

ASIA'S NATIONAL ICONS

The modern political history of most Asian nations is shaped by revolts – both violent and peaceful – against oppression and colonization. Many of these independence fighters, nation builders and revolutionaries are still celebrated as heroes and, in some cases, demigods. Their words speak of war, strife, pride and nationalism.

1 

"Politics is war without bloodshed, while war is politics with bloodshed."

Mao Zedong (1893–1976)
Chairman of the Communist Party of China and de facto leader of China from 1949 to 1976. Often viewed with awe and respect inside his country while criticized outside for his despotic dictatorship.

2 

"I am the punishment of God. If you had not committed great sins, God would not have sent a punishment like me upon you."

Genghis Khan (1162–1227)
The 1st Great Khan of the Mongol Empire, which after his death became the largest contiguous empire in history.

3 

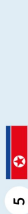
"Remember, the storm is a good opportunity for the pine and the cypress to show their strength and their stability."

Ho Chi Minh (1890–1969)
First President of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam, who led the fight against the Japanese, then the French and, finally, the American army.

4 

"Happiness is when what you think, what you say, and what you do are in harmony."

Mahatma Gandhi (1869–1948)
Leader of the India's non-violent independence movement.

5 

"Peace secured by slavish submission is not peace."

Kim Il-sung (1912–1994)
Eternal President of North Korea.

6 

"When you play with a gentleman, you play like a gentleman. But when you play with bastards, make sure you play like a bigger bastard. Otherwise, you will lose."

Sheikh Mujibur Rahman (1920–1975)
First Prime Minister of Bangladesh and later the country's President.

7 

"I have ventured to commit a serious crime, offering my life for my country. This is the behavior of a noble-minded patriot."

Ahn Jung-geun (1879–1910)
South Korean independence fighter and patriotic martyr.

8 

"I ignore polling as a method of government. I think that shows a certain weakness of mind – an inability to chart a course whichever way the wind blows, whichever way the media whichever way the media encourages the people to go, you follow. If you can't force or are unwilling to force your people to follow you, with or without threats, you are not a leader."

Lee Kuan Yew (1923–2015)
Prime Minister of Singapore from 1959 to 1990.

9 

"A good person can make another person good; it means that goodness will elicit goodness in the society; other persons will also be good."

Bhumibol Adulyadej (1927–2016)
King of Thailand, who was seen as a guarantor of stability despite violent political upheavals.

10 

"A thousand of old men are just able to dream, but a young man is able to change the world!"

Sukarno (1901–1970)
First President of Indonesia.

11 

"Anything can be accomplished if you take responsibility for doing at least 80 percent to 90 percent of it yourself. Pass the remaining 10 to 20 percent of responsibility on to others and give them all the credit."

Sakamoto Ryōma (1836–1867)
Samurai regarded as a founding father of the modern age in Japan and whose vision set the stage for a unified open country.

12 

"No nation can rise to the height of glory unless your women are side by side with you."

Muhammad Ali Jinnah (1876–1948)

Founder and first leader of Pakistan as Governor-General.

13 

"The media's power is frail. Without the people's support, it can be shut off with the ease of turning a light switch."

Corazon Aquino (1933–2009)
First female president of the Philippines who led her country's transition from dictatorship to democracy.

14 

"In so far as nationalism inculcates in us a sense of national and social justice which calls upon us to fight any system that is oppressive or tyrannical both in our country and the world, there I am completely with nationalism. I hate imperialism whether British or Japanese or Burmese."

Bogyoke Aung San (1915–1947)
War Minister of Burma, founder of the country's modern army and Communist Party.