



East Asian History Notes

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Preface

How To Use the Notes

These notes are designed to help teachers and students in understanding the complex events that took place in East Asia 1870-1952. They can be used in conjunction with *East Asian History 1870-1952* by the same author or independently for revision.

The material is divided into ten chapters, following the order of topics specified for the Hong Kong Certificate of Education Examination History paper. Each chapter is divided into major topics, under which are sub-topics. Below the sub-topics, information is presented in note form. The major topics provide the students with an overview of events of the time, enabling them to understand detailed happenings as a part of an era, rather than as isolated facts merely to be memorized. The sub-topics and notes are designed to help students extract the important information from the mass of material they must study in order to prepare themselves for the examination.

The students, therefore, should look through all the major topics within a chapter, then the sub-topics within each major topic, before proceeding to study the detailed notes.

Questions have been provided at the end of each chapter to help the student check if they have understood the information. At the end of the book, there is a section teaching them how to answer essay questions. It is advisable to pay careful attention to that section, perhaps after the students have studied the information covered in the sample questions.

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1 The Sino-Japanese War 1894-95

During the final decade of the 19th century, Japan succeeded in becoming the strongest power in East Asia by defeating China in the Sino-Japanese War over the control of Korea.

A China after the Opium War

1 Domestic rebellions

- a China was defeated by Britain in the Opium War.
- b The Chinese government made concessions to foreigners in the Treaty of Nanking, signed at the end of the war (1842).
- c There were widespread rebellions during the second half of the century. The most important of these was the Taiping Rebellion.
- d The rebellions destroyed the Chinese economy which was mostly based on agriculture.

2 Foreign pressures

- a Weaknesses shown by the Qing government led to more foreign demands.
- b Japan began to force China to give up her traditional control over Korea.

3 Self-strengthening

- a A number of officials in China began to demand that the government adopt reforms.
- b The Self-strengthening Movement was a programme adopted primarily to modernize China's armed forces.
- c As there was not enough money or other kinds of support, this reform programme did not succeed in what it set out to do.

4 Management of foreign affairs

- a The *Zongli yamen* was established in 1861 to handle foreign affairs

of the Chinese Empire.

- b Prince Gong headed the *Zongli yamen* until 1870.
- c Under Prince Gong, the *Zongli yamen* also managed a number of modernization projects.

5 Rise of Li Hongzhang

- a Li Hongzhang became the most important man in Chinese foreign affairs after 1870.
- b Among Li's policies were establishment of official diplomatic relations with Japan in 1871 and the opening of Korea in the 1880s.
- c Li also conducted negotiations with the French over Vietnam in 1884 and peace with Japan after the Sino-Japanese War in 1895.

B Japan's challenges to Chinese supremacy in East Asia

- 1 As Japan became industrialized, she began to look to Korea, the Liuqiu Islands and Taiwan for raw materials as well as markets for her manufactured goods.
- 2 In the past, these areas were under the control of the Chinese Empire.
- 3 As China became weaker, Japan began to expand her influences over these areas.
- 4 Japan began her expansion by challenging Chinese supremacy in Korea.

C Korea: focus of Sino-Japanese rivalry

1 Traditional relationship between China and Korea

- a Since the Tang dynasty, Korea had been a tribute state of the Chinese Empire.
- b This meant that the Korean ruler governed his own country, but sent tributes to the Chinese emperor from time to time in order to trade.
- c When Korea was threatened, such as when Japan invaded Korea in 1592, the Chinese emperor sent troops to aid the Korean king.

2 Isolation of Korea

- a Western Christian missionaries and traders began to enter Korea after 1635.
- b After 1786 when Christianity was banned in Korea, Korea became isolated from the outside world.
- c It came to be known as the 'Hermit Kingdom'.

3 Japanese expedition to Korea (1875)

- a After the Meiji Restoration in 1868, the Japanese tried to establish trade and relations with Korea.
- b The *Taewongon*, regent of the young King Kojong, was anti-Japanese.
- c In 1875, Japanese gun-boats were sent to the Korean coast.
- d Meanwhile, the Chinese government insisted that Korea was a self-governing nation in domestic and foreign affairs.
- e The Japanese took this to mean that China would not protect Korea against the Japanese.

