

25. East Asia

Location and physical borders

= China, Mongolia, North Korea

= Japan, South Korea, Taiwan

Seas to remember: South China Sea, East China Sea, Yellow Sea, Sea of Japan, Sea of Okhotsk



Main characteristics of China

- Chinese = 1 of the oldest civilisations
- 1/5 of total world's population lives here
- isolated development of the region ↔ physical-geographic barriers and large distances from other source regions
- Beijing surroundings = central (core) region of country (and culture)
- Japan imperialism + European colonisation = destructive influence
- sphere of influence was diminished by Russian expansion to East Asia
- majority of population concentrated to eastern part (500 km from the coast)
- *communist rule* since 1949 but nowadays very slow economic liberalization, but only in chosen areas
- *communist cultural revolution* = thousands of intelligence killed
- disorder everywhere, big problems with transportation (transport infrastructure)

Core areas of China

- *Shen Zhen* = nearby Hong Kong => open market (free zone) for foreign investments = 1/3 of FDI coming to China located here
- *SE* = monsoonal climate (>1000 mm of annual rainfall) => highly used for agriculture

Other Chinese regions

- *NE* = Heilongjiang
- *N* = Inner Mongolia
- *S* = strongly agricultural region
- *W* = Xizang (Tibet) – different culture (Lamaism)



Main characteristics of Japan

= 1 of the most economically developed countries

- 4 main islands (Honshu, Kyushu, Shikoku, Hokkaido) + Ryukyu islands
- mountainous islands, lot of volcanoes (Mt. Fujisan)
- high temperature extremes (Hokkaido vs. Kyushu + influence of ocean currents)
- 1 of the most densely populated regions of the world (regions of >300 inh./km²)
- disadvantageous location (far from trade partner countries)
- import of raw materials \Leftrightarrow small own sources and export of products
- big role in Asian development, highly developed regional specialization
- high modernization (flexible specialization of SME, quick innovation, model of sub-supplies)
- the most effective and the most productive agriculture in Asia \Rightarrow very intensive agriculture, remaining agricultural products are imported from abroad \Leftrightarrow cheaper to import, e.g. wheat from South Korea
- important fishing companies (sea-grasses, whales, molluscs)
- order in rules of the system, very intensive traffic (transport) connection
- former colonists (western Pacific), during WWII = occupation of Korean peninsula and western Pacific Ocean
- symbiosis between technical development and conservation (keeping) of old cultures \Rightarrow highly cultural nation

Core areas of Japan islands

- *Gulf of Tokyo* = Kantó lowland, Tokkaido megalopolis (Tokyo \rightarrow Yokohama – most important harbour)
- *Kyoto* (former Japanese capital) + *Kobe* (important harbour) + *Osaka*
- *north part of Kyushu island* = Kitakyushu and Shimonoseki



South Korea

= very similar to Japanese economic model (highly developed economy) – expanding by cooperation

= one of “Asian economic tigers” (besides Taiwan, Singapore, Hong Kong)

Agriculture: very intensive and effective (rice 2-3x per year), export of vegetables and wheat to Japan

Industries: automobile, high-technology => South Korea was 11 of the biggest investors to SE Asia

= hate to Japanese ⇔ occupation for 30yrs. till WWII

= artificial land beneath the airport of Seoul



North Korea

= mountainous country, small arable areas => degradation of soils ⇔ bad farming methods

= large coal and iron ore reserves but few oil and natural gas reserves.

= isolated country, the only connection with outer world through Beijing ⇔ *communist regime* (besides Cuba, Mongolia and China)

= “Stalinist type of cult”

Industries: armament, iron and steel (smelting) industry

Agriculture: growing of rice and wheat mostly



Korean conflict

= heavy battles during 1950s resulted in stable, well-guarded border (both sides). **1953** = definitive separation of the 2 countries =>

- no post or other communication between North and South Korea for 50 yrs.
- no buildings situated in the distance of 5 km on North Korean side of the border
- no trade between the 2 countries
- very high political tension between the 2 Koreas

Religion

- South Koreans = most tolerant (*Catholics* + *Protestant*)
- *Shintoism* = Japan
- *Confucianism*, old Chinese traditions
- Tibet = specific culture = *Buddhism* => *Lamaism*