KnowledgeNEWS

Special Investigation

Contents

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China's Big Numbers

Size matters. At least, it matters when the news turns to China. Why? Because China is big, big, big. How big is it? Consider these sizeable Sino-statistics.

Big Geographic Numbers

3.7 million – China's total area, in square miles (9.6 million sq km). Only Russia and Canada are significantly larger. China is about the same size as the United States. Whether it's slightly larger or slightly smaller depends on whether you count certain disputed territories.

14 – Number of countries that border on China. China's longest borders are with Mongolia, Russia, and India. Each is more than 2,000 miles (3,200 km) long.

Big Population Numbers

1.3 billion – China's total population. That's more than four times as many people as live in the United States, and about a fifth of the people on Earth. India is the only other nation with more than a billion people, and it still has 200 million fewer than China.

33 – Number of top-level administrative divisions in China, including 22 provinces, 4 municipalities, 5 autonomous regions (including Tibet), and 2 special administrative regions (Hong Kong and Macau). Each of the eight most populous provinces has at least 64 million people—more than Britain, France, or Italy. If any of those provinces were an independent nation, it would rank among the world's 20 most populous.

10 million – Population of Shanghai, China's largest city. Beijing, the capital, is home to about 7.5 million people, and Hong Kong to another 7 million. Since the 1950s, China has urbanized rapidly, but most of the people—around 60 percent—still live in rural areas.

Big Economic Numbers

10 trillion - China's gross domestic product (GDP), in U.S. dollars, adjusted for purchasing power parity (PPP). That's second only to the United States, whose GDP (PPP) is $13 trillion. Basically, a nation's GDP is the value of all the goods and services it produces in a given year. Economists adjust GDP for purchasing power parity to account for the fact that a dollar buys more in some places than it does in others.

Tenfold – Increase in China's GDP since 1978, when the communist regime opened up to foreign investment and began implementing market-based reforms.

53 – Percentage of China's population that lived in poverty in 1981, according to the World Bank. By 2001, the number had fallen to 8 percent. Of course, given China's size, that still amounts to more than 100 million people.

45 billion – Amount China says it will spend on its military in 2007, in U.S. dollars. The Pentagon says China's actual military expenditures will be much higher—perhaps more than twice that much. But that's still far less than the $533 billion the U.S. military has budgeted for 2007.

—Steve Sampson

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Source: U.S. Central Intelligence Agency

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Mongols, Mings, Manchus, Mao

When Chairman Mao argued for a "permanent revolution," he probably didn't have in mind the sort of revolution under way in the capital of communist China. Today, brand-new BMWs share crowded streets with donkey carts and bicyclists; Stalinist slogans sit side by side with Starbucks.

How long will the Communist Party continue the capitalist party? No one knows for sure. But we do know how Beijing got to this point. It all started 40 centuries ago. . . .

Mongols

China is the world's oldest continuous civilization, with a succession of ruling dynasties going back 4,000 years. The Chinese people can literally trace their history back to the Bronze Age—before Rome, before Greece, before King Tut ruled briefly in Egypt. When China got started, Europeans were still stacking rocks at Stonehenge.

Beijing got its start some 3,000 years ago as a frontier trading post. The first capital city at the site, called Chi, arose not too many centuries later. For the next 1,500 years, the city (which was called by various names) grew in size and importance, though it was destroyed and rebuilt several times and periodically fell to invading nomads from the north.

During the 13th century, Chinese rulers came under increasing pressure from the Mongols, a nomadic northern tribe led by the fearsome Genghis Khan, who destroyed an incarnation of Beijing in 1215. By the time Kublai Khan took over for granddad Genghis, the Mongols controlled most of northern China.

Kublai pushed south, conquering China and establishing the Yuan dynasty (1279-1368). For his capital, he rebuilt the city Genghis had destroyed and renamed it Dadu, or "Great Capital." The city now known as Beijing became the political center of China—and youth hostel for one Marco Polo, who called Kublai "the greatest lord the world has ever known."