4 Treaty of Kanghwa (1876) and Japanese advances in Korea

The visit of the Japanese gun-boats and Chinese refusal to protect Korea meant that Korea had to submit to Japanese demands. A treaty was signed between the two countries. The terms included:

- a Three Korean ports, Pusan, Inchon (Chemulpo) and Wosan, were opened to Japanese trade.
- b Japan had extra-territoriality in these ports.
- c Japanese ships were to have the right to survey the Korean coast.
- d Diplomatic relations were established between Korea and Japan.
- e Japan declared Korea an independent state.

5 Importance of the Treaty of Kanghwa

- a This treaty showed that China was too weak to protect Korea against Japanese demands. It was the first step for Japanese expansion into East Asia.
- b After this, Japan began to interfere in Korean affairs openly.

6 Opening of Korea to the west

- a After Li Hongzhang took over control of foreign affairs of China, he pressured the Korean court to negotiate treaties with western powers. He hoped that this would weaken Japanese influences in Korea.
- b During the 1880s, Korea signed treaties with the United States, Britain, France, Germany, Italy and Russia, resulting in the exchange of diplomats and trade.
- c Thus, Korea was opened to the west.

D Sino-Japanese rivalry in Korea

1 Re-organization of the Korean army by pro-Japanese forces

- a In 1882 King Kojong took over the Korean government.
- b The *Taewongon*, the regent, who was pro-Chinese, retired.
- c Kojong's wife, Queen Min, was pro-Japanese.
- d She reformed the army by dismissing pro-Chinese officers and hiring Japanese officers in their places.

2 Insurrection of 1882

The dismissed pro-Chinese officers of the old army, with the support of the *Taewongon*, revolted by attacking the palace and the Japanese legation in Seoul, killing many Japanese officers.

3 Chinese reactions to the insurrection of 1882

China sent troops to Korea, capturing the *Taewongon* and taking him into exile in China.

4 Japanese reactions to the insurrection of 1882

Japan also sent troops into Korea. With Japanese troops in the country, Korea was forced to sign the Treaty of Chemulpo.

5 Treaty of Chemulpo

- a China agreed to keep the *Taewongon* imprisoned in China.
- b Korea agreed to pay Japan an indemnity of US\$50,000 for the Japanese officers killed during the insurrection; and \$500,000 to the Japanese government.
- c Korea was to send a mission of apology to Tokyo.
- d Korea was to permit Japan to station troops in Seoul to protect her legation.

6 Importance of this treaty

- a The anti-Japanese *Taewongon*, imprisoned in China, was prevented from influencing Korean policies.
- b By permitting Japanese troops to remain in Seoul, Korea was open to further Japanese demands.

7 Li Hongzhang's Korean policies after 1882

After 1882 Li began to follow a policy to strengthen China's position in Korea.

- a A commercial treaty was signed between China and Korea, giving China extra-territoriality in Korea.

- b Large loans were given to the Korean government.
- c A Chinese agent was appointed to supervise Korean trade.
- d Chinese troops remained in Korea under the command of Yuan Shikai.

8 Insurrection of 1884

- a Yuan Shikai dominated Korean affairs from 1882 to 1884.
- b Queen Min, meanwhile, became pro-Chinese and anti-Japanese.
- c In 1884, while China was busy in the war with France over Vietnam, pro-Japanese Koreans under Kim Ok-kyun, with the help of Japanese troops in Seoul, attacked the palace.
- d Yuan's troops rescued the king. This meant that Chinese troops were fighting Japanese troops in Korea.
- e The Japanese legation was burned.
- f Kim Ok-kyun fled to Japan.

9 Importance of 1884 insurrection

Japan's role in starting this insurrection against the king aroused anti-Japanese feelings throughout Korea. Pro-Japanese officials had to keep quiet for the time being.

10 Result of the insurrection – the Li-Ito Convention (1885)

Ito Hirobumi, a leading Japanese official, met Li Hongzhang in Tianjin to discuss Korea. They signed the Li-Ito Convention. Its terms were:

- a China and Japan agreed to withdraw their troops from Korea within four months.
- b Neither country would train Korean troops, but would recommend a third country to do so.
- c China would inform Japan in advance if she should decide to send troops to Korea in the future.
- d Japan would inform China in advance if she should decide to send troops to Korea in the future.

