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ABSTRACT

This report summarizes the results of an intensive survey undertaken by the Asia Society to determine how Asia is depicted in American School textbooks. Over 100 scholars and teachers reviewed 306 social studies texts in use in the 50 states in 1974-75 to discover what is being taught about Asia at each grade level. The textbooks were designated as either contributing to an understanding of Asia or distorting Asian reality. This booklet describes various textbook approaches to Asia: the Asia-centered approach, the Western-centered approach, the inscrutable Asian approach, the case studies approach, and the ethnocentric approach which treats Asian cultural achievement in a negative manner. Specific shortcomings noted in the textbooks include failure to provide Asian sources, specific factual errors, sexism, and extreme ethnocentrism. Overall ratings and qualifications of authors and consultants are presented. Also summarized are the Asia Society's own conclusions and recommendations for action as a result of their findings. Appendices include references, textbook evaluation guidelines, and a list of the readers. (Author/DB)

Asia in American Textbooks

An evaluation based on a study conducted by The Asia Society with support from The Ford Foundation

The Asia Society is a not-for-profit educational organization dedicated to.deepening American understanding of Asia and stimulating thoughtful trans-Pacific intellectual exchange.

Contents

Introduction

This booklet distills the results of an intensive survey of how Asia is depicted in American school textbooks. Conducted by the Asia Society with support from The Ford Foundation, the study considered 306 social studies texts in use in the 50 states as of early 1975. The books came primarily from state and city adoption lists across the country, but since some states and localities do not mandate teaching about Asia, the list was supplemented by additional titles supplied by teachers who were using the books in their classrooms. In this way the Society hoped to conduct as complete a survey as possible of those texts in actual use in American schools.

The books were read by over one hundred experts: scholars of Asian studies, elementary and secondary school teachers with Asian specialization and experience in teaching about Asia, and writers with a special concern about how Americans see Asians.

The study was not the first to analyze attitudes toward Asia in American textbooks, but what distinguishes it from its predecessors is its scope, believed to be the most extensive ever attempted, and even more importantly, its methodology.

To provide both a common frame of reference for the readers and a tool for quantifying the results, staff of the Society's Educational Resources/Asian Literature Program developed a highly detailed evaluation guide with the assistance of participants in a master's program in Asian studies for teachers at New York University and revised and refined it several times in consultation with an advisory committee of outstanding leaders in the fields of education and Asian studies.

The questionnaire asked readers to respond to a number of very specific questions on the following elements:

- accuracy and authenticity
- underlying assumptions and approaches
- attitudes toward Asian life and culture and the use of primary Asian sources such as literature, the fine arts, historical documents, case studies, and similar materials (referred to in the evaluation guide as humanistic/human interest materials)
- style and tone
- format and illustrations
- attitudes toward women
- qualifications of authors and consultants

Readers were asked to document their answers wherever possible by citations from the texts and to indicate how they would rate the books on an overall basis as suitable for classroom use.

Since 34 of the original 306 books turned out to be excerpts from larger units in the sample, the Society did not solicit complete

answers on these duplications, although it did receive and tabulate data on the qualifications of authors and consultants for 302 texts—virtually the complete sample. In addition, because not every reviewer answered every question, the number of texts for which information is presented varies from question to question. Data compiled on approaches and underlying assumptions about Asia, for instance, reflected expert opinions on 263 texts; that on the treatment of Asian cultures and the use of primary Asian source materials was based on 260 texts. Every reviewer was asked to report on accuracy and replies were tabulated for those reports from scholars, 97 in all.

The primary purpose of the study, however, was not to produce a precise numerical profile on the Asian content of American textbooks. It was not even to pinpoint good or bad textbooks, although this indeed was an important consideration. (By far the majority of the texts are a mixture of good and bad.) *Rather, the primary purpose of the survey was to catalogue the variety of themes and source materials which can contribute to an understanding of Asia, and on the other hand, those which can distort Asian reality.* It is hoped that this identification will serve as a guide to publishers in the revision and production of new texts, to textbook adoption committees as they select the books that will be used in their schools, and to teachers as they teach about Asia in the classrooms.

It took two years to conduct the survey and compile a full report on the findings, copies of which are on file at both The Asia Society and The Ford Foundation and in limited circulation. In another sense, however, the study has been in the making for nearly 20 years, almost the entire lifespan of The Asia Society.

Founded in 1956 to deepen American understanding of Asia and stimulate thoughtful trans-Pacific intellectual exchange, the Society early undertook two important tasks. One was to produce guides for teachers to books, paperbacks, films, and other supplementary educational materials about Asia. The other was to search out Asian works of literature, find experts to translate them, provide editorial services to translators, encourage the publication of the works in books and literary magazines, and promote their dissemination through readings, conferences, radio programs, and other means.

A logical second step in both these long-term efforts would have been to develop Asian literature selections that might be used to supplement social studies courses on Asia in the elementary and secondary schools. It became apparent, however, that before the Society could create such materials, it must take thorough stock of the social studies texts themselves to find out what was being taught about Asia at each grade level. This report summarizes the findings.

The Asia-Centered Approach

Every textbook approaches Asia with a set of attitudes and assumptions, explicit or implicit, conscious or unconscious. The study also had its own basic point of view—one that it shares with many, if not most, cultural anthropologists. To understand a society one must assume that its cultural system is based upon a coherent set of values—in other words, that commonly held patterns of thought and ways of acting "make sense" to the members of the society. Conveying the reality of the society, then, becomes a matter of describing it in such terms that its people seem "normal" and "logical." Attitudes and actions that may appear to an outsider to be shortsighted, senseless, self-destructive, or even bizarre, become rational when viewed from a vantage point within the society.

While this approach avoids the conclusion that the members of another society are strange or stupid, it does not lead to the conclusion that they are "just like us" either. But it does enable us to empathize with the people of that society, to imagine something of the way they feel, think, and look at the world.

One textbook, for instance, employs such an approach in explaining the morning rounds made by Buddhist monks in Thailand. It begins its account by stating that "one of the most common forms of giving is feeding the Buddhist monks, who live on the generosity of the community." The text helps the student to understand this activity as very different from begging in a Western society by going on to say that the monks "*do not ask for a contribution, and they receive one in silence. It is rather the giver who states his thanks for the opportunity to gain merit through performing a good deed.*"[1]

A textbook employing what we shall call the Asia-centered approach does not describe a Japanese home as lacking in the furniture and solid walls with which we are familiar, but tells students that homes in Japan are designed with a simplicity of furnishings and a flexibility of space so that each room can be used in many different ways.

Such a textbook does not recount 19th-century history merely in terms of the Chinese refusal to trade with Europeans or the morality of the opium trade. It also discusses the traditional Chinese tribute system of foreign relations and then describes what followed when *Europeans rejected the Manchu system of foreign relations.*"[2]

Attempting to get beyond the alien and exotic surface of another culture, one textbook employing an Asia-centered approach explains to children that Japanese people prepare and drink tea in a special way and then asks, "*How might you feel if you went to Japan and you were the only person not sitting on the floor to eat?*" Such a textbook helps children to lift their cultural blinders by asking, "*Why is this kind of behavior strange when you think about doing it in the United States, but not when you think about doing it in another country or in a Japanese restaurant?*" It reinforces the child's conclusion by pointing out, "*People have learned to do different things because they live in different places. These things don't seem strange when everyone else does them.*"[3]

The Asia-centered approach appears in only 30 per cent of the books in the study and predominates in only 18 per cent

The Progress-Centered Approach

Far more frequently than the Asia-centered approach, textbooks employ one or another of a cluster of value judgments that can be summarized under the heading of the progress-centered approach. In this view, which was that of 71 per cent of the texts in the sample, change is good, necessary, and historically inevitable. "The story of man is one of progress," as one text puts it.

A reader found eight examples from one elementary book on India alone. Among them were the following: "*Its people are changing from old ways of living to new modern ways.*" "*Rural India is changing, though slowly.*" "*Some villagers are learning how to run dairies. They learn how to make the milk safe to drink. Many other villagers go to industrial training schools. They learn to use the machines in India's new factories. They stop being farmers. They begin to lead a new life.*". "*All these things mean that the people of India have a good chance of keeping their freedom during the transition to an up-to-date way of life.*"[4]

In *Social Change and History* (Oxford University Press, 1969) the sociologist Robert Nisbet has pointed out that Western thought, following the Greeks, once assumed that social systems are biological organizations that are born, grow to maturity, and die. Since the time of Augustine the West has tended to believe that cultures and societies grow in a straight line and develop by stages into higher systems. The view that social change is purposeful is no longer confined to the West, however. On the contrary, many Asians now emphasize the importance of development for their own societies. The danger is that the criterion of progress can be applied in such a way that the enduring cultural values of a society—any society—are distorted or neglected. If this happens, tradition (because it is old) may be regarded as existing in quaint juxtaposition with the new rather than interacting with it:

"*Rocket experts ride buses alongside Indian mystics. Sacred cows share the streets with automobiles. Indian industries produce tractors, yet millions of peasants still use wooden plows. The contrasts are endless.*"[5]

Other texts describe modernity as challenging, conflicting with, or contradicting tradition:

"*Some of this will become clear as we examine conflicts between the new ways and old in the family, the position of women, and the social classes.*"[6]

Some textbook writers find the interaction of past and present simply perplexing

Chiyo's youth had been a rather confusing combination of Japanese tradition and Western modernity.

