Lesson 4

MAIN IDEAS

1 **Culture** Korea was independent for much of its history, but it adopted many elements of the culture of China.

2 **Government** Vietnam was one of several small kingdoms that developed on the mainland of Southeast Asia in the shadow of China.

3 **Culture** The Khmer Empire prospered between two powerful neighbors, China and India.

TAKING NOTES

Reading Skill: Comparing and Contrasting

Comparing and contrasting involves finding similarities and differences between two or more things in order to better understand them. Use a chart like this one to compare and contrast accomplishments of the kingdoms discussed in this lesson.

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<th>Korea</th>
<th>Vietnamese Kingdoms</th>
<th>Khmer Empire</th>
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 Ancient Korean Map This Korean map of the world dates from the 17th century. It was based on a Chinese map. The enlarged area shows what Koreans believed to be East Asia.

CALIFORNIA STANDARDS

7.3.1 Describe the reunification of China under the Tang Dynasty and reasons for the spread of Buddhism in Tang China, Korea, and Japan.

**CST 1** Students explain how major events are related to one another in time.

**HI 1** Students explain the central issues and problems from the past, placing people and events in a matrix of time and place.

**HI 2** Students understand and distinguish cause, effect, sequence, and correlation in historical events, including the long- and short-term causal relations.
Korea and Southeast Asia

Build on What You Know  As you read earlier in this chapter, Japan’s development was significantly influenced by China. Japan was not alone, though, in feeling the influence of more powerful neighbors. Smaller kingdoms in Korea and Southeast Asia rose in the shadow of China to the north and India to the west.

An Independent Korea

ESSENTIAL QUESTION Why did Korea adopt many elements of the culture of China?

Korea is one of the world’s oldest nations. According to legend, it was founded in the 2300s B.C.E. Korea developed independently of China but was influenced by Chinese culture. Throughout their history, the Koreans borrowed Chinese practices and ideas. Like Japan, they adapted them to meet their own needs.

Geography of Korea  Korea is a peninsula. It extends from northern China, on the Asian mainland. (See map on page 276.) Only a river separates Korea from its much larger neighbor to the north. So movement between the two countries has been easy throughout history. Korea is also close to the islands of Japan. Chinese culture sometimes spread to Japan by way of Korea.
Founding Korean Kingdoms  Korea’s first inhabitants were probably nomads from the north. They lived in clans. In 108 B.C., Chinese of the Han Dynasty invaded northern Korea. The Koreans resisted and won back most of the lost territory by 75 B.C. During the next 700 years, three main kingdoms formed in Korea. These kingdoms fought wars for supremacy of the Korean peninsula.

The Silla kingdom in the southeast conquered the other two kingdoms during the 600s. As it did, it also drove out the remaining Chinese. Silla united Korea for the first time. But soon Silla nobles were fighting among themselves for power. Peasants, too, rebelled. These conflicts caused Silla to collapse in 935. A kingdom called Koryo replaced it. The name Korea evolved from this kingdom’s name.

China Influences Korea  The Koryo rulers modeled their government after China’s. Koreans also learned rice cultivation, papermaking, and printing from the Chinese. In addition, they adapted Chinese artistic styles, including a method for making pottery. In fact, Korea became famous for its celadon (SEHL•uh•DAHN), pottery that has a bluish-green glaze. (See photograph on page 279.) Koreans also learned about and adopted two belief systems from China: Confucianism and Buddhism. Buddhism was adopted first by the nobles and later by the common people. It then spread from Korea to Japan.
Resisting Foreign Invaders  Korea remained united and independent for centuries. But it had to struggle to be free of foreign control. In the 1200s, the Mongol conquerors of China invaded the kingdom. They controlled Korea until their empire in China collapsed in the late 1300s. In 1392, the powerful Yi family established a new Korean dynasty called the Choson Dynasty. It turned back an invading army from Japan in the late 1500s. The Choson Dynasty ruled Korea for more than 500 years.

