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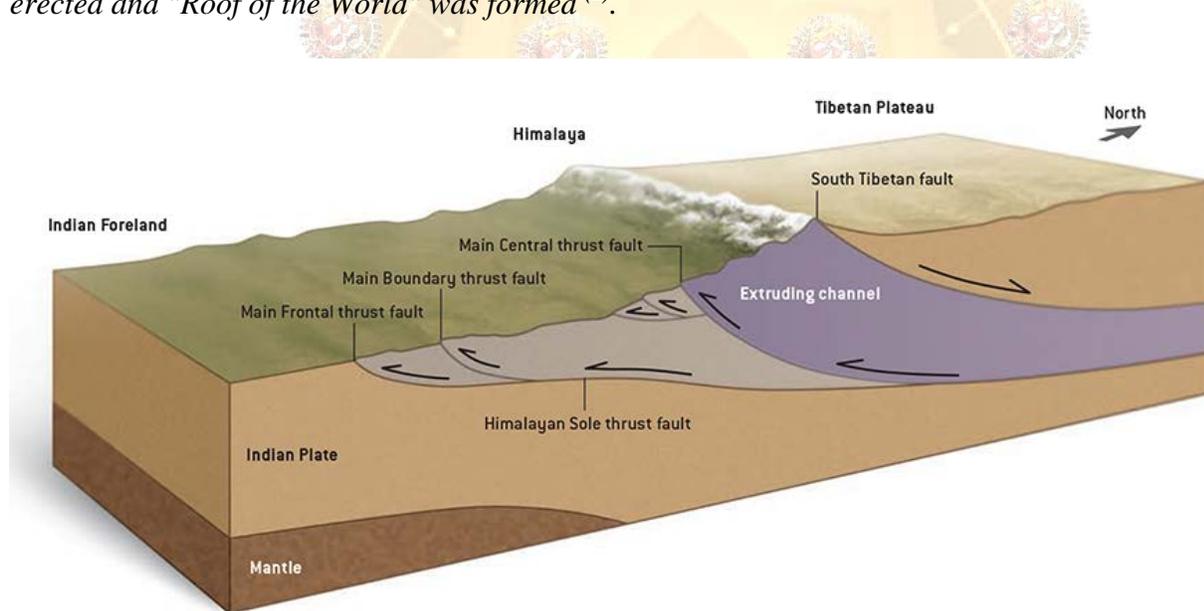
Mana Sanskriti (Our Culture)

Chief Editor: Dr. Sreenivasarao Vepachedu, Esq.

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THE INDIAN CONTINENT

About 225 million years ago, Indian continent was a large island still situated off the Australian coast, and a vast ocean (called Tethys Sea) separated Indian continent from the Asian continent. When Pangaea broke apart about 200 million years ago, India continent began to forge northward. About 140 million years ago the main landmass on Earth was concentrated together in a super continent called Gondwana which started to break up in four tectonic plates; **African, Antarctic, Australian and Indian plates**. About 80 million years ago, Indian continent was located roughly 6,400 km south of the Asian continent, moving northward at a rate of about 9 m a century. When India rammed into Asia about 40 to 50 million years ago, Himalayas were erected and "Roof of the World" was formed⁽¹⁾.



At the time of collision, part of the ancient Indian plate, known as "Greater India," slid underneath the Eurasian plate. Therefore, India's surface today is much smaller than it was 50 million years ago⁽²⁾. The Indian plate bends slightly under the weight of the mountains, and the resulting trough, now filled with sediments, can be detected under the Ganges plain⁽³⁾. According

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to prevailing theories of plate tectonics, the Indo-Australian plate began to deform internally about 10 million years ago. As the plate moved northwards, the region near India crunched against the Eurasian plate, thrusting the Himalayas up and slowing India down. Most scientists think that the Australian portion forged ahead, creating twisting tensions that are splitting the plate apart in the Indian Ocean. Geological stresses rending the Indo-Australian plate apart are likely to have caused the magnitude-8.6 and magnitude-8.2 quakes, which broke along numerous faults and unleashed aftershocks for 6 days afterwards⁽⁴⁾.

