Chapter 40

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

OUTLINE

I. Introduction

Japan and other Pacific Rim nations have undergone significant industrialization. China and Vietnam have differed from much of the rest of Asia and Africa. Although industrialized to a degree, China and Vietnam share many experiences with developing nations, including experiences with imperialism, lower standards of living, overpopulation, and ecological destruction. Moreover, China and Vietnam chose to abandon the traditional Confucian culture in favor of Communist revolution. Gradualist alternatives proved impossible in both cases. Economic development and revolution have fundamentally recast East Asia since World War II.

II. East Asia in the Postwar Settlements

A. Introduction

After World War II, the Western negotiators had definite plans for Asia. They divided Korea into Russian and American zones, restored Taiwan to nationalist China, pledged independence to the Philippines, and restored colonial regimes in Vietnam, Malaya, and Indonesia. The United States occupied Japan as a means of imposing widespread reforms.

B. New Divisions and the End of Empires

The postwar settlement did not work out exactly as the Western victors planned. The Philippines, Malaya, and Indonesia all gained their independence within a decade of the war’s end. Taiwan continued to be ruled by a nationalist government under Chiang Kai-shek, but mainland China was under a Communist government. Korea continued to be divided following a bitter war. Only Japan was re-created in the pattern laid out by the United States.

C. Japanese Recovery

Japan had been devastated by the war but, with the assistance of the United States, was able to recover rapidly. The U.S. occupation government destroyed the Japanese military and introduced more democratic forms of government. Although the occupation government also attempted to break up the zaibatsus, they were rapidly reestablished. The new constitution made the parliament the supreme governing body, while the emperor was reduced to a symbolic figurehead. Most of the new constitutional measures were accepted by the Japanese population. The military did not recover its prewar eminence in Japan, even after the withdrawal of the occupation government. Military defense remained in the hands of the United States. The most powerful political party to emerge after the war was the Liberal Democratic party, which monopolized Japanese government into the 1990s. By 1955, Japan’s industrial base had recovered to prewar
levels. Shortly thereafter, a huge industrial spurt made Japan a competitor of Western industrialized nations. American occupation ended in 1952. Japanese relations with the Soviet Union remained tense, but did not result in major conflict.

D. Korea: Intervention and War

As the Cold War intensified after World War II, the United States and the Soviet Union were unable to agree on a plan for reunification of Korea. The United States backed the southern Republic of Korea, while the Soviet Union supported the People’s Democratic Republic of Korea in the north. In 1950, Communist North Korea attacked the southern republic. The United States determined to halt Soviet advance in Asia and induced the United Nations to support its efforts. When it appeared that the North Korean forces would be defeated, Communist China intervened on their behalf. The front stabilized in 1952, and an armistice was signed in 1953. Northern Korea continued as an authoritarian Communist regime under Kim Il-Sung. Southern Korea also followed an authoritarian political pattern but rapidly industrialized with the help of U.S. aid.

E. Emerging Stability in Taiwan, Hong Kong, and Singapore

The Chinese nationalists withdrew to Taiwan in 1948. When they did so, they imposed a new government supported by a massive army of the indigenous population of the island. An authoritarian government under Chiang Kai-shek dominated the native Taiwanese and attempted to defend the island from Communist China. Supported by the United States, the nationalist regime on Taiwan survived. As in South Korea, U.S. aid created economic prosperity and industrialization. Hong Kong and Singapore, both British colonies, also participated in the postwar economic boom. Hong Kong was returned to China in 1997. Singapore withdrew from Malaya and established independence in 1959. With the exception of Vietnam, the smaller East Asian nations had achieved stability by 1960.

III. Japan, Incorporated

A. Introduction

Industrialization and economic success were the hallmarks of Japan after 1950.

B. Japan’s Distinctive Political and Cultural Style

Between 1955 and 1993, the Liberal Democratic party provided political stability and introduced methods of government similar to those of Japan in the 1920s. Centralization of police forces in the 1950s produced dissent, but the government managed to avoid serious confrontations. Economic prosperity during the 1970s and 1980s reduced criticism of the government. Evidence of corruption within the government renewed some opposition in the late 1980s. Unlike the West, there was little separation between the state and the private sector in economic planning or the use of public resources for capitalization. The government sought to protect Japanese businesses from reliance on raw material and petroleum imports, limited population growth, and successfully united Japan in a sense of common purpose. The government expanded the public education system and concentrated on technical subjects believed useful in the business environment. Japanese culture preserved important traditions, such as group solidarity, art, poetry, and theater. These proved critical in establishing a sense of permanence in a rapidly changing society. Japanese culture also embraced contemporary developments in the West.
C. The Economic Surge