In citing passages like these from the texts some readers added that the dichotomy between tradition and change is based on superficial definitions of the two concepts. Modernity, pointed out a reader of one text, mentioned in connection with the strivings of Southeast Asian leaders here and there, is characterized implicitly as consisting of tall buildings, electricity, and air-conditioning. The complexity of change is not really brought up at all.

One way of presenting change that recognizes continuity

History would seem to indicate that in all societies change has taken place at all times. But in the process, past and present interact; cultural traditions are not destroyed, they are transformed.

The following examples from a text assumes a constructive relationship between modernity and tradition:

"Maoism was deliberately invented to replace Confucianism, but in many ways it resembled what was displaced. Anything else would be strange, for Mao was educated in a traditional way until his twenties, when as a young college student he first met Lenin's ideas and began his career as a Marxist. Other Chinese Communist leaders, as well as many of the rank and file, have a similar personal history. Massive carryover from the Confucian past is, therefore, inescapable, even if doctrines have been officially and fundamentally changed."[8]

Social Institutions as Impediments to Progress

When tradition and modernity are seen as antithetical, traditional social institutions, especially religious ones, become obstacles to the modernizing process, whether economic, social, or political. Readers found these examples, among others, in the texts:

religious beliefs and lack of education make progress slow."[9]

"Thus industrialization and modern agricultural techniques were slow in coming to the Indian subcontinent—partly because of the firm hold tradition has on the way of life of the people."[10]

The attitude that Asian social institutions are impediments to progress was found by readers in 63 texts. Most of the examples cited by readers centered on Hindu beliefs about caste and animals. The texts tend to regard caste as an obstacle to nationalism or democracy or as a cause of economic deprivation:

"India is a democracy. In a democracy, all men are created equal. The caste system does not fit in with the idea of a true democracy."[11]

"This system has made life a hopeless nightmare of toil and unspeakable poverty for countless millions of India's people."[12]

Following this line of thinking, teacher's guides and questions at the end of chapters in student texts frequently suggest that students compare the caste system with racial segregation in the United States.

Many of these texts also lament the Hindu willingness to take the lives of a variety of creatures ranging from cattle and monkeys to snakes and silkworms. A classic expression of the attitude of these texts toward Indian treatment of the cow, for instance, states:

[Nehru] also had to fight ancient Hindu customs. These customs often hindered India's economic progress. One of these customs were the belief that the cow was a sacred animal. . . Hindus do not eat beef, and the cattle served no useful purpose."[13]

In answering questions on accuracy in the texts, scholars heavily criticized discussions of caste and cattle for their failure to reflect the great diversity of views about these elements of Indian culture. The scholars pointed out that these treatments of caste confuse it with class and neglect the fact that castes and their relationship have been in constant flux historically and that their underlying

principles are readily adaptable to modern conditions. As one reader argued, "a caste system makes for a division of labor, a high degree of interdependency (and) promotes solidarity by requiring exchanging and distribution of goods and other resources among households of different occupation caste, and economic class."

How might a text discuss caste and the cow?

An exception to the rule, one text was cited as expressing far more accurately the part which the cow plays in the Indian economy. The text included a poem by Indian, R. K. Narayan:

"Living, I yield milk, butter and curd, to sustain mankind
My dung is as fuel used,
Also to wash floor and wall;
Or burnt, becomes the sacred ash on forehead.
When dead, of my skin are sandals made,
Or the bellows at the blacksmith's furnace;
Of my bones are buttons made . . .
But of what use are you, O Man?"[14]

Two readers argued that a text might discuss caste more profitably by considering how it gives meaning and security to life. They suggested looking at the advantages and disadvantages of a society based on the Indian dharma (duty, seen as function of one's status level) rather than on competition.

The Importance of Economic Wealth and Technology

One of the results of seeing history, in terms of "progress," is to place great emphasis on economic conditions and technological advancement. Textbooks tend to speak about nations and people in terms of their material wealth or poverty.

"Like its history and its people, the Japanese government is interesting, but easily the most interesting thing about Japan is its economy."[15]

"The followers of Zoroaster, from ancient Persia, are called Parsees. Though there are only about 200,000 of them in India, they are important as businessmen."[16]

The questionnaire did not ask readers to comment on the texts' specific attitudes toward technology, but some readers make a special point of describing a book's tendency to place great emphasis on, or faith in, technology. As evidence they gave examples like these:

Modern science, technology, and medicine can provide the means to improve the quality of life for the Indian people."[17]

Radio, television and jet airplanes are bringing the billions of people on earth closer together."[18]

You can see clearly now that the farmers of East Asia have lagged somewhat behind those in many other lands. But they are not standing still. Here and there, men are learning about new crops and new ways of caring for the old, familiar crops. A few new machines are coming into use. For example, the picture above shows a new way of lifting water to irrigate a rice field. This is Thailand. From such simple beginnings, a new kind of farming and a new way of life may take shape, in time, in East Asia."[19]

Americans use more machines than any other people in the world. These are found in office buildings, factories, homes, and many other places. With these tools and machines, Americans make many good things for people. Think for a moment of the machines and tools in your home and school. In your home there may be a can opener, a toaster and a refrigerator."[20]

Readers did not indicate that they thought it was wrong to emphasize the importance of improving the quality of life in Asia. But they reported that the books in which they found these and similar examples showed no awareness that technology can be a mixed blessing, bringing problems as well as advantages.

The Western-Centered Approach

Many of the preceding quotations from the texts not only suggest that the proper perspective from which to view a society is how far along it has come on the road to progress. They also assume that in Asia progress by definition must follow the path it has historically taken in the West. The basically ethnocentric character of this point of view has been analyzed in *The Modernity of Tradition* by sociologists Lloyd I. and Susanne Hoeber-Rudolph. They argue that "The myths and realities of Western experience set limits to the social scientific imagination, and modernity becomes what we imagine ourselves to be." This approach is one of a closely related cluster of Western-centered attitudes that occur in 76 per cent of the texts and form the exclusive approach of 56 per cent of them.

It could be argued that some Asians would share a belief in Western technological, political, economic, or social superiority. Nevertheless it is one thing for an Asian to hold this belief, it is quite another for it to be the only point of view presented to American school students by textbook authors.

"Catching up with the West"

Most frequently (in 99 out of 263 texts) Western ethnocentrism takes the form of portraying Asia as "catching up with the West".

"*Once Europe developed machines and mastered the use of power to run these machines, the West forged ahead rapidly. Now, belatedly, the countries of the Orient are trying to catch up.*"[21]

"*In the twentieth century, the peoples of Asia and Africa have come alive. They have adopted the nationalistic creeds, the democratic ideals, and the modern science of the West, and they have demanded freedom from imperial rule.*"[22]

Western civilization developed in Europe among men of the Caucasoid race. This fact tended to give Caucasoids a belief in their own superiority, because they had better ships, weapons, and technology than the non-Caucasoid peoples they conquered. But Western civilization is a cultural factor, not

something biological It can be learned, and is being learned, by people of every race. Western civilization is becoming world civilization The races of man are competing or, better, cooperating more and more on a basis of equality

Confusing Westernization with Modernization

In some books (28 in the sample) a Western orientation is reflected in a failure to distinguish Westernization and modernization In such examples modernization Westernization and even industrialization are used interchangeably as if they were synonyms Referring to a photograph in a student text the teacher's guide, for instance, suggests that the attention of the students be called *to the fact that the father in the Japanese family is wearing traditional dress while the other members of the family are dressed in modern clothes* The reader who cited this example pointed out that the modern clothes referred to are Western clothes He added that the kimono worn by the father in the photograph is no closer to Japanese clothes of a few centuries ago than the Western clothes worn by other family members are to Western clothes a few centuries ago Both are modern adaptations

Other readers did not find an explicit identification of Westernization with modernization but argued that it was often implied as in a text which said that the Indian Government believed that

India's enormous problems of illiteracy poverty and a very low standard of living could only be resolved by following the currents of industrialization and modernization courses already travelled by the Western democracies

Readers point out that such treatments fail to take into account that Western ideas are actually adapted by Asians not slavishly copied that Asians have also borrowed from Asians and that this has occurred to a far greater extent over a much longer period of time (witness the seminal impact of Chinese and Indian civilizations on most of the rest of Asia), and that Asians have also influenced the West While texts describe 19th-century Japan as alternately modernizing or Westernizing for instance, they fail to note that at the same time a passion for Japonaiserie was sweeping the arts of Europe

A perspective on Japanese imitation

One reader offered a helpful perspective from which to view Japan, the Asian nation most frequently described as imitating others. "The question of whether or not Japanese culture is all an 'imitation' of China or the West is a tough one to deal with," he said. "It depends on what one means by imitation, and particularly on what value one ascribes to it. At worse, imitation is parrot-like mimicry; at best, it's a truly creative adaptation and eventual assimilation of the high achievements of another.

