

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

East Asia in the Postwar Settlements

- Asia was reorganized following World War II. Korea was occupied by the Soviet Union and the United States, **Taiwan** went back to China, and elsewhere colonial rule was restored. Changes followed quickly, including Indonesian, Malayan, and Philippine independence. China's communist regime was transformed.
- In spite of extensive destruction during the war, Japan was able to recover quickly. Occupied until 1952, the government and infrastructure was deeply reorganized by the United States. Under a new constitution, the Japanese undertook legal reforms, which nevertheless supported traditional values. The **Liberal Democratic Party** monopolized the Japanese government from 1955 into the 1990s. Education was made available to more Japanese. Following the end of occupation, traditional values such as respect for the elderly have been emphasized.
- Korea was divided in 1948 between the south, under U.S. domination, and the north under the Soviet Union. North Korea was governed by Kim Il-Sung until 1994. South Korea was initially governed by Syngman Rhee. In 1950, the **Korean War** broke out between North and South Korea. The war ended with an armistice in 1954. The country remained divided.
- The Chinese Guomindang occupied Taiwan, while the communists controlled mainland China from 1946–1948. Aid from the United States supported the Taiwanese into the 1960s. **Hong Kong** was returned to British control, which lasted until 1997. Singapore was also under British rule until 1965. By about 1960, many of the smaller east Asian nations had achieved stability.

Japan, Incorporated

- Japan's Liberal Democratic Party ruled the country from 1955 to 1993. Many elements of the political system date from the Meiji period. Economic development was based on cooperation between the public and private sectors. Supporting birth control and abortion, state intervention has controlled the population growth. Japanese cultural traditions have been carefully preserved and synthesized with Western borrowings. The writer Yukio Mishima, for example, initially embraced controversial new themes, but later turned to more traditional values.

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- Japan's economy grew remarkably, especially after the 1950s. The Japanese government played a large role in economic development, partly through educational reform. Spending little on the military, the country could afford to spend more elsewhere. Japanese labor policies included group exercise and lifetime employment guarantees. A strong sense of group loyalty kept both labor and management productive. Compared to their Western counterparts, Japanese women enjoyed more education, but spent more time on domestic duties. The Japanese suffered less from feelings of isolation, but suffered more from stress than Westerners. Relief is sought in drinking and in the company of geishas. Western influence shows in the popularity of baseball and golf. Problems of pollution and political corruption have become important issues.

The Pacific Rim: New Japans?

- After World War II, South Korea was ruled by Syngman Rhee until 1960. The military leader Park Chung-hee succeeded Rhee, ruling until his assassination in 1979. The military government was removed in the late 1980s, and opposition political movements and freedom of the press were soon established. Industrialization was heavily supported from the mid-1950s. Industrial companies, for example Daewoo and **Hyundai**, now loom large, creating housing and schools for their employees. Growing population pressures led to state-supported birth control.
- In Taiwan, developments in both agriculture and industry spurred economic growth. Private and public investment improved education and led to economic and cultural change. Hostility between China and Taiwan eased with the emergence of informal diplomatic ties. **Chiang Ching-kuo** replaced his father, Chiang Kai-shek, in 1978. The rule of Singapore's Prime Minister **Lee Kuan Yew**, ruling from 1965, resembled the Taiwanese government. Oppression was silenced by the People's Action Party. A well-established shipping industry was joined by manufacturing and banking. Hong Kong, also a banking center, connected China with the global economy. The territory was returned to China in 1997.
- Commonalities among the Pacific Rim states include cultural traits—group cohesion preferred over individualism—and political direction, including significant government intervention. Malaysia, Indonesia, Thailand, and other small nations in the region shared in the economic expansion. Growing concerns at the end of the 20th century included rising unemployment and slowing growth. Predictions that restructuring would be necessary have been contradicted by slow but definite recovery.

Mao's China and Beyond

- **Chiang Kai-shek's** struggle against communism was halted by the Japanese invasion of the 1930s, which led Chiang to join the communists. His conventional forces were not successful against the Japanese, leading to U.S. military support. By 1945, the communists were in the ascendancy. In the civil war from 1945 to 1949, the communists defeated the nationalists. Chiang retreated to Taiwan, and Mao declared the new **People's Republic of China**. Mao had won support in China by defeating the Japanese, but also by land reform and by giving the peasants a central role in the movement. Strong military leadership, exemplified by **Lin Biao**, gave the communists the upper hand.