After the 1950s, Japan emerged as one of the world’s economic giants, although per capita income lagged behind the Western economic powers. Active participation of the government in economic growth was a factor in the remarkable expansion. There was little conflict between labor and capital in Japan, as workers were primarily organized in company unions. Paternalism and group loyalty helped prevent work stoppages that were common in the West. High savings rates produced capital for investment. Japanese management tended to also be loyal to their corporations. Feminism did not develop as rapidly in response to industrialization in Japan as it did in the West. Although well educated, Japanese women often remained in the home. In child-rearing, the emphasis was on producing social conformity. The emphasis on group solidarity permeated almost all aspects of Japanese society. After World War II, Japanese culture embraced some aspects of the West, such as baseball, Western eating utensils, and an emphasis on youth. Conservatives within Japan became concerned with the growing acceptance of Western cultural concepts. Japan’s economic success created resentment and competition among its trade rivals. When attempts to force Japan to open its markets failed, competitors threatened tariff structures aimed at Japanese exports. Pollution became a growing problem in Japanese cities. By the 1990s, economic recession combined with government corruption raised questions about the continued success of Japan, Incorporated.

IV. The Pacific Rim: New Japans?

A. Introduction

Developments in the Pacific Rim nations mirrored Japan’s success in the 20th century.

B. The Korean Miracle

Korea’s government continued to be dominated by strongmen, often from the military. Political opposition was permitted in Korea but often suppressed. As in Japan, the Korean government was dedicated to industrialization. In the case of Korea, Japanese colonialism had devastated the economy. The government assisted in capitalization and central planning. By the 1970s, economic growth was nearly equal to Japan’s. Industrial groups, such as Hyundai, enjoyed much regional influence. In some cases, corporations virtually governed regions of Korea and accepted responsibility for welfare programs, housing, and education. With industrialization, population growth increased dramatically, prompting many Koreans to emigrate despite economic prosperity. Per capita income, although on the rise, remained below that of Japan.

C. Advances in Taiwan and the City-States

Economic growth in Taiwan nearly equaled that of Korea. Production in both agriculture and industry increased. The demise of the government’s plans to invade the Chinese mainland left additional capital for investment. Centralized planning was a significant aspect of economic development, but there remained room for private initiative. The government also poured funds into public education. The dominance of Communist China affected Taiwan’s relations with the rest of the world, particularly the United States. In 1978, the United States ended formal diplomatic relations with Taiwan, although it retained informal liaisons. Japan became the most important trade partner of the island. Even after the death of Chiang Kai-shek in 1978, an authoritarian government continued under his son, Chiang Ching-kuo. Authoritarianism was also the basis of the Singapore government under Lee Kuan Yew. Government control over everyday life was more rigorous in Singapore than elsewhere among the Pacific Rim nations. Opposition
to the dominant political authorities was not permitted. The economic success of the government made it acceptable. Manufacturing and banking supplemented shipping as major sectors of the economy. By the 1980s, the per capita income of Singapore’s residents was the second highest in Asia. Hong Kong continued to serve as a major world port and banking center with a growing industrial sector. Hong Kong served as the connecting point between the rest of the world and Communist China.

D. Common Themes and New Problems

The Pacific Rim states all experienced rapid industrial growth. They also shared common traits: group loyalty in preference to individualism, an ethos of hard work, limited consumer demands, and the continued tradition of Confucian morality. Government central planning and authoritarianism were also common traits.

V. Mao’s China and Beyond

A. Introduction

When it appeared that Chiang’s Nationalists might defeat the Communists, the Japanese invaded China in 1937. Even as the Japanese advanced, Chiang continued to press his campaign against the Communists. Only when forced by military associates, Chiang formed an alliance with the Communists to form a united front against Japanese aggression. While the Japanese successfully defeated Chiang’s conventional forces along the Chinese coast, the Communists waged a more successful guerrilla campaign and gained control of much of northern China. When the war ended, the Nationalists were restricted to the northern Chinese cities. By 1945, when World War II ended, the Communists held a clear advantage. Mao was able to drive the demoralized remnants of the Nationalists to the island of Taiwan in 1949. Mao proclaimed the People’s Republic of China. Critical to Communist success was its program of rural reform. Mao concentrated on social and economic reform for the peasantry, a commitment that won many to his party.

