



SOUTHERN AND EASTERN ASIA: GEOGRAPHIC UNDERSTANDINGS SS7G9

The student will locate selected features in southern and eastern Asia

on a world and regional political

map: Ganges River

(Yellow River), Indus River, Mekong River, Yangtze (Chang Jiang) River, Bay of Bengal, Indian Ocean, Sea of Japan, South China Sea, Yellow Sea, Gobi Desert, Taklimakan Desert, Himalayan Mountains, and Korean Peninsula.

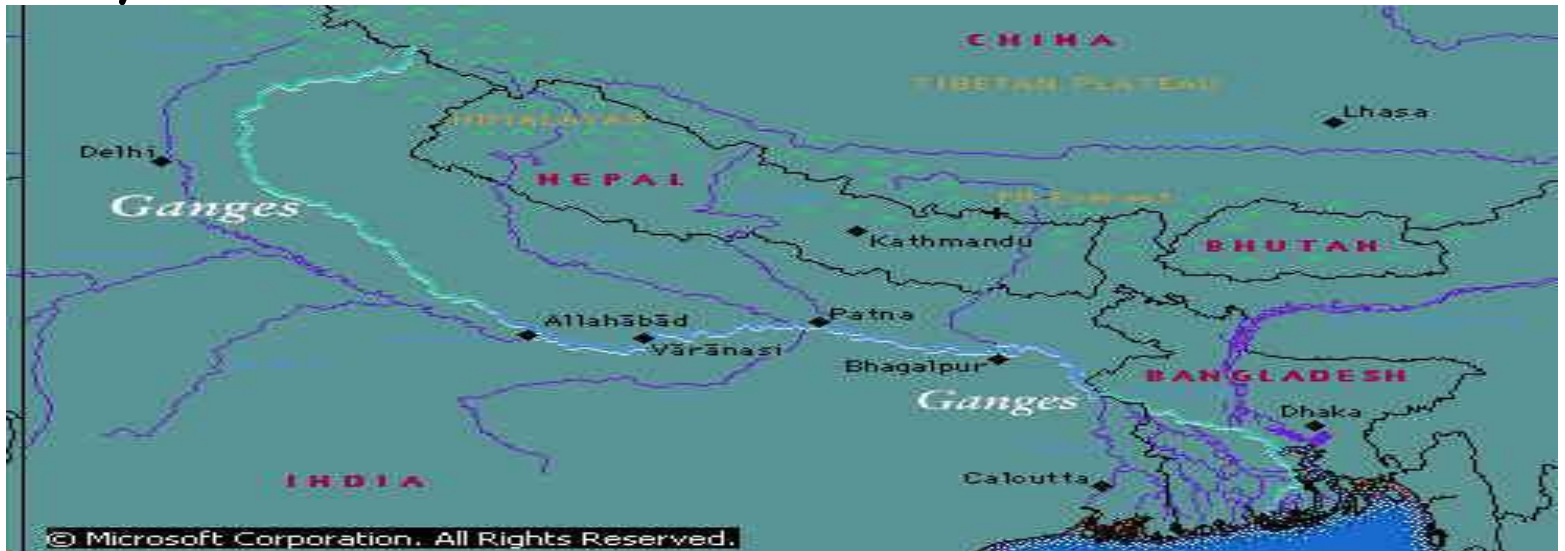
The southern and eastern parts of Asia are home to almost half of the world's population. The geography of this large area is varied, containing some of the world's longest rivers, highest mountain ranges, and most extensive (large) deserts.



The **Indus River** begins in the mountains of Tibet and flows almost 2,000 miles through the country of Pakistan before emptying into the Arabian Sea. The **Indus River valley** is one of the richest farming areas in this region. Many different civilizations have lived along this river throughout the centuries.



The **Ganges** [gan-jeez] River is India's most important river. It begins in the **Himalayan Mountains** and flows southeast through India and Bangladesh before emptying into the **Bay of Bengal**. The water of the Ganges carries tons of rich **sediment** (topsoil, silt, and minerals from the mountains) that is gradually spread along its path enriching the farmland and creating a large, fertile, or rich **delta** at the mouth of the river.



Because so many people live and work along the Ganges, the water in the river is heavily polluted.



The Indian government recently declared the badly polluted Ganges River a national heritage site and committed to cleaning up the waters, holy to Hindus, which are used by hundreds of millions of people each day to bathe and to wash clothes.

The country of **Bangladesh** is located almost completely in the **Ganges River delta**. Heavy flooding in this part of the world during **monsoon season** (a seasonal prevailing wind, lasting several months which brings heavy rains) often causes great hardships for those living in this country. Further out to sea is the **Indian Ocean**, which is the third largest ocean in the world.



The **Himalayan Mountains** form the southern border of **China**. This high ground spreads to the north to form the **Tibetan Plateau**. The area is sometimes called "*the roof of the world*" because of its high altitudes. This wide area of mountains and high plateau blocks any moisture coming from the rivers and seas to the south.



The **Himalayan Mountains** form India's eastern border with **China** and **Nepal**. These high mountains form a barrier between **India** and countries to the north and east. The Himalayan Mountains stretch for almost 200 miles. The highest mountain in the world, **Mount Everest**, is on the border between Nepal and China.



Mt. Everest, **above**, is 29,035 ft. high and was formed about 60 million years ago. There are about 120 corpses of failed hikers still on the mountain

As the mountains begin to level off in the north, the land becomes desert. Here one finds the Taklimakan Desert and the Gobi Desert. The Taklimakan Desert [tah-kluh-muh-kahn] in western China is over 600 miles in length, one of the longest deserts in the world.



Above left: The Taklimakan Desert is a vast, dry sandy wasteland. Pyramid-shaped sand dunes tower 300 meters above the plains. The name means "can't get out once you come in." **Right: Mummy** found⁹ in Taklimakan dates from 4000-2300 years ago.

To the west and in the central part of China is the **Gobi** [go-bee] **Desert**, which can be one of the hottest and one of the coldest places in the world. Much of the **Gobi Desert** is covered with sand and rocks.



China's fertile farming areas lay north and east of this great desert region. The **Huang He** (hwang • he) or **Yellow River**, begins in the mountainous plateau of Tibet, It flows toward the east and finally empties into the **Yellow Sea**. The yellow dust blowing out of the Gobi Desert is picked up by the Huang He and is carried along as **loess** (lus or lō • uhs), or silt, giving both the river and the sea a yellowish color.



Loess is also deposited along the river's path, creating rich soil for the farmers in the area. This river is also used for transporting people and goods, though sometimes annual floods make conditions along the river's path dangerous. The frequent flooding has led some to call the Huang He "*China's Sorrow*."



Loess (silt) is what gives the Yellow River (above) its name and its color.¹²

The **Yangtze** [yang-see] River or **Chang Jiang** also begins in the **Tibetan Plateau**. This river travels east until it reaches the **East China Sea**. **Shanghai**, one of China's most important ports, is located at the mouth of this river. The **Yangtze River** is over 3,400 miles long making it China's longest river.



The Yangtze goes through fertile farming land and is one of China's main transportation routes. The Yangtze and Huang He are connected by the Grand Canal, one of the world's oldest and longest canal systems. The oldest parts of the canal were built over 2,000 years ago.



Above: photos of China's Grand Canal

The **Mekong** [mey-kong] River begins in the Tibetan Plateau. This river runs south from **China** through **Myanmar** (MEE-ahn-mar or my-AHN-mar), formerly **Burma**, **Thailand** (TIE-land), **Laos** (lous), **Cambodia**, and finally, **Vietnam**, where it empties into the **South China Sea**. It's the longest river in southeast Asia. The Mekong River delta has some of the richest farming land in the world.



The Korean Peninsula is a mountainous peninsula (a body of land surrounded by water on three sides). It's attached to China and bordered by the **Yellow Sea** and the **Sea of Japan**. Over half of the peninsula is made up of mountains. Even though so much of the country is mountainous, there is still plenty of rich farmland.



Since the end of World War II, Korea has been divided into two different countries, **North Korea** and **South Korea**. North Korea is Communist and is separated from South Korea, which is supported by the U.S., by the **demilitarized zone** or **DMZ**, shown on the map below.




The **Sea of Japan** is a small sea bound by Russia to the north, the Korean Peninsula to the west, and Japan to the east.





SS7G9

The student will locate selected features in Southern and Eastern Asia.

- b. Locate on a world and regional political-physical map the countries of China, India, Indonesia, Japan, North Korea, South Korea, and Vietnam
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Below is a map of southern and eastern Asia. Are you able to locate the countries of China, India, Indonesia, Japan, North Korea, South Korea, and Vietnam?



SS7G10

The student will discuss environmental issues across Southern and Eastern Asia.

- a. Describe the causes and effects of pollution on the Yangtze and Ganges Rivers.

THE GANGES RIVER

The **Ganges** [gan-jeez] River begins high in the Himalayan Mountains and flows 1600 miles through India and Bangladesh to the Bay of Bengal. This river provides water and transportation for the over 400 million people who live in its river valley.

It's known as "*Mother Ganges.*"



In spite of the Ganges' importance and its place in the spiritual lives of Indians, the quality of the water has become poor. Chemicals used in fertilizer and industry are washed into the river everyday. Human and animal waste also foul the river.



The bodies of dead animals as well as the cremated remains of human beings (bodies that are burned after death and whose ashes are scattered in the river) regularly float down the river. In spite of this, many Indian Hindus bathe in the Ganges because they believe it's holy and will wash away sins and grant immortality. They also use the water for drinking and cooking.



Cities along the Ganges have the highest rates of **water-borne diseases**, which are diseases found in water, of any people who live in India. Still, these cities pour millions of gallons of **sewage**, or water that contains waste products, into the river to be carried to cities and villages farther south. Outbreaks of diseases like cholera, dysentery, and hepatitis are common. Most officials say polluted water is part of the reason.



The above image shows a corpse floating in the Ganges.

India did begin a program called the **Ganges Action Plan** in 1985 to try to clean up the river. Many sewage and water treatment plants have been built along the river. However, the growing population of India, around 1 billion people, and the run-off from industrial and farm production have meant that clean-up efforts fall short of what is needed.



THE YANGTZE RIVER

China's longest river, the Yangtze [yang-see] River, flows almost 4,000 miles through over 185 towns where almost 400 million people live. Pumping stations along the river take water out to supply people with water for drinking, irrigation, and industrial uses.



Millions of gallons of **sewage** (refuse liquids and waste matter carried off by sewers) are dumped into the **Yangtze**, along with chemicals from agricultural runoff and industrial wastes. Nitrogen from fertilizers and arsenic, a poison, from industrial uses are leading pollutants found in the Yangtze's waters.



Above left: Trash floats on this stretch of river in Chongqing, China. The World Wide Fund for Nature estimates the river gets more than half of China's sewage and industrial waste. **Right:** Untreated industrial sewage from a textile dyeing factory is drained into the Yangtze River in Yichang, central China's Hubei Province.

The pollution in the river puts all the cities along its bank at risk. Many species of plants and animals that once lived in the rivers are disappearing. The high levels of nitrogen and phosphates lead to the growth of blue-green algae. This growth reduces the oxygen in the water causing fish to die. Contaminated fish are caught and eaten by the Chinese people, leading to other health problems.



Middle photo: A resident scoops up a bowl of foul-smelling, polluted river water. **Left and Right:** Water supplies to about 200,000 people in central China have been contaminated by pollution, which has turned branches of the Yangtze River system red.

China is building more **water treatment facilities** which would treat the water and remove contaminants. It's encouraging cities along the river to build **sanitary landfills** where trash and waste would be isolated from the environment until it's safe rather than dumping garbage in the river. International organizations like the **World Bank** have worked with Chinese authorities to organize such programs.



The massive **Three Gorges Dam** was built along the Yangtze River in central China to provide **hydroelectric power** to millions of Chinese who have not had electricity.



The Three Gorges Dam on the Yangtze River is one of the largest construction projects ever undertaken by mankind. The Chinese government finally gave its approval to launch the project in 1992, some seventy years after Sun Yat-sen first proposed the idea. It was to be completed in 2009. It will provide China with tremendous power generation and flood control.