11 Importance of the Li-Ito Convention

- a This agreement did away with China's exclusive role as protector of Korea.
- b It also confirmed Japan's right to send troops to Korea.
- c Later on, when both countries sent troops to Korea at the same time, the result was the Sino-Japanese War.

E International politics in Korea during the 1880s

1 Russia

In 1885 Russia took the ice-free Port Lazareff on the northeastern coast of Korea.

2 Britain

Britain took Port Hamilton on the southern tip of the Korean peninsula.

3 Japan

Japan encouraged China to strengthen her control over Korea, hoping that this would keep other foreign powers from expanding further into Korea. So that when the time came for Japan to take over Korea, the only country she would have to fight would be China.

4 China

Li Hongzhang fell into this trap. He forgot that he had adopted a policy earlier to curb Japanese expansion by allowing western nations into Korea.

a He returned the *Taewongon* to Korea to please the Korean conservatives.

b He sent Yuan Shikai to be China's resident diplomat in Seoul.

c Yuan quickly became the most powerful man in Korea.

5 Importance of this temporary Sino-Japanese truce in Korea

This lull in Sino-Japanese conflict in Korea gave Japan a chance to concentrate on her economic and military modernization programmes, and to prepare her armed forces for further expansion into East Asia.

F The Sino-Japanese War (1894-95)

1 Events leading to the war

a Assassination of Kim Ok-kyun (March 1894)

i In March 1894, Kim Ok-kyun, who had led the insurrection of 1884, was persuaded to leave Japan where he had been in exile.

ii While his ship was in Shanghai, Kim was assassinated.

iii The Korean government rewarded the assassin.

iv The Japanese government chose to see this incident as an insult to Japan. In addition to staging anti-Korean and anti-Chinese riots in Japan, the Japanese government encouraged a

Korean sect to stage an uprising against the Korean government in Korea.

b The Tonghak Insurrection (1894)

- i The *Tonghak*, a religious sect, became anti-government when it was persecuted.
- ii Encouraged by the Japanese, the sect staged an uprising.
- iii Yuan Shikai sent for Chinese troops.
- iv Under the Li-Ito Convention, China had to inform Japan before Chinese troops could be sent into Korea.
- v Japan sent an even larger force consisting of 8,000 soldiers.
- vi Although the Korean government had already put down the insurrection, the Chinese and the Japanese forces stayed.

2 Outbreak of the war

- a Li Hongzhang tried to find a diplomatic solution. Russia and Britain were warned to stay out of it. Li delayed China's military preparations while diplomats argued.
- b Yuan sent for reinforcements from Beijing. The Japanese navy sank the ship carrying Chinese troops to Korea on 25 July 1894.
- c On 1 August 1894, war was declared between China and Japan.

3 The fighting

- a Land: On land, the Japanese army defeated Li Hongzhang's Huai Army at P'yongyang.
- b Sea: The modern Japanese navy, though smaller, defeated Li's Beiyang Fleet. The Chinese ships proved to be heavy, unwieldy and slow.

