

GLOBAL
Q&A

'If you could meet yourself 25 years from now, what would you ask?'

Did people honour their personal values, fulfill their dreams, or make a difference to the community during their lifetimes? These are some of the questions Epoch Times reporters discovered from Italy to Brazil when they asked locals: "If you could meet yourself 25 years from now, what would you ask?"

CANARY ISLANDS, SPAIN
PALOMA CAUBIN PEREZ, 46, NURSERY OWNER



The first one is 'if I had fulfilled the dreams I had 25 years ago' and the second one is 'if I was happy with my life experience, if I honoured my personal values in those 25 years, not sacrificing them to get what I thought I deserved to.' Those are the main questions I consider relevant thinking ahead of time.

VAGGIO, REGELLO, ITALY
MARIA INÉS ANGELUCCI, 43, SALES AGENT



I would ask: 'And now, what do you have to offer to others, to yourself, to your family?' We are in a chaotic situation. I have three children, aged 18, 16 and 3; we lived through the earthquake in L'Aquila last year, and we had to change to live in San Giovanni. In 25 years, I would ask myself: 'Do you have something to offer now?'

RIO DE JANEIRO, BRAZIL
JULIA MENEZES PIMENTA, 59, RETIRED NURSE



I would ask myself if the profession I've chosen was really what I wished, and if I have been able to achieve self-realization through it. I worked 33 years in a hospital and then retired. After leaving, I feel like a non-existent being when I go to that place. The head-person doesn't know who I am anymore. It's as if all the work I've done there has been forgotten.

LEBANON (RESIDENT OF DUBAI)
JANA OBEID, 18, UNIVERSITY STUDENT



'Did I meet my goals? Have I done my best? Was I a good girl or a good daughter for my parents? Did I make myself happy? Did I live a happy life? Did I do everything to the best of my ability? Did I live my moment? Did I enjoy my time?' And if the answer is yes to these questions, then I accomplished what I wanted to achieve.

ALL PHOTOS BY THE EPOCH TIMES

Look for the Global Q&A column online every week, when Epoch Times correspondents interview people around the world to learn about their lives and perspective on local and global realities. Next week's global question: What would you like to see more coverage of in the media?

U.S. admiral on Iran: Diplomacy first, attack last

IRAN CONTINUED FROM P1
Meanwhile, over the weekend, The New York Times reported that U.S. Secretary of Defense Robert Gates sent a letter to President Barack Obama saying the U.S. doesn't have a plan to deal with Iran if they develop nuclear weapons.

Gates however said the Times article inaccurately described his letter to the president. "The memo identified the next steps in our defense planning process where further inter-agency discussion and policy decisions would be needed in the months and weeks ahead," Gates said in a written statement on Sunday night.



DIPLOMACY FIRST: Admiral Mike Mullen, speaking at Columbia University on April 18, said military action against Iran is "still on the table" but diplomatic or economic sanctions are preferred. GARY DU/THE EPOCH TIMES

North Korean spies arrested in 'assassination plot'

By STEPHEN JONES
Epoch Times Staff

North Korean spies disguised themselves as refugees to enter South Korea via Thailand on an alleged mission to "slit the throat" of a senior defector from the Communist North.

The two military officers were sent on a mission to kill Hwang Jang-Yop, 87, the former secretary of the North Korean Workers' Party, who defected to the South in 1997.

The pair were alleged to have received training in China in December before smuggling themselves into Thailand disguised as refugees.

The allegations of China's involvement in the plot may strain diplomatic relations between Seoul and Beijing.

The two suspects—Kim Myong Ho and Dong Myong Kwan, both 36-year-old majors in the Korean People's Army (KPA)—now face death sentences after being charged with conspiracy to commit murder.

An unnamed senior official at Seoul Central District Prosecutors' Office told reporters they said their orders were to "slit the betrayer's throat."

Hwang was once a close aide to the former leader and founder of the

North regime, Kim Il-sung. He was the author of the country's national philosophy of self-reliance and a leading ideologue.

He defected after hundreds of thousands died of famine during the 90s, causing great humiliation to Sung's successor, Kim Jong-il.

Hwang left behind several close family members, many of whom are now believed to be in labour camps. Thirteen years on, his defection is still a sore subject for the country's leaders.

Just two weeks ago, a North Korean news agency threatened him with death and described him as a "traitor and human scum."

Following the arrest of Kim and Dong, questions will likely be asked of the need to properly vet North Korean's seeking political asylum.

Hwang's defection has been a catalyst for many political refugees from the totalitarian state.

In the year that he defected he was one of only 85 North Koreans who fled to the South. In 2008 there were 2,800.

South Korea is no stranger to death squads from the North. In 1968, dozens of commandos from North Korea attempted to storm the presidential palace in Seoul in a bid to assassinate President Park Chung-hee.



Hwang Jang-Yop, the highest-ranking North Korean official to defect to South Korea, is shown in this October 30, 2003 photo as he visits Capitol Hill in Washington, D.C. TIM SLOAN/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

Cleaning the highest place on earth

By MARCO 'T HOEN
Epoch Times Staff

In the coming weeks the Extreme Everest Expedition, a team of 20 Nepalese volunteers, will clean up the 'zone of death' on Everest mountain.

Many climbers try to reach the top. So far more than 2,000 people have stood atop the world and many more failed during their attempts. Over 200 people have died on the mountain, and the trash climbers have left behind has given Everest the nickname "highest garbage dump on earth."