Some people feel that the Three Gorges Dam project was begun without taking into account the effects such a project would have on the environment. A number of plant and animal species that live along the river where the dam has been built are now threatened with **extinction**. Another concern is that the dam has been built in an area prone to earthquakes.



The above image shows the Three Gorges Dam, the largest dam ³² in the world, in the early morning mist.

SS7G10

The student will discuss environmental issues across southern and eastern Asia.

b. Describe the causes and effects of air pollution and flooding in India and China.

INDIA

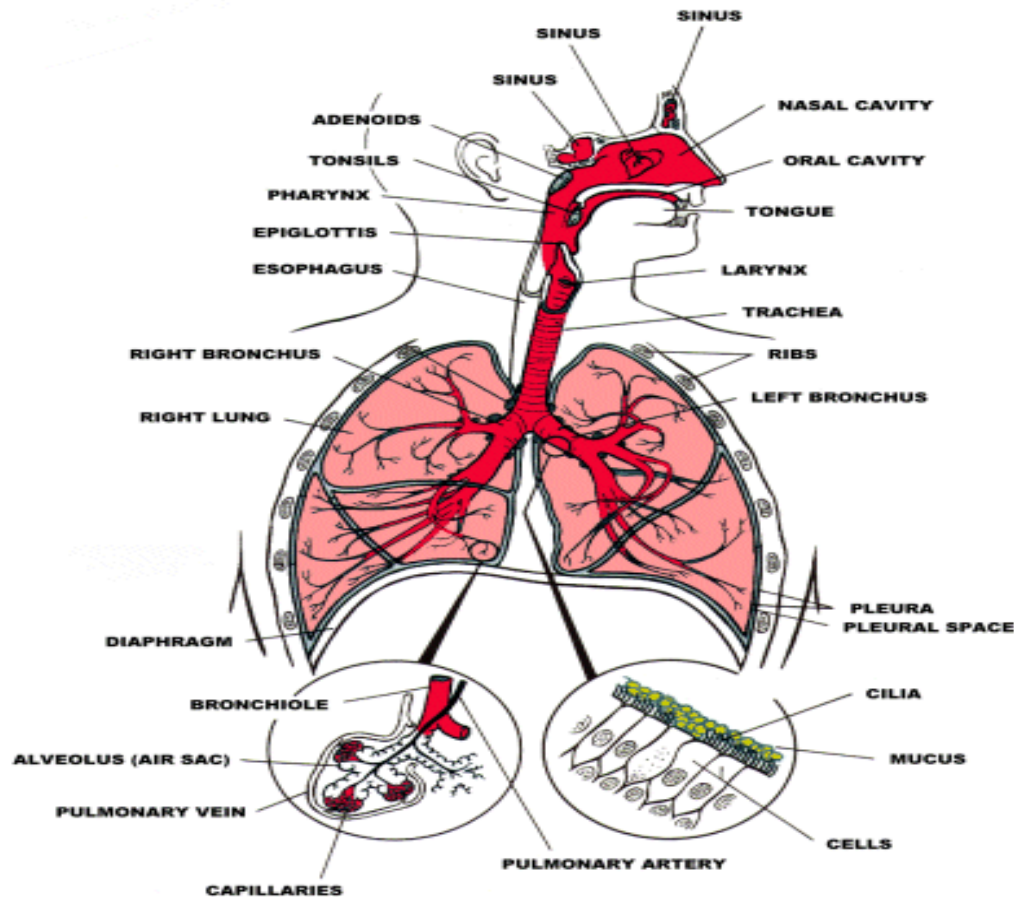
Air pollution is one of India's most serious environmental problems. An enormous and growing population along with the rapid growth of cities (urban areas) and the development of industry have left many parts of India with some of the heaviest air pollution in the world.



Above images show air pollution in India which kills 5 million people each year.

Indians living in several major cities have some of the highest rates of **respiratory disease** in the world. These kinds of diseases effect the lungs, bronchial tubes, and trachea.

THE RESPIRATORY SYSTEM



In addition to industrial smoke, the growing number of automobiles and trucks in India contribute to the poor air quality. Some estimates say that automobile emissions like carbons and other chemicals that come from a car's engine are responsible for almost 70% of the air pollution in some urban areas of India.



Many people in India are poor. They don't want to do anything that would slow down their country's economic growth. For this reason, it's been difficult for the Indian government to enforce many of the laws on industry and transportation that might improve the country's air.



In rural areas, many families cook over open fires, using wood, animal dung, or coal as fuel. These fuel sources send carbon monoxide, soot, and many different chemicals into the air as well. The air inside the home is often as bad as the outside air. This pollution can form a haze known as **brown clouds** which reduce rainfall and temperatures.



New research suggests that cow dung used by millions of people in India for cooking fires may be adding to the arsenic poisoning epidemic.

Right: Wood fires cook slowly and the smoke causes glaucoma and lung diseases mainly for the women and children.

When the Olympic committee decided to have the 2008 Olympic Games in Beijing, one of the concerns among the athletes who were going to compete was the quality of the air in that Chinese city. Beijing was dubbed the "Air Pollution Capitol of the World." Like many other major Chinese cities, it had experienced tremendous growth in both population and industry during the past few decades.



Much of China's energy is provided by burning coal, a process that sends tons of soot, ash, and chemicals into the atmosphere. In addition, millions of Chinese people now drive automobiles and trucks and that exhaust is another source of massive air pollution. China is the second-largest producer of greenhouse gases.



According to the People's Republic of China's own statistics, the leading causes of death in that country are respiratory and heart diseases that can be tied to long exposure to air pollution.

Most polluted cities in China

China is home to six of the 30 most polluted cities in the world. Air pollution causes 300,000 premature deaths a year, Chinese officials estimate. Health issues and environmental damage cost China almost 6 percent of its gross domestic product (GDP), according to the World Bank.

URUMQI: Severe air pollution from industry and coal burning

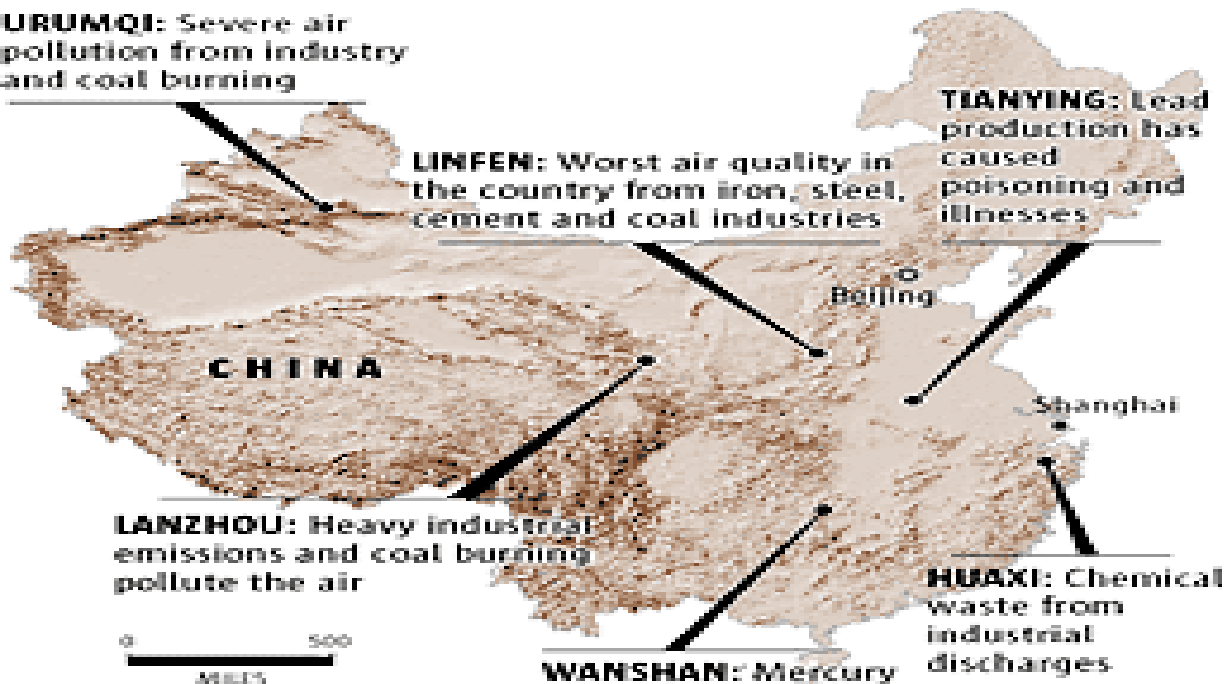
LINFEN: Worst air quality in the country from iron, steel, cement and coal industries

TIANYING: Lead production has caused poisoning and illnesses

LANZHOU: Heavy industrial emissions and coal burning pollute the air

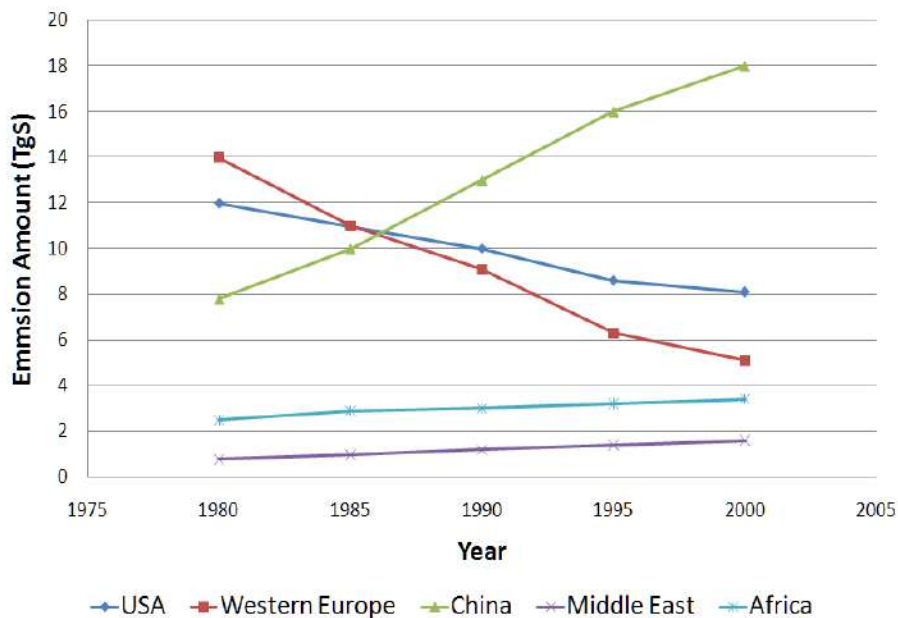
HUAXI: Chemical waste from industrial discharges

WANSHAN: Mercury contamination throughout the air, water and soil

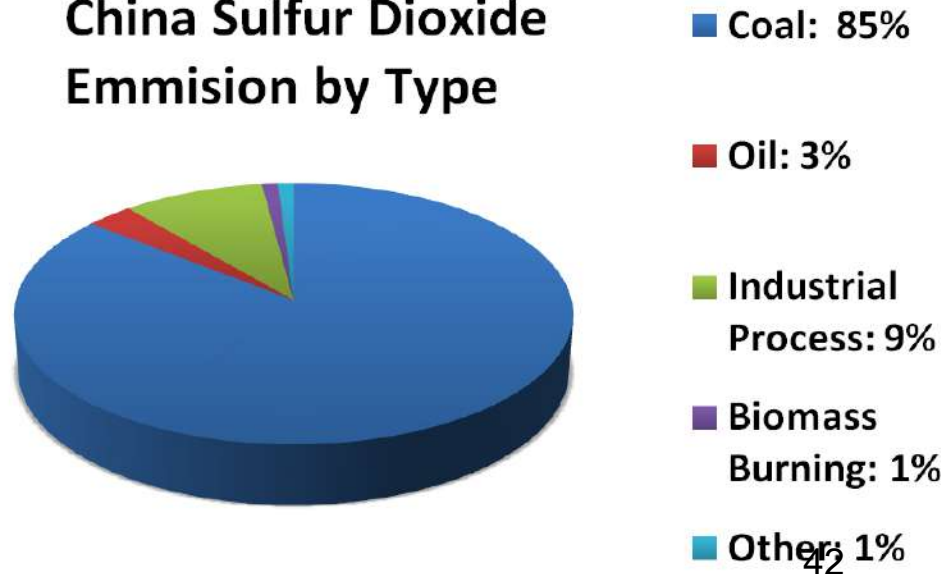


Airborne pollution also contributes to acid rain, a problem for at least a third of China's agricultural areas. Acid rain occurs when chemicals in the air, especially sulfur dioxide and nitrogen oxides that come from burning fossil fuels like coal, react with the moisture in the atmosphere and fall to the ground as rain containing sulfuric acid and nitric acid. Acid rain is harmful to plants, animals, and even buildings.

