

SOUTHERN AND EASTERN ASIA

GEOGRAPHIC UNDERSTANDINGS

SS7G9 The student will locate selected features in Southern and Eastern Asia.

- a. Locate on a world and regional political-physical map: Ganges River, Huang He (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 deserts.

The **Indus River** begins in the mountains of Tibet and flows almost 2000 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 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 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.

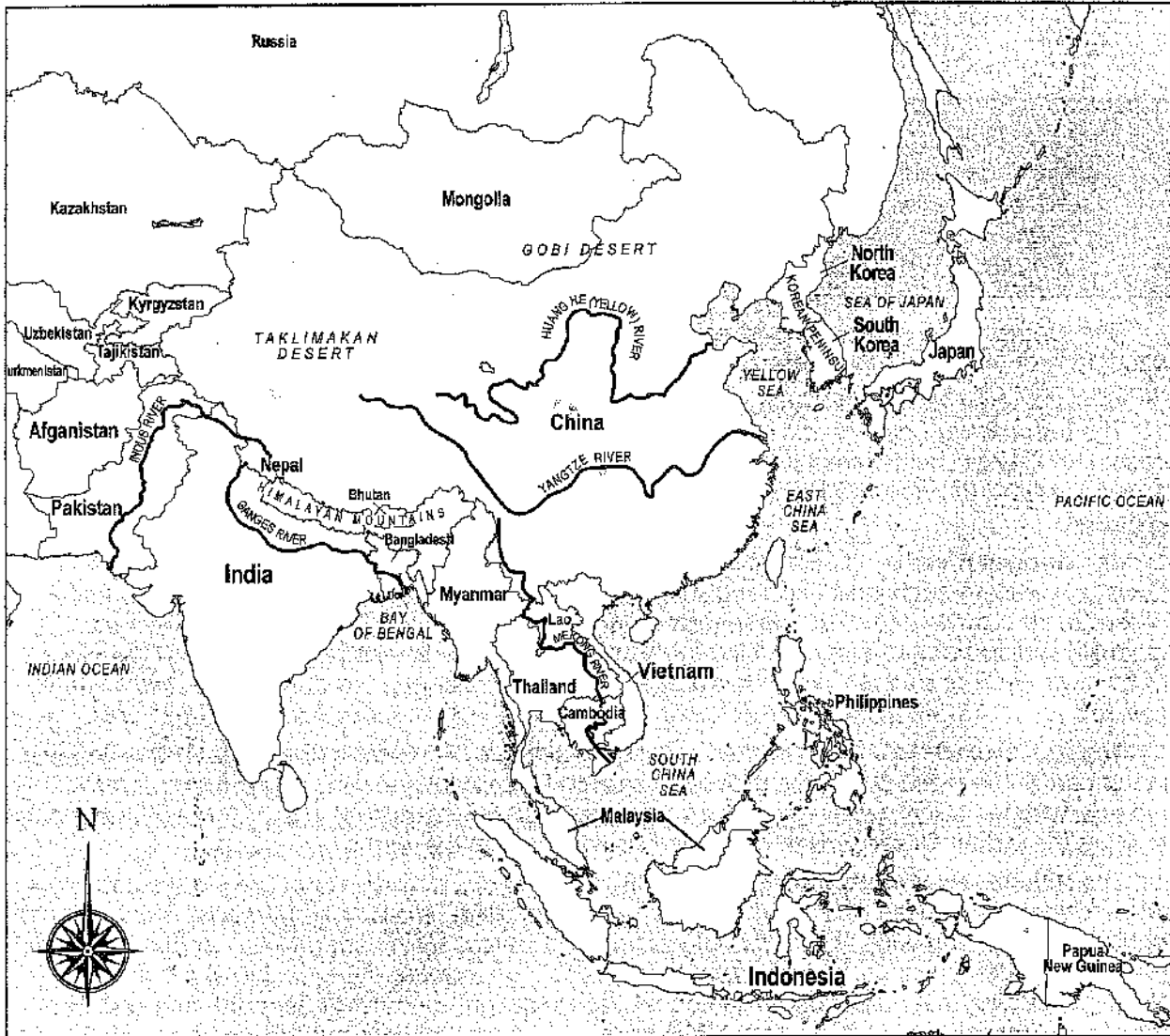
The country of Bangladesh is located almost completely in the Ganges River delta. Heavy flooding in this part of the world during the **monsoon season** (a seasonal prevailing wind, lasting several months, bringing heavy rains) often causes great hardships for those living in this country. Further out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

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** is over 600 miles in length, one of the longest deserts in the world. To the west and in the central part of China is the **Gobi Desert**, which can be one of the hottest and also 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**, 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 carried along as loess (another name for 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."

The **Yangtze 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 3400 miles long making it China's longest river. This river goes through fertile farming land and is one of China's main transportation routes. The Yangtze River and Huang He River 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 2000 years ago.



The **Mekong River** begins in the Tibetan Plateau. This river runs south from China through Myanmar, Thailand, Laos, Cambodia and finally Vietnam, where it empties into the **South China Sea**. 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 that is surrounded by water on three sides). It is 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.

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.

Use the map on the next page to locate the geographic areas in questions 366-370.