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Social Studies: History for Middle School Students
Japan's Path and World Events
(first revised edition)

(* Items marked with an asterisk are scheduled for future translation.)

Chapter 7 Contemporary Japan and the World

1. JAPAN'S POSTWAR GROWTH AND INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

1. The constitution needed for a new era

Occupation under the Allied forces and various reforms*

The establishment of the new constitution*

2. A cold war and the United Nations

The United Nations and the Cold War*

Trends in Asia

After the Second World War, Asian nations were liberated from colonial control, with the Philippines, India, and Indonesia gaining independence and Vietnam rising up in arms against France for its independence. In China, the Kuomintang and the Chinese Communist Party had been waging a civil war, but the Communist Party, led by Mao Zedong, came to power in October of 1949 and established the People's Republic of China. The Kuomintang, however, fled to Taiwan.

The Korean War

Though Korea was liberated from Japanese colonial control, it was divided into South and North Korea by the United States and the Soviet Union. In 1948, the Republic of Korea (South Korea) was established in the south and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (North Korea) was established in the north. In June 1950, the North Korean military crossed the 38th parallel to try and unify the Korean Peninsula, starting the **Korean War**. A United Nations force led by the US military supported South Korea, while Chinese volunteer soldiers joined North Korea. The Korean War came to an end after fierce battles

in 1953 with the signing of a cease-fire agreement.

When the Korean War started, the General Headquarters of the Allied Powers instructed the Japanese government to create the National Police Reserve (which later became the Self-Defense Forces) for maintaining law and order. In addition, the GHQ restricted labor movements and revised its democratization policy. Japan was brought into the Cold War in this way. Since the US military used Japanese bases during the Korean War and Japan received orders for the production of military supplies (**special demand**), Japan's economy was revived.

MAP: The Korean War.

Something to try:

- Give two examples in the world where a nation has been divided by the Cold War and note them on a map.
- Interview people who know about this period of history and ask them what has changed since the Cold War era. Write up a report of the interviews.

3. Japan's independence and security

Signing the peace treaty and joining the United Nations

In 1951 (Shôwa 26) the San Francisco Peace Conference was held,¹ and Japan signed the **San Francisco Peace Treaty** with the United States and 47 other nations, mostly capitalist nations.² As a result, Japan was able to regain its independence. In this treaty, Japan admitted the independence of Korea, relinquished its rights over Taiwan, the Kuril Islands, and Southern Sakhalin, and agreed to allow Okinawa and the Ogasawara Islands to remain under US administration. As for war reparations, most countries did not demand reparations, believing that Japan would not be able to afford large outlays. At the same time as this conference, Japan and America also signed the **Japan-US**

¹ Fifty-five countries were invited to the conference, but Yugoslavia, Burma (Myanmar), and India refused to attend. China and Korea were not invited. Among the countries attending the conference, the Soviet Union refused to sign the peace treaty.

² There were those in Japan who argued that it was necessary to sign a peace treaty with all countries, including the socialist states.

Security Treaty, which permitted the US military to place bases (facilities and other areas) within Japan.

Japan later signed the **Soviet-Japanese Joint Declaration** with the Soviet Union and restored diplomatic relations with the country. Japan was then able to join the United Nations and rejoin the international community.

PHOTO: Prime Minister Yoshida Shigeru signs the San Francisco Peace Treaty.

PHOTO: Japan's postwar borders. Japan's national territory was limited to Honshû, Hokkaidô, Kyûshû, Shikoku and the surrounding islands, as stipulated in the Potsdam Declaration. The four islands of the Northern Territories that the Soviet Union had occupied (Kunashiri, Etorofu, Habomai, and Shikotan) were included in this territory. The Soviet Union did not return these islands even after bilateral relations were restored in 1956. The issue remains unresolved, and Japan continues to negotiate with the Russian Federation for the islands.

GUIDE TEXT: The conflict between the US and Soviet Union played a role in the decision to hold the San Francisco Peace Conference.

GUIDE TEXT: How are Japan's territories different today from when it signed the San Francisco Peace Treaty?

The formation of new forces*

The two-party system and *anpo tôsô* (popular protests against the Japan-US Security Treaty)*

4. Development known as high economic growth

Rapid development and shifts in lifestyles*

Serious pollution problems*

5. Changes in international relations and Japan

The impact of the Vietnam War*

Japan and East Asia

Japan's relationship with East Asia shifted together with changes in US foreign policy. In 1965 (Shôwa 40), Japan signed the **Korea-Japan Treaty** and

normalized ties with the Republic of Korea. Japan still has no diplomatic relations with the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, however. In 1972, the **China-Japan Joint Communiqué** was ratified and bilateral ties were established. In 1978, the **Japan-China Peace and Friendship Treaty** was signed and the relations between the two countries were furthered.

