

CHAPTER 34

Rebirth and Revolution: Nation-Building in East Asia and the Pacific Rim

CHAPTER SUMMARY

The recent history of China, Japan, and Vietnam has significant differences from other Asian and African states. Japan remained independent, industrialized, and became a great imperialist power. After World War II, Korea, Taiwan, and other industrializing nations gave the Pacific Rim new importance. China and Vietnam suffered from Western and Asian imperialists. With their traditional order in ruins, they had to face the usual problems of underdeveloped, colonial, peoples. Full-scale revolutions occurred. By the beginning of the 21st century, the result of all the changes gave east Asia a new importance in world affairs.

East Asia in the Postwar Settlements. Allied victory and decolonization restructured east Asia. Korea was divided into Russian and American occupation zones. Taiwan was occupied by Chiang Kai-shek's Chinese government. The Americans and Europeans reoccupied, temporarily, their colonial possessions. Japan was occupied by the United States. The Pacific Rim states became conservative and stable nations tied to the West.

New Divisions and the End of Empires. The postwar tide of decolonization freed the Philippines from the United States, Indonesia from the Dutch, and Malaya from the British. The Chinese Communist victory in China drove Chiang's regime to Taiwan. Korea remained divided after a war in which American intervention preserved South Korean independence. Japan under its American occupiers peacefully evolved a new political structure.

Japanese Recovery. Although Japan had been devastated by the war, it recovered quickly. The American occupation, ending in 1952, altered Japan's political forms. The military was disbanded and democratization measures were introduced. Women received the right to vote, unions were encouraged, and Shintoism was abolished as state religion. Landed estates were divided among small farmers and *zaibatsu* holdings temporarily dissolved. A new constitution established the parliament as the supreme governing body, guaranteed civil liberties, abolished the "war potential" of the military, and reduced the emperor to a symbolic figurehead. The Japanese modified the constitution in 1963 to include social service obligations to the elderly, a recognition of traditional values. Most Japanese accepted the new system, especially the reduction of the role of the military. Defense responsibility for the region was left to the United States. Two moderate political parties merged to form the Liberal Democratic Party in 1955. It monopolized Japan's government into the 1990s. The educational system became one of the most meritocratic in the world.

Korea: Intervention and War. Cold war tensions kept Korea divided into Russian and American zones. The North became a Stalinist-type Communist state ruled until 1994 by Kim Il-Sung. The South, under Syngman Rhee, developed parliamentary institutions under strongly authoritarian leadership. The North Koreans, hoping to force national unity on Communist terms, invaded the South in 1950. The United States organized a United Nations defense of South Korea that drove back the invading forces. China's Communist government reacted by pushing the Americans southward. The fighting stalemated and ended with a 1953 armistice

recognizing a divided Korea. In the following years, North Korea became an isolated, dictatorial state. South Korea, under authoritarian military officers, allied to the United States. The South Korean economy flourished.

Emerging Stability in Taiwan, Hong Kong, and Singapore. When the Guomindang regime was defeated in China by the Communists, it fell back on Taiwan. The Chinese imposed authoritarian rule over the majority Taiwanese. The United States supported Taiwan against China until tensions lessened in the 1960s. By then, Taiwan had achieved growing economic prosperity. Hong Kong remained a British colony, with its peoples gaining increasing autonomy, until returned to Chinese control in 1997. Singapore developed into a vigorous free port and gained independence in 1965. By the end of the 1950s, there was stability among many smaller east Asian states; from the 1960s, they blended Western and traditional ideas to achieve impressive economic gains.

Japan, Incorporated. From the 1950s, Japan concentrated upon economic growth and distinctive cultural and political forms. The results demonstrated that economic success did not require strictly following Western models.

Japan's Distinctive Political and Cultural Style. The Liberal Democrat party provided conservative stability during its rule between 1955 and 1993. The political system revived oligarchic tendencies of the Japanese past as changes in parliamentary leadership were mediated by negotiations among the ruling elite. Change came only in the late 1980s when corruption among Liberal Democratic leaders raised new questions. Japan's distinctive political approach featured close cooperation between state and business interests. Population growth slowed as the government supported birth control and abortion. Most elements of traditional culture persisted in the new Japan. Styles in poetry, painting, tea ceremonies, theater, and flower arrangements continued. Films and novels recalled previous eras. Music combined Western and Japanese forms. Contributions to world culture were minimal. Nationalist writers, as Hiraoka Kimitoke, dealt with controversial themes to protest change and the incorporation of Western ideas.

