

Celebrating Asian Heritage

Lesson 2: Government & Economy

Asian countries share many characteristics because of their close proximity to one another geographically, but unique government structures and economic systems have grown from each country's history.

A number of Asian countries share a common experience that shaped what they are like today: declaring independence from European nations. These countries had been colonies until the 1940s to the 1970s. For example, Bahrain, Burma, India, Kuwait, Malaysia, Maldives, Qatar, Sri Lanka and the United Arab Emirates all gained their independence from the United Kingdom during those decades. The leaders who rose to the highest ranks after independence were familiar with Western, centralized governments because that is the type of rule they had lived under, and so they tried to set up similar centralized governments of their own design.

While this approach to government was common across the former colonies, the final result was not. Now, Bahrain and Malaysia are constitutional monarchies, Burma is a military

regime, India is a federal republic, Kuwait is a constitutional emirate, Maldives and Sri Lanka are republics, Qatar is an emirate, and the United Arab Emirates is a federation. The distinct histories of each of these countries following independence affected how their governments evolved.

The countries of Asia are also very diverse economically. Some have strong, global economies, such as China and Japan. Others, like Timore-



The flag of Cambodia includes an image of Angkor Wat, a temple from which kings once ruled. Cambodia's government is a democracy under a constitutional monarchy.



Kazakhstan gained its independence in 1991 from the Soviet Union. The colors, eagle and sun on its flag represent the country's broad, blue skies and move toward freedom and hope.

Leste and Vietnam, have had their economic infrastructures wrecked by corruption and war. Still others show great resilience. Bangladesh's economy relies on services (like the production of clothing) and agriculture and has been subjected to many government inefficiencies. However, the country's economy has grown steadily for more than a decade and even fared well during the recent worldwide recession.

ACTIVITY: Build on the information you researched for the first Celebrating Asian Heritage lesson by learning about the government and economy of the country you selected.

BONUS! Compare and contrast how the United States' history influenced the structure of our government with the way that Asian countries' paths to independence influenced their governments.

Newspapers for this educational program provided by:



THE OKLAHOMAN

Super CAO NGUYEN
高源超级市场