The Indian plate includes Peninsular India and the Australian continental portions. The subduction zone along the Himalayas forms the northern plate boundary in the form of continent-continent convergence. In the east, it extends through Rakinyoma Mountains (Arakan Yoma) of Myanmar towards the island arc along the Java Trench. The eastern margin is a spreading site lying to the east of Australia in the form of an oceanic ridge in SW Pacific. The Western margin follows Kirthar Mountain of Pakistan. It further extends along the Makrana coast (Pakistan and Iranian coasts) and joins the spreading site from the Red Sea rift (Red Sea rift is formed due to divergence of Somali plate and Arabian plate) southeastward along the Chagos Archipelago (Formed due to hotspot volcanism). The boundary between India and the Antarctic plate is also marked by oceanic ridge (divergent boundary) running in roughly W-E direction and merging into the spreading site, a little south of New Zealand⁽⁵⁾. The accumulation of geological stress in the region is ongoing. A sweep of the western Himalayas in India, Nepal, Pakistan and Afghanistan is at risk from earthquakes as strong as magnitude 8, as pressure mounts between the India and Eurasia tectonic plates⁽⁶⁾.

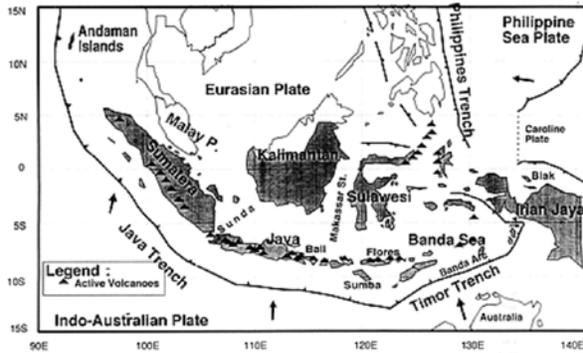


Figure 1 Tectonic and plate boundaries in Indonesia. Large arrows indicate the direction of plate motion, triangles active volcanoes.

Indonesia is a place of complex convergence of Eurasian, Indian-Australian, Caroline, and Philippine Sea plates and several minor plates. Relative to Eurasian plate, the Indian-Australian plate is moving approximately northward, whereas the Philippine Sea plate approximately west-

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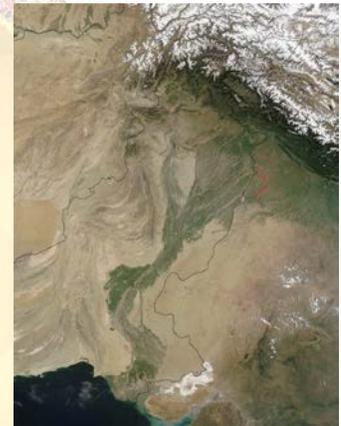
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northwestward. Relative to the Philippine Sea plate, the Caroline plate is moving approximately east-southeastward near the Aru though and west-northwestward near the Yap trench.

The Indian Continent is now divided into two regions, 1) South Asia and 2) South East Asia. Thus, the inhabitants of the Indian Continent have new names, South Asians and Southeast Asians, comprising Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar, Thailand, Vietnam, West Malaysia, East Malaysia, Indonesia, Singapore, Philippines, East Timor, Brunei etc. Indonesia lies between the Indian-Australian plate and Eurasian plate⁽⁷⁾.

Although it is not part of Eurasia as explained above, various countries in the Indian Continent are embracing the term “Asian” because, perhaps, a) they are placed in that Asian racial box by America and Europe, b) they do not want to associate with the Indus-Saraswati Valley civilization and the Indus River from which the term Hindu/India is derived, including the people of the Pure (Pak) State (Stan) of Islam (Pakistan), where the River Indus flows, c) they decline to be Hindu or Indian to assert their sovereignty and differences from the modern state of India, and d) any number of other geopolitical and economic considerations.



Some of the countries of the Indian Continent such as Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka came together in 1985 to form an organization called South Asian Association of Regional Cooperation (SAARC), establishing the new name “the South Asians” for the Indians of the Continent and embracing it, thus limiting the Indian/Hindu credentials for the people of the modern democratic



Indian Union, also known as Bharat.

The first-ever eight-member SAARC Summit of the Heads of States was held in Dhaka, Bangladesh. As defined in its Charter, the principal objectives of the Association are to promote the welfare of the peoples of South Asia and to improve their quality of life through accelerated

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economic cooperation, social progress and cultural development in the region, and by establishing SAARC Secretariat in Kathmandu in 1987.