The Economic Surge. By the 1980s Japan was one of the two or three top economic world powers. The surge was made possible by government encouragement, educational expansion, and negligible military expenditures. Workers organized in company unions that stressed labor-management cooperation. Company policies provided important benefits to employees, including lifetime employment. The labor force appeared to be less class-conscious and individualistic than in the West. Management demonstrated group consciousness and followed a collective decision-making process that sacrificed quick personal profits. Leisure life was very limited by Western standards. Family life also showed Japanese distinctiveness. Women's status, despite increased education and birth rate decline, remained subject to traditional influences. Feminism was a minor force. Women concentrated on household tasks and childrearing, and did not share many leisure activities with husbands. In childrearing, conformity to group standards was emphasized and shame was directed at nonconformists. Group tensions were settled through mutual agreement, and individual alienation appeared lower than in the West. Competitive situations produced stress that could be relieved by heavy drinking and recourse to geisha houses. Popular culture incorporated foreign elements, such as baseball. Pollution became a major problem and the government gave the environment more attention after 1970. Political corruption led to the replacement of the Liberal Democrats during the 1990s by unstable coalition governments. Severe economic recession and unemployment disrupted former patterns.

The Pacific Rim: New Japans? Other Asian Pacific coast states mirrored Japan's economic and political development. Political authoritarian rule under parliamentary forms was common. Governments fostered economic planning and technical education. Economies flourished until the end of the 1990s.

The Korean Miracle. The South Korean government normally rested in the hands of military strongmen. One general, Chung-hee, held power from 1961 to 1979. The military was pressured from power at the end of the 1980s and was succeeded by an elected conservative government. Limited political activity and press freedom was allowed. From the mid-1950s, primary attention went to economic growth. Huge firms were created by government aid joined to private entrepreneurship. The Koreans exported a variety of consumer goods, plus steel, automobiles, and textiles. The industrial groups, such as Hyundai, resembled Japanese zaibatsus and had great political influence. As Korea industrialized, population soared to produce the highest national world population density. Per capita income advanced, but was still far behind Japan's. Important economic inequalities continued.

Advances in Taiwan and the City-States. The Republic of China (Taiwan) experienced a high rate of economic growth. Agricultural and industrial production rapidly increased as the government concentrated on economic gains. Education received massive investments. The policies meant important economic and cultural progress for the people of Taiwan. The government remained stable despite the recognition of the Communists as the rulers of China by the United States in 1978. The Taiwanese built important regional contacts throughout eastern and southeastern Asia to facilitate commerce and opened links with the regime in Beijing that continued to claim the island was part of China. After the death of Chiang Kai-shek in 1978, the gap between mainland-born Chinese and Taiwanese lessened as gradual reform went forward. Singapore developed along lines roughly similar to those of Taiwan. Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew held power for three decades after 1965. Tight controls were maintained over many aspects of public and private life. Authoritarian rule suppressed opposition movements. Successful economic development eased the political strains; by the 1980s Singapore's people had the second-highest per capita income in Asia. After its return to China in 1997, Hong Kong continued as a major world port and international banking center. It linked China to the rest of the world. Industrial development fueled high export levels.

In Depth: The Pacific Rim as a U. S. Policy Issue. The rise of Pacific Rim economies raises important questions for the West, especially the United States, because of its military role and world economic position. The United States had promoted the region's economic development as part of the contest with Communism. It did not want to end its influential position of military superiority. The economic competition of the Pacific Rim states posed real threats. Japan was a major contributor to the United States' unfavorable trade balance, and it increased its holdings within the country. During the 1980s, many individuals urged Americans to imitate Pacific Rim patterns, and some firms did so. Others wanted a more antagonistic American response: evacuation of military bases, imposition of tariffs. No clear policies followed. Pacific Rim nations similarly had to rethink their relationship with the West and the United States. Access to Western markets and military assistance remained desired, but there was a strong wish to establish a more equal relationship.

