CHAPTER 35

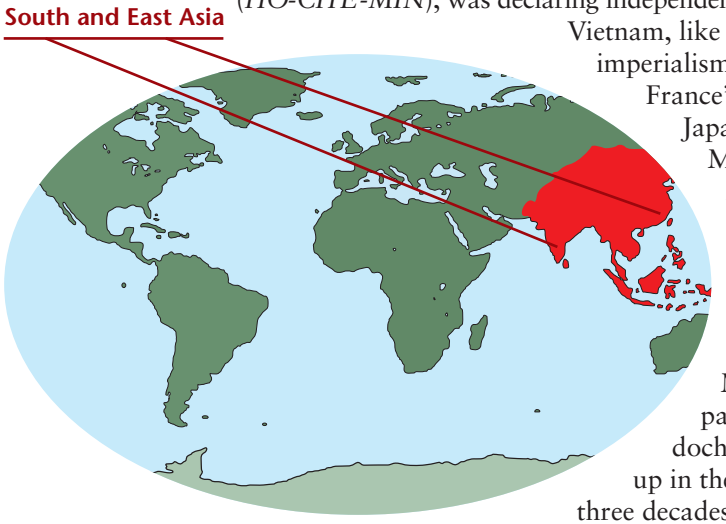
# The Upheavals of Asia, 1945–present




## Modern Urban Asia

The era following World War II brought massive upheavals in Asia. Asians threw off Western domination, engaged in bloody regional conflicts, and transformed age-old rural ways of life by creating modern urban societies with global connections, as illustrated by this photo of Osaka, Japan.

On September 2, 1945, the day Japan's surrender formally ended World War II, a small, frail man addressed a huge crowd in the Southeast Asian city of Hanoi. "All men are created equal," he proclaimed in Vietnamese. "They are endowed by their creator with certain inalienable rights; among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness." Noting that this "immortal statement" was from the U.S. Declaration of Independence, he went on to assert: "In a broader sense, this means: All the peoples of the earth are equal from birth; all the peoples have a right to live, to be happy and free." The speaker, known as Ho Chi Minh (*HŌ-CHĒ-MIN*), was declaring independence for his nation, Vietnam.




Vietnam, like many Asian lands, had endured both Western imperialism and Japanese aggression. It had been part of France's Indochina colony since the 1800s and of Japan's empire since 1941. Now, however, Ho Chi Minh hoped that Vietnam could avoid the return of French colonial control by declaring independence and appealing to American ideals of freedom and human rights. But France, determined to regain great power status after World War II, wanted to restore imperial rule. Furthermore, since Ho Chi Minh was communist, and France became part of America's anticommunist alliance, Indochina's quest for independence soon got caught up in the Cold War, bringing Southeast Asia over three decades of almost constant conflict.

Ho Chi Minh's declaration and the ensuing conflicts exhibit the ideals and global connections fueling upheavals in Asia after World War II. Adapting for their own purposes Western ideals such as democracy, nationalism, and socialism, Asians sought to escape Western domination, only to become enmeshed in global Cold War politics. India gained independence but divided into separate Hindu and Muslim nations, one courted by the Soviets and the other by the Americans. Japan arose from the ashes of defeat, with American help, to become a capitalist stronghold in Asia. China endured a brutal civil war won by communists, who then combined calamitous experiments in socialist mass mobilization with bitter hostility toward the West. Korea and Indochina became the Cold War's bloodiest battlegrounds, torn by civil wars that emerged as international conflicts between communism and capitalism. By the early twenty-first century, although many Asians continued to be plagued by sweeping social changes and persistent poverty, economic growth and the end of the Cold War finally brought stability and prosperity to much of Asia.

## Independence and Conflict in India and Pakistan

After decades of struggle for independence, the Indian subcontinent (Map 35.1) was freed from British rule in 1947. But with independence came partition, as the former British colony was split into two hostile states: the Republic of India, a huge Hindu-dominated democracy, and a somewhat smaller Islamic Republic of Pakistan, which

## FOUNDATION MAP 35.1 East and South Asia in 1945

Following Japan's defeat in World War II, many of Asia's prewar rulers sought to maintain or restore the power they had before the war. Note that the British still ruled India, the Nationalists reclaimed control of China, the French sought to reassert imperial rule in Indochina, and the Dutch did the same in Indonesia. Note also, however, that within a decade these regimes would all be replaced. What factors and movements challenged the positions of Asia's prewar rulers?

became a dictatorship. As both states grappled with poverty and population growth, they remained bitter foes. Their ongoing clashes were aggravated by Cold War politics and later by each nation's development of atomic weapons.

## Independence and Partition

In the 1930s, under Mahatma Gandhi's leadership, Indians had compelled Britain to grant them some autonomy (Chapter 32). By the 1940s, however, two key obstacles limited further progress. One was the Muslim League, representing India's large Islamic minority, which feared repression by the Hindu majority if India became independent—despite Gandhi's pledges to honor Muslim rights. Another was World War II, which heightened tensions between India and Britain, especially after Britain committed India to war without consulting Indian leaders. Dismayed, Gandhi and his followers planned a new anti-British campaign, but were arrested in 1942 by the British government of Winston Churchill. A passionate opponent of Indian independence, Churchill in 1931 had found it "nauseating" that "seditious" Gandhi negotiated "half-naked" with British officials.

India gains independence, but Muslim Pakistan splits off

The end of the war in 1945 brought India new hope and new problems. British voters swept Churchill's government from office that summer, and his successors, intent on reducing Britain's overseas obligations, began moving to grant India self-rule. But the Muslim League, led by Muhammad Ali Jinnah, organized protests against a united India and pressed for a separate Islamic state. When these protests fueled violent clashes between Hindus and Muslims, threatening mass chaos, Britain reluctantly agreed to partition the subcontinent. On August 15, 1947, two separate new independent nations emerged: the Republic of India and the Islamic Republic of Pakistan (a name meaning "Land of the Pure"), itself divided into East and West sections on opposite sides of northern India. Saddened by his country's "vivisection," Gandhi refused to rejoice, predicting instead that "rivers of blood" would flow.

Mass relocation and violence mar Indian independence

Gandhi's prediction proved prophetic. Since Hindu and Muslim populations were often intermingled, the partition left millions of Muslims in Hindu-dominated India, and numerous Hindus in Islamic Pakistan. Fearing repression, many of these people moved. Muslims left India for East or West Pakistan, while Hindus fled these lands in the other direction. In chaotic mass migrations, marred by bloody clashes and forcible expulsions, hundreds of thousands were killed. All-out war erupted in the northern region of Kashmir, claimed by both Pakistan and India (Map 35.2). Although eventually divided by a 1949 truce, Kashmir remained a source of bitter conflict between the two new nations. By this time Gandhi was gone, murdered in 1948 by a militant Hindu who resented the Mahatma's efforts to accommodate Muslims. The "rivers of blood" that Gandhi had foreseen thus included his own.

## India: Democracy, Progress, and Problems

Gandhi slain, but his ally Nehru leads non-aligned, democratic India

The Republic of India adopted a parliamentary system modeled on Britain's, with democratic rights guaranteed for all citizens, regardless of sex, religion, or caste. Until 1964 it was led by Jawaharlal Nehru (*juh-wuh-har-LAHL NĀ-roo*), Gandhi's longtime associate, who as prime minister used state-run industries and modernizing reforms to pursue

## Map 35.2 India and Pakistan Since 1947

In 1947, after decades of resisting British rule, India finally achieved independence. Observe, however, that owing to the efforts of India's Muslim separatists, the former British colony was split into two hostile states—Hindu-dominated democratic India and Muslim Pakistan—that contended for control of Kashmir in the north and remained bitter foes for decades. Note also that in 1971 East Pakistan rebelled and, with Indian assistance, became an independent nation known as Bangladesh. Why was there such hostility between Pakistan and India? What impact did Cold War politics have upon their hostility?


prosperity. Principled and conscientious, he achieved modest success, but massive poverty and population growth continued to burden the new nation.

In foreign affairs, Nehru practiced nonalignment, rejecting U.S. pressures to join the anticommunist camp and accepting substantial Soviet aid. India thus in the 1950s became a leader of the **nonaligned nations**, a group of countries (also including Indonesia,

Egypt, and Yugoslavia) that refused to side with either superpower, hoping thus to get aid from both while avoiding Cold War commitments.

Indira Gandhi improves agriculture and curbs population growth

In 1966, two years after Nehru's death, his daughter Indira Gandhi (no relation to the Mahatma) became prime minister and then dominated India for almost two decades. Talented and tenacious, she initiated programs to provide the poor with housing and land. She also supported the **Green Revolution**, a global agricultural movement that used synthetic fertilizers and scientifically developed high-yield crops to enhance farm output. She attacked official corruption and promoted male sterilization to slow population growth. These unpopular efforts brought her electoral defeat in 1977, but in three years voters returned her to office when her successors proved ineffective. Increasingly rigid and self-righteous, she was challenged by the nation's Sikhs, a religious minority whose faith combined elements of Hinduism and Islam. In 1984, after some Sikhs turned to violence in pushing for political autonomy, she ordered an attack on the Sikhs' Golden Temple at Amritsar, killing more than 450 people. Several months later her own Sikh guards murdered her in retribution.

Indian foreign minister meeting with Soviet and Chinese officials, 1962.