Total Sulfur Dioxide Emissions by Country



China Sulfur Dioxide Emission by Type



Before the 2008 Olympics, the Beijing Municipal Environmental Protection Bureau was established to work on the quality of the city's air. Automobile traffic was greatly reduced and many factories were temporarily closed. As a result, many major air pollutants were reduced by as much as 45%.

Improved pollution levels in Beijing

Particulate matter (PM10) readings taken on 7 August



Many people living in Beijing want the government to find ways to keep pollution down while still allowing for economic progress. Leaders at the World Bank make the argument that the expenses of health problems tied to air pollution are far greater than those industries and activities that contribute to the pollution.



The impact of environmental and health problems related to air and water pollution take many years to show up in the general population. Often governments begin clean-up efforts long after the health of a country's population has begun to suffer.

World by Carbon Emissions

>> Size of a country equals emissions in million metric tons



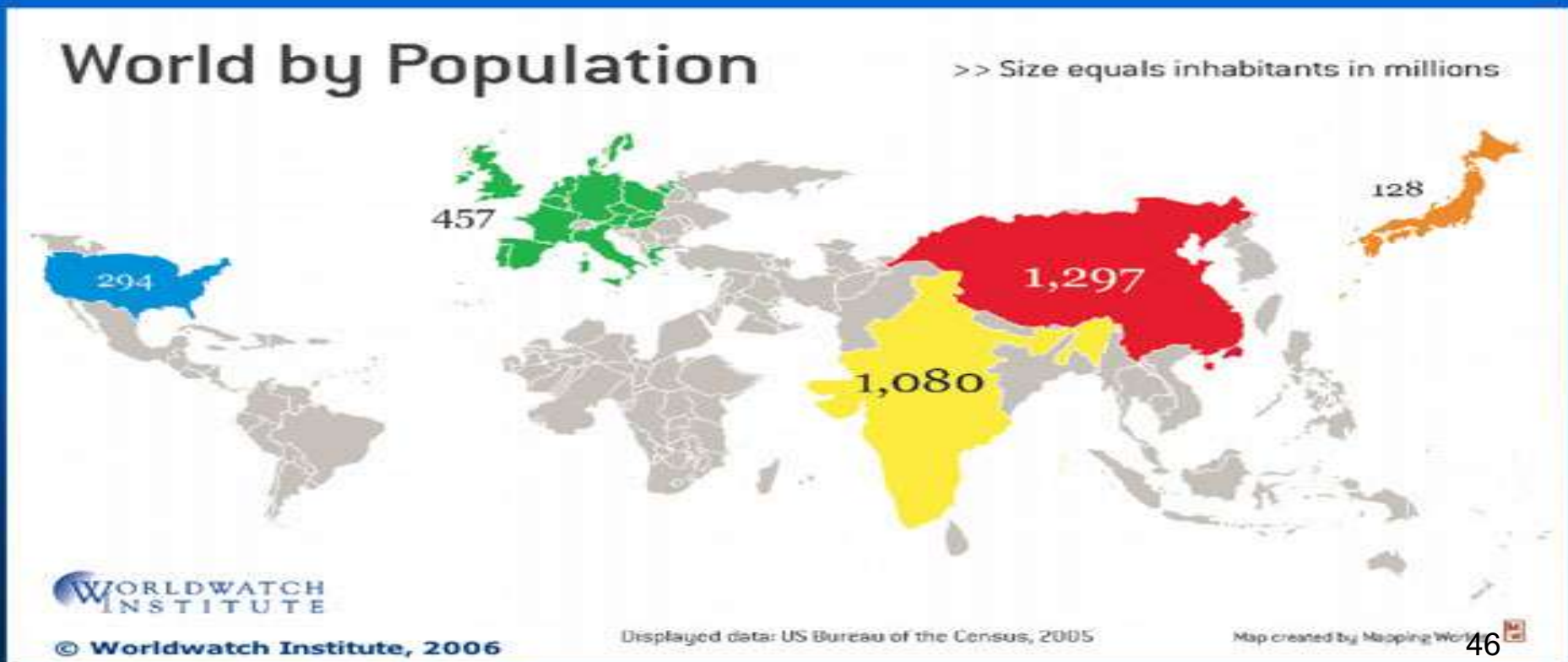
WORLDWATCH
INSTITUTE

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Employed data: US Department of Energy

Map created by Mapping World

Because **China** and **India** have such enormous populations, almost one-half of all the people on earth, attention to health issues related to air and water pollution are of critical importance.





SS7G11

The student will explain the impact of location, climate, physical characteristics, distribution of natural resources, and population distribution on southern and eastern Asia.

- a. Describe the impact climate and location has on population distribution in southern and eastern Asia.



The climates of most of the countries in southern and eastern Asia vary depending on each country's geography. Nearby oceans, mountains, deserts, latitude, and wind patterns affect climate.

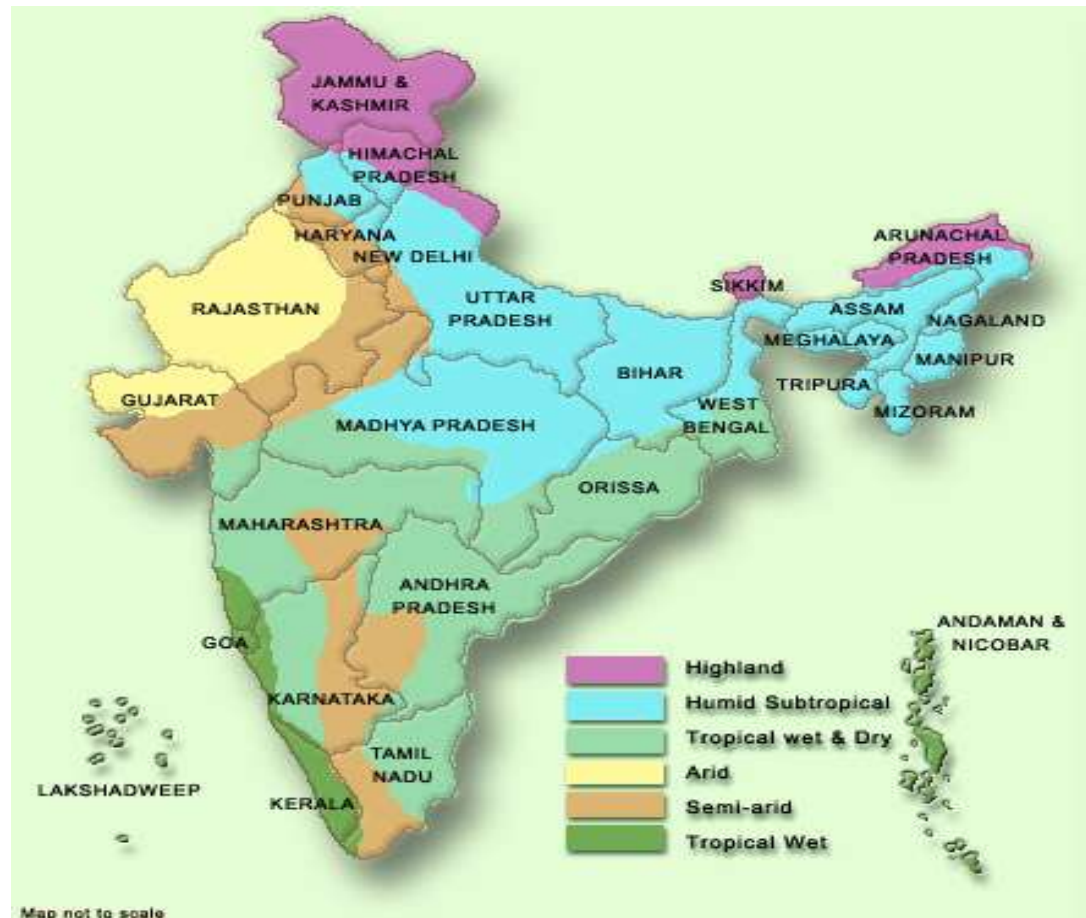


INDIA

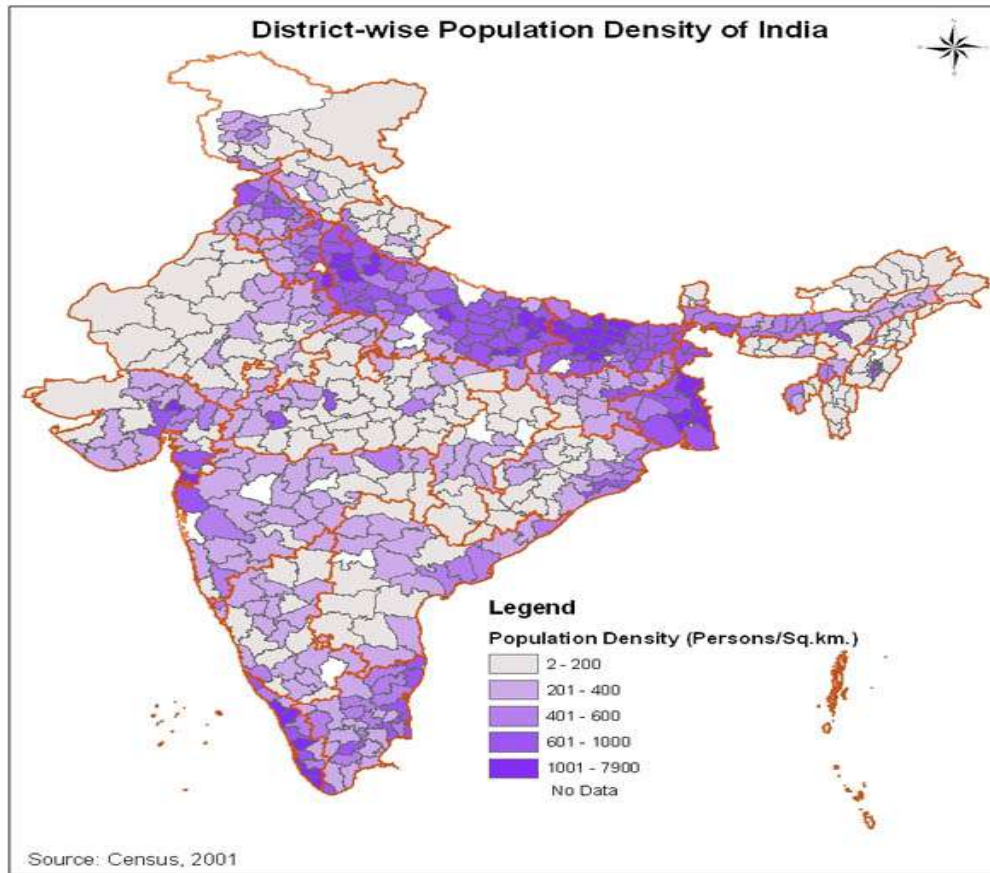
India has many types of climates. Snow and ice are in the northern mountains, hot, dry plains are in the central plateau, and steamy tropical weather is along the southern coast. Along the mountain ranges to the north, the temperatures are like those in other high altitude locations. Some of the highest peaks are covered with ice and snow.



A large desert area borders Pakistan, while the Ganges Plain is humid and almost tropical. The Deccan Plateau in the center of the country is more moderate, with a subtropical coastal plain along the Indian Ocean.



