

# Review of HMH Social Studies for California (Grades 6–8)

Hindu Education Foundation USA (HEF)

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**Note:** This document contains the following.

The first part (Page 2 through 12) describes the different problems in the HMH Social Studies for California (Grades 6–8) textbook draft in detail.

The Appendix 1 (Page 13 through 16) lists the violations in the textbook drafts as per the categories suggested in History–Social Science Adoption Program Evaluation Map for quick reference of all citations that are raised through this document.

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This is a review of Houghton Mifflin Harcourt’s program for middle school named the HMH Social Studies for California (Grades 6–8)<sup>1</sup>.

The textbook drafts being considered have several instances of adverse reflections on Hinduism and India in the textbook which violate the Californian Law and Educational standards. We see that the narrative in textbook draft reflects many Orientalist biases.

It is important to note that the Evaluation criteria for Instructional Material require the textbooks “to project the cultural diversity of society; instill in each child a sense of pride in his or her heritage; develop a feeling of self-worth related to equality of opportunity; eradicate the roots of prejudice; and thereby encourage the optimal individual development of each student”. They also prohibit any “Descriptions, depictions, labels, or rejoinders that tend to demean, stereotype, or patronize minority groups.”<sup>2</sup> Our review shows that the drafts do not completely adhere to these provisions.

The textbook draft also completely ignores or minimizes many important additions to the 2016 History Social Science Framework especially in the ancient India and Hinduism sections which could have brought some amount of parity on how these sections are portrayed in the textbooks. We list some of the major problems in the next sections.

## 1. Orientalism - A Brief

By Orientalism, scholars refer to patronizing depictions of cultures and people that were part of an imagined geographical entity called the ‘Orient’ an area including India, China the Middle East and the South East Asia. Dr. Edward Said, a founder of the academic field of postcolonial studies, defines Orientalism as “a style of thought based upon an ontological and epistemological distinction made between “the Orient” and (most of the time) “the Occident.”” It is based on an underlying assumption that there is an “absolute and systematic difference between the West, which is rational, developed, humane, superior, and the Orient, which is aberrant, undeveloped, inferior.”<sup>3</sup>

Said writes that since antiquity, the ‘Orient’ has had a special place in European Western experience, as a place of “romance, exotic beings, haunting memories and landscapes”. Orientalism started off as “a way of coming to terms” with these strange and mysterious people. With many European nations becoming colonisers of these places, asymmetric power equations ensured that this way of understanding the colonized and their cultures,

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<sup>1</sup> Houghton Mifflin Harcourt Textbook Drafts <http://www.hmhco.com/country/us/california/ca-hss-review>

<sup>2</sup> *Education Code* Sections 51501, 60040(b), and 60044(a). Also see ‘Standards for Evaluating Instructional Materials for Social Content, 2013 Edition’, page 5 and page 9 of 19.

<sup>3</sup> Said, Edward W. 1978. *Orientalism*. New York: Pantheon Books

became the only legitimate way of understanding and creating knowledge about these people. As Said points out, Orientalist biases are not just manifested in many genuine works of Western scholarship but that “racial ideas too came from the same impulse.” Needless to say, that the narratives based on them are often at variance with what the people of those cultures experience about themselves and also with empirical evidence.

Orientalists often see India as defined by primitive hierarchical structures of “caste” and outdated rituals. They conflate and essentialize Hinduism and Indian civilization into these structures and objectify Hindus ignoring their diversity, aspects of culture such as philosophy, aesthetics and art as also other achievements of the civilization.

caste	36
Aryan	38
Yoga	0
Meditation	4 (All 4 in Buddhism none in Hinduism)
Dharma	6
Karma	13

A sample word count from 'Ancient India' section in HMH 6-8

Politically, colonialism might have ended in the last century, but many scholars have shown that its remnants are well entrenched in many different ways and that Orientalist biases still exist in the narratives about many of these cultures although they may not be ubiquitous at all times.

We believe that there are many instances of Orientalism in the textbook drafts we have considered. The following sections detail a few of them.

## 2. Hinduism inferior than Buddhism?

The section in Buddhism starts with the paragraph

“A man sitting at the foot of the tree begins to speak about how one ought to live. **His words are like nothing you have heard from the Hindu priests.**”<sup>4</sup> (Emphasis not in original)

The above position not only adversely reflects on Hinduism by portraying it as inferior to Buddhism, it also serves to underplay the influence of Vedic traditions in the evolution of Buddhist thought. In fact Buddha was preceded by many Vedic sages and great thinkers such as Vyasa, Valmiki, Jabali, Yagnavalkya, Gargi to just name a few. So to contend that Hindus, before Buddha, knew nothing about how one ought to live is not just inaccurate but

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<sup>4</sup> Page 186 HMH 6-8

blatantly polemical. Buddha's ideas did not emerge out of isolation but they were built on top of the rich Upanishadic traditions in which he grew up as scholars have pointed out.