Common Themes and New Problems. The nations had more in common than economic success. They all stressed group loyalty over individualism and emphasized hard work.

Confucian morality played a part in the process. All relied on government planning and limits on dissent. All benefited from contact with the flourishing Japanese economy. Pacific Rim dynamism influenced other regions of southeast Asia. By the 1980s Indonesia, Thailand, and Malaysia experienced rapid economic growth. But by the closing years of the 20th century, the region showed weaknesses as growth lessened, currencies declined, and unemployment rose. Many Westerners thought that the nations had to adopt more free-market competition. The economic distress brought political difficulties that played a role in a change of government in Indonesia. At the end of the century, economic growth quickened.

Mao's China and Beyond. Chiang Kai-shek's success during the 1930s was interrupted by Japanese invasion. He allied with the Communists and for the next seven years, war against the Japanese replaced civil war. The war strengthened the Communists at the expense of the Guomintang since it was defeated by the Japanese when waging conventional warfare. The Communists fought guerrilla campaigns and extended control over much of north China. Intellectuals and students changed their allegiance to the Communists. By 1945, the balance of power was shifting to Mao, and in the renewed civil war after the defeat of Japan, the Communists were victorious in 1949. Mao triumphed because Communist policies won the support of the peasantry and other groups. Land reform, education, and improved health care gave them good reason to support Mao. The Communists won because they offered a solution to China's fundamental social and economic problems.

The Communists Come to Power. The long struggle had given them a strong military and political organization. The army was subordinate to the party. The Communists used their strength to reassert Chinese regional preeminence. Secessionist movements in Inner Mongolia and Tibet were suppressed and, in the 1950s, China intervened in the Korean War and preserved the division of that country. They periodically threatened to invade the Guomintang refuge in Taiwan, and supported the Vietnamese liberation movement. The close cooperation with the Soviet Union collapsed by the late 1950s because of border disputes and arguments with the post-Stalinist leadership. During the early 1960s, China defeated India in a brief border war and exploded a nuclear device.

Planning for Economic Growth and Social Justice. Government activity for domestic reform was equally vigorous, but less successful. Landlords were dispossessed and purged, and their lands redistributed. To begin industrialization, a first five-year plan commenced in 1953, drawing resources from the countryside for its support. Some advances were achieved in heavy industry, but the resulting consequences of centralized state planning and a privileged class of urban technocrats were unacceptable to Mao. He had a deep hostility to elitism and to Lenin's idea of a revolution imposed from above; he clung to his faith in peasants as the force of the revolution. The Mass Line approach began in 1955 with the formation of agricultural cooperatives; in 1956 they became farming collectives that provided the bulk of Chinese production. Peasant ownership ceased. In 1957 intellectuals were purged after being asked their opinion of government policies.

The Great Leap Backward: The Great Leap Forward, an effort to revitalize the revolution by restoring its mass and rural base, was launched in 1958. Small-scale industrialization aimed at creating self-reliant peasant communes, but instead resulted in economic disaster. Peasants reacted against collectivization. Communist China experienced its worst famine, the crisis exacerbated by a growing population and a state rejection of family planning. The government did then introduce birth control programs and succeeded in slowing population increase. By

1960 the Great Leap ended and Mao lost his position as state chairman. He continued as head of the Central Committee. Pragmatists such as Zhou Enlai, Liu Shaoqi, and Deng Xiaoping pushed policies of restored state direction and local level market incentives.

“Women Hold Up Half of the Heavens.” Mao, assisted by his wife Jiang Qing, was committed to the liberation of Chinese women. Guomindang efforts to reverse gains made by women during the early revolution caused many women to support the Communists. They worked in many occupations in Communist ranks. When the revolution triumphed, women received legal equality. Women gained some freedom in selecting marriage partners and were expected to work outside of the home. Educational and professional opportunities improved. Traditional male attitudes persisted and women had to labor both in and out of their homes. Males continued to dominate upper-party levels.