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- The communist struggle for power provided the new government with a ready-made infrastructure, including the **party cadres** and the **People's Liberation Army**. These forces were used to block secession, and then to act aggressively in Korea and Vietnam against United States involvement. Cooperation between China and the Soviet Union diminished after the death of Stalin.
 - Completing the work of the revolution in the countryside was a priority for the new government. The landowning class and large landowners were purged, with as many as 3 million executed. Industrialization was another key goal. Technocrats rose to power. From the mid-1950s, Mao undertook a new program, the **Mass Line** approach. Beginning in 1955, rural collectivization reversed the distribution of land that had been achieved three years earlier. In 1957, a call for comment on communist rule brought a vocal, critical response, which was harshly silenced.
 - A new program launched in 1958, the **Great Leap Forward**, attempted to bring about industrialization at the local, rural level, supervised by peasant communes. The result was resistance and corruption, leading to massive famine. International proposals to implement family planning were dismissed. While the Chinese birth rate was not extremely high, the country already had a large population. From the 1960s, families were restricted to one or two children. By 1960, the Great Leap was abandoned, and Mao was replaced by **pragmatists**, including **Zhou Enlai**, **Liu Shaoqui**, and **Deng Xiaoping**.
 - Mao's wife, **Jiang Qing**, helped her husband in reforming the place of women in China. Madam Chiang Kai-shek had stressed traditional women's roles, with the result of greater communist support for expanded women's rights. Women rose in the military, and in many other sectors, and gained legal parity with men. However, that has not always translated to equal opportunity, and higher positions are held by men.
 - Mao remained head of the Communist party after his fall from power. His opposition to the new administration culminated in the **Cultural Revolution**. His **Red Guard** forces attacked Mao's rivals, who were killed, executed, or exiled. The movement achieved the overthrow of the government that Mao had hoped, but then continued, out of control. Mao ended the campaign in 1968, but political fighting continued. The **Gang of Four**, led by Jiang Qing, plotted to overthrow the pragmatists, but was not successful. After Mao's death, Deng Xiaoping led the pragmatist majority. In spite of important failures, the Chinese have successfully redistributed wealth and improved conditions for most of their people.

Colonialism and Revolution in Vietnam

- Vietnam attracted the attention of the French from the 1600s. In the 1770s, the **Tayson Rebellion** overthrew the Nguyen dynasty, and the Trinh dynasty was also ousted shortly after. The surviving Nguyen, Nguyen Anh was supported by the French. He ruled as emperor Gia Long. The French were rewarded with a privileged place at court. Gia Long ruled an enlarged Vietnam, including the Mekong and Red river regions. His highly traditional rule was continued by **Minh Mang**, who also embraced Confucianism. He persecuted the French catholic community. French adventurers undertook the conquest of Vietnam and Cambodia. All of Vietnam

was under French control by the 1890s. French attempts to maximize their profits exacerbated overcrowding and the migration of peasants to urban areas.

- In the late 19th into the 20th centuries, the Vietnamese rallied around their ruler. The lack of support from the Nguyen and Confucian bureaucrats led to loss of faith in both. A Western-educated middle class emerged in the early 1900s, often adopting French ways. Rising nationalism coalesced around the secret **Vietnamese Nationalist Party** (the VNQDD) in the 1920s. Failed uprisings ending with a 1929 revolt weakened the party. The **Communist Party of Vietnam** was left to rally resistance. The future **Ho Chi Minh** dominated the party. Communist support helped the Communists oppose the French. Weakened by the Japanese invasion of Indochina in 1941, French rule was left vulnerable to nationalist rebellion.
- The nationalist movement, the **Viet Minh**, liberated portions of the country during World War II. When Japanese rule ended, the Viet Minh were able to take power. Under **Vo Nguyen Giap**, the Vietnamese used guerilla fighting against the French and Japanese. In 1945, Ho Chi Minh declared the independence of Vietnam. The next year, the French, with British support, moved to retake the country. Guerilla warfare began anew. The French were defeated at **Dien Bien Phu** in 1954.
- Although the United States and the Viet Minh cooperated during World War II, anticommunist sentiment in the United States following the war drove the two apart. The United States supported the presidency of **Ngo Dinh Diem**. Diem's attack on communists in the south, called the **Viet Cong**, led to further communist support for the new National Liberation front. The United States sent increasing support, including nearly 500,000 troops in 1968, but was finally forced to retreat in the 1970s. Communist rule united the north and south.
- Vietnam remains isolated, in part because of U.S. international pressure. Attempts to impose hard-line Marxism failed to ease poverty. From the 1980s, Vietnam has been more open to outside investors, boosting economic growth. The costs of entering the global economy include harsh conditions for workers and diminishing social services.