**Review**  What influences shaped Korea’s development?

Vietnamese Kingdoms

**Essential Question**  What role did China play in the development of Vietnamese kingdoms?

Mountains separate the mainland peninsula of Southeast Asia from China to the north. (See map on pages 246–247.) So movement between the two regions was mostly by sea or along coastal plains. Chinese soldiers, merchants, and missionaries followed these routes as they brought China’s culture to Vietnam and other regions.

The Kingdom of the Viets  The Viets were a people who lived just south of China in what is now Vietnam. In 111 B.C., the Chinese Empire conquered their kingdom, called Nam Viet. At first, China’s rule was not harsh. Mostly, Chinese rulers wanted to use the region’s ports on the South China Sea. Chinese trading ships needed places to stop on the way to and from India and the islands of Southeast Asia.

Soon, though, China’s rulers began to force the Vietnamese to adopt their culture. For example, they required them to speak Chinese and to wear Chinese clothes. They also forced them to follow the principles of Confucianism and Daoism. But many Vietnamese resisted these efforts.

Driving Out the Chinese  In A.D. 40, Trung Trac, a noblewoman whose husband had been killed by the Chinese, and her sister, Trung Nhi, led a rebellion against China’s rule. Their forces were successful at first but were later overpowered. The Vietnamese rebelled several times during the next few centuries. But at the same time, they continued to adopt elements of Chinese culture, including Buddhism. In the 900s, China’s Tang Dynasty weakened, and the Vietnamese broke free.

The Trung Sisters  The Trung sisters ruled briefly as co-queens after they drove out the Chinese. ▼
Dai Viet In 939, the Vietnamese established an independent kingdom called Dai Viet. In the 1200s, Mongols who had conquered China attacked Dai Viet. Three times, the Vietnamese turned back the invaders. But the fighting left the kingdom weakened. In 1407, Chinese soldiers of the Ming Dynasty invaded the kingdom. The Vietnamese eventually drove them out in 1428 and returned to ruling themselves. Dai Viet then strengthened its position by seizing Champa, a rival kingdom to the south.

**REVIEW** How was Vietnam shaped by outside influences?

**The Khmer Empire**

**ESSENTIAL QUESTION** How was the Khmer Empire able to prosper between two powerful neighbors?

The most powerful and longest-lasting kingdom on the mainland of Southeast Asia was the **Khmer Empire**. It was centered in what is today Cambodia. (See map on page 247.) The culture of Khmer was significantly influenced by its western neighbor India, as well as by its northern neighbor China.

**The Khmers** A people known as the Khmers established a kingdom on the mainland peninsula in the 500s. It prospered mainly because of its successful cultivation of rice. Peasant farmers built excellent irrigation systems to help them grow rice. They also developed better seeds that may have allowed them to grow three crops a year.

The Khmers learned rice farming from the Chinese. But India had a stronger cultural influence on the Khmers. They took ideas about rule by a god-king, a writing system, and forms of religion—Hinduism and Buddhism—from India.
Angkor Era In the late 800s, the Khmer ruler began to build a new capital at Angkor. Several temples were constructed here. The most famous formed a complex known as Angkor Wat, built in the 1100s. It still exists and covers nearly one square mile. It is the largest religious structure in the world. The temples honored the Hindu god Vishnu. Buddhist statues were added later.

The Khmer Empire reached its peak in the 1200s. It declined under attack from neighboring empires. In 1431, Angkor fell to the Thais, a people from what is now Thailand.

**REVIEW** How did the Khmers adapt to outside influences?

**Lesson Summary**

- Korea developed independently from China but borrowed and adapted many aspects of its culture.
- Vietnam was invaded and influenced by China for much of its history.
- The Khmer Empire was influenced by India.

**Why It Matters Now...**

China and India are the two most populous nations in the world, with more than one billion people each. They remain powerful cultural influences on their Asian neighbors and countries around the globe.