Richard Gombrich, Professor Emeritus at Oxford University and the Academic Director of the Oxford Centre for Buddhist Studies has the following to say on the matter

“The standard account of the early history of Indian religion posits several discontinuities and fresh starts. Firstly, it is held that belief in rebirth is not to be found in the *Rg Veda*, but appears suddenly in about the sixth century BC, perhaps first in the early *Upanishads*; one then has to conjecture where it came from. Then the Buddha is thought to have little or nothing to do with the *Upanishads*; not long ago leading scholars even claimed that early Buddhist texts showed no awareness of Upanishadic texts or teachings. Jainism is acknowledged to bear some resemblance to Buddhism, but is assumed to have played no part in the main developments of Indian religion. Finally, it is doubted whether Buddhism had any effect on the religion of the *Mahābhārata*. I believe all these four views to be wrong.”<sup>5</sup>(Italics not in the original)

Also, the Pali Canon has a record of two Hindu teachers named Alara Kalama and Uddaka Ramaputta from whom Buddha learnt yogic meditation techniques<sup>6</sup>. They also mention the advanced meditation techniques that are still used in Buddhism. Buddha indeed had great original ideas and which are very important, but does that mean we erase the influences on which his contributions stand and show them in very poor light?

The narrative of Buddha as a discontinuity and as a rebel against Vedic Hinduism, emerged in Europe in nineteenth century. For the many European scholars of nineteenth century who first collected and translated the Buddhist texts in the institutions of learning in Europe, Buddhism was to early Hinduism what Protestantism was to Roman Catholicism and sometimes also what Catholicism was to Judaism. Philip Almond in *The British Discovery of Buddhism* 1988, sees the origins of this comparison in the inner dynamics of the European society at that time<sup>7</sup>. He notes that the “analogy of the Buddha with Luther served iconoclastic ends, highlighting in a particularly potent way the contrast of Buddhism and Hinduism.” In an atmosphere charged with anti-Catholic and sometimes also

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<sup>5</sup><https://buddhiststudies.stanford.edu/events/richard-gombrich-fitting-buddha-early-history-indian-religion>

<sup>6</sup> Alexander Wynne 2007 'The Origin of Buddhist Meditation (Routledge Critical Studies in Buddhism)', Routledge

<sup>7</sup> ALMOND, PHILIP, C. 1988 *The British Discovery of Buddhism*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

anti-Judaic polemics, Buddha was seen as a Luther, as somebody who rebelled “against the sacrificialism and sacerdotalism of the Brahmans”, their heathen practices, rituals, their priesthood and their archaic social structures. So what we see here too is an Orientalist construction of imagined categories based on the ideological divisions within the nineteenth century European society. The textbook draft perpetuates this narrative while ignoring the evidence and latest scholarship on the matter.

For example the textbook draft tells us

“The Buddha also challenged the authority of the Hindu priests, the Brahmins. He did not believe that they or their rituals were necessary for enlightenment. Instead, he taught that it was the responsibility of each individual to work for his or her own liberation.”

How then do we reconcile with the fact that Buddha himself often talks approvingly of the Vedic rituals, and the mantras as recorded in the Pali canon? For example, in the following words from Majjhima Nikaya 92 and in Samyutta Nikaya 111 in the Pali Canon, Buddha praises Agnihotra as the foremost of rituals and Sāvitrī (Gayatri mantra) as the foremost of meters.

aggihuttamukhā yaññā sāvittī chandaso mukham<sup>8</sup>  
(agnihotra is the foremost ritual and savitri the foremost of meters)

Agnihotra is a fire ritual performed with the chanting of the verses of Rig Veda, Savitri or Gayatri Mantra is also a mantra from the Rig Veda, dedicated to the Sun deity. Both of these rituals are practised by Hindus even today. Buddhists also practice many rituals that are similar to Vedic practices. One of the earliest of Buddhist rituals that is practiced in many parts of the world is the worship of deity Indra. He is, for example, worshiped by the Chinese Buddhists as Dìshìtiān, and by the Koreans as Hwanin. ‘Homa’, the fire ritual of the Vedas is practiced in Japan as ‘Goma’, and the carrier of this ritual to Japan was in-fact Buddhism. It is also common knowledge that Buddhism in Japan incorporates many Hindu Deities, such as Saraswati and Ganesha, as most recently documented by Benoy Behl<sup>9</sup>.