Most of India's people rely on farming and other agricultural work, so many people live along the great rivers and in the fertile river valleys. Some of India's largest cities are located along the Ganges River or along the coast. Fewer people live in the Deccan Plain in the higher center of the country.



The climate of India is shaped by seasonal winds known as **monsoons**. These winds blow hot, dry air across the continent from the northeast during the winter. In spring and summer, the winds come from the opposite direction and bring heavy rains from the ocean. These monsoon winds can be a blessing when they bring much needed rain. On the other hand, monsoon rains can cause destructive flooding. The monsoons are very unpredictable.



AP

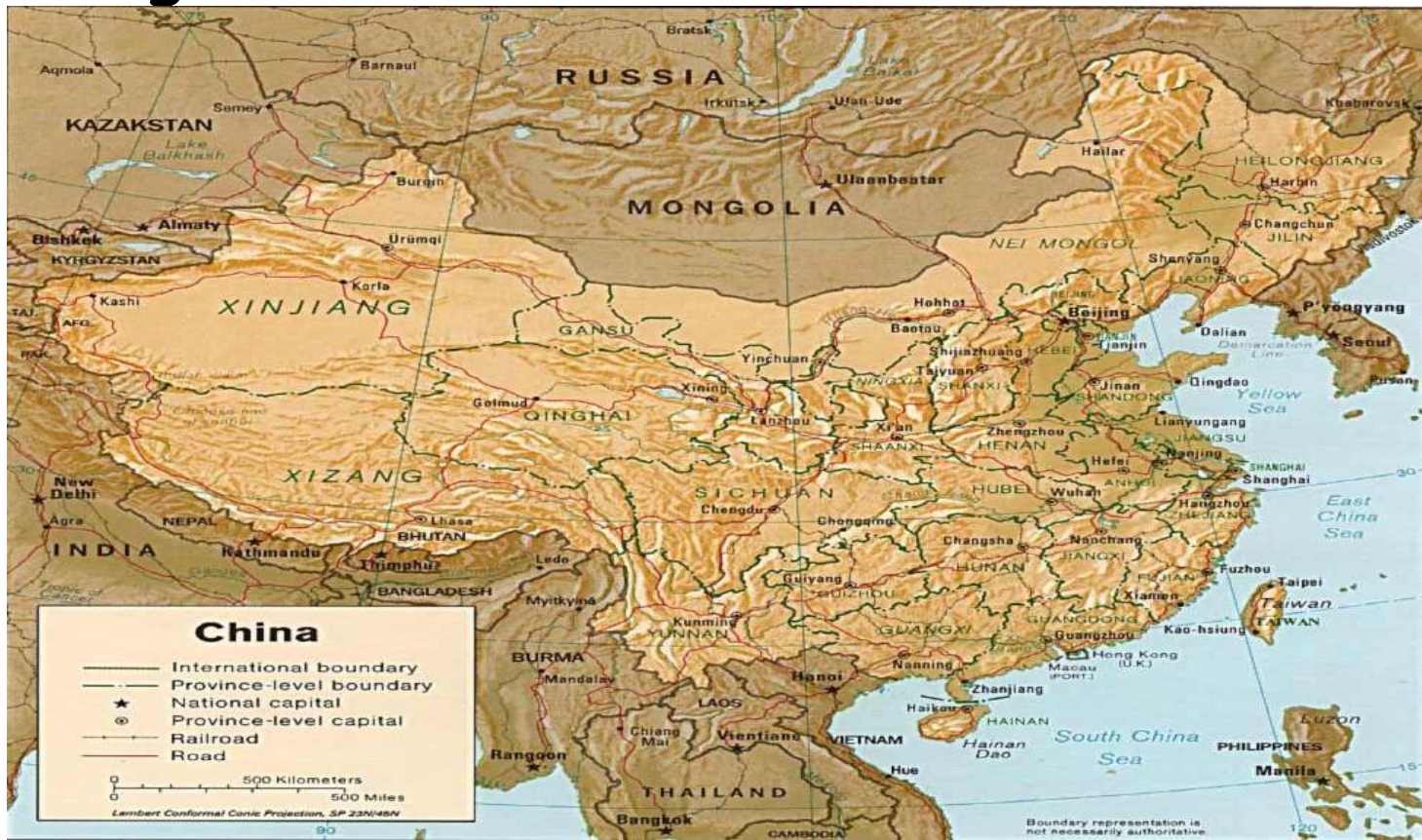


The people of India have had to live their lives around these seasonal winds and rains. When the shifts in weather are moderate, the Indian people are able to farm the rich river valley soil and use the rivers for transportation and trade.



CHINA

The same variety of climates is found in China. A country as large as China has nearly every type of climate. High mountain ranges to the south cut China off from India and the moisture that might come from the Indian Ocean.



The **Gobi** [gō-bee] and **Taklimakan** [tah-kluh-muh-kahn] desert regions in the center of the country are harsh and dry. **Mongolia** to the north is semi-arid, and the areas to the east and south are humid and even tropical.



Japan

Japan, an island nation on the far eastern edge of East Asia, has a climate affected by ocean currents. The **Japan Current** coming from the south brings warm water to the southern and eastern coasts of Japan, while the **Oyashio Current** coming in from the north cools the northern coast.

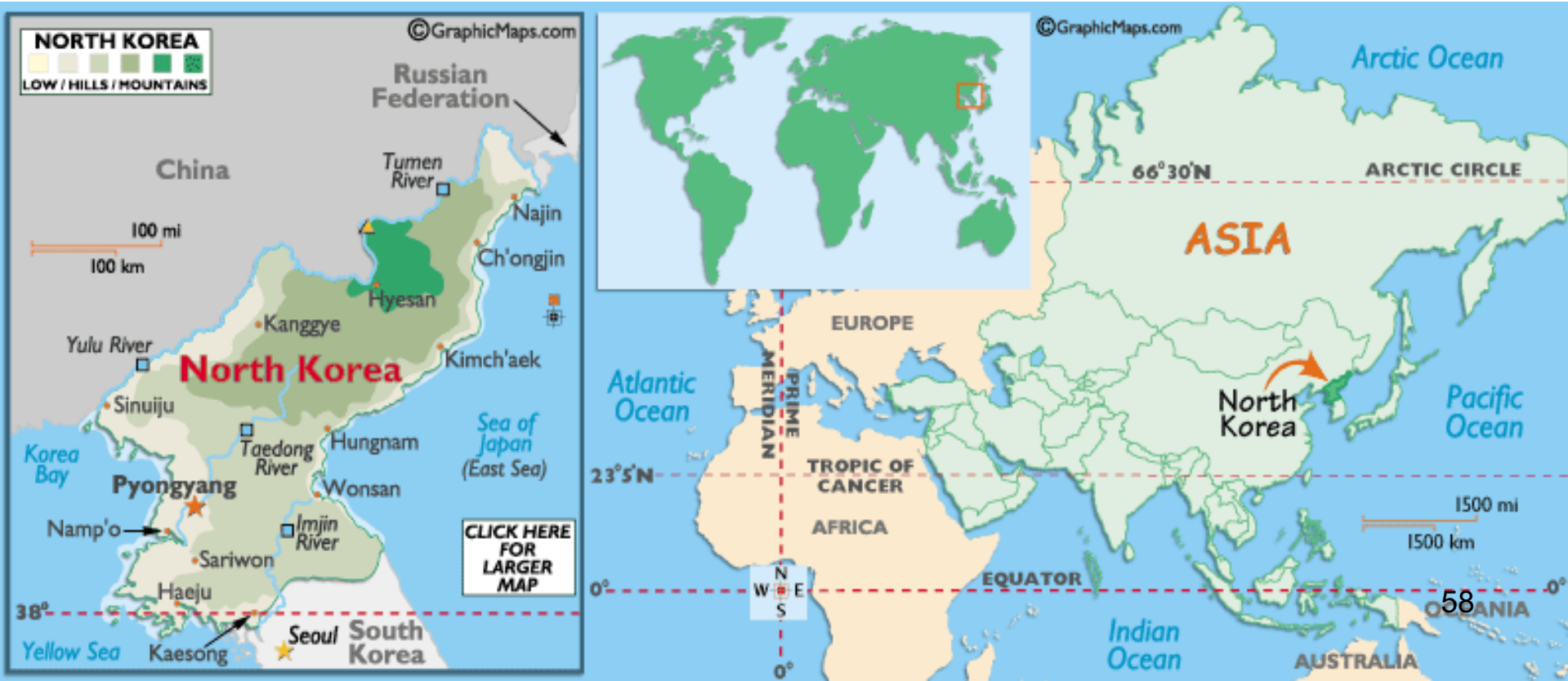


The warmer parts of the country are able to have longer growing seasons for farmers, while those living in the cooler north rely on fishing. Japan experiences monsoon rains and even tropical hurricanes called typhoons.



NORTH KOREA

North Korea shares a border with China and has short summers and long, cold winters, much like that of the northeastern corner of China. The land is mountainous and not as heavily populated as South Korea.



South Korea

South Korea has fewer mountains and a milder climate due to the warm winds that come from the ocean. South Korea has a larger population than North Korea. Many South Koreans live in the country's largest city, Seoul (sōul). Farming is more widely practiced here than in the mountainous north.



Countries further to the southeast like **Vietnam** are warmer and more tropical. Here climate and geography join to create rich farmlands where 90% of the world's rice is grown.



SS7G11

The student will explain the impact of location, climate, physical characteristics, distribution of natural resources, and population distribution on Southern and Eastern Asia.

b. Describe how the mountain, desert, and water features of southern and eastern Asia have affected the population in terms of where people live, the types of work they do, and how they travel.

INDIA

India is separated from the rest of Asia by three ranges of mountains: the Hindu Kush, the Himalayas, and the Karakoram ranges. Because of this, India is often called a subcontinent, which means it's a division of a continent.



Just south of the large mountain ranges, most of India is made up of a broad plain between the **Indus** and the **Ganges Rivers**. A plain is a large expanse of land. The land in this plain is very fertile because the rivers provide tons of silt to enrich the soil.



South of the great plain between the Indus and Ganges Rivers is an area of higher plateau called the **Deccan Plateau**. A plateau is a flat landform whose surface is raised above the surrounding land with a steep cliff on each side.



Even farther south, the land gives way to a narrow tropical strip along the coast of the Indian Ocean.



The climate map of India above shows that the dark green strip of land in the southwest has a wet, tropical climate.

India's mountains have sometimes stopped invaders to the north who wanted India's fertile river valleys to the south. At other times, invaders have been able to use natural passes through the mountains to make their way into the heart of India and establish new rulers and customs.



Most Indians live in the major river valleys, particularly the **Ganges**. People are moving into cities from rural areas in large numbers looking for work and better opportunities for their families.



Above is an image of **Mumbai**, formerly known as Bombay, which is the commercial and economic center of India as well as the capital of Mahârâshtra State. With a population approaching 17 million,⁶⁷ it's a crowded city with images of shocking poverty.

The rivers in India provide transportation, trade routes, water for irrigation, and water to supply the people living in the cities. As a result, nearly all of India's large cities have problems with over-crowding and air and water pollution.