Indira Gandhi's son Rajiv Gandhi, a former airline pilot who replaced her as prime minister, focused the next five years on enhancing India's military strength and technological know-how—efforts that helped India eventually become a nuclear power and world leader in computer technology. But Rajiv was tainted by charges that he took financial kickbacks from a Swedish firm that sold India weapons, and his government was voted out in 1989. Two years later, while campaigning for return to office, he and 16 others were blown apart by a woman, with a bomb in a basket of flowers, who allegedly had ties to another violent separatist movement. Sonia Gandhi, Rajiv's Italian-born widow, later became a prominent force in Indian politics, but legally she could not become prime minister due to her foreign origins.

Agricultural advances and technology increase Indian prosperity, but poverty persists.

By the early twenty-first century, then, India was a land of contrasts. Its surging population of over a billion made it by far the world's largest democracy, but its guarantees of human rights failed to satisfy religious and ethnic minorities. Its agricultural and technical advances, especially its leading role in computer technology, brought prosperity to millions, but millions of others continued to live in poverty. India's military strength, enhanced by a successful nuclear test in 1998, made it a prominent power but also intensified the regional instability resulting from strife with neighboring Pakistan.

Persistence of poverty in India.

## Pakistan: Dictatorship and Division

Pakistan, meanwhile, had severe internal problems of its own. The partition of British India left Pakistan with some of the subcontinent's poorest lands, lacking both mineral resources and industrial development. The ongoing struggle with India over Kashmir, which erupted into periodic violence, taxed Pakistan's resources and increased the influence of its army. Although it had parliamentary institutions, Pakistan by 1958 had become a military dictatorship, remaining thereafter largely under dictatorial rule.

Pakistan becomes military dictatorship and U.S. Cold War ally

Yet the Cold War gave Pakistan a major advantage. The United States, intent on containing communism by forming alliances with countries near the communist bloc, allied with Pakistan's repressive regime, giving it extensive economic and military aid.

East Pakistan rebels and becomes independent Bangladesh

In the 1960s the people of East Pakistan, separated from West Pakistan by more than a thousand miles (Map 35.2), grew discontented with the dictatorship that ruled them from the west. Sharing West Pakistan's Muslim faith but differing in language and culture, East Pakistan's Bengali people voted in 1970 for autonomy. The next year, however, the regime in West Pakistan used tanks and troops to slaughter Bengalis rioting for self-rule. Then, after millions of refugees fled East Pakistan to India, Indira Gandhi's government sent forces to help the Bengalis defeat Pakistan's army. East Pakistan thus in 1971 became a new nation called Bangladesh (East Bengal), which after independence continued to be torn by poverty and instability.

What was left of Pakistan, in the west, fared better, benefiting from American military and economic aid. But the Pakistani army's political involvement repeatedly frustrated efforts at civilian rule, while widespread corruption impeded attempts to achieve stability and prosperity. Zulfikar Ali Bhutto (*BOO-tō*), for example, who ruled the country through martial law during the 1970s, was arrested by his foes for electoral fraud and executed in 1979. His daughter Benazir Bhutto, the first woman to head a modern Muslim country, served twice as prime minister (1988–1990 and 1993–1996), and was twice dismissed on charges of corruption.

Afghan wars, atomic race with India, and unrest unsettle Pakistan

Tensions with volatile neighbors also troubled Pakistan. In the 1980s, during the Soviet-Afghan War, Pakistan became a base for Afghan anti-Soviet rebels and for U.S. efforts to supply them with weapons. In 1998, after India tested its first nuclear weapons, Pakistan exploded its own atomic device, raising fears of nuclear war between the bitter foes. In 2001, after an Afghanistan-based Muslim terrorist group attacked the United States in September, Pakistan supported a U.S. invasion of Afghanistan—fueling violent unrest in Pakistan, where many Muslims shared the terrorists' antipathy toward America. Pakistani President Pervez Musharraf (*moo-SHAH-ruf*), a military man who had seized power in 1999, sought to forcibly suppress unrest. But his harsh repression only prompted more violence, including terrorist bombings and the assassination of Benazir Bhutto in 2007 as she sought a return to power.

Global commerce conducted at Japanese shipyard.

## Revival and Resurgence of Japan

While India and Pakistan dealt with internal and external strife, Japan, whose major cities were reduced to rubble in 1945 by American bombs, emerged from the ashes of World War II to become a U.S. Cold War ally and an economic powerhouse. Restructured with American help along democratic and capitalistic lines, Japan came to rival the West in productivity and prosperity. Japan's economy, however, remained dangerously dependent on foreign markets and imported natural resources, while its society still struggled with contrasts between its Eastern traditions and its modern Western values.

### Japan's Economic Miracle

U.S. occupation and support promote Japanese prosperity and democracy

Japan's recovery was aided by postwar U.S. occupation, lasting from 1945 until 1952. Determined to rid Japan of militarism, Americans strove to remake the island nation into a capitalist democracy. Under General Douglas MacArthur, who served as occupation commander, they helped Japan devise and implement a democratic constitution and

Tokyo war crimes tribunal.

bill of rights that granted the vote and legal equality to both men and women. Japan's armed forces were limited in size, and its emperor was reduced to symbolic status. A war crimes tribunal set up by MacArthur tried and executed Japan's top wartime leaders but was relatively lenient to lower-ranking officials. The *zaibatsu*, huge Japanese industrial conglomerates that had been central to the war effort, were broken into smaller firms. Workers were encouraged to form unions with full rights to bargain and strike. Large estates owned by wealthy landlords were divided into small farms and sold at low cost to former tenants. Education was restructured along American lines, with a new emphasis on individualism challenging Japan's traditional collectivist approach.

Cold War divisions help Japan become a bastion of capitalist democracy

Japan also gained from the Cold War. As the Soviet-American struggle intensified, and communism spread to nearby North Korea and China, U.S. leaders came to see Japan as a bulwark against Asian communism. America thus treated Japan more as an ally than as a defeated foe, opening U.S. markets to Japanese products and giving Japan's people extensive economic aid. A 1951 treaty committed America to defend Japan militarily, allowing U.S. forces to maintain bases on Japanese soil. Thus protected from foreign attack, and limited by its constitution to a small military force, Japan was able to focus its energies on economic growth.

Japan's economic approach, blending market capitalism with central government planning, soon became a model for the rest of Asia. In collaboration with business, the government's Ministry of International Trade and Industry (MITI) set production goals and quotas, granted cooperating firms low taxes and interest rates, and shielded these firms from foreign competition with tariffs and import controls. Japanese government and business thus worked together, competing in the global market almost like one huge enterprise, sometimes described as "Japan, Incorporated."

A science class in Japan.

These efforts nourished Japan's "economic miracle." With solid government support, broad access to Western markets, and strong traditions of employee loyalty and hard work, Japanese enterprises flourished. Some, such as Sony, Nissan, Toyota, and Honda, became global conglomerates, ranking among the world's largest and best-known corporations. They rewarded their workers with good pay and benefits, job security, and company-sponsored health and recreation programs. By the 1980s, Japan's living standards were among the world's highest, and its economy was second only to America's.

## Problems amid Prosperity

For all its success, however, Japan faced serious problems. Some stemmed from its dependence on global commerce, others from a clash between its Westernized culture and traditional values.

Japan depends on global trade and energy imports

Because it lacked mineral resources and relied on foreign trade, Japan was vulnerable to actions by its trading partners, especially the United States. American efforts to protect U.S. business from growing imports of low-cost Japanese goods, including a 10 percent import surcharge imposed in 1971, underscored Japan's reliance on U.S. markets and its vulnerability to U.S. economic protectionism. In 1973, oil-producing Arab nations placed an embargo on petroleum shipments to America and its allies because they supported Israel in a war against Arab countries (Chapter 37). This embargo created critical shortages in Japan, highlighting its almost total dependence on foreign fuels and raw materials. A severe economic downturn in the 1990s, combined with increased

competition from other Asian nations, Europe, and America, further damaged Japanese economic confidence.

Western impacts and urban blight mar Japan's traditional culture

Meanwhile, Western culture's pervasive impact continued to subvert Japan's traditions, including Shinto and Buddhist religious practice. Furthermore, although Japan's crime rate remained lower than crime rates in the West, Japanese cities nonetheless suffered from similar industrial blights—slums, traffic jams, urban sprawl, and air pollution. Even Japanese democracy, modeled on that of the West, was marred by corruption and scandal, intensified by the longtime rule of the Liberal Democratic Party, which held power from 1955 until 1993.

Japanese women gain legal rights but male dominance persists

In gender matters, too, Japan was torn between tradition, which assigned women a submissive role, and modern expectations, which promoted equality. Japanese women now had full legal rights and growing employment opportunities, but Japan's corporations still often put them in subordinate positions, with lower salaries and fewer chances for advancement than men. Meanwhile, the male-dominated Japanese government for decades concealed World War II atrocities against women by Japanese troops, including the use of Korean "comfort women" as sex slaves for Japanese soldiers (Chapter 33). In 1993 the government finally apologized, after women who survived these abuses came forth to publicize them, but some Japanese leaders continued to deny or minimize the extent of such wartime atrocities.

These problems, however, could not diminish the impact of Japan's achievements after World War II. Within a few decades, with help from its former foes, the island nation had emerged from defeat and devastation to become one of the world's most prosperous and influential countries.

## Conflict and Division in China and Korea

Communist soldiers study artillery during Chinese civil war.

