

# FACTS ABOUT ASIA

## MISCELLANEOUS FACTS ABOUT THE CHINESE ECONOMY

### SIZE

China's gross domestic product (GDP), the value of all good and services produced in one year, has quadrupled since economic reform began in 1978 under former leader Deng Xiaoping.

China's economy is now the world's sixth largest with a GDP of approximately \$1.4 trillion. The US ranks first, with a GDP of \$10.9 trillion.

### TRADE AND INVESTMENT

Almost sixty percent of Chinese exports to the US are produced by firms owned by foreign companies, many of them American.

US importers with dominant positions in China, such as Wal-Mart and Hallmark, have the power to compel Chinese suppliers to keep their costs as low as possible. Wal-Mart alone purchased \$18 billion worth of Chinese goods in 2004, making it China's eighth largest trading partner—ahead of Australia, Canada, and Russia.

### POVERTY COMPARED IN CHINA AND SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA

Recently a World Bank report stated, "Dramatic progress against absolute poverty has been made by China. Since 1981, the number of extremely poor (income under \$1.00 per day) fell from over 600 million people." According to the same report, while Chinese GDP per capita during this time quadrupled,

since 1981 a 15 percent contraction in GDP per capita in Sub-Saharan Africa resulted in a near-doubling of the people living on less than \$1.00 a day—from 164 million to 314 million people.

### CHINA'S SHARE OF WORLD OIL DEMAND

1990	3.5 percent
2000	6 percent
2025	Nearly 11 percent projected

### CHINESE MANUFACTURING PROGRESS AND ENGINEERS

"China is the most exciting place in the world right now to be a manufacturer," said Mark Wall, President, GE Plastics in China. According to Wall, the country is in love with manufacturing, and engineers come in excited and ready to work long days.

In 2004, Chinese universities produced 325,000 engineers, five times as many as the US, where the number of engineering graduates has been declining since the early 1980s.

#### Sources:

Richard Katz, ed., "China's Petroleum Appetite: Wheeling and Dealing," *The Oriental Economist Report*, February 2005.

Richard Katz, ed., "China Poverty," *The Oriental Economist Report*, February 2005.

Ted Fishman, "The Chinese Century: Will China Surpass the United States as the World's Economic Leader?" *The New York Times Upfront*, [upfrontmagazine.com](http://upfrontmagazine.com), January 10, 2005.

Neil C. Hughes, "A Trade War with China," *Foreign Affairs*, July/August 2005.

## JAPANESE AUTOMOBILES AND THE US

Two-thirds of all cars, SUVs, and minivans that Japanese companies sell in the US are made in the US.

GM presently controls 25 percent of the automobile market share, the largest in the US industry, while Toyota controls 14 percent.

The hybrid segment of the US auto market is exploding, and Toyota's Prius dominates with a 64 percent share. Although hybrids are a tiny share of the overall auto market, Toyota anticipates untapped demand and has launched production of hybrid versions of the Lexus 330 car-SUV crossover and the Camry, and will soon include other high volume vehicles in its hybrid lineup too.

Source: Julie Norwell, "Toyota Not Blamed for GM Travails," *The Oriental Economist Report*, June 2005.

## SOUTH KOREAN-UNITED STATES TRADE BOOMED IN 2004

The ROK ranked seventh among United States trade partners in 2004, and was the seventh largest market worldwide for US exports. Total ROK-US bilateral trade reached \$72.5 billion in 2004, almost one-fifth higher than the previous year.

Source: Nan N. Fife, "U.S.-Korea Economic Relations: A View from Washington," *Korea's Economy 2005* (Korea Economic Institute and the Korea Institute of International Economic Policy) Volume 21.

## BANGKOK: PHYSICAL AND HUMAN GEOGRAPHY

Bangkok has a population of more than ten million, and is located at the mouth of the Chao Praya River at the Gulf of Thailand in Central Thailand. Bangkok has been Thailand's capital since 1782, and is home to the national government and monarchy, the Old Royal City and Grand Palace, extensive temple complexes, world famous museums, and vibrant commercial and industrial sectors.

Once known as "the Venice of the East," Bangkok has a vast network of canals and waterways that extend into the cities and suburbs. Although the canals were once Bangkok's primary transportation routes, many of them today are no longer navigable and some have been filled in with concrete in conjunction with new construction projects.

Bangkok contains approximately 80 percent of Thailand's motor vehicles, including some two million motorbikes and motorcycles. Although most major cities allocate about 25 percent of their space to a semi-logical grid of streets and major thoroughfares, within the city proper, Bangkok's drivable streets comprise about 6 percent of its overall area and some sources estimate this figure to be as low as 2.5 percent. It has been estimated that Bangkok's rush hour traffic moves at approximately 4 kilometers (2.5 miles) per hour while an average pedestrian walks at a pace of approximately 5 kilometers (3 miles) per hour. Because of Bangkok's massive traffic problems, a safe assumption is that the average commuter devotes a minimum of three hours daily to the round trip to and from work.

Both the canals and the traffic situation are serious environmental problems in Bangkok. The canals have often become the sites of slum communities where their water has been simultaneously utilized for drinking/cooking and as depositories for human waste. The highly concentrated numbers of motor vehicles have resulted in Thailand having one of the very highest levels of carbon dioxide emissions in Southeast Asia.

Source: Timothy D. Hoare, *Thailand: A Global Studies Handbook*, Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO, Inc., 2004.