

Hindutva and the California History Textbook Scandal (November 2005)

Below are some key snippets of changes that were initially proposed for California grade school textbooks — and in many cases initially approved! — by the California Board of Education Curriculum Committee. (Things as of early 2006 are up in the air.) The recommendations followed the lead of two extremist Hindutva organizations — the Hindu Education Foundation and the Vedic Foundation. The Board of Education hired a Hindutva-leaning academic, Shiva Bajpai, as a “consultant” to the Curriculum Committee (the CRP mentioned in the text).

Advisors of the Hindu Education Foundation include none other than the infamous David Frawley and S. Kalyanaraman, two of the most active Hindutva supporters:

<http://www.hindueducation.org/advisors.html>

Take a look at the History of India according to the Vedic Foundation:

<http://tinyurl.com/du4kq>

(Ancient India there approximately 1.7 billion years before the dinosaurs, and Hinduism revealed over 111 trillion years ago; this is apparently why the group objects to Mohenjo-daro and Harappa in the text books being described as India’s “first” cities — see the edits later.

Note: the page above was removed from their server when we publicized it, but lives on in Internet cache.

Other crazy dates live on in their server even now:

http://www.thevedicfoundation.org/bhartiya_history/chronology.htm

Read on from these snippets and enjoy (?). There is a lot of black humor here....

Michael Witzel and Steve Farmer
11 November 2005
(Minor revisions January 27, 2006)

LAST MINUTE MEMORANDUM

DATE: November 2, 2005

TO: MEMBERS, STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

SUBJECT: 2005 History-Social Science Primary Adoption: Curriculum Development and Supplemental Materials Commission Recommendations

Hindu Education Foundation: CRP-Recommended Edits
CRP: Shiva Bajpai, Professor Emeritus, CSU Northridge

The Hindu Education Foundation submitted a detailed report with numerous suggested edits for each of the programs under consideration for adoption. A number of the comments contained suggestions for changes, such as the addition of lengthy new passages, new literature selections, or rewriting of entire sections. These changes are not allowed under Commission policy and were not included in the recommended list.

Number	Group's Edit/Correction	Ad Hoc Committee Action
4	Page 115, "The Aryans": current text, "Also about this same time, tribes of people called Aryans began to move into the Indus Valley. These Aryan people came from the area around the Caspian and the Black seas. [...] Eventually some of them crossed the Hindu Kush mountains into India where they slowly spread over the subcontinent." Replace with, "Since the <u>1800s</u> it was believed that about this same time, tribes of people called Aryans began to move into the Indus Valley. These Aryan people came from the area around the Caspian and Black <u>Seas</u> . The recent archeological proofs are negating <u>the</u> Aryan invasion theory. The new theory suggests <u>Aryans</u> were not the outsiders."	Approve edit as written. Minor grammatical corrections underlined. Used "1800s" instead of "19 th century" for consistency with rest of program.

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15	Page 236, Inset: current text, "It [Hinduism] began with the religion of the Aryans, who arrived in India in 1500 B.C. Replace with, "The basic principles of what is known today as Hinduism were already formulated by 1500 <u>B.C.</u> under the collective name of Sanatana dharma. They are to be found in the four Vedas."	Approve edit as written. The same edit will have to be made on page 247.
18	Page 242, entire page: current text, "They [Aryans] were part of a larger group of people historians refer to as the Indo-Europeans." Remove this statement.	Approve edit as written.
19	Page 245, second paragraph: "Men had many more rights than women." Replace with, "Men had different duties (dharma) as well as rights than women. Many women were among the sages to whom the Vedas were revealed."	Approve edit as written.
21	Page 262, second column, second paragraph: "[Ashoka's] tolerance was unusual for the time." Replace with "His tolerance was usual for the time."	Approve edit as written.
96	Page 240, first paragraph, second column: current text, "India's first civilization in the Indus River valley began about 3000 B.C...." Astronomical evidence in the Rig Veda suggests a date earlier than 3000 B.C. for the Rigveda.	Replace "first" with "early".

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25	Page 386, paragraph 5: current text, "The Vedas came to form the major beliefs of the religion called Brahmanism." Replace with, "The Vedas constitute the source of Hinduism."	Approve edit as written.

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31	Page 151, "The Caste System", third paragraph: remove entire paragraph.	Approve edit as written.
32	Page 152, "The Vedas": current text, "The oldest of the Vedas, the <i>Rigveda</i> , was probably written before 1000 B.C." Replace with "The oldest of the Vedas, the <i>Rigveda</i> , was probably collected and arranged before 1000 B.C."	Instead of "redacted", use "collected and arranged".

