



Branding Chanakya  
The Kingmaker

Formerly  
Winners IAS  
Academy

Cell: 70101 52287

• TET • PGTRB • TNPSC • POLICE • BANKING • RRB • SSC • UPSC • POSTAL EXAMS

100 நபர்களுக்கு மேல் அரசு பணியில் அமர வைத்துள்ள நிறுவனம்.

## Asia

### Definition and boundaries

#### Asia–Africa boundary

The boundary between Asia and Africa is the [Red Sea](#), the [Gulf of Suez](#), and the [Suez Canal](#).<sup>[15]</sup> This makes Egypt a [transcontinental country](#), with the [Sinai peninsula](#) in Asia and the remainder of the country in Africa.

#### Asia–Europe boundary



Definitions used for the boundary between Europe and Asia in different periods of History. The commonly accepted [modern definition](#) mostly fits with the lines "B" and "F" in this image.

The threefold division of the [Old World](#) into Europe, Asia and Africa has been in use since the 6th century BC, due to [Greek geographers](#) such as [Anaximander](#) and [Hecataeus](#).<sup>[citation needed]</sup> Anaximander placed the boundary between Asia and Europe along the [Phasis River](#) (the modern

Rioni river) in [Georgia](#) of Caucasus (from its mouth by [Poti](#) on the [Black Sea](#) coast, through the [Surami Pass](#) and along the [Kura River](#) to the Caspian Sea), a convention still followed by [Herodotus](#) in the 5th century BC.<sup>[16]</sup> During the [Hellenistic period](#),<sup>[17]</sup> this convention was revised, and the boundary between Europe and Asia was now considered to be the [Tanais](#) (the modern Don River). This is the convention used by Roman era authors such as [Posidonius](#),<sup>[18]</sup> [Strabo](#)<sup>[19]</sup> and [Ptolemy](#).<sup>[20]</sup>

The border between Asia and Europe was historically defined by European academics.<sup>[21]</sup> The [Don River](#) became unsatisfactory to northern Europeans when [Peter the Great](#), king of the [Tsardom of Russia](#), defeating rival claims of [Sweden](#) and the [Ottoman Empire](#) to the eastern lands, and armed resistance by the tribes of [Siberia](#), synthesized a new [Russian Empire](#) extending to the [Ural Mountains](#) and beyond, founded in 1721. The major geographical theorist of the empire was a former Swedish prisoner-of-war, taken at the [Battle of Poltava](#) in 1709 and assigned to [Tobolsk](#), where he associated with Peter's Siberian official, [Vasily Tatishchev](#), and was allowed freedom to conduct geographical and anthropological studies in preparation for a future book. <sup>[citation needed]</sup>

In Sweden, five years after Peter's death, in 1730 [Philip Johan von Strahlenberg](#) published a new atlas proposing the Ural Mountains as the border of Asia. Tatishchev announced that he had proposed the idea to von Strahlenberg. The latter had suggested the [Emba River](#) as the lower boundary. Over the next century various proposals were made until the [Ural River](#) prevailed in the mid-19th century. The border had been moved perforce from the Black Sea to the Caspian Sea into which the Ural River projects.<sup>[22]</sup> The border between the Black Sea and the Caspian is usually placed along the crest of the [Caucasus Mountains](#), although it is sometimes placed further north.<sup>[21]</sup>

### **Asia–Oceania boundary**

The border between Asia and the region of [Oceania](#) is usually placed somewhere in the [Malay Archipelago](#). The [Maluku Islands](#) in Indonesia are often considered to lie on the border of southeast Asia, with [New Guinea](#), to the east of the islands, being wholly part of Oceania. The terms Southeast Asia and Oceania, devised in the 19th century, have had several vastly different geographic meanings since their inception. The chief factor in determining which islands of the Malay Archipelago are Asian has been the location of the colonial possessions of the various empires there (not all European). Lewis and Wigen assert, "The narrowing of 'Southeast Asia' to its present boundaries was thus a gradual process."<sup>[23]</sup>

## Ongoing definition



[Afro-Eurasia](#) shown in green

Geographical Asia is a cultural artifact of European conceptions of the world, beginning with the [Ancient Greeks](#), being imposed onto other cultures, an imprecise concept causing endemic contention about what it means. Asia does not exactly correspond to the cultural borders of its various types of constituents.<sup>[24]</sup>