Mings

In the 14th century, secret peasant societies began to spring up in response to harsh Mongol taxation and confiscation of land. One of these societies, the "Red Turbans," drove the Mongols from China under the leadership of a peasant named Zhu Yuanzhang, who proclaimed the Ming dynasty (1368-1644) and became known as the Hongwu emperor.

Under Hongwu and his immediate successor, Kublai Khan's capital city was renamed Beiping ("Northern Peace"), and for the next 35 years China's capital shifted south to Nanjing. The third Ming emperor, Yongle, moved the capital back to the north in 1403 and rebuilt the city, giving it its modern moniker: Beijing ("Northern Capital"). He also oversaw construction of the Forbidden City, an elaborate city-within-the-city at the heart of Beijing that served as the home of the Chinese emperor for five centuries.

(The Forbidden City was actually doubly forbidden. It was surrounded by the Imperial City, a larger walled city-within-the-city that was also off-limits to the public. By the middle of the 17th century, as many as 25,000 people worked within its walls. But even these privileged few were not free to roam about in the even-more-forbidden Forbidden City.)

Of course, the Ming dynasty made great vases. But it also built sterner stuff, including most of the defensive walls along China's northern frontier, known collectively as the Great Wall. The Chinese had been building walls to keep out northern invaders since at least 200 BC, but the Great Wall that stands today is mainly Ming-made.

Unfortunately, the walls never really succeeded in keeping northern invaders out. Nor did isolationist prohibitions against travel abroad and foreign trade succeed in stopping Europeans—first the Portuguese, then the Spanish, English, and French—from establishing lucrative trading posts along China's coasts in the 16th and 17th centuries.

Manchus

By the early 17th century, the Ming dynasty was in trouble. A new enemy to the north—the Manchus—threatened, and the Ming emperors' ability to rule was clipped by a factious and corrupt bureaucracy, controlled primarily by eunuchs.

In 1644, rebelling peasants overthrew Beijing. The best Ming troops had been deployed to the Great Wall to guard against a Manchu attack. Yet when faced with Beijing's fall, the Ming commander made a deal with the Manchus to drive the rebel peasants out. The Manchus helped retake the city, but found they rather liked it. They made themselves rulers and established the Qing dynasty (1644-1911).

Unlike the Ming, who destroyed much of the old Mongol city and built their own, the Qing left the city pretty much as they found it. They adopted most of the Ming's political organization and generally left Chinese cultural traditions and institutions alone (except that they forced Chinese men to wear their hair in braids down their backs). They were wise enough, however, to purge the bureaucracy of its corrupt civil servants and to replace them with relatively more honest academics. Chinese scholars flocked to Beijing, and the city has remained the center of Chinese learning ever since.

Over time, the Qing established unprecedented levels of order, peace, and prosperity in China. In fact, the dynasty's advances in engineering methods prevented devastating floods in the countryside that had regularly killed millions of people before. Yet by the mid-19th century, the Qing began to falter, partly as a result of population growth driven by the very peace and prosperity that Qing rulers had brought to China. European, and later American, powers also began to exert influence, determined to open China to trade (even if, in the case of Britain, that meant pushing opium).

Soon, European powers forced China into a series of disadvantageous treaties and trade agreements. The Treaty of Nanjing in 1842 ceded Hong Kong to Great Britain and opened five other Chinese ports to British trade and residence. The 1858 Treaty of Tianjin opened up ten more ports and allowed European travelers and missionaries into China's interior. By the end of the century, the Europeans seemed poised to divide up China among themselves. The humiliation of this interference remains at least part of the reason China's leaders resent western "interference" today.

Mao

As the Qing dynasty deteriorated, reform movements sprang up across China. Finally, in 1911, a loose coalition of revolutionaries overthrew the last Qing emperor and proclaimed a western-style republic. For several years after, the country was torn apart by warlords, civil war, and Japanese invasions. It was a republic in name alone.

