant and comprehensive dance system, offering performances of unrivaled athletic precision and ethereal grace for the past several hundred years. Few people, however, knew of classical Chinese dance, which had been passed down through thousands of years and had accumulated a rich vocabulary of movements, rhythms, and inner meanings.

Through its performances, Shen Yun brings classical Chinese dance, alongside Chinese ethnic and folk dances, to the forefront. The dancers' precision, athleticism, and synchronicity have impressed multitudes of audience members in many countries. This has allowed classical Chinese dance to take its rightful place alongside ballet as one of the most comprehensive dance systems in the world.

Shen Yun's performances have not only brought us an unknown dance system, but they have also presented dance in its purest form, embodying universal spiritual values such as truth, kindness, and forbearance through the characters and scenes the dancers portray.

Music

Shen Yun's orchestra, which accompanies the dance pieces, is a combination of tradition, virtuosity, and innovation. By blending the distinct sensibilities of Chinese music with the power of a Western orchestra, Shen Yun has achieved a feat of musical harmony. Not only does a Western orchestra play original compositions—melodies that embody the Chinese spirit—but Shen Yun also incorporates traditional Chinese instruments such as the gong, pipa, and erhu as permanent members of the orchestra.

In listening to the music, we can hear the traditional Chinese instruments enhanced by the strength of the Western instruments. The effect is one that is pleasing to the ear yet also rich in meaning, history, and values.

By taking a Western symphony orchestra, which is already a complete body, and expanding its potential through the inclusion of Chinese instruments and musical styles, Shen Yun has thus brought about a groundbreaking development that is sure to have a tremendous effect on the development of classical music.

Another outstanding feature, likely to have a significant impact on the vocal arts, is Shen Yun's revival of the authentic bel canto technique for singing in the upper register. Originally mastered by artists in ancient Chinese theater and early European opera, the technique has since been lost in both China and the West. However, Shen Yun has rediscovered it and is presenting it on stage today.

The lyrics of the singers' songs are profoundly spiritual, offering reflections on the meaning of life and our place in the world today. These lyrics continue in the tradition of spirituality that has been long present in both Eastern and Western classical music, yet they transcend all spiritual beliefs, speaking to the innermost longings of our hearts.

Backdrops and Costumes

While presenting traditional culture, Shen Yun makes admirable use of 21st-century technology, having patented a special technique that allows performers to interact with the digital backdrops in perfect timing. A feat of artistry, technology, and choreography, the backdrops take audiences to celestial kingdoms, imperial palaces, and colorful plains. They extend the stage and immerse us in a multisensory experience that even seems to make time travel possible. Presented in classical, realistic style, the images enhance the traditional beauty and grandeur of the dances.

In addition, the colors of the backdrops complement the dancers' costumes, which are in themselves artistic creations based on extensive research and inspiration. According to the Shen Yun website, the costume designers are focused on harmonic balance and contrast, aiming to present both an authentic expression of divinely inspired traditional attire and a consummate stage effect. The result, certainly breathtaking with vibrant color combinations, often leaves the audience in awe.

A Tradition Continues

Shen Yun's rapid growth in less than 15 years is a testimony to our yearning for beauty, traditions, and divinely inspired values and aesthetics on stage. The pursuit of artistic excellence and divine inspiration by Shen Yun's artists continues in the tradition of the Western classical masters, and brings in the vigor and inspiration from China's 5,000 years of civilization.

In the future, we are certain to look at this time as a special period in our artistic history: the rebirth of a greater awareness of the purpose of the arts to elevate humanity and bring goodness into our lives.

For more information, visit ShenYun.com

DAI BING/THE EPOCH TIMES



(Above) "Celebrating the Divine."

(Right) Violinist Fiona Zheng and conductor Milen Nachev with the Shen Yun Symphony Orchestra.

Discover the Healing Power of Music

The Shen Yun Symphony Orchestra's world tour is only weeks away. In anticipation of our new season, we take a moment to celebrate the healing power of music, and explore the ancient wisdom behind it all.

Ancient Chinese knew that music had the power to heal. In fact, the Chinese character, or word, for 'medicine' actually comes from the word for 'music.'

Over the course of 5,000 years, the worldview that man and heaven are one, and that all matter has life, has permeated every aspect of Chinese culture—including music.

Chinese music, for example, uses a pentatonic scale, and its five notes are connected to China's theory of the Five Elements. The Five Elements are in turn connected to the human body's five main internal organ systems.

The first note, gong (宫), is connected to the earth element, which corresponds to the digestive system. Music based on this note makes a person feel serene. The third note, jue (角), is connected to the wood element, and relates to liver health.

Sages of the past in both the East and West saw great value in elegant music that nurtured virtue. It placed a person's organs in harmony and brought balance to the mind.

Much of today's music is decadent and noisy. It's chaotic and provokes the senses; it even wounds the body.

Music is in harmony with heaven and earth... Virtuous, elegant music is in alignment with the motion of matter and with principles of human health. It possesses a Pure energy.



Ancient Chinese knew that music has the power to heal and ingrained this wisdom in the Chinese character for 'medicine,' which is actually the character for 'music' with the addition of the 艹 component (simplified from 艸) indicating a relation to grass, herbs, or plants.

In its original compositions, Shen Yun simply uses classical composition methods and harmonies.

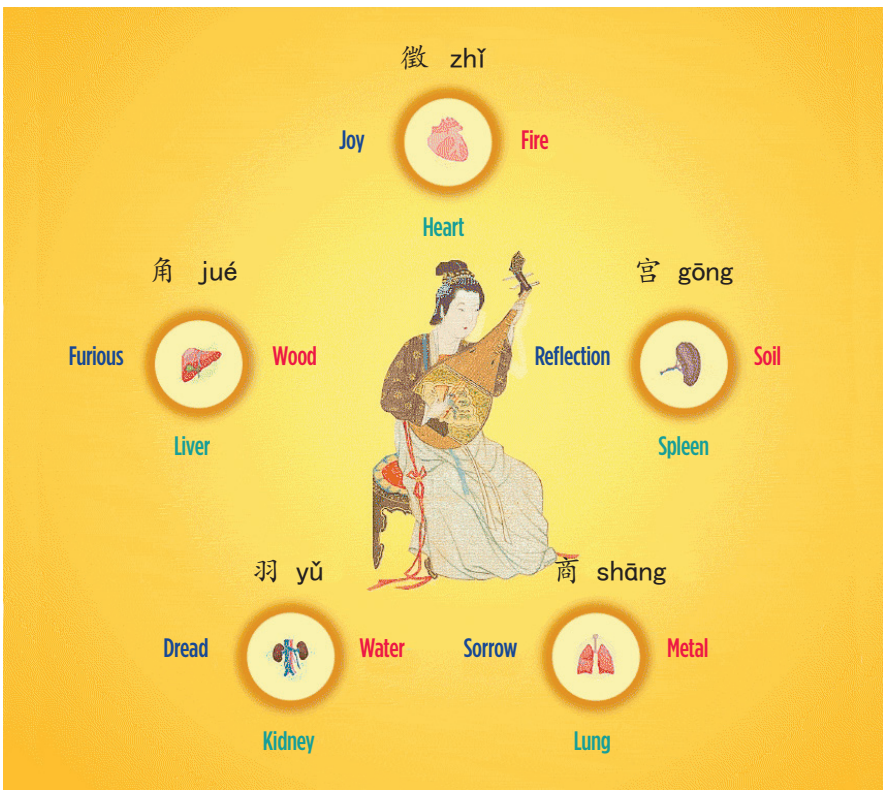
Pure Energy

In ancient China, music was not only a form of entertainment, but also a way of spiritual elevation. Refining one's character and seeking harmony with heaven was a natural part of the artistic process. Using this approach, an artist's music would carry a pure energy and bring a sense of wellbeing to all who listened.