Further, as Gombrich notes, the Sutta Piṭaka, the second of the three divisions of Pali canon “contains several passages in which he [Buddha] argues that *brahmin*, properly

<sup>8</sup> Majjhima Nikaya 92 and in Samyutta Nikaya 111 in the Pali Canon

<sup>9</sup><http://www.uniindia.com/hindu-gods-forgotten-in-india-treasured-in-japan-filmmaker-benoy-behl/entertainment/fullstory/924144.html>

understood, is not a social character but a moral one, referring to a person who is wise and virtuous.”<sup>10</sup>(italics not in original)

The above examples show that the binary divide between the Buddhists and Brahmins as being envisaged in the textbook drafts is inaccurate. There indeed existed differences between Buddhism and the many schools of Vedic Hinduism, as evidenced by their polemics and hagiographies, which are similar to the differences that existed within the different schools of Vedic Hinduism themselves. Yet these traditions do not correspond to the sweeping binaries and discontinuities imposed by the Orientalist frameworks. The reality is much more complex than these Orientalist biases allow.

The textbook also tells us that

“Some of the Buddha’s teachings challenged traditional Hindu ideas. For example, the Buddha told people that they did not have to follow the Vedas to achieve enlightenment.”

This too is an unnecessary adverse reflection based on shallow understanding of the Indic traditions. In Indic traditions, texts have been considered only as one of the aids which need to be transcended when one is firmly on the path to Liberation or Enlightenment. In the *Bhagavad Gita*, for example, which is considered by Hindus as one of the most important of spiritual texts and as the condensed version of *Upanishads*, Krishna tells Arjuna to transcend the *Vedas* for achieving enlightenment<sup>11</sup>. The verses from *Mahabharata* also posit that for following dharma, the shrutis (eternal texts including the Vedas) are helpful to only a certain extent but not beyond that and that secret of dharma is found within us<sup>12</sup>. So the idea that the texts have to be transcended ultimately is neither new nor uncommon in the Hindu tradition. Rather it has been a feature of Hindu and other Indic tradition. Hence to posit this as some sort of discontinuity is fallacious.

Buddha made many original contributions to Indic spirituality and it is our firm belief that his accurate portrayal does him a lot more service than to wrap him in Orientalist binaries. His virtues and that of Buddhism, that we all are proud of, can indeed be highlighted without unnecessary and inaccurate adverse reflections on Hinduism.

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<sup>10</sup> Gombrich, Richard, F. 2002, *How Buddhism Began: The Conditioned Genesis of the Early Teachings*, Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers

<sup>11</sup> Schweig Graham M. 2010, *Bhagavad Gita: The Beloved Lord's Secret Love Song*, HarperOne, *Bhagavad Gita*, Chapter 2, Verse 45

<sup>12</sup> Aranyakaparvan (32.2-5), *Mahabharata*, For English translation consider 'The Mahabharata' by Vishnu Sukthankar, Bhandarkar Oriental Library, 1942

### 3. Essentializing Hinduism into ‘caste’

The section on ‘Ancient India’ with 42 pages has the word ‘caste’ mentioned 36 times, the words ‘varna’ and ‘jati’ appear 13 and 9 times respectively. What explains this obsession with ‘caste’ so as to bring it so many times?

The subsection on “Vedic Society” starting page 175 within the ‘Ancient India’ section opens with the following question for the students.

“If YOU were there . . . Your family are skillful weavers who make beautiful cotton cloth. You belong to the class in Aryan society who are traders, farmers, and craftspeople. Often the raja of your town leads the warriors into battle. You admire their bravery but know you can never be one of them. To be an Aryan warrior, you must be born into that noble class. Instead, you have your own duty to carry out. How do you feel about remaining a weaver?”

This is a case of anachronism and stereotyping based on essentializing everything Hindu into “caste”. This is anachronistic because the birth based occupational social systems were a later day phenomena and there is no evidence to suggest that it was pervasive or even prevalent during the Vedic period. In fact many early Vedic hymns clearly show that the social structure during the Vedic period was fluid and not as rigid as is made out to be. Consider for example the following verses from the Rig Veda.

I am a reciter of hymns, my father is a doctor, my mother a grinder of corn. We desire to obtain wealth in various actions.