From 1928 to 1937, Chiang Kai-shek, a young Nationalist Party general, ruled China from Nanjing. Meanwhile, the Chinese Communist Party grew in strength by mobilizing peasant forces in the countryside. In 1934, Chiang's forces attempted to destroy the communists, driving them north in what became known as the Long March. Only 8,000 of the 80,000 communists who started the march survived Chiang's extermination campaign.

The survivors, including the young leader Mao Zedong, became heroes in Chinese communist lore. By 1949, the communists had seized power under Mao. Chiang Kai-shek and his forces sought refuge on the island of Taiwan, where, until his death in 1975, Chiang continued to claim that his was the legitimate government of all China.

When Mao and his forces established the People's Republic, they made Beijing their capital and rebuilt the city yet again. Blocks of buildings were razed to widen major thoroughfares. Soviet engineers removed several of the city's outer walls to improve the traffic patterns. Cosmetic adjustments, however, were the least of the changes. Mao launched several attempts to overhaul China's economy, including a bloody process of land redistribution in which tens of thousands of landlords were killed. Untold numbers of peasants perished, too, in famines resulting from Mao's reforms.

After Mao's death in 1976, his successor, Deng Xiaoping, sought to relieve the nation's staggering poverty with economic reforms, which included dismantling the agricultural communes established under Mao and building new factories. Deng's successors, Jiang Zemin and Hu Jintao, have continued to liberalize China's economic policy while endeavoring to maintain the party's iron grip on power.

—Steve Sampson and Maggie Debelius

China is the world's oldest continuous civilization, with a succession of ruling dynasties going back 4,000 years.

Why China Claims Taiwan

Is Taiwan really part of China? It depends whom you ask. Those who say "yes" have political reality and a billion Chinese on their side. Those who say "no" have economic reality, a different view of history, and a possible majority of Taiwanese voters on theirs.

The Yeasayers

The People's Republic of China (PRC) certainly thinks Taiwan is part of China. Beijing has threatened to invade the island if it ever declares independence—even though the United States has long implied that it wouldn't stand idly by. As far as the PRC is concerned, Taiwan is a renegade Chinese province controlled by an illegitimate government.

Conversely, the Kuomintang (KMT) on Taiwan has historically viewed mainland China as the renegade, controlled by an illegitimate communist government. After all, the KMT didn't start out as a Taiwanese political party. It started out as the Chinese Nationalist Party, which battled hard for control of China after the last emperor fell in 1911—right up until 1949, when Mao Zedong's Red Army drove Chiang Kai-shek and his KMT nationalists from the mainland.

Generalissimo Chiang and the KMT retreated to Taiwan, and for decades they said they would someday return to rule a reunified China. Taiwan, they said, was just the Chinese province to which they—China's legitimate, non-communist government—had retreated. Over the years, of course, the KMT's position vis-à-vis the PRC came to look increasingly like an LSD-induced fantasy, especially after 1972, when President Nixon and Chairman Mao got cozy.

After Chiang Kai-shek's death in 1975, the KMT moved slowly but surely away from grand designs for retaking the mainland and toward a "Taiwan first" policy. They had already used billions of dollars in American aid to lay the foundations for an economic explosion. Throughout the 1970s and early 1980s, Taiwan enjoyed the benefits of that investment, including an average annual economic growth rate of nearly 10 percent.

The Naysayers

Most nations eventually had little choice but to recognize the communist PRC as the "real" China. But they still could do plenty of business with capitalist (yet nevertheless authoritarian) Taiwan. The fruits of all that economic intercourse included a higher standard of living and a better-educated workforce, and this prosperity, as it often does, led to democracy.