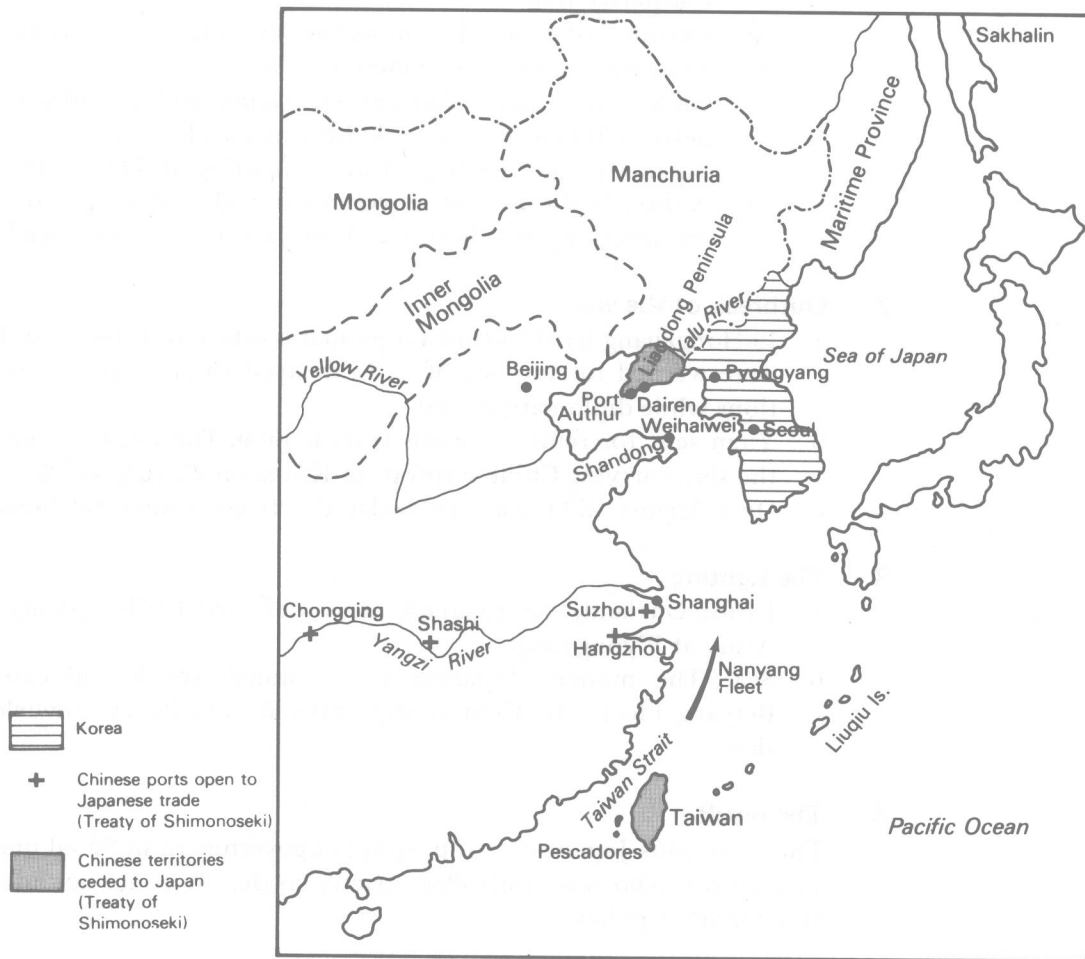
4 The result

The victorious Japanese set up a puppet government in Seoul under the *Taewongon* who was controlled strictly so that he could not adopt any anti-Japanese policy.

G The peace settlement: Treaty of Shimonoseki (April 1895)

- 1 Korea was recognized by both China and Japan as an independent nation.
- 2 China was to pay Japan an indemnity of 200 million taels of silver.
- 3 Taiwan, the Pescadores (Penghu Islands) and Liaodong Peninsula were to be ceded by China to Japan.

- 4 Four more Chinese ports were to be opened to the Japanese for trade: Chongqing, Suzhou, Hangzhou and Shashi.
- 5 Japanese nationals gained the right to open factories in China.



The Sino-Japanese War 1894-95

H Causes of China's defeat

- 1 The lack of unity of authority in China was the main reason for her defeat. Government officials did not work together. Only forces under Li's direct control fought in the war.
- 2 On the other hand, Japan in 1894 was a modern nation with a strong

central government, sound economy, efficient army and navy. The Japanese people supported their government in its policy of expansion.

- 3 Widespread corruption in China made her armed forces useless. Funds for the navy were used to construct the Summer Palace. The old-fashioned fleet could not fight a modern war.
- 4 Li did not understand power politics. He had not realized that Russia was not planning to come to China's aid.

I Results of the war

1 Japan became the most powerful nation in East Asia

- a With Taiwan in the south and Korea in the north, Japan had in her hands bases for future advances onto the China mainland.
- b Japanese victories paved the way for her challenge to Russia for control over Manchuria.
- c Japanese victories also encouraged her policies of military expansion.

2 China's defeat was disastrous for the Qing dynasty

- a Public display of China's weaknesses led to an era of foreign imperialist advances.
- b Foreigners built railroads, opened mines, established factories, opened banks, and ran all kinds of organizations at the expense of the Chinese Empire and Chinese people.
- c Within the next 20 years, the Qing dynasty was to fall. A Chinese Republic was to be founded under the leadership of Sun Yat-sen.

Important Dates

1635	European Christian missionaries began to enter Korea.
1786	Christianity banned in Korea; beginning of Korean isolation.
1842	Treaty of Nanking between Britain and China, ending the Opium War.
1861	<i>Zongli yamen</i> founded to handle Chinese foreign relations.