"The European peoples are so diverse, and they fade off so delicately, in time and geography, into the vast reaches of Asia and the Near and Middle East, that the whole issue of 'imitation' seems never to arise. This is so because mutual influences have been so continuous that they've been almost invisible; and the notion arises that the 'Western' culture is and always has been essentially homogeneous too, and so is all of Asia on into Europe and across the Bering Straits.

"In the meantime, though, Japan is a long way out in the ocean, and whenever she opens herself to foreign influence, she gets caught red-handed stealing goodies from somebody else's island. Of course, the tycoons on the other island are very magnanimous about it, and the more so since they've forgotten what clever imitators they once were themselves; or still are."

Praising and Describing by Western Standards

A very effective method of introducing new material to students is to build on situations with which they are already familiar. Unfortunately, if applied to the study of other societies, this otherwise excellent pedagogical device can easily slide over into ethnocentrism.

Japanese children study much the same things American children do. English is also taught. Japanese boys and girls even enjoy many of the same sports Americans do, such as baseball, tennis and swimming."[26]

"Ice cream is a favorite in the United States and is becoming a favorite around the world." (caption for photograph of Japanese boy with ice cream and baseball glove)[27]

Readers argued that comparisons like these and others they found in the texts assumed American technological, political, economic, sartorial, athletic, or even culinary standards as goals to be met. Some examples can be downright condescending:

Japanese ocean liners are operated with great efficiency. Their ships which carry passengers to the Orient are quite as comfortable and safe as those of any other nation."[28]

What readers objected to in these well-intentioned comparisons was the assumption that Asian societies are acceptable to the extent that they are reflections of our own.

Emphasis on Asian Problems—Neglect of Asian Strengths

Although textbooks sometimes use Western yardsticks in an attempt to promote a positive (if sometimes condescending and superficial) portrait of Asia, they more often use these standards to project a picture of technological, economic, political, and social underdevelopment. Readers were asked by the evaluation guide to note whether the differences between Asian and Western nations were explained in such a way that there is an emphasis on what the Asian societies do not have and whether there was an overemphasis on the poverty of a country or area. The range of examples they offered in return was very great. Some show the very subtle form which Western ethnocentrism can take:

"There was no bread or meat, no milk or fruit, no toast or jelly—just plain oatmeal-like porridge."[29] (From a book on the emerging nations)

"Farm families, like Slamet's, do not use knives, forks, or spoons, as you do."[30] (From a book on Indonesia)

By far the majority of the examples, however, depict Asia as a place of unrelieved misery, with insufficient food, flimsy houses, little electricity, a low income level, a short life span, poor health care, few machines, low literacy rates, too many people, and inflexible social and political institutions. Here are some typical examples of what the readers found in 89 out of 263 books.

"In Africa and Asia, millions of people live in small huts that have less protection and less comfort than the huts of Europe in the early Middle Ages. These people do not have any of the conveniences made possible by electricity and gas."[31]

"... most (Indonesian) villagers have no electricity in their homes so they have no radios or television sets for entertainment. They have no books or magazines to read either."[32]

These descriptions are not necessarily inaccurate. But by assuming that the social and material aspects of United States culture are universal norms of the good life, texts describe Asian societies from the perspective of what they *do not* have. The readers' chief quarrel was that this viewpoint offers a very one-sided look at Asian countries. Many of Asia's huts, for instance, exist in places of year-round warm climate—unlike medieval Europe. In a typical village in Java, where almost half of Indonesia's people live, people might watch dramatic presentations of the *Mahabharata*, the *Ramayana*, or indigenous

Javanese epics that last 12 hours at a time, and in many a village every male can play some instrument of the *gamelan* orchestra. Similarly, the following textbook description of regimentation in China gives no hint of the satisfactions that Chinese living in the system may find for themselves:

"In 1958, Mao launched 'The Great Leap Forward.' This was probably the most extreme example of communization in history. China's hundreds of millions of peasants were gathered together on huge farms called communes. They were organized into brigades to work in the fields, ate together in community dining halls, and slept in large dormitories. Before and after work, they were required to attend Communist lectures and drill in the militia. Each commune also had to establish and operate small steel furnaces or other small industries. City people were subjected to similar treatment. Many were sent out to work in the communes or were drafted for labor on huge public work projects."[33]

India

Perhaps of all the countries, textbook treatment of India most reveals negative attitudes. The stench of rotting garbage and the pall of disease and death hang over many of the passages excerpted from texts by the readers. The following example sums up the grim image that is often evoked:

"Death in India comes in so many more ways. A playful nip from a rabid puppy, a burning fever, a gnawing belly, a leprous hand. . . . Perhaps in no other country is it so easy to talk about life and death, about God and eternal salvation, as it is in India."[34]

Since textbooks depict India's economic and health conditions with so harsh a brush, it was perhaps all too likely that they would make incorrect or negative inferences about the role of the caste system and the multiplicity of languages in India

". . . the village people live in 'another world.' Many of them have barely heard of Gandhi or Nehru. Many of them are sick and cannot read or write. So many different languages are spoken that Indians have a difficult time communicating with one another. Many are terribly poor. The caste system still divides the people, though it has been outlawed by the new government."[35]

One-sidedness and inaccuracy-by-omission are also at the heart of a textbook discussion of technology and transportation in India:

"Most Indians living in village India find machinery difficult to control or understand. Machines are a mystery. The automobile is a constant source of wonder to Indian peasants. Westerners who ride in cars almost from birth on learn very quickly that in order to stay on a truck as it turns a corner, one must lean into the turn. . . . Many villagers in India so rarely ride in vehicles that they fail to correct for this. . . . In learning to drive an auto, they find it difficult to go around curves smoothly. At 35 to 60 miles per hour, they are constantly overturning autos, trucks, and buses because they find themselves going off the road and jerking the wheel in order to frantically make the last-second adjustments necessary to stay on the road." Having set forth the "problem" the textbook offered the following "solution":

"Time and practice, of course, solve this problem. Americans started with slow-moving Model-T Fords and, as a nation, over the years built and became adept at driving cars traveling at sixty to eighty mile-an-hour speeds on modern four-lane freeways. Indians are being thrust into the automobile age without a corresponding Model-T phase."[36]

Stated the reader who found this example, "The implication is that Indians are completely unable to handle technology. It is not mentioned that India is the sixth largest industrial power. Furthermore, Indians are able to keep automobiles running which would be on the scrap heap elsewhere."

Charges of one-sidedness as well as inaccuracy were also leveled by readers against treatments of 19th-century Japan and China, which are often portrayed as stagnant until contact with the West.

The People's Republic of China

Readers particularly objected to the inaccurate treatments they found of the People's Republic of China. The following example is typical of the out-of-date economic

information they discovered in many textbook discussions of China:

"*The beggars at left illustrate the hunger of China's people. Given all these conditions, disease spreads quickly. The Communist government has been unable to solve these problems that have long plagued the nation.*"[37]

Communes are a failure . . . there is good reason to believe that the average Chinese is not getting enough food to keep healthy, and in many cases even enough food to keep alive"[38] (This same text, which was published in 1974, also said that China was "poor in petroleum.")

While some texts do report economic progress made by the People's Republic of China, they frequently describe it grudgingly.

The communist Chinese have tried to combine these small farms into large agricultural cooperatives, with modern machinery and methods. So far, however, these methods have not been entirely successful. But progress has been made, and agricultural production in China has increased."[39]

Economic desperation is seen by the texts as the rationale for acceptance of political restrictions, which are sometimes described as having been achieved through tricks and deceptions rather than motivated by social goals.

Everyone would live happily ever after. While these were mainly empty promises, they found sympathetic ears in a country where poverty and war had destroyed all other hope.

The newly 'liberated' peasants were organized into 'mutual aid teams.' The peasants were lured by promises of what they longed for."[40]

Using Different Yardsticks

The eradication of poverty, hunger, disease, and social injustice are worldwide goals. No reader quarreled with discussions of these problems where they exist provided the texts did not concentrate on them to the exclusion of the positive side of Asian life. But readers did object to the assumption of American social or economic standards behind the discussions of Asian deprivations:

"*If you were a Brahmin, could you go to a movie with a Kshatriya? Think of some Americans who started life as farm boys or poor city boys, and became presidents of the United States . . . Could this happen in India under the caste system?*"[41]

The (Chinese) government has not shown a great effort to improve the living standard of the individual."[42]

Charging "gross unfairness," the reader who cited the second of these passages said, "I am afraid that the author means Western, American standards of living when he uses that term." Similar examples were found in other texts which emphasized the absence of cars in China without regard for the fact that two cars for every family is not the national goal of the Chinese themselves.

