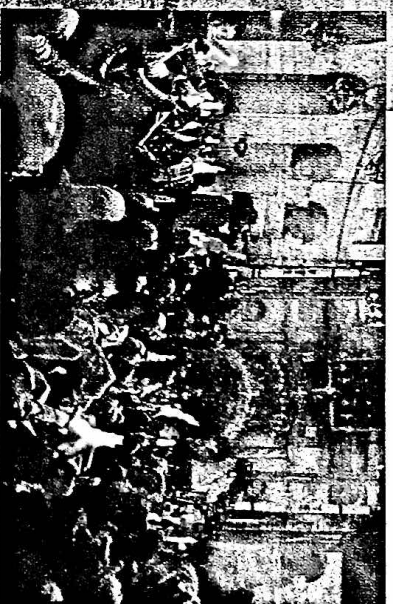
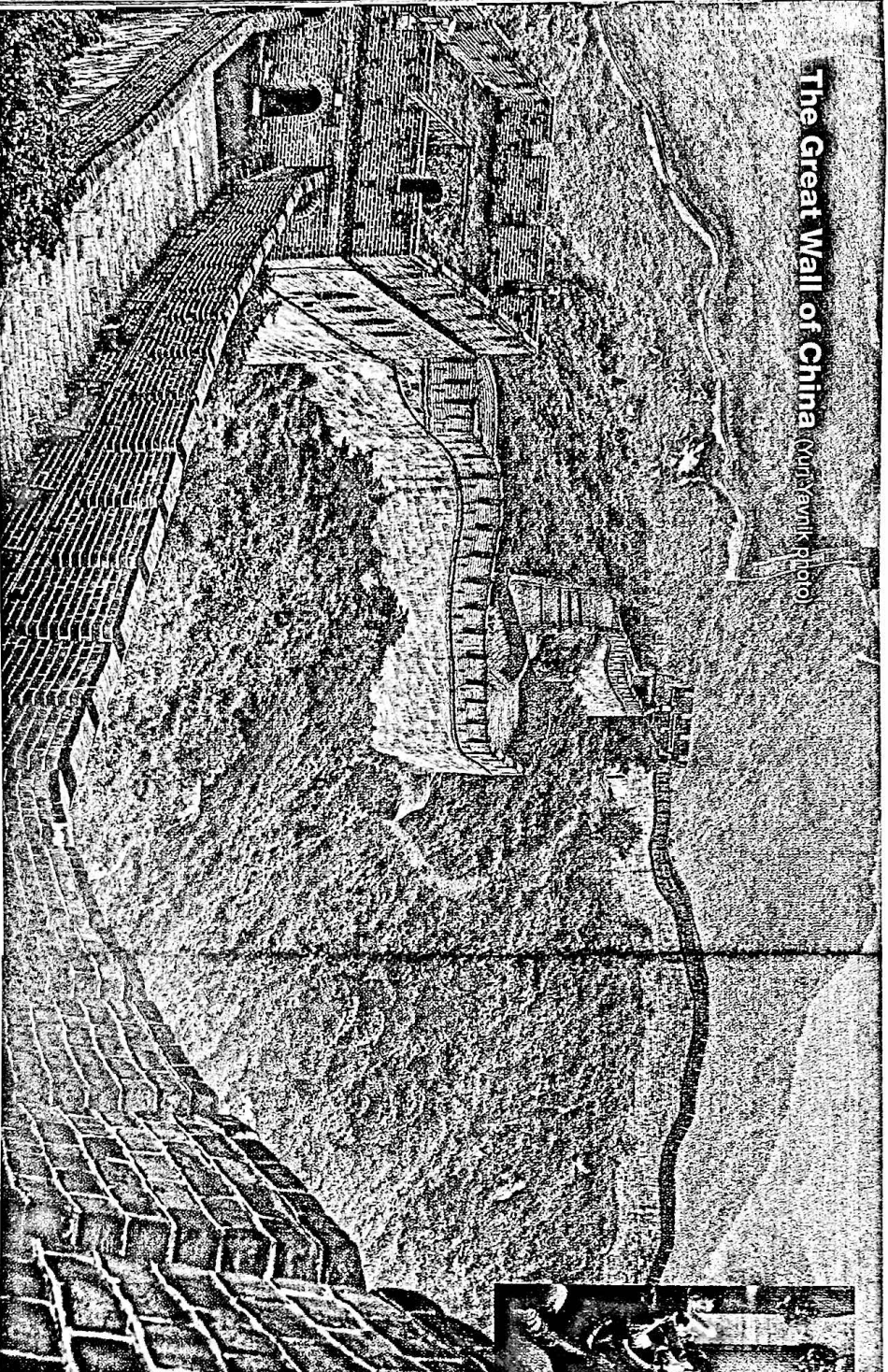


