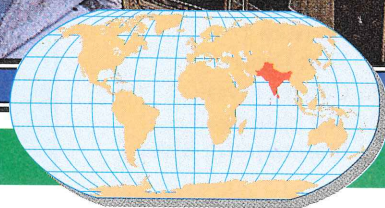
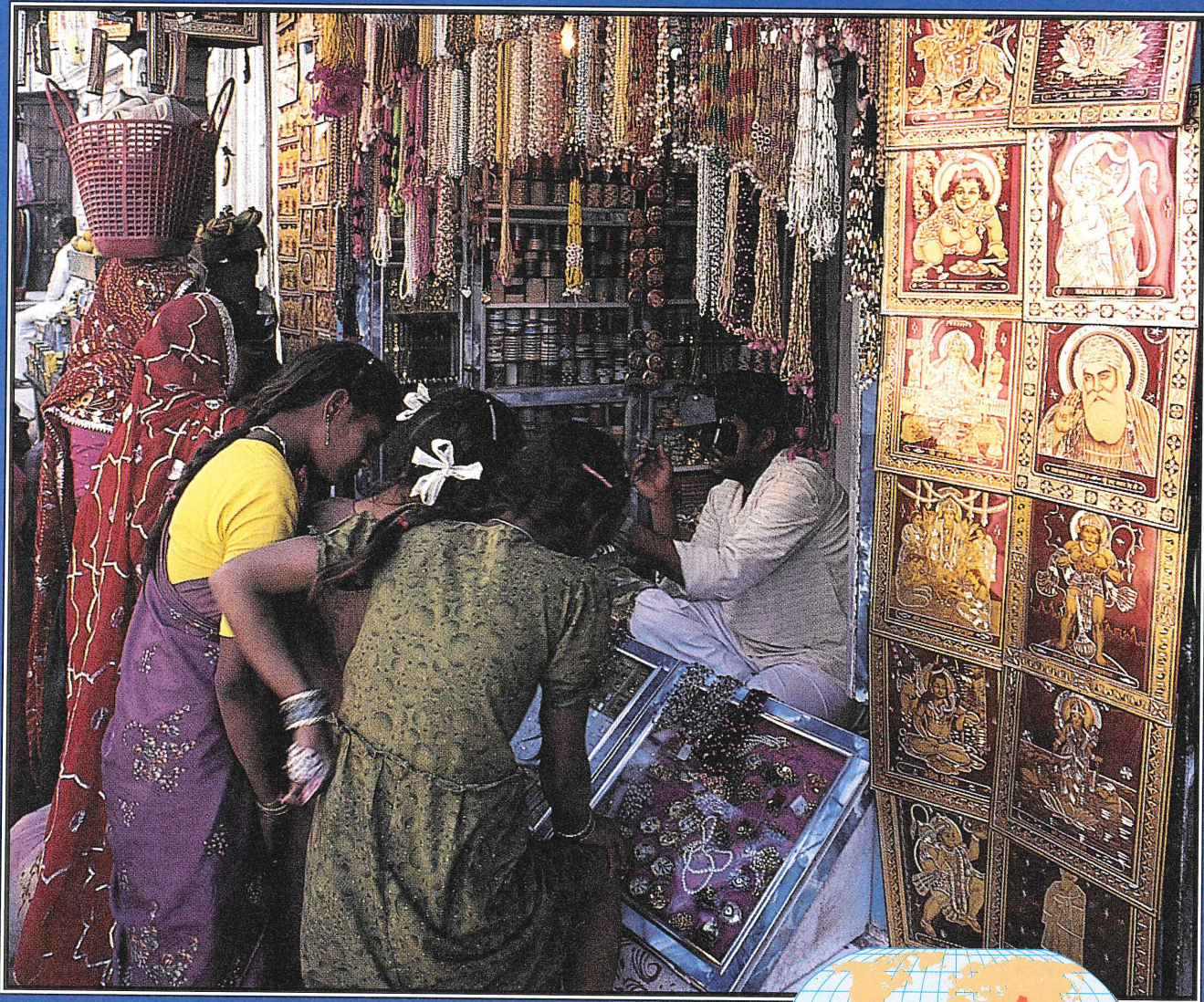


# The Cultural Geography of South Asia



## CHAPTER FOCUS

### Geographic Setting

Throughout history many peoples have entered South Asia through the mountain ranges of the north and then dispersed throughout the Indian subcontinent. The result is a rich diversity of peoples, languages, and traditions.



### Geographic Themes

#### Section 1 Population Patterns

**REGION** Throughout South Asia people tend to cluster in the fertile plains and lowlands.

#### Section 2 History and Government

**MOVEMENT** Two great religions, Hinduism and Buddhism, began in South Asia.

#### Section 3 Cultures and Lifestyles

**HUMAN/ENVIRONMENT INTERACTION** Lifestyles, education, and health care all vary in South Asia depending on whether people live in urban or rural environments.

▲ **Photograph:** Jewelry vender in Rajasthan, India



# Population Patterns

## SETTING THE SCENE

### Read to Discover . . .

- the ethnic groups of South Asia.
- the density and distribution of population in South Asia.
- differences between rural and urban life in the region.

### Key Term

- jati

### Identify and Locate

Indo-Gangetic Plain, Thar Desert, Calcutta, Mumbai (Bombay), Delhi, Dhaka, Islamabad

Bangalore, India

Bangalore is a very busy, cosmopolitan city.

People from all over the globe have settled here permanently. You can see children playing cricket, soccer, and field hockey wherever there is empty space. Movies are the major source of recreation, but sometimes it is impossible to get a ticket unless bought in advance. Flower shows and gardens are very popular and numerous in Bangalore.

Your friend,  
Azeez Haque



**A**zeez Haque's description of the hectic pace of life in Bangalore, India, is typical of urban areas in the culture region of South Asia. More than 1,300 million people—about 22 percent of the world's population—live in South Asia. India's population of about 989 million people ranks second in the world and constitutes more than 76 percent of the region's total population. Bangladesh and Pakistan are home to most of the region's remaining population.

### PLACE

## Human Characteristics

**S**outh Asia has one of the richest and most complex mixes of people in the world. The peoples of the region are divided by six major religions, hundreds of languages, and numerous social groupings.

### India

In India a person's religion may be Hindu, Muslim, Buddhist, Sikh, Jain, or Christian. The person's ancestors may have entered India from Europe or Central Asia thousands of years ago, or the individual may be part of a group whose roots go back more than 8,000 years. If the individual is a Hindu, he or she will belong to one of hundreds of **jati**—social groups that define one's occupation and social standing.

### Pakistan and Bangladesh

In Pakistan and Bangladesh, more than 9 out of 10 people are Muslims. In Pakistan there are at least 5 main ethnic groups, while in Bangladesh, virtually all of the people are Bengali.

### Sri Lanka

Conflict divides Sri Lanka's two main ethnic groups—the Sinhalese and the Tamils. These



two groups inhabit different parts of the island, speak different languages, and practice different religions. The Sinhalese are Buddhist and the Tamils are Hindu. The Sinhalese are the majority, and they dominate the government of Sri Lanka. Many Tamils have pressured the government to create an independent Tamil state, and some have joined terrorist groups such as the Tamil Tigers.

### Bhutan and Nepal

Most inhabitants of Bhutan and Nepal came originally from Mongolia and are quite different in appearance from the inhabitants of India. Tiny Nepal has one of the most complex ethnic patterns in the world. Probably the best-known Nepalese are the Sherpas, famous worldwide since their mountaineering skills helped in the first conquest of Mount Everest, the world's highest peak, located in the Himalayas.