Readers argued that using standards such as life span or number of cars can produce a favorable picture of the United States and a dismal one of many countries in Asia. However, concentration on the problems of our society, such as pollution and high consumption of irreplaceable sources of energy, could easily reverse the image. Indeed it is ironic that these standards should be used to derogate Asia just when we are beginning to wonder whether they are fully valid for us. Reports from readers, questioning whether it is right to continue to glorify the use of the car and electricity, pointed up how texts lag behind recent public opinion.

Readers also discovered that the picture of Asia set forth in the texts was sometimes even more unflattering by comparison with that of the West because Europe or America had been painted in unrealistically rosy tints:

"*At a time when Europe was rapidly entering the modern age and new nations were rising, Japan was still living under feudalism.*"[43]

Remarked the reader, "This attitude is taken for granted by a lot of people and by a great many Japanese indeed. Nonetheless, I think it's unfair. Japan in, say, 1800 seems to have been a good deal more lively and 'progressive'

(if this is what one wants) than is generally supposed and Europe and America were a good deal more grubby than we care to remember

How might a text discuss a technologically less developed society in a sympathetic way?

It is possible to compare our way of life with that of technologically less advanced societies in a way that does not make them (or us) sound inferior. It is even possible to show that very positive values exist in such societies. One textbook does this so well that we quote it at length:

**"*The standard of living in rural Southeast Asia, from our point of view, might seem only slightly above subsistence level. We would find it difficult to live without running water, refrigerators, package foods, and the host of conveniences surrounding us. The typical one or two room dwellings made of bamboo and palm leaves would strike us as interesting to visit but impossible to live in. The privacy valued by most Americans is not part of the Southeast Asian peasant's life. Life is simple and, consequently, needs are not so great. The competitive drive which so dominates our urban, industrialized society is largely lacking in the peasant society of Southeast Asia. It is interesting that even most of the games played by young people are non-competitive in nature.*

"Due to the relatively small size and interdependent nature of the village, rural life tends to be typified by harmonious community relations. They include a democratic election of village offices, communal plowing and land ownership, and various forms of mutual aid. Nearly an entire village participated in the dedication of a new house in a small village in Northern Thailand recently. Hunters went into a jungle and shot a wild boar which they contributed to a village feast. Most of the members of the village came to pay a visit to the owner of the house to wish him well and sample some of the special treats he had prepared. It was an occasion largely foreign to our experience, but one with which our early forefathers had more in common. In fact, it was not totally unlike an Amish barnraising in our own country today."

"Again, in another place, the same text explains the differences between life with machines and life surrounded by nature without making either seem less satisfying from a human point of view:

**"*Many of us in America have grown up in a highly controlled environment. Modern machines have eased the burden of physical labor; lighting and heating systems enable us to alter the pattern of hot to cold, light to darkness; and modern modes of transportation and communication have vastly reduced conceptions of time and space. Our industrialized, highly mechanized world view greatly conditions our behavior and attitudes. . . . While modernity is beginning to change life in many parts of rural Southeast Asia, these societies are still largely traditional. The forces of nature which determine the successful rice harvest are to be placated rather than controlled, and the major values of the human community are still centered about the family and religion. The most important celebrations revolve around the agricultural calendar, significant occurrences in family life such as weddings and funerals, and the major religious events of Buddhism, Islam, or Hinduism."*[44]

Europeans and Americans in Asia

Some textbooks not only describe Asia from a Western point of view but also magnify the historic role of Americans and Europeans Readers reported that 48 books in the sample either discuss Asia primarily in terms of its contact with the West, so that it is seen as

merely a stage on which some of the drama of Western history unfolds, or give a disproportionate amount of attention to the West by comparison with Asia. So-called "world" history books are particularly susceptible to this flaw. Two thirds of the world's people live in Asia. Yet the average amount of text devoted to it in the 42 "world" histories in the survey is 15.6 per cent.

But most frequently the glorification of Europe and America takes the form of showing Westerners as helpers in Asia, bringing technology, government, and security to the area. The colonial period, the occupation of Japan after World War II, and the assistance rendered to Asia through AID, the Peace Corps, and our military establishment are usual topics for textbook writers who, in the judgment of the evaluators, discuss only the Western contributions to Asian life and fail to mention any Asia initiatives and strengths at all

"During the many years the British occupied India, new ideas and ways were introduced. The British contributions to India were railroads, schools, and a European form of government Under British rule, the people of India also learned a little about manufacturing."[45]

"The occupation authorities instituted many significant changes in Japanese life. Japan was given a democratic constitution, guaranteeing the people the right to participate in their government. Women were given the vote . . . Schoolbooks were rewritten to teach Japanese children the ways of democracy The Japanese people have taken enthusiastically to their new form of government, and to the new freedom in their personal lives."[46]

"With Western help, American surplus food, and improved transportation, the devastating famines of a few decades ago are currently being thwarted . . ."[47]

"Red China is using its growing power throughout the region. . . . If they (nations trying for democratic forms of government) fail, much of the Far East will be closed to the people of the free world. American soldiers and arms have been sent to Southeast Asia to help keep South Vietnam free of communism."[48]

None of the readers argued that Western contacts with Asia be ignored or that humanitarian motives are not also operating along with those of self-interest in our post-war activities in Asia. They do believe, however, that a more balanced view would lessen the impression of Asia the weak and America the powerful.

How a more balanced presence might be achieved

Textbooks might achieve balance in their description of the Western presence in Asia by considering Asian experiences under colonialism and United States military and economic aid in the period following World War II. The books might discuss Asian initiatives toward development as well as Western ones.

Why Learn About Asia?

The emphasis on Asian weaknesses and deficiencies in the majority of American texts might lead one to suspect that in the eyes of many textbook writers, a discussion of Asia is merely a device to teach students, by comparison, of the blessings of the American way of life. Such indeed was the explanation given by one teacher's guide that explained its objective as enabling the pupil *"to appreciate the basic American values which make the United States distinct from other nations."*[49]

The readers had no quarrel with this purpose as a valid educational goal for American school children. They merely questioned whether it should be carried out in the context of teaching about other societies. Must the United States be praised at the expense of other peoples?

Readers also found explicit reference in 33 of the books to another argument for studying Asia, that of American self-interest:

"If we are wise, we shall realize that nothing important can happen in any part of the world (even Asia) without in some way affecting us.

It will make a difference to us whether Asia has peace

"We may not care to get mixed up in the problems of government in India or Southeast Asia but it will be to our interest that those who do have responsibility for those things shall be our friends, and that the native people of those distant lands shall be able to live peacefully and happily with as democratic a government as they are able to manage."[50]

"First, by helping the less-developed nations raise their standards of living, we are creating future customers for American goods and those of our European allies. Second, most of this country's leaders believe that people who are well fed and well clothed are more capable of resisting the influence of communism."[51]

It may be true that some part of Asia is vital to our security. It is undoubtedly true that a peaceful and prosperous Asia is a better customer for American business. It is also undoubtedly true that the world is becoming increasingly interdependent. All these points may make excellent arguments for selling technical and military assistance programs in Asia to Congress and the American taxpayer. But readers argued that quotations like those cited above present Asia in a Western-centered, rather than Asia-centered, context.

Asia as Inscrutable or Exotic

The progress-oriented and Western-centered approaches are not the only ones which fail to present Asian reality fully. Regarding Asia as inscrutable—once a common attitude among Westerners—also fails dramatically the first criterion for interpreting a society: to reveal it as it is to its members. One teacher's guide suggested that Asia might be depicted initially as strange to stimulate student interest. But, as the reader commented, the goal should be to demystify Asia.

Presenting Asia as exotic also fails to reflect the full humanity of its people by making them seem alien and other than us. In a textbook on the Philippines, for instance, one ethnic group, the Moros, is described solely in terms of its colorful dress. In an anthropology text for younger children, the student's first introduction to any Asians is to a group of headhunters:

India, where the Nagas live, is in Asia. Asia is the largest of all the continents. About half of the world's people live in Asia.

Breathtakingly juxtaposing a familiar situation (having neighbors) with the fearfully different, the textbook then asks the student, *How would you like to have headhunters for neighbors?*[52] It goes on, in a description of a Naga village, to suggest that the child would be scared silly by the sight of human skulls hanging all over the place.

Another text emphasizes the strangeness and exoticism of Hindu religious practices (and errs in the use of *Brahma*, the name of an individual Hindu deity, instead of the correct, *Brahman*, meaning the universal spirit):

They worshiped thousands of gods and offered bloody sacrifices to them. They became fatalistic about life, passively accepting the evils about them. Fanatical holy men achieved fame by half-starving themselves or by performing incredible feats like lying for years on a bed of nails. In such ways they hoped to free their souls from the burden of flesh and to become one with Brahma."[53]

Readers reported, however, that textbooks only relatively rarely spoke of Asia as inscrutable or exotic.