The Great Wall of China (Muriel Sevnik photo)



A religious ceremony in Jerusalem, Israel (Mikhail/Shutterstock)



Monks in Thailand, which is in Asia (Jakkree Thampitakull photo)

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

THE LARGEST CONTINENT

When it comes to continents, Asia is at the top of many lists.

Asia is the largest continent by area. It has the highest population of any continent. It has the two countries with the largest populations. It has the highest mountains.

Let's take these one at a time.

Asia is 17 million square miles in area. The next largest continent, Africa, has 11 million square miles.

More than four **BILLION** people live in Asia. That's nearly four times the number of people who live in Africa, which is second in population.

China and India have the highest populations of any countries in the world. Both are in Asia.

The highest mountain range in the world is the Himalayas, in Asia. There you will find Mount Everest, the highest mountain in the

world. Mount Everest is 29,029 feet above sea level. That is higher than many planes fly!

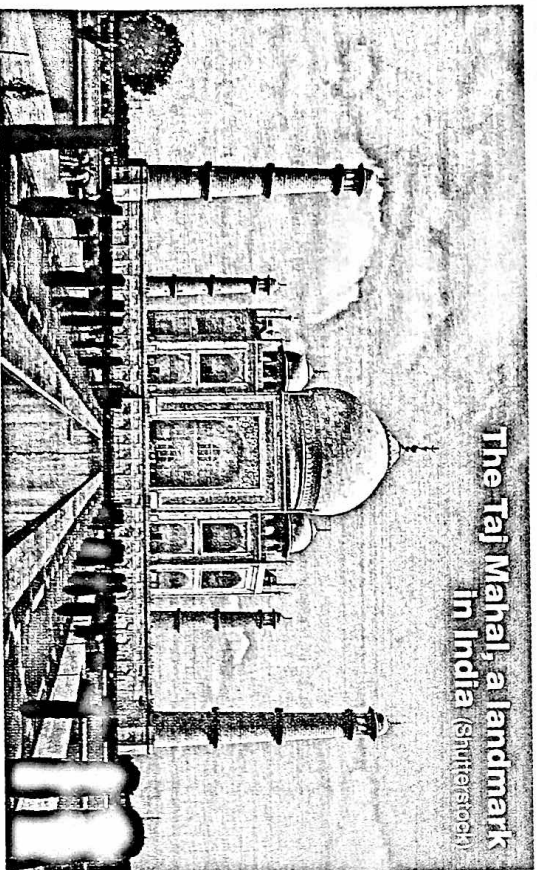
Asia is bordered to the east by the Pacific Ocean; on the north by the Arctic Ocean; on the west by Europe; and on the south by the Indian Ocean.

Having said that, quite a bit of Asia consists of islands in the Indian and the Pacific Oceans. There are an estimated 20,000 islands in Asia!