Rigveda 9.112.3

O Indra, fond of Soma, would you make me the protector of people, or would you make me a ruler, or would you make me a Sage who has consumed Soma, or would you bestow infinite wealth to me?

Rigveda 3.44.5

As the textbook itself mentions in the next sections, the rigid birth based occupational social system that the opening paragraph alludes to, came about when the ‘varnas’ merged with the ‘jatis’ in a later period of time. When did this merging of diverse social organizations occur?

Recent genetic studies<sup>13</sup> have suggested that the birth based occupational social system what has been called 'caste' in modern lexicon, started setting in only about 70 generations ago suggesting that it could be around 5th century CE or later that such a system started setting in. Yet, it did not become pervasive encompassing the whole of the Indian society till the onset of colonialism. Studies have indicated that Indian society even during medieval times was a lot more heterogenous before it was simplified, reduced and transformed during colonial rule into the colonially constructed concept of 'Caste System.'

Nicholas Dirks, the former Chancellor of the University of California, Berkeley and one of the foremost scholars on colonialism in India writes in 'Castes of Mind: Colonialism and the Making of Modern India' that "caste", as we know it today, as a basic expression or essence of Indian tradition and as a designation that exhausted the totality of Indian social forms is "the product of a concrete historical encounter between India and Western colonial rule."<sup>14</sup>

Dirks writes

"In precolonial India, the units of social identity had been multiple, and their respective relations and trajectories were part of a complex, conjunctural, constantly changing, political world. The referents of social identity were not only heterogeneous; they were also determined by context."

"Under colonialism, caste was thus made out to be far more - far more pervasive, far more totalizing; and far more uniform - than it had ever been before, at the same time that it was defined as a fundamental religious social order."

So the opening paragraph in the textbook draft has two glaring problems. It erroneously identifies the Vedic period with a rigid birth based occupational system, which is in all possibility a different phenomena of a different period. Secondly, it betrays an Orientalist obsession with caste and an assumption that caste is the essence of Indian society and possibly the only or the most important thing to be talked about when discussing India. The opening paragraph, it appears, is supposed to give some context about the text that is to come, about what is important in it and about how one should grasp it. The Vedic period had many great achievements which the paragraph could have talked about but completely ignores and essentializes and thereby reduces the Vedic period into 'caste'.

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<sup>13</sup> A Basu et al, 2015 Genomic reconstruction of the history of extant populations of India reveals five distinct ancestral components and a complex structure, Proceedings of National Academy of Science USA <http://www.pnas.org/content/113/6/1594.abstract>

<sup>14</sup> Nicholas B. Dirks, 2001, Castes of Mind: Colonialism and the Making of Modern India, Princeton University Press

Consider the opening paragraphs of Sikhism and below

“If YOU were there . . . You hear a guru, or teacher, speaking in public. He is a Sikh, and he believes that all people should be treated equally. He talks about a community of Sikhs near you who embrace this principle.

Or the one from Judaism

“If YOU were there . . . You live in a small town in ancient Israel. Some people in your town treat strangers very badly. But you have been taught to be fair and kind to everyone, including strangers. One day, you tell one of your neighbors he should be kinder to strangers. He asks you why you feel that way. How will you explain your belief in kindness?”

The section also skips the mention that the most important sages within Hinduism like Vyasa and Valmiki were not born Brahmin but that are the most revered sages of Hinduism, the former having compiled the *Vedas* and authored the *Mahabharata* and the latter having authored the *Ramayana*. It merely contends that “Although Brahmins had a special religious role, many important Hindu writers and teachers did not belong to this varna.”<sup>15</sup>

The mention that sages Vyasa and Valmiki were not born Brahmin lends credence to the fact that there indeed was social mobility, a fact also mentioned in the History Social Science Framework<sup>16</sup>.

#### **4. Not A Single Mention of "Yoga" and "Meditation" in Hinduism section**

It is interesting to note the conspicuous absence of the word "yoga" and "meditation" in the whole of Hinduism section. We do not find even a single mention of these words which form the core to Hindu spirituality and are also mentioned in the 2016 History Social Science Framework narrative mentions yoga and meditation<sup>17</sup>. We see the mentions of word meditation in Buddhism and even in Sikhism but they strangely do not exist in the Hinduism section.

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<sup>15</sup> Page 179, HMH 6-8

<sup>16</sup> Page 216, Line 867, History Social Science Framework, Adopted by the State Board of Education on July 14, 2016

<sup>17</sup> Chapter 10, Page 217, Line 890 and Line 880, History Social Science Framework, Adopted by the State Board of Education on July 14, 2016

For example consider the text below from the textbook draft. It squarely misses to even talk about the concept of yoga and its practice as leading to spirituality and through it to moksha or the realization of ultimate reality.