From the time of [Herodotus](#) a minority of geographers have rejected the three-continent system (Europe, Africa, Asia) on the grounds that there is no substantial physical separation between them.<sup>[25]</sup> For example, Sir [Barry Cunliffe](#), the emeritus professor of European archeology at Oxford, argues that Europe has been geographically and culturally merely "the western excrescence of the continent of Asia".<sup>[26]</sup>

Geographically, Asia is the major eastern constituent of the continent of [Eurasia](#) with Europe being a northwestern [peninsula](#) of the landmass. Asia, Europe and Africa make up a single continuous landmass—[Afro-Eurasia](#) (except for the Suez Canal)—and share a common [continental shelf](#). Almost all of Europe and a major part of Asia sit atop the [Eurasian Plate](#), adjoined on the south by the [Arabian](#) and [Indian Plate](#) and with the easternmost part of Siberia (east of the [Chersky Range](#)) on the [North American Plate](#).

Etymology

---



Ptolemy's Asia

The idea of a place called "Asia" was originally a concept of [Greek civilization](#),<sup>[27]</sup> though this might not correspond to the entire continent currently known by that name. The English word comes from Latin literature, where it has the same form, "Asia". Whether "Asia" in other languages comes from Latin of the [Roman Empire](#) is much less certain, and the ultimate source of the Latin word is uncertain, though several theories have been published. One of the first classical writers to use Asia as a name of the whole continent was [Pliny](#).<sup>[28]</sup> This [metonymical](#) change in meaning is common and can be observed in some other geographical names, such as [Scandinavia](#) (from [Scania](#)).

## Bronze Age

Before Greek poetry, the [Aegean Sea](#) area was in a [Greek Dark Age](#), at the beginning of which syllabic writing was lost and alphabetic writing had not begun. Prior to then in the [Bronze Age](#) the records of the [Assyrian Empire](#), the [Hittite Empire](#) and the various [Mycenaean](#) states of Greece mention a region undoubtedly Asia, certainly in Anatolia, including if not identical to Lydia. These records are administrative and do not include poetry.

The Mycenaean states were destroyed about 1200 BCE by unknown agents, though one school of thought assigns the [Dorian invasion](#) to this time. The burning of the palaces caused the clay tablets holding the Mycenaean administrative records to be preserved by baking. These tablets were written in a Greek syllabic script called [Linear B](#). This script was deciphered by a number of interested parties, most notably by a young World War II cryptographer, [Michael Ventris](#), subsequently assisted by the scholar, [John Chadwick](#).

A major cache discovered by [Carl Blegen](#) at the site of ancient [Pylos](#) included hundreds of male and female names formed by different methods. Some of these are of women held in servitude (as



study of the society implied by the content reveals). They were used in trades, such as cloth-making, and usually came with children. The epithet *lawiaiai*, "captives", associated with some of them identifies their origin. Some are ethnic names. One in particular, *aswiai*, identifies "women of Asia".<sup>[29]</sup> Perhaps they were captured in Asia, but some others, *Milatiai*, appear to have been of [Miletus](#), a Greek colony, which would not have been raided for slaves by Greeks. Chadwick suggests that the names record the locations where these foreign women were purchased.<sup>[30]</sup> The name is also in the singular, *Aswia*, which refers both to the name of a country and to a female from there. There is a masculine form, *aswios*. This *Aswia* appears to have been a remnant of a region known to the Hittites as Assuwa, centered on Lydia, or "Roman Asia". This name, *Assuwa*, has been suggested as the origin for the name of the continent "Asia".<sup>[31]</sup> The [Assuwa league](#) was a confederation of states in western Anatolia, defeated by the [Hittites](#) under [Tudhaliya I](#) around 1400 BCE.

### Classical antiquity



The province of [Asia](#) highlighted (in red) within the Roman Empire.

Latin Asia and Greek Ἀσία appear to be the same word. Roman authors translated Ἀσία as Asia. The Romans named a province [Asia](#), located in western Anatolia (in modern-day Turkey). There was an Asia Minor and an Asia Major located in modern-day Iraq. As the earliest evidence of the name is Greek, it is likely circumstantially that Asia came from Ἀσία, but ancient transitions, due to the lack of literary contexts, are difficult to catch in the act. The most likely vehicles were the ancient geographers and historians, such as [Herodotus](#), who were all Greek. [Ancient Greek](#) certainly evidences early and rich uses of the name.<sup>[32]</sup>

The first continental use of Asia is attributed to Herodotus (about 440 BCE), not because he innovated it, but because his *Histories* are the earliest surviving prose to describe it in any detail. He defines it carefully,<sup>[33]</sup> mentioning the previous geographers whom he had read, but whose works are now missing. By it he means [Anatolia](#) and the [Persian Empire](#), in contrast to Greece and Egypt.