The first serious opposition political party to emerge, the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP), officially formed in 1986. Since then, Taiwanese independence has been a key plank in the DPP's platform—though the party has been careful not to appear overly radical in recent years, especially since its leader, Chen Shui-bian, was elected president. Favoring independence is one thing. Declaring it, or even pursuing it too obviously, with hundreds of Chinese missiles pointed at you is something else entirely.

The appeal of independence in Taiwan has some obvious grounds. First, economic modernization and long separation from the mainland have clearly made Taiwan something very different from a typical province of the People's Republic. What's more, two generations have come of age since the arrival of the Chinese nationalists, whose families account for just 15 percent of the population. Growing up on Taiwan, the nationalists' children, and now their children's children, naturally feel less connected to the mainland.

For the other 85 percent of Taiwanese people—whose families' presence on the island predates the KMT retreat—there are other historical questions to consider.

Proponents of reunification on both sides of the Taiwan Strait have always assumed that China's historical claim on the island is legitimate: that prior to the Chinese civil war, Taiwan was, or should have been, part of China. Yet in recent years, critics have challenged that assumption. They argue that China ceded control over Taiwan to Japan at the end of the Sino-Japanese War in 1895, and that the Qing dynasty governed the island loosely at best for 200 years before that.

In fact, since at least the 17th century, when a holdout general from the overthrown Ming dynasty used the island as a base of operations against the newly established Qing, Taiwan has played host to a long series of colonizers who later had to deal with insurrections, rebellions, and resistance movements. For some, Chiang Kai-shek and the KMT appear in the grand sweep of history as little more than Taiwan's most recent colonizer. The big question now is whether the People's Republic is determined to be the next.

—Steve Sampson

As far as China is concerned, Taiwan is a renegade province controlled by an illegitimate government.

How Drugs Made Hong Kong

Hong Kong is an odd bird. It rose to prominence as a British imperial outpost in the Far East, and now it's struggling to maintain that prominence as a capitalist outpost in communist China. Makes you wonder who in the world hatched such a place, doesn't it? Answer: drug dealers.

Xianggang, the "Fragrant Harbor"

Before there was a hustling, bustling Hong Kong—packed tight with people—there was an island in which few saw much use. A lively sea trade navigated the surrounding waters, but ships shunned the island itself, which was known chiefly as a hideout for pirates.

Things only began to change once the western "barbarians"—scurrilous sorts from Europe and America—acquired a taste for tea, silk, and fine porcelains imported from China. Western coinage flowed east, and, since the Chinese had little interest in manufactures from the industrialized West, a large trade deficit soon sucked silver from European and American coffers. Somehow western traders had to fill their ships with a commodity that the Chinese would crave enough to tip the balance of trade back in a westerly direction.

Drug Money

In the days before McDonalds, Hollywood, and Britney Spears, the answer to western traders' prayers was, as it turned out, opium. The Chinese already had a tradition of taking opium in small doses. At some point, the practice of smoking tobacco spread to China, and with a little coaching from the Dutch, the Chinese learned you could smoke opium, too. The result was a highly addictive method of ingesting the drug. Soon China was dotted with opium dens filled with addicts slowly puffing their lives away.

Western traders were only too happy to feed their addiction. Vast fields of poppies were planted and harvested in India to supply the new Chinese market. The trade balance swung back in the other direction, until it was Chinese coffers that were being depleted. The Chinese government saw what was happening and tried to put a stop to the drug trade. But the western powers were too pleased with the money they were making to allow that. From 1839 to 1860, Britain and France fought two "opium wars" to protect the rights of pushers.

God Save (and Enrich) the Queen

In 1842, a humiliated China not only agreed to allow the opium trade to continue, it ceded Hong Kong Island to Britain in perpetuity as well. In 1860, it ceded nearby Kowloon Peninsula forever. And in 1898, it allowed Britain to lease the adjacent "New Territories" for a period of 99 years. Sleepy Hong Kong—old Chinese fishing hole and sometime pirate den—became an imperial British outpost at the center of international trade.