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	1000 BC.” Replace with, “The oldest of the Vedas, the <i>Rigveda</i> , was redacted in the form it is known to this day by 1500 <u>BC</u> .”	Use BC instead of BCE for consistency.
33	Page 152, “Later Vedic Texts,” all four paragraphs. Identify all four sections of the Veda: (1) Samhita, (2) Brahmana, (3) Aranyaka, and (4) Upanishad.	Delete the word “later”.
35	Page 154, “Hinduism and Women”: current text, “However, Hinduism also taught that women were inferior to men. As a result, Hindu women were not allowed to read the Vedas or other sacred texts.” Delete these sentences.	Make edit as directed. Deletion leaves only one sentence under “Hinduism and Women”. It might be better for flow to just add this remaining sentence to the end of the previous section, or remove it altogether.
38	Page 170, “Mathematics and Other Sciences”: current text, “The ancient Indians were also very skilled in the medical sciences.” Replace with, “The ancient Indians were also very skilled in the medical science known as the Ayurveda. Ayurveda is derived from Sanskrit <i>ayus</i> , meaning long and healthy life span, and <i>veda</i> , meaning theory and practice. The psychosomatic dimension of ayurveda incorporates significant input from the tradition of yoga. Though principally a pathway to spiritual liberation, yoga as a discipline of breathing and bodily functions finds a place of honor in most medical and healing traditions of India.”	Replace with the following language: “The ancient Indians were also very skilled in the medical science known as the Ayurveda. Ayurveda incorporates significant input from the tradition of yoga. Though principally a pathway to spiritual liberation, yoga as a discipline of breathing and bodily functions finds a place of honor in most medical and healing traditions of India.”

Macmillan/McGraw-Hill

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41	Page 235, Timeline: “circa 1500 B.C. Aryan songs become foundation of Hinduism.” Replace with “circa 1500 B.C. Vedas were redacted into the form in which we know them today.”	Make edit but replace “redacted” with “collected and arranged”.
43	Page 242, last paragraph: current text, “In the years that followed, a group of people called the Aryans began settling in the region. Soon a new civilization emerged.” Replace with, “In the years that followed, a group of people from other regions of India began	Approve edit as written.

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	settling in the region, enriching the Harappan civilization.”	
45	Page 244, second paragraph: current text, “Men had many more rights than women. Unless there were no sons in a family, only a man could inherit property. Only men could go to school or become priests.” Replace first sentence with, “Men had different rights and duties than women,” and add after last sentence, “Women’s education was mostly done at home.”	Approve edit as written.
47	Page 245, “Review”: current text, “Describe some of the ways in which men enjoyed more rights than women in ancient India.” Replace with, “...enjoyed different rights.”	Approve edit as written.
50	Page 249, Timeline: current text, “1000 B.C. <i>Rig Veda</i> created.” Replace with, “1500 B.C. Rigveda was redacted.”	Make edit but replace “redacted” with “collected and arranged”.
51	Page 252, picture: remove picture of the “Untouchable.”	Remove picture.
58	Page 268: current text, “Although he was a Buddhist, Asoka allowed his Hindu subjects to practice their religion. His tolerance was unusual for the time.” Replace with, “Although he was a Buddhist, Asoka allowed his Hindu subjects to practice their religion. His tolerance was usual for the time.”	Approve edit as written.

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62	Page 229: depicts untouchables as the fifth Varna. Remove this.	Approve edit as written. The text at the bottom of p.228 will also have to be edited.

Note: this publisher ... has indicated that they have met with the group and are working on implementing some of the suggested edits for its grade 6 program.

Number	Group's Edit/Correction	Ad Hoc Committee Action
68	Page 76, second paragraph: current text, "The language and traditions of the Indo-Aryan speakers replaced the old ways of the Harappans..." Replace with "People from elsewhere in India replaced..."	Approve edit as written.

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78	Page 179, second paragraph: current text, "Like most nomads, Indo-Aryans did not create a written language.... The Vedas are poems that tell the story of the Indo-Aryan people and their gods." Replace second sentence with, "The Vedas are poems that record and narrate the story of the people of India and their deities—male and female. Vedas also reveal significant achievements in the fields of mathematics, science, agriculture, and many other disciplines."	Approve edit as written.
83	Page 181, table, last row ("Sudras"): current text, "Native peoples; performed services for members of the three higher castes." Replace with, "Performed services for all classes and did more labor-intensive work."	Approve edit as written.
86	Page 182, fourth paragraph: current text, "In modern India, these people are now called Dalits, and treating someone as an untouchable is a crime against the law." Replace with, "In modern India, treating someone as an untouchable is a crime against the law."	Approve edit as written.

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91	Page 144, second paragraph, last sentence: current text, "Hinduism is a blend of the Aryan beliefs and the beliefs of the people they conquered." Replace with, "Hinduism is a blend of the Aryan beliefs and the beliefs of the people living in <u>the Indus-Saraswati</u> civilization."	Approve edit as written. Minor corrections underlined. The text uses, "Indus-Sarasvati civilization" throughout.
92	Page 144, third paragraph, replace current text, "The Aryan civilization..." with "The Indus-Saraswati civilization..."	Approve edit as written.