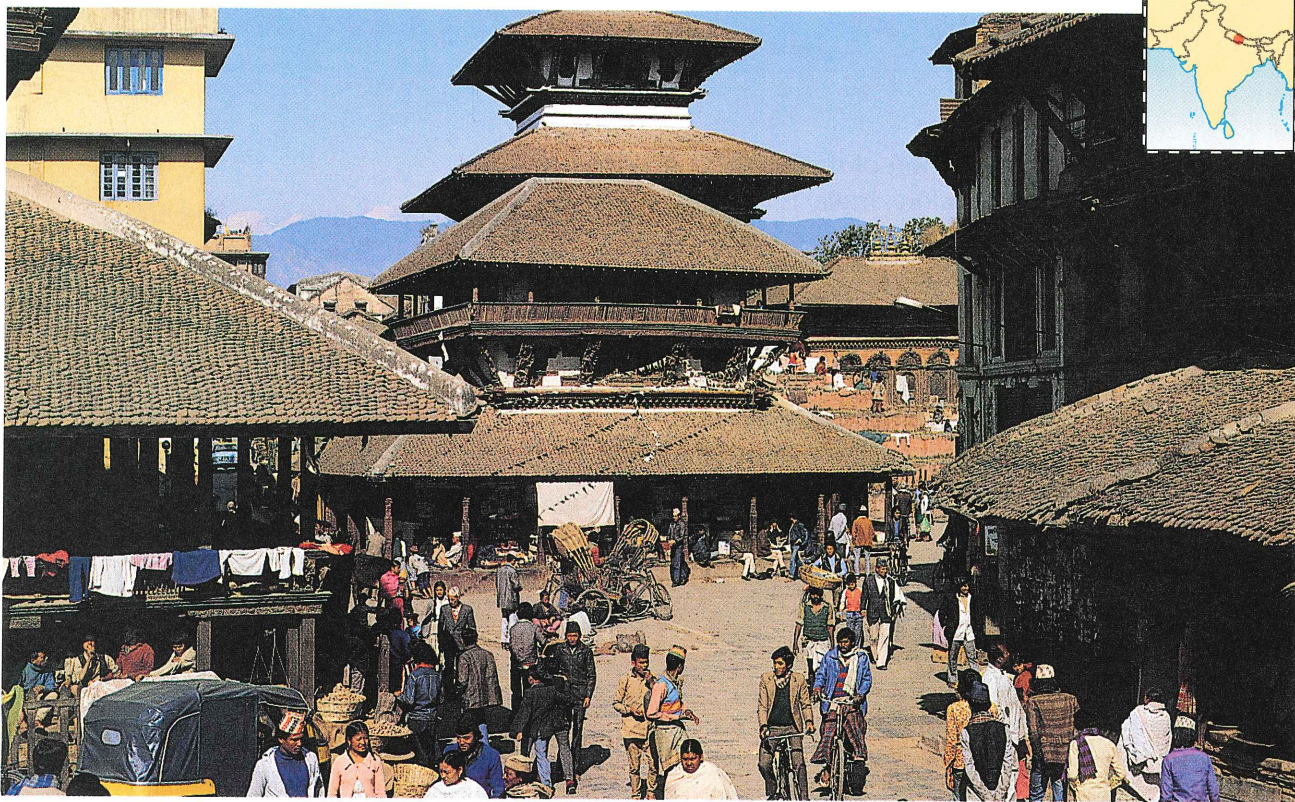
#### PLACE

## Population Density and Distribution

South Asia's overall population density is high—760 people per square mile (293 people per sq. km). This is about 7 times the world average. The rate of population growth in South Asia also is high. If growth continues at its present rate, the population of South Asia will double in less than 40 years.

### Regional Variation

Although population densities are generally high in South Asia, they vary from one region to another. Factors such as climate, vegetation, and terrain have an impact on the number of people the land can support. Some of the most fertile farmland in South Asia is home to many thousands of people per square mile, while other areas, such as the glacier-



#### Geographic Themes

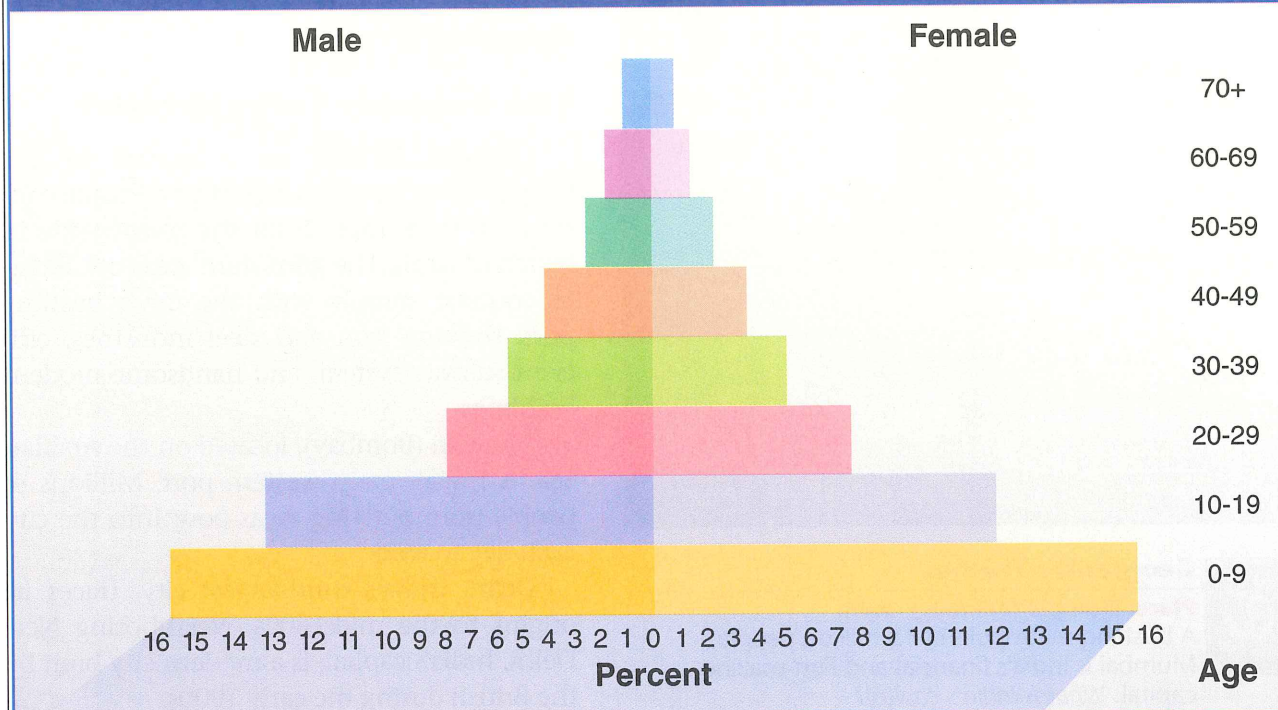
##### Place: Kathmandu, Nepal

Kathmandu, Nepal's capital and largest city, lies at the foot of the Himalayas. *What Nepalese are famous for their mountain-climbing skills?*





## POPULATION OF BANGLADESH BY AGE AND GENDER



### GRAPH STUDY

Bangladesh has one of the most rapidly growing populations in the world. *What percentage of the male population is nine years of age or younger? What percentage of the total population is nine years of age or younger? What kind of problems will this cause in the future of Bangladesh?*

Source: *Encyclopedia Britannica Book of the Year, 1997*

dotted mountains of Nepal and Bhutan, can support only a few individuals per square mile.

### Densely Populated Areas

The greatest concentration of people in South Asia is found on the fertile Indo-Gangetic Plain and along the monsoon-watered coasts of the peninsula. Because rice is an abundant and important food source, it is only natural that most South Asians live where rice is grown.

On Sri Lanka, tea and rubber are grown on large plantations. Because large plantations require large workforces, most of Sri Lanka's population live in rural villages.

The most densely populated country in the region is Bangladesh, with 2,454 people per square mile (948 people per sq. km). This is

one of the highest population densities in the world. Having so many people packed into this tiny country creates serious problems. Despite rich alluvial soil and improved farming techniques, there is not enough food for all the people of Bangladesh. The situation is likely to be even more severe in the future. If the population continues to grow at its current rate, the population of Bangladesh will double in about 38 years.

### Less Densely Populated Regions

India's Deccan Plateau is not as populous as the Indo-Gangetic Plain, but it is still home to an average of 125 to 250 people per square mile (48 to 97 people per sq. km).

The population of the Thar Desert is very sparse, and few people inhabit the mountainous western part of Pakistan.







### Geographic Themes



#### Place: Mumbai (Bombay), India

A bustling metropolis of 15 million people, Mumbai is India's financial and film-making capital. *What is India's capital?*

The southernmost parts of Bhutan and Nepal have populations of about 25 to 60 people per square mile (10 to 23 people per sq. km), but in the northern areas of both countries—where elevations are higher—the density drops to fewer than 25 people per square mile (10 people per sq. km).

### PLACE

## Urbanization

The percentage of South Asians living in urban areas is generally low. The urban portion of the population ranges from as low as 15 percent in Bhutan to 28 percent in Pakistan. Urbanization, however, is an important aspect of life in the region. Currently almost 350 million people in South Asia live in cities.