- 1871** Formal diplomatic relations between China and Japan established.
- 1875** Japanese expedition to Korea, resulting in Treaty of Kanghwa.
- 1876** Treaty of Kanghwa.
- 1882** Kojong became king of Korea.
Insurrection of 1882 against pro-Japanese policies of Queen Min.
- 1882** Treaty of Chemulpo.
- 1882-84** Yuan Shikai dominated Korean affairs.
- 1884** Insurrection of 1884 led by pro-Japanese Kim Ok-kyun.
- 1885** Li-Ito Convention.
Russia took Port Lazereff on Korean coast.
Britain occupied Port Hamilton on Korean coast.
- 1894** Assassination of Kim Ok-kyun in Shanghai.
Tonghak Insurrection.
Sino-Japanese War began.
- 1895** Treaty of Shimonoseki ending Sino-Japanese War.

Questions

- 1 What role did Li Hongzhang play in handling Chinese foreign affairs after 1870?
- 2 How did Chinese and Japanese interests in Korea lead to war between the two countries in 1894? Why did China lose the war?
- 3 How did Japanese victory in Korea make it possible for her to expand her influences in East Asia?

2 China from the reform movement of 1898 to the revolution of 1911

After China's defeat in the Sino-Japanese War, it was clear that the country was in need of major reforms. In 1898 a series of reforms was introduced by the Emperor Guangxu in June. By September, however, they were brought to an end by the Empress Dowager who again took over control of the government. Reforms introduced by the Empress Dowager and her officials were to be 'too little and too late'. The Chinese Empire came to an end when the revolution of 1911 established the Chinese Republic in its place.

A Background of the reform movement of 1898

1 Failure of the Self-strengthening Movement

- a This movement aimed to modernize the Chinese army by adopting western weapons and technology.
- b A military college was founded at Tianjin.
- c Students were sent to study military science in Europe.
- d Arsenals and shipyards were built along the coast.
- e Telegraph lines and railroads were built to modernize communication and transportation in China.
- f China's defeat by Japan in 1894-95 showed that this movement had neither succeeded in creating an effective military force nor in bringing China closer to the modern age in other respects.
- g Why did this movement fail? Neither Chinese officials in the provinces nor the Chinese people were ready to accept some of the changes. They did not support this movement. Without their support, the programmes could not be carried out.

2 Demands by western-trained young intellectuals for reform

- a After the Opium War, American and British missionaries founded schools and universities in China to introduce western knowledge and culture to Chinese youths.
- b Libraries and museums were opened; newspapers and magazines

- were printed to spread information and knowledge.
- c Among Chinese leaders who read these publications were Prince Gong, Li Hongzhang, Kang Youwei and Liang Qichao.

3 Effects of China's defeat in the Sino-Japanese War

- a The Self-strengthening Movement was discredited.
- b Western powers increased their demands on Chinese government to grant them further concessions.

B The reformers: Kang Youwei and Liang Qichao

1 Kang's background

- a Kang Youwei came from a well-to-do family in Guangdong. He was educated in the Confucian classics.
- b Kang visited Shanghai and Hong Kong when he was in his twenties. He was impressed by the orderliness and efficiency of these cities administered by foreigners.
- c Thereafter, he began to read western works in translation and his thinking began to show western influence.

2 Kang's ideas

- a In his book, *A Study of Confucius on Reform*, Kang insisted that Confucius favoured change. All true Confucians, therefore, must be prepared to make changes in order to solve China's problems.
- b Changes proposed by Kang in his writings were radical, including elimination of the state and marriages, and cremation of the dead.
- c His works were banned by the Qing government.

3 Kang's influences

- a Scholars attracted to Kang's ideas included Liang Qichao who became Kang's chief colleague in carrying out the reforms in 1898.
- b In 1895, Kang and Liang organized candidates for metropolitan examinations in Beijing to protest against the humiliating terms of the Treaty of Shimonoseki.
- c They signed a 10,000 word petition to the emperor, but the emperor never saw it.
- d Importance of this petition: it established Kang's reputation as a radical reformer.

4 Kang proposed a programme for reform to Emperor Guangxu

- a Kang realized that he must get the emperor to support his ideas.