

## 21. Asia – population and settlements

Asia's huge population is distributed according to climate and topography with the monsoons and the fertile alluvial plains determining the areas of greatest density: (Figure 1, Figure 2)

- *Ganges plains of India*
- *Yangtze and northern plains of China*
- *small alluvial plains of Japan*
- *and the fertile volcanic soils of the Malay Archipelago.*

i.e. concentration of population mainly to **S + SE + E Asia** (to riverine lowlands). Settlements along Trans-Siberian railway. **China** = 90% of total population concentrates to eastern third of the country. **Japan** = concentration to limited lowland areas.

Average population density: 71 inh./km<sup>2</sup>

Lowest population density: Mongolia (<2 inh./km<sup>2</sup>)

Highest population density: Singapore (>4,400 inh./km<sup>2</sup>)

Figure 1: Population density of Asia

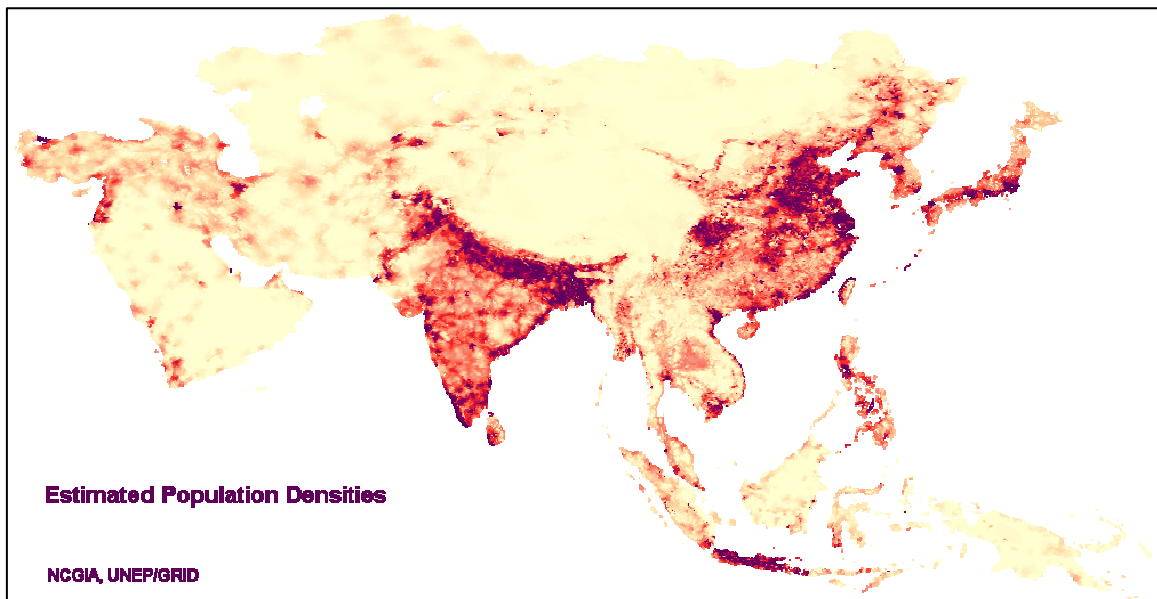
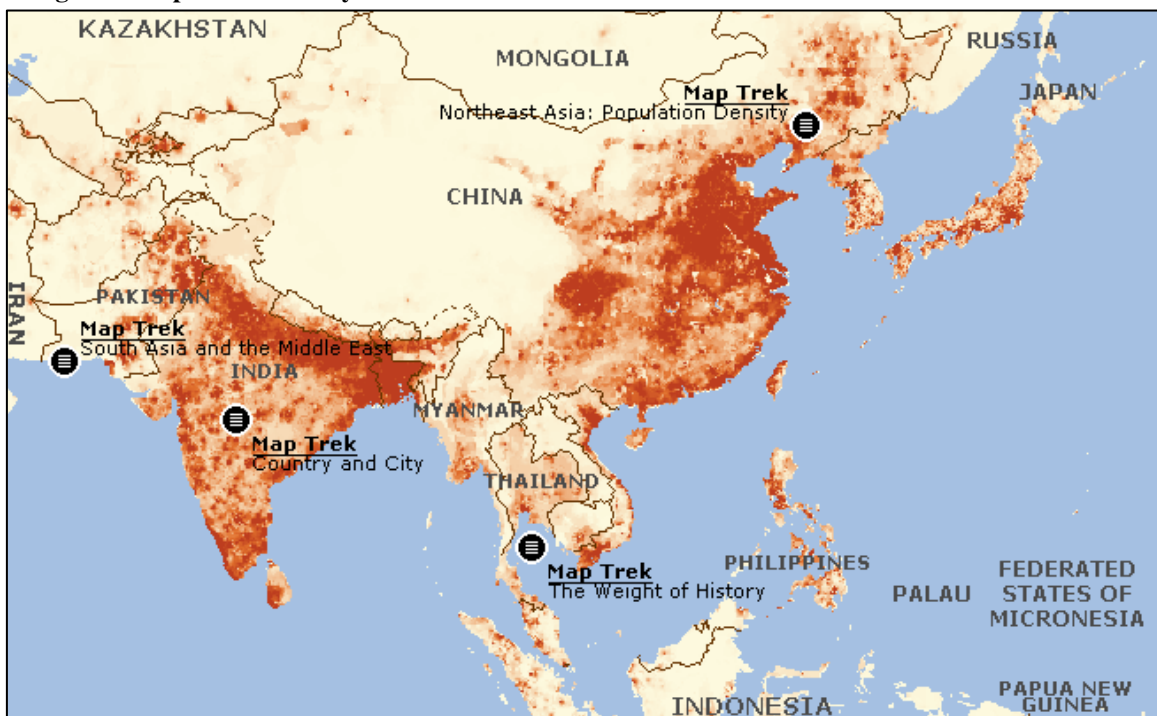