Mao’s Last Campaign and the Fall of the Gang of Four. By 1965, Mao believed that he had won sufficient support to overthrow his pragmatist rivals. He launched the Cultural Revolution, during which opponents were attacked, killed, or forced into rural labor. Zhou Enlai was driven into seclusion, Liu Shaoqi killed, and Deng Xiaoping imprisoned. The destruction of centralized state and technocratic elites endangered revolutionary stability. The campaign was terminated by Mao in 1968 as the military brought the Red Guard back into line. The struggle between Mao and his rivals recommenced, with Deng slowly pushing back the Gang of Four led by Jiang Qing. The deaths of Zhou Enlai and Mao in 1976 cleared the way for an open succession struggle. The pragmatists won out; the Gang of Four was imprisoned for life. Since then the pragmatists have opened China to Western influences and capitalist development, but not to political reform. The Communists, since taking power in 1949, have managed a truly revolutionary redistribution of China’s wealth. The mass people have much better standards of living than under previous regimes, and their condition is superior to that of the people in many other developing regions. The agricultural and industrial growth rates have surpassed India’s.

Colonialism and Revolution in Vietnam. Although the Vietnamese were brought under European rule during the 19th century, the Confucian influence of China on their historical evolution makes their encounter with the West similar to China’s. The failure of the Confucian emperor and bureaucracy to prevent a French takeover discredited the system in force in Vietnam for a millennium. The French had been interested in Vietnam since the 17th century; by the late 18th century they became politically involved when internal power struggles brought wide disorder. From the late 1770s, the Tayson peasant rebellion toppled the Nguyen and Trinh dynasties. The French backed Nguyen Anh (later renamed Gia Long) and helped him to unify Vietnam by 1802. Hue became the capital, and French missionaries and traders received special rights. Gia Long and his successors were conservatives deeply committed to Confucianism, thus disappointing French missionary hopes to convert Vietnam to Catholicism. When ruler Minh Mang persecuted Vietnamese Catholics, the French, during the 1840s, intervened. By the 1890s, Vietnam, Cambodia, and Laos were under French control, with the Nguyen made into puppet rulers. The French exploited Vietnam without providing its people any significant return. Food consumption among the peasantry dropped between the early 1900s and the 1930s while Vietnam became a leading world rice producer.

Vietnamese Nationalism: Bourgeois Dead Ends and Communist Survival. The failure of the Nguyen to resist the French discredited the dynasty. There was guerrilla opposition into the early 20th century, but it was localized, small-scale, and easily defeated. With the old order discredited, many Vietnamese rejected Confucianism. Under the French, a Western-educated

middle class grew to work in government and private careers. They contested French racism and discrimination in job opportunities. French ability to repress all outward signs of opposition gave those arguing for violent solutions the upper hand. In the 1920s, a Vietnamese Nationalist Party (VNQDD), with members drawn from the educated middle class, began to pursue violent revolution. Their efforts ended with the harsh repression of the party in 1929. The fall of the VNQDD left the Communist Party, dominated by Nguyen Ai Quoc (Ho Chi Minh), as the main focus of resistance. The Communists believed in revolt based upon urban workers until, in the early 1930s, they shifted to a peasant emphasis to take advantage of rural risings. The French crushed the party, but it survived underground with help from the Comintern. The Japanese occupied Vietnam in 1941.

The War of Liberation against the French. The Communist-dominated resistance movement, the Viet Minh, fought the Japanese during the war and emerged at the end of World War II as an effective party ready to continue the reforms they had inaugurated in liberated regions. By 1945, under the leadership of Vo Nguyen Giap, and with much rural support, the Viet Minh proclaimed an independent Vietnam. They did not control the South, where the French returned to exploit local divisions and reassert colonial rule. A harsh colonial war followed that closed with French defeat at Dien Bien Phu in 1954. An international conference at Geneva promised elections to decide who should govern Vietnam.