“Many Hindus believe that their souls will eventually join Brahman because the world we live in is an illusion. Brahman is the only reality. The Upanishads teach that people must try to see through the illusion of the world. Because it is hard to see through illusions, this can take several lifetimes. That is why Hindus believe that souls are born and reborn many times, each time in a new body. This process of rebirth is called reincarnation.”

It completely skips the point that various paths of Yoga including duty, devotion, knowledge and meditation are seen by Hindus as the way to achieve peace, happiness and a higher state of consciousness. The *Bhagavad Gita* mentions the word ‘Yoga’ many times and illuminates on the different paths of Yoga including ‘dhyana yoga’<sup>18</sup> (the path of meditation) in the sixth chapter which has steps explained for meditation. *Yoga Sutra* of Patanjali and *Yoga Vasista* are also important texts within Hinduism on the topic of ‘Yoga’ which are extensively used today in the practice of Yoga.

It would also be worth mentioning that it is from the Sanskrit word for meditation ‘dhyana’ which originated in Vedas and Upanishads, comes the word ‘chan’ in Chinese and then ‘Zen’ in Japanese.

To not have details on ‘Yoga’ and ‘meditation’ in Hinduism, while mentioning meditation in other religions, deprives Hindu students of their cultural heritage, as also deprives all children from having an accurate understanding of Hinduism. This is a clear instance of adverse reflection on Hinduism.

## 5. Contentious Speculations About Ancient Indians

The textbook draft privileges speculations about Harappans to what is known and inferred from archaeology and other sources of history.

Firstly, it, contentiously conjectures the existence of slavery in the Harappan civilization based on very little evidence in its support. The text resorts to ‘argumentum ad temperantiam’ when it tells us that “Historians disagree on whether slavery existed in the Harappan civilization. Some historians believe buildings have been found that were slave

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<sup>18</sup> Please see Chapter 6. For an English translation please see Schweig Graham M. 2010, *Bhagavad Gita: The Beloved Lord's Secret Love Song*, HarperOne,

dwellings.” It floats speculations that are thin on evidence while completely ignoring what historians themselves have to say about the people of Indus-Saraswati civilization based on the rich archaeological evidence gathered from archaeological excavations from hundreds of cities across North and North West of India.

Historian Walter Fairservice has clearly stated that there is no evidence for slavery or class division in Harappan civilization or even state rituals or palaces that are comparable to the civilizations of Early China, Pharaonic Egypt or Sumero-Akkadian Mesopotamia.<sup>19</sup>

John Marshall, one of the original excavators of earliest sites of this civilization has noted "There is nothing that we know of in prehistoric Egypt or Mesopotamia or anywhere else in western Asia to compare with the wellbuilt baths and commodious houses of the citizens of Mohenjodaro. In those countries, much money and thought were lavished on the building of magnificent temples for the Gods and on the places and tombs of kings, but the rest of the people seemingly had to content themselves with insignificant dwellings of mud. In the Indus Valley, the picture is reversed and the finest structures are those directed for the convenience of the citizens."<sup>20</sup>

J.M. Kenoyer, scholar of ancient India and an archeologist who worked excavating these sites, notes that trade and religion rather than military might were real instruments of authority; indeed, no piece of Harappan art glorifies rulers, conquest or warfare.<sup>21</sup>

Archaeologist Rita Wright, emphasizes "a growing awareness that [the Harappan civilization] does not fit into the social, political and economic categories developed for the study of other states", such as Mesopotamia or Egypt, which had centralized administrative structures. "Among the Harappans on the other hand, a pattern of decentralization appears to have persisted". In the formative era, Wright also notes "an absence of factionalism" and "a unified material culture", which, to her, point to "production and distribution systems based upon kinship or community related organizations".<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> Fairservis, Walter A. 1992, *The Harappan Civilization and Its Writing: A Model for the Decipherment of the Indus Script*, BRILL