B. The Communists Come to Power

The party enjoyed strong political and military organization. The People’s Liberation Army continued to administer much of the country after 1949, although the military accepted the party’s leadership. Following their victory over the Nationalists, the Communists moved to restore China’s dominance in East Asia. As Communist China’s power grew, a split developed with the Soviet Union. China demonstrated its international strength in defeating India in a brief border war and exploding a nuclear device.

C. Planning for Economic Growth and Social Justice

Between 1950 and 1952, the landlord class in China was eliminated. The government redistributed land to peasants and formed village cadres. As in Russia, the goal of the Communists was industrialization. Five-year plans were begun in 1953. To achieve development, the party became urban-based, undertook central economic planning, and turned away from the peasants. Mao found this direction unacceptable and forced the party to change directions in the mid-1950s. Mao disliked bureaucratic elites and intellectuals. He continued to identify the revolution with the peasants. In 1955, Mao introduced the Mass Line approach leading to farming collectives that brought peasants together in production groups. Following outspoken criticism of the Communist regime in 1957, Mao roughly repressed dissidents.
D. The Great Leap Backward

With political opposition subdued, Mao introduced the Great Leap Forward in 1958. Industrialization was to be based in rural communes rather than urban factories. The immediate consequences of collectivization and the Great Leap Forward were disastrous for development in China. Famine and falling production caused hardship. Economic regression was further complicated by massive population growth. Initially resistant to the idea of birth control, the Communist government limited families to one child in the 1980s. By 1960, Mao’s failures cost him his position of leadership of the nation. Pragmatists, headed by Zhou Enlai, decided to restore central planning and private landholding.

E. ‘Women Hold Up Half of the Heavens’

Mao’s revolutionary social program included improvements in the social and economic status of women. The failure of the Nationalists to support women’s rights led many women to embrace the Communists. The Communist party, in contrast, used women as teachers, laborers, and even soldiers. Some women rose to positions of influence within the party. The Communist victory brought full legal equality to Chinese women and entry into the work force. As was often the case in other nations, women were still expected to fulfill traditional roles as wives and mothers within their households. Males continued to dominate the upper reaches of the party structure. Mao’s wife temporarily enjoyed exceptional political influence, but her position depended on her relationship to her husband.

F. Mao’s Last Campaign and the Fall of the Gang of Four

Mao continued to oppose the pragmatists and to develop a base of mass support. In 1965, he launched the Cultural Revolution. Student demonstrations began mass criticisms of Mao’s political enemies. They soon drew the support of the lower echelons of the army. Bureaucrats and managers were deprived of their positions and sent to the country to work off their so-called crimes. As chaos spread, the army leaders forced the lower echelons back into line. The pragmatists launched political counter strikes to regain control of the government. The Gang of Four, including Mao’s wife, Jiang Qing, attempted to sustain the Cultural Revolution until Mao’s death in 1976. The military and the pragmatists, acting together, arrested the Gang of Four, who were purged from the Communist party. Following their victory, the pragmatists opened China up to greater Western influence and considerable capitalization. Of all the revolutionary regimes, the Chinese have been most successful at redistributing wealth and supplying social services to the peasantry. The Chinese have raised standards of living, although relative poverty is still common. China’s industrial and agrarian sectors have been more productive than democratic India.

VI. Colonialism and Revolution in Vietnam

A. Introduction

Vietnam’s experience with Western colonialism had much in common with China. Like the Chinese, exposure to imperialism caused the Vietnamese to abandon Confucian elements of their culture. Catholic missionaries first stimulated French interest in Vietnam. When the Tayson Rebellion in southern Vietnam toppled the Nguyen dynasty in the 1770s and the northern dynasty was similarly disabled, the French Bishop of Adran chose to support the surviving member of the Nguyen house, Nguyen Anh. By 1802, Nguyen Anh’s armies, supported by the French,
successfully defeated the Tayson in both the south and north. He was proclaimed the Gia Long emperor of a united Vietnam. The French achieved great influence in the new court. Gia Long and his successor, Minh Mang, emphasized the Confucian tradition of government in Vietnam. Under Minh Mang, the Vietnamese government began to persecute Catholics. The French chose to intervene militarily to protect Vietnamese Catholics. They exploited divisions in Vietnam in order to justify the piecemeal conquest of Vietnam, Cambodia, and Laos. By the 1890s, the French had reduced the Nguyen to the status of puppet rulers. French exploitation devastated the peasantry of northern Vietnam. Many peasants chose to migrate to the Mekong delta region in the south and became virtual serfs on the French plantations.

