





Brahmin. "So we have religious ceremonies at home . . . Well, there's no Hindu temple in all of London. I've heard they'll open one. When, I don't know." Usha's family has a simple Hindu altar over a mantelpiece at home: a few idols and pictures of Hindu gods and goddesses. "We celebrate important Hindu festivals and religious days with a simple *puja*," she said.

There are, of course, a few teenagers who feel strongly about their religion. "I read the Holy Koran as often as I can," Noor said. "There's a copy at home, in Arabic, with pronunciations in Urdu written under each line. I believe in the Holy Koran and the Prophet Mohamed. Our Prophet makes many references to Mary and Jesus and Abraham. I tell this to my religious teacher and English boys, but they don't bother. People don't care for religion in this country."

I often asked those who attended scripture classes which story or fable impressed them the most. Roop chose the Good Samaritan, whereas Shiv singled out Noah's Ark, because "it's like *Malta-pradiva* in our Hindu books—the Great Flood."

### Clothes and food

Their generally tolerant attitude toward religion often extends to dressing and eating habits. Almost all the boys were wearing "knickers" at school in India or Pakistan. The switchover to trousers in Britain was expected and was accepted without a murmur.

The crucial thing for a Sikh boy is the turban. It is no longer universal. My Sikh respondents put the number of those Sikh boys who have removed their turbans at 40 per cent to 60 per cent of the total. I asked Roop why he had removed his turban and long hair. "I was in a chain store once," Roop replied. "I was six then, and a sales lady thought I was a girl. That upset me. I wouldn't eat until I had my hair cut off. Of course, my father had removed his turban some time ago. In those days there was a lot of prejudice against turbans."

The girls' dressing problems crop up when they mature. When Mehtab recently joined a technical college, her mother insisted that she wear the Indian *sari* because "she said that I was a grown-up girl, and that I was going to a coeducational college. I had to submit to her wishes." At one time Usha wanted to have short hair, but her mother thought it unfeminine. "Long hair is an object of beauty in a girl, she told me. I had to go along with her views," Usha said. "After all, she's my mother."

As a rule, boys are less respectful of their parents' wishes and habits than girls. Akram found school lunches a "welcome change from the rich and spicy food I have to eat at home. Yes, I've eaten pork and bacon. I don't like it. It's too greasy. Of course, my parents don't know. They'd be appalled if they knew. They don't even buy margarine because someone told them it had pig's fat in it."

The parents of one Hindu boy feel differently. "They know I eat meat at school lunches," he said. "They don't mind as long as it's not at home. We are vegetarian—at home . . . I guess I must have eaten beef, because I eat what's given. It doesn't matter." But to Preetam it does. "I avoid beef," Preetam said solemnly. "All religions have some sacred animal or something. If Hindus have cow, I should respect it, shouldn't I?" Roop would not, or so he told me. "If I were about dying, I'd kill a cow and eat it. Religion did not make man. Man made religion. India could earn a lot by exporting those skinny things. Chop them off, and sell their skins abroad. My Indian friends don't agree; they get emotional . . ."

On the whole, Muslim students such as Rasheed, Noor and Mehtab tend to follow Jewish students on food restrictions at school.

Conflicts arise in schools on such subjects as history. Most of the older Indian students arrive in this country with some knowledge of modern Indian history. Consequently they find the British version of history, where it pertains to the Indian subcon-



continent, distasteful. The following example illustrates the situation:

"My history teacher was telling us how Clive the victorious went and conquered India," Deepak Singh said. "So I got up and told him that if it hadn't been for some of our clots the British would have been thrown out. He said 'Get lost.' I was taken to the headmaster. I told him too. The history books here say all the good things the English did in India not a word about all the bad things they did. What about that Jallianwalla Bagh in Amritsar? That orchard . . . they closed the gates and shot at our people . . . the English generals did. I've seen the bullet marks on the walls with my own eyes. Not a word about that in English history books. Not a word about all the gold the English took from our country." In contrast, Akram had no previous knowledge of Indian/Pakistani history, and seemed unconcerned.