### Rapid Urban Growth

Many South Asians are migrating to urban areas in search of better jobs and higher wages. The rapid growth of cities presents an important challenge for the governments of the region. The cities are becoming overcrowded,

and the increased population is putting a tremendous strain on public facilities such as schools and hospitals.

### The Region's Largest Cities

Calcutta, located on a branch of the Ganges River, is India's largest city. People continue to flock there from the countryside in search of work. The grim slum areas of Calcutta contrast sharply with the city's bustling port, thriving iron and steel industries, efficient subway system, and handsome modern buildings.

Mumbai (Bombay), located on the Arabian Sea, is India's main western port. Millions of people from outlying areas pour into the city each day to work.

Delhi, India's third-largest city, traces its origins to the mid-1600s. Neighboring New Delhi, India's capital, is a modern city built by the British during the early 1900s.

The cities of Bangladesh are as crowded as the rest of that country. The capital, Dhaka, has more inhabitants per square mile than any city in the world except Lagos, Nigeria. In Islamabad, the capital of Pakistan, new housing developments are being built to accommodate the growing middle class.

## SECTION 1 ASSESSMENT

### Checking for Understanding

- 1. Define** jati.
- 2. Locating Places** On what body of water is Mumbai located?
- 3. Place** Which is the most densely populated country of South Asia?
- 4. Movement** What challenge have South Asia's cities faced in recent decades?

### Critical Thinking

- 5. Drawing Conclusions** Why are the Indo-Gangetic Plain and coastal areas the most densely populated parts of South Asia?

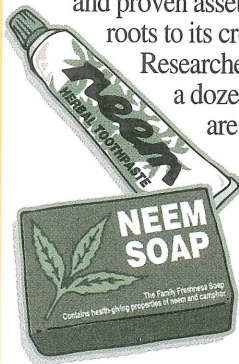




## What is the world's most useful tree?

**T**ropical neem trees, already considered by some scientists to be the most useful tree species on the earth, may turn out in the 21st century to be as versatile as the peanut.

Virtually unrivaled for the title of top tree, the neem grows fast even in poor soil—up to 30 feet (9 m) in six years. It has potential and proven assets from its roots to its crown.

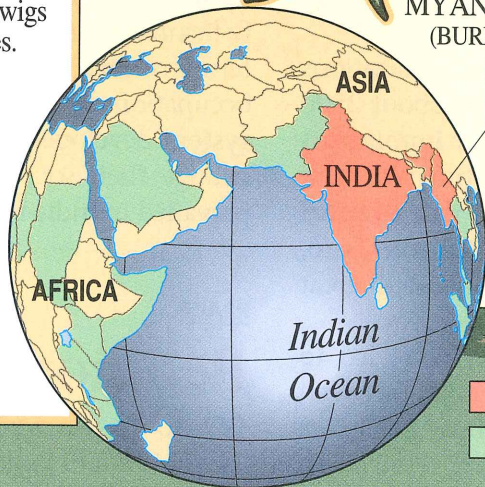
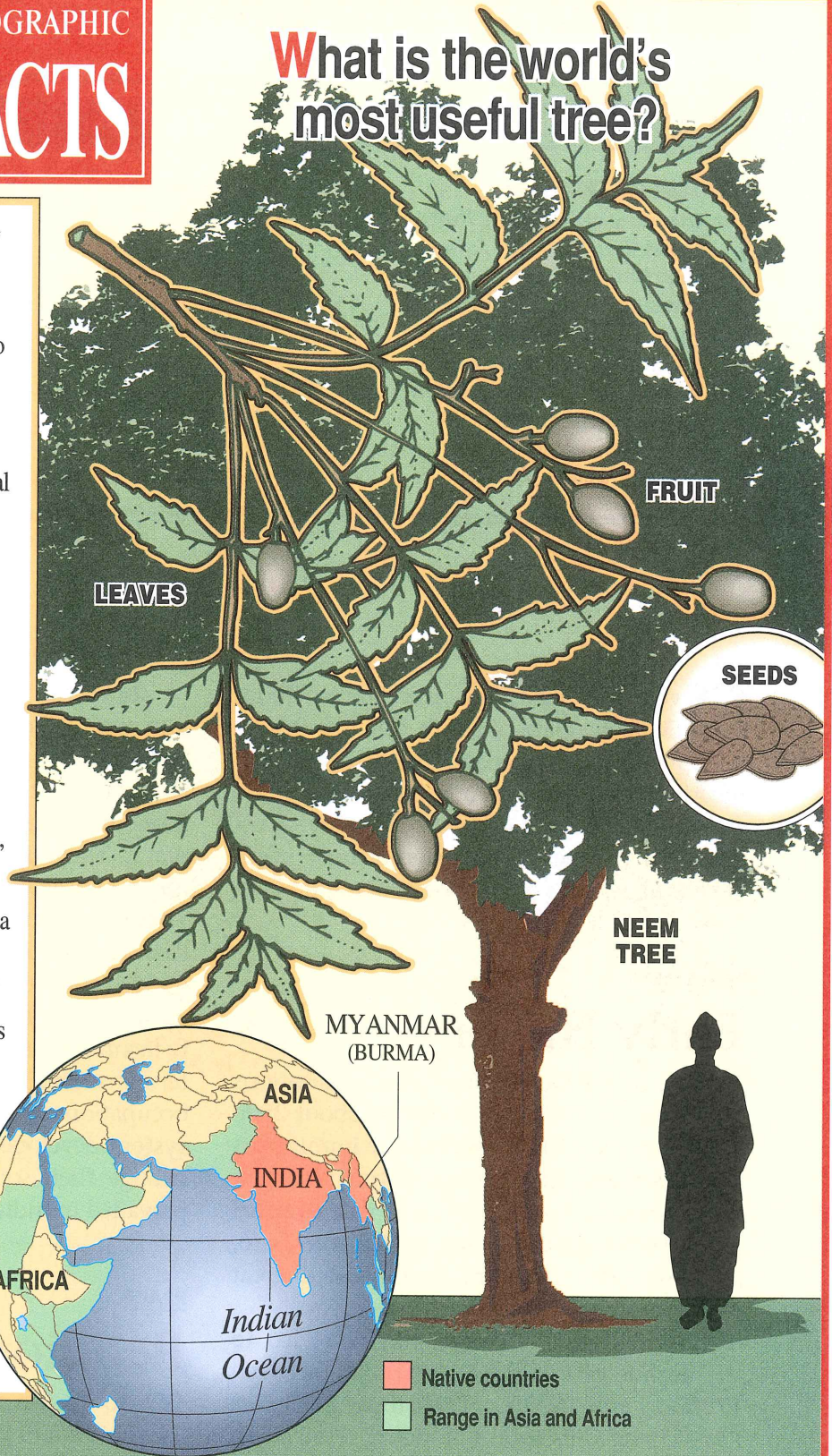


Researchers in at least a dozen countries are trying to unlock the secrets of this member of the mahogany family.

In its native India, the neem is called the “village pharmacy.” Its leaves and seeds contain substances that kill bacteria and viruses.

Neem tea is believed to combat ulcers. Neem extracts have anti-inflammatory powers. Neem twigs have been used as toothbrushes.

A light coating of neem oil keeps stored apples from spoiling so quickly, according to the U. S. Department of Agriculture. In powdered form on farm fields, neem is a safe, natural fungicide and insecticide. Neem’s extraordinary materials can affect more than 200 insect species.



Native countries  
Range in Asia and Africa

Designed by **BILL PITZER**





# History and Government

## SETTING THE SCENE

### Read to Discover . . .

- the early civilizations that developed in South Asia.
- the characteristics of Hinduism and Buddhism.
- how the British established an empire in the region.
- how South Asians achieved independence and established new governments.

### Key Terms

- caste system
- dharma
- karma
- reincarnated
- nirvana

### Identify and Locate

Mohenjo-Daro, Hindu Kush, Gupta Empire, Maurya Empire, Mogul Empire, British India

Over the centuries the fertile Indo-Gangetic Plain of South Asia has attracted many groups of people. The first people to invade, the Aryans, had a lasting influence on all the others. Later invaders, including Muslims and Europeans, also significantly influenced the region's cultural development.

### MOVEMENT

## Early History

One of the world's first great civilizations arose in the Indus Valley by about 2500 B.C. It was most likely founded by immigrants from Iran, who developed a writing system, a strong central government, and rich overseas trade. They built cities such as Mohenjo-Daro, in present-day Pakistan, that boasted great wealth and sophisticated technology.