B. Vietnamese Nationalism: Bourgeois Dead Ends and Communist Survival

Despite sporadic guerrilla attempts to support the Nguyen, the failure of the dynasty to free itself of French influence discredited the Confucian regime. In the early years of the 20th century, French colonialism produced a Western-educated middle class in Vietnam. Within this group, a nationalist party first emerged. By the 1920s, attempts at peaceful protests had failed, leaving only a revolutionary option. Those who proposed the violent overthrow of the French administration were organized in the Vietnamese Nationalist party. A series of failed revolutions and French repression virtually destroyed the party. In the wake of the failed middle-class movement, the Communist party of Vietnam inherited the revolutionary mantle. In the late 1920s, the leader of the Communists was Nguyen Ai Quoc, later known as Ho Chi Minh. The party shifted from dependence on urban workers to a peasant-led revolution in the 1930s. Again, failed attempts at revolution smashed much of the party, leaving only an underground organization. When the French were weakened by the advance of the Japanese in 1941, the Communists were prepared to reemerge as a revolutionary force.

C. The War of Liberation Against the French

The Communist nationalist movement, the Viet Minh, operated primarily in northern Vietnam. As the Japanese were defeated, the Viet Minh were well placed to step into the political vacuum. They immediately carried out social and economic reforms within the regions they controlled. Under General Vo Nguyen Giap, Viet Minh forces conducted a successful guerrilla campaign against Japanese-held portions of Vietnam. By 1945, the Viet Minh controlled the northern capital of Hanoi and proclaimed an independent Vietnam. After the war, the French attempted to restore their hold over southern Vietnam. General Giap swiftly renewed the guerrilla war, this time against the French. After the Vietnamese won the critical battle of Dien Bien Phu in 1954, an international conference at Geneva conceded the Viet Minh control of the northern portions of the country. The conference declared that an election would determine the political fate of the south.

D. The War of Liberation Against the United States

No elections were ever held. The United States, who had supported the French, now determined to halt the advance of communism in Asia. The United States selected Ngo Dinh Diem, a nationalist leader, to create a new government in southern Vietnam. A Catholic and long allied with the United States, Diem enjoyed little support in Vietnam. Diem attempted to crush Communist cadres in southern Vietnam, while the northern Vietnamese government attempted to ship men and arms to the south. As the war expanded, both the United States and northern Vietnam expanded their support. When it appeared that Diem might fail, the United States approved a military coup in the south. The United States continued to escalate support in men and material for the southern government but were unable to crush the Communists. As the
government in the south began to fall apart, the United States withdrew from the war in 1975. The Communists reunited Vietnam for the first time in more than a century.

E. After Victory: The Struggle to Rebuild Vietnam

Diplomatic isolation imposed by the United States and border clashes with China made it difficult for the Communist government to make much headway in the postwar program of development. The heads of the party in Vietnam expended much effort in eliminating enemies and attempted to maintain a strongly centralized economic system. The result was a lack of progress. In the 1980s, the government began to liberalize the economy and to permit investment from the West and industrialized nations of Asia. Vietnamese relations with the United States have recently improved. Integration into the global economy has been difficult.

VII. Global Connections: East Asia and the Pacific Rim in the Contemporary World

China and Vietnam have undergone profound revolutions, with entire social classes disappearing. In government, Confucianism has been replaced with Marxist-Leninism, recently blended with Western capitalism. However, many values of Confucianism survive. Japan and the Pacific Rim have remained more traditional, but economic growth and democracy have also brought change to them. East Asia and the Pacific Rim have become major players in the world economy, independent of Western control.
**TIMELINE**

*Insert the following events into the timeline. This should help you to compare important historical events chronologically.*

- Chiang Kai-shek dies in Taiwan
- Hong Kong returns to China
- Singapore gains independence from Malaya
- beginning of Korean War
- Japan abolishes Korean monarchy
- foundation of Liberal Democratic party in Japan

**TERMS, PEOPLE, EVENTS**

*The following terms, people, and events are important to your understanding of the chapter. Define each one.*

- General Douglas MacArthur
- Republic of Korea
- Syngman Rhee
- Hong Kong
- Lee Kuan Yew
- Hiraoka Kimitoike
- Mass Line
- Jiang Qing
- Gang of Four
- Minh Mang
- Viet Minh
- Ngo Dinh Diem
- Liberal Democratic party
- Korean War
- Chiang Kai-shek
- Hyundai
- Pacific Rim states
- Little tigers
- Great Leap Forward
- Cultural Revolution
- Tayson Rebellion
- Vietnamese Nationalist party
- Viet Cong
- General Giap
- North Korea
- Kim Il-Sung
- Taiwan
- Chiang Ching-kuo
- People’s Liberation Army
- People’s Republic of China
- pragmatists
- Red Guard
- Nguyen Anh
- Ho Chi Minh
- Dien Bien Phu
- Deng Xiaoping
MAP EXERCISE

The following exercise is intended to clarify the geophysical environment and the spatial relationships among the important objects and places mentioned in the chapter. Locate the following places on the map.