Hong Kong may have been neglected, but it had a lot to offer, particularly one of the world's best deepwater harbors and a location that could command the main trade routes between Europe and the Far East. No dummies, the British quickly built it up. People flocked in, though the Chinese who came had little say in the government. The city was a British colony, run by a governor appointed by the British crown. Until 1997, that is.

There Can Be Only One—Or Maybe Two

Technically, the question of how to handle 1997, when Britain's 99-year lease expired, applied only to the New Territories, since Hong Kong Island and

the Kowloon Peninsula had been granted to Britain in perpetuity. The new Chinese government didn't see things that way, though, and insisted on treating the entire territory the same. The British—in full retreat from their former imperial ambitions—were willing to go along, and so in 1982 negotiations began on how to hand Hong Kong back to China.

That involved certain obvious difficulties. China had become a communist state, while Hong Kong had become home to some of the most feverish capitalism on the planet. Yet two years of negotiations brought the Chinese and British governments to an agreement. For a 50-year term starting July 1, 1997, China would be one country encompassing two systems. Hong Kong would remain a capitalist outpost within a communist country. After 2007, it could even choose its own government by democratic means. Meanwhile, Hong Kong's economy would serve as a money pump, injecting currency into China's less developed regions.

Ach! Tung

That was the plan, at any rate. In 1997, amid much pomp and circumstance, Hong Kong's last British governor, Chris Patten, stepped down, and shipping magnate Tung Chee-hwa became "chief executive." China seemed happy—Tung pretty much took his orders from Beijing. He was never popular in Hong Kong, though, and he lost face entirely when he tried to institute an anti-sedition, anti-subversion, anti-secession law in 2003. Half a million people—more than 7 percent of the country—took to the streets to protest.

In March 2005, Tung resigned. Some say China dumped him to impose a more popular man. Either way, Hong Kong marches into the future with more questions than answers. Will the communist government eventually allow democratic elections? Will China remain one country with two systems, or will Hong Kong's political and economic independence be strangled into nonexistence? Most economists agree that China badly needs Hong Kong to remain a capitalist money machine, but that's bitter medicine for a communist to take.

—Mark Diller

From 1839 to 1860, Britain and France fought two "opium wars" to protect the rights of pushers.

Who's Hu in China?

China's government remains dictatorial and dangerous for those who dare dissent, despite market reforms that have made the Middle Kingdom an important part of the global economy. It also remains opaque—an enormous web of official ruling congresses, string-pulling party committees, and tank-deploying military commissions employing some 10 million people in all. That's more than many governments rule.

So how does China's president, Hu Jintao, keep control? Behind the curtain of power, there are basically three key governing institutions: the Central People's Government, the People's Liberation Army, and the Chinese Communist Party—the unelected institution that decides what's best for "the people." Here's how the system works.

Mostly Follow the Constitution

According to China's 1982 constitution, the National People's Congress (NPC) is China's primary power, central legislature, and chief organ of government. The NPC elects the president (currently Hu Jintao) and vice president (currently Zeng Qinghong). It also approves the president's choice of premier (currently Wen Jiabao), who governs day-to-day through a cabinet called the State Council.

Yet the NPC isn't nearly as powerful as it appears. Its 3,000 delegates—elected by provincial congresses—meet for only a few weeks a year. During those brief meetings, they mostly rubber-stamp legislation drafted and debated by the Chinese Communist Party. Their elections aren't exactly what westerners would call "free and fair," either. In 2003, Hu Jintao was elected president by a vote of 2,937 to 4.

When the full NPC isn't in session, a standing committee of about 150 NPC delegates stands in for it, passing laws, ratifying treaties, but only occasionally asserting the NPC's constitutional power. In theory, the State Council answers to the NPC. But in practice, the NPC mainly does what the State Council says it should do.