Shen Yun's artists are reviving this tradition of self-refinement and cultivation in the arts. As much as they are artists, they are also spiritual seekers on a shared journey. They meditate together, study teachings together, and strive to live by the principles of truth, compassion, and tolerance.

This inner difference makes Shen Yun unique. It might also explain why many audience members report feeling energized and uplifted after listening to a Shen Yun Symphony Orchestra concert.

For the ultimate musical experience, come see the Shen Yun Symphony Orchestra on tour in North America this October.



The healing power of Shen Yun's original compositions comes from the connection between the five notes in the pentatonic scale and China's theory of the Five Elements—which are in turn connected to the five main internal organ systems in the human body.

Coronavirus has no effect on Shen Yun

DANIEL TENG

With concerns over coronavirus high, audience members have asked whether Shen Yun is still able to perform.

According to a press release on Shen Yun's website, the performing arts group is still performing and touring the world:

"Shen Yun is based in New York, not China. Performers have not been to China in years, have not had recent direct contact with people from China, and in fact Shen Yun is not even allowed to perform in China."

The Utah Department of Health in the United States, has corroborated these claims in a tweet on the 26th February:

"We are aware of several rumours regarding the Shen Yun dance troupe performances in SLC (Salt Lake City). We have investigated them and have no reason to believe that any

Shen Yun is based in New York, not China. Performers have not been to China in years, have not had recent direct contact with people from China, and in fact Shen Yun is not even allowed to perform in China.

members of the Shen Yun dance troupe are infected with COVID-19..."

Established in 2006 in upstate New York, Shen Yun was founded by a group of elite Chinese artists with the mission of reviving five thousand years of traditional Chinese culture.

During the Chinese Cultural Revolution (1966 to 1976), traditional culture, values and arts were destroyed systematically, as the communist regime sought to establish its own identity on the populace.

Even today, the communist regime has continued its mandate and tightly controls artistic endeavours in the country, including censorship over Hollywood film, media and art exhibits.

Hence, traditional Chinese cultural performances, such as Shen Yun, have not been allowed access into China.

SHEN YUN PERFORMING ARTS

Audience Reactions

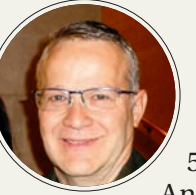
The Epoch Times considers Shen Yun Performing Arts the significant cultural event of our time and has covered audience reactions since the company's inception in 2006.

The Epoch Times is a media sponsor of Shen Yun Performing Arts, and believes its mission to revive the 5,000-year civilization of China is history in the making, and in line with our mission of covering and preserving traditional arts and culture.



It's an experience of a lifetime, I would encourage anyone to come and see it ... The colors are breathtaking, the precision is immeasurable, I've never seen anything like it ... You feel like you're living the experience, because the actors and the dancers execute everything with such precision, and such drama that it pulls you in ... I immediately connected with ... the fact that we're here for a purpose, but that life goes on after this world, and that's what I'm walking away with this evening.

CATHERINE SZERSZEN Ms. Kentucky Senior America 2016, at the William H. Mortensen Hall at The Bushnell Theatre in Hartford, Conn., on Feb. 8, 2020



It was a great mixture of action and ideas and spirituality and power, physical power ... The truth 5,000 years ago is ageless. And we age and dynasties age, but it stays youthful, and is the same throughout. And the integrity and honesty and kindness, that doesn't grow old.

PETE MILLETT museum director, at the William H. Mortensen Hall at The Bushnell Theatre in Hartford, Conn., on Feb. 8, 2020



I noticed that there was such an honor and admiration of the divine, and that we were also, throughout this performance, honoring the divine within each other.

And I think that's something that really can be showcased throughout not only Chinese culture but all cultures across the globe. If we really honor and recognize each other's divinity, the more productive, creative, supportive and loving we can be as a people in general.

DEBORAH BURNS brand strategist, at the William H. Mortensen Hall at The Bushnell Theatre in Hartford, Conn., on Feb. 8, 2020



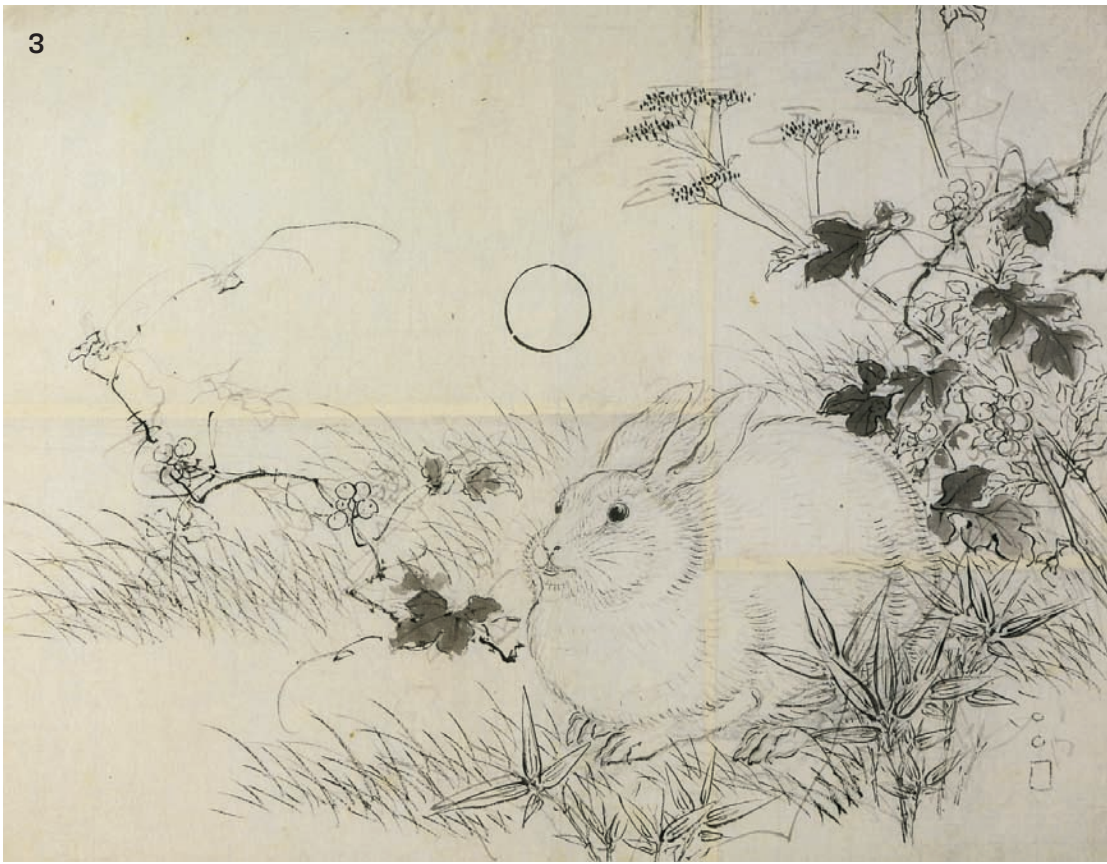
It's really quite breathtaking ... There's a lot of structured movement, which is what I like. Very structured movement. It wouldn't work nearly as well as if they weren't as precise as their precision. Remarkable.