While Japan was rising from the ashes, China and Korea, freed at the end of World War II from Japanese occupation, were plunging into conflict and chaos. In 1946 a civil war broke out between the Chinese Communist Party and China's Nationalist government, widely discredited by rampant corruption and poor performance in the war against Japan. In a stunning Cold War triumph for global communism, the communists emerged victorious in 1949, controlling the Chinese mainland, while the Nationalists survived by moving their regime to the island of Taiwan off China's southeast coast. Then, in 1950, Asian peace was shattered again by conflict in Korea, which became a Cold War battleground. Three years of futile fighting left Korea, like China, with two hostile regimes, one communist and one nationalist.

### Civil War in China: Communists Versus Nationalists

China's communists gain popular support during war against Japan

On the surface, during China's long war against Japan (1937–1945), Chinese Nationalists and communists were allegedly united against the common foe. In reality, however, they waged simultaneous struggles against Japan and each other. Expanding from Yan'an, their remote northwestern base, the communists waged effective guerilla war, tormenting the Japanese troops who occupied northern and eastern China. The Nationalists, meanwhile, hampered by corruption and incompetence, retreated from the Japanese, while striking out

sporadically against the communists. By 1945 the communists, by vigorously resisting the invaders, had greatly enhanced their prestige, while the Nationalists under Jiang Jieshi (Chiang Kaishek) had lost much support.

Japan's defeat and U.S. aid restore Nationalist rule in China

When Japan surrendered in 1945, both sides in China scrambled for position. The Nationalists, aided by American vehicles, planes, and ships, soon reoccupied most of the territory vacated by Japan. Jiang seemed once again the master of China. Manchuria, however, was still occupied by Soviet troops, who had moved in at the end of the war.

Hoping to avoid a Chinese civil war, which the Soviets could exploit, the United States negotiated a truce between China's communists and Nationalists, getting both to endorse a coalition government. The deal, however, was doomed. The communists, distrusting America as the capitalist world's leader and the Nationalists' main supporter, accepted the truce only to buy time. And Jiang Jieshi, with a huge army and access to U.S. arms, still intended to crush his communist foes. By mid-1946 the truce had broken down, and China was engulfed in civil war.

Initially the Nationalists did well. Because they controlled China's cities, railways, factories, and mines, they were able to dominate industry and transportation. Their three-million-man army outnumbered the communist forces by at least three to one. And their modern American weapons and vehicles gave the Nationalists a big edge over the communists, whose rifle supply was limited and who moved mainly on foot. By mid-1947, the Nationalists had moved across northern China and captured the communist headquarters at Yan'an (Map 35.3).

Communists benefit from guerilla tactics and broad peasant support

But the communists were far from beaten. During the long war against Japan, they had honed their guerrilla tactics, learning to fight a better-armed foe by avoiding direct combat and relying on subversion and sabotage. In their years at Yan'an they had won over the peasants by giving them land and abolishing social classes. The Nationalists controlled the cities and railways, but the communists were aided and supplied by village peasants, who made up most of China's population.

War refugees, China, 1949.

Communist commander Lin Biao (*LIN b'YOW*) retreated with his "People's Liberation Army" to Soviet-occupied Manchuria, where he gained access to Soviet weapons and those left behind by Japan. Determined to crush his foes, Jiang pursued the communists into Manchuria, extending his supply lines and leaving his forces vulnerable. A communist counterattack, aided by peasants who disrupted the Nationalists' supply lines and dug trenches to trap their tanks, turned the tide in 1948. The communists won victory after victory, taking Beijing in January of 1949 and Nanjing in April. By summer the Nationalist forces were in full flight.

## Divided China: Taiwan and the People's Republic

But communism's triumph proved incomplete. The Nationalists fled to the island of Taiwan, where they were protected by the seas and the U.S. Navy. Ruling only Taiwan, they nonetheless called their regime the Republic of China, claimed with American support to be China's legitimate government, and even held China's United Nations seat until 1971. Led by Jiang Jieshi, who ruled the island under martial law until his death in 1975, they dreamed of restoring their rule over China's mainland. But by 1987, when Taiwan finally lifted martial law and began moving toward democracy, this dream had long since disappeared. The future of mainland China lay in communist hands.

## Map 35.3 Communist Victory in China, 1948–1949

In the early stages of the Chinese Civil War, the Nationalists, with a much larger army and modern equipment, seemed to have the advantage over the communists. Notice, however, that after retreating into Manchuria early in the war, the communists turned the tables in 1948 and, with the aid of their peasant supporters, began a counterattack that defeated the Nationalists in 1949. What factors contributed to communist victory, and why was it incomplete? How and why did the Nationalist regime survive?


The communists, meanwhile, moved to consolidate their power. On October 1, 1949, at a grand ceremony in Beijing, their longtime charismatic leader Mao Zedong proclaimed a new regime called the People's Republic of China. The world's most

Communists create People's Republic and ally with USSR

populous country, its half-billion people constituting over a fifth of all humanity, was now under communist control.

Much to the dismay of the Western powers, which refused to recognize the new regime and called it simply "Red China," early in 1950 Mao and his comrades concluded a treaty of friendship and alliance with the Soviet Union. But even as China's new rulers moved to transform their country along communist lines, their efforts were diverted by a complex conflict in Korea.

## Occupation, Partition, and Conflict in Korea

Soviet and U.S. occupation zones result in divided Korea

Like China, Korea emerged in 1945 from Japanese occupation only to be divided between communists and nationalists. In the waning days of World War II, after entering the war against Japan, the Soviets invaded northern Korea. As the war ended, the United States, anxious to keep its Soviet allies from taking all of Korea, insisted on dividing it at the 38th parallel of latitude into U.S. and Soviet occupation zones. In the north, within a few years, the USSR installed a Soviet-style government led by Kim Il-sung, a capable, ruthless communist who had been active in anti-Japanese resistance. In the south, under U.S. influence, a right-wing nationalist named Yi Sung-man, widely known as Syngman Rhee, emerged in 1948 as president. The superpowers then removed their troops, leaving the country split into hostile states.

Communist North Korea invades South Korea in 1950

The fragile peace did not last long. On June 25, 1950, with a large, Soviet-equipped army, North Korea launched a massive invasion across the 38th parallel, quickly overrunning most of the south (Map 35.4). But America, stunned by communism's recent triumph in China, was not about to let another country "go communist." After promoting a United Nations resolution calling for military support for South Korea, the Americans helped create a U.N. military force. Anxious to show that the new United Nations—unlike the old League of Nations—could resist aggression, 15 other countries joined in this effort, the U.N.'s first military action.

American–led U.N. forces drive communist armies deep into North Korea

Led by America's General Douglas MacArthur, the U.N. force soon reversed the war's momentum. In September, with a surprise amphibious landing at the port of Inchon behind the lines of North Korean forces, MacArthur divided them and drove them from the south. In October, expanding beyond his initial objective of liberating the south, MacArthur pushed into North Korea, aiming to drive out the communists and unite the country. By November he occupied most of the north and seemed on the verge of victory.

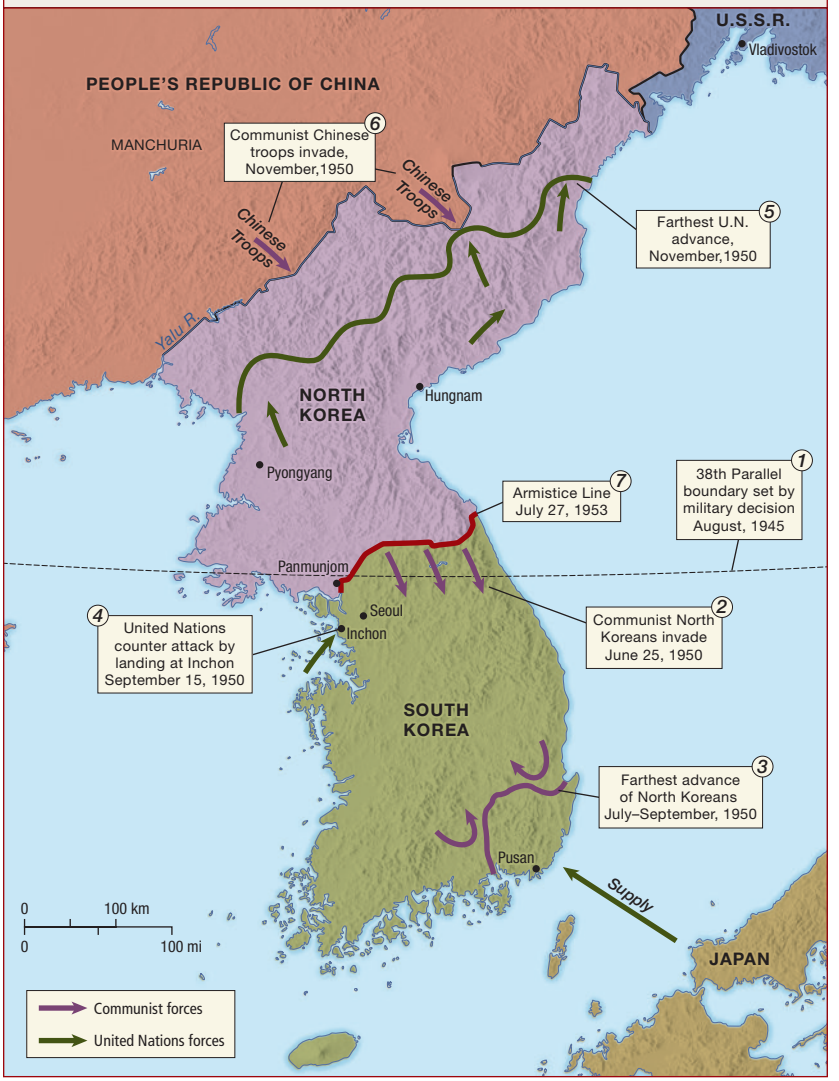
Communist Chinese troops help North Korea drive back U.N. forces

But again the war's momentum changed. As MacArthur's forces approached the Yalu River, which separates Korea from China, the Communist Chinese began to fear that he might invade their land. In late November, without declaring war, they started sending in thousands of Chinese troops to aid the North Koreans. Caught off guard, the U.N. forces retreated, barely escaping to the south, where they regrouped and continued the war.