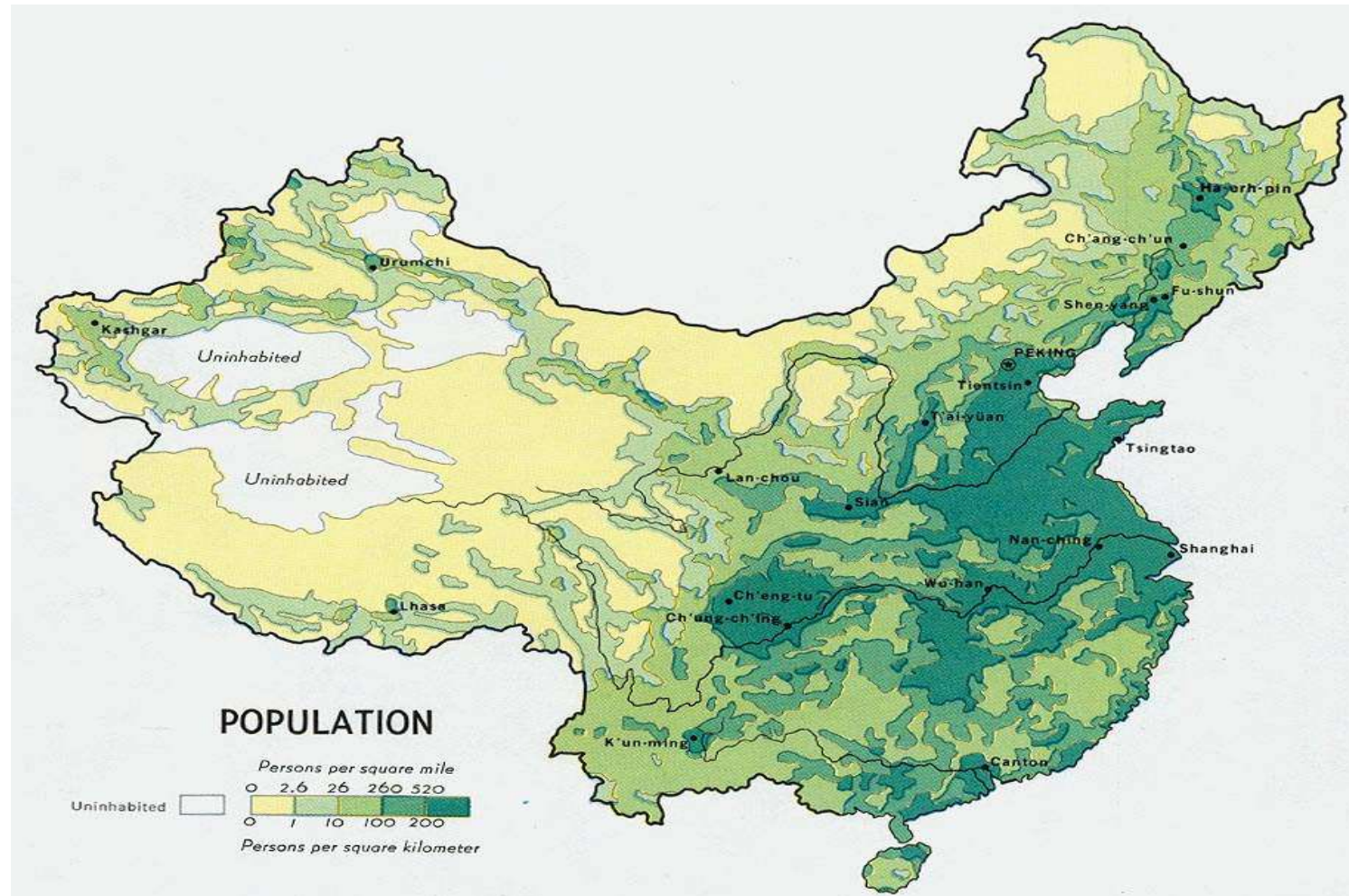
Above: Overcrowded transportation in Indian cities.

CHINA

On the northern side of the Himalayan Mountains and across the Tibetan Plateau is the country of **China**. Its enormous size means there is a great variety of climates and terrain. Two great deserts are located in northern China: the **Gobi** and the **Taklimakan**.



Few people live in the harsh terrain of the mountains and desert regions, and many of those who do live as nomads and animal herders.



Other parts of northern and western China have climates that are more moderate and some farming is possible.



top right: sorting peppers in Ping'an; **top left:** farmers near Yangshuo;
bottom row: rice terraces in Longsheng

The northeast, along the route of the Huang He River, is China's most heavily populated region. **Beijing** is located here.



While agriculture is still common, this region of the country is also China's industrial center. Farming is the most common occupation of the Chinese who live in the southeastern part of the country. Here the Yangtze River flows to **Shanghai**, China's largest port.



The above image is of Shanghai, the largest city in the People's Republic of China. Shanghai has been a leading force in China's economic reform, embracing the forces of business and emerging as an international metropolis with both modern and traditional Chinese features.⁷³

This region of the country is the site of the **Three Gorges Dam**. This large hydroelectric project is designed to bring electricity to China's rural areas. For Chinese workers, rapid industrialization has meant that many have left their rural homes and found work in overcrowded cities.



Above left: A hospital in Chengdu City, in the Sichuan Province is crowded with parents and their children; **Right:** Bicycle commuters

KOREA

The mountains of North Korea have meant that it has had less success with agriculture than many others have had in this region.



There are fast-flowing rivers in the mountains where the North Koreans have developed hydroelectric power plants. The country earns a profit from mining coal and other minerals like iron and copper. Most of the people here live along the western half of the country where the mountains slope down to the sea and farming is more successful.



Above: Sayano-Shushenskaya dam

South Korea is less mountainous and a large part of the country has excellent farmland. The population is greater than that of North Korea, with about 25% of the people living in and around the capital city, **Seoul** (sōul).



People living in or near Seoul have the advantages of markets, jobs, and education that are harder to find in rural areas. While there are cold winters and warm summers, the climate in South Korea is milder than that of North Korea because of the ocean winds.



JAPAN

Almost 80% of the country of Japan is covered with mountains. This leaves only a small percentage of the land suitable for farming.

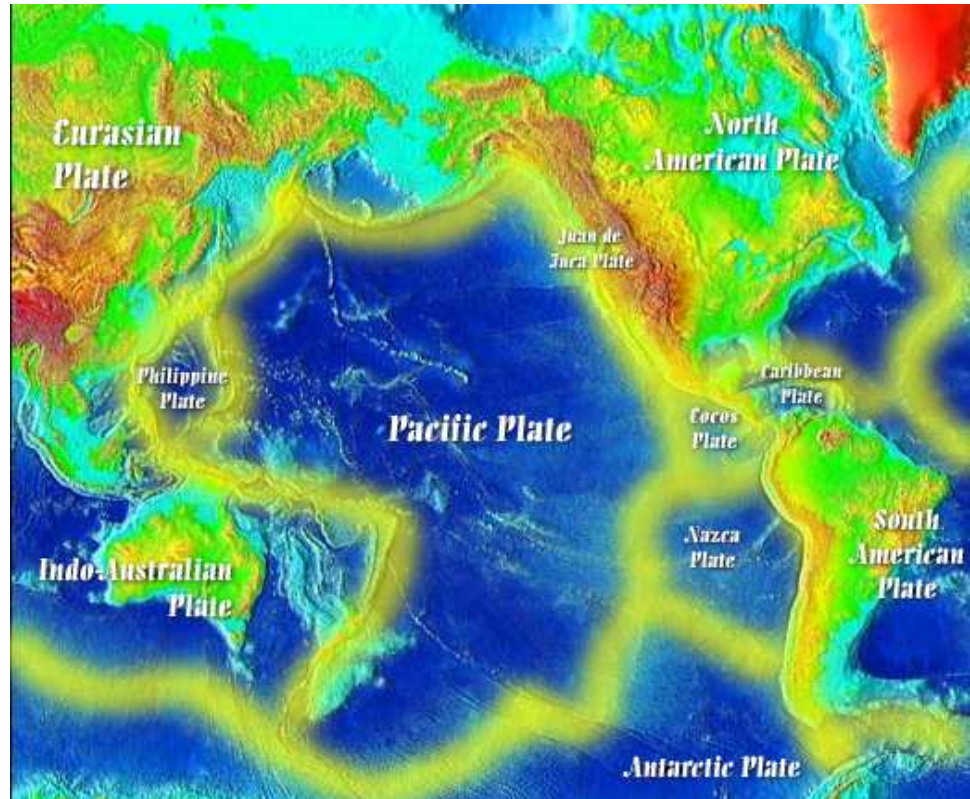


The Japanese have created farmland out of these mountains by building **terraces**, putting in irrigation channels, and using different fertilizers and farming techniques. Even so, Japan has to import a lot of food from other countries for its growing population.



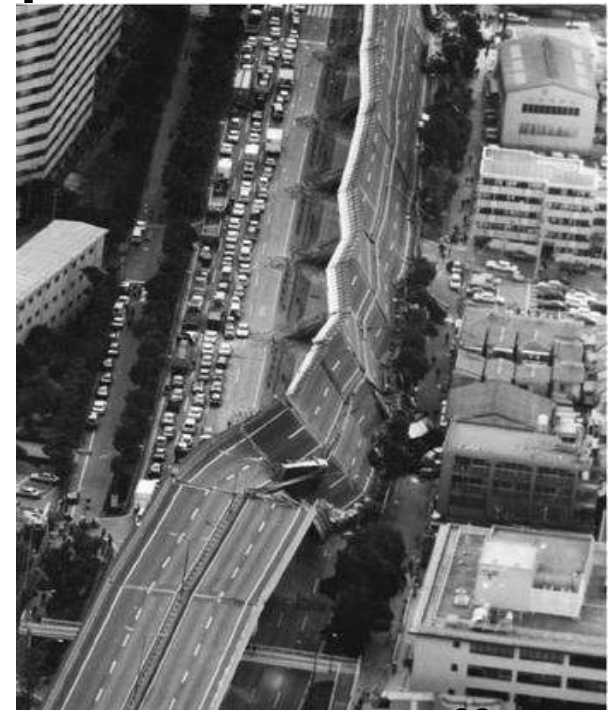
Less than one sixth of the land is good for farming in Japan. 80
Hillsides, lower mountains, slopes and fields are used for farming.

There are many volcanoes in Japan. In fact, Japan is in an area of the world known as the "ring of fire." These volcanoes are often the cause of earthquakes. Japan has more earthquakes every year than any other place on earth.



The Ring of Fire is an area of high volcanic activity due to shifts along the fault line where tectonic plates converge.

The Japanese people have adjusted to the threat of earthquakes, even though many cause a lot of damage. Some parts of the country have developed hot springs in the volcanic areas, and others use the heat to warm water for people to use.



Earthquake damage in Japan. **Left:** a national highway; **Middle:** Kanetsu Highway in 2004; **Right:** Hanshin Expressway, 1997

Because Japan has so little farmland, the Japanese people depend on fishing for much of their food. They have to import a lot of food from other countries.



Above left: Japan's fish markets may be partially responsible for depleted tuna populations in the Mediterranean Sea;
Middle and Right: Tsukiji Fish Market in Tokyo

Japan imports fuel as well. The country has a very highly developed industrial economy, but no gas or oil. They depend on the world market for petroleum products.



Above: Japanese gas stations

Distribution of natural resources throughout Southern and Eastern Asia plays a major part in determining what sorts of work people do and how comfortably they are able to live. A **natural resource** is something that is found in the environment that people need and can use. Fresh water, trees, rich soil, minerals, and oil are all examples of natural resources.



Left: North Korean gold mine; **Right:** Korean tungsten mine

One of the most valuable resources in this part of the world is rich farmland. All of the countries of Southern and Eastern Asia depend on agriculture to feed growing population. India and China are able to claim large areas of rich farmland as an important natural resource. However, these countries have a difficult time producing enough food to take care of their rapidly growing populations.



Indian ginger farm



Harvesting ginger

India, China, North Korea, and South Korea also have good supplies of coal. While this is an important fuel and energy source for all of the economies of these countries, coal burning is also a major cause of **air pollution**. Air pollution is one of the greatest environmental hazards facing the countries of southern and eastern Asia today.



Above left: One of many pollution sources in Mongolia ;
Right: Pollution from a coal fired generator in Mongolia

Both **North** and **South Korea** have a number of mineral deposits, including **lead** and **zinc**. **South Vietnam** is able to mine phosphates for export, as well as drill for oil. **Japan**, an industrial powerhouse on the eastern edge of this region, has practically no natural resources at all. For this reason, Japan must depend on industry and trade to supply its population with all they need.



Left: pyrite from China; **Middle:** Scolecite, Apophyllite & Stilbite from India; **Right:** clear calcite with snow white acicular mesolite from India



SS7G12

The student will analyze the diverse cultures of the people who live in southern and eastern Asia.

a. Explain the differences between an ethnic group and a religious group.