MIKE LECKRONE director of the University of Wisconsin Marching Band from 1969–2019, at the Overture Center for the Arts in Madison, Wis., on Feb. 5, 2020



It's fascinating. I think one of the most interesting things to me is that they're talking about the history before modern-day China, which we assume is just communism and a lack of religion and a lack of understanding of any type of spirituality. But what's so fascinating about this history that they're talking about is that there is a lot of spirituality. There's a lot of these teachings that are much, much older than what we know about modern-day communist China. And it's just such a rich history. It's amazing!

JEREMY PIERSON investor, at the William Saroyan Theatre in Fresno, Calif., on Feb. 6, 2020



FINE ARTS

Taki Katei: A Champion of Tradition in a Time of Immense Change

The drawings of a Japanese master

- 1. "Bush Peonies" by Taki Katei. Paper, pigment, and ink; 56 7/8 inches by 23 1/4 inches.
- 2. "Cranes" by Kazunori Ishibashi. Paper, pigment, and ink; 14 5/8 inches by 11 1/4 inches.
- 3. A finished work: "Rabbit" by Taki Katei or Kazunori Ishibashi. Paper and ink; 16 5/8 inches by 21 inches.

Continued from B1

The exhibits include works by Katei and his student Kazunori Ishibashi. The works are in the museum's permanent collection due to one of Katei's students, Ishibashi (1876-1928), who studied at the Royal Academy of Arts in London. Rather surprisingly, it's the first time Katei's work has been shown outside of Japan.

Taki Katei Championed Tradition
Born in 1830, Taki Katei grew up in a time when Japan's art was rich with traditions. Artists borrowed particularly from the traditions of classical Chinese painting, but also followed the tradition of studying from life (people and animals) and botany. Artists started teaching Katei these traditions when he was just 6 years old. At 20 years old, he traveled to Nagasaki to be closer to Chinese culture. At that time,



A finished work: "Prosperity and Fragrance" by Taki Katei. Paper, pigment, and ink; 15 1/2 inches by 44 1/4 inches.

Nagasaki was the only port open in Japan and trade was restricted to the Netherlands, Korea, and China. Here, Katei could mix with Chinese artists and literati who taught him about their culture firsthand. Over the next 15 or 16 years, Katei traveled around Japan, learning from teachers and by imitating great works; he worked on com-

missions as he went. In this way, he built up his reputation as well as an archive of works. These enabled him to open an art school in his home when he returned to Tokyo in 1866, Blakeborough said in a phone interview. By 1868, Japan was in turmoil. The Tokugawa shogun "great general" of the Edo period (1603-1867) was overthrown, ending Japan's

ALL PHOTOS BY KEITH SWEENEY/NATIONAL MUSEUMS LIVERPOOL



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To perfect silk painting takes incredible patience, skill, and endless practice.



5



6

feudal system. Japan's emperor replaced the shogun, becoming Japan's supreme ruler, and reigned as the Meiji emperor of "enlightened rule." Thus began a time of immense transition for Japan, when tradition largely came second to Westernization. Japan welcomed steam locomotives and Western styles of architecture and dress, for example.

The government formed an art school and museum and ran regular public exhibitions. Artists were encouraged to integrate Western styles into their art and adapt works for exhibition halls, glazing and framing paintings rather than creating the traditional silk hanging scrolls.

"Katei did not integrate any stylistic elements from Western painting into his work," Buckland said. He belonged to the Japan Art Association, a group of artists who "sought to re-energize the established form of Japanese painting," she said.

The association promoted Japanese traditional art overseas and submitted art at international expositions in Chicago in 1893, and Paris in 1900. They held two annual exhibitions in Toyko and submitted work to government-sponsored exhibitions.

The group exhibited art that specifically showcased powerful

- 4. A finished work: "Autumn Scene" by Kazunori Ishibashi. Paper, pigment, and ink; 43 5/8 inches by 75 7/8 inches.
- 5. "Jurojin, God of Longevity" by Taki Katei. Paper, pigment, and ink; 37 3/8 inches by 15 1/2 inches.
- 6. "Waves of the First Rank" by Taki Katei. Paper, pigment, and ink; 76 1/2 inches by 44 3/8 inches.

and eye-catching motifs or themes that represented Japanese culture, Buckland explained.

'Drawing on Nature: Taki Katei's Japan'

Katei's drawings in the exhibition show just how artists studying with Katei would've been taught these traditional art practices. The drawings could be for folding screens, sliding doors, fans, albums, hand-rolls, and of course, hanging scrolls, according to the exhibition audio guide.

They were "functional pieces used in teaching his students how to paint certain motifs, instructing them in the subject matter of traditional East Asian painting (most of this derived from China) and the whole language of set themes for paintings, some dating back almost a thousand years in China," Buckland said. These painting themes were detailed in an 1886 book for apprentice artists that Katei contributed to.

In the exhibition, the drawings are pinned rather than hung in the gallery, allowing visitors a glimpse into how Katei's students learned from him. "His works would have been pinned around his studio for his students to copy, so that's really what [we're] doing; we're continuing his tradition of teaching," Blakeborough explained.

The amount of detail in many of the drawings is incredible. "I can still remember the first time that I saw these works and being astounded that they were not actually finished pieces," Blakeborough said.

Most of the work consists of preparatory drawings. For Katei, "to be able to repeat that detail and skill [for the final piece] is astonishing in itself," Blakeborough said.

Katei had to render the drawings to such an extent if the painting was done on silk, because the tiniest errors are impossible to erase. To perfect silk painting takes incredible patience, skill, and endless practice.

Those principles come through Katei's drawings in the exhibition. Gridlines appear on some drawings so that the picture could be enlarged when copied. Some of the drawings are annotated with corrections, as in a delightful drawing of a pair of cranes by Kazunori Ishibashi. The birds' heads have been gently adjusted in red ink by either Katei or Ishibashi.

In "Bush Peonies," Katei's delicate pink peony petals hint at a velvet texture and perhaps even a whiff of fine fragrance. And in another, simply called "Deer," the animal's fur is so finely rendered that you can sense it's soft to the touch.