As a stalemate soon developed, not far from the 38th parallel, the frustrated MacArthur demanded authority to attack Communist China. But his superiors, anxious to avoid an all-out Asian war, opted to limit the conflict to Korea and seek a negotiated truce. In 1951, when he openly questioned this policy, MacArthur was relieved of his command. The war dragged on in debilitating deadlock until July 1953, when an

## Map 35.4 The Korean War, 1950–1953

The Korean War began in summer of 1950, when Communist North Koreans invaded and overran much of South Korea. Note, however, that in the fall an American-led United Nations coalition drove them back deep into the North, only to have the momentum change again in November, when communist Chinese forces came to the aid of the North Koreans. Note also that, after a lengthy and debilitating deadlock, the fighting finally ended in 1953 with a truce that left Korean split into two hostile states. Why did the communist Chinese intervene in the Korean War? Why did they call their forces "volunteers"?



Korean child receiving food aid.

armistice finally ended the fighting. Over two million people had been killed, including numerous Korean civilians, while countless other Koreans suffered from disease, dislocation, and the death of loved ones as their country was ravaged. And yet Korea remained divided, separated by a heavily patrolled demilitarized zone (DMZ), two and a half miles wide, along the armistice line.

### Divided Korea: Communist North, Capitalist South

In the North Kim Il-sung ruled a Stalin-style communist police state for the next four decades. The regime's planned economy, state-run industries, and collective farms reflected its Soviet roots. Relentlessly hostile to South Korea and America, it maintained good relations with both Communist China and the USSR, even when these two countries eventually became bitter rivals. After Kim Il-sung died in 1994, his son Kim Jong-il continued the repressive regime. An eccentric recluse with a love of fast cars and a mortal fear of air travel, the younger Kim moved to develop nuclear weapons, despite a faltering economy and widespread famine.

Repressive regimes rule South Korea, but U.S. backing helps bring prosperity

In the South Syngman Rhee, whose American-backed regime was authoritarian and corrupt, ruled as dictator until 1960, when he was ousted by a student-led uprising. The next year, however, the military seized control, and it retained power for the next three decades. General Park Chung-hee, who served as president from 1961 until his assassination in 1979, combined political repression with strong support for industry and economic growth. By the 1980s, with U.S. help and access to global markets, South Korea had become a capitalist powerhouse, with automaker Hyundai and electronics giant Samsung among the world's leading corporations.

Seoul, South Korea's modern capital.

The regime nonetheless remained repressive, rigging elections, censoring the press, and suppressing dissent. In 1980 Kim Dae-jung, leader of the democratic opposition, was arrested and condemned to death. Under U.S. pressure, the regime reduced his sentence to 20 years in prison, and later let him go to America for medical care. In 1987, as South Korea prepared to host the 1988 Summer Olympic Games in its capital, Seoul, student-led protests captured world attention, compelling the government finally to allow free elections.

Democratic reforms followed, but corruption scandals and a short but severe Asian economic downturn in 1997 plagued the new democracy. Elections that year brought to power the widely admired Kim Dae-jung, who improved the economy, reduced corruption, and even reached out to the communist North, meeting with North Korean leader Kim Jong-il in the year 2000. By the twenty-first century, despite ongoing corruption problems, South Koreans lived in a prosperous and democratic society.

## Radicalism and Pragmatism in Communist China

The Chinese were less fortunate than South Koreans. After driving out the Nationalists in 1949, the communists formed a socialist government based on the Soviet model, with Mao Zedong as Chairman of the party's Central Committee, and his comrade Zhou Enlai (*JŌ EN-LĪ*) as the government's premier. The regime labored mightily to transform the country and improve people's lives, but its efforts also brought mass upheavals and extensive suffering.

## Early Radical Reforms

Communist China's radical reforms seek to aid peasants and women

Seeking to remake China in accord with their communist vision, Mao and his comrades initiated radical reforms and mobilized mass campaigns designed to end corruption and instill new selfless socialist values. They transferred land from landlords to peasants, encouraged peasants to share farm animals and tools, and killed many thousand former landlords and others labeled "enemies of the people." In another radical break with the past, the new regime promoted equality for women, easing access to day care for children so mothers could work outside the home. A 1950 Marriage Reform Law allowed women to inherit property and seek divorces, while inviting young people to choose their own spouses—thus undermining the age-old practice by which parents arranged their children's marriages. In the next five years, several million women divorced the men they had earlier been compelled to wed.

Landowner trial, China, 1950s.

Following the Soviet Union's example, China's communists also centralized control over information, education, and the economy. They directly managed the media, which they used to mobilize support for the party and attack practices they deemed harmful to society, such as drug abuse, corruption, prostitution, and religion. To educate the masses and instill communist ideals, the regime took control of schools and colleges and required teachers to follow a curriculum imposed by communist authorities. And in 1953, with Soviet assistance, the government initiated a Five-Year Plan, designed to promote heavy industry and collectivize farming. By the mid-1950s the Chinese communists seemed to be creating a Soviet-style socialist society.

China adopts Soviet-style central planning and control

But Mao's vision differed radically from the Soviet model. Whereas Soviet communism, in line with Marxist doctrine, was based on the urban proletariat, Mao's revolutionary goals were founded on the rural peasants. Inspired by his peasant background and disdain for urban elites (Chapter 32), Mao intended to create a rural, egalitarian, socialist society. Moreover, while Soviets strove to transform society through economic planning and socialist programs, Mao sought to do so by changing the people themselves, using media control and mass campaigns to mold people's minds, alter their attitudes, and mobilize the masses for heroic achievements.

Mao's peasant socialism and mass campaigns diverge from Soviet model

## The Great Leap Forward and Its Failure

Although the Five-Year Plan fostered real economic growth, for Mao, the rural revolutionary, it was too urban, timid, slow, and bureaucratic—too much like the Soviet system of centralized control by an elite managerial class. By 1958 he was ready to try something new. So that year he launched the Great Leap Forward, a sensational campaign of mass mobilization designed to rapidly reshape China into a model rural socialist society. Small collective farms were combined into huge communes of five thousand families, many of which had collective work brigades, communal dining halls, day-care facilities, and even their own small factories. Industry was decentralized and moved from cities to communes, where peasants produced goods in rural workshops and steel in small backyard furnaces. China's future, Mao insisted, must be fashioned by the rural masses, not by urban technocrats and bureaucrats. "Twenty years in a day" was his slogan, and the Chinese people strove valiantly to meet his ambitious goals.

Great Leap Forward forms huge rural communes throughout China

Poor performance and natural disasters ruin Great Leap Forward

But the Great Leap Forward turned into a great catastrophe. Lack of industrial expertise resulted in shoddy goods, backyard furnaces produced inferior steel, and pressures to meet unrealistic goals led communes to overstate the size of their harvests, creating a massive food shortage. In 1960 a nationwide drought, regional typhoons, and torrential rains helped turn the tragedy into a horrendous famine, killing an estimated 20–30 million people.

Chinese split with Soviets and develop nuclear weapons

This catastrophe, moreover, fueled a growing rift between China and the USSR, which had been giving the Chinese substantial aid. In 1960 the Soviets, offended by Mao's rejection of their model and loath to use their limited resources to support his disastrous Great Leap Forward, abruptly cut off aid. The Chinese, offended by Soviet leader Khrushchev's efforts at "peaceful coexistence" with the West (Chapter 34), increasingly renounced these efforts as collaboration with communism's enemies. By 1963 the two communist giants were openly vilifying each other. In 1964 China tested an atomic bomb, adding to the fears of Soviet leaders, who were aware that Mao seemed to see nuclear war as a viable option.

Meanwhile moderate Chinese leaders, including Premier Zhou Enlai, were trying to repair the damage resulting from Mao's radical experiment. In 1960 these moderates abandoned the Great Leap Forward, relaxed the pace of change, began dismantling the communes, and reduced the role of Mao Zedong. Respecting Mao's earlier achievements, they let him remain party chairman, but otherwise eased him into semi-retirement.

## The Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution

Mao's youthful Red Guards conduct a new radical mass campaign

But Mao, the legendary "Great Helmsman" who had piloted the communists to power, refused to sail quietly into the sunset. Late in 1965, aided by Defense Minister Lin Biao and the People's Liberation Army, Mao launched his most spectacular venture: the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution.


Mao's "Little Red Book."