Always Toe the Party Line

And both answer to an even higher power: the Chinese Communist Party (CCP). With more than 70 million members, the CCP is the world's largest political party, and influences nearly every aspect of Chinese life. Its rule is virtually unopposed. The Chinese government recognizes a few other, small political parties, but these are controlled by the CCP. Groups that oppose the CCP are branded enemies of the state—since the party pretty much *is* the state.

The party's structure parallels the government's (or vice versa), from the local level to Beijing. Since the CCP manages personnel changes at every level, the only guaranteed way to get ahead politically is to work your way up through the party. In theory, the CCP's ruling body is its National Party Congress, which convenes about once every five years. In practice, though, it's controlled by a 22-member Politburo, which is dominated by a nine-member standing committee.

Current members of the Politburo's standing committee include Hu, Zeng, and Wen—as in President Hu, Vice President Zeng, and Premier Wen. In China, those at the head of the party are also conveniently at the head of the government. At the top of both heaps is Hu, who's president of the country *and* general secretary of the CCP.

Never Upset the Army

But there's also a third heap: the People's Liberation Army (PLA), the world's largest military force. The PLA's 3 million soldiers and paramilitary personnel are not, as with most western militaries, entirely

under the government's command. Instead, the PLA is a semi-autonomous force that reports to both the government's Central Military Commission and the party's Central Military Commission.

Usually, the two Central Military Commissions have (surprise!) the same members, and so amount to more or less one Central Military Commission. But the chairman of this unified commission isn't always the president or party secretary. In fact, retiring Chinese leaders—including President Hu's predecessors, Jiang Zemin and Deng Xiaoping—have preserved their power for a while by retaining this chairmanship and its command of the troops.

That has led some analysts to argue that China's real leader is whoever holds the PLA's reins. So, who holds the reins now? Hu holds the reins now. He's president of the country *and* general secretary of the CCP *and* chairman of the Central Military Commission. No matter how you slice it, Hu's in charge in China.

—Steve Sampson

Hu is president of the country* and *general secretary of the Communist Party* and *chairman of the Central Military Commission.

KnowledgeNews

Confucius Says

Confucius taught in China a generation before Socrates taught in Greece, living from 551 to 479 BC. But back then, no one called him Confucius. They called him K'ung-fu-tzu (or Kongfuzi, depending on how you romanize the Chinese). It meant "Master K'ung." He was born K'ung Qiu. He became "Confucius" when Christian missionaries sent his teachings to the West in the 17th century and gave him a Latin name.

Like Socrates, Confucius didn't write anything down. We know what he taught only because his students collected his sayings into a slim volume that westerners call the *Analects of Confucius*. What does it say? Let's ask Confucius himself. Yes, we know he's dead. But he still lives in that book.

Master K'ung, how did you get to be such a wise man?

"At 15, I set my heart on learning; at 30, I took my stand; at 40, I came to be free from doubts; at 50, I understood the Decree of Heaven; at 60, my ear was attuned; at 70, I followed my heart's desire without overstepping the line."

Sounds like you've led a very deliberate life.

"By nature, men are nearly alike; by practice, they get to be wide apart."

Are you still learning? Or have you gotten to a point where you just sit around all day and think wise thoughts?

"I once spend all day thinking without taking food and all night thinking without going to bed, but I found that I gained nothing from it. It would have been better for me to have spent the time learning."

"If one learns from others but does not think, one will be bewildered. If, on the other hand, one thinks but does not learn from others, one will be in peril."

People say you're a "sage" and as "benevolent" a man as anyone could ever meet. Are you?

"How dare I claim to be a sage or a benevolent man? Perhaps it might be said of me that I learn without flagging and teach without growing weary."

"Quietly to store up knowledge in my mind, to learn without flagging, to teach without growing weary, these present me with no difficulties."

"It is these things that cause me concern: failure to cultivate virtue, failure to go more deeply into what I have learned, inability—when I am told what is right—to move to where it is, and inability to reform myself when I have defects."