Figure 2: Population density of Asia



## Urbanization

= greatest in the industrialized regions of *Japan, Korea, and Taiwan*, but huge urban centers are to be found throughout the continent. Almost two thirds of Asia's indigenous population is of Mongolic stock (origin/tribe).

Largest proportion of urbanization in countries such as: *Japan, Taiwan, Singapore, Hong Kong, South Korea, Jordan, Israel.*

Largest cities of S + SE Asia: Karachi, Mombay, Calcutta, Rangoon, Kula Lumpur, Singapore, Jakarta, Surabaya, Manila, Ho Chi Minh City (former Saigon), Phnom Penh, Hanoi.

Largest cities of SW Asia: Tehran, Baghdad, Damascus, Jerusalem, Istanbul, Tel Aviv-Yafo, Beirut, Ankara.

Largest city (also of the world): Tokyo urban area (25 million inh.)

## Major religions (Figure 3)

- *Hinduism* in India
- *Theravada Buddhism* in Sri Lanka, Myanmar (Burma), Thailand, Cambodia, Vietnam, and Laos
- *Lamaism* (Tibetan Buddhism) in Mongolia and China (particularly Tibet)
- *East Asian Buddhism* in China and Korea, mixed with Confucianism, shamanism, and Taoism, in Japan mixed with Shinto and Confucianism
- *Islam* in SW and S Asia, W central Asia, and Indonesia
- *Catholicism* in the Philippines, East Timor, and Vietnam

Figure 3: Distribution of major Asian religions



## Races

- *mongoloid* race = from Tibetan and Himalayan area, extending through Mongolia into Siberia => E + mainland SE Asia
- *Causasoid stock* = S + SW Asia
- *Malayo-polynesian stock* = SE Asian archipelagos

## Ethnicity

= very diverse:

- sinitic (Chinese) culture => *Chinese, Tibetans, Mongols, Koreans, Japanese*
- SE Asia => *Malay (islands), Burmese, Thai, Vietnamese, Khmer (mainland)*

## Languages (Figure 4)

- Indo-European languages = north part of S Asia
- Dravidian languages of India, sino-tibetan languages (mainland E + SE Asia)
- SW Asia = Persian, Arabic, Turkish, Hebrew
- Central Asia = Altai languages, Russian (Siberia)

Figure 4: Distribution of major Asian languages