Scrutinizing the "Inscrutable"

Mysticism is one of the aspects of certain Asian cultures most bewildering to Westerners. It is possible, however, to present it in such a way that it becomes approachable. The following discussion from a text shows how this might be accomplished:

"Though we may find it hard to take mysticism and asceticism seriously, more than half the human race has done so. Indian transcendental ideas spread to China and Southeast Asia, and influenced Christianity as well. Such a career requires us to adjust our usual habits of thought and ask ourselves what we would do and how we might behave if it really were true that reality lay behind the world of sense. How do you know that it does not? How do you know that the Indian mystics were not on the right track after all, and that it is we moderns who are chasing after illusions? Many people in our time have asked themselves this question. Many people in every age of the past, from the time when such ideas first clearly came to be formulated, have been fascinated by these questions. It would be absurd to scoff and pay no attention, or refuse to take seriously ideas that sustained one of the world's greatest and most successful civilizations."[54]

Eclecticism

The fact that many Asians are progress-oriented while retaining many of their own cultural values suggests that there are times when a text might profitably adopt a multi-valued approach to Asia Even a Western-centered point of view might be used, providing that it is carefully labeled as such and presented as one of several that can be taken toward Asia Obviously, one of the others should be Asia-centered If a text employs more than one perspective consciously we shall call its approach eclectic While many, if not most, of the texts unconsciously—and thus uncritically—adopted several basic approaches only 14 out of the 263 titles were truly eclectic in this sense The core of the method is described in the following excerpt from a reader s report

In Volume I the (Indian) culture seems quite rational Given Hindu assumptions, the whole system seems to make so much sense that many students are quite attracted to the model But then in Volume II, especially during the section on development, students begin to question the assumptions of Volume I They see that there is a plurality of value systems at work in India and many of the values are difficult to reconcile to each other How does one digest dharma, karma, and caste together with egalitarianism, social revolution and technological progress?

Teachers sometimes use the technique of values clarification as a way of introducing questions of value into the classroom without inculcating any specific set of values. As a reader pointed out, however, the danger is that with such an approach, another culture is not studied for its own sake but is used as a tool of student self-discovery. "If a student is asked to clarify his or her attitudes toward the question of violence (e.g. was peasant violence during the Chinese Revolution justified)," he argued, "the student will naturally appeal to the value base of his own culture in clarifying this question. The point here is not that confronting such a question may not be a useful thing to do (which it is) but whether confronting it tells you anything significant about Chinese values (which it doesn t.)"

How "values-clarification" can be eclectic

One reader reported that a text did indeed present an Asian culture as rational within its own context by providing exercises in which the students were asked to examine the feelings of the people within the culture before making a cross-cultural comparison. For instance, it asked them to compare the meaning of "a good life" as the Japanese parents in the text saw it with how the young people saw it. Only then were the students to compare their own view with that of the young Japanese.

Talking about Asians and the Asian Experience

To overcome the barriers in the way of understanding another society a text should avoid focusing exclusively on important people such as heads of state (or at least the public political side of such people), or upon "typical" people such as farmers or city dwellers. It should make the effort to relate such abstractions as problems, forces, events, and movements to individual people and the concrete reality of their everyday lives. It should let the people speak for themselves—and allow students to think for themselves without becoming involved in judgments about what is good and bad in the lives they are studying. That texts must center on peoples and their cultures was a fundamental point of view behind the evaluation study.

With such an approach, for instance, a textbook on Japan shows how (in the words of one reader) at a TV factory, the employees sing a company song at the start of each work day; how many students, even in grade school, attend special afternoon classes to prepare for college entrance examinations; and how religion, music, and calligraphy play some small part in the lives of the people.

In discussing the Korean war, another book deals with questions of foreign policy and the conduct of war, but relates all of these issues to real individuals. In addition to revealing the personalities and philosophies of the military and civilian leaders of the age, it provides a movingly real account of the plight of the ordinary foot soldier and even the noncombatant.

A text encourages understanding of what is being attempted in the People's Republic of China by quoting three statements from Mao Tse-tung. "Of all the things in the world . . . people are the most precious. Our duty is to hold ourselves responsible to the people. Anyone should be allowed to speak out, so long as he means to be helpful."[55]

Literature, art, music, dance, drama, philosophy, religion, and other primary expressions of the human experience provide excellent devices to present a people and their culture vividly and concretely, as do such materials as journalistic pieces, letters to the editor, historical and political documents, case studies, and photographs of people.

Readers were asked to rate books on how Asian life was discussed and to what extent actual Asian sources were included. Of the 260 texts for which responses were received on this topic (termed "humanistic, human interest approach and content" in the evaluation guide), readers found that only 43 were centered on people and their culture, only 23 books actually included primary sources. Far more frequently, readers found the books to be negative or inadequate in their treatment of Asian peoples and their cultures.

Negative and Ethnocentric Treatment of Asian Cultural Achievements

Considering the strong emphasis on change and progress in American textbooks and the insistence of many that tradition and modernity are incompatible, it is not surprising that textbooks often treat Asian cultures negatively, regarding them as hindrances to progress or as primitive trappings that will become outmoded when change has taken place. One reader characterized a book on India as suggesting that pride in its cultural achievements is "preventing India from changing rapidly enough to keep its people from starving."

The readers found many examples in the texts in which Asian art forms are referred to as "strange" or as lacking what ours have. One textbook, for instance, describes Indian and East Asian music in the following terms:

> *"Hindu music is confined largely to popular songs and to accompaniments for the famous temple dances. Drums, cymbals, wooden flutes, and many stringed instruments have been used for centuries. Because it lacks harmony and relies solely on melodies that are so different from our own, Hindu music, like that of most East Asian countries, seems strange to Western ears."*[56]

Many students would probably never experience Indian music or other Asian art forms as strange unless prompted to do so. On the contrary, there is strong evidence that art forms of other cultures are particularly accessible to children, especially younger ones. While some older students might find Asian art forms unfamiliar (a preferable word), there is no reason that this has to be the lasting effect. But when the first and only impression of some aspect of an Asian culture is one of "strangeness," why should anyone want to explore it further?

Other ethnocentric and in effect negative treatments of Asian art forms are to be found in textbook characterizations of Japanese plays as moving "*too slowly for Westerners*"[57] or of Afghan singing as "*a monotonous groan with a kind of growl quality.*"[58]

Ironically, textbooks also adopt the opposite outlook. They describe Asian artists and art forms in terms of ours:

> *"Kalidasa, who lived in the 400's A.D., has been called the Indian Shakespeare. He wrote three plays, the most famous of which is Sakuntala. The story, a romantic one, concerns..."*[59]

> *"As with Christian churches during the Renaissance, wealthy Buddhist monasteries employed numerous painters and sculptors. They have left us with many figures of Buddha, usually carved but also shown in fine fresco paintings such as those in the Ajanta caves. In style the paintings somewhat resemble the work of early Italian Renaissance artists."*[60]

> *"Asoka's services to Buddhism compare to Constantine's to Christianity."*[61]

If sensitively done, these comparisons might have potential for a positive initial introduction to a new art form, but the textbooks from which the readers took these examples go no further than the Western-oriented references. The problem with these facile analogies—beyond their superficiality—is that that they fail to relate Asian arts and thinkers, and their achievements, to their own cultures and thus fail to say anything very meaningful about them. Like all descriptions of Asia in Western terms, they are essentially ethnocentric in character.

Failure to Provide Asian Sources

Some texts signal their awareness of the need to use Asian sources in teaching about Asia but fail to include such sources or explain how to go about finding them Teacher s guides suggest that students prepare a Japanese tea ceremony or write *haiku*, for instance, but fail to provide instructions on how to go about these activities More seriously however, some texts use Western sources instead of Asian ones Probably the most widespread example is the inclusion of works by Pearl Buck and Rudyard Kipling in the Chinese and Indian literature sections of some textbooks But the Pearl Buck-Rudyard Kipling syndrome has many symptoms. One takes the form of presenting a Western author as if he or she represented an Asian point of view Other symptoms are the dependence, exclusively or primarily, on Western authors or documents and the failure to list Asian authors in bibliographies. Readers comments leave no doubt as to the distortions such treatment can create

Shooting an Elephant is authentic Orwell, not authentic Burma It tells how he felt about the Burmese and how he thought the Burmese felt toward him

The author has a tendency to quote from Western writers when characterizing India, e g , there are a number of quotations from Mark Twain and one from H. G Wells I would like more quotations from Indian writers and ordinary people to make India come alive

It's interesting that many novels are suggested out of Western literature These include. *A Tale of Two Cities*, *Drums Along the Mohawk*, *Hornblower and the Hotspur*, *Celia Garth*, *The Three Musketeers*, and *A Bell for Adano*. In spite of the fact that there are many excellent Asian novels available in English translation, nothing comparable is suggested, unless you count *Anna and the King of Siam*, which is offensive to most Thai people

Where outside commentators are quoted—in the teacher s guide—only Americans are doing the commenting, e g , J Anthony Lukas and C. L. Sulzberger of *The New York Times* Political cartoons in the text come from the United States England and the Netherlands, not from Indian newspapers

How might Asians voices be used in the texts?

