A HISTORY OF E A S T A S I A

From the Origina of Civilization to the Twenty-First Century

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A History of East Asia From the Origins of Civilization to the Twenty-First Century

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A History of East Asia

Charles Holcombe begins his extraordinarily ambitious book by asking the question: What is East Asia? In the modern age, many of the features that made the region – now defined as including China, Japan, and Korea – distinct have been submerged by the effects of revolution, politics, or globalization. Yet as an ancient civilization, the region had both a historical and a cultural coherence. It shared, for example, a Confucian heritage, some common approaches to Buddhism, a writing system that is deeply imbued with ideas and meaning, and many political and institutional traditions. This shared past and the interconnections among three distinct yet related societies are at the heart of this book, which traces the story of East Asia from the dawn of history to the early twenty-first century. Charles Holcombe is an experienced and sure-footed guide who encapsulates, in a fast-moving and colorful narrative, the vicissitudes and glories of one of the greatest civilizations on earth.

Charles Holcombe is Professor of History at the University of Northern Iowa. His publications include *The Genesis of East Asia*, 221 B.C.—A.D. 907 (2001) and In the Shadow of the Han: Literati Thought and Society at the Start of the Southern Dynasties (1994).

Pronunciation Guide

(Where not indicated otherwise, pronunciations are approximately as might be expected by American English speakers.)

Chinese

East Asians normally do not use the Roman alphabet, but for the purpose of transcribing the sounds of East Asian words in our alphabet, a number of different spelling systems have been devised. For Mandarin Chinese, a spelling system called *pinyin* is increasingly standard. In pinyin, the vowels and diphthongs (two vowels that combine to form a single syllable) of Mandarin are pronounced approximately as follows:

```
a as in ah
ai like the igh in sigh or high
ao like the ow in how now brown cow
e like the u in but
ei like the ay in May day
i as in police or like the ee in feet – except in the combinations chi (where it sounds more like the chi in chirp), ci (where it sounds more like the si in popsicle), ri (where it sounds more like the ur in urban), shi (where it sounds more like the shou in should), si (where it sounds more like the si in sibling), zhi (where it sounds more like the Ge in German), and zi (where it sounds more like the zi in ziggurat)
o like the ou in ought
ou like oh, or the o in Oklahoma
u like the o in who or the oo in hoot
```

Some exceptional combinations follow:

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ui sounds more like oo-eigh rather than oo-ee yan sounds like yen (rhymes with Zen) rather than yahn
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-ian (in such words as bian, lian, nian, etc.) sounds like -ee-en (as in Zen) rather than -ee-ahn

yi sounds no different from a solitary i (as in police) – in other words, the i sound in isolation, or at the beginning of a word, is by convention spelled yi

A few unusual consonants in pinyin follow:

- c sounds like the ts in the Russian title Tsar (the word cui therefore sounds like ts-oo-eigh, pronounced together quickly)
- q sounds like the **ch** in **ch**ance (*Qin* therefore sounds like **cheen**)
- x sounds like **hs** or the **s** in **s**ee (*Xia* therefore sounds like **hs-ee-ah**, pronounced together quickly)
- zh sounds like the j in jay (zhou therefore sounds just like the familiar English name Joe)

Each Chinese syllable also always has a distinct tone, which is not, however, normally indicated in writing and therefore cannot be guessed from the spelling.

There are also a number of alternate Chinese spelling systems still in circulation (although they are not used in this book) and several old, irregular spellings (and associated pronunciations) that have become conventionally established in English usage such as Peking for Beijing, Canton for Guangzhou, Sun Yat-sen for the man more commonly known in Mandarin as Sun Zhongshan, and Chiang Kai-shek for Jiang Jieshi.

Japanese

The vowels and diphthongs in Japanese are pronounced approximately as follows:

a as in ah

ai like the igh in sigh or high

e as in ten

ei like the ay in May day

i as in police

o as in oh, or the o in Oklahoma

 \bar{o} (with a macron) is pronounced just like o but is sustained for twice the duration

u is like the o in who or the oo in hoot

 \bar{u} (with a macron) is pronounced just like u but is sustained for twice the duration

When other vowels appear next to each other in Japanese, they are each pronounced separately rather than combined into a single-syllable diphthong. For example, ii is pronounced **ee-ee**.

After an initial s, the u in Japanese is often also nearly silent. Sukiyaki, for example, sounds more like s'kiyaki.