Herodotus comments that he is puzzled as to why three women's names were "given to a tract which is in reality one" ([Europa](#), [Asia](#), and [Libya](#), referring to Africa), stating that most Greeks assumed that Asia was named after the wife of [Prometheus](#) (i.e. [Hesione](#)), but that the [Lydians](#) say it was named after Asies, son of Cotys, who passed the name on to a tribe at [Sardis](#).<sup>[34]</sup> In [Greek mythology](#), "Asia" (*Ἀσία*) or "Asie" (*Ἀσίη*) was the name of a "[Nymph](#) or [Titan](#) goddess of Lydia".<sup>[35]</sup>

In ancient Greek religion, places were under the care of female divinities, parallel to guardian angels. The poets detailed their doings and generations in allegoric language salted with entertaining stories, which subsequently playwrights transformed into classical Greek drama and became "Greek mythology". For example, [Hesiod](#) mentions the daughters of [Tethys](#) and [Ocean](#), among whom are a "holly company", "who with the Lord [Apollo](#) and the Rivers have youths in their keeping".<sup>[36]</sup> Many of these are geographic: Doris, Rhodea, Europa, Asia. Hesiod explains:<sup>[37]</sup>

For there are three-thousand neat-ankled daughters of Ocean who are dispersed far and wide, and in every place alike serve the earth and the deep waters.

The [Iliad](#) (attributed by the ancient Greeks to [Homer](#)) mentions two Phrygians (the tribe that replaced the [Luvians](#) in Lydia) in the [Trojan War](#) named [Asios](#) (an adjective meaning "Asian");<sup>[38]</sup> and also a marsh or lowland containing a marsh in Lydia as *ασιος*.<sup>[39]</sup> According to many Muslims, the term came from [Ancient Egypt](#)'s Queen [Asiya](#), the adoptive mother of [Moses](#).<sup>[40]</sup>

## History

---

*Main article:* [History of Asia](#)



The [Silk Road](#) connected civilizations across Asia<sup>[41]</sup>



The [Mongol Empire](#) at its greatest extent. The gray area is the later [Timurid Empire](#).

The history of Asia can be seen as the distinct histories of several peripheral coastal regions: East Asia, South Asia, Southeast Asia and the Middle East, linked by the interior mass of the Central Asian [steppes](#). The coastal periphery was home to some of the world's earliest known civilizations, each of them developing around fertile river valleys. The civilizations in [Mesopotamia](#), the [Indus Valley](#) and the [Yellow River](#) shared many similarities. These civilizations may well have exchanged technologies and ideas such as [mathematics](#) and the [wheel](#). Other innovations, such as writing, seem to have been developed individually in each area. Cities, states and empires developed in these lowlands.

The central steppe region had long been inhabited by horse-mounted nomads who could reach all areas of Asia from the [steppes](#). The earliest postulated expansion out of the steppe is that of the [Indo-Europeans](#), who spread their languages into the Middle East, South Asia, and the borders of China, where the [Tocharians](#) resided. The northernmost part of Asia, including much of [Siberia](#), was largely inaccessible to the steppe

nomads, owing to the dense forests, climate and [tundra](#). These areas remained very sparsely populated.

The center and the peripheries were mostly kept separated by mountains and deserts. The [Caucasus](#) and [Himalaya](#) mountains and the [Karakum](#) and [Gobi](#) deserts formed barriers that the steppe horsemen could cross only with difficulty. While the urban city dwellers were more advanced technologically and socially, in many cases they could do little in a military aspect to defend against the mounted hordes of the steppe. However, the lowlands did not have enough open grasslands to support a large horsebound force; for this and other reasons, the [nomads](#) who conquered states in China, India, and the Middle East often found themselves adapting to the local, more affluent societies.

The Islamic [Caliphate](#)'s defeats of the Byzantine and Persian empires led to West Asia and southern parts of Central Asia and western parts of South Asia under its control during [its conquests](#) of the 7th century. The [Mongol Empire](#) conquered a large part of Asia in the 13th century, an area extending from China to Europe. Before the Mongol invasion, [Song dynasty](#) reportedly had approximately 120 million citizens; the 1300 census which followed the invasion reported roughly 60 million people.<sup>[42]</sup>

The [Black Death](#), one of the most devastating [pandemics](#) in human history, is thought to have originated in the arid plains of central Asia, where it then travelled along the [Silk Road](#).<sup>[43]</sup>