Japan  Taiwan
Singapore Hong Kong
South Korea

Geographically, how are the Pacific Rim states related to China? What does this suggest about the potential of economic relations in East Asia? How are the Pacific Rim nations related to the older European world trade system? (Hint: How is Singapore related to the Malaccan Straits?) How are they related to Japanese imperialism?
MAKING CONNECTIONS

The following questions are intended to emphasize important ideas within the chapter.

1. What accounts for the enormous economic growth of Japan after 1955?
2. What was the political structure of Japan after 1955?
3. What themes were common among the states of the Pacific Rim?
4. What accounts for the common theme of growth in the Pacific Rim?
5. How did Mao’s political beliefs affect the nature of Communist reforms until 1975?
6. What gains did women in China make under the Communists?
7. How did France gain control of Vietnam?
8. How did the Japanese invasion of Indochina aid in the Communist success in Vietnam?
9. What was new following the revolutions in China and Vietnam? What was retained from traditional civilization?

PUTTING LARGER CONCEPTS TOGETHER

The following questions test your ability to summarize the major conclusions of the chapter.

2. In what ways did the development of the Pacific Rim continue the traditions of Asian (primarily Chinese) civilization? In what ways did the Pacific Rim depart from the traditions of the past?
SELF-TEST OF FACTUAL INFORMATION

1. Americans introduced all of the following reforms to Japan during their occupation EXCEPT
   a. giving women the vote.
   b. abolishing Shinto as a state religion.
   c. outlawing labor unions.
   d. making the emperor a symbolic figurehead.

2. Which of the following was NOT a significant part of the Japanese industrial development after World War II?
   a. military expenditures
   b. government credit
   c. government support for the educational system
   d. lack of independent labor unions

3. Which of the following statements concerning the Japanese political system after World War II is most accurate?
   a. The emperor remained the most powerful figure in the Japanese political system.
   b. A single moderate party, the Liberal Democrats, emerged after 1955 to monopolize the Japanese political system.
   c. Although the military suffered a setback as a result of the Japanese defeat, the general staff of the Japanese armies continued to influence virtually all political decisions.
   d. Japanese politics was characterized by a huge number of parties, none of which could achieve a majority in the new parliament.

4. Which of the following statements most accurately reflects the situation in Korea following the Korean War?
   a. Northern and southern Korea were rapidly reunited under a single government.
   b. Northern Korea threw off its ties with China and the Soviet Union.
   c. Korea remained divided with authoritarian governments in both halves of the nation.
   d. Southern Korea became fully democratic but moved closer to political neutrality during the Cold War.

5. Japan produced a distinctive economic culture after the 1950s that included all of the following features EXCEPT
   a. a strong tradition of independent unions.
   b. managers who displayed active interest in suggestions by employees.
   c. a network of policies and attitudes that reflected older traditions of group solidarity.
   d. willingness among management to abide by collective decisions.

6. Which of the following statements concerning the states of the Pacific Rim is most accurate?
   a. Individualism was the hallmark of the economic development of this region.
   b. The Pacific Rim states abandoned Confucian concepts in pursuit of Western culture.
   c. Most of the states of the Pacific Rim depended on centralized government planning.
   d. All of the states of the Pacific Rim benefited from having been former British colonies.
7. The Great Leap Forward
   a. imposed a series of five-year plans intended to create an industrial technocracy.
   b. brought China into closer relationship with the West.
   c. pushed industrialization through small-scale projects in peasant communes.
   d. resulted in the creation of small private plots for peasants.

8. The Vietnamese dynasty that succeeded in uniting all of Vietnam under a single government in 1802 was the
   a. Nguyen.
   b. Trinh.
   c. Tayson.
   d. Qing.

9. By the late 1920s, the leader of the Vietnamese Communist party was
   a. Zhou Enlai.
   b. Le Duc Quang.
   c. Nguyen Ai Quoc.
   d. Ngo Dinh Diem.

10. What happened to the Ngo Dinh Diem regime?
    a. It was defeated by the Viet Cong in 1975.
    b. It was overthrown by the Tayson Rebellion.
    c. It was removed by the Vietnamese military with the consent of the United States.
    d. It established a unified government after 1975 with its capital at Hanoi.