Subsistence Agriculture

Extensive vs. Intensive
Swidden, Wet-Rice Cultivation, and Nomadic Herding

Types of Agriculture:
Subsistence versus Commercial

Subsistence

- Family or social group works together
- People live on food they grow
- Small surplus traded or sold locally

Commercial

- Products raised for market
- Low consumption of food by farmers

Extensive versus Intensive
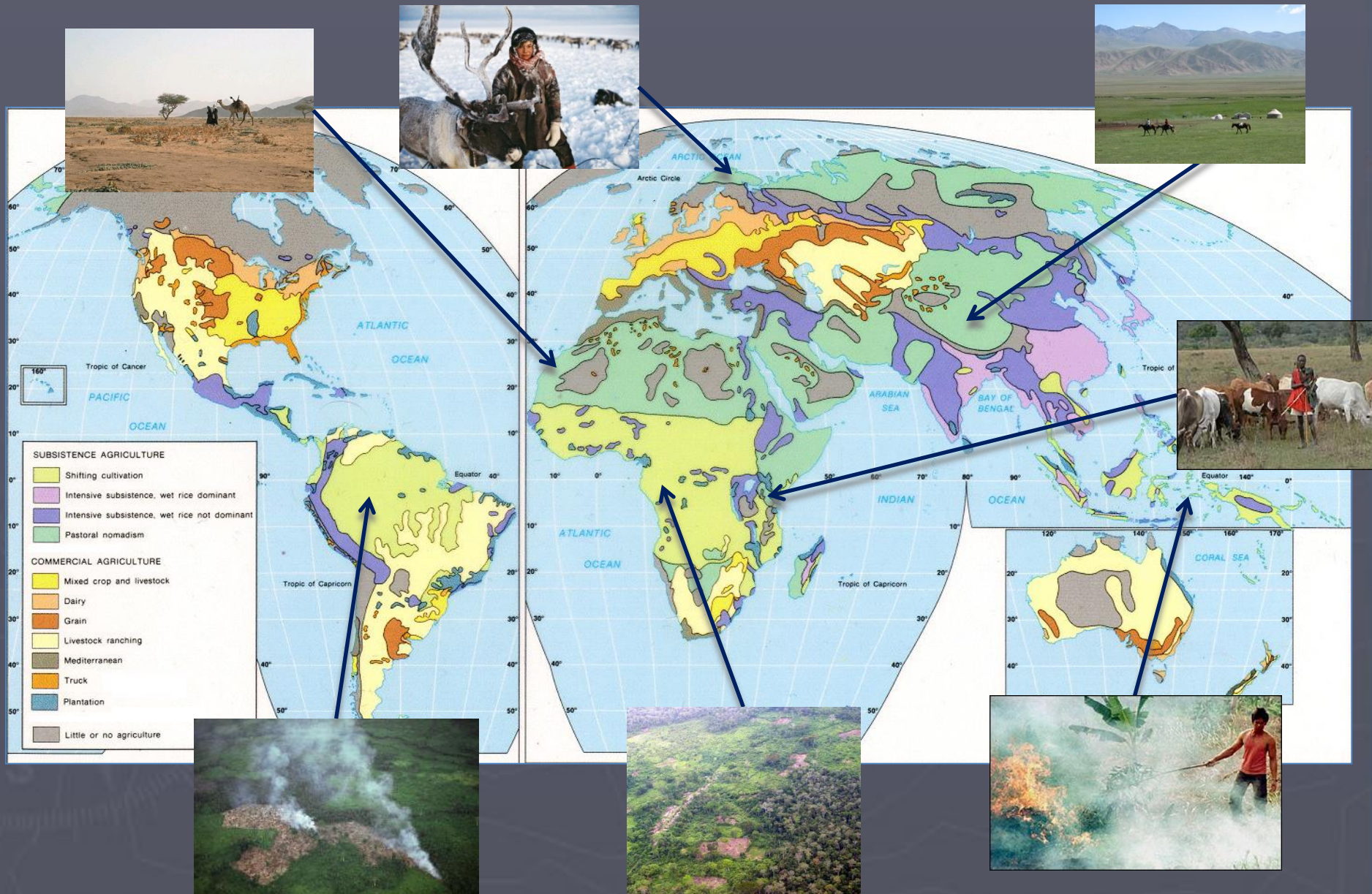

Extensive

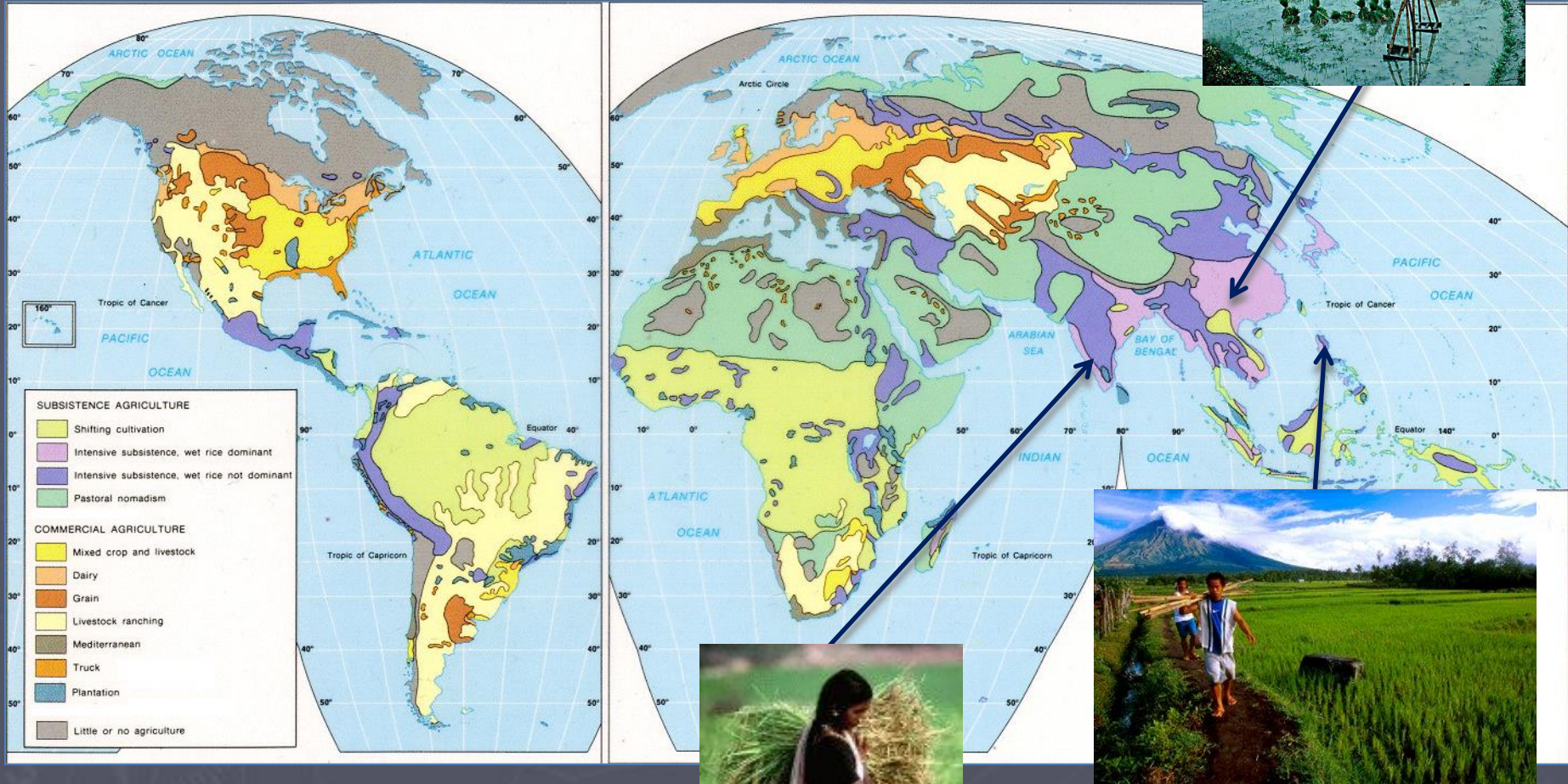- A lot of land
  - Slash and Burn
  - Nomadic Herding
- Less labor