These subjects were not just

flights of fancy that Katei wanted to paint. Japanese paintings, just as in Chinese classical art, used nature to portray meaning. The peony brimming with its multiple layers of dense petals represents wealth and prosperity, and a deer represents longevity.

Katei and his students would've had to learn this language of East Asian art—a language conveyed not by the written or spoken word, but by the language of symbolism.

Many of these drawings and hanging scrolls are full of meaning. Often, households have 1,000 years' worth of tradition stored away in their hanging scrolls only to be unraveled on certain occasions. The peony, if in bloom, would be stored until summertime and then hung. A painting such as "Waves of the First Rank," featuring majestic cranes in undulating waves, could be hung to herald the New Year. The red-crested crane was a symbol of longevity and purity.

To have Katei's works hung in one exhibition at the same time is fortuitous indeed—for Japanese traditional culture and for art itself. May this be the first of many Taki Katei exhibitions outside of Japan.

To find out more about "Drawing on Nature: Taki Katei's Japan," which runs until April 13, visit LiverpoolMuseums.org.uk

Feeling Connected Makes Us Kind

A study suggests that our social connections inspire altruism

NADINE LUERAS-TRAMMA

We all know that it feels good to feel connected to other people—indeed, research has even linked social connections to happiness, health, and longer life. But one study suggests that our feelings of connection don’t just make us feel good; they also make us do good. In the study, researchers tried a few different ways of making people feel connected to others, testing to see whether such feelings of “relatedness” motivated those people to perform kind, helpful or “pro-social” acts. Prior research has suggested that this sense of connection is one of three ingredients people need to really thrive in life; the other two are feeling capable of achieving their goals, known as “competence,” and feeling in control of their own actions and decisions, known as “autonomy.”

In one experiment, the researchers had participants read words associated with social connection (e.g., community, connected, relationship) and then asked them how much they intended to volunteer for a charity. The results show that people were more willing to volunteer for a charity after reading those words than they were after reading a series of other, neutral words (e.g., book, lamp, shoe). They were also more likely to want to volunteer after reading the social connection words than after reading words that evoked autonomy (e.g., freedom, choice, preference) or competence (e.g., skilled, expert, competent). In a second experiment, the researchers had participants write about a time that they felt a close bond with someone else, bringing to mind that feeling of connection. Then they asked how willing the participants were to perform five pro-social actions over the coming weeks, including giving money to charity and going out of their way to help a stranger in need.

Feeling socially connected reduces aggression, whereas feeling excluded increases aggression and reduces pro-social behaviors.

Just thinking about their close connection boosted people’s altruistic impulses: After writing about their relationship, they showed a stronger desire to help others than they did after writing about feeling competent, autonomous, or just after answering some banal questions (e.g., “I think that the color blue looks great on most people”). And it seems like these feelings of connection do more than encourage good intentions; they also spur positive actions. In a third and final experiment, participants either read words evoking social connection or read neutral words, just like in the first experiment. Afterward, they were given the chance to anonymously donate some of the money they earned for participating in the study to the British Red Cross, which they were told was working with the researchers. Nearly half of the participants who had been reminded of their social connections donated to the Red Cross, whereas fewer than 20 percent of the other participants did. Although previous studies have suggested a link between altruism and feelings of relatedness, this study is the first to find that inducing those feelings can directly cause people to be kinder and more generous. According to the researchers, their findings highlight the basic human need for belonging. In their paper, published in the Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin, they point to other research showing that feeling socially connected reduces aggression, whereas feeling excluded increases aggression and reduces pro-social behaviors. Taken together, they argue, these findings suggest that helping people connect with others benefits their own well-being and could benefit society as a whole. They call for more research to explore precisely how fostering social connections can boost pro-social behavior. “Such research could promote simultaneously individual welfare and the welfare of others,” they write, “in a way that would challenge the assumption that there is some kind of conflict between the two.”

Nadine Lueras-Tramma is a Greater Good research assistant. This article was originally published on the Greater Good online magazine.

These findings suggest that helping people connect with others benefits their own well-being and could benefit society as a whole.





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Someone’s Watching: Why Anyone Can Be a Good Role Model

Harnessing the power of positive influence, no matter how small-scale

CONAN MILNER

We learn by imitation, and we look to role models for guidance. Professional athletes, pop stars, and other celebrities are often promoted as role models, and historical figures like George Washington or Ghandi remain popular exemplars of grace, sacrifice, and leadership. Buddha, Jesus, and other spiritual leaders are important examples to many, and everyday people like parents and teachers are often looked up to.

The role model dynamic is simply about demonstrating characteristics others wish to emulate.

Advertisers seek celebrity role models due to their success and good looks. But you don’t have to be rich, famous, or have less than 10 percent body fat to have an impact on the people around you.

According to Dr. John DeGarmo, director of the Foster Care Institute, we’re all role models whether we like it or not.

“We are all walking, talking role models,” DeGarmo said. “Every single one of us is. Somebody is looking up to us in some way. Somebody is watching what we do and listening to what we say.”

DeGarmo has thought a lot about the power of role modeling, especially with kids. During his tenure as a teacher at a rural high school, he noticed several of his students with a pattern of behavioral problems, academic issues, and poor attendance.

“I kept asking, why is this? And then I met a lot of their birth parents and realized it starts in the home,” he said.

Parenting may be the most important and intensive role modeling gig there is. We don’t just pass down our genetic material, but our way of life. Kids try on their parents’ habits and routines, see how they fit, and make them their own.

But what happens to kids without parents? Where do they get their guidance? These questions led DeGarmo and his wife to open up their home to numerous children. In addition to their own six kids (both biological and adopted), the DeGarmos are currently foster parents to three siblings. Over the past decade, more than 50 foster kids have lived at the DeGarmo house, and he tries to give them all the best impression he can.

“When these kids come to my home, some of them have never seen how a husband treats a wife,” he said. “They’ve never seen somebody interact with people at the grocery store or the gas station, in all walks of life or in difficult situations.”

DeGarmo says that if he doesn’t teach his kids how to behave, he knows someone else—or something else—will.

“We’re living in a society where more and more children are being raised by

As long as we realize that our behavior at any moment might manifest in someone else, we become more mindful of our actions.

Our words and actions can help endorse the virtues of a healthy lifestyle, the importance of education, or other positive qualities.

cellphones, computers, and tablets—everything except an actual human being to interact with them,” he said.

“That’s why it’s even more essential that we try to counter that and be a positive role model to everyone that we meet. It’s a big responsibility, but it’s an important one.”

Becoming a Positive Role Model

The DeGarmos have taken in so many kids because there are so many that need help. Fueled in part by the opioid crisis, several U.S. states are currently experiencing a corresponding foster care crisis, as a growing number of children lack a home or guardians to care for them.

“Two of the kids I’ve adopted are third-generation foster care, which means that their parents and their grandparents have been in foster care as well. The system failed them. They didn’t get what they needed from their parents or other members of society. They just followed this vicious cycle they were in,” he said. “We broke that with the kids we adopted.”