Seizing control of the media and denouncing the moderates as followers of the "capitalist road," he urged young people to form **Red Guards**, radical militias aimed at restoring Maoist revolutionary fervor. Millions of high school and university students responded enthusiastically. The young Red Guards then went on a rampage, attacking all traces of capitalist elitism in China. They disrupted businesses and closed down universities, forcing managers and professors to labor in the fields with the peasants. The Red Guards also held mass rallies to glorify their leader, waving copies of his "Little Red Book," *Quotations from Chairman Mao*, a collection of sayings they could recite by heart (see "*Quotations from Chairman Mao*"). This spectacle marked the high point of the cult of Mao and the ultimate expression of his radical populism in action. But it also echoed China's past: indeed, as Mao basked in mass exaltation, he almost seemed to have assumed the Mandate of Heaven, enjoying the regal status once reserved for Chinese emperors.

Cultural Revolution creates chaos, ruins economy, and isolates China

Like the Great Leap Forward, however, the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution was a catastrophic failure: it created mass chaos, set the economy back years, and isolated China from the outside world, which watched in spellbound anxiety. Finally, in 1970, the radicalism subsided, schools and businesses reopened, and stability was restored. By 1971 the moderates were back in power and Lin Biao was dead, reportedly killed in a plane crash as he fled toward the Soviet Union following a failed attempt to

## Document 35.1 Quotations from Chairman Mao

**The "Little Red Book" of *Quotations from Chairman Mao* was a central symbol of China's Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution, with youthful Red Guards committing it to memory and waving it zealously at mass rallies in support of Mao. Here are some excerpts that provide a flavor of what was called Mao Zedong Thought.**

> A revolution is not a dinner party, or writing an essay, or painting a picture, or doing embroidery; it cannot be so refined, so leisurely and gentle, so temperate, kind, courteous, restrained and magnanimous. A revolution is an insurrection, an act of violence by which one class overthrows another.
>
> Every Communist must grasp the truth, "Political power grows out of the barrel of a gun."
>
> . . . There are two winds in the world today, the East Wind and the West Wind . . . I believe . . . today that the East Wind is prevailing over the West Wind. That is to say, the forces of socialism have become overwhelmingly superior to the forces of imperialism.
>
> The revolutionary war is a war of the masses; it can be waged only by mobilizing the masses and relying on them.
>
> The atom bomb is a paper tiger which the U.S. reactionaries use to scare people. It looks terrible, but . . . the outcome of a war is decided by the people, not by . . . new types of weapon.
>
> Every comrade must . . . understand that as long as we rely on the people, believe firmly in the inexhaustible creative power of the masses and hence trust and identify ourselves with them, we can surmount any difficulty, and no enemy can crush us while we can crush any enemy.
>
> There is an ancient Chinese fable called "The Foolish Old Man Who Removed the Mountains." It tells of an old man who lived . . . long ago and was known as the Foolish Old Man of North Mountain. His house faced south and beyond his doorway stood . . . two great peaks . . . obstructing the way. With great determination, he led his sons in digging up these mountains hoe in hand. Another greybeard, known as the Wise Old Man, saw them and said derisively, "How silly of you to do this! It is quite impossible for you few to dig up these two huge mountains." The Foolish Old Man replied, "When I die, my sons will carry on; when they die, there will be my grandsons, and their sons and grandsons, and so on to infinity. High as they are, the mountains cannot grow any higher and with every bit we dig, they will be that much lower. Why can't we clear them away?" Having refuted the Wise Old Man's wrong view, he went on digging every day, unshaken in his conviction. God was moved by this, and he sent down two angels, who carried the mountains away . . . Today, two big mountains lie like a dead weight on the Chinese people. One is imperialism, the other is feudalism. The Chinese Communist Party has long made up its mind to dig them up. We must persevere and work unceasingly, and we, too, will touch God's heart. Our God is none other than the masses of the Chinese people. If they stand up and dig together with us, why can't these two mountains be cleared away?

SOURCE: Quotations from Chairman Mao Tse-tung. 2. Classes and Class Struggle, 5. War and Peace, 6. Imperialism and All Reactionaries Are Paper Tigers, 8. People's War, 12. Political Work, 14. Relations between the Army and the People, 21. Self-Reliance and Arduous Struggle. http://art-bin.com/art/omaotoc.html

seize power for himself. According to a mythical but widely circulated account, when Mao learned that Lin Biao was escaping after his act of betrayal, the Great Helmsman stretched out his arm toward his former comrade's flight path, and at that instant Lin Biao's plane exploded. Such was the power attributed to Mao Zedong.

## China's Opening to the West

Mao's era, however, was approaching its end. The aging chairman again faded into the background as moderate comrades sought to end China's isolation. Premier Zhou Enlai, a gifted diplomat and nimble opportunist who retained his premier's post throughout the Cultural Revolution, now engineered a stunning change in Chinese foreign policy. He helped open his communist country to the capitalist West.

Deepening Soviet-China split marked by bloody border clashes

China's change of course was preceded by a dangerous deterioration in Chinese-Soviet relations. In 1967, Red Guards on the rampage denounced the Soviet Union and besieged its Beijing embassy. In 1968, the Soviets invaded Czechoslovakia and proclaimed the Brezhnev Doctrine, asserting the USSR's right to intervene in other communist countries (Chapter 34). China reacted in horror, fearing it might be the next Soviet target. In 1969, Communist China and the Soviet Union fought several brief but deadly undeclared border wars along their lengthy frontier. Hoping to offset the threat from their Soviet neighbor, Chinese leaders started looking to improve relations with the West.

Communist China opens dialogue with America and gains U.N. seat

The Americans, meanwhile, moved to exploit the hostility between China and the USSR. They began to seek dialogue with Communist China, whose existence the United States had never formally recognized. In 1971 the United States lifted restrictions on American travel to China. The Chinese then invited the U.S. table tennis team to play in Beijing, where the team was warmly welcomed by Zhou Enlai himself. This "Ping Pong diplomacy" helped pave the way for a secret visit to Beijing that summer by President Nixon's national security advisor (and later secretary of State) Henry Kissinger, followed by a dramatic announcement from Nixon himself that he would soon visit China. Later that year the United Nations recognized Communist China, giving it the seat previously held by the Nationalists on Taiwan.

China hosts U.S. president, and later establishes diplomatic relations

Nixon's visit to China in February 1972, parts of which were televised around the world, featured meetings with Zhou and Mao, attendance at banquets and a ballet, a presidential trip to China's Great Wall, and a joint statement pledging both sides to work for improved relations. The visit did not, however, result at once in formal relations between the two countries, since the Chinese insisted that America first break relations with Taiwan. Only in January 1979, when America finally did so (while continuing military and economic support for Taiwan), were full diplomatic relations established between the United States and the People's Republic.

Nixon in China.

## China After Mao: Economic Freedom, Political Repression

By then the People's Republic had new leaders. In 1976 Zhou Enlai and Mao Zedong both died, and a new power struggle arose between radicals and moderates. Led by Mao's widow Jiang Qing (*jē-AHNG CHING*), a group of radicals, later called the **Gang of Four**, sought to seize power and renew the Cultural Revolution. They were defeated and imprisoned by moderates under Deng Xiaoping (*DUNG shē-YOW PING*), an aging pragmatist who had survived the Long March (Chapter 32). Deng had worked to restore the economy after the Great Leap Forward, but then was denounced as a "capitalist road" follower and expelled from leadership during the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution. Back in power as vice premier in 1977, Deng ran the country through his protégés, whom he placed at the head of the government and the Communist Party.

Deng and pragmatists liberalize economy and pursue global trade

Deng and his protégés gradually liberalized the economy. Breaking with Mao's radical collectivism, they allowed small profit-oriented private businesses, experimented with free enterprise in special economic zones, and sent Chinese students abroad to study business, science, and technology in Japan, America, and Europe. Using capitalist-style incentives and claiming it was "glorious" to "get rich," the regime allowed peasants to farm small family plots and sell what they produced in open markets. China's new leaders also patched up relations with the USSR, while continuing to woo the West with prospects of lucrative trade—even as they flooded global markets with inexpensive shoes, toys, bikes, watches, and clothes, made in Chinese factories using low-cost Chinese labor. These efforts increased China's stability and prosperity, tripling average family income by the 1990s.

Tiananmen Square Massacre reinforces political repression

But the moderates did not bring China freedom or democracy. After initially easing repression, Deng and his comrades in the 1980s faced growing demands for greater democratization. These demands increased until spring 1989, when idealistic students staged mass demonstrations in Beijing's vast Tiananmen Square, calling for more democracy and less corruption. Fearing that such demonstrations could trigger mass unrest, the leaders chose to suppress them. On June 4, 1989, the regime trucked in troops from the provinces, used tanks and artillery to clear the square, and killed hundreds, if not thousands, of demonstrators.

Chinese pragmatists suppress dissent while liberalizing commerce

The Tiananmen Square Massacre shocked the world, but it did no long-term damage to China's economy or foreign trade. Eager to exploit the massive market of more than a billion Chinese, the West concluded that sanctions against China would do more harm than good. Even after Deng Xiaoping died in 1997 at age 92, his colleagues continued to combine economic liberalization with political repression. Under Jiang Zemin (*jē-AHNG zuh-MIN*), president of the People's Republic from 1993 to 2003, China expanded its domestic market economy and international trade, while sternly suppressing dissent.