Multiple-Choice Questions

1. All of these nations are economic powerhouses of the Pacific Rim EXCEPT:
 - (A) Vietnam.
 - (B) Taiwan.
 - (C) Honk Kong.
 - (D) South Korea.
 - (E) Singapore.
 - (C) democracy dominated by a political and economic oligarchy.
 - (D) democratic republic with an unstable party system.
 - (E) militaristic state.
2. Japan's postwar government is BEST characterized as a
 - (A) communist people's democracy.
 - (B) traditional monarchy with a hereditary emperor and little popular sovereignty.
 - (A) the lack of social mobility.
 - (B) a large non-Japanese ethnic minority deprived of any rights.
 - (C) limited rights for women and minorities.
 - (D) severe demographic dislocation due to
3. The chief socio-cultural tension within post-war Japan has been

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- rapid industrialization.
- (E) a conflict between indigenous traditions or values and Western influences.
4. Postwar Korean development has been largely determined by the
- (A) occupation of the country by China and the Soviet Union.
- (B) division of the peninsula between pro-Soviet and pro-capitalist states.
- (C) long and autocratic rule by the Korean king.
- (D) extreme hunger and poverty of the Korean peoples.
- (E) devastation caused by World War II.
5. Following its defeat on mainland China, the Guomindang or Nationalist Party led by Chiang Kai-shek
- (A) collapsed.
- (B) fled to Korea.
- (C) fled to Taiwan and established the Republic of China.
- (D) sought support from the U.S.S.R. for a prolonged fight with Mao's China.
- (E) joined with the Chinese Communist Party to form the People's Republic of China.
6. Maoist programs in China include all of the following EXCEPT:
- (A) the Great Leap Forward.
- (B) the Mass Line approach.
- (C) the Tayson Rebellion.
- (D) collectivization in the agricultural sector.
- (E) the Cultural Revolution.
7. The relationship between business and government in Japan, Korea, and Taiwan in the later half of the 20th century is BEST described as
- (A) a communist-style command economy.
- (B) a socialist-capitalist mix of private prop-erty and public welfare.
- (C) separated by American-style constitu-tions.
- (D) cooperative—the government encourages and protects businesses in an almost mercantilist manner.
- (E) antagonism toward each other.
8. In contemporary Japan and Taiwan,
- (A) Christianity replaced the older Shinto and Confucian belief systems.
- (B) both countries have military alliances with China.
- (C) individualism and competitiveness are valued.
- (D) populations are increasingly abandoning traditional ways and values.
- (E) group consensus and collective decision making are highly valued.
9. The Pacific Rim nation that has recently emerged as an economic giant and whose industries and products have challenged Japan, the United States, and Western Europe is
- (A) North Korea.
- (B) Taiwan.
- (C) Hong Kong.
- (D) South Korea.
- (E) Singapore.
10. All of these problems are shared by the con-temporary Pacific Rim nations EXCEPT:
- (A) falling growth rates.
- (B) a rise in unemployment.
- (C) antagonisms between the United States and the Soviet Union, which threaten war.
- (D) declining power of their national curren-cies.
- (E) popular pressures for change in tradi-tional political practices.

Free-Response Question

What are the key factors in economic development in the Pacific Rim and east Asian nations?

ANSWERS AND EXPLANATIONS

Multiple-Choice Questions

- **1. (A) is correct.** Only Vietnam has been slow to participate in the economic dynamism of the Pacific Rim.
- **2. (C) is correct.** Following World War II, Japan strongly embraced democracy, while retaining some of its oligarchic traditions.
- **3. (E) is correct.** Western influence has created conflict with traditional values, resulting sometimes in synthesis of the two, sometimes in rejection of one or the other.
- **4. (B) is correct.** The division of the peninsula led to intense conflict between the United States and the Soviet Union.
- **5. (C) is correct.** Chiang Kai-shek established a government on Taiwan before attempting to take China.
- **6. (C) is correct.** All of the programs were begun by Mao, except the Tayson rebellion, which was a Vietnamese movement.
- **7. (D) is correct.** The three countries have been successful in providing state support for private business.
- **8. (E) is correct.** The tradition of loyalty to one's group as opposed to individualism has been used to great effect in modern businesses in the two countries.
- **9. (D) is correct.** South Korea has had phenomenal success in transforming its economy.
- **10. (C) is correct.** All of the answers are problems of contemporary Pacific Rim nations, except for rivalry between the Soviet Union and the United States, which has disappeared.

Free-Response Essay Sample Response

What are the key factors in economic development in the Pacific Rim and east Asian nations?

The key factors have been international relations, the ability of governments to bring about change, and internal divisions. Countries that have managed to open their markets to foreign trade and foreign investment have done well; Taiwan is a good example. Government involvement has been important in all countries, ranging from the massive land redistribution in China to South Korea's support for large industrial companies. Internal strife, most notable in Vietnam and China, has marred economic progress.