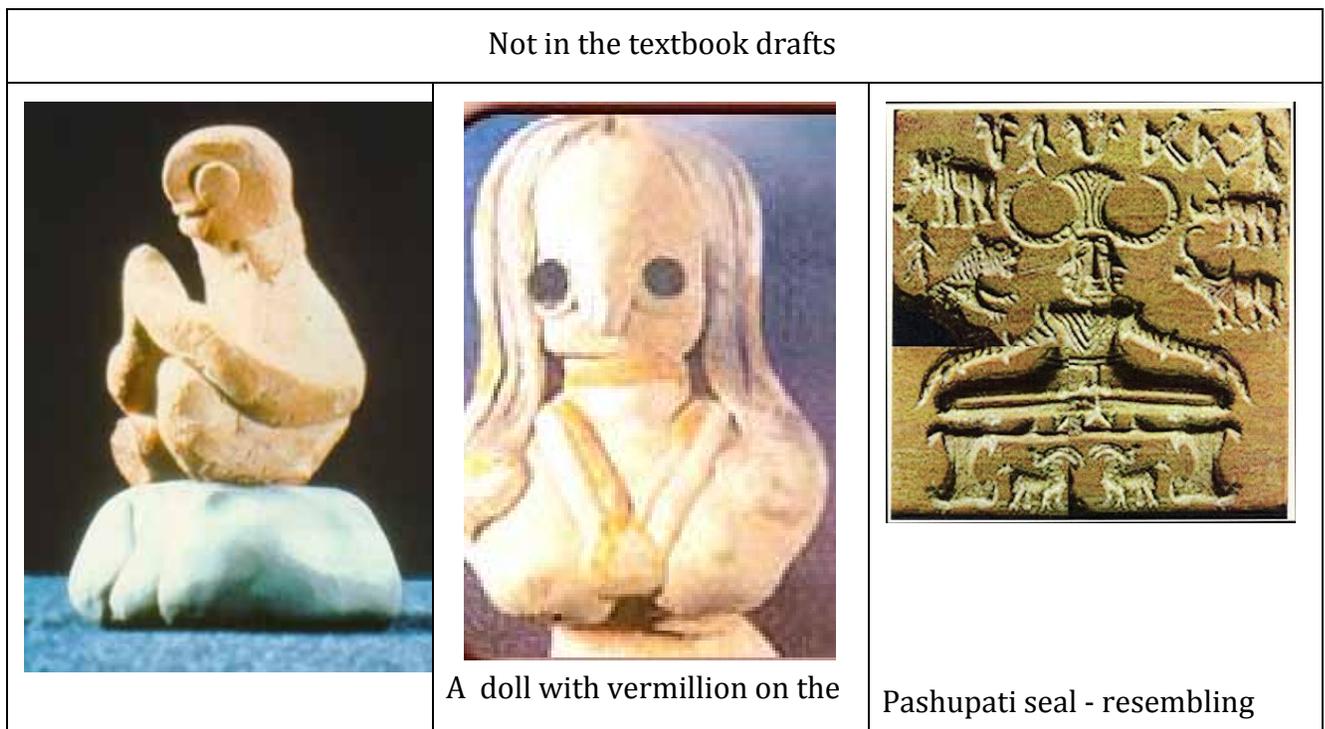
<sup>20</sup>Marshall, John, 'Mohenjodaro', *Illustrated London News ILN*, 27 Feb 1927, quoted by McIntosh Jane R., *A Peaceful Realm*, p21

<sup>21</sup> Kenoyer, Jonathan Mark, 'Early City States in South Asia: Cross Cultural Approaches', *Smithsonian Institution Press*, Washington D.C., 1997

<sup>22</sup> Wright, Rita P., 'The Indus Valley and Mesopotamians Civilizations: A Comparative View of Ceramic Technology', in *Old Problems and New Perspectives in the archeology of South Asia*.

While historians are nearly unanimous on what can be inferred about the ancient Indian civilization, we wonder what makes somebody privilege contentious speculations over inferences based on available historical evidence for the content in the textbook?

Secondly, the textbooks draft also seems to be trying hard to dispute civilizational continuity in India. This civilizational continuity is evidenced by the Harappan seals and artifacts that resemble current-day common Hindu customs. Examples such as the terracotta dolls in 'Namaste' greeting, seals that resemble the Hindu God Shiva in meditative pose etc (both of which are mentioned in the 2016 History Social Science Framework, see Framework chapter 10, lines 823 to 841) and dolls with vermilion and bangles are all examples of common customs in Hinduism today yet are completely ignored in the drafts. Archaeologists like B B Lal, have clearly shown that these archaeological findings point to a cultural continuity between the ancient civilization and modern day Hindu practices<sup>23</sup> and which the framework clearly mentions. The drafts does not even mention these aspects. It again resorts to 'argumentum ad temperantiam' to ignore this evidence by contending that "Many seem to be religious, but the specific beliefs are unclear." These are completely contrary to the wealth of archaeological evidence which clearly indicates civilizational continuity.