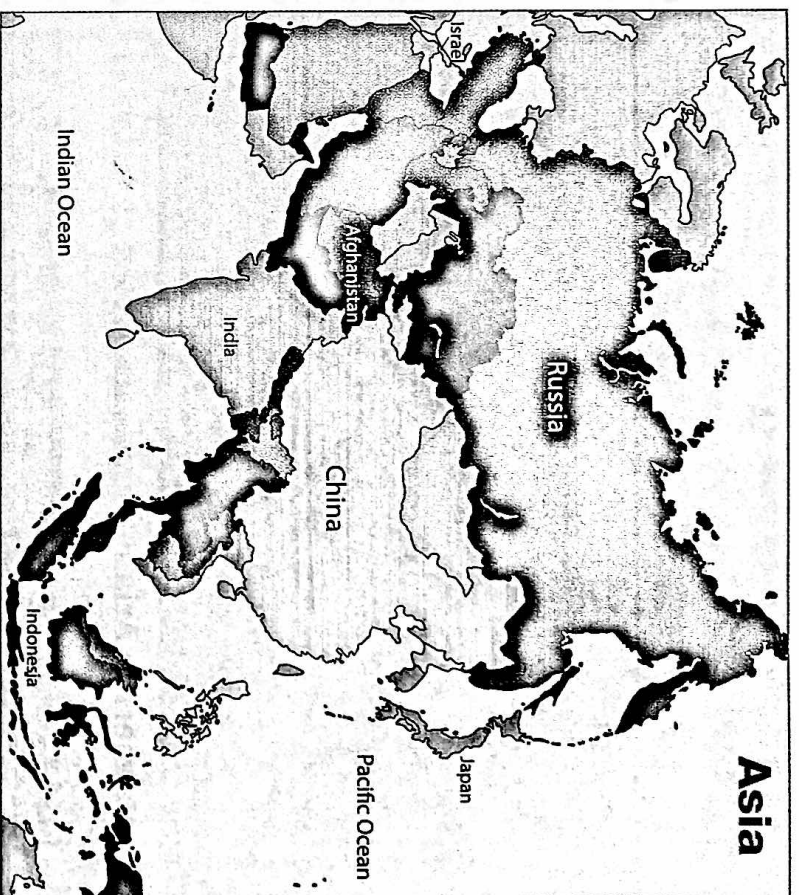
Allies and trading partners

Asia is far from the United States. But some of the countries in Asia are important to us:

- Since it has more people than any other country, China is very important to the United States. Also, many of the



TRUE OR FALSE? Nine of the ten tallest buildings in the world are in Asia. *(Answer on page 96)*



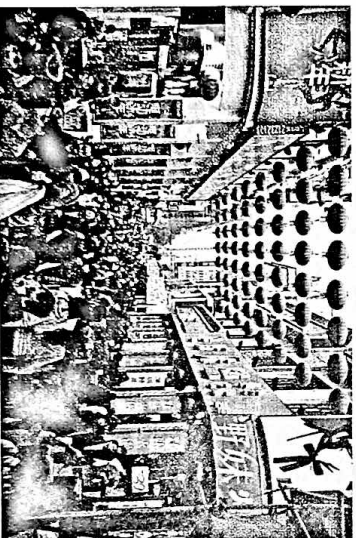
products we use in the U.S. were made in China. (Look at your toys to see where they were made!)

- Russia (which is in both Europe and Asia) has a large army and navy. Russia has been important in the minds of Americans for many years.
- During World War II, between 1941 and 1945, the United States fought against Japan (along with Germany and Italy). Since that time, the U.S. has been an ally of Japan.
- In 2001, the United States went to war against terrorist groups in Afghanistan. Because of that, some of you may have fathers or mothers who have been there.



Rice farmers in Asia (Gautier Guillaume/Shutterstock)

- Israel is a small country in the part of Asia known as the Middle East. In spite of its size, Israel is important in the minds of many Americans because it is so central to the story of many religions.



Shoppers in China walk past a KFC restaurant. (Shutterstock)

Most of the Middle East is desert. Most Americans associate that part of Asia with oil, since some of the world's top oil-producing nations are there. 🌍

QUESTIONS

- 1) What two countries have the highest populations in the world?

- 2) What are two reasons China is important to the United States?

- 3) What small country in the Middle East is important to many Americans because of religion?

- 4) What country is so large that it is in two different continents?

- 5) In what Asian country has the United States been fighting a war against terrorism?