Environmental changes may have led to the decline of this great civilization between 1700 B.C. and 1500 B.C. Over time, the Indus River changed its course, flooding some cities. Other cities became stranded, far from the water on which they depended for irrigation and trade networks.

About the time the Indus Valley civilization was collapsing, a new group of people known as the Aryans entered the region from the northwest. Unlike the people who built Mohenjo-Daro, the Aryans left behind few artifacts. They did, however, hand down a great body of sacred literature called the Vedas. These four books tell about Aryan religious beliefs. They also explain how Aryan society was divided into three classes: nobles, priests, and ordinary people. At first these classes were fairly flexible; people of different groups could intermarry and individuals could change their occupations. Eventually, however, a rigid **caste system** developed in which people could not change their social status. The caste system prevailed in India for centuries.

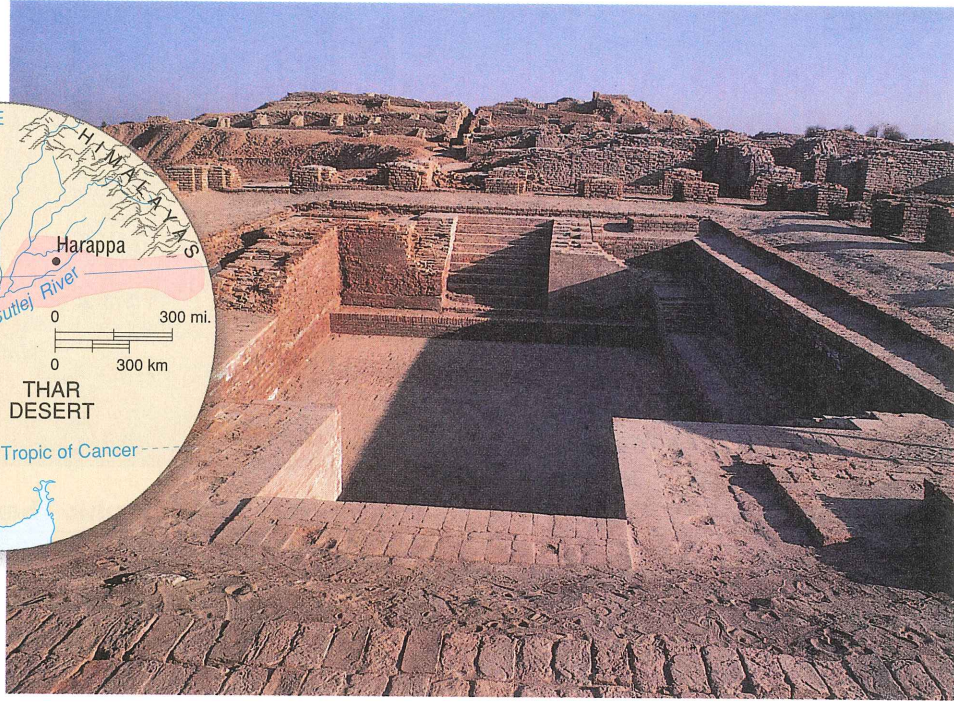
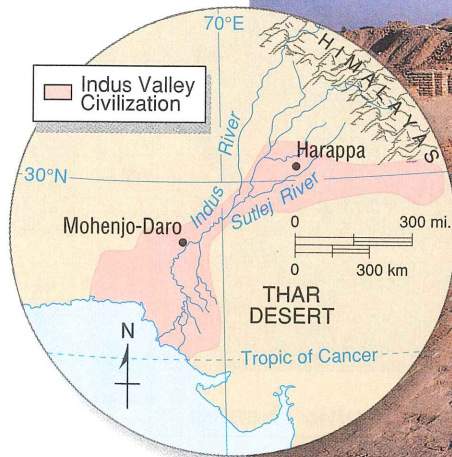
### PLACE

## Religions

Two of the world's great religions—Hinduism and Buddhism—began in India. To understand Indian history and culture, it is important to understand the origins and the teachings of these religions.







## Geographic Themes

### Human/Environment Interaction: Indus River valley

The Indus River valley civilization centered around planned cities: Mohenjo-Daro (shown above) and Harappa. *What environmental changes led to the decline of the cities?*

## Hinduism

Hinduism grew out of Aryan culture and incorporated the caste system first laid out in the Vedas. Hinduism is both a way of life and a set of beliefs.

Hindus believe that every individual must live according to her or his own **dharma** (DUHR•muh), or moral duty. All good actions are rewarded and bad deeds punished according to the law of **karma**. People are **reincarnated**, or reborn, repeatedly until they have overcome all their weaknesses and earthly desires. At that point, they are released from the cycle of rebirth.

Hinduism recognizes many gods and goddesses. Many Hindus see them as different forms of one being. Similarly, Hinduism sees all of the world's religions as different paths toward the same goal.

## Buddhism

In approximately 563 B.C., in present-day Nepal, a prince was born—Siddhartha Gauta-

ma (sih•DAHR•tuh GAUT•uh•muh). As a man, he had everything he could want. Siddhartha's awareness of human suffering, however, made him unable to enjoy life, so he went on a pilgrimage. After years of spiritual searching and intense meditation, he perceived the true nature of human existence for the first time. In so doing, he became known as the Buddha, or the Awakened One.

Buddha spent the rest of his life trying to teach people that they suffer because they are overly attached to material things, and that to escape the chain of desire and suffering which leads to endless rebirth, one must live by certain rules. These rules include thinking clearly, acting wisely, and behaving kindly toward others.

Unlike Hinduism, Buddhism as preached by Buddha had no religious rituals. Buddha wanted to offer human beings a practical way out of their unhappiness. By following his guidelines, people could enter a state of great insight, calm, and happiness, which is called **nirvana** (nir•VAHN•uh).

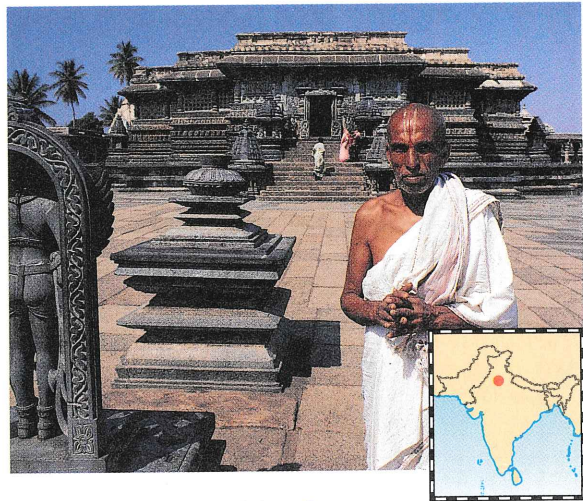




**MOVEMENT**

# Invasions and Empires

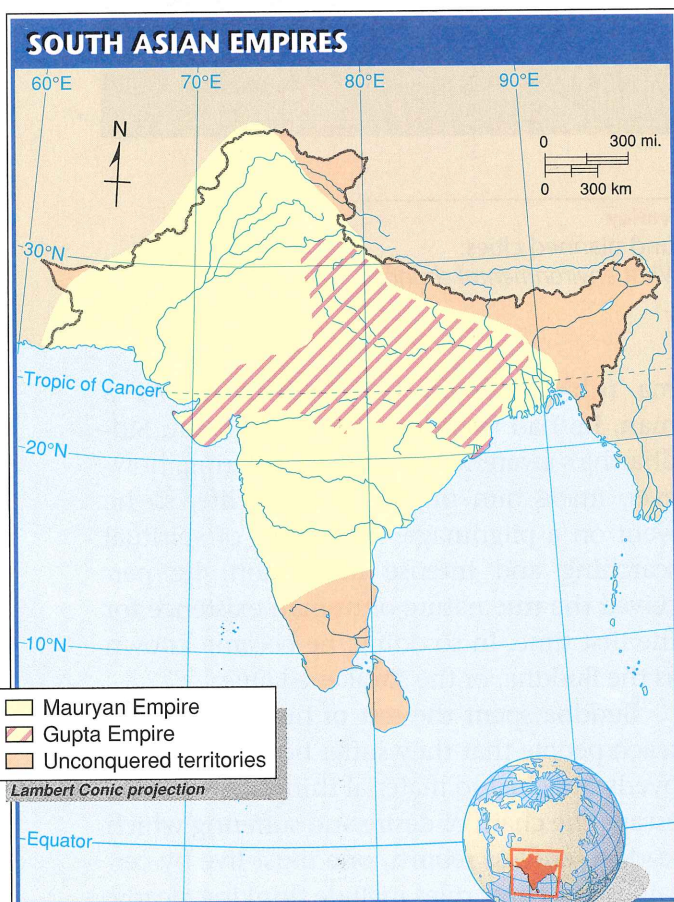
After the Aryans, many other groups of invaders entered South Asia through the Hindu Kush Mountain range in the northwest. The first invaders, the Maurya (MAU•ree•uh), established an empire that lasted from about 320 B.C. to 180 B.C. The last and greatest Mauryan emperor was named Asoka. Although officially a Hindu, he was impressed by Buddha's teachings and helped spread Buddhism.