The [Russian Empire](#) began to expand into Asia from the 17th century, and would eventually take control of all of Siberia and most of Central Asia by the end of the 19th century. The [Ottoman Empire](#) controlled Anatolia, most of the Middle East, North Africa and the Balkans from the mid 16th century onwards. In the 17th century, the [Manchu](#) conquered China and established the [Qing dynasty](#). The Islamic [Mughal Empire](#) and the Hindu [Maratha Empire](#) controlled much of India in the 16th and 18th centuries respectively.<sup>[44]</sup> The [Empire of Japan](#) controlled most of East Asia and much of Southeast Asia, New Guinea and the Pacific islands until the end of [World War](#)

## Languages

*Main article:* [Languages of Asia](#)

Asia is home to several [language families](#) and many [language isolates](#). Most Asian countries have more than one language that is natively spoken. For instance, according to [Ethnologue](#), more than 600 languages are spoken in Indonesia, more than 800 languages spoken in



India, and more than 100 are spoken in the Philippines. China has many languages and dialects in different provinces.

## Religions

See also: [Eastern philosophy](#), [Religion in Asia](#), and [List of Asian mythologies](#)

Many of the world's [major religions](#) have their origins in Asia, including the five most practiced in the world (excluding [irreligion](#)), which are Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, Chinese folk religion (classified as Confucianism and Taoism), and Buddhism respectively. Asian mythology is complex and diverse. The story of the [Great Flood](#) for example, as presented to Jews in the [Hebrew Bible](#) in the narrative of [Noah](#)—and later to Christians in the [Old Testament](#), and to [Muslims](#) in the [Quran](#)—is earliest found in [Mesopotamian mythology](#), in the [Enûma Eliš](#) and [Epic of Gilgamesh](#). [Hindu mythology](#) similarly tells about an [avatar](#) of [Vishnu](#) in the form of a [fish](#) who warned [Manu](#) of a terrible flood. Ancient [Chinese mythology](#) also tells of a [Great Flood](#) spanning generations, one that required the combined efforts of emperors and divinities to control.

## Abrahamic



The [Western Wall](#) and the [Dome of the Rock](#), [Jerusalem](#)



Pilgrims in the annual [Haji](#) at the [Kaabah](#) in [Mecca](#).

The [Abrahamic religions](#) including [Judaism](#), [Christianity](#), [Islam](#) and [Bahá'í Faith](#) originated in West Asia.

[Judaism](#), the oldest of the Abrahamic faiths, is practiced primarily in [Israel](#), the [indigenous](#) homeland and historical birthplace of the [Hebrew nation](#): which today consists both of those [Jews](#) who remained in [the Middle East](#) and those who returned from [diaspora](#) in [Europe](#), [North America](#), and other regions;<sup>[80]</sup> though various diaspora communities persist worldwide. Jews are the predominant ethnic group in [Israel](#) (75.6%) numbering at about 6.1 million,<sup>[81]</sup> although the levels of adherence to Jewish religion vary. Outside of Israel there are small ancient Jewish communities in [Turkey](#) (17,400),<sup>[82]</sup> [Azerbaijan](#) (9,100),<sup>[83]</sup> [Iran](#) (8,756),<sup>[84]</sup> [India](#) (5,000) and [Uzbekistan](#) (4,000),<sup>[85]</sup> among many other places. In total, there are 14.4–17.5 million (2016, est.)<sup>[86]</sup> Jews alive in the world today, making them one of the smallest Asian minorities, at roughly 0.3 to 0.4 percent of the total population of the continent.

[Christianity](#) is a widespread religion in Asia with more than 286 million adherents according to [Pew Research Center](#) in 2010,<sup>[87]</sup> and nearly 364 million according to [Britannica](#) Book of the Year 2014.<sup>[88]</sup> Constituting around 12.6% of the total population of Asia. In the Philippines and [East Timor](#), Roman Catholicism is the predominant religion; it was introduced by the Spaniards and the Portuguese, respectively. In [Armenia](#) and Georgia, [Eastern Orthodoxy](#) is the predominant religion. In the Middle East, such as in the [Levant](#), [Syriac Christianity](#) ([Church of the East](#)) and [Oriental Orthodoxy](#) are prevalent minority denominations, which are both [Eastern Christian](#) sects mainly adhered to [Assyrian people](#) or Syriac Christians. [Saint Thomas Christians](#) in India trace their origins to the evangelistic activity of [Thomas the Apostle](#) in the 1st century.<sup>[89]</sup>

[Islam](#), which originated in the [Hejaz](#) located in modern-day Saudi Arabia, is the second largest and most widely-spread religion in Asia with at least 1 billion Muslims constituting around 23.8% of the total population of Asia.<sup>[90]</sup> With 12.7% of the world Muslim population, the country currently with the largest Muslim population in the world is Indonesia, followed by Pakistan (11.5%), India (10%), [Bangladesh](#), Iran and Turkey. [Mecca](#), [Medina](#) and [Jerusalem](#) are the three holiest cities for Islam in all the world. The [Haji](#) and [Umrah](#) attract large numbers of Muslim devotees from all over the world to Mecca and Medina. Iran is the largest [Shi'a](#) country.