<sup>23</sup> B. B. Lal (2009). How Deep Are the Roots of Indian Civilization?: Archaeology Answers. Aryan Books. (B. B. Lal, is a renowned Indian archaeologist. He was the Director General of the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) from 1968 to 1972, and has served as Director of the Indian Institute of Advanced Studies, Simla. He also worked for UNESCO committees.)

A terracotta doll excavated from Harappan civilization with 'Namaste' greeting.	parting of hair on forehead, a custom practiced by Hindu women even today	Hindu God Shiva in meditating pose.
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## Conclusion

The textbook has many serious problems in the portrayal of Hinduism and India as detailed above and also in the Appendix 1 below. These violate the California laws as also the criteria for instructional material as mandated by CDE. Hence it is imperative that these problems be addressed, failing which the textbook not be adopted for teaching in California public schools.

### Appendix 1: List of Category-1 Violations in HMH Social Studies for California (Grades 6–8)

#	Page	Text	Violations	Details
1	171	Some historians believe buildings have been found that were slave dwellings. Others believe these buildings actually were “motels” for travelers.	<p>Category 1.4 which mandates historical accuracy</p> <p>Standards For Evaluation of Instructional Material for Social Contents which state its prohibits adverse reflection of heritage’ Education code sections 60044 (a), (b) and 51501.</p>	Contentious speculation. Please read Section 5. ‘Contentious Speculations About Ancient Indians’ above for detailed explanation and references.
2	175	“If YOU were there . . . Your family are skillful weavers who make beautiful cotton cloth. You belong to the class in Aryan society who are traders, farmers, and craftspeople. Often the raja of your town leads the warriors into battle. You admire their bravery but know you can never be one of them. To be an Aryan warrior, you must be born into that noble class. Instead, you have your own duty to carry out. How do you feel about remaining a weaver?”	<p>Category 1.4 which mandates historical accuracy, Category 1.8 which stresses on importance of variables of time and space and Category 1.10 which prohibits adverse reflection on the basis of religion.</p> <p>Standards For Evaluation of Instructional Material for Social Contents which state its purpose as ‘to instill in each child a sense of pride in his or her heritage’ Education code sections 60044 (a), (b) and 51501.</p>	<p>This wrongly identifies “caste” with Vedic period and essentializes it to caste.</p> <p>Please read section 3. Essentializing Hinduism into ‘caste’ above for a detailed explanation and references.</p> <p>This would lead students to wrongly assume that birth based caste was a core phenomenon from the times of Vedic Hinduism.</p>
3		“Most historians and archaeologists believe that the Aryans crossed into India through mountain passes in the northwest.”	Category 1.4 which mandates historical accuracy	This is inaccurate. Most archaeologists claim that they have no evidence to posit an Aryan invasion or a large scale migration. Archaeologist B B Lal who had first posited in 1977 that the archaeological evidence of Painted Grey Ware

				<p>Culture (PGW) as best representing Aryan Invasion in 1997 retracted completely. He and other archaeologists like S R Rao, Jim Shaffer have written that there is no archaeological evidence that might represent the “Aryan phenomena”<sup>24</sup></p> <p>The theory of Indo-European migration solely rests on Linguistic theories.</p>
4	179	<p>“Rules developed about how people of different groups could interact. As time passed, these rules became stricter and became central to Indian society.”</p>	<p>Category 1.4 which mandates historical accuracy and and Category 1.8 which stresses on importance of variables of time and space.</p>	<p>As many scholars of colonialism have shown “caste” was not all that pervasive or central to Indian society till the British enforced in India starting the 1901 ethnographic survey of India. Please read section 3. Essentializing Hinduism into ‘caste’ above for a detailed explanation and references.</p>
5	179		<p>Category 1.2 which requires incorporation of content from framework, Category 1.4 which mandates Variety of Perspectives and Category 1.8 which seeks inclusion of primary texts</p>	<p>The section does not include ‘Bhumi Sukta’ which is present in the HSS framework narrative or any relevant texts from the Vedas.</p>
6	179	<p>“As Indian society developed, Brahmins came to be regarded as the highest group. Although Brahmins had a special religious role, many important Hindu writers and teachers did not belong to this varna.”</p>	<p>Category 1.2 which requires incorporation of content from framework and Category 1.4 which mandates Historical Accuracy, Detailed Content and Variety of Perspectives</p>	<p>The section skips the mention that the two most important sages revered within Hinduism, namely Vyasa and Valmiki were not born Brahmin. This fact showed that social mobility existed during the Vedic times. This is mentioned in the HSS Framework but has not been incorporated. Please read section 3. Essentializing Hinduism into ‘caste’ above for a detailed explanation and references.</p>
7	181	<p>“People from Persia and other kingdoms in Central</p>	<p>Category 1.4 which mandates historical</p>	<p>Dr. Shiva Bajpai, Professor Emeritus of History, Cal State</p>