Between the last camp and the summit, up 29,029 feet around

4,400 pounds of clothing, tents, empty food cans, and oxygen bottles have been left behind. Sherpa Namgyal will lead the expedition climbing with empty backpacks to clean up this "zone of death," area since "the mess hinders climbers that want to go up," he told Reuters.

Previous actions have cleaned up a large part of the mountain, but never at this highest part. Since 1995, climbers have to take down their own garbage or face fines of up to \$4,000.

The sherpas will also take down the dead bodies. The melting of snow exposes previously buried unnatural things on the mountain.

Reader's gift cow a dream come true for Tanzanian volunteer

COW CONTINUED FROM P1

In this isolated region of Tanzania owning a cow is rare; it is akin to being the sole person with a job in a village of unemployed.

Simwaba did not go there to enjoy his pension. Instead, he has spent his time setting up a clinic, a nursery school, an education centre, a self-help group, a community farm, and a mission house for Catholic nuns with a small orphanage that is expected to be expanded soon.

"I stay in Mahango because I want to help the people," he said. "I'm interested in people. When I worked in Kilimanjaro region, I used to help people there. Then since I retired and moved here, I've been helping people here."

What goes around comes around. This time, it is Simwaba on the receiving end of generosity.

"Oh, I thank her very much, I appreciate it. This is very good news, I will accept the gift." That was his reaction when he first heard the unexpected news.

Initially Simwaba had his eye on a pregnant cow, which he estimated would cost around 400,000 TS (\$290), with another 100,000 TS for hiring a truck to transport the cow back to his village.

The donor in San Francisco promptly wired \$450 to Simwaba through the nearest Western Union office in Mbeya, the provincial capital.

After picking up the money,

What goes around comes around. This time, it is Simwaba on the receiving end of generosity

Simwaba set off to make his purchase. Unfortunately, the pregnant cow he had his eye on had just been sold, so he bought a sturdy, healthy-looking cow for 450,000 TS (\$328). With some money left over, he managed to buy a small calf as well.

Two days later, his "home improvements" were delivered to his door in Mahango village.

With the recent completion of a small orphanage in the village by a Czech NGO, Simwaba said he plans to build two bigger dormitories for orphans. His next concern is his peers—elders of the village who have no relatives left to provide for them. When he has enough milk later on, they will all share in the bounty too, he said.

"You know, to me it means a lot. ... It will be great for me and other elders and orphans. So it will help more people, not only myself. I really thank you and the donor for providing us this opportunity."



A farm is pictured in front of smoke and ash billowing from the Eyjafjallajökull volcano near Porolfell, on April 21, 2010. The sky is clearing and many airports are now opening again. EMMANUEL DUNAND/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

Eruption continues but airports opening

ERUPTION CONTINUED FROM P1
The effects of the Eyjafjallajökull volcano eruption were felt all over the world, as travellers going to and from Europe had their flights cancelled, leaving many stranded abroad. Those visiting Europe have been stuck there, wondering if there is any hope in sight for their departure home.

European airlines have reported a \$1.7 billion loss from at least 100,000 cancelled trips

and refunds. The German air-space has finally opened up for flights, and some travellers from the U.K. are still suffering from the effects.

European government officials are offering assistance to the airline industry, similar to the actions of the U.S. government in the aftermath of the American airline industry crash following the Sept. 11 attacks on the World Trade Center in New York.

Russia gains sea power while Ukraine gets cheap gas

RUSSIA CONTINUED FROM P1

Expensive gas has been a burden on the ailing Ukrainian economy, making it difficult for the state to pass a budget.

Yanukovich and his Russian counterpart Dmitry Medvedev met on Wednesday in the former Ukrainian capital of Kharkiv to finalize the deal.

Under the agreement, Ukraine will receive a \$100 discount per 1,000 cubic metres if the price climbs higher than \$330 per 1,000 cubic metres, and a 30 percent discount if the price is below that level.

Pro-Russian Yanukovich said the discount should save his country about \$4 billion a year.

Gazprom's, Alexey Miller, head of Russian state-run gas company, said that the price adjustment should not impact the company's overall budget.

In January 2009, then-Ukrainian Prime Minister Yulia Tymoshenko signed a 10-year gas contract with Russia. That deal followed a conflict that left some Eastern European consumers without Russian-supplied gas for two weeks during the winter.

According to that contract, gas prices were adjusted quarterly. Most recently the price was US\$330 per 1,000 cubic meters.

INSIDE THE DEAL

Medvedev announced that tied to the gas discount, Ukraine would be extending the Russian navy's right to be in the Black Sea by another 25 years beyond the original contract date, which had been set to expire in 2017. The fleet will now be allowed to stay until 2047.

Ukrainian opposition politicians opposed the deal claiming that the extension violates the constitution, which prohibits foreign countries from keeping a military base in Ukraine after 2017. The 2017 agreement was signed with Boris Yeltsin in 1991.

Opposition member Arseniy Atsenuk said in a statement on Wednesday that the decision was unconstitutional and any change to the terms of that agreement would need to be confirmed in a national referendum, then ratified by Parliament.

The existence of a Russian fleet in Ukrainian waters has been a sensitive issue since Ukraine's former president, Victor Yushchenko, came to power in the 2004 Orange Revolution. He considered the navy dangerous for the country's sovereignty, a stance that irked Russia.