

18. Asia – position and regional classification

Position

Stretching from the frozen Arctic to the hot equator => the largest and most mountainous of all the continents. Part of Eurasian continent. Asia = cradle of population. Vast majority of Asia lies in northern hemisphere (Figure 1).

Surrounding macro-regions:

N = Arctic Ocean

S = Indian Ocean, Australia

W = Africa, Europe, Mediterranean Sea

E = Pacific Ocean, Alaska, Australia

West border of Asia: Ural mountain range, Ural river, Caucasus, Caspian sea, Azov sea, Bospor, Marmar sea, Dardenelles, Aegean sea, east Suez Canal, Red sea, Bab-al-Mandab strait

Total area = 45 000 000 km². Asia covers about 1/3 of the world's total land area.

Regional classification (Figure 2)

1. Southwest = Saudi Arabia, Yemen, Oman, UAE, Bahrain, Qatar, Kuwait, Jordan, Israel, Syria, Lebanon, Iraq, Iran
2. South = Afghanistan, Pakistan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Bhutan, Bangladesh, Burma
3. Central (+ Caucasian countries) = Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, Georgia, Armenia, Azerbaijan
4. Southeast = Thailand, Laos, Cambodia, Vietnam, Malaysia, Singapore, Indonesia, Philippines, Brunei
5. East (+ Pacific) = China, Mongolia, North Korea, South Korea, Japan, Taiwan

North part of Asia belongs to Russian federation (Siberia).

Basic economic regions

- ❖ Economically well-developed countries (Japan, Israel)
- ❖ Newly industrialized countries (South Korea, Taiwan, Singapore, Malaysia)
- ❖ Economically less-developed countries are divided into:
 - *wealthy countries of Persian gulf* (Kuwait, UAE, Bahrain, Saudi Arabia)
 - *countries with good agriculture conditions* (Iraq, Thailand, Cambodia)
 - *countries with central control of economy* (China, Mongolia, North Korea)
 - *poorest countries* (Bangladesh, Afghanistan, Bhutan)

Geology and Geomorphology

Granite range (Himalayas), sandstones in the SW Asia.

Asia = highest average altitude of all the continents, very rugged topography (relief).

Geomorphological units: Himalayas, Tibet plateau, Pamir, Hindu Kush, Kunlun Shan, Tian Shan, Altai, Gobi desert, Takla makan desert, Ural, Western/Eastern Ghats, Iran plateau, Elburz mts., Zagros mts., Caucasus mts., West-siberian plain, Central Siberian highlands

Features:

Highest point: Mt. Everest (8 848 m)

Lowest point: Dead Sea (395 m below sea level) and half of total Bangladesh area is located between sea level and 8 m of altitude.

Longest river: Yangtze (5 520 km)

Largest lake: Caspian Sea (378 400 km²)

Largest island: Borneo (743 250 km²)

Largest peninsula: Saudi peninsula

Deepest lake: Baikal

Figure 2: Political map of Asia

