

**Rich Sweeney**

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**From:** Michael Witzel [witzel@fas.harvard.edu]  
**Sent:** Friday, February 24, 2006 7:42 AM  
**To:** Benjamin Marsh  
**Cc:** Michael Witzel  
**Subject:** Re: some new developments

**Ben,**  
**I have probably not yet answered to this letter. Many thanks for all of your successful work in DC!**

**A few notes below:**

**On Feb 15, 2006, at 10:00 AM, Benjamin Marsh wrote:**

**Michael,**

**The SBE/CDE staff recommendations do keep references to the Dalits and Untouchables, but they also call Varna class and only say that women had worse property rights**

**These points are only partially seen. At other occasions the new texts clearly speak about the lower position of women. Class/caste is a confusing issue (varna = class, jaati = caste). Class is earlier, but there also are some indications of (low) castes in et Veda; but, all is clear by the time of Manu's law book. -- We (and many others will take up this point on the 27th. Please see also our 50 scholars letter below.**

**We will aim to have someone there, as well as sending another letter. Aside from the Dalit issues, which are our organizations main concern, what other of the proposed changes do you think we should protest/protect?**

**Please see below. However, everyone has only 1-2 minutes. So please better concentrate on Dalits.**

**NB: PLEASE ANNOUNCE yourself as an organization. This time, people will be lined up as per organizations, I hear. (I guess you have coordinated with Messrs Deepankar and Varhade? And FOSA?**

**It seems to me like they muddled the Aryan invasion issues and included sentences saying that it is "disputed," but I am not entirely confident in my understanding of those issues to include it in my letter.**

**Sure, there is some discussion, but often not on a professional level (even by archeologists who usually argue just ex nihilo) . Better to leave it aside. Others will take it up.**

**==**

**HERE our letter to the board of Feb. 20:**

**Dear Ms. Johnson and members of the Board,**

**The undersigned (our letter of Nov. 8, 2005) sincerely thank the Members of the California State Board of Education and the staff of the California Department of Education for the thorough and painstaking review of the edits proposed by the Hindu Education Foundation and Vedic Foundation as to ensure the historical accuracy of the 6th grade History and Social Science textbooks.**

**However, while the signatories agree with most of the recommendations made by the SBE/CDE, many of us believe that more of our recommendations should have been adopted.**

**Many of us think that a clear definition of class (varna) and caste (jati) has to be included (e.g., HEF edits #82, 83, 85, 93). Castes are clearly attested and defined at least since the law book of Manu (late 1st mill. BCE). Some of the other edits that are, in our view, still to be reviewed include the following.**

**HEF**

**# 15: revise to : Some important aspects of Hinduism began ..**

**# 18: revise to : Most historians believe..**

**# 30: revise to: Sanskrit .. is the root of many northern South Asian languages, but not of the southern (Dravidian) ones, such as Tamil.**

**# 35 reinsert: sentence about women**

**# 44 revise to: ..Sanskrit and Tamil became.. .. Hindi, the official language of India today, and many other northern regional languages..**

**# 52 revise to: ..were called untouchables as they were obliged to perform dirty work..**

**# 62 reinstate & revise: untouchables as a-varna (not belonging to a varna) or as 5th varna ..**

**Also note that in # 56 the Ad Hoc Committee Action is left blank.**

**VF**

**# 21 revise to: Indian society divided and still divides itself..**

**# 38 revise to: Many historians credit the Aryans with bringing important aspects of Hinduism..**

**We sincerely appreciate the hard work of the State Board and the Department of Education and we look forward to a solution of the process that stresses historical accuracy.**

**For the undersigned,**

**Michael Witzel  
Wales Professor of Sanskrit**

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**Barring a word from you, I will just talk about the Varna issue and the Dalits**

**Ben**

**-----Original Message-----**

**From: Michael Witzel [mailto:witzel@aa.tufts.ac.jp]**

**Sent: Wednesday, February 15, 2006 8:09 AM**

**To: Benjamin Marsh**

**Cc: Michael Witzel**  
**Subject: some new developments**

**Ben, here are late last night's official developments in CA:**

**\* date for Subcommittee set on Feb 27: 4 hours, discussion point by point. Probably 10 am - 2 pm.**

**You have 2 minutes for each speaker, maybe only 1 if a lot of Hindutvavadins attend (as can be expected; they will discover the date soon).**

**\* a new set of edits done by the CA authorities, have not yet read them: only these will be up for discussion NOT the old HEF/VF/Bajpai etc. ones.**

**\* someone of your group should attend and announce themselves as representing your organization.**

**\* Also, it is important that your group as such writes to CA (Dept. & Board) giving your official position on the whole matter. The more non-Hindutva \*groups\* the better.**

**\* the final Board Meeting (probably merely sanctioning the Subcomm. results as 5 of their members are the same) will be held on March 8-10. More about that later.**

#### **DETAILS:**

**The SBE site is now announcing the meeting: Feb 27, 10:00 a.m.**

**<http://www.cde.ca.gov/be/ag/ag/science022706.asp>**

**1. Edits are up at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/be/ag/ag/documents/hssnotice022706a1.pdf> haven't had a chance to look at them closely yet, but they look very much like the jan 6th edits. men have more property rights and varna is class, not caste.**

**2. detailed meeting agenda has not been posted yet. but look at:  
<http://www.cde.ca.gov/be/ag/ag/documents/hssnotice022706.doc>**

**"Any member of the public who wishes to submit written comments in time to be reviewed by the Committee before the meeting, should submit them to the State Board of Education, 1430 N St., Ste. 5111, Sacramento, CA 95814 no later than 4 p.m. on Tuesday February 21. To ensure that lengthy written comments are received, please have a hard-copy delivered to the above address. "**

**If you want to talk, I will be at home all day.**

**MW**

**PS: Note; NYT NATIONAL | February 15, 2006**

**Ohio Board Undoes Stand on Evolution**

**By JODI RUDOREN**

**The Board of Education voted 11 to 4 to toss out a mandate that 10th-grade biology classes include critical analysis of evolution.**

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 Also, NPR had a small segment today:

<http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=5206166>

MW.

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**If you give me six lines written by the hand  
 of the most honest of men, I will find something  
 in them which will hang him.**

**(Qu'on me donne six lignes écrites de la main  
 du plus honnête homme, j'y trouverai de quoi  
 le faire pendre.)**

**Cardinal Richelieu, Minister of Louis XIII  
 (Quoted: January 1641, in "Mirame")**

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 <<http://www.fas.harvard.edu/~witzel/mwpage.htm>>  
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 < <http://users.primushost.com/~india/ejvs/>>

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