An **ethnic group** is a group of people who share cultural ideas and beliefs that have been a part of their community for generations. The characteristics they have in common could include **language, religion, history, types of foods, and a set of traditional stories, beliefs, or celebrations.** These things make up a common culture shared by those in a particular ethnic group.



China is composed of about 56 different ethnic groups. Han Chinese (left) make up 92 % of the population, while the other 55 ethnic groups compose the remaining 8%; She (middle) and Yao (right) Chinese ethnic groups.

A religious group shares a belief system in a god or gods, with a specific set of rituals and literature. People from different ethnic groups may share the same religion, though they may be from very different cultures.



Left: Buddhist monk in Cambodia in front of a holy mountain;
Right: Hindu devotees perform rituals dedicated to the Sun God⁹¹ as they take a holy dip in the River Ganges in India.

Asian Country	Religions
India	Hinduism, Buddhism, Christianity, Animism, Islam, Sikhism, Animism
Cambodia	Theravada Buddhism, (95 %), Islam, Christianity, Animism other (5 %)
Indonesia	Islam (86.1 %), Protestant (5.7 %), Roman Catholicism (3 %), Hinduism (1.8 %), others including Buddhism, or unspecified (3.4 %)
Laos	Theravada Buddhism(65 %) with Animism (32.9 %), Christianity (1.3 %), others (0.8 %)
Malaysia	Islam (60.4 %), Mahayana Buddhism (19.2%), Christianity (9.1 %), Hinduism (6.1 %), Animism (5.2 %)
Myanmar	Theravada Buddhism(89 %), Islam (4 %), Christianity (4 %), Animism (1 %), others (2 %)
Philippines	Roman Catholicism (81 %), Islam (5 %), Evangelical (2.8 %), Iglesias ni Cristo (2.2 %), Philippine Independent Church (Aglipayan) (2 %), other Christian (4.5 %), others (Animism, Buddhism, Judaism, nonreligious, etc) (2.5 %)
Thailand	Theravada Buddhism(94.6 %), Islam (4.6 %), others (1 %)
Vietnam	Mahayana Buddhism (78 %), Roman Catholicism (7 %), Theravada Buddhism(5 %), Cao Dai (2 %), Protestant (1 %), others (Animism, Hoa Hao, Islam, nonreligious, etc) (7 %)

HINDUISM

Hinduism is one of the oldest religions in the world. This religion developed in **India**, taking much from the religion practiced by the **Aryans**, a group who invaded the country from the north around 1500 BC. The worship of Aryan priests followed complicated rituals and hymns known as the **Vedas**, of **The Books of Knowledge**. These prayers and rituals, along with many other Aryan beliefs, led to the development of Hinduism.



Hinduism is **polytheistic**, meaning they worship many gods, but Hindus believe that all these gods are part of a supreme spirit named **Brahman**. Hindus also believe that all living beings have souls, animals as well as people. Some animals, like the cow, are considered especially sacred. Hindus are **vegetarian**, meaning they eat no meat.



All Hindus believe in **reincarnation**, which is the belief that the soul does not die with the body, but enters the body of another being, either a person or an animal. The type of life a person leads determines what his or her next life will be like. A good person will have a better life in his next reincarnation. An evil person will suffer in his or her next life.



A soul is reincarnated over and over again until the life it lives is good enough to bring it to be united with Brahman. The belief that one's actions determine one's fate is called **karma**, another important Hindu belief.

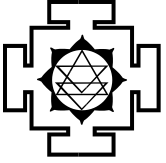


This is Kali, one of the millions of gods of Hinduism. She is the murderous, blood-thirsty consort to Shiva, another god, ⁹⁶ who is laying down in this picture.

Another important part of Hinduism is the caste system, a belief that social class is inherited and doesn't change during a person's lifetime. The only way to move to a higher caste is to be born into one in the next life.



Above: Images of Hindu temples in India including (right) an Indian woman who is pouring an offering of milk for the sacred rats at the Karni Mata Hindu Temple. 97



There are four main castes:



- priests and wise men, or **Brahams** (also spelled Brahmins), are the highest
 - warriors and rulers called the **Kshtriyas** (KSHAHT-rih-yuz)
 - merchants, traders, and small farmers, **Vaisyas** (VY-syuz)
 - the **Sudras** (SOO-drahs), or peasants and field workers are last
- a fifth caste is considered even lower, the **untouchables**, or pariahs, who do work no one else does

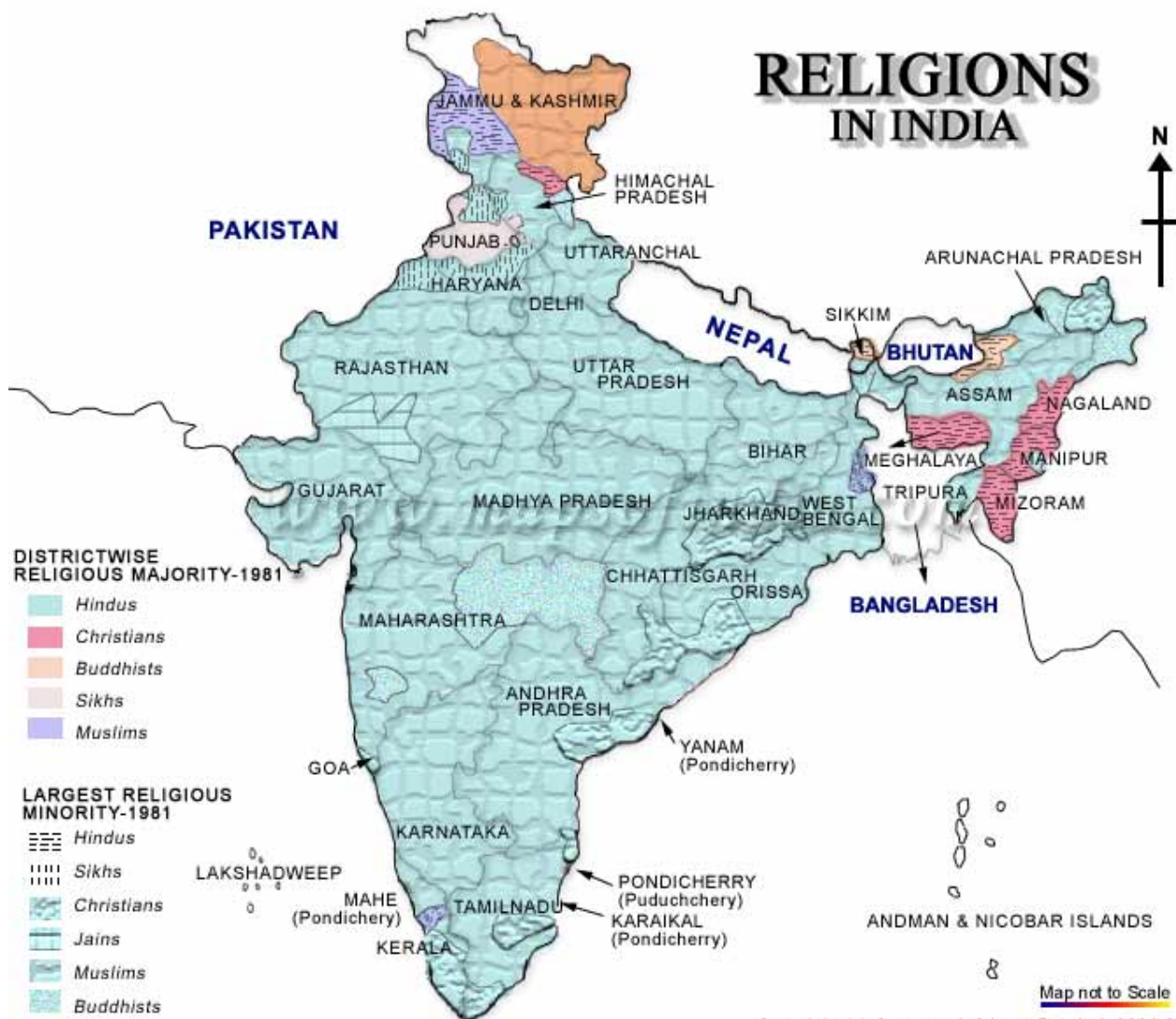


There are divisions within each caste, making Indian social structure very complicated. Traditional families would not let their children marry someone from a different caste. Many jobs in India are still awarded based on caste connections. The government of India is working to make caste divisions less important, but this is a tradition that is slow to change.



Left: A priest from the Brahmin caste, the highest caste, performs a Hindu wedding ceremony; **Right:** Untouchables from the lowest caste.

Hinduism is the religion most widely practiced in India and the third largest religion in the world behind Christianity and Islam.



BUDDHISM

Buddhism is a religion that also began in India. Siddhartha Gautama (below), a rich young man, founded the religion about 500 BC. He had a life of luxury, but he was troubled by the poverty and suffering he saw in the world around him. He left his family and became a wandering monk for a number of years hoping to learn why people had to suffer.



Finally, Siddhartha Gautama quit wandering and simply sat and thought, or **meditated**, about the unhappiness of man. He felt that he understood what needed to be done. He believed people could find peace if they could reject greed and desire.



He accepted the Hindu belief in reincarnation and karma, but didn't accept the caste system or the need for priests. He was called "Buddha," or "The Enlightened One," by his followers.



Above: Images of Buddhists monks.

Buddha taught that there were **Four Noble Truths** in life. One was that life always brought pain. The second was that this suffering and sorrow were usually caused by greed and the desire for material things. The third was that by giving up these greedy desires, a person could end his suffering and reach **Nirvana**, a state of perfect peace. The fourth was that to achieve Nirvana, a person needed to follow **The Middle Way**.



The **Middle Way** was accomplished by following what Buddha called the **Eightfold Path** (eight rules for conduct):

- * (1) try to recognize the truth
- * (2) try to avoid evil actions and bad people
 - * (3) don't say things that hurt others
- * (4) respect other people and their belongings
- * (5) choose a job that doesn't harm others
 - * (6) don't think evil thoughts
 - * (7) avoid excitement or anger
- * (8) work at meditation, thinking carefully about what matters in life