## Geographic Themes

### Region: South Asia

Even though there are Hindu priests and temples, Hindu worship and meditation are mostly centered in the home. How does Hinduism regard other religions?



### FOCUS ON GEOGRAPHIC THEMES



1. **Region:** Which empire was limited to the Ganges River valley and central India?
2. **Place:** What part of the Indian subcontinent was never under the rule of the empires?

About 500 years after the Mauryan Empire, the Gupta dynasty created a new empire in northern India. During the Gupta Empire, which lasted from about A.D. 320 to 550, India was one of the most advanced cultures in the world, excelling in the arts, science, and technology. The numerals we use today were most likely developed in India before being introduced to Europe by Arab traders.

Muslim merchants, adventurers, and missionaries first entered India in the 700s. By the 1100s, Muslim armies had conquered northern India. A succession of Muslim conquerors ruled the subcontinent for the next several centuries.

The final invaders were the Europeans who arrived about 1500. The Portuguese arrived first, and they came mainly to trade.

By the early 1600s, England had become the leading European power in South Asia, largely because of the success of its royal trading company, the East India Company. The company was so successful that by the mid-1700s it had occupied almost the entire region. Under the company's rule, changes were introduced, such as the reorganization of education, the introduction of the English language, and the development of a civil service.





## PLACE

# Modern South Asia

Today the countries of South Asia are independent of European control. Independence did not come easily, however.

## Independence

Many people of South Asia wanted freedom from the United Kingdom. One leader of this group was a British-trained lawyer named Mohandas K. Gandhi. Gandhi believed that Indians should rely on nonviolent methods to persuade the British to leave India. Under his guidance, many Indians refused to buy British-made goods. Known as *Mahatma*, or “Great Soul,” Gandhi was often imprisoned and went on a hunger strike.

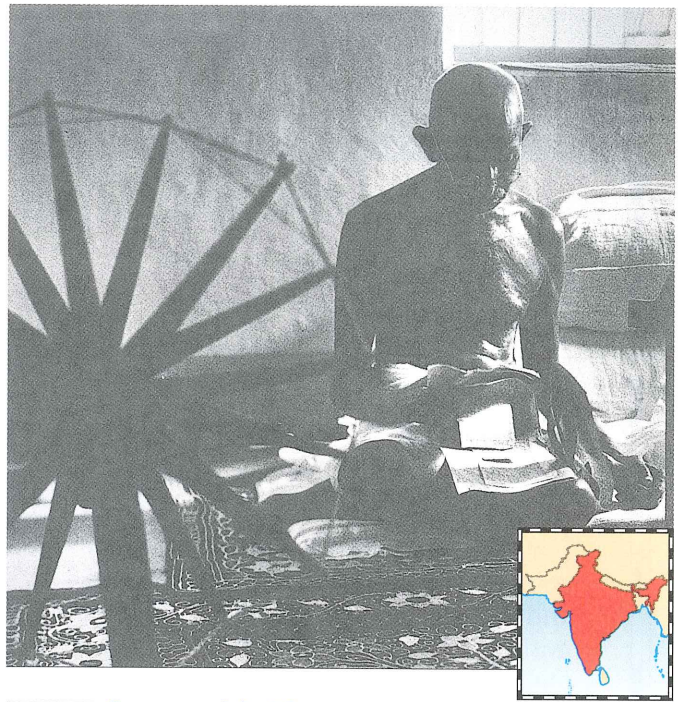
By the end of World War II, the British were tired of fighting faraway conflicts and agreed to grant independence. In 1947 British India was divided into 2 independent states. Areas with a Muslim majority became part of the Muslim nation of Pakistan, while areas with a majority of Hindus became part of the nation of India. Under this plan, Pakistan consisted of 2 sections—East Pakistan and West Pakistan—separated by about 1,000 miles (1,609 km) of Indian territory.

The departure of the British brought other changes. One year after the division of British India, British-ruled Ceylon was granted independence. In 1972 the nation changed its name to Sri Lanka. In the northern part of the subcontinent, Bhutan and Nepal had always remained independent of the British.

## Today’s Governments

After independence, tensions arose between Muslims and Hindus. Muslims living in mostly Hindu India fled to Pakistan, while many Hindus in Pakistan migrated to India. Rioting broke out, and tens of thousands were killed. Problems also developed between the people of East and West Pakistan. In 1971, East Pakistan revolted and declared itself the independent nation of Bangladesh.

The current governments of South Asia include democracies and monarchies. India is a



### Geographic Themes

#### Region: India

Mohandas K. Gandhi led India toward independence from British rule. *What was Gandhi’s background?*

federal parliamentary republic. Sri Lanka and Bangladesh also have parliamentary systems. Pakistan today has a president who is elected indirectly by members of the legislature. Bhutan and Nepal are monarchies.

## SECTION 2 ASSESSMENT

### Checking for Understanding

- 1. Define** caste system, dharma, karma, reincarnated, nirvana.
- 2. Locating Places** In what part of South Asia were the first great cities built?
- 3. Place** What was a major feature of each empire established in South Asia?
- 4. Movement** What action did Mohandas K. Gandhi recommend in the struggle for independence?

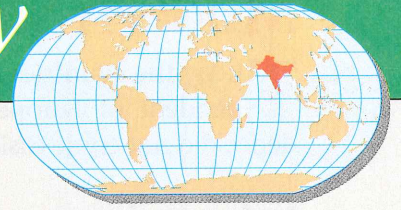
### Critical Thinking

- 5. Making Comparisons** Compare and contrast Buddhism and Hinduism.





# Geography and History



## NEPAL AND BHUTAN: ISOLATED BY GEOGRAPHY

As you read, examine how Nepal and Bhutan were affected by their geography.

### Location

Cradled between the huge countries of India and China, and hidden among the imposing crags of the Himalayas, Nepal and Bhutan remained mysteries to much of the world for many centuries. Indeed, chroniclers in China refer to Bhutan as the “hidden holy land.” Its present-day name came from British explorers who arrived in the mid-1770s.

### Mountain Lands

Of the two countries, Bhutan is the more geographically isolated. Eight successive ranges of the Himalayas cut north to south across the tiny country, slicing it into a series of parallel valleys. The river systems that irrigate and drain the valleys provide additional obstacles that explorers or would-be invaders had to overcome.

Not until the early 1960s were roads completed across the country as well as farther south into India. Before that time, the few people who visited the country had the choice of the two methods of travel the Bhutanese themselves used: foot or horse. Most Bhutanese still travel by those two methods, while



The Himalayas cover much of Nepal and Bhutan. The mountains have long, harsh winters and short, cool summers. Steep river valleys cut through the icy glaciers and snow. Buddhist monasteries and Hindu temples often are perched on hillsides overlooking the valleys.

Bhutanese officials now use helicopters extensively.

Himalayan ranges cover the northern two-thirds of Nepal, forming the largest of the country's three parallel regions that run east and west. The remaining southern third of Nepal is divided into a strip of hills and river basins and a section that is part of India's Gangetic Plain. Steamy, tangled rain forest met intruders from the south; the freezing, hostile Himalayas met any challenge coming from the north.

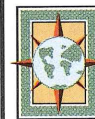
### Widening Contacts

During the late 1700s and early 1800s, the British increased their influence in both countries while strengthening their hold on India. Although the United

Kingdom assumed control of the countries' foreign affairs and defense, it did not interfere with either nation's internal politics. Until the late 1950s, Bhutan and Nepal continued their isolation from world affairs. Since then, both nations have lessened their ties to the United Kingdom and have moved toward greater modernization.

### Checking for Understanding

1. What geographical factors isolated Bhutan and Nepal?
2. **Movement** What changes have come to Nepal and Bhutan during this century?