The [Bahá'í Faith](#) originated in Asia, in Iran (Persia), and spread from there to the Ottoman Empire, Central Asia, India, and Burma during the lifetime of Bahá'u'lláh. Since the middle of the 20th century, growth has particularly occurred in other Asian countries, because Bahá'í activities in many Muslim countries has been [severely suppressed](#) by authorities. [Lotus Temple](#) is a big Bahá'í Temple in India.

## *Indian and East Asian religions*



The [Swaminarayan Akshardham Temple](#) in [Delhi](#), according to the [Guinness World Records](#) is the *World's Largest Comprehensive Hindu Temple*<sup>[91]</sup>

Almost all Asian religions have philosophical character and Asian philosophical traditions cover a large spectrum of philosophical thoughts and writings. [Indian philosophy](#) includes [Hindu philosophy](#) and [Buddhist philosophy](#). They include elements of nonmaterial pursuits, whereas another school of thought from India, [Cārvāka](#), preached the enjoyment of the material world. The religions of [Hinduism](#), [Buddhism](#), [Jainism](#) and [Sikhism](#) originated in India, South Asia. In East Asia, particularly in China and Japan, [Confucianism](#), [Taoism](#) and [Zen Buddhism](#) took shape.

As of 2012, Hinduism has around 1.1 billion adherents. The faith represents around 25% of Asia's population and is the largest religion in Asia. However, it is mostly concentrated in South Asia. Over 80% of the populations of both India and Nepal adhere to Hinduism, alongside significant communities in Bangladesh, Pakistan, Bhutan, Sri Lanka and [Bali](#), Indonesia. Many overseas Indians in countries such as Burma, Singapore and Malaysia also adhere to Hinduism.



The Hindu-Buddhist temple of [Angkor Wat](#) in [Cambodia](#), the largest religious monument in the world

Buddhism has a great following in mainland Southeast Asia and East Asia. Buddhism is the religion of the majority of the populations of [Cambodia](#) (96%),<sup>[92]</sup> [Thailand](#) (95%),<sup>[93]</sup> [Burma](#) (80–89%),<sup>[94]</sup> Japan

(36–96%),<sup>[95]</sup> [Bhutan](#) (75–84%),<sup>[96]</sup> [Sri Lanka](#) (70%),<sup>[97]</sup> [Laos](#) (60–67%)<sup>[98]</sup> and [Mongolia](#) (53–93%).<sup>[99]</sup> Large Buddhist populations also exist in Singapore (33–51%),<sup>[100]</sup> [Taiwan](#) (35–93%),<sup>[101][102][103][104]</sup> South Korea (23–50%),<sup>[105]</sup> [Malaysia](#) (19–21%),<sup>[106]</sup> [Nepal](#) (9–11%),<sup>[107]</sup> [Vietnam](#) (10–75%),<sup>[108]</sup> China (20–50%),<sup>[109]</sup> [North Korea](#) (2–14%),<sup>[110][111][112]</sup> and small communities in India and [Bangladesh](#). The Communist-governed countries of China, Vietnam and North Korea are officially atheist, thus the number of Buddhists and other religious adherents may be under-reported.

[Jainism](#) is found mainly in India and in overseas Indian communities such as the United States and Malaysia. [Sikhism](#) is found in Northern India and amongst overseas Indian communities in other parts of Asia, especially Southeast Asia. [Confucianism](#) is found predominantly in Mainland China, South Korea, Taiwan and in overseas Chinese populations. [Taoism](#) is found mainly in Mainland China, Taiwan, Malaysia and Singapore. In many Chinese communities, Taoism is easily syncretized with [Mahayana Buddhism](#), thus exact religious statistics are difficult to obtain and may be understated or overstated.

**FOR ADMISSION ENQUIRY**  
**Chanakya's IAS Academy(TM REGD)**  
**Collectorate Arch Annex Building**  
**Villupuram 8122623252/04146294252**