The War of Liberation Against the United States. The promise of elections was not kept as Vietnam became entangled in cold war maneuvers. Anti-Communist feeling in the United States during the early 1950s fed the idea that South Vietnam must be defended against a Communist takeover. A southern government, with the United States' backing, was established with Ngo Dinh Diem as president. He rigged elections to legitimize his rule and began a campaign against the Communists (the Viet Cong) in the South. The North Vietnamese regime supported the Viet Cong. When hostilities escalated and Diem proved unable to stem Communist gains, the United States allowed the military to depose him and take over the war. The fighting continued, but even the intervention of 500,000 American troops and massive bombing did not defeat the Communists. The United States gave up and withdrew its forces in the 1970s. Southern Vietnam fell to the Communists in 1975. Vietnam had its first united government since the mid-19th century, but it ruled over a devastated country.

After Victory: The Struggle to Rebuild Vietnam. Communist efforts to rebuild have floundered, partly because of Vietnamese isolation from the international community. The United States used its influence to block international assistance. Border clashes occurred with China. Vietnamese leaders of a dictatorial regime pushed hard-line Marxist-Leninist political and economic policies and persecuted old enemies. A highly centralized economy stifled growth and continued wartime miseries. Liberalization in the economic sphere finally began during the late 1980s. The United States and Vietnam began movement into a more constructive relationship.

Global Connections: East Asia and the Pacific Rim in the Contemporary World. Both China and Vietnam have undergone revolutionary transformations during the 20th century. Monarchies and colonial regimes have been replaced by Communism. Entire social classes have disappeared. New educational systems have been created. Women have gained new legal and social status. Confucianism fell before Marxist-Leninism and later Western capitalist influences. But much remains unchanged. Suspicion of commercial and entrepreneurial classes persists, and the belief remains that rulers are obliged to promote the welfare of their subjects.

Ideological systems stress secular and social harmony rather than religious concerns. Japan and the Pacific Rim have undergone lesser change, and in some ways, remain more traditional societies. But industrialization and democratization have brought change in many areas. East Asia, largely independent of Western control, has become a growing force in world affairs

KEY TERMS

Singapore: Part of the British colony of Malaya with a mostly Chinese population; after World War II emerged as a flourishing, independent city-state.

Douglas MacArthur: American commander during the war against Japan; headed American occupation government of Japan after the war; commanded United Nations forces during the Korean War.

Liberal Democratic Party: Conservative political party that monopolized Japanese governments from 1955 into the 1990s.

Republic of Korea: Southern half of Korea occupied by the United States after World War II; developed parliamentary institutions under authoritarian rulers; underwent major industrial and economic growth after the 1950s.

Democratic People's Republic of Korea: Northern half of Korea dominated by U.S.S.R. after World War II; formed a Communist dictatorship under Kim Il-Song; attacked South Korea to begin the Korean War.

Korean War: Fought between 1950 and 1953 between North Korea and its Soviet and Chinese allies and South Korea and United Nations' forces directed by the United States; ended in stalemate.

Taiwan: Island off the Chinese mainland that became the refuge for Chiang Kai-shek's Guomindang regime; maintained independence with United States' support; rapidly industrialized after the 1950s.

Hong Kong: British colony in China; became a major commercial and industrial center; returned to China in 1997.

Hyundai: Major Korean industrial giant; typical of firms producing Korea's economic miracle.

Lee Kuan Yew: Authoritarian ruler of Singapore for three decades from 1959; presided over major economic development.

Mass Line: Economic policy of Mao Zedong inaugurated in 1955; led to formation of agricultural cooperatives that then became farming collectives in 1956; peasants lost land gained a few years earlier.

Great Leap Forward: Economic policy of Mao Zedong introduced in 1958; proposed small-scale industrialization projects integrated into peasant communities; led to economic disaster and ended in 1960.

Zhou Enlai, Deng Xiaoping, and Liu Shaoqui: Pragmatists who, along with Zhou Enlai, opposed the Great Leap Forward; wanted to restore state direction and market incentives at the local level.

Jiang Qing: Wife of Mao Zedong; one of the Gang of Four; opposed pragmatists and supported the Cultural Revolution; arrested and imprisoned for life in 1976.

Cultural Revolution: Initiated by Mao Zedong in 1965 to restore his dominance over the pragmatists; disgraced and even killed bureaucrats and intellectuals; called off in 1968.