One reader praised the artistic, philosophical, and literary selections he found in a book on Confucian China as serving not only to "establish the existence of artistic activity in China,"

but also to "elucidate and make real the other subjects, such as historical events and social structure, being discussed."

In another book on China, proverbs were cited frequently throughout. The enthusiastic reader pointed out that they were "always pertinent, always shedding new light on the subject under discussion or bringing some difficult conglomeration of facts and events into a comprehensible pattern."

Traveler's Tales

To impart a vivid dimension to a discussion of life in an Asian country, textbooks sometimes employ what might be called the traveler's tale. The problem with eyewitness accounts by foreign visitors, however, is that the authors are more concerned with their own impressions than with trying to convey the Asian experience.

I tried to assume the lotus position by tucking my feet under myself and sitting calmly. The session lasted only 15 minutes, but it was difficult to concentrate on nothingness. . . . At the time I did not realize enough about Zen to have the experience of satori.

Remarked the reader who found this example: From the standpoint of an American first visiting Japan, the author's reactions are pretty standard and quite authentic. But they are also quite out of place in a textbook on Japan.

The essence of entertaining travel writing is to convey a sense of the distance one has come from the familiar. One tends to exploit the potential for amusement or excitement in the unfamiliarity of the surroundings. First-time impressions are very different from those experienced by someone who has grown up in a culture.

In addition to presenting an inaccurate view of a culture, the use of travelers' tales usually precludes the utilization of actual Asian accounts.

Westernization of Asian Sources

By retelling Asian myths, legends, folktales, or history, textbooks also in effect Westernize Asian sources. If sensitively and authentically done, a retelling can be effective, especially if the vocabulary and writing style would otherwise be too advanced for the textbook's grade level. All too often, however, texts present retellings as actual Asian sources, fail to provide identification, so that it is impossible to know whether the story is authentically Asian, rewrite history in a condescending manner, or change the concept and story line. In a description of Commodore Perry's arrival in Japan, for instance, one textbook does not draw upon actual Japanese accounts in translation. Instead it presents the following fictionalized Westernized version:

On July 7, 1853, the crews of some Japanese fishing boats in Tokyo Bay saw a strange sight. Into the mouth of the bay steamed a squadron of warships flying a foreign flag. The Japanese fishermen were speechless with amazement, for they had never seen a vessel propelled by steam.[6]

The Japanese myth of creation in its accepted version has been available in English translation for over 75 years and readily accessible in a standard anthology for more than 10 years, yet two recent textbooks, in remarkably similar versions, retell the myth, transforming its male and female deities, Izanami and Izanagi, into a single unnamed masculine figure reminiscent of Neptune or Jupiter, turn the floating bridge of heaven on which they stand in the original version into a rainbow, eliminate the delightful dialogue between the two deities, and portray them as producing not countries, as in the authentic version, but merely the islands of Japan. Yet both textbook versions are accompanied by a Japanese painting from the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston which depicts both Izanami and Izanagi thrusting down the jewel spear of Heaven into the waters to produce the first island, Ono-goro-jima. One wonders whether students ever notice the inconsistency and what they think about it.

The Use of Case Studies

Textbooks often advocate case studies of an individual a family. or a village as an effecti . way of presenting social studies concretely fact. case studies are frequently the only attempt a textbook will make to focus on a people and their culture. Out of the sample of 260 texts readers reported that case studies appeared in 75 Unfortunately. in only 8 of these was an Asian-centered approach dominant and only 3 scored "dominant" on the use of actual Asian sources

Far more frequently textbook case studies are inventions. replete with fanciful m.. nformation as one reader put it They are filled with situations. dialogue. and attitudes that either nave been made up outright or seem to have been very loosely constructed from scholarly evidence and presented as fact.

One textbook contains an account of a civil service examination in Confucian China. The character is named Cheng She Kit. which the reader characterized as "a hodgepodge of Mandarin and Cantonese." and the text describes in detail how Cheng "*cut a piece from the stick of ink.*"[64] mixed it with the water on his palette. and then proceeded to take his examination. writing out each passage as it was read by the examiner. and then writing an explanation for it. Commented the reader. "It is wholly inaccurate. from the way Chinese ink is used to the way the examinations were conducted. as any one who has read a single book on China might know"

Readers also faulted the case studies for the general lifelessness and robot-like character of their people. In effect. they appeared reminiscent of the Dick and Jane robots the American school child frequently meets when first learning to read. ("See. Jane. see. Run. Dick. run.") Such characters talk and question in a cardboard way and live in families typically consisting of a brother and sister heroine. "Mother." "Father." and "Little Brother." Such characters. if they do not utterly bore the students. can give the false impression that case-study characters are typical of people in the country

Asia Through Western Eyes

Although it is possible to present authentic Asian data but color it with a Western point of view. readers suspected that many case studies were invented because they seemed to reveal more about the ways in which Americans see Asians than about how Asians see themselves. One book. for instance. tells the story of Sachin. an Indian untouchable. who goes to the city. makes good with top grades and a well-paying job. and then returns

to his village wearing a Western suit and shiny new shoes only to be rejected and left standing in the dust by the caste-conscious people of his village. The reader commented that "going out with a few girls" is "nice and American" but not the way things are usually done in India. But the reader found it plainly incredible "that the people where Sachin worked would not be aware—or at least curious—about his caste" and that Sachin himself would not know what to expect of the villagers when he returned home. The tenor of the story is far more that of a Horatio Alger plot gone sour than that of an actual Indian experience.

Another book uses the device of boy and girl twins to introduce village life in Thailand. But the reader argued that had the writer really been familiar with Thailand she would have introduced a brother and sister with one or two years' difference in age so that she could have presented the Thai social relations of status and reciprocity in which, in the case of family members, the younger automatically owes obedience to the older and the older has a natural obligation to protect the younger.

Still another book on Pakistan talks about a youth's preference for tight jeans and his hope for "good grades" and has a Pakistani bride saying "I do."

Many of the case studies fail as genuine projections of the Asian experience because they are used exclusively or primarily to convey an aura of backwardness, deprivation and material poverty. In short, the studies portray Asians from the standpoint of how far they have come along the road of Western progress. The following example from a textbook on Japan illustrates the bias that often occurs when a village, a family, or an individual is described in terms of possessions familiar to Americans that it may or may not have:

> *"all the Nakamuras sleep in one bedroom divided by a screen. The road to the house is not paved. There is a growing list of appliances in the Nakamura home—an electric refrigerator, stove, toaster, and color television. Yet the bathroom is far from . . . modern. The toilet is primitive, and there is no shower."*

Ethnocentrism in the form of explicit comparisons with the United States also enters into some of the progress-oriented case studies. One book makes the point with pictures. A woman in an American laundromat is pictured alongside a painting of Indian women doing their washing in a stream. Another book compares the situation of a Japanese farmer with what can only be described as that of an upper middle class American:

> *"Sekine . . . owns only 1.5 acres of land—hardly more than a 'backyard' in American terms, but an average-size farm in overcrowded Japan."*

The insistence on "learning new ways" and the condescension of the "white man's burden" combine in another typical "case study" to suggest a strong ethnocentric flavor and the overwhelming likelihood that the "study" is actually the figment of a textbook writer's mind. The book describes how an American girl and her businessman father are seeing Bangkok's canals by boat and run into a Thai youth with the improbable (for a man) name of Siri. Unlike most Thais who won't talk politics with strangers, Siri speaks of "*the threat of Communist China*" and says that the Thais "*have little defense against the huge army of China.*" Reports the reader, "The American, acting in an almost patronizing and certainly 'let me, the American, help you' manner, tells Siri that he and his group of men can get him a scholarship to learn modern ways so that Thailand will have educated leaders."

The progress-centered case study as seen through American eyes, with a cast of unreal people, is vividly illustrated by two characters which appear most frequently in textbook discussions of India. One, whom we'll call "Toothless Ram," is pathetically backward and poverty-stricken. The following excerpts from different texts show him in two typical appearances:

> *"Ram is a toothless little man who lives in a small village in India. He is a poor tenant farmer. He cannot read or write, but he is no different in this respect from millions of others. At 42, he looks and feels like an old man. He and his wife had seven children, but only three, two sons and a daughter, are still alive. Both of his sons are married and live*

with him. He is worried because his daughter is not yet married."[68]

Arun cannot read or write . . . For the past few years he has had a bad cough in his chest. He went to the village doctor and paid him three rupees or 42¢ for treatment. The doctor rubbed his chest with a large red stone and told him the coughing would stop. It never did, but Arun has not been back to the doctor because he does not want to spend more money."[69]

Enlightened Ram," on the other hand, is the mirror opposite of Toothless Ram. He is in favor of progress, modernity, and Western ways. He is impatient with his countrymen who cling to old ways and are slow to change.