# Cultures and Lifestyles

## SETTING THE SCENE

### Read to Discover . . .

- the languages and religions of South Asia.
- the contrasts between rural and urban lifestyles in South Asia.
- the arts and celebrations of South Asia.

### Key Terms

- mantra
- sadhu
- raga
- tala

### Identify and Locate

Taj Mahal, Golden Temple

**S**outh Asia's ethnic diversity and its long and complicated history have produced a rich culture. Although the region's standard of living tends to be low when measured in terms of material wealth or life expectancy, South Asians are surrounded by beautiful art and architecture, have access to a lively film industry, and celebrate hundreds of festivals each year.

### PLACE

## Languages

South Asia has a diversity of languages. India alone has 14 major languages and hundreds of regional dialects. Although English is commonly spoken in government and business, Hindi is the official language of India.

### Indo-Aryan Languages

Most of the languages spoken in Pakistan, Bangladesh, and northern India fall into the Indo-Aryan family of languages. These include Hindi, Urdu, and Bengali. About half of the Indian people, especially in the north and central areas, speak Hindi as a first or second language. Urdu is the official language of Pakistan, and Bengali is the official language of Bangladesh. Hindustani, a language spoken in northern India, is a mixture of Hindi and

Urdu. Nepali and Sinhalese, the official languages of Nepal and Sri Lanka, are Indo-Aryan languages as well.

### Other Languages

About one-fifth of the people in southern India and Sri Lanka speak languages of the Dravidian family. The Dravidian languages include Tamil, Telegu, Kannada, and Malayalam. In northern South Asia, the languages spoken in Bhutan and Nepal reflect these countries' close ethnic and historic ties with central Asia.

### PLACE

## Religions

**T**he major religions of South Asia are Hinduism, Islam, and Buddhism. Most of the people in India and Nepal practice Hinduism. There are also Hindus in Bhutan, Sri Lanka, Pakistan, and Bangladesh.

The majority of people in Pakistan and Bangladesh are Muslim. In India, Muslims are the largest single minority, exceeding 140 million.

Although Buddhism had its beginnings in South Asia, its overall influence has declined in the region. This has been primarily because of the flexibility of Hinduism, which has absorbed many of the teachings of Buddhism.







#### FOCUS ON GEOGRAPHIC THEMES



1. **Region:** What is the dominant language family in northern South Asia?
2. **Location:** Where are Sino-Tibetan languages spoken?
3. **Place:** To which language family does Tamil belong?

Buddhism, however, remains quite strong in Sri Lanka, Bhutan, and Nepal.

Two other religions of South Asia are Sikhism and Jainism. Jainism was founded in the 500s B.C. by a young Hindu teacher named Mahavira. Its chief characteristic is a belief in extreme nonviolence. Jains believe that every living thing has a soul, and that to kill even an insect is evil. Today, Jainism has over 3 million followers in India.

Sikhism was founded in the early 1500s by a teacher named Nanak. Nanak was interested in combining Hinduism and Islam into one united creed. Sikhs are monotheistic, like Muslims, and accept Hindu ideas on karma and reincarnation. Most of the 25 million Sikhs live in the northwestern part of India.

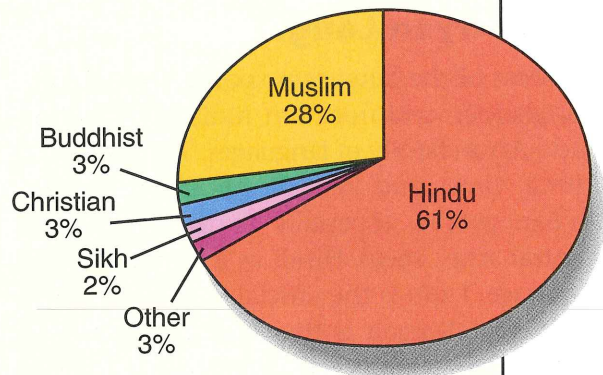
Another religion in South Asia is Christianity with about 40 million followers. Most Christians live in the south of India.

### Influence of Religion

Religion has a powerful influence on daily life in South Asia. In Bhutan, prayer flags flap in the wind, sending out sacred messages called **mantras**. In India, Hindu teachers known as **sadhus** can be seen everywhere. Usually dressed in yellow robes, they carry just a bowl and a blanket and live on gifts from those who want to improve their karma. In India, where Hindus consider cattle sacred, thousands of cows roam the streets. In Pakistan women dress modestly as Islamic law requires.

#### South Asia: Religions

Hindu	800,000,000
Muslim	370,000,000
Christian	40,000,000
Sikh	25,000,000
Buddhist	35,000,000
Other	30,000,000



Sources: *The Information Please Almanac*, 1998; *The World Almanac*, 1998



PLACE

# The Arts

Like religion, the arts are an important aspect of life in South Asia. Even the humblest workers perform their tasks in an artistic way. For example, a spice or cosmetic stall in any Indian bazaar is a palette of dazzling colors piled in perfect pyramids by merchant vendors.

## Architecture

One of the world's most famous buildings, the Taj Mahal, is in India. A Muslim emperor built it in the 1600s as a tomb for his beloved wife. The structure is made of white marble and has towers and domes in the Islamic style. Delicate screens, which allow air to circulate, are carved in the Hindu style.

Other outstanding architectural works include mosques in Pakistan and Bangladesh and the Golden Temple of the Sikhs in Amritsar (UH•M•RIT•suh•r), India. In Bhutan there are old fortified monasteries called dzong (dza•wng) that developed as centers for Buddhist learning and art.

## Music and Dance

Classical Indian dances are based on themes from Hindu mythology. There are numerous dance styles, each from a different region.

The style known as Bharata Natyam (bah•RAH•tah•naht•yahm) is mainly danced in the south. The dancers are usually women, gorgeously dressed in bright silk saris and gold bracelets. The dances are long and elaborate, with complex hand gestures, rapid whirling, and stamping feet.

In the Kathakali (kah•thah•KAHL•lee) dances from India's west coast, the dancers wear huge, colorful masks and move violently. Very different is Manipuri, a gentle, swaying dance style from northeastern India.

Indian classical music is divided into two basic types: Hindustani—practiced in the North—and Karnatak—practiced in the South. The melody is called the *raga*, and the rhythm is called the *tala*. There is no harmony in Indi-



an music, and improvisation plays an important role.

## Literature

Two of India's most famous works of literature are the *Mahabharata* (muh•HAH•BHA•ruh•tuh) and the *Ramayana* (rah•MAH•yah•nuh). These two great epic poems were composed between about 1500 B.C. and 500 B.C. and are still frequently read aloud or used as the basis of dramas today.

The *Mahabharata* includes a shorter work known as the *Bhagavad Gita* (BAH•guh•vahd•GEE•tuh), meaning "the lord's song." This





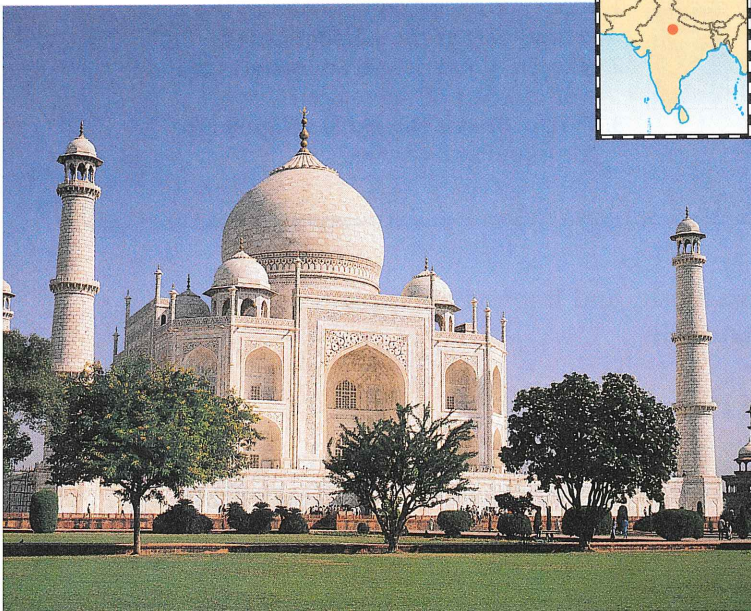
story takes place before a great battle and teaches people to fulfill their duties and not to fear death.