DeGarmo wants more people to adopt or become foster parents, but he says there are many ways to counter the negative influences that all children pick up. Other positive role models can include teachers, coaches, and tutors.

“For today’s kids, if there is no one there to show them that this is how we act, this is how we talk, this is proper behavior, this is positive role modeling, then we’re going to have a generation that is in rough shape,” he said.

Positive role modeling doesn’t require a formal title. As long as we realize that our behavior at any moment might manifest in someone else, we become more mind-

SABINE VAN STRAATEN/UNSPLASH



ful of our actions. This by itself makes the world a better place.

“We need to embrace the possibility that we might be the only positive role model some children might ever see,” DeGarmo said.

Mirroring for the Future

It can be daunting to consider that even the little details of your behavior may be copied and scrutinized by the world around you. In a 2017 article in Interview magazine, actress Emma Watson admitted that living under such pressure can be a little paralyzing.

“When people call me a role model, it puts the fear of God into me, because I feel like I’m destined to fail,” she said.

Many young women look up to Watson for her accomplishments, but you don’t have to play strong female roles or be a U.N. Women’s Goodwill Ambassador to promote a positive influence. Just by being a good, kind person you can help guide the way.

According to Dr. Shelly Chandler, a licensed mental health counselor and provost of Beacon College in Leesburg, Florida, our words and actions can help endorse the virtues of a healthy lifestyle, the importance of an education, or other positive qualities.

“I grew up on a farm where my father valued hard work,” Chandler said in an email. “We were encouraged by receiving his positive attention when working on the farm together. These activities provided us with a shared vision and promoted his values of hard work and integrity within us.”

But this mirroring feature works the other way, too. Chandler says that when children see a negative behavior that is not followed by a consequence, it can lead to something called “negative vicarious learning.”

Some examples can be extreme, like the Dallas boy who killed his younger brother while trying to imitate a wrestling move he saw on television. However, commonplace examples can be more insidious, such as celebrities who appear to enjoy success without hard work.

“Vicarious learning is a tendency to commit a behavior that someone else gets praise or attention for even when it is negative,” Chandler said. “There are always examples of vicarious learning in the media.”

It’s inevitable that kids will be exposed to bad behavior, and this is why they need regular exposure to positive role models to help balance the scales. But DeGarmo said that many kids are growing up in a culture where they see mostly bad examples, with no one to tell them what is right or wrong.

“A child wants to do the right thing,” he said. “Lots of children just simply don’t know how to do that because they’ve never had somebody spend time with them in a positive fashion.”



The authors of a new low-sugar, kid-tested family cookbook share tips and recipes

ANDREW THOMAS

A hidden enemy lurks in much of the food and beverages kids love to eat and drink: added sugar. Unlike the naturally occurring sugars in fruits, vegetables, and dairy, added sugars are added to food and beverages during cooking or before serving. According to the American Heart Association, children ages 2–18 and adult women should have a daily limit of six teaspoons of added sugar, and men should limit themselves to nine teaspoons. Children under two years of age shouldn’t consume any added sugar at all.

But children are regularly eating three times the daily recommended amount of sugar, which can lead to a variety of health problems, including type 2 diabetes, obesity, cardiovascular disease, hypertension, and high cholesterol.

Two mothers are on a mission to help reduce kids’ sugar intake—and prove that they don’t have to sacrifice the meals and sweet treats they love to do so.

Jennifer Tyler Lee and Dr. Anisha Patel are the authors of the new cookbook “Half the Sugar, All the Love.” The family-friendly cookbook features 100 simple, low-sugar recipes for breakfast, lunch, and dinner, from oven-baked Korean chicken wings, glazed in a date-sweetened chili sauce, to double chocolate brownies, sweetened with sweet potatoes and almond butter.

Lee is a cookbook author and home cook, and Patel is a licensed pediatrician and associate professor of general pediatrics at Stanford University.

I had an opportunity to speak with both authors about their new book, and the importance of teaching children how to eat and cook with less sugar.

The Epoch Times: Why did you decide to write for a family audience, and why was it important to write for kids in particular?

Jennifer Tyler Lee: My focus has always been children’s health because I think if we start our kids on the right path, that sets them up for a lifetime of healthy habits. Beyond that, kids are consuming their weight in added sugar every year: 64 pounds a year. That level of excess added sugar consumption is leading to serious health consequences.

Anisha Patel: Given our backgrounds (Jen had developed a healthy eating cookbook and game for families, I’m a

“
Many children and adults exceed their daily added sugar limit of six to nine teaspoons after eating breakfast.

Anisha Patel,
co-author

“
Added sugar shows up in places where you expect it, like cakes and cookies, and also in places where you don’t expect it, like condiments, dressings, and soups.

Jennifer Tyler Lee,
co-author



Anisha Patel.

pediatrician, and we are both moms of kids who like to cook), this was the ideal target audience. In addition, as dietary preferences are established early, we wanted to make sure that our focus was on children.

Why do you think added sugar has become so prevalent in our society’s diets?

Ms. Lee: Added sugar shows up in places where you expect it, like cakes and cookies, and also in places where you don’t expect it, like condiments, dressings, and soups. I call those sneaky sugars because you’re not even aware you’re consuming that sugar. In some cases it’s a savory dish, and you’re consuming added sugar.

Dr. Patel: Historically, fat was removed from foods based on health [recommendations], but then sugar and salt were added to improve the flavor of those low-fat foods. Sugar also is added to help mask lower quality ingredients—for example, less ripe tomatoes in winter. Sugar is a preservative and helps to make foods more shelf stable.

Is there a particular meal of the day that is the major culprit for excess added sugar?

Ms. Lee: It really shows up in all of our meals. You can have what you think of as a healthy breakfast—yogurt, granola, topped with berries, maybe a drizzle of honey—and you’ve exceeded your added sugar intake for the day. That breakfast can have as much sugar as a candy bar in some cases.

Dr. Patel: Beverages account for about 50 percent of added sugar intake. That is the major culprit. Many children and adults exceed their daily added sugar limit of six



Jennifer Tyler Lee.

to nine teaspoons after eating breakfast. Breakfast foods with a “health halo” such as raisin bran and other cereals, yogurt, granola, energy bars, and oatmeal, have a lot of added sugar.

What are some common myths or misconceptions about sugar that you’d like to help dispel?

Ms. Lee: Sugar substitutes are not a smarter choice. That goes for both artificial sweeteners and natural sugar substitutes like stevia and monk fruit. There are new studies showing that stevia and artificial sweeteners affect your gut bacteria in a not positive way. Also, stevia is 200 to 400 times sweeter than sugar, and what that does is it trains you to crave the sweet. When you use fiber-rich fruits and vegetables instead, you’re sweetening in a healthier way.

Dr. Patel: Less refined “natural” sugar like honey or maple syrup isn’t healthier than refined sugar—for example, granulated sugar. All added sugar counts toward the daily limit. We also need more research on non-nutritive [artificial] sweeteners, particularly among children, before we can recommend them on a general population level.

What should we look for when grocery shopping or eating out to avoid unnecessary added sugars?