<sup>24</sup> Bryant, Edwin, 2001, The Quest for the Origins of Vedic Culture, Oxford University Press

		Asia, for example, brought their ideas to India. Hinduism was also influenced by religious texts written in Tamil and other South Asian languages.”	accuracy.	<p>Northridge, specifically disputes the claim that people from Persia and other kingdoms in Central Asia brought ideas to India in a manner that they significantly influenced the genesis of Hinduism. This text does not provide any evidence as to which schools or traditions within Hinduism or which basic aspects of Hinduism were significantly influenced by ideas of Persia and other kingdoms of Central Asia so as to mention them so prominently. While there were always exchanges of ideas between these different regions but to posit some foundational idea of Hinduism came from Persia begs evidence.</p> <p>The second sentence assumes that the religious texts written in Tamil were not Hindu themselves. What draws such a line of separation? The earliest of Tamil texts are full with references to Gods including Shiva who are part of the Hindu pantheon.</p>
8	182	Many Hindus believe that their souls will eventually join Brahman because the world we live in is an illusion. Brahman is the only reality. The Upanishads teach that people must try to see through the illusion of the world. Because it is hard to see through illusions, this can take several lifetimes. That is why Hindus believe that souls are born and reborn many times, each time in a new body. This process of rebirth is called	Category 1.4 which mandates historical accuracy and and Category 1.8 which stresses on importance of variables of time and space and Category 1.10 which prohibits adverse reflection	The whole section on Hinduism does not have a single mention of Yoga and meditation, which seems a deliberate attempt to show Hinduism as archaic set of practices. Please refer to section 5. ‘Not A Single Mention of ‘Yoga’ and ‘Meditation in Hinduism section.’ where this problem has been discussed in detail.

		reincarnation.		
9	183	“A universal spirit called Brahman created the universe and everything in it.”	Category 1.4 which mandates Historical Accuracy, Detailed Content and Variety of Perspectives	There seems to be a ontological mistake here. The Hindu Deity Brahma is said to create the universe. Brahman (sounds similar but a different concept) is a concept that is beyond creation.
10	16	Key Hindu teachings and practices, like Yoga and meditations are not incorporated	Category 1.2 which requires incorporation of content from framework,	The HSS Framework mentions the four purusharthas Dharma, Artha, Kama and Moksha and practices like Yoga and meditation. Only Dharma is briefly mentioned while rest everything do not even find mention.
11	378	“They did not need to visit temples or priests to reach liberation. Instead, they could express their devotion through singing, dancing, or ceremonial parades.”	Category 1.4 which mandates Historical Accuracy, Detailed Content and Variety of Perspectives	It is not true that bhakti saints did not visit temples, rather many bhakti saints like Purandara dasa lived and sang in temples and alvar saint praise the ‘divya desams’ or temples in their Tamil bhakti compositions.
12	378	“These poems were written not in Sanskrit but in the languages that people spoke, like Hindi or Tamil.”	Category 1.4 which mandates Historical Accuracy, Detailed Content and Variety of Perspectives	Bhakti literature was both composed in Sanskrit and vernacular. For example Ramananda himself is known to have composed works in Sanskrit like <i>Vaisnava Mata Bhajabhaskara</i> and <i>Ramarcana paddhati</i> <sup>25</sup> .
13	397	“During this time, the British continued to trade with the Mughals. However, the British began to assert greater control over political and economic life in India. Great Britain began to replace Indian leaders with British officials. Many Indians resented this control.”	Category 1.4 which mandates Historical Accuracy, Detailed Content and Variety of Perspectives and Category 1.5 which seeks continuity and narrative coherence.	There is a discontinuity in the narrative. As Mughal empire started declining the Maratha Empire had emerged to the fore ruling the vast expanse of Indian subcontinent before the British rule set in. In fact Maratha ruler ‘Mahadji Scindhia had been made the ‘Vakil-ul-Mutlaq’ (regent of Mughal affairs) by the Mughal ruler in 1784 and had become the defacto ruler..

<sup>25</sup> R. S. McGregor, 1992, *Devotional Literature in South Asia: Current Research, 1985-1988*, Cambridge