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	"Early Aryan religion..." with "Early Hindu religion..."	
93	Page 145, last paragraph: "The caste system is just one example of how Hinduism was woven into the fabric of daily life in India." Delete this part.	Approve edit as written.

Vedic Foundation: Recommended Edits

CRP: Shiva Bajpai, Professor Emeritus, CSU Northridge

Number	Group's Edit/Correction	Ad Hoc Committee Action
1	p. 100-101: Instances of "Indus" and "Ganges" are used throughout the text beginning with this page.	Group recommends use of "Sindhu" and "Ganga" throughout. Either usage is acceptable and does not comprise a correction.

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10	p. 146-148: The text under the heading 'India's First Cities' inaccurately describes Harappa and Mohenjo-Daro as 'first' cities. The heading should read, "India's Early Cities."	Approve edit as provided.

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18	Grade 6, p. 216: "Some researchers have developed the theory that sometime about 2000 to 1500 BC, a major river in India called the Saraswati dried up." The teacher's edition states, "For many years, the Saraswati River existed only in myth. Recently, however, scientists have traced its historic path and begun to unlock the secrets of its decline." The statement in the teacher's edition should replace the student's edition text.	Approve edit as written.
21	Grade 6, p. 229: "Indian society divides	Change "divides" to "divided."

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	itself into a complex structure of social classes based particularly on jobs. This class structure is called the caste system .” This sentence, written in the present tense in a textbook describing ancient history, is out of place. It presumes that the caste system is present in India today. According to the Indian Constitution, under the section, Fundamental Rights, the Right to Equality is guaranteed to all citizens, just as the U.S. has enacted Equal Employment Opportunity Laws to prevent discrimination.	

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39	p. 143: “Hinduism...has affected how people worship, what jobs they do ,... And it has helped to determine the status of people in Indian society.” Remove.	Approve edit as written.
41	p. 143: “One of the most famous Hindu stories is the <i>Ramayana</i> . The <i>Ramayana</i> tells about life in ancient India and offers models in dharma.” Replace with “...Hindu scriptures is the <i>Ramayana</i> . The <i>Ramayana</i> describes the divine actions of Bhagwan Ram when he appeared in ancient India. Through His righteous living He set an example of how to live by dharm.”	Approve edit as written.
45	p. 144: Paragraph beginning “Vedic rituals and sacrifices honored a number of gods associated with nature . A class of priests... only they knew...became the dominant class in India. Later Vedism is often called Brahmanism .” Remove.	CDE: does the removal of this passage limit understanding of this chapter? Consult with CRP.
46	p. 144: “Modern day Hinduism is very complex . Many beliefs , many forms of worship, and many gods exist side by side.” Remove.	Approve edit as written.
54	p. 146: “...show gods and goddesses from popular Hindu stories .” Replace with “...show various forms of God from Hindu scriptures.”	Approve edit as written.

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55	p. 146: "Modern Hindus continue to visit temples to express their love of the gods ." Replace with "...visit temples to worship and express their love for God."	Approve edit as written.
57	p. 147: The heading "Hindu Beliefs About Multiple Gods". Replace with "Hindu Beliefs About Various Forms of God."	Approve edit as written.
58	p. 147: Paragraph beginning "There are many gods and goddesses ...quality of Brahman." Replace with "Hindu scriptures describe that God represents the various aspects of His unlimited blissful personality through many forms."	Approve edit as written.
65	p. 148: Passage beginning "This reverence for life...feed people who were starving." Remove or revise per following: It is stated earlier that Hindus respect all life forms so there is no reason to single out cows. Because of their importance in Indian agricultural life, cows were and continue to be loved as part of the family just as pet dogs are loved in Western society. It does not mean that cows are sacred ; they are simply loved and respected in India.	CDE: Develop exact language in consultation with CRP.
68	p. 148: Remove the picture and caption. It is a random photograph that is not representative of reality. Cows aren't allowed to just help themselves otherwise they would be healthy and not skinny as the cow shown in the picture. To suit the theme, a beautiful picture of Lord Krishn or Lord Ram would be much more appropriate.	Approve edit as written.
70	p. 149: "From ancient times, Hindus believed that souls had many lives ." Replace with "Hindus believe that souls have had uncountable lives."	Approve edit as written.
71	p. 149: Replace photograph with one having a temple in the background. This photo is of a mosque.	Replace photo or crop out the mosque in the background.
76	p. 151: Photo caption – "A member of the Brahmin caste reads aloud from the sacred Vedas." Replace with "A ceremonial worship performed according to the Vedas."	Approve edit as written.

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77	p. 173: "Sculptures created statues out of stone... Many of these statues portrayed the Buddha or Hindu gods ...A temple statue of Buddha." Statue is a derogatory word to describe a Hindu deity. Deity means divinity and aptly describes the Hindu conception of the representations of divinity.	CDE: consult with CRP to determine if "statue" should be replaced with "deity" throughout.