Ms. Lee: If it’s not listed on the label, which is a lot of the time, you can do this: For example, take a single serving of vanilla yogurt and a plain yogurt-unsweetened, same brand—and then compare the sugar line on those two products. The vanilla yogurt might have 29 grams of sugar, and the plain unsweetened might have 15 grams. Subtract out [the sugar

content of the] plain yogurt from [that off] the vanilla, and what you're left with is how many grams of sugar have been added to that yogurt to sweeten it. If you divide by four, you determine the number of teaspoons of added sugar that are in that yogurt.

When eating out at restaurants, choose your dressing on the side so that you can regulate how much of it you use.

When cooking at home, what are some of your favorite easy ways to reduce the amount of added sugar in your food, without sacrificing flavor?

Dr. Patel: Flavor with fiber-rich fruits or veggies, add a drizzle of honey to foods like yogurt rather than buying it presweetened, and use spices and nuts or seeds to add natural sweetness and texture.

Combine items at home. For example, instead of buying raisin bran, buy unsweetened bran flakes and naturally sweet raisins and combine.

Drink water instead of sugary drinks and juice. You can add fruit or veggies for flavor.

What are some of the challenges of cooking with less sugar?

Ms. Lee: I think the biggest thing that I learned in developing these recipes is I get why sugar was a valuable tool. It adds sweetness, it gives recipes texture, it holds things together, so when you take it out, the recipe can fall apart. All of the recipes in the book I had to rebuild from the ground up.

Did you have your kids taste some of the recipes in the book?

Ms. Lee: Yes, my kids and Anisha's kids have both tested the recipes in the book. Even beyond that, because we wanted the recipes to be super easy for everyone to make, my 15-year-old daughter, who was 13 [at the time], tested the recipes in the book from start to finish.

How did the kids react?

Ms. Lee: They can't tell the difference between the brownie that I sweetened with sweet potato and any other brownie. When I served the double chocolate brownies from the book, I didn't tell them it was low sugar. I just told them these are brownies, and they loved them.

“**They can't tell the difference between the brownie that I sweetened with sweet potato and any other brownie.**

Jennifer Tyler Lee, co-author



Really this book is all about enjoying the foods that you love in a healthier way.

What are some of your go-to recipes from the book?

Ms. Lee: For breakfast, I really love the honey peach breakfast pops, because they are very quick and easy to make, and they can serve as breakfast, snacks, or dessert.

Dinner is one of those sneaky [meals]. You don't think you're eating sugar, and there it is. I love the oven-baked Korean wings. Those have zero added sugar. They're great for game day, and they've got this spicy chili sauce that's sweetened with dates. It's just delicious.

For dessert, I really love those double chocolate brownies sweetened with sweet potato. They're gluten-free, too. My son's favorite is a no-churn banana ice cream with chocolate and salted caramel; that caramel I create with dates.

Do you think it's important for families to cook together?

Ms. Lee: I do think it's important for families to cook together when you can, and I've got tips throughout the book for how you can involve kids in cooking.


Cooking is the antidote to added sugar. Cooking is also one of the easiest ways to set your kids up for a lifetime of healthy habits. If they can learn how to cook a few simple dishes, you're setting them on the right path. It's also a great way to bring your family together.

Dr. Patel: Eating at home is a healthier choice than eating out, since you can control all the ingredients you put in your foods. Also, children who eat meals with their families at home eat healthier foods, have a better weight, have fewer eating disorders, and have improved social-emotional health.

Do you have any advice for getting kids involved in the kitchen, and teaching them to be more aware about the food they're eating in general?

Ms. Lee: My biggest piece of advice is to let the kids choose what they want to make. Let them open the book, find something that's inspiring to them, and then make that together.

Interviews have been edited for clarity and brevity.



DOUBLE CHOCOLATE BROWNIES

Our rich, fudgy brownies hit the mark with less than half the sugar of a boxed brownie mix. The secret ingredients are ones that none of our tasters could guess: sweet potatoes and almond butter. Sweet potatoes give these brownies a natural sweetness, while almond butter adds a creamy, rich texture—plus they're studded with chocolate chips. They don't need flour, so they're great for gluten-free families. If you use canned sweet potato puree, the whole recipe comes together in less than 10 minutes in the food processor, so you can satisfy chocolate cravings quickly.

**ADDED SUGAR: 1 1/2 TEASPOONS
MAKES 24 BROWNIES**

Nonstick cooking spray

225g sweet potatoes, peeled, cubed, and boiled until fork-tender

1/2 cup unsweetened almond butter

1/2 cup coconut oil or unsalted butter (1 stick), melted

1 large egg plus 1 large egg yolk

1/4 cup maple syrup

2 teaspoons pure vanilla extract

3/4 cup unsweetened natural cocoa powder

1/2 teaspoon salt

1/2 teaspoon baking soda

1 cup plus 2 tablespoons semisweet chocolate chips

Preheat the oven to 175 degrees C. Line a 13 x 9-inch baking dish with parchment paper, leaving 2 inches of overhang on each side, and coat with cooking spray.

Combine the sweet potatoes, almond butter, coconut oil, egg, and egg yolk in a food processor. Process until very smooth, making sure no chunks of sweet potato remain, about 1 minute.

Scrape down the side of the bowl and add the maple syrup and vanilla. Process until combined, about 30 seconds.

Add the cocoa powder, salt, and baking soda and process until all the dry ingredients are incorporated, about 1 minute more. Fold in 1 cup of the chocolate chips.

Pour the batter into the prepared pan, spread it into an even layer, and sprinkle with the remaining 2 tablespoons chocolate chips. Bake until the top is set and a toothpick inserted into the center comes out with a few moist crumbs, 27–30 minutes. Let the brownies cool slightly. Cut into 24 bars.

QUICK TIP

You can substitute 1 cup canned sweet potato puree for the fresh sweet potato.

WHAT KIDS CAN DO

Little chefs can measure the ingredients and sprinkle the chocolate chips.

MAKE AHEAD

The brownies can be stored in an airtight container at room temperature for up to 3 days.



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Lifting Up Our Minds and Hearts: The Value of Prayer

JEFF MINICK

A good many years ago, in the monthly meeting of our book club in Waynesville, North Carolina, the subject of prayer came up during a discussion of Anne Tyler’s “Saint Maybe.” A doctor, an intelligent and well-spoken man with a wry sense of humor, asked of us, “What exactly is prayer? I mean, what do you do when you pray?”

His question was sincere. He had grown up in a non-religious household, and as it turned out, had never prayed in his life.

Several people tried to answer him, but when we said our goodnights my friend looked as puzzled as when he had popped the question.

So what is prayer?

Belief, Connection, and the Pathways of Prayer

From the old Baltimore Catechism, young Catholics learned that prayer “was the lifting up of our minds and hearts to God.” Evangelist Billy Graham once stated that “Prayer is more than a wish. It is the voice of faith directed at God.” Devout Jews pray so their hearts can reach out to the Almighty.

All these religions, and others, believe that we connect through prayer to God. My friend’s atheism no doubt accounted for his inability to understand prayer.