By the early twenty-first century, then, China had achieved both political stability and economic growth. Its great urban centers sported skyscrapers, traffic congestion, air pollution, countless cell phone users, and a wide array of businesses large and small. Not everyone shared the new prosperity: party officials and their families grew rich through commercial connections, but workers in some businesses lost their jobs due to capitalist competition, and peasants in remote areas still lived in great poverty. Gender disparities resurfaced, as parents seeking to improve family incomes pulled daughters out of school to work in Chinese industry, where they were less likely than men to be promoted and more apt to be laid off. The new China had become a modern economic power, but it scarcely resembled the egalitarian peasant socialist society envisioned by Mao Zedong.

The old and the new in Shanghai, China.

## The Agonies of Southeast Asia and Indonesia

South of China, upheavals also marked the postwar era in the former French colony of Indochina, embracing Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia, and in the former Dutch East Indies, now called Indonesia. As people in these regions sought freedom from foreign rule, their efforts were entangled in the global Cold War struggle between communism and

capitalism, spawning wars, rebellions, and genocide. Only after the Cold War's end did these lands achieve some stability.

## Vietminh, France, and the First Indochina War

Indochina's strife was rooted in the era of French colonial rule, lasting from the mid-1800s until World War II. During this era, France governed the masses of Buddhist village farmers through an elite minority of urban, French-educated, Vietnamese Catholics. An independence movement aimed at ending French rule arose, led by a Vietnamese nationalist who took the name Ho Chi Minh ("he who brings enlightenment").

Ho Chi Minh fights to free Indochina from France and then Japan

As a young man, after leaving Vietnam to work as a cook on a steamship, Ho Chi Minh traveled widely and lived for six years in France. There, dismayed by France's refusal to give colonists the same rights as French citizens and attracted by the anti-imperialism of Russia's Marxist leaders, he became communist. After sojourns in the USSR and China, he returned to Vietnam, where in 1930 he formed the Indochinese Communist Party. In 1941, as Japan occupied Indochina, Ho joined other nationalists to form a coalition called **Vietminh**, the Vietnamese Independence Brotherhood League, which then conducted guerrilla war against Japanese occupation forces. As described at the start of this chapter, on the day Japan surrendered to the Allies in September 1945, Ho Chi Minh proclaimed independence for Vietnam.

France tries to restore imperial rule after World War II

But France had other ideas. Eager to restore their national pride and great power status, undermined by four years of German occupation (1940–1944), the French sought to resurrect their old colonial empire. Needing a strong France to counter Soviet power in Europe, Britain and America tacitly supported this effort.

Vietminh forces defeat France in First Indochina War

The result was the First Indochina War (1946–1954), a debilitating conflict between the French and Vietminh. The Vietminh commander, former history teacher and gifted strategist Vo Nguyen Giap (*VŌ 'n-GIH-un z'YAHP*), used guerrilla tactics to wear down the French until he had amassed, with Chinese help, a sizable, well-equipped army. Then, in spring 1954, as the French wearied of war, he trapped and defeated them in northern Indochina at a place called Dien Bien Phu (*dē-YEN bē-YEN FOO*) (Map 35.5).

Geneva Accords split Indochina into Laos, Cambodia, North Vietnam, and South Vietnam

Meanwhile, French leaders met in Geneva, Switzerland, with Indochinese delegates and key officials from Britain, America, the USSR, and China in talks aimed at ending the Indochina War. In July 1954, they produced the **Geneva Accords**, an agreement to end French rule in Indochina and divide the former colony into Laos, Cambodia, North Vietnam, and South Vietnam. Laos and Cambodia would have neutral regimes, aligned with neither the communist East nor the capitalist West. North Vietnam would be ruled by Vietminh (led by Ho Chi Minh and the communists), and South Vietnam would soon have an anticommunist Catholic president named Ngo Dinh Diem (*'n-GŌ DIN dē-YEM*). But Vietnam's partition into North and South was meant to be temporary: the Geneva Accords called for elections in 1956 to unite the country.

Those elections, however, were not held. The United States, fearing that Vietminh's prestige and popularity would ensure its victory, thus bringing all Vietnam under communist rule, backed efforts by Ngo Dinh Diem to prevent the vote. Anxious to counter communism, the United States opted to prevent elections the communists might win. America thus became the main supporter of an unpopular and increasingly dictatorial South Vietnamese regime.

## Vietnam, America, and the Second Indochina War

Diem's regime, moreover, was neither strong nor stable. By relying on colonial structures the French had created and giving government jobs to the Catholic minority, Diem alienated both nationalists and Buddhists. Taking advantage of Diem's unpopularity, communists in South Vietnam formed a nationalist coalition called the National Liberation Front and guerrilla units called **Viet Cong**. By 1963, South Vietnam was in chaos, with Viet Cong leading a full-fledged insurgency against Ngo Dinh Diem, and with Buddhist monks burning themselves to death on city streets to protest his repressive rule.

The Americans, having formerly supported Diem with military aid and advisors, finally conspired against him with his army, which killed him in November 1963. South Vietnam thus came under military rule, but even the army could not restore stability.

Capitalizing on the chaos, in 1964 communist North Vietnam started sending armed units south to support the Viet Cong. That same year, in the nearby Gulf of Tonkin, U.S. surveillance ships reported being shot at by North Vietnamese patrol boats. Although North Vietnam denied these reports, which were never verified, the U.S. Congress passed a Gulf of Tonkin Resolution authorizing President Lyndon Johnson to take "all necessary measures . . . to prevent further aggression." It turned out to be a license to wage war. As American forces arrived the next year in large numbers, South Vietnam's insurgency became an international conflict.

For several years the war intensified, as America sent more and more troops while North Vietnam, supplied with arms and aid by the Soviets and Chinese, funneled in forces along the "Ho Chi Minh Trail," a crude network of pathways through neutral Laos and Cambodia (Map 35.5). Advanced American weapons and mass bombing, exceeding all the firepower used in World War II, caused extensive damage and countless casualties but failed to crush the communists.

**Map 35.5** Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia, 1954–1975

After France lost the First Indochina War (1946–1954), its Indochina colony was divided into North Vietnam, South Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia. Note, however, that despite massive U.S. military support for South Vietnam, North Vietnam won the Vietnam War (1964-1975) and united all Vietnam under communist control. How did these developments help bring communists to power in Laos and Cambodia?

Vietnam becomes a major Cold War battleground

Then, in early 1968, communist commander Vo Nguyen Giap surprised the Americans with simultaneous attacks throughout South Vietnam during celebrations of the Lunar New Year, known in Vietnam as *Tet*. Militarily this **Tet Offensive** was a failure for North Vietnam, as U.S. forces soon regained all the ground taken in the initial attacks. But the offensive undermined American morale. Stunned that the battered communists could launch a major assault, and shocked by televised images of the violence, Americans concluded that victory was not in sight, as their leaders had claimed. In March, his credibility shaken, President Johnson announced he would not seek reelection. The spring and summer of 1968 were marked by antiwar protests and violence across the United States (Chapter 34). In November, Americans elected a new president, Richard Nixon, who promised an honorable end to the Vietnam War.

U.S. soldiers in Vietnam.

Nixon initiated **Vietnamization**, a process that transferred the fighting to South Vietnam's army, while gradually withdrawing U.S. troops and negotiating with the North. But he also enlarged the conflict into a Second Indochina War, invading Cambodia in 1970 to destroy bases and supply lines used by communist forces in South Vietnam. In 1972, when negotiations stalled, he renewed massive bombing of North Vietnam. Nixon's tactics achieved his goal, an agreement with North Vietnam, signed in Paris in January 1973, suspending the conflict and providing for withdrawal of all U.S. forces.

But Nixon's tactics also left the region in chaos. In 1974, with the Americans gone, North Vietnam again began sending forces south, and in early 1975 it launched an all-out offensive. By April the communists had conquered the South, uniting Vietnam under their rule. That same year communist regimes took power in Laos and Cambodia, ending the Second Indochina War.

After U.S. withdrawal, North conquers South and reunifies Vietnam

## The Cambodian Catastrophe

But Southeast Asia's agony did not end. In 1975, Cambodia's new ruling communist party, the **Khmer Rouge** (*kuh-MER ROOZH*), or "Red Khmer" (Khmer is the ethnicity to which most Cambodians belong), launched a radical mass campaign inspired by China's Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution. Led by Pol Pot, a Maoist fanatic determined to create an agrarian communist society, the Khmer Rouge sought to de-urbanize Cambodia, seizing city dwellers at gunpoint and herding them to the countryside to work the fields. Urban professionals, including bankers, lawyers, doctors, teachers, and others who dared resist, were executed en masse, while thousands more died of overwork and starvation. Over the next few years, according to outside estimates, up to two million of Cambodia's seven million people may have died in this genocidal slaughter.

Maoist Pol Pot leads genocidal anti-urban campaign in Cambodia

Then Cambodia's catastrophe became more complex. Taking advantage of the chaos, communist Vietnam in 1978 invaded communist Cambodia, replacing Pol Pot's Khmer Rouge regime with a moderate communist state called the People's Republic of Kampuchea (*KAHM-poo-CHĒ-uh*), the local ethnic name for Cambodia. But in 1979, alarmed by Vietnam's growing influence, communist China invaded communist Vietnam to punish it for invading communist Cambodia.

