

FILM REVIEWS

Asia Video Reports: Japan

A four-part series with a video and teacher's guide on:

- ◆ Japanese housing
- ◆ Japanese food
- ◆ Japanese arts and crafts
- ◆ Japanese holidays and festivals



Each 15-minute video contains several shorter segments that can be used individually or together. For example, the video on housing features stories about the traditions of the tatami room, removing one's shoes when entering a room, and furniture-making, as well as the emerging popularity of Western-style homes and homes equipped with cutting-edge technology. Each teacher's guide contains background essays for the teacher, a video transcript and discussion guide, two complete lesson plans, and a list of relevant Web resources.

Asia Video Reports was created and compiled at the Asian Educational Media Service in the Center for East Asian and Pacific Studies at the Urbana-Champaign campus on behalf of the Board of Trustees of the University of Illinois.

To order, send a check or purchase order to SSEC; shipping and handling should be added as follows: \$0-\$50—\$6; \$51-\$100—\$8; \$101-\$500—\$15; \$501-\$1000—\$30.

- _____ Japanese Arts and Crafts (397-7, \$25.00)
 _____ Japanese Food (398-5, \$25.00)
 _____ Japanese Holidays and Festivals (399-3,
 \$25.00)
 _____ Japanese Housing (400-0, \$25.00)
 _____ All four titles (404-3, \$90.00)

Name _____
 Address _____
 City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Return to: SSEC, PO Box 21270, Boulder, CO
 80308-4270.

Tapoori

Children of Bombay

ALAN HANDEL PRODUCTIONS

DISTRIBUTED BY FILMMAKERS LIBRARY

1998. 26 MINUTES

Daughters of the Veil

Impact of Education on Women in Pakistan

ASIAN DEVELOPMENT BANK

1997. 12 MINUTES

One of the best ways to introduce cultures of other nations to American students can be by helping them to understand at least a little about the lives of their peers, other children, in the countries they are studying. Two recent videos attempt to address this issue in India and Pakistan, and I offer some thoughts on the content of the videos and their utility in the classroom.

Daughters of the Veil is about schools for Pakistani girls partially funded by the Asian Development Bank, and *Tapoori: Children of Bombay* is about some boys who live on the street without their parents in Bombay, India. The videos take different approaches, with *Daughters* being partially a promotional piece, and *Tapoori* taking more of an activist approach. Also, the children in *Daughters* are all girls, whereas *Tapoori* is populated entirely by boys.

It can be quite difficult for American students to under-

stand social systems in other countries, and how they leave members of those societies in the positions they occupy. Such is certainly the case with the position of women in many Islamic societies, and particularly so with the nation of Pakistan. If students know anything about Pakistan (other than that it now possesses nuclear weapons), it is that women there are discriminated against. While the current video may not particularly address how Pakistani women came to occupy the social space they now do, it does examine some ways in which that situation may be changed.

In the eleven-minute span of the video, we are shown schools for women and girls in rural areas of Baluchistan and the urban center of Lahore, among others. While one may suspect that this is a promotional piece assembled by the Asian Development Bank (which funds the schools pre-

sented), it also elucidates some of the reasons why similar ventures have not produced the expected results.

These schools have involved parents in their planning and operation, and part of the footage is of a meeting between parents and school administrators. Parents enumerate some of the reasons they feel that the schools are sometimes not worth the time of their children, citing periodic failure of the teachers to show up for class.

This video is likely to prompt discussion and questions about why the educational system in Pakistan is as poor as it is; unfortunately, this is an area which is completely unaddressed, perhaps for fear of offending the Pakistani government. While the military and government buildings in Islamabad and the provincial capitals are lavished with money, basic social services, including health care and education, are completely neglected. Pakistan has one of the lowest per capita spending

averages on education of any country in the world. Spending on the military (as in most countries) far exceeds spending on education, and this is particularly true of elementary education in Pakistan. While private schools are available for the children of the elite, most Pakistanis must educate their children in poorly funded public schools, if even these are available, and there are always some fees at these schools as well.

In *Tapoori* we meet three boys who have no prospect of going to school. They live without their parents on the streets of Mumbai (formerly Bombay) or in the massive Victoria Railway Station in that city. They make their living by working, selling bottles of water to travelers, or picking through trash for materials to sell to recyclers. Subra has left his family home partially because his father beat him. At one point in the video he returns home only to come back to Mumbai when it

becomes clear his situation has not improved.

The video includes frank discussion of the boys' drug use (glue inhalation), frequenting of prostitutes, sexual explorations with each other, and the blunt hierarchy of the street, where a boy may be beaten for not paying a local thug for his sleeping spot on the sidewalk.

A local priest has arranged a room in the railway station for the boys to gather in, where he hopes he may be able to help them learn to read and write, and also find out if there is any possibility of them returning to their families. A female social worker is shown with Subra discussing returning to his village, but the conversation is not translated and is muted, so one cannot tell what the boy is saying about the possibility. Given the desperate life these boys lead on the street (where they can easily be murdered), it seems there is more to their abandonment of home than beatings. Other possibilities might include being expelled

from home (too many mouths to feed), or questions about parentage.

These two videos illuminate small parts of the lives of some children in South Asia, and while the overall situation looks bleak, each offers some rays of hope that these and other children like them may someday be able to improve their lives. These videos are most appropriate for middle school and older students. Either makes interesting fodder for classroom discussion, and the two together are compelling in both their similarities and their contrasts. ■

KEITH SNODGRASS is Outreach Coordinator and Assistant Director of the South Asia Center at the Jackson School of International Studies at the University of Washington. His work has focused on religion and politics in North India and Pakistan, as well as on K-12 education about South Asia in the U.S. He has taught courses on Media and Society in South Asia and reviews materials for several education journals.

3 ISSUES PER YEAR

Subscribe to **Education About ASIA**

TO SUBSCRIBE, PLEASE CHECK THE APPROPRIATE BOX

INDIVIDUAL SUBSCRIPTIONS:

- 1 year \$18.00 (U. S. mailing address)
 \$22.00 (Outside U. S. mailing address)

2 YEAR

- \$36.00 (U. S. mailing address)
 \$44.00 (Outside U. S. mailing address)

ORGANIZATIONS:

- 1 year \$24.00 (U. S. mailing address)
 \$28.00 (Outside U. S. mailing address)

2 YEAR

- \$48.00 (U. S. mailing address)
 \$56.00 (Outside U. S. mailing address)

Starting with: Spring 2000 Fall 2000

Charge my: MasterCard VISA Expires ___/___/___

Card #

I have enclosed a check (in U.S. dollars, drawn on a U.S. Bank— Payable to Association for Asian Studies, Inc.)

SIGNATURE _____

NAME _____

ORGANIZATION _____

ADDRESS _____

MAIL YOUR ORDER TO: THE ASSOCIATION FOR ASIAN STUDIES, 1021 EAST HURON ST., ANN ARBOR, MI 48104-9876

ORDER BY PHONE: 313-665-2490, or fax: 313-665-3801, E-mail: abeard@asianst.org, or visit our Web site to order: www.asianst.org