People who worship a higher power pray in different ways. Some use devices like the rosary, prayer wheels, or the Jewish phylacteries. Some assume different postures for formal prayers. Some pray aloud, others silently.

Although reasons for prayer may vary from individuals, most religious faiths promote prayers of thanksgiving, praise, gratitude, and intercession. This last form of prayer involves asking for help from heaven, begging for a miracle to cure a loved one’s cancer, seeking strength and courage when your world comes crashing down around you, asking for wisdom in dealing with a wayward teenager.

Does Prayer Work?

So what about it? When you tell your friend whose husband has just deserted her you will pray for her, will your intercession help to bring her peace of mind? Will the “lifting up of hearts and minds to God” by family and friends do any good for that man being rolled on a gurney to the operating room for a heart transplant? By knocking at heaven’s door, can we perform better at our job? Do our prayers go from our mouths to God’s ear or are they just a waste of breath, the wishes of children lost and wandering in a cold, indifferent universe? Let’s take a look.

Physical Health

In her online article at WebMD, “Can Prayer Heal?” Jeanie Lerche Davis pres-



ents evidence from numerous studies showing that prayer not only heals, but can also prevent disease and even promote good health.

For 30 years, Davis reports, Harvard scientist and physician Herbert Benson has studied the effect of prayer and meditation on patients, and has discovered their positive effects on the brain, breathing, blood pressure, and heart rate. Duke University’s Harold Koenig, MD, has uncovered some remarkable connections between health, faith, and prayer, reporting that “heart patients were 14 times more likely to die following surgery if they did not participate in a religion” and that “hospitalized people who never attended church have an average stay of three times longer than those who

attended regularly.”

Mitchell Krucoff, MD, also of Duke University, reports that “all of these studies, all the reports, are remarkably consistent in suggesting the potential measurable health benefit associated with prayer or spiritual interventions.”

Mental Health and Strength

In addition to possibly affecting our physical health, prayer and meditation bring mental and spiritual rewards as well. Some listen for the “still, small voice” of God while others empty themselves of the noise and hustle of the world. Such attempts can lower our anxiety and stress, improve our mental abilities, and increase our energy.

Many draw strength from prayer. The

soldier going into battle, the woman facing an important job interview, the football player who bows his head with a teammate before a game: all are examples of people asking for courage and intercession.

Family and Community Life

Prayer can also strengthen our marriages and families. Mark Merrill, founder of Family First, Inc., writes in “8 Benefits of Praying Together with your Spouse” that praying with a wife or husband increases “trust and intimacy with a spouse,” teaches “you to be other-focused,” and helps “your spouse know your struggles and needs better.”

In “The Power of Prayer for Families,” Alysse ElHage reports that praying together helps reduce family tensions, allows for the opportunity to pass on religious traditions, and creates a sense of family unity.

Finally, prayer can also strengthen communities. When faced by some disaster—a mass shooting, a hurricane, a terrible fire—some people offer up “thoughts and prayers” for the victims and the survivors. Others mock them, claiming, for instance, that “pie in the sky” orisons won’t end mass shootings. They may be correct, but they fail to see that these prayers draw those who lived through that shooting closer together as a community.

Fifteen years ago, when my wife lay dying and in a coma in a hospital, our children prayed the Rosary and other prayers around her bedside. After a while, one of the nurses pulled me aside and said, “About these prayers ... your children do know that their mom will never recover, don’t they?” “They do,” I told her, “and they are praying for a miracle, but mostly they are praying their mother will be with God after she dies.”

Stillness

The power of prayer does not prove the existence of a Divine Power. Those with religious faith believe that it does. Skeptics would reply that prayer and meditation might offer physical and mental relief but no indisputable sign of any god.

Whichever side of that fence we stand on, we might reflect on the famous words of Blaise Pascal, mathematician and philosopher: “All of humanity’s problems stem from man’s inability to sit quietly in a room alone.”

To sit quietly in a room alone is the beginning of prayer. It is the beginning of an answer to my friend’s question during that book club get-together long ago.

Jeff Minick has four children and a growing platoon of grandchildren. For 20 years, he taught history, literature, and Latin to seminars of homeschooling students in Asheville, N.C., Today, he lives and writes in Front Royal, Va. See JeffMinick.com to follow his blog.

Raising Autonomous Children Starts at the Dinner Table

ANNIE HOLMQUIST

My father’s childhood in small town America was great fodder for the stories he told me growing up. One of these stories revolved around a large sandbox down the block from his home. While playing there one evening, he overheard a conversation from the neighboring Johnson house. (Note: Names have been changed.)

The family was having dinner, but all was not well. The stillness of my father’s sandbox foray was

How you guide your children’s approach to food can help form well-rounded, well-behaved adults.



broken by the deep voice of Mr. Johnson bellowing—presumably at his young daughter Susie—“EAT ... YOUR ... SUPPER!”

Mr. Johnson’s firm insistence that his child focus on the food set before her is a rarity in contemporary America. Instead, many parents cater to their children’s wishes, even going so far as requesting a separate kid-friendly meal when visiting a friend’s house for dinner.

That was the experience related in a recent letter to Slate. As the letter writer explains:

“We spend a lot of time with other families, in situations where one family is responsible for preparing a meal for the group. Many of our friends’ kids are picky eaters, and this is reinforced by parents who prepare or expect special kid-friendly meals in addition to the main meal.”

He goes on to explain that catering to children’s needs always leads to problems:

“Preparing a separate kid meal signals that they are more special than everyone else, or that they never have to be anything less than completely satisfied. It says

that in group situations, the welfare of the group comes second to their happiness and that there is no expectation to be polite or grateful to your host.”

Self-esteem and autonomy are a big deal today, especially for parents who want to do right by their children. Far be it from them to do anything that would hinder their child’s self-expression or potential to grow into a well-rounded independent person. Denying them food they like or forcing them to eat something that they don’t like may have negative and long-lasting effects on a child’s psychology! Better to give them what they want, even if it is inconvenient for the parents or others around them.

Karen Le Billon, author of “French Kids Eat Everything,” thought this way once. “Fostering independent eating was an important step in building autonomy, right?” she asks in her book. “The kids should be in charge of their own eating, right?”

A move to France began to change her mind. She writes:

“The belief that parents should actively educate their children

about food in a gently authoritative way is at the heart of the French approach to kids’ food. Deep down, I knew that this approach—which was much more authoritative than my approach—might benefit my children. But for a long time, I resisted it.”

In the end, she learned that this authoritative approach to children’s eating is the way the French train their children to be well-rounded adults—“well-spoken, well mannered, and well behaved.” Such authoritative training often instills natural and healthy self-esteem in these children, the same self-esteem that American parents are trying to instill by letting their children walk all over them.

Might we be doing things backward? Are the results we want produced not by giving into our children’s demands, but by gently and firmly leading them in paths that time and experience have taught us are wise ways?

Annie Holmquist is the editor of Intellectual Takeout. This article was originally published on Intellectual Takeout.

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Chapter Nine (Cont.)

