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 Kimito, 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 Japanes? 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 zaibatsu 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 Guomindang 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 Guomindang 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 vitalize 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 Shaoqui, 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 Shaoqui 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.
CHAPTER 34

TIMELINE

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

Ho Chi Minh declares Republic of Vietnam  
French defeated at Dien Bien Phu  
Long March  
Tayson Rebellion in Vietnam  
Great Leap Forward begins in China  
May Fourth Movement begins in China  
End of U.S. occupation of Japan

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1919

1934

1945

1949

1954

1958

1975

TERMS, PEOPLE, EVENTS

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

Gang of Four  
Guomindang  
Jiang Qing  
Li Dazhao  
Lin Biao  
Long March  
Mass Line  
Minh Mang  
Ngo Dinh Diem  
Pacific Rim  
Park Chung-hee  
Sun Yat-sen  
Viet Minh  
Deng Xiaoping  
Tayson Rebellion  
Whampoa Military Academy  
Cultural Revolution  
New Youth  
party cadres  
People’s Republic of China  
Great Leap Forward  
Vietnamese Nationalist party  
General Giap  
Syngman Rhee  
Chung Ju Yung  
Yuan Shikai  
Viet Cong  
Nguyen Anh  
Mao Zedong  
Red Guard  
Socialist Youth Corps  
Liu Shauqui  
People’s Liberation Army  
pragmatists  
Ho Chi Minh  
Kim Il-Sung  
Hiraska Kimitoke  
People’s Action Party  
May Fourth movement  
Dien Bien Phu

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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.

China

Vietnam

(You may need to consult maps in other chapters for precise boundaries.)

In what sense has the success of Communism in China and Vietnam restored the old Chinese Empire in east Asia?
MULTIPLE CHOICE. Choose the one alternative that best completes the statement or answers the question.

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.
   E) None of the answers are correct.

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
   E) Government housing subsidies

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.
   F) Japan’s government fell back into old patterns of Shogunate rule.

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.
   E) While North Korea remained intact, South Korea was split into two individual occupational sectors.
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.
E) life-long relationships between company and employer.

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.
E) The Pacific Rim survived because of Communist collectivization.

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.
E) was never implemented.

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.
E) Quoc.

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.
E) Agn Lee Duoc.
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.
   E) It remains in power to this day.

SHORT ANSWER. Write the word or phrase that best completes each statement or answers the question.

1. ________ retained a large British naval base until 1971, when Britain abandoned all pretense of power in east Asia.

2. The American occupation government, headed by General ________, worked quickly to tear down Japan’s wartime political structure.

3. A 1955 merger of two moderate parties led to the new ________ Party that would monopolize Japan’s government into the 1990s.

4. In 1948 the United States sponsored the ________ in the South of the Korean peninsula.

5. The northern half of the Korean peninsula was governed by the Soviet-dominated ________ of Korea.

6. North Korea quickly became a Communist state with Stalinist-type emphasis on the power of the leader, ________.

7. During the 1950s the South Korean regime was headed by the nationalist ________.

8. President Truman orchestrated the United Nations’ sponsorship of a largely American “_______” in support of South Korean troops.

9. In the 1980s, Britain reached an agreement with China to turn over ________ to the Chinese in 1999.

10. ________ virtually governed Korea’s southeastern coast through shipbuilding and company-supported housing and education networks.
TRUE/FALSE. Write ‘T’ if the statement is true and ‘F’ if the statement is false.

1. Mao nurtured a deep hostility toward elitism, which he associated with the discredited Confucian system.

2. Within months after it was launched, all indicators suggested that the Great Leap Forward had revitalized the Chinese Revolution and provided the basis for successful industrialization.

3. Under the leadership of General Giap, the Viet Minh skillfully used guerrilla tactics similar to those devised by Mao in China.

4. The Communists united Vietnam under a single government for the first time since the 1850s.

5. The programs of the Great Leap Forward of 1958 resulted in a dramatic increase in China’s industrialism.