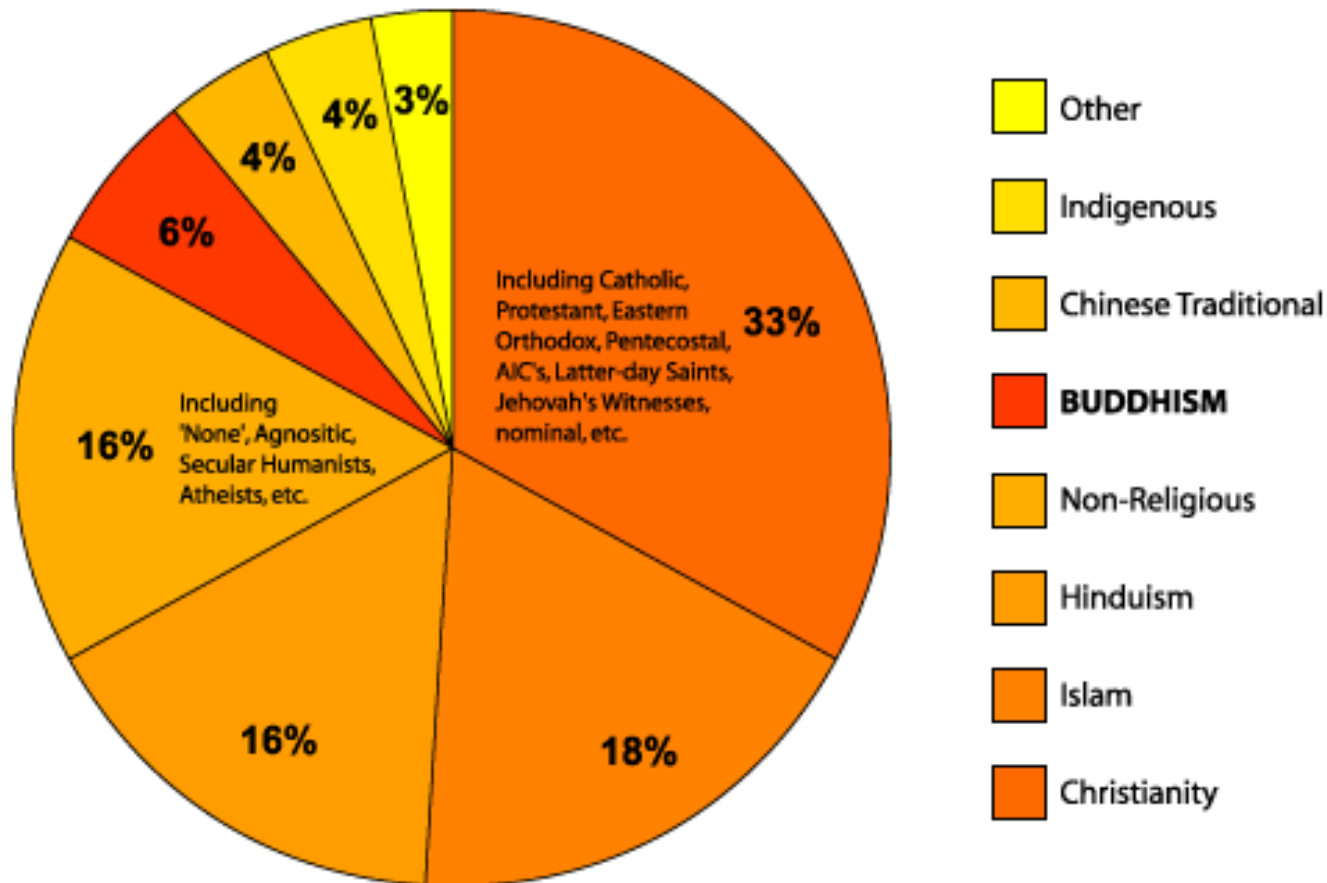


Buddha believed that unselfishness was the key to everything. He didn't recognize gods, or see a need for priests. He felt a man alone could change evil into good. If one followed the **Middle Way**, one's soul would eventually reach a state of perfect peace.



Buddhist children practicing meditation in an effort to reach Nirvana.

About 6 % of the world's population today is Buddhist, making it the fourth largest religion in the world. Buddhism is practiced all over the world, though the largest number of followers are found in Southern and Eastern Asia.

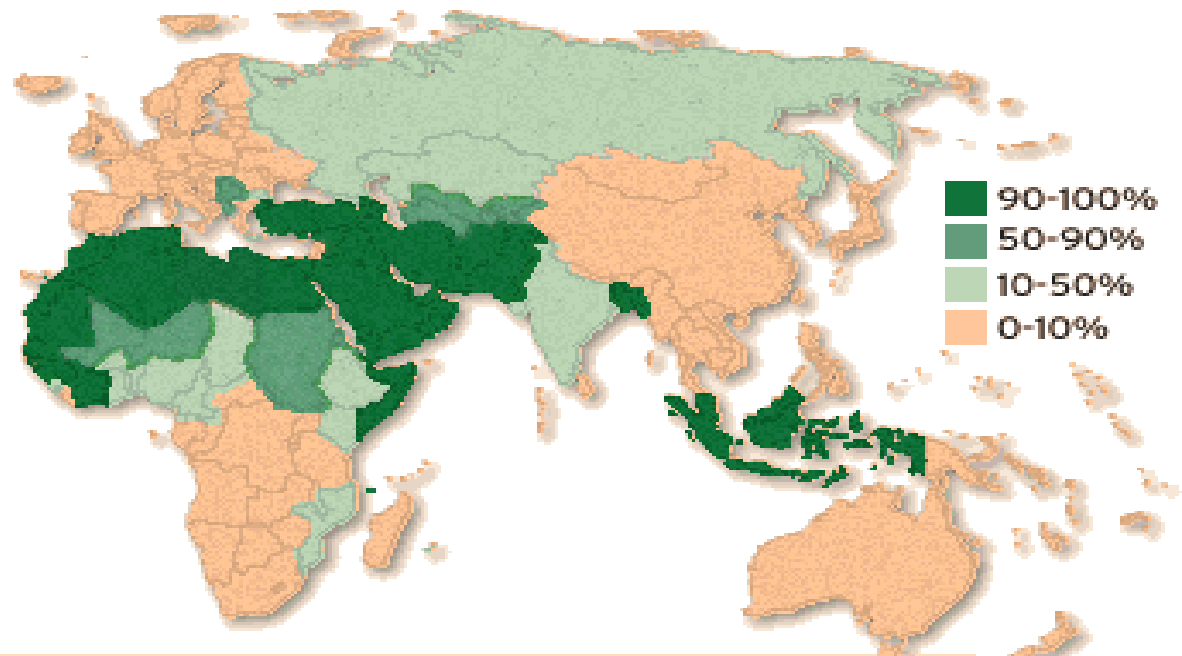


ISLAM

Islam is another religion that is widely practiced in Southern and Eastern Asia. **Islam** began in the Arabian Peninsula in the 7th century AD with the teachings of the prophet Muhammad. Islam gained followers rapidly in Southwest Asia and North Africa in the years following Muhammad's death.



Islam came to India in the 1500s AD when Muslim armies swept into the country from the northwest. They established the **Mogul Empire** that ruled India for almost 200 years. Muslim conquerors treated the Hindus as conquered people and introduced Islam as a new religion.



Distribution of Muslim Populations

The above map shows the current distribution of Muslim populations in the world.

Muslims practice what is known as the
Five Pillars of Islam:

* (1) profession of faith

"There is only one god and Muhammad is his messenger."

* (2) pray five times a day facing Mecca

* (3) charity, or alms, to the poor

* (4) fasting from sunrise to sunset during the month of Ramadan

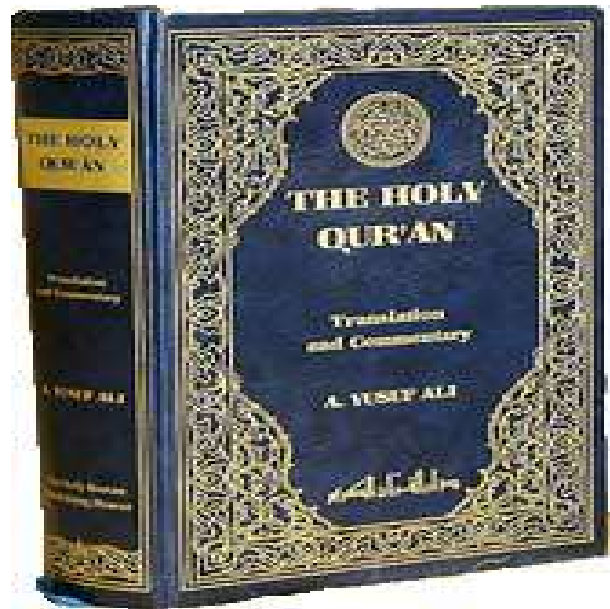
* (5) make a pilgrimage, or hajj, to Mecca at least once during a person's lifetime.



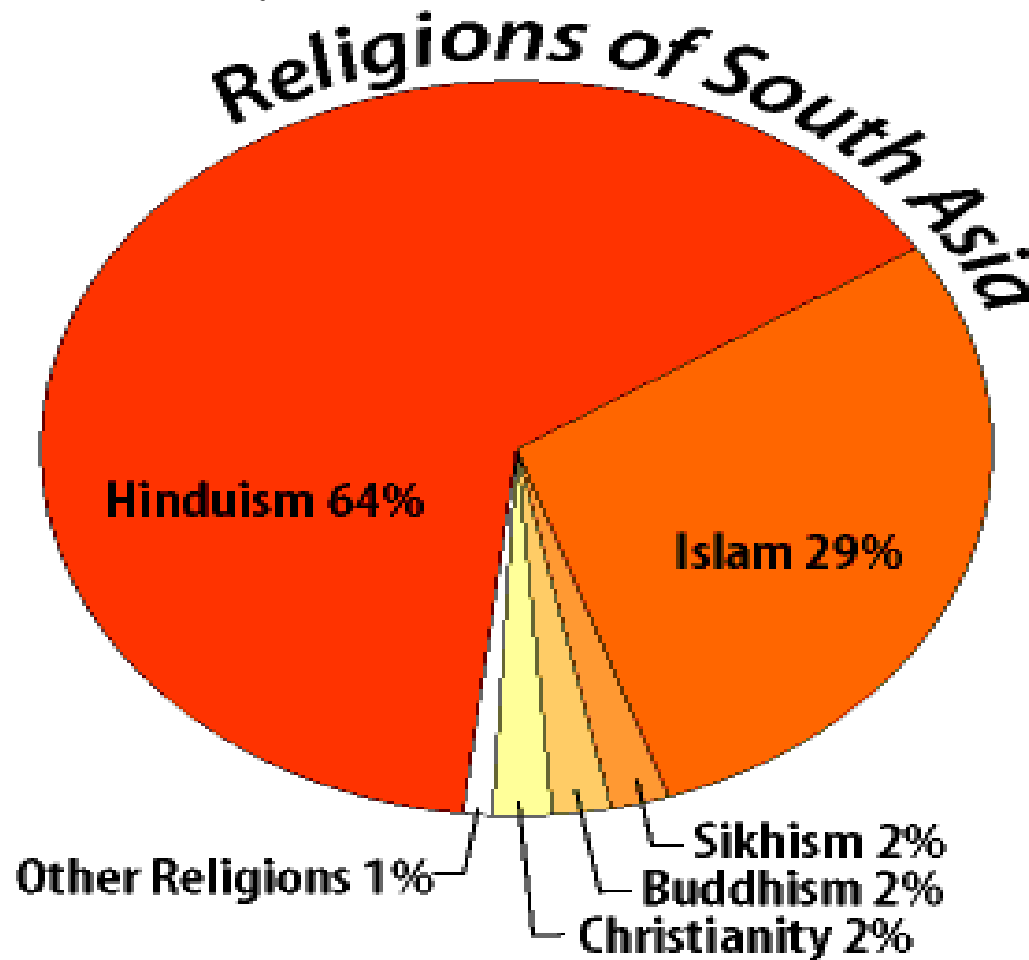
Because Muslims believe in only one god, it's called a **monotheistic religion**. A religion that believes in more than one god is called a **polytheistic religion**. Muslims don't have an organized priesthood, but they do gather in **community mosques** for prayer. There are Muslim leaders for prayer, as well as Muslim scholars.



Muslims also have a holy book, the **Quran**, which they believe is the actual word of God handed down by the angel Gabriel. Muslims do not believe in the **caste system** which many Hindus in India have accepted. They also don't believe that cows are to be sacred, and they have no rules against eating beef. Few Muslims will eat pork, however, believing the meat to be unclean.



Today, many millions of Muslims live in Southern and Eastern Asia. Islam is the second largest religion in the world. Only Christianity has more followers.



SHINTO

The earliest religion of Japan was Shintoism, which literally means the "way of the gods."

Shintoism centers on reverence, or respect, for the **kami** (kā'mī). These are divine spirits that Shinto followers believe live in nature.

The word **kami** means "superior."



SHINTO

Kami are believed to live in beautiful places, animals, and especially as a person's ancestors. Many Japanese people believe some of the mountains and rivers in Japan are the homes of these kami, and these places are considered sacred. Shintoism also stresses the virtue of cleanliness.