5. Marx’s Theory of Exploitation: A Fallacious Inversion of Good and Evil

Karl Marx said that only labor creates value. If a company owner invests \$10 million this year, and the company’s revenue is \$11 million, then this \$1 million profit was created by the employees. According to Marxist theory, capital—which includes the company’s storefronts, goods, and other means of production—does not create value, but is only transferred to a part of the cost of goods. The value created by the company’s employees (\$11 million) is higher than the company’s costs (including the salaries of employees, which is the cost of their labor). In Marxist theory, the profit, \$1 million, is “surplus value” created by employees yet unfairly expropriated by the capitalist.

Marx, therefore, claimed that he had found the secret to how capitalists make money and believed that it is the original sin of the bourgeoisie: exploitation. Capitalist investment in the establishment of factories and companies is obviously for profit, so according to Marx, the proletariat (working class) will inevitably be exploited. This original sin of exploitation is inherent in the capitalist system, which belongs to the entire bourgeoisie. Marx thus concluded that to eliminate this sin, the entire capitalist society must be destroyed—that is, the bourgeoisie must be eliminated and their assets confiscated, while the vanguard of the party collectivizes property and institutes communism.

The absurdity of Marx’s theory of exploitation is mainly reflected in two aspects. First, it divides people into two opposing classes: the bourgeoisie with capital, and the proletariat without. In fact, since industrialized societies came to the fore, class mobility has increased rapidly. The class mobility in Marx’s era (the early 1800s to the 1850s) was similar to that of the 1970s in both the United Kingdom and the United States. The interchange between classes is a dynamic process; a supposed member of the proletariat is no longer among the proletariat if he buys public equity in a company, for example. If class assignment can be changed so easily, attempts at dividing people into groups like this have no other purpose than to incite class hatred.

Traditional moral standards as well as belief in the divine, saints, and other prominent scholars and personages were branded as belonging to ‘the exploiting classes’ and were to be attacked and toppled.

On the other hand, through a set of elaborately designed “theories,” Marxism deceives people into replacing traditional moral standards with its ersatz standards that invert right and wrong. In the Marxian view, whether an individual is good or bad is based not on his morality and actions, but rather on his place in the (inverse) hierarchy of capital. One who belongs to the capitalist class is guilty of exploiting the proletariat, and since the proletariat is the suppressed and

exploited, its members naturally occupy the moral high ground. No matter how they treat capitalists, they can hold their heads high. This indeed has turned the possession of property into a crime, twisted the theft of wealth into justice, and legalized and justified violent expropriation. This reversal of right and wrong, good and evil, has encouraged evildoing.

In China, the former Soviet Union, and the communist states of Eastern Europe, the communist parties stole land, lynched landlords, and robbed capitalists of their factories. Worse yet, the party even murdered “class enemies,” engaged in arson, confiscated generational wealth, destroyed human nature, and waged an overall campaign of state terrorism against the people. All this evildoing was a result of these theories. Meanwhile, traditional moral standards, as well as belief in the divine, saints, and other prominent scholars and personages, were branded as belonging to “the exploiting classes” and were to be attacked and toppled.

Marx’s theories have been widely criticized in economic and philosophical circles. The following are merely a few examples that illustrate the absurdity of Marx’s theory of exploitation.

Marx argues that labor creates value, and that value is determined by the labor time necessary for production. This is a ridiculous theory. The value of a commodity is not one of its intrinsic properties. Most of the time, humans add a subjective element to each commodity—most saliently, supply and demand. Many economists have explored the process of valuation, and unlike Marx’s narrow monism, most economic thinkers believe that numerous factors are involved in the creation of value—including land, capital, labor, science and technology, management, the risk of investment, and so on. Economic activities are a complex system, involving different links in the chain of production. Different factors of production have certain managerial requirements, and different people play different roles, which are indispensable to the whole chain and make contributions to the creation of “residual value.”

For example, a capitalist plans to spend \$1 million hiring two engineers to design and produce a certain new toy. A marketer also is hired to promote the new toy. Two years later, the new toy gains popularity and earns a profit of \$50 million. Is it the labor of the engineers and marketer that created the residual value of \$50 million? Of course not. The new toy earned millions because people wanted it. The capitalist’s insight into the market, ability to organize and manage others, and courage to take a risk all contributed to the value of the toy.

Suppose the creativity in the toy came from one of the engineers—then, does the residual value of the \$50 million come from the fact that the capitalist exploited the engineer’s creativity without giving anything in return? Of course not. If the engineer thinks his creativity was not being adequately rewarded, he could find another company that offers higher pay.

In a free market, a balance will ultimately be struck in matching skills and ambition with capital. Capitalists who demand unreasonable profits will lose to the competition or be unable to attract talent. In addition, since waiting for a return on invested capital delays spending or other enjoyment of that capital, the profits are also due to the efforts of the investor. Therefore, it’s normal that an additional sum will be gained in return. The principle is no different to lending at interest.

There also are many “accidental” factors involved in deciding the value of a commodity. Such accidental factors

can only be reasonably explained by a frame of reference founded on traditional beliefs and culture.

In certain situations, the creation and destruction of value can be entirely unrelated to the question of labor. A diamond worth \$10 million today may have been worthless 5,000 years ago because no one wanted it. A barren patch of land inherited from a grandfather could be 100 times more valuable due to the prosperity of a nearby city or the discovery of rare-earth metals underground. Here, the increase in value involves no labor. Such vast, unexpected wealth is simply called fortune. Both Western and Eastern cultural traditions recognize that fortune is a blessing given by gods to man.

In the Marxian view, whether an individual is good or bad is based not on his morality and actions, but rather on his place in the (inverse) hierarchy of capital.

In order to demonstrate the “rationality” and “necessity” of public ownership, Marx concocted the exploitation theory based on surplus value, which turned the economic activities that people engage in as a normal part of life into negative and unethical behavior. His theory poured hatred and scorn on the existing economic order as part of his attempt to undermine and overthrow it.

The capitalists and the workers, the landlords and the peasants, in fact form a community of shared interests. Their relationship should be one of cooperation and interdependence; each supports the other to survive. Marx deliberately made the contradiction between them absolute, extreme, and absurdly exaggerated—as if they had a hostile relationship of life and death. In fact, there are good and bad people among capitalists, just as there are among workers, too. In economic exchange, what should really be exposed and sanctioned is neither capitalists nor workers as such, but anyone who undermines normal economic activities. The basis of judgment should be moral quality and behavior, not wealth.

People can change their economic and social status through their own efforts. Workers can become investors through the accumulation of wealth. Investors can become workers due to failures in their investments. Society is constantly changing and flows like a river. The role of labor and investors in modern society often changes. Most people also play both roles—putting the profits they made into future productive capacity, thus creating employment, increasing social wealth, and benefitting the general public. Even a founder of the U.S. trade union movement said, “The worst crime against working people is a company which fails to operate at a profit.”

The absurd “surplus value theory” affixes the label of “exploitation” to the normal activities of landowners and capitalists. It has incited incalculable hatred, muddled thinking, and struggle, and has destroyed the lives of millions.

See next edition for the next installment.