PHOTO: Prime Minister Tanaka Kakuei visiting China. The prime minister of the time, Tanaka, visited China and signed the China-Japan Joint Communiqué which was prefaced with the statement that Japan "is keenly conscious of the responsibility for the serious damage that Japan caused in the past to the Chinese people through war, and deeply reproaches itself." Diplomatic relations with the Nationalist government in Taiwan were broken off at the same time.

The return of Okinawa and US base problems*
Japan which overcame the oil crisis*

2. JAPAN AND THE WORLD IN THE FUTURE

1. Changes in the world and Japan

The end of the Cold War and globalization*

Engaging the North-South problem*

Post-war reparations and neighboring nations

As for compensation and reparations to the countries Japan had colonized during the Pacific War, the government determined that the issue had been closed with the signing of the peace treaty. The government therefore turned down demands for personal compensation. But as the treatment of the Korean and Chinese people during the war became known, Japan was faced with the problem of its war responsibility towards these people.¹ Neighboring countries have also been critical of Japan's perceptions of the war.² With the end of the

¹ The compensation issues of women who had been sent to *ian shisetsu* [comfort stations] and Korean and Taiwanese men who had been conscripted as Japanese soldiers during the war have been taken to courts.

² In 1982, a debate arose whether Japan's military actions in the past were an "invasion" or "advance." This debate was criticized in

postwar era and the Cold War and increasing trade ties with our neighboring countries, particularly China, it has become necessary for us to become aware of Japan's position and consider what must be done to establish genuinely friendly international relations.

Something to try:

- What is the relationship between GDP and calorie intake as seen in chart 1? Write down how these are connected.
- What is the reason for the relationship? Discuss it with others.

BOX: Connections with the present: Japan in Asia

The end of the Cold War structure influenced the relationship between Japan and Asia. International economic cooperation going beyond the East-West conflict, such as in the Asian-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) forum, is increasing. There have also been instances in which Japan has been asked to increase imports from Asia for the sake of revitalizing their economies.

Exchanges are increasing culturally as well. Korea, which once banned Japanese culture, has gradually liberated imports of Japanese culture. In 2004, the sales of Japanese CDs and video games were legalized and performances by Japanese singers were held in Korea. Korean singers have also been active in Japan, and Asian movies are gaining popularity here. More and more Asian students are coming to Japanese universities and companies to learn about technology and services.

GUIDE TEXT: We can find a lot of Asian culture around us.

FIGURE: Exchange students from Japan and other Asian countries, 1998. (From *Monbushô tôkei yôran* [Education Ministry survey of statistics] and other sources)

PHOTO: Japanese *manga* have been translated into various Asian languages. Japanese culture, including *manga*, is popular around the world.

2. Returning to our own situation today

China, South Korea, and North Korea.

GUIDE TEXT: For every period in history, there are various challenges. Our ancestors have overcome them. It is our turn next. What kind of future would you like to make?

Engaging the twenty-first century

We need to consider the various problems of the contemporary world from different angles. We have inherited challenges from past political conflicts. These include the problem of how to manage and abolish the massive number of nuclear weapons produced during the Cold War and how to handle the economic gap between developed and developing nations. There are other challenges that we must go beyond the thinking of individual nations to deal with. These include the issue of maintaining international peace, as seen in the examples of international terrorism and the Iraq War, and the need for balance between economic development and protection of the natural environment.

Japan today is using its technological know-how for various international aid efforts. Examples of this are Japan's development of more environmentally friendly cars and its guidance in the construction of roads and dams in developing nations. The Kyoto Protocol, which regulates the emission of carbon dioxide in order to prevent global warming, went into effect in 2005. As globalization continues, the world is looking forward to Japan's efforts, together with those of the United Nations, to promote peace, and its contributions to areas like education and the environment.

In the meantime, there are many problems to be solved within Japan itself. Discrimination against the *Burakumin*, the Ainu people,¹ and Koreans living in Japan, as well as the creation of a society where men and women can participate equally,² are serious issues relating to basic human rights. Though the nation has become wealthy, problems of juvenile crime and domestic violence remain. In addition, Japan faces a host of new problems, including the

¹ The Law to Revive Ainu Culture was passed in 1997 (Heisei 9) to restore and revive traditional Ainu culture. With the passage of this new law, the Law to Protect the Former Indigenous People of Hokkaidô of 1899 (Meiji 32) was abolished.

² The Basic Law for a Gender-Equal Society was enacted in 1999 to enable men and women to participate equally in society with their unique qualities and talents.

acceptance of foreign workers and the nature of social welfare as the population ages and fewer children are born.

GUIDE TEXT:

“People in the past each had different lifestyles and fashions.”

“Yeah. It seems they are similar to us in some ways, and I have become more interested in history. What about you two?”

“What are we going to do after studying history? It seems there are more things we need to know.”

“I feel like there are more things I want to study.”

Towards an era of symbiosis*