Is virtue more important than knowledge?

"I do not see how a man can be acceptable who is untrustworthy in word. When a pin is missing in the yoke-bar of a large cart or in the collar-bar of a small cart, how can the cart be expected to go?"

Don't virtue and knowledge go together?

"A man of virtue is sure to be the author of memorable sayings, but the author of memorable sayings is not necessarily virtuous."

So what is virtue? What does it take to be what you call a "gentleman" guided by "benevolence"?

"The gentleman never deserts benevolence, not even for as long as it takes to eat a meal. If he hurries and stumbles, one may be sure that it is in benevolence that he does so."

"In his dealings with the world the gentleman is not invariably for or against anything. He is on the side of what is moral."

"While the gentleman cherishes benign rule, the small man cherishes his native land. While the gentleman cherishes respect for the law, the small man cherishes generous treatment."

What advice would you give would-be "gentlemen"?

"Make it your guiding principle to do your best for others and to be trustworthy in what you say."

"Do not impose on others what you yourself do not desire."

Ah, the Golden Rule. But people can't really be expected to measure up to that, can they? I mean, we know it's the way to go, but we don't have the strength to stay the course.

"A man whose strength gives out collapses along the course. In your case you set the limits beforehand."

"Even when walking in the company of two other men, I am bound to be able to learn from them. The good points of the one I copy; the bad points of the other I correct in myself."

"When you meet someone better than yourself, turn your thoughts to becoming his equal. When you meet someone not as good as you are, look within and examine your own self."

So look for mentors, eh?

"Virtue never stands alone. It is bound to have neighbors."

"The gentleman helps others to realize what is good in them; he does not help them to realize what is bad in them. The small man does the opposite."

"The virtue of the gentleman is like the wind; the virtue of the small man is like grass. Let the wind blow over the grass and it is sure to bend."

But how do you know who's virtuous, and who's not?

"Look at the means a man employs, observe the path he takes, and examine where he feels at home. In what way is a man's true character hidden from view?"

"In his errors a man is true to type. Observe the errors and you will know the man."

And good people don't mind being pestered by small people looking to grow?

"To fail to speak to a man who is capable of benefiting is to let a man go to waste. To speak to a man who is incapable of benefiting is to let one's words go to waste. A wise man lets neither men nor words go to waste."

Thank you, Master K'ung, for your time and your thoughts. For more of Confucius's collected wisdom, check out the Analects of Confucius*, available in bookstores now.*

—Michael Himick

KnowledgeNews Editors

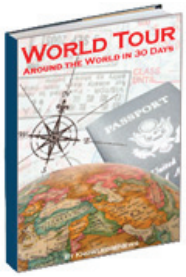
Michael Himick, publisher and editor-in-chief

Michael Himick heads up KnowledgeNews. Michael used to be managing editor at Britannica.com, where he and a team of history, science, and culture editors invented online features for the world-famous Encyclopaedia Britannica. He used to be vice president and executive producer at e-newsletter giant LifeMinders, the firm that practically invented e-newsletters. He used to teach writing, edit history and humanities books, and write on business and finance. Now, he has the best job around—interacting with learners all over the world and discovering something new every day.

Steve Sampson, managing editor

Steve Sampson has written more articles for KnowledgeNews than anyone—*and* produced a host of world-class email newsletters. He produced the official e-newsletter of the Sydney Olympic Games, working on location to send daily features to fans in 150 countries. He's produced email newsletters to track daily news, provide weather updates, improve your health, bring your family closer together, and more. Before all that? Serious academic research. Steve taught writing at George Washington University and worked at the famed Folger Shakespeare Library in Washington, DC.

KnowledgeNews Ebooks



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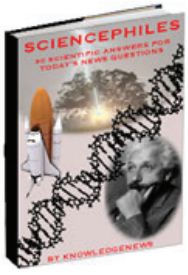

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