Red Guard: Student brigades active during the Cultural Revolution in supporting Mao Zedong's policies.

Gang of Four: Jiang Qing and her allies who opposed the pragmatists after the death of Mao Zedong; arrested and sentenced to life in prison.

Tayson Rebellion: Peasant revolution in southern Vietnam during the 1770s; toppled the Nguyen and the Trinh dynasties.

Nguyen Anh (Gia Long): With French support, unified Vietnam under the Nguyen dynasty in 1802 with the capital at Hue.

Minh Mang: Second ruler of united Vietnam (1802-1841); emphasized Confucianism and persecuted Catholics.

Vietnamese Nationalist Party (VNQDD): Middle-class revolutionary organization during the 1920s; committed to violent overthrow of French colonialism; crushed by the French.

Communist Party of Vietnam: The primary nationalist party after the defeat of the VNQDD in 1929; led from 1920s by Ho Chi Minh.

Ho Chi Minh (Nguyen Ai Quoc): Shifted to a revolution based on the peasantry in the 1930s; presided over the defeat of France in 1954 and the unsuccessful United States intervention in Vietnam.

Viet Minh: Communist Vietnamese movement; fought the Japanese during World War II and the French afterwards.

Vo Nguyen Giap: Military commander of the Viet Minh and the victor at **Dien Bien Phu** in 1954.

Ngo Dinh Diem: Became president of South Vietnam with United States' support in the 1950s; overthrown by the military, with U.S. approval.

Viet Cong: The Communist guerrilla movement in southern Vietnam during the Vietnamese war.

Pacific Rim: Region including Japan, South Korea, Singapore, Hong Kong, and Taiwan; typified by rapid growth rates, expanding exports, and industrialization; either Chinese or

strongly influenced by Confucian values; considerable reliance on government planning and direction, and limitations on dissent and instability.

Chiang Ching-kuo: Son and successor of Chiang Kai-shek as ruler of Taiwanese government in 1978; continued authoritarian government; attempted to lessen the gap between followers of his father and indigenous islanders.

People's Republic of China: Communist government of mainland China; proclaimed in 1949 following military success of Mao Zedong over forces of Chiang Kai-shek and the Guomindang.

Lin Biao: (1907 – 1971) Chinese commander under Mao; trained at Chiang Kai-shek's Whampoa Academy in the 1920s.

Party cadres: Basis for China's Communist government organization; cadre advisors were attached to military contingents at all levels.

People's Liberation Army: Chinese Communist army; administered much of country under People's Republic of China.

Pragmatists: Chinese Communist politicians such as Zhou Enlai, Deng Xiaoping, and Liu Shaoqui; determined to restore state direction and market incentives at the local level; opposed Great Leap Forward.

Liu Shaoqui: Chinese Communist pragmatist; with Deng Xiaoping, came to power in 1959 after Mao was replaced; determined to restore state direction and market incentives at local level; purged in 1966 as Mao returned to power.

Deng Xiaoping: One of the more pragmatic, least ideological of the major Communist leaders of China; joined the party as a young man in the 1920s, survived the legendary Long March and persecution during the Cultural Revolution of the 1960s, and emerged as China's most influential leader in the early 1980s.

Dien Bien Phu: Most significant victory of the Viet Minh over French colonial forces in 1954; gave the Viet Minh control over northern Vietnam.

LECTURE SUGGESTIONS

Evaluate the ways in which the development of the Pacific Rim continues the traditions of Asian (primarily Chinese) civilization and the ways in which the Pacific Rim departs from that past. Chinese traditions continue to exist, including elements of the Confucian state and social system (emphasis on group solidarity and cooperation rather than competition, the concept that rulers must act to benefit all, an emphasis on central control leading to central planning and authoritarianism, tight links between government and society, a sense of cultural superiority over the West, and a retention of aspects of traditional culture, such as poetry, theater, and art). Aspects of tradition that have been overcome are the mistrust of commercial classes replaced by the growth of corporate businessmen as social leaders, the growing acceptance of aspects of Western culture, and a more complete entry into the world trade system.