India's greatest modern writer was Rabindranath Tagore, winner of the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1913. In addition to writing poetry, fiction, and drama in both Bengali and English, Tagore composed music and painted. He lived at a time when South Asia was awakening from British rule, and his works expressed the cultural and patriotic ferment that was sweeping the region.

Another important modern writer of South Asia was Muslim poet and philosopher Muhammad Iqbal. Iqbal, who wrote extensively during the early 1900s, proposed the idea of Pakistan—a separate Muslim state for the subcontinent's Muslims.

## Movies

Today movies are the most popular form of entertainment in India. Movies are also very popular in Bangladesh. The Indian film industry produces more than 800 full-length films a year—more than any other country.



### Geographic Themes

#### Place: Taj Mahal

The white marbled Taj Mahal is considered one of the most beautiful buildings in the world. *Why was the Taj Mahal built?*

## PLACE

# Lifestyles

Lifestyles in South Asia, like those in many developing nations, are a complicated mixture of the traditional and the modern.

## Urban and Rural Contrasts

The standard of living in the rural areas of South Asia is often low. The majority of the people are peasant farmers who must struggle to raise enough food to feed their families. Large extended families live in small villages and work on small farms nearby.

Prosperous people in the cities live very different lives. These people include business leaders, industrialists, political leaders, and large landowners. They live in high-rise apartments or small houses, drive cars, and enjoy the many cultural offerings.

Many of the cities' residents, however, have little chance to appreciate these luxuries. Millions live in the streets, spreading out their beds on the sidewalks each night. Others build flimsy shelters of bamboo.

## Health

Because much of South Asia has a semi-tropical or tropical climate, such diseases as malaria and smallpox were once widespread. In recent years, governments have made some progress against these diseases. Sri Lanka was one of the first developing nations to eliminate malaria, a disease spread by mosquitoes. Nepal has also eradicated the disease through insect spraying programs.

In Nepal, life expectancy is the shortest in the region—about 55 years. Only Sri Lanka with its life expectancy of 72 years approaches the rates of developed countries such as Japan or the United States, where life expectancy exceeds 75 years.

The availability of clean water is a problem in much of South Asia. Therefore, water-borne diseases such as cholera and dysentery are still common. In Nepal, almost one-third of the babies die from dysentery before they reach their first birthday. Infant mortality is also very high in Bangladesh.





## Food Needs

Another reason for the health problems that face South Asia is poor nutrition. It has been estimated that almost one-third of the people of this region do not get enough protein to eat. The reason is simple: they are too poor to afford a variety of foods.

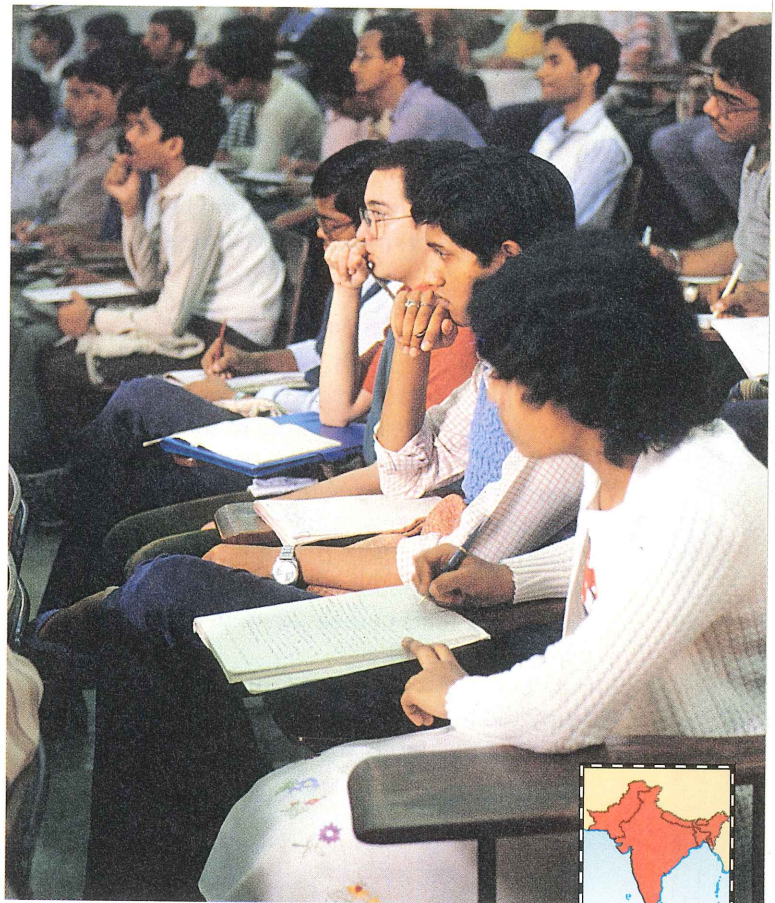
Governments are doing what they can to improve food production and people's diets. In Nepal, government-sponsored reforms have taken farmland away from large landowners and put it in the hands of those who actually work it. The result has been increased production. Beginning in the 1960s, the Indian government began a many-sided campaign to increase the country's food supply. So far the campaign has been very successful.

## Education

Improving education is essential to improving South Asia's standard of living. In most areas of South Asia, about one-third of the people over the age of 15 can read and write. In Sri Lanka, the literacy rate is very high—about 90 percent. The government of India is committed to expanding educational opportunities. Today's literacy rate is twice what it was when the country first became an independent nation. Advances in education are also weakening the caste system, especially in the cities. Laws have also been passed giving the lowest social class—the untouchables—the same rights as other people.

## Celebrations

An example of South Asia's rich and varied cultures are the region's many celebrations. Hindu festivals, such as Diwali, the festival of lights, are joyous, colorful occasions marked by ancient symbols and community togetherness. Muslims celebrate a great day of festivity at the end of Ramadan, the month during which they abstain from food and drink from dawn to dusk. The day is marked by visiting and feasting with friends, relatives, and neighbors. Buddhists widely celebrate the birth of the Buddha, and Christians celebrate the traditional holidays of the Christian calendar.



### Geographic Themes

#### Region: South Asia

The countries of South Asia are committed to improving education and raising their standards of living. *About how many people in South Asia over the age of 15 can read and write?*

## SECTION 3 ASSESSMENT

### Checking for Understanding

- 1. Define** mantra, sadhu, raga, tala.
- 2. Locating Places** In what part of India are the Dravidian languages spoken?
- 3. Place** What has been the greatest improvement in medical care in South Asia?
- 4. Region** How does religion affect lifestyles in South Asia?

### Critical Thinking

- 5. Expressing Problems Clearly** How does unclean water affect the health of South Asians?





# MAP & GRAPH SKILLS

## Reading a Line Graph

A line graph is an excellent tool for recording changes in data over time. On a line graph, time intervals (hours, weeks, years, etc.) are recorded on the horizontal axis, or **x-axis**. The vertical axis, or **y-axis**, shows numbers or units of measurement. These two axes form a grid.

### REVIEWING THE SKILL

In plotting a line graph, for each time interval you must place a dot along the vertical axis showing what quantity occurred at that time. Then draw a line connecting the dots to show whether the numbers go up or down.

To read a line graph, apply the following steps:

- Read the graph title to determine its subject.
- Study the information on the x- and y-axes to identify the units of measurement and the time period.
- Look at the placement of dots on the grid.
- Study the movement of the line(s) on the graph to draw conclusions about trends over time.