Communist Vietnam ousts communist Pol Pot from Cambodia

China's invasion was brief. Vietnam's army, with battle-tested troops and modern weapons supplied by Soviets or captured from Americans, rebuffed the Chinese forces. The Chinese soon withdrew, but their invasion heartened Pol Pot and others opposing Cambodia's new regime, many of whom had fled to neighboring Thailand. These assorted rebels,

China tries to "punish" Vietnam as Cambodian turmoil continues

including Khmer Rouge and other Cambodian nationalists, conducted civil war against Cambodia's Vietnam-backed regime throughout the 1980s. Displaying both the complexity and cynicism of Cold War politics, communist Russia and communist Vietnam supported the Cambodian regime, while their main foes—communist China and capitalist America—backed the Cambodian rebels, including the murderous Khmer Rouge.

U.N. truce and elections finally stabilize Cambodia

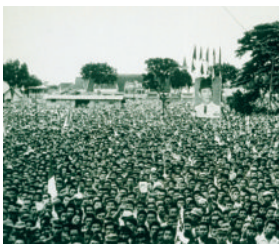
In the early 1990s, when the United Nations negotiated a truce and sent in peacekeepers, Cambodia finally regained some stability. Following national elections in 1993, it officially became a constitutional monarchy under King Norodom Sihanouk (*SĒ-uh-NOOK*), who had fled Cambodia before the 1970 U.S. invasion. In 1997, repudiated even by former supporters, Pol Pot was arrested and convicted of treason; he died the next year under house arrest. Cambodia's nightmare seemed to be over at last.

## Indonesia Between East and West

Indonesia, the three-thousand-mile-long island chain to the south of Indochina, also experienced both European imperialism and Japanese occupation. Before World War II, as the Dutch East Indies, it was exploited for its spices, coffee, oil, and rubber. After the war, led by a romantic revolutionary nationalist named Sukarno, it became an independent nation, buffeted between East and West.

Sukarno leads Indonesia to independence from Dutch

Sukarno, the "father of modern Indonesia," was a poor schoolteacher's son who completed a degree in civil engineering before founding the Indonesian Nationalist Party in 1927. A compelling speaker whose outlook on life combined nationalism, Islam, and Marxism with Indonesian mysticism and magic, he sought to blend these incompatible ideals into an independence movement through the power of his own personality. Imprisoned and later exiled by the Dutch, he returned to his homeland in 1942 to serve as an advisor to the Japanese, who had occupied Indonesia, while urging them in vain to grant his people independence. When the war ended in 1945, Sukarno declared Indonesia independent. The Dutch sought to reassert control, but after four years of futile fighting they gave up, and in 1949 Indonesia became an independent republic (Map 35.6).



Pro-Sukarno rally, Indonesia.

Sukarno and his revolutionary colleague, Muhammad Yamin, formulated the **Panca Sila**, or Five Pillars, as the basis for the development of independent Indonesia. Similar in some ways to Sun Yixian's *Three Principles of the People* (Chapter 32), Panca Sila tried to unify Indonesian peoples on a foundation of nationalism, internationalism, government by popular consent, social justice, and belief in one God. Panca Sila, however, could not transcend the differences among Muslim and Christians, rich and poor, and Indonesia's numerous ethnicities. Genuine national unity thus eluded Indonesia, as deep-seated poverty and religious tensions continued for decades to cause widespread suffering.

Sukarno first joins non-aligned nations, then sides with Soviets

In foreign affairs, like India's Nehru, Sukarno emerged as a leader of the nonaligned nations, rejecting alliance with either East or West. In 1955, at the Indonesian city of Bandung (*BAHN-doong*), he hosted a conference of 29 nations, mostly from Asia and Africa, that likewise identified with neither the Western capitalist world nor the Soviet bloc. In a stirring speech, Sukarno used Indonesia's cultural and religious diversity as a model for how new nations, emerging from colonial control, could put aside their differences and unite to advance common interests. Eventually, however, attracted by Soviet aid, Sukarno led his nation into the Soviet camp. This abandonment of nonalignment

## Map 35.6 East and South Asia in the Early Twenty-First Century

By the early twenty-first century, virtually all of East and South Asia had gained freedom from foreign domination, and many of its nations had attained some stability and prosperity. Note, however, that serious tensions persisted in North Korea, Pakistan, Indonesia, and elsewhere, that millions of Asians remained very poor, and that a catastrophic tsunami off the Indonesian coast killed over 200 thousand people in 2004. What factors contributed to Asia's increasing prosperity? What factors help to explain the persistence of poverty amidst this growing prosperity?

enmeshed Indonesia in the Cold War and made Sukarno an enemy of the United States, while his new ally, the USSR, considered Indonesia relatively unimportant and invested few resources there.

Suharto ousts Sukarno and leads brutal pro-Western dictatorship

Sukarno's policies thus led Indonesia into a dead end. Between 1965 and 1967, a military strongman named General Suharto turned the country around, launching a violent anticommunist crusade that killed more than 300 thousand people and filled Indonesia's rivers with headless corpses. Suharto ousted Sukarno in 1967, then ruled for three decades as a staunch pro-Western and anti-Soviet dictator. The Western democracies overlooked his regime's corruption and repression.

By the 1990s, however, the Cold War was over, the USSR was gone, and the aging dictator was in trouble. With 200 million people, his nation was the world's fourth most populous country. But despite Indonesia's rich resources and economic potential, most of its people lived in poverty and resented the vast wealth amassed by Suharto and his family. Concerned by the growing popularity of Islamist fundamentalism (Chapter 37), Suharto reached out to Muslims, making the pilgrimage to Mecca in 1990 and periodically visiting the tombs of Indonesian Muslim saints. But in return he expected Muslims to accept clear separation between religion and his government, a distinction rejected by Islamist fundamentalists. In 1996 he repressed violent protests by students and Islamic leaders. Then an Asian financial crisis the next year undermined the Indonesian economy, and in 1998 a popular uprising forced Suharto to step down.

Muslim protests and financial crises finally force Suharto out

In 1999 a new government was elected democratically, but ongoing unrest, as well as regional tensions between Christians and Muslims, quickly undermined it. Two years later, Indonesia's assembly replaced the country's president with Megawati Sukarnoputri, the legendary Sukarno's daughter. After Pakistan's Benazir Bhutto, she was the second woman to lead a modern Muslim nation—and the world's most populous Muslim nation at that.

Poverty, terrorism, and a deadly tsunami add to Indonesian instability

As president, however, Megawati Sukarnoputri faced numerous problems, including a weak economy and an armed Islamist rebellion in the northwest. In 2002 a terrorist car bomb exploded at a nightclub on the Indonesian island of Bali, killing more than two hundred people and injuring at least three hundred others. In 2003, resolving to stabilize her country, she launched an all-out military attack on the Islamist rebels, but in September of 2004, faced with widespread unemployment and charges of corruption, she was voted out of office. Three months later a massive undersea earthquake off the country's western coast unleashed a colossal tsunami (Map 35.6) that killed more than 200 thousand Indonesians and wrecked many coastal cities on the island of Sumatra. Rich in resources and diversity, but plagued by poverty and problems, twenty-first century Indonesia faced a promising but challenging future.

## Changes in Asian Societies

Sweeping economic and social changes accompanied Asia's upheavals in the wake of World War II. Eager to escape foreign domination by acquiring wealth and power, Asian nations expanded their industry and technology, exploiting Cold War rivalries to get aid from the Soviets or from the West. Industry and technology fostered urbanization, as millions of Asians moved from rural villages to industrial cities. These transitions in turn brought changes in family and gender roles, presenting new challenges and opportunities for Asian societies.

Inoculation of Asian child in the 1950s.

## Industry, Technology, Population, and Urbanization

In the decades after World War II, aware that industry, technology, and commerce had brought wealth and power to the West, Asian nations sought to expand in these areas. At first the Cold War aided their efforts: eager to support Asian friends, Americans provided Japan, Taiwan, and South Korea with economic assistance and access to Western markets, while Soviets aided India and initially Communist China. In time, however, Asians developed their own economic approaches, typically combining market capitalism with central government planning.

Japan led the way with this approach, creating by the 1970s an economic powerhouse that was the envy of Asia. By the 1980s Taiwan and South Korea had imitated Japan's success. After abandoning Mao's disastrous anti-urban experiments, China, too, achieved substantial economic growth by blending central state control with open market incentives, while India used a similar combination to attain global leadership in electronics and computer technology.

Asian populations increase greatly despite efforts to curb growth

Meanwhile modern medicines and inoculations, increasingly available to ordinary Asians, helped accelerate Asian population growth. Death rates declined markedly, especially among children, while traditional Asian preference for large families initially kept birth rates high. Eventually government efforts to promote smaller families, such as China's rigorous "one child per family" campaign, reduced birth rates through contraception and abortion, combined with economic incentives for limiting family size. Despite such efforts, however, Asia's population more than doubled in the second half of the twentieth century, from under 1.5 billion in 1950 to over 3.5 billion in 2000—by which time nearly 60 percent of the earth's people lived in Asia.

Asian cities grow rapidly as people seek urban jobs

The attraction of the large cities, which offered not only industrial jobs but also educational and cultural opportunities, combined with population growth to promote mass urbanization. Tens of millions of Asians moved from rural villages to large urban areas, despite the anti-urban efforts of Mao Zedong and Pol Pot. Millions of the new city-dwellers found jobs in industry and commerce; but since there were not enough such jobs to go around, millions of others joined a vast urban underclass of destitute people dwelling in sordid slums and shanties. Yet the mass migrations to the cities continued, as percentages of Asians in urban areas tripled, from under 15 percent in 1945 to roughly 50 percent by the early twenty-first century—by which time Asia had at least eight cities with metropolitan populations exceeding ten million people.