Left: "After Death"; Middle: "Way to Heaven"; Right: "Heaven"¹¹⁵

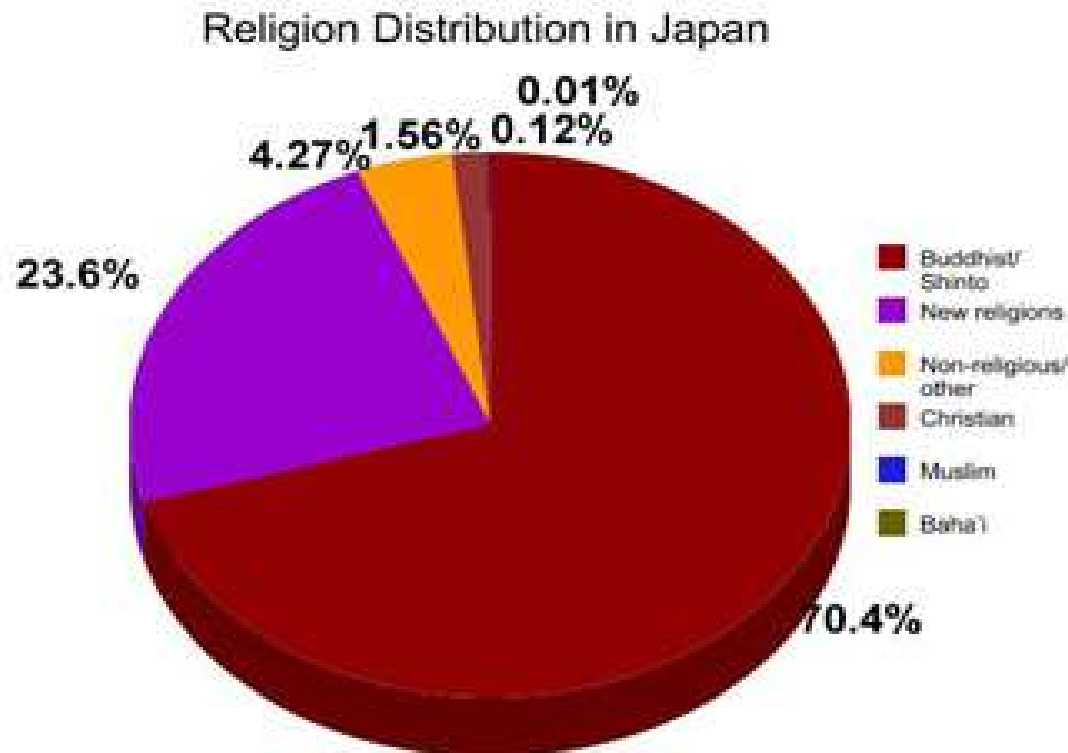
Those who practice Shintoism offer prayers and perform rituals to honor and please the **kami**, or spirits they feel are special. There is no elaborate philosophy in Shinto, and the religion doesn't stress life after death. Most Japanese households have a small altar where the family will offer prayers for the spirits they hope will bless and protect them.



The worship of nature has also led the Japanese to perfect the art of creating small, beautiful gardens, that are areas of quiet and reflection in their crowded world.



Shintoism is no longer the official state religion, but it's still widely honored among the Japanese. There are followers of Shintoism around the world, but they are relatively few in number when compared with other major religions.

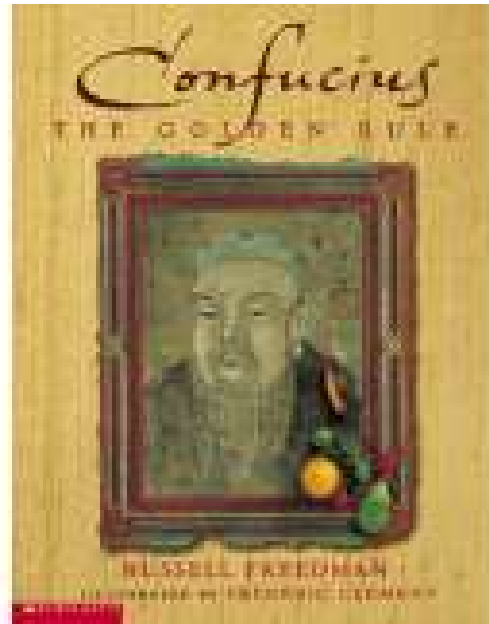


CONFUCIANISM

Confucius was one of the most important scholars in Chinese history. He was born around 550 BC at a time when the government was having trouble keeping order and warlords controlled much of the countryside.



Confucius believed that the key to peace and social order was for people to behave with good character and virtue. **Virtue** is behaving fairly and with justice toward others. His **Golden Rule of Behavior** was "What you do not like when done unto yourself, do not do unto others."



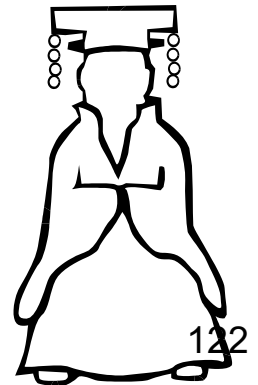
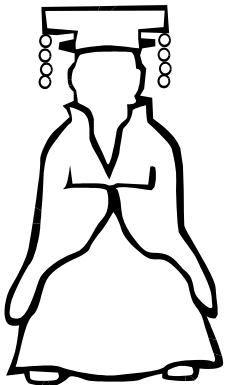
Confucius believed a good ruler was one who treated his people fairly and was kind to them. He was not a religious prophet or even a religious leader. He saw himself as a teacher, and Confucianism is thought of as a philosophy or ethical system based on good deeds and morality rather than a religion.



Confucius believed there were **five basic relationships** among mankind:

- * ruler and subject
- * father and son
- * husband and wife
- * older brother and younger brother
- * friend and friend

He believed that if each relationship were based on kindness, there would be peace and harmony in the country.



Wudi, the Han emperor of China in 121 BC, declared that Confucianism would be the official guiding practice for the Chinese government during his reign. He hired Confucius scholars to make up his government staff. Confucian philosophy continued to have a great influence on Chinese government for the next 2,000 years.



Above: Image of the Han emperor, Wudi

Even since the Communist revolution in China in 1949, many in China still support the teaching of Confucius and his emphasis on dealing with others fairly. Many other people in Southern and Eastern Asia also admire the teachings of Confucius. Many historians see Confucius as one of the foundations of Chinese society.





SS7G12

The student will analyze the diverse cultures of the people who live in Southern and Eastern Asia.

c. Evaluate how the literacy rate affects the standard of living.



Literacy, or the ability to read and write, has a big effect on the standard of living in a country.

Those who cannot read or write have a very difficult time finding decent jobs. Lack of education also prevents many young people from becoming engineers, doctors, scientists, or business managers that modern economies need in order to bring improvements to their countries.



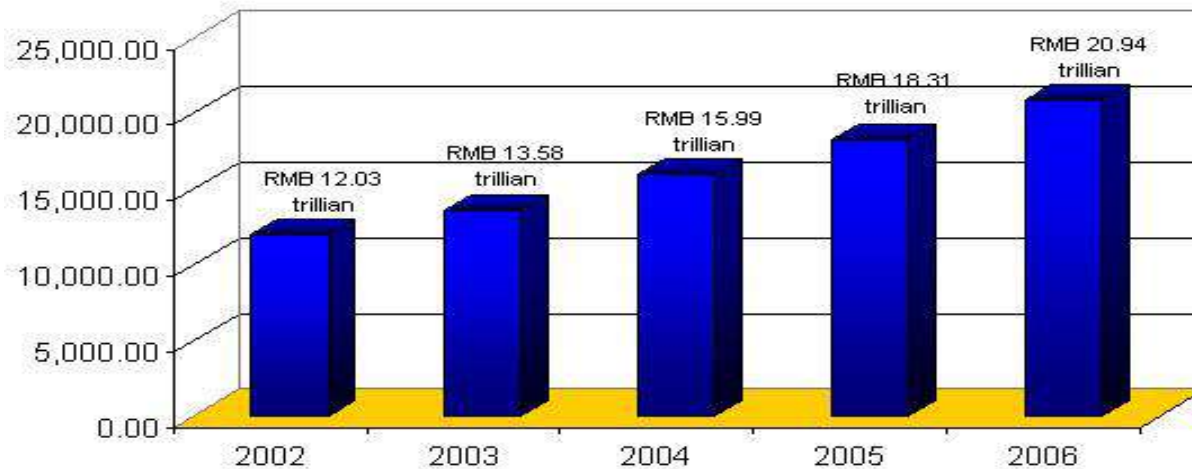
Left:
Unemployed
Chinese workers

In many parts of the world, education is only available to those who can afford to pay for it themselves. In those countries, the literacy rate is often quite low. Countries that have stronger economics usually make money available so that anyone who wants an education can go to school.

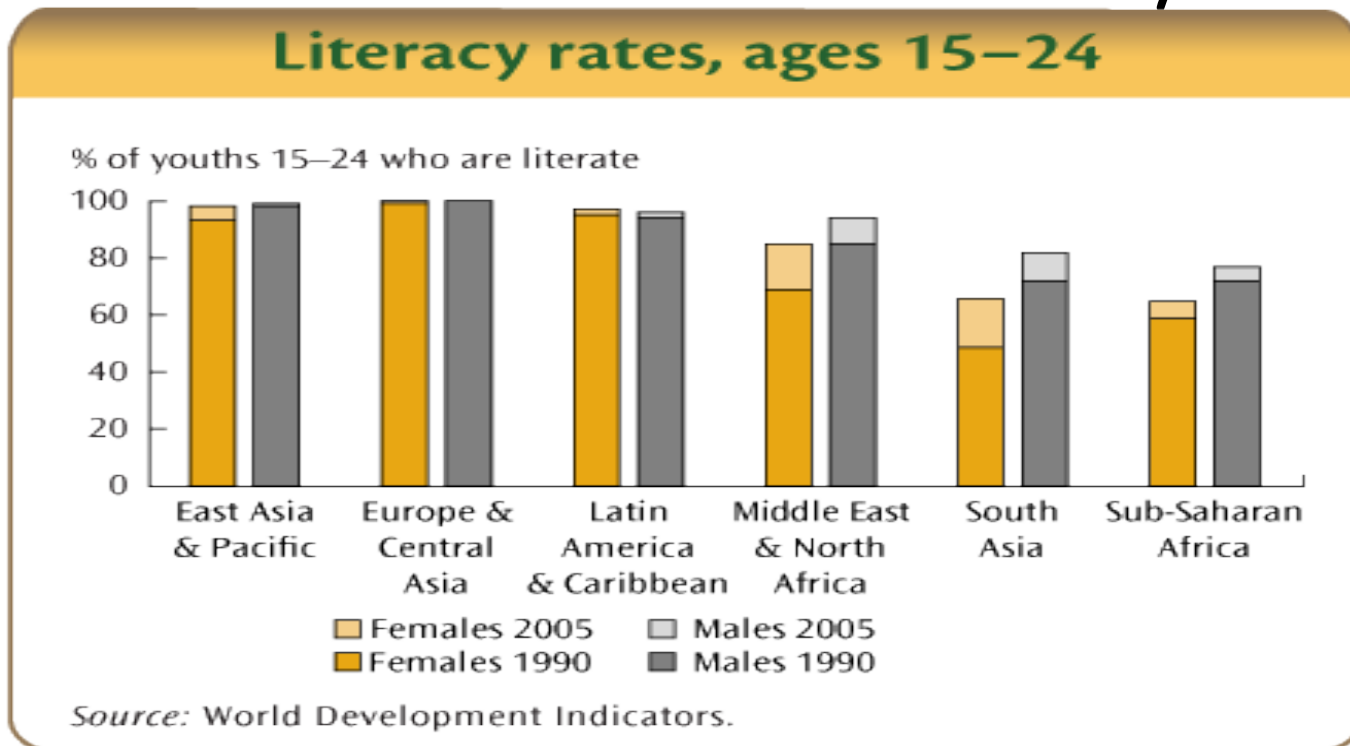


One way to measure the standard of living is the **gross domestic product** or **GDP**. The GDP is the value of all goods and services produced within a country in a given year and then converted into United States dollars for comparison. When divided into a value **per capita** (or per person), it can be used as a measure of the living conditions in a country.

GDP of China: 2002-06



Southern and Eastern Asia offer some interesting contrasts. Many parts of Southern and Eastern Asia, especially those where there are fewer cities and towns, have lower literacy rates than found in Europe and the United States. Higher rates of literacy are usually found in countries that are wealthy.



In Southern and Eastern Asia, some countries have weak economies, but very high literacy rates. Two of these, China and North Korea, have strong state-run education systems that require attendance through a certain age. Even though their economics lag behind the rest of the region in some areas, literacy is a national priority. China has some of the richest and poorest people in Eastern Asia. Even with the wide range of incomes, basic literacy is a primary goal for the Chinese government.