### PRACTICING THE SKILL



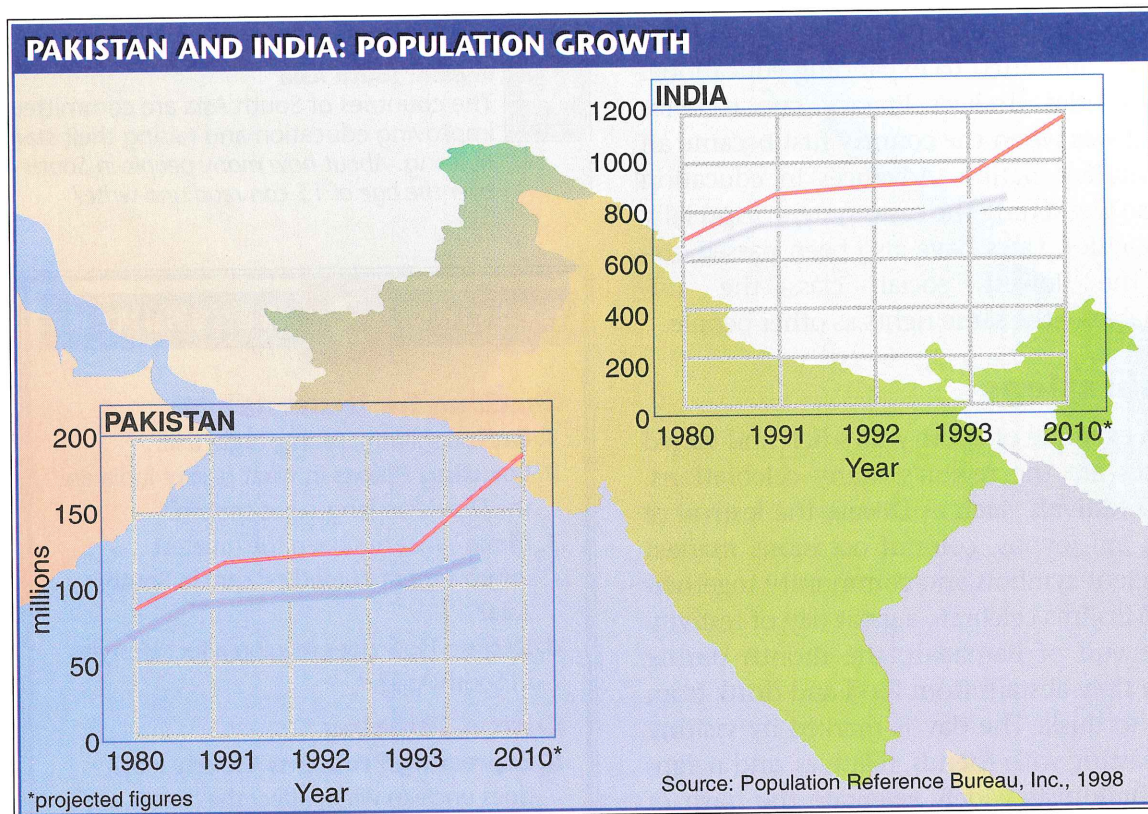
Answer the following questions:

1. What is the topic of the graphs?
2. What time period is measured on these graphs?
3. What do the numbers on the y-axis represent?
4. What was the approximate population of each country in 1992?
5. Are the figures shown for the year 2010 actual or estimated? Explain your answer.

For additional practice in reading a line graph, see **Practicing Skills** on page 508 of the **Chapter 24 Assessment**.



The **Glencoe Skillbuilder Interactive Workbook, Level 2** provides instruction and practice in key social studies skills.





**1**

SECTION

KEY TERMS

SUMMARY

**Population Patterns** jati (p. 491)

- South Asia is an ethnically diverse area.
- Population density is greatest on the Indo-Gangetic Plain.
- Although most South Asians live in rural areas, an increasing number are migrating to the cities in search of work.



Victoria Railway Station, Mumbai, India

**2**

SECTION

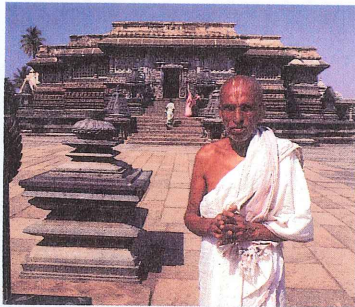
KEY TERMS

SUMMARY

**History and Government**

caste system (p. 496)  
dharma (p. 497)  
karma (p. 497)  
reincarnated (p. 497)  
nirvana (p. 497)

- The Indus Valley was home to one of the world's first great civilizations.
- Many peoples have conquered South Asia, from the Aryans to the British.
- Two of the world's great religions—Hinduism and Buddhism—originated in South Asia.
- After World War II, the region achieved independence from the British Empire.
- Today most of the people of South Asia elect their leaders.



Hindu temple and priest

**3**

SECTION

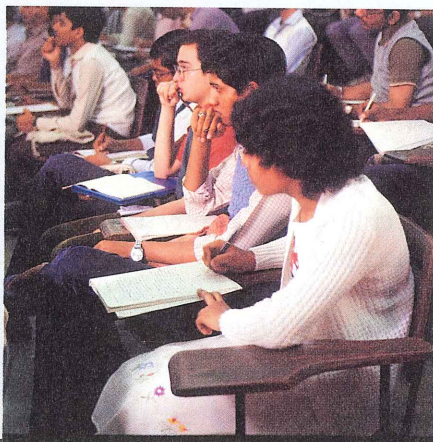
KEY TERMS

SUMMARY

**Cultures and Lifestyles**

mantra (p. 502)  
sadhu (p. 502)  
raga (p. 503)  
tala (p. 503)

- South Asians speak many different languages. India alone has 14 major languages and hundreds of dialects.
- The main religions of South Asia are Hinduism, Islam, and Buddhism. People also practice Christianity, Jainism, and Sikhism.
- In most of South Asia the standard of living is low and life expectancy is short. There have been improvements, however, in health care and education in recent years.



Modern university class in India





## Reviewing Key Terms

Choose the vocabulary term that best completes each of the sentences below. Write your answers on a separate sheet of paper.

- jati (p. 491)
- caste system (p. 496)
- dharma (p. 497)
- sadhu (p. 502)
- raga (p. 503)

### SECTION 1

1. The term for a Hindu social division is \_\_\_\_\_.

### SECTION 2

2. Hindus believe that each person must follow his or her moral duty, or \_\_\_\_\_.
3. India's ancient \_\_\_\_\_ consisted of four major groups.

### SECTION 3

4. \_\_\_\_\_ is the melody of Indian classical music.
5. \_\_\_\_\_ are Hindu teachers.

## Reviewing Facts

### SECTION 1

6. South Asia is home to what percentage of the world's population?
7. Which capital is the second most densely populated city in the world?

### SECTION 2

8. Which people passed on the body of literature known as the Vedas?
9. According to the Buddha, what is the result of desiring things?

### SECTION 3

10. What religion is followed by most of the people of Pakistan and Bangladesh?
11. Why do so many South Asians fail to eat enough protein?

## Critical Thinking

12. **Cause and Effect** Why do few people live at high elevations in Nepal and Bhutan?
13. **Drawing Conclusions** What do the objects discovered at Mohenjo-Daro suggest about the people who created them?
14. **Expressing Problems Clearly** Why have the governments of South Asia been unable to improve urban living conditions?



## Geographic Themes

15. **Region** How does the region's overall population density compare with the world average?
16. **Movement** From what direction did most invaders enter South Asia?
17. **Place** What is the *Baghavat Gita's* theme?



## Practicing Skills

### Reading a Line Graph

Refer to the line graph on page 506.

18. By how much did Pakistan's population grow from 1980 to 1991?
19. By how much is each country's population expected to increase in the 30-year period shown in the graphs?

## Using the Unit Atlas

Refer to the cultural geography section of the Unit Atlas on pages 470–471.

20. From what country did Bangladesh win its independence? When?
21. What major social problem is India facing?



**Projects**

**Individual Activity**

Choose Hinduism, Buddhism, or Islam and research one aspect of the religion in depth. You might examine its teachings on the deity or its rules for daily life. Write a report on what you learn.

**Cooperative Learning Activity**

Working in a small group, go to the library. Have each person research one topic related to South Asia, such as festivals, health, or ethnic diversity. Use the *Readers' Guide to Periodical Literature* to locate recent articles on these subjects. Report your findings to the class.

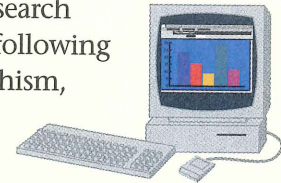
**Writing About Geography**

**Description** Locate and study resources about Mohenjo-Daro. Describe Mohenjo-

Daro as it would have looked thousands of years ago. Using your journal record, compare the products of modern South Asia with those produced in the region's earliest civilization. What geographic factors account for any similarities or differences?

**Technology Activity**

**Using a Database** Research information about the following religions of India: Buddhism, Hinduism, Jainism, Sikhism, Christianity, and Islam. Organize your research into a database with the following fields: Number of followers, Basic beliefs, and Major figures.



**Locating Places**

**SOUTH ASIA: PHYSICAL GEOGRAPHY**

Match the letters on the map with the places of South Asia. Write your answers on a separate sheet of paper.

1. Thar Desert
2. Sri Lanka
3. New Delhi
4. Calcutta
5. Nepal
6. Indus River
7. Hindu Kush
8. Mumbai
9. Dhaka
10. Bhutan