Ram is a farmer who is now living in a small village near Bombay. One of the government advisers came to discuss the new method of rice growing. . . . Even his own father warned him against changing his ways. 'Take whatever God gives you,' he said. 'Don't ask for too much.'"

However, he agrees to try the new agricultural methods, and

Many years later, Ram looked back on the changes he had made. He had learned to use fertilizer. He was now borrowing tools from the village's new cooperative. He was buying good seed. He was using a new plow and sickle that were better than the ones his father and grandfather used. All of this puzzled Ram's father. He remarked, 'You are getting everything—good seed, fine fertilizer, and good tools—as if a spirit is bringing all these to you.'"[70]

Sometimes the issue is not one of technology but of social customs.

"This was the home Krishna was expected to return to. But after six years of being away, he was no longer sure that he was suited to live under the rules of the family. For some time he had run his own life, and he thought it would be hard to take orders from the older members of the family. He wanted to choose his own career and his own wife. This was not acceptable to his grandfather's way of life."[71]

While there might be some Indians who resemble "Toothless Ram" or "Enlightened Ram," in the textbooks both Rams are caricatures.

Other Dimensions of Adequacy and Accuracy in the Texts

Treating an Asian topic superficially and imposing a Western framework on it are essentially forms of inaccuracy. Scholar-readers also found inaccuracies in fact, such as "The practice of suttee was common through Asia" and "Bengal is a province", in the use and definition of foreign terms, such as *Hinayana* instead of the correct *Theravada* Buddism and *hara-kiri* instead of the preferred *seppuku*, and in the identification of illustrations and photographs

The unattractiveness of some formats is another dimension of the inadequacy of many texts Exactly 50 per cent of the 168 readers who replied to a question on whether the format was initially appealing to the eye said that the poverty of the design of the book did not invite children to read onward.

Illustrations tend to perpetuate stereotypes and cliches about Asia The inevitable pictures of the Taj Mahal, of beggars, and of cows in the streets abound in books on India, while Japan is represented with the usual delicate women in kimonos, the tea ceremony, gardens, and shrines, as well as overcrowded subways, student riots and traffic jams in Tokyo There seems to be no middle ground, remarked a reader In general, illustrations and photographs give no indication also of the ethnic diversity of many Asian nations.

There were also instances of sexism in the stereotyping of women's roles and the neglect of women as characters in the case studies.

The tone of the terminology used reinforces many of the Western ethnocentrisms apparent in the texts. One book says that "*to a remarkable extent the Japanese citizen can say what he thinks, read what he wishes, and write what he believes.*"[72] Why should this be remarkable unless one assumes that Asian countries in general should model their behavior on American patterns? Another text likens colonial countries to "*problem children*" in a hurry to grow up. But the most prevalent offenders are such terms as "*underdeveloped,*" "*backwards,*" "*primitive,*" "*tradition-bound,*" "*superstitious,*" "*old-fashioned,*" "*static,*" "*unchanging,*" "*have-nots,*" and "*new nations*" as applied to the countries of Asia. Continued use of cold war language, even in very recent texts, is revealed by such habitual phrases as "*Communist China*" or "*Red China,*" instead of the relatively value-free and correct designation, The People's Republic of China, and by such rubrics as "*Communist challenge*" or "*the ruthless imperialism*" of China.

Readers also took exception to the number of instances in which Asia was referred to Europocentrically as the "*Far East*" or "*the Orient,*" a term whose root meaning is "the East." Sometimes Asian and African societies are lumped together under the designation, "*non-Western.*" Terminology like this encourages American (or European) students to develop a belief in the centrality of their own culture.

Still another dimension of ethnocentrism, readers reported, is revealed in the use of such condescending terms as "*the friendly, fun-loving Filipinos*" and "*the happy, gentle Thais,*" which suggest a childlike nature in need of guidance, if not domination.

Expert knowledge is no insurance that Western biases will not creep into the formulation of American textbooks on Asia, nor does all Asian experience qualify an author to take on the responsibility of interpreting an Asian culture to American students. Nevertheless it is noteworthy that of 302 texts on which replies were tabulated to questions concerning the qualifications of authors and consultants, only 24 per cent listed authors and consultants credited with Asian expertise. Fewer than one per cent of the membership of the Association for Asian Studies, the leading professional organization in the field, were involved in the production of any of the texts. Moreover, of those few experts who did participate in the formation of the texts, only a fraction were specialists in the humanities.

Overall Ratings

Basing their judgments on the variety of factors set forth in the evaluation guide, readers were asked to give overall ratings of the books they reviewed. Out of 261 books for which these evaluations were received, 63 were designated either as "excellent, should be highly recommended" or "can be used, but has some problems." Reports from readers indicated that 118 books should not be used without revision and an additional 80 were declared to be so inadequate that they should be replaced by new texts. On any given topic there appear to be at most 4 usable titles. Most of the material on Asia judged to be suitable is produced for the high school student. Of 16 elementary books given "suitable" ratings, only one series of basic texts received consistently good marks. Twelve books on the junior high level and 35 on the high school level were seen as usable by readers.

Plan for Action

The Asia Society has concluded from the reports of the readers that the majority of textbooks in common use in American elementary and secondary schools do not come close to reflecting what thoughtful educators have long been recommending for teaching about other societies, a recognition of these societies' unique aspirations, lifestyles, systems of values, and modes of thinking.

More than 70 per cent of the books emphasize the importance of progress, a yardstick which, if applied uncritically, can neglect or distort the persistent themes and continuities inherent in all cultures. The result in many texts is that Asian traditions are regarded as irrelevant to the present or thought of as obstacles to modernization.

Three fourths of the texts approach Asia from a Western-centered point of view. They assume Westernization and modernization are one and the same and talk of Asia as "catching up" with the West. They describe it in terms of what it possesses—or lacks—by comparison with us. They discuss the material poverty of Asian nations without pointing out the satisfactions of life for Asian peoples.

The role of Americans and Europeans in Asian history is also magnified in the textbooks, and in world histories, a disproportionate amount of space is given to America and Europe.

An even larger percentage of the texts fail to discuss Asians as individuals, to depict the concrete reality of their everyday lives, and to include authentic Asian sources or at least bibliographies of these sources.

Inaccuracies of fact and definition are frequent, and illustrations and terminology perpetuate Western ethnocentrism, stereotyping, and condescending attitudes toward Asian peoples. Few Asian specialists are involved as authors or consultants in the preparation of the texts and of those who are, a very small proportion hold credentials in the humanities.

If the texts are characteristic of social studies curricula across the country, then serious questions should be raised about the effectiveness of the entire post-World War II movement for "international" education or "global" studies.

The Asia Society intends to disseminate the findings widely to the general public, teachers, publishers, writers, textbook selection committees, state education departments, teacher training programs, and government agencies. A list of outstanding texts was drawn up as a result of the evaluation survey, and is currently available to anyone requesting it.

Through the Association for Asian Studies and other professional organizations, the Society will work to enlist the concern and involvement of specialists in Asian studies, particularly in the humanistic disciplines, and assist them in the preparation and distribution of papers on frequently misrepresented topics, such as caste and cattle in India. It will also use the findings on the individual texts to assist publishers in the revision of texts and the preparation of new ones.

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7 *Women of Asia*, Cambridge, 1974, p 2
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63 *East Asia*, Silver Burdett, 1970, p 113
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Textbook Evaluation Guidelines

I Format

Describe format and its implications briefly. Appraise text, including cover design, as if you were thumbing through the book with intent to purchase. Does it look like a "real" book or a textbook? What size is the print? Does the book invite you to read on? Why? If not, why not? If you were a student would you want to read it?

II Disciplines

What are the specific disciplines? Describe weight given to each approach (historical, anthropological, sociological, economic, humanistic, etc.) Is the approach chronological, expository, interpretive, case-study, primary source, or other? Is the primary purpose of the book to introduce Asia or to introduce a discipline?

III. Topics

What are the specific topics covered in the Asian material? (e.g. Long March, land reform)
Are there glaring omissions (e g. the Opium War in treatment of European involvement with China)?
Which topics are emphasized? What are the general topics dealt with in world history material? How does coverage of Asia compare with coverage of other regions?