High-yield crops and new technologies begin to transform rural Asia

Rural Asia also experienced great changes. Policies promoted by both capitalist and communist regimes, for example, gave land to small farmers, curtailing such traditional practices as tenant farming and absentee landlordism. Fast-growing, high-yield "miracle rice," developed in the 1960s, together with synthetic fertilizers, vastly expanded the output of Asian farmers, accelerating the Green Revolution. In time village life was also enhanced by more and more clinics and schools, while new technologies, such as radios, televisions, and wireless phones, connected even small remote settlements with the outside world.

## Changing Family and Gender Roles

Urbanization undermines traditional Asian families

Asia's upheavals also affected the traditional Asian family. The partition of India and Pakistan, wars in Korea and Vietnam, and violent mass campaigns in China and Cambodia tore apart millions of families, destroying their homes, dividing their loyalties, and

causing mass dislocation. But urban growth played an even more disruptive and transformative role. For when rural Asian families moved to cities, they frequently did so in stages, with one spouse moving first to find employment, then often living there alone for a time and sending money back to the village. Since whole clans rarely moved to the city at once, large extended families, long dominant in villages, typically gave way to smaller nuclear families in cities. Government birth control programs, along with urban crowding, also led city couples to keep families small.

Childbirth education in southern Asia.

In cities, moreover, new institutions assumed many of the family's traditional roles. In cities, for example, education meant public schools teaching academic subjects (such as calculating, reading, and writing), rather than families passing on practical skills (such as farming, carpentry, spinning, and weaving) as in the traditional village. In cities, care for the sick and elderly was supplied by public clinics and government pension programs rather than by the family. In cities, social discipline was furnished by courts and police, who punished offenses (such as loitering or urinating in public) that were not crimes in the village, where heads of families resolved conflicts and punished offenders. In cities, recreation occurred at public settings such as taverns, teahouses, movies, concerts, and sporting events, while in villages it often meant visiting with one's extended family. In cities, worship took place at temples, or did not take place at all (especially in communist countries where religion was discouraged), while in villages it typically occurred at family shrines. Urbanization thus diminished the family's role in many Asian people's lives.

Urban institutions, schools, and clinics take on traditional family roles

Urbanization also affected traditional gender roles. When men moved to the city to find jobs, their wives often stayed behind to run the household, and thus grew accustomed to heading the family by the time they rejoined their husbands. When women moved to the city to find jobs, they acquired greater independence and gained a new status as family wage earners by sending money they earned back to the village. When families were reunited, men often tried to reassert their family authority, sometimes reacting to their reduced status by abusing their wives and children. But traditional patriarchal dominance nonetheless gradually waned.

In the meantime, Asian women acquired political and civil rights, along with greater reproductive and economic freedom. Political reforms in most Asian countries gave women the right to vote, along with legal rights and educational opportunities that in theory (though often not in practice) made them equal to men. Access to government-provided contraceptives and abortions also helped women control the timing of pregnancies and family size. Economic pressures to enhance family income, combined with exposure to Western media depicting women in professional roles, encouraged Asian women to seek jobs outside the home and even to pursue careers in such areas as business, medicine, and law.

Asian women gain legal rights and greater economic opportunities

Asian women did not, however, gain full equality with men. In most Asian societies, women who worked outside the home, often with lower pay and less potential for advancement than men, were still expected to fulfill traditional roles in the household, and even in the workplace. In Japanese corporations, for example, women were often expected to serve tea to male executives, while female political leaders were rare in Japan, Korea, and Taiwan. Elsewhere in Asia, however, talented and ambitious women—such as Indira and Sonia Gandhi in India, Benazir Bhutto in Pakistan, Jiang Qing in China, and Megawati Sukarnoputri in Indonesia—played very prominent and highly visible roles.

Many Asian women still treated as subordinate by men

In villages across Asia, patriarchal attitudes persisted. In many cases parents still arranged marriages, the bride's family still supplied a dowry, and wives were still seen as

their husband's property. On occasion, as in times gone by, an Indian or Pakistani husband who was unhappy with his wife might abuse or even kill her so he could seek a new wife. By the late twentieth century, however, such practices had become increasingly rare.

Sometimes practices intended as progressive, when combined with traditional patriarchal attitudes, had unintended results. In China, for example, the "one child per family" program and ready access to abortion, combined with the age-old preference for male children and new technologies that can identify sex before birth, led many families to abort girls or sell their newborn daughters on the black market. A gender imbalance thus developed among Chinese children, with boys outnumbering girls in some places by 10 percent or more. Illegal commercial networks sold many orphaned Chinese girls into domestic servitude or urban prostitution.

Indian women receiving military training.

Still, despite the resilience of some traditional attitudes and behaviors, the transformation of Asian societies was profound. By the early twenty-first century, instead of living in villages in patriarchal families and producing their own food and goods, most Asians lived in urban areas in small nuclear families and worked for wages with which they bought food and goods. Asia's upheavals and urbanization had brought mass trauma and distress, but Asians in the process had acquired new wealth, new technologies, new outlooks and attitudes, and new ways of life.

# Chapter Review

## Putting It in Perspective

In the decades after World War II, global connections contributed to conflicts in Asia, as efforts to gain independence from the West and implement new ideals, combined with Cold War ideologies and tensions, produced dramatic and often violent upheavals. The bloody partitioning of India, Mao's catastrophic mass campaigns in China, disastrous wars in Korea and Indochina, deadly repressions and revolts in Indonesia, and Pol Pot's genocidal policies in Cambodia killed many millions of people and shattered millions of lives. Rapid transformation from rural to urban societies created mass dislocation, disrupting and altering traditional family and gender roles.

Eventually, however, global connections helped Asian nations gain varying degrees of stability and prosperity. Japan and South Korea flourished, capitalizing on global commerce by blending market capitalism with central state planning. India used Soviet and Western aid, modern agricultural science, and global leadership in electronic technology to reduce poverty and instability. China, after years of disastrous turmoil, achieved stability and economic growth by combining authoritarian governance with open market incentives and global trade. By the early twenty-first century, although population growth and regional hostilities continued to cloud Asian horizons, Asia's growing political and economic strength suggested that Asians may well have largely put their upheavals behind them.

## Reviewing Key Material

### KEY CONCEPTS

nonaligned nations, 911
Green Revolution, 912
Red Guards, 922
Gang of Four, 924
Vietminh, 926
Geneva Accords, 926
Viet Cong, 927
Tet Offensive, 927
Vietnamization, 928
Khmer Rouge, 928
Panca Sila, 929

### KEY PEOPLE

Ho Chi Minh, 908, 926
Jawaharlal Nehru, 910
Indira Gandhi, 912
Rajiv Gandhi, 912
Sonia Gandhi, 912
Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, 913
Benazir Bhutto, 913
Pervez Musharraf, 913
Douglas MacArthur, 913
Jiang Jieshi (Chiang Kaishek), 916
Lin Biao, 916

Mao Zedong, 917
Kim Il-sung, 918
Kim Jong-il, 920
Park Chung-hee, 920
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Richard Nixon, 924
Jiang Qing, 924
Deng Xiaoping, 924
Jiang Zemin, 925
Vo Nguyen Giap, 926
Ngo Dinh Diem, 926
Pol Pot, 928
Norodom Sihanouk, 929
Sukarno, 929
Suharto, 931
Megawati Sukarnoputri, 931

## ASK YOURSELF

1. How were each of the major Asian nations affected by the rivalry between communism and capitalism during the Cold War? Why did the Cold War have such a devastating impact on Asia?
2. Why was British India divided into two separate countries when it gained independence in 1947? Why was there so much ongoing hostility between India and Pakistan?
3. What combination of factors made possible Japan's economic miracle? How did each of the other Asian nations seek to imitate Japan's success?
4. What was Mao Zedong's vision for China, and how did he seek to implement it? Why did his efforts to implement his vision fail, and why were they so traumatic for China?
5. How did technology, urbanization, and population growth impact traditional family and gender roles in Asia? Why was this impact so profound?

## GOING FURTHER


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## Key Dates and Developments

| | |
|---|---|
| **1945–1952** | U.S. occupation of Japan |
| **1946–1949** | Chinese Civil War and communist victory |
| **1946–1954** | First Indochina War |
| **1947** | Independence and division of India and Pakistan |
| **1949** | Independence of Indonesia |
| **1950–1953** | Korean War |
| **1958–1960** | Great Leap Forward in China |
| **1960–1963** | Split between China and USSR |
| **1964–1975** | Vietnam War/Second Indochina War |
| **1966–1969** | Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution in China |
| **1969** | Border wars between China and USSR |
| **1971** | Independence of Bangladesh from Pakistan |
| **1972** | Nixon's visit to China |
| **1973** | U.S. withdrawal from Vietnam |
| **1975–1977** | Cambodian genocide |
| **1978–1997** | Deng Xiaoping's economic reforms in China |
| **1984** | Assassination of Indira Gandhi in India |
| **1989** | Tiananmen Square Massacre in China |
| **1998** | Testing of nuclear weapons by India and Pakistan |
| **2000** | Meeting of North and South Korean leaders |
| **2004** | Tsunami devastates Indonesia and much of southern Asia |
| **2005** | North Korea claims to have developed nuclear weapons |
| **2007** | Assassination of Benazir Bhutto in Pakistan |