Intensive

- Small amount of land
- Labor intensive
  - Wet Rice

Extensive Subsistence Agriculture

SUBSISTENCE AGRICULTURE
- Shifting cultivation
- Intensive subsistence, wet rice dominant
- Intensive subsistence, wet rice not dominant
- Pastoral nomadism

COMMERCIAL AGRICULTURE
- Mixed crop and livestock
- Dairy
- Grain
- Livestock ranching
- Mediterranean
- Truck
- Plantation

Little or no agriculture

Intensive Subsistence Agriculture

Shifting Cultivation

- Also called slash-and-burn or swidden
- Practiced in Tropical rainforests
  - Amazon
  - Congo
  - East Indies

Process for Shifting Cultivation

- Cut down non-useful trees and shrubs

- Burn felled trees to release nutrients into soil

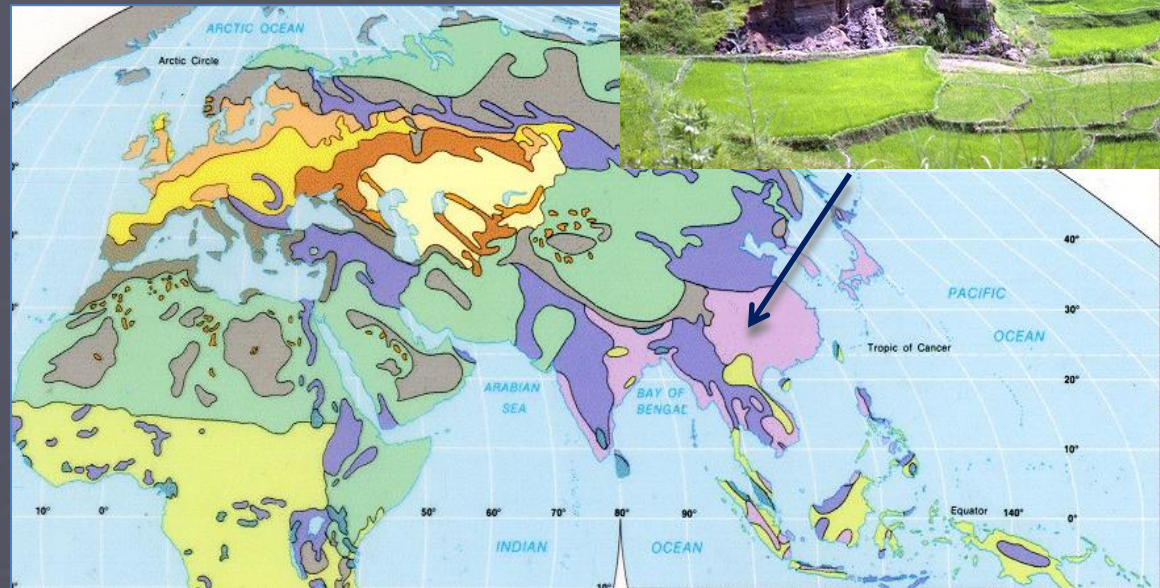- Clear space and till soil for agriculture

Problems of Shifting Cultivation

- Sustainability
  - Land is only productive for 2-5 years
    - Then needs to sit fallow for 15-20
- In-efficiency
  - 20% of land used to feed 5% of population
- Deforestation
- Loss of native flora and fauna

Wet-Rice Cultivation

- Paddy rice farming
  - Intensive Subsistence
- Tropical regions, nutrient-rich, with monsoon seasons
  - China
  - Philippines
  - India

Labor Intensive Process

- Field Preparation
  - Build, repair, clean canals and dikes
  - Plow and smooth soils in paddies
  - Grow seedlings in nursery
- Planting
  - Plant seedlings
  - Raise water level as plants grow
  - After flowering, water level is lowered
- Harvesting
  - Rice stalks hand picked

Nomadic Herding

- Subsistence Agriculture
  - Changing more so to wage earning business
- Arid, Semiarid, and Arctic Regions
  - Migratory based on trend of herds
    - Horizontally – Across a large area
    - Vertically (transhumance) – Changes in elevation
  - Declining Lifestyle
    - Cultural diffusion and governmental regulations

Location of Nomadic Herding Agriculture