Southeast Asia includes the remaining countries in the Indian Continent that are east of India and south of China, such as Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar, Thailand, Vietnam, West Malaysia, East Malaysia, Indonesia, Singapore, Philippines, East Timor, Brunei, and Christmas Island. Indonesia is geographically located between Eurasia and India. Now that South Asia is established as a new name for the group of countries by SAARC, the world has adopted it as such, including the CIA⁽⁸⁾, World Bank, BBC, Harvard etc⁽⁹⁾.

However, the World Health Organization (WHO)'s South East Asia Region has 11 Member States: Bangladesh, Bhutan, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, India, Indonesia, Maldives, Myanmar, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Thailand, and Timor-Leste⁽¹⁰⁾. There is the 10-member [Association of Southeast Asian Nations \(ASEAN\)](#), which includes Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, and Vietnam⁽¹¹⁾. The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) was formed in 1967 by Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, and Thailand to promote political and economic cooperation and regional stability. Brunei joined in 1984, shortly after its independence from the United Kingdom, and Vietnam joined ASEAN as its seventh member in 1995. Laos and Burma were admitted into full membership in July 1997 as ASEAN celebrated its 30th anniversary. Cambodia became ASEAN's tenth member in 1999⁽¹²⁾.

India enjoys substantial regional influence across the Indian Continent due to its size, comparative economic might, and historical and cultural relevance to the region. During the early 1990s, the former prime minister, Venkata Narasimha Rao Pamulaparathi (aka PV), the Father of Indian Economic Reforms⁽¹³⁾, whose contributions are often ignored in Indian foreign policy discourse, was a visionary to recognize the importance of engaging with the world's most economically dynamic region and formulate India's "Look East" policy, which originally was primarily focused on trade and economics, has now attained a distinct security dimension. India is the largest trading partner of ASEAN. As India's economic linkages with various countries in the region have become more extensive, demands have grown for a gradual strengthening of security ties at a time of China's rapid ascendance in the global hierarchy. Smaller states in the region are now looking to India to act as a balancer in view of China's growing influence amid a

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broader leadership vacuum in the region, while larger states see India as an attractive engine for regional growth⁽¹⁴⁾.

President Barak Husain Obama, who lived in Indonesia as a boy, is the first American President to meet with leaders of all 10 ASEAN countries. Early in his presidency, President Obama “decided that the United States, as a Pacific nation, would rebalance our foreign policy and play a larger and long-term role in the Asia Pacific. And this has included engagement with Southeast Asia and ASEAN, which is central to the region’s peace and prosperity, and to our shared goal of building a regional order where all nations play by the same rules⁽¹⁵⁾.”

During the SAARC summit in Kathmandu in 2014, Prime Minister Narendra Modi had announced business visas with 3-5 years validity for citizens of all SAARC nations. India is all set to issue multicity, multiple-entry business visa to businessmen of SAARC nations including Pakistan, beginning April 1, 2016. The business visa, to be called '**India Business Card**' is expected to be granted for up to five years. Bhutanese and Nepalese do not require visas to enter India. No specific visa limitations apply for visitors from countries like Sri Lanka, Bangladesh and Maldives. However, Pakistani entrepreneurs should run an enterprise worth 1,000,000,000 Indian rupees and have an annual income of at least 1,000,000 Pakistani rupees to apply for a three-year multiple entry card. Also, the Pakistani applicant should be a member of any Chamber of Commerce in Pakistan recognized by India⁽¹⁶⁾.

India plays an important role not only in the Indian Continent divided into SAARC and ASEAN, but also in the global governance and security. Although the idea of global governance in general is still evolving, India has contributed to the international institutions for global nuclear governance, and participated in the making and implementing the regimes for global nuclear governance. The international community expects India to shape the evolution of global governance by addressing challenges the global community is facing now⁽¹⁷⁾.

As the Indian Continent continues to exert its pressure on Eurasia changing the landscape and raising the mountains, so does India continue to exert her influence in the evolution of a new global landscape of nations and institutions for globalization and governance.

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(13) He was the first Telugu Prime Minister of India from the State of Telangana, a scholar who could speak several Indian and foreign languages, who brought a significant change in the country in a decisive move from a socialist-style economy to greater privatization, leading

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India through a bold economic reform program, laying the foundations for one of the world's fastest growing economies. The first Prime Minister outside the Nehru-Khan-Gandhi dynasty left the office leaving the Indian economy on a path of rapid growth.

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