Korean

The vowels and diphthongs in Korean are pronounced approximately as follows:

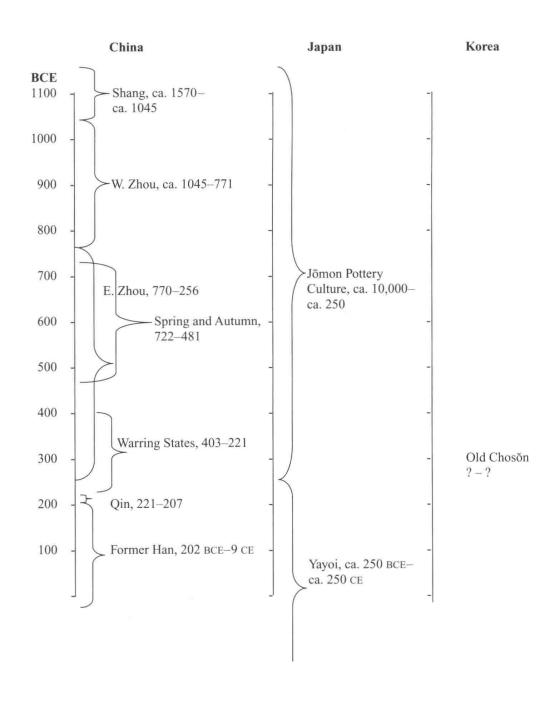
a as in ah

ae like the a in hat

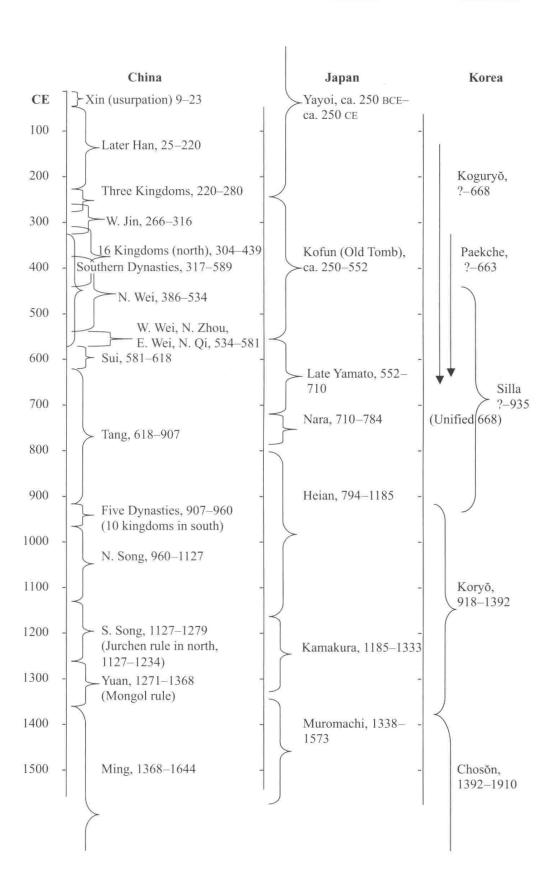
```
e as in ten
i as in police
o like the o in orbit
ŏ like the au in caught
u like the o in who or the oo in hoot
ŭ like the u in put
ŭ like we
```

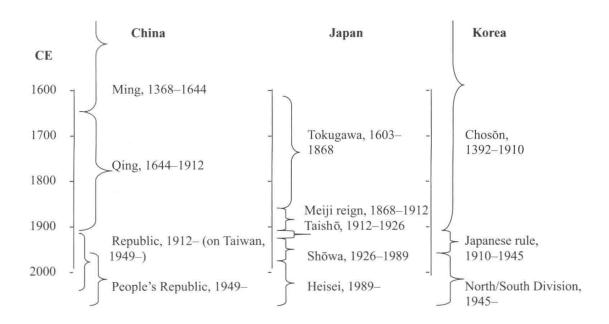
Note also that in Korean pronunciation, the consonant pairs ch/j, k/g, p/b, r/l, s/sh, and t/d are not necessarily clearly distinguished (technically, in one widely used spelling system, they are distinguished with the aid of an apostrophe, e.g., **ch'** represents the English **ch** sound and **ch** the English **j** sound, with tch, kk, pp, ss, and tt indicating further subtle shades of difference). Chosŏn, for example, therefore sometimes appears spelled as Joseon (with the \check{o} sound being represented by eo), Koguryŏ as Goguryeo, Paekche as Baekje, and Silla as Shilla.