IV. Accuracy and Authenticity

Evaluate accuracy in terms of factual information, use of foreign terms, and sources
Evaluate authenticity. If the material is not authentic, give examples. For instance, if the text relates in the author's own words "A Day in the Life of Beero," is the day an authentic one for an Indian child? Are names and places authentic? Identify and give examples from the text and teacher's guide as follows

1. Factual inaccuracies and inauthenticity.
2 Inauthenticity through invented case studies. Are the names accurate?
3 Inaccuracy in the use of foreign terms (e.g. Mt. Fujiyama, hara-kiri).
4. Inaccuracy in the definition of foreign terms.
5 Inaccuracy through the misspelling of foreign terms.
6. Inaccuracy through the use of out-of-date material.
7 Inaccuracy as the result of omission or a fragmented or superficial treatment of a topic, resulting in distortion.
8. Inaccurate sources used in bibliography.
9 Inaccurate pronunciations in the pronunciation guide
10 Are authors and consultants qualified in Asian background? Total number of consultants: . number with Asian specialization.
11. How would you rate the overall accuracy/ authenticity level of this book? 1) poor 2) fair 3) good 4) excellent

V Use of Foreign Terms

Please list foreign terms (common words) used in each text by country. Is there a pronunciation guide? Where is the pronunciation guide?

VI. Assumptions and Approaches

Listed below are various approaches and assumptions that occur in textbooks They may be found in the text, the illustrations, or the end-of-chapter questions.

1. Developmental approaches
   (a) Does the text emphasize change and growth or persistence and continuity in a culture?
   (b) Is there an assumption that all societies follow a developmental or evolutionary

pattern? Does this imply the superiority of the West?
(c) Are large, powerful societies emphasized to the neglect of the small?
(d) If comparisons between Asian countries and Western countries are made, how are they made?
(e) If comparisons are made, is there an effort to compare the "likes"? Are they valid?
(f) Are the accomplishments of Asian cultures measured by Western standards?
(g) Are differences between Asian and Western countries explained in such a way that there is an emphasis on what the Asian cultures do not have?
(h) Is Asia seen as a stage for Western history?
(i) Are foreigners always helping or intervening to the extent that the people of the area seem to have little initiative or influence?
(j) Are differences between Asian and Western countries explained in such a way that Asian social and cultural forces are seen as "problems"?
(k) Are terms like "modernization" and "Westernization" used? How are they used and defined?
(l) Is "Westernization" used interchangeably with "modernization"?
(m) Is there a dichotomy assumed between tradition and modernity in the text?
(n) Is there a definition of human, societal, or a civilization's worth in economic terms?
(o) Is there an overemphasis on the poverty of a country or area?
(p) Is the study of Asia justified in terms of strategic importance to the U.S.?
(q) What assumptions are made about the relationship between technology and change? Are both the advantages and limitations of technology explored?
(r) Is an effort made to see development issues from Asian perspectives? (See Asia-centered approach below.)

2 Asian superiority approach.
Are Asian cultures presented as superior to the Western? (e.g. more spiritual, exotic, artistic)
3 Asian inscrutability approach:
Is Asia presented as mysterious and inscrutable?
4 Asia-centered approach:
(a) Is the culture presented as rational within its own context and cultural value system?
(b) Does the text help students develop empathy for other cultures? If so, how?
(c) Is the culture viewed within an Asian historical context?
(d) Are there attempts to get beyond the exotic or alien nature of some social customs?
5 Eclectic approach
Is a conscious effort made to present different possible approaches in the text?

VII *General considerations concerning assumptions*

1 Does the author recognize his or her assumptions?
2 Is the text consistent in its assumptions?
3 What values or aims does the text promote? Does the text carry this out successfully? (e.g. interdependency, Asia as part of the entire world system, futuristic thinking, prevention of war and preservation of peace, restoration of ecological balance, expanded social justice, sharing of world resources)
4. Are the text's assumptions and values as they apply to different Asian countries consistent? For example, are five-year plans seen as totalitarian in China and progressive in Indonesia?
5. What assumptions are made about the organization of societies and historical change? (e.g. organismic, cyclical, diffusionist, historical, geographic, or economic determinist)
6. Is an effort made to portray both the Great and Little Traditions? (Great Tradition is considered to be classical philosophy, religion, and literature. Little Tradition is considered to be folk myths and practice.)
7 Is there an effort to present a balanced view of topics?
8 Is there a conscious effort to portray pluralism in a society when it exists?

VIII *Humanistic and Human Interest Materials*

Humanistic materials include literature (poetry, fiction, diaries, letters, drama, etc.) art, music, philosophy, religion. Human interest materials include such things as letters to the editor of the *Asahi Shimbun* from a Japanese woman, or matrimonial ads in an Indian newspaper

1 To what extent does the text take a humanistic approach? Are people (men and women) at the center? To what extent does the text include Asian humanistic sources or voices as opposed to outside observers? (e.g. Lu Hsun vs. Pearl S Buck)
2 Even if the humanities are not introduced as a specific discipline, which humanistic traditions are represented? (e.g. religion, philosophy, literature, music, visual arts, performing arts)
3 How are humanistic/human interest materials used? Give examples.
(a) Is a humanistic language, style, or tone used?
(b) Are humanistic materials included to give extra information about an area? (i.e. to indicate an area has an art or a literature as well as an economic policy)
(c) Are humanistic materials (especially literature) used to increase student understanding of social science concepts? (e.g. social change)
(d) Are humanistic materials included to increase student appreciation of Asia's cultural heritage?
(e) Are humanistic materials included to illustrate cultural values?
(f) Is humanistic material presented so that students are given direct contact with other peoples and their values and can empathize with them? (Do not confuse creating sympathy with the plight of others with empathy.)
(g) Does humanistic material balance Western observers' interpretations of situations under study? For instance, are Japanese impressions of Perry included in word and picture along with Perry's impressions of the Japanese?
4 Do end-of-chapter questions encourage empathy? When possible, check desired responses in the teacher's guide to see what is

expected Do the end-of-chapter questions encourage ethnocentricity?

5 What about questions that follow humanities material? Are they done sensitively to foster empathy? (Debates that encourage students to decide the value of retaining different cultural practices do not always foster empathy. Nor will everyone empathize with the same material.)

6 Are writings (poetry, journals, quotations, etc.) by Asians set off in a different format or treated as an integral part of the text? If set off, does the design enhance the statement or does it look like an afterthought or something to be skipped over?

7 What Asian humanistic human interest sources can you recommend be included as source readings either in the body of the text or in the teacher s or student's bibliography?

IX Style and Tone

1 Are value-laden ethnocentric and or charged words and terminology used? (e.g. Red China. Far East. progress. development)
2 Are cliches used? (e g. dawn of civilization, cradle of civilization, emerging giant')
3 Is there a we-they tone?
4 Is there a condescending, moralistic, or patronizing tone?
5 Is there a brotherhood of man approach that denies differences?
6 Is the treatment of any given topic at such a high level of abstraction that students would have difficulty understanding the material?
7 Is there evidence of racist and or sexist attitudes on the part of the author? (e g white man s burden or little brown brother approach)

X Format and Illustrations

1 Do the illustrations extend and enhance the text adding to its meaning or are they purely decorative?
2 Analyze type number, and date of illustrations (charts cartoons photographs etc) Is there a balanced variety? Are art objects historical paintings and documents also represented?
3 Are different groups within a society portrayed?
4 Do pictures project stereotypes? (e g poverty aggressive behavior women in subservient or supporting roles quaint Asian scenes, modern technology)
5 If color reproduction is used is the quality good? What about black and white illustrations?
6 If applicable what kind of first impressions about Asia does the cover convey? The frontispiece?

XI. Credits

What types of credits are given for illustrations and photos? Do they appear on the same page or in another part of the book? Are dimensions given for art work? Names of artists? Period? Museum? Collection? Are dates given for maps and illustrations?

XII. Source Readings

1 Are source readings in body of text credited? If so, does the credit appear in footnote form on the same page? What kind of information is in the footnote? Does it indicate whether the reading is a direct quote or adapted from another work? Are the translator and source credited?
2 List Asian source readings within text.
3 Are the translations in contemporary language or are they dated?

XIII Bibliography

- Is there a bibliography listing further Asian sources? Are sources listed in the student's book as well as in the teacher's manual? Please list sources. If there is a distinction between student and teacher sources, please make two separate lists. Indicate which sources are humanistic or human interest

XIV. Supporting Materials

1 Is there an accurate pronunciation guide?
2 Is there a glossary of foreign terms?
3 Is there an index?
4. Is there a teacher's guide?
5 Does the teacher's guide promote the same values and rest on the same assumptions as the student text?
6 Does the teacher's guide make a conscious effort to avoid ethnocentrism? Does it succeed in this?
7 Does the teacher's guide assist in carrying out the objectives of the text? Is the teacher's guide useful?
8 Is the teacher's guide realistic about what can be achieved through the student text?
9 Are humanistic materials made available through the teacher's guide? Are these intended to be shared with the student? Could they have been presented directly to the student?

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