

The Chinese Engineer by Sinophobia Philly

"You know who's to blame for global warming, right?" said my friend Nathan Niederhoffer.

I had a pretty good idea who he had in mind.

"The Chinese."

Bingo.

Nathan works in the insurance game. He's a front man for the Pillars of Hercules Life Insurance Company, otherwise known as: *The Herc*.

"The Chinese," he said again.

I agreed, what with all the fossil fuels. Especially the coal.

"No," said Nathan, "nothing as obvious as that."

I should have no known better. Nathan was a lot of things, but obvious was not one of them. Or perhaps I was just trying to weasel my way out of the conversation. Wouldn't be the first time.

"Do you have any idea how much sea levels will rise due to global warming?"

Sea levels? What about contaminated air? Won't we still be wanting to breathe?

"Do you have any idea how many homes that will cause to go underwater?"

Oh, yes; homes underwater. For people in the insurance racket, underwater was a huge term. Same for people in the mortgage business. Besides that, there had just been the big hurricane.

"Do you have any idea how much that's going to cost in homeowner-policy payouts alone?"

Millions?

"Millions? Come on, man. It's more like \$5.7 trillion. And that's just in the US alone."

As an insurance man, I wasn't surprised Nathan had the exact figure.

"And do you know who's to blame?"

The Chinese?

"Not just any Chinese, but one Chinese engineer in particular by the name of Yu."

Yu?

"Yes, Yu the Great."

Oh, Yu the Great.

"Yu the Great was the founder of the first real Chinese empire: the Xia dynasty, somewhere around 2000 BC.

2000 BC?

"Flooding was a huge problem back in Ancient China. Especially around the Yellow River. At the request of Emperor Shun, Yu, the engineer, took on the responsibility of finding a way to stop the flooding and make the land more hospitable to humans.

"After thirteen years, with help from a black turtle and a yellow dragon, Yu was triumphant in his task. What he did was, instead of trying to dam-up the waters of the Yellow River like his father had, he instead built a series of drainage ditches and irrigation canals to help with the Yellow's overflow. In essence, he worked with the river instead of against it. Confucius would one day be proud.

"Yu was a big hero, who went on to become emperor and found the first real Chinese dynasty."

Okay, I said; thanks for the history lesson. But what does it have to do with global warming? Rising sea levels?"

"What does it have to do with rising sea levels? It has everything to do with rising sea levels and the impending financial catastrophe associated with them.

With every beach house and seafood restaurant built right there on the seashore. And more. Do you have any idea how many homes and office buildings will be flooded if the oceans rise five feet?"

I did not.

"It will be cataclysmic. A quarter of the continental United States will be under water."

Fair enough, I said; but I still don't see the connection between global warming, Ancient China, and imminent economic doom.

"What most people don't know is that back in the year 2000 BC, there was another option to that series of ditches and canals. There was another Chinese engineer by the name of Wy Du. Wy Du had another solution for the Yellow River rising and driving thousands of poor Chinese from their homes, but Emperor Shun would have nothing to do with it."

So, I asked, what was Wy Du's solution?

"Wy Du, the most brilliant and accomplished engineer of his time, looked Emperor Shun square in the eyes and said, "Why not just move to higher ground? There are some great lots available in the hills nearby. It'll make for some great views."

And what did the emperor say?

"The emperor looked at him long and hard, then ordered him to be executed."

And how would this have affected life today?

"Don't you get it?" said Nathan. "If Yu the Great wouldn't have tamed the Yellow River, people wouldn't have had the foolish idea to start living right along the waterfront. Do you have any idea how much financial risk insurance companies incur every year from people living right on the water? Especially the ocean. A river is one thing, but the ocean... Oh, boy. Ocean-front property is the big blue whale of risk avoidance forgone."

Spoken like a true insurance man.

So how did my friend Nathan Niederhoffer come to know all this, I wondered? About Emperor Shun and Yu the Great?

"Watch the History Channel sometime," said Nathan.

And Wy Du?

"TJ Max told me."

Ah, yes; good ole TJ Max.

Poor Wy Du. First he gets executed, then he gets blamed for global warming: four thousands years in the making. Some people just can't catch a break.

Wy Du, the Chinese engineer. Of course. It's all his fault.

The Chinese Engineer is the latest in the Flashbytes series from worst-selling author Philip Loyd. Loyd came up with the idea one day when watching a documentary on Chinese history. When it came to the Yellow River flooding, Loyd commented, in all his wisdom, by saying simply, "Why didn't they just move away from the river?" Loyd also has his own ideas on how to solve the problem of global warming.

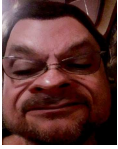
What are Flashbytes? Catering to today's ADD masses, Flashbytes are complete stories in 5 minutes or less.

Flashbytes are perfect for those brief outbreaks of mental awareness. Read Flashbytes while you're waiting at the doctor's office, the DMV, even dropping a deuce. After all, most songs last 5 minutes or less; why not treat your brain instead?

FLASHBYTES: FEED YOUR HEAD

Get Fresh Flashbytes at
<https://realfashbytes.wordpress.com>

About the author



Philip Loyd loves fat chicks and cheap beer, though not necessarily in that order. He has worked for Forbes and McGraw Hill, both times running for his life as if waking up from a nightmare. His dream is to one day move to Hollywood, take up serial killing, and walk away with a Razzie. Until then, he lives with his mom in Dumbass, Texas. <http://PhilipLoyd.com>