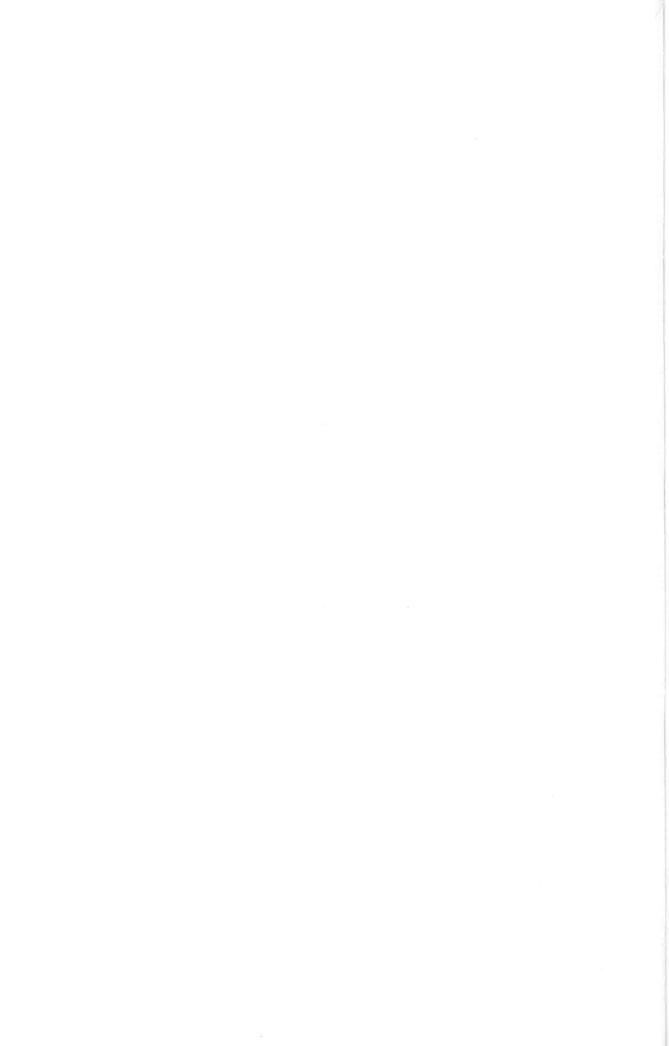
Timeline: Dynasties and Major Historical Periods



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Glossary

Altaic A major, somewhat hypothetical north Eurasian language

family, possibly including the Turkic, Mongolic, Manchu,

Japanese, Korean, and other languages

Amaterasu

The Japanese sun goddess

Annam

A premodern name for Vietnam

Bakufu

The military "tent government" of the Japanese shōguns An altruistic enlightened Buddhist being (Sanskrit)

Bodhisattva Bushi

A Japanese "military gentleman," or samurai

Chaebŏl

A post-World War II South Korean conglomerate (written with

the same two Chinese characters as the pre-World War II

Japanese word zaibatsu)

Chanoyu

The Japanese tea ceremony

Chosŏn

Korea

Comintern

The Communist International, an organization based in

Moscow from 1919 to 1943 (English abbreviation)

Daimyō

"Great name": the lord of a regional domain in late premodern

Japan

Dao Tong

The Neo-Confucian "Transmission of the Way" (in Chinese)

Dhāranī

A Buddhist magical formula (Sanskrit)

Enka Falun Gong A popular sentimental modern Japanese musical style A new "traditional" Chinese religion, founded in 1992 and

currently banned in the People's Republic of China

Guandong

Chinese for "East of the Passes," with reference to

early-twentieth-century Japanese military activity, usually referring to Manchuria (and frequently spelled "Kwantung" in

older publications)

Guanzhong

The region "Within the Passes": a Chinese geographical area

roughly corresponding to the modern Shaanxi Province

Guomindang

The Chinese Nationalist Party, alternatively spelled

"Kuo-Min-Tang" in the older Wade-Giles spelling system (and

abbreviated either GMD or KMT)

Guoyu The Chinese National Language, or Mandarin

Hakka "Guest Families" (Mandarin: Kejia): a Chinese subethnic group

Han'guk "The Country of the Han": Korea

Han'gŭl The Korean alphabet

Hanzi Chinese characters or written symbols

Hiragana A Japanese syllabary or set of phonetic written symbols

representing complete syllables

Hu A generic Chinese name for northern non-Chinese peoples,

used especially during the Age of Division

Huangdi The Chinese term for emperor

Huaxia China

Hwarang "Flower Youths": aristocratic young warriors in Silla (Korea) Jinshi "Presented Scholar": the highest degree in the late imperial

Chinese examination system

Juche The modern North Korean ideology of self-reliance

Junzi Literally the "son of a Lord" but used by Confucius to refer to

anyone who behaved as a proper gentleman (in Chinese)

Kami Japanese gods or spirits

Kantō Japanese for "East of the Passes," referring to the largest

Japanese agricultural plain in the vicinity of modern Tōkyō

Katakana A Japanese syllabary or set of phonetic written symbols

representing complete syllables - now chiefly used to write

Western loanwords

Keigo The Japanese "respect language"

Keiretsu Post-World War II Japanese enterprise groups Kokutai Pre-World War II Japan's "national polity" Kolp'um Aristocratic "bone rank" in Silla (Korea)

Kuo-Min-Tang The Chinese Nationalist Party, alternatively spelled

"Guomindang" in pinyin (and abbreviated either GMD or

KMT)

Kwantung Chinese for "East of the Passes," with reference to

early-twentieth-century Japanese military activity, usually referring to Manchuria (and now spelled "Guandong" in

oinyin)

Li "Courtesy," "propriety," "rites," or "ceremony" (in Chinese)
Li The organizing "principle" or "principles" for *qi*, or "matter,"

in Neo-Confucian philosophy (in Chinese) (note: this word li is written with an entirely different character from the preceding

li, meaning "courtesy")

Logograph A nonphonetic written symbol, such as a Chinese character,

used to represent a word in a particular language (a newly

coined English term)

Maripkan Early native Korean royal title

Minzu The modern Chinese word for "nation," in the sense of "a

people"