### Colour consciousness

I scrupulously avoided any mention of colour, but invariably my respondent introduced the subject in our conversation. It seems to me that colour consciousness in an Asian child begins in one or more of the following ways:

1. Through parental experience: One boy told me that his father had made 200 applications for an office job during his first four weeks in England, and had secured one interview. (His father now works as a moulder in a Birmingham rubber factory.) Such parental experiences leave a mark on their children.
2. Through personal (or a close friend's) experience: This is the most common. On the very first day Deepak Singh went to the senior school, a white boy called him over, shouted "You fucking wog!" and punched him. Deepak Singh felt very bitter. Later on, when he found out that the white boy was indeed a Maltese immigrant, Deepak Singh's feelings against the white [English] boys did not change. "The point is that that boy had grown up in English society," Deepak Singh explained. "He had learnt their attitudes. Besides they're all the same: the Poles, the English, the Greeks. Same religions, same food, same customs."

Shiv had felt no distinction against being an Indian

in a predominantly English school. The incident happened. One morning I pushed him on the way to assembly, him back. "The English boy hit me back," Shiv said. "And so it was going English boys attacked me. I fell on the ground. I didn't know what happened. I was sides by many English boys. I got ve all over my face. A teacher came at medicine. Then I went to my class. Look, he got beaten, but nothing in boy who beat him! After that I kept self. If English boys were playing play on another. I had nothing to do. A different norm exists in Roop's Indian, and English boy get into a takes them to a gym to have a fair fight. Girls' experiences are no different. "When I have a quarrel or something mate, the first thing that comes on is 'You black bitch!'" Usha said. "I you treat as friends. This colour thing

Noor had had the worst experience evening I was passing an alley and stopped me, and said, 'I want to f asked 'why?'. He said, 'Because bastard.' At once he drew a knife. I scared. Then I just ran. He ran after After that, for many days I'd no streets, not even in daylight."

3. Through indirect social reaction illustrates this. "Everything is all right grammar school. I'm the only Indian. Every Saturday afternoon we wait vision, and then one of the Pop si Indian boy in the dancing crowd. Y pans on him, a cry of disgust ge English boys in my hall. That's wh they really think of me. It could be r

I tried to gauge the reaction of the white boys by asking them, "If y in America, whose methods would Malcolm X's or Dr King's?" A majority chose Malcolm X. "His Shiv assured me. "After my beating, don't we Indians form our own c number in the school was growing with Indians and Pakistanis. Then back. Now if some English boy s some small Indian boy, we get the him. We don't wait for him to acc We hit him right away: that way he Now the English boys respect us." Dr King. "In the long run, non-viol what you want."

Further, I asked if it were possible about colour. Even the most a sounded pessimistic. "No," he rel you? I came here a long time ago only Asian house in the street. I then. One day I was standing near a Suddenly a ball hit the car. An Eng rushing out of a house, and sho bastard! I had absolutely nothing ball. It was some English kids play you be neutral? It's they who have us. The working class adults are the others are any better. I went to agency once. The woman there said ment store in Oxford Street want music shop.' Backroom job, min she picked up the phone. The next t starting at me and saying on the ph right . . . he's not dark at all . . ."

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in a predominantly English school until the follow- ing incident happened. One morning an English boy pushed him on the way to assembly. So Shiv pushed him back. "The English boy hit me, and I hit him back," Shiv said. "And so it was going—until five-six English boys attacked me. I fell on the ground. Then I didn't know what happened. I was kicked from all sides by many English boys. I got very sore, bleeding all over my face. A teacher came and applied some medicine. Then I went to my class. Everybody said, Look, he got beaten, but nothing happened [to the boy who beat him]. After that I kept myself to myself. If English boys were playing on one side, I'd play on another. I had nothing to do with them."  
A different norm exists in Roop's school: "If an Indian and English boy get into a fight, a teacher takes them to a gym to have a fair fight."

Girls' experiences are no different from boys'. "When I have a quarrel or something with a class mate, the first thing that comes out of her mouth is 'You black bitch!'" Usha said. "I mean girls whom you treat as friends. This colour thing is very deep."  
Noor had had the worst experience of all. "One evening I was passing an alley and an English boy stopped me, and said, 'I want to fight with you.' I asked 'why?'. He said, 'Because you're a black bastard.' At once he drew a knife. I got scared, real scared. Then I just ran. He ran after me. I ran fast. After that, for many days I'd not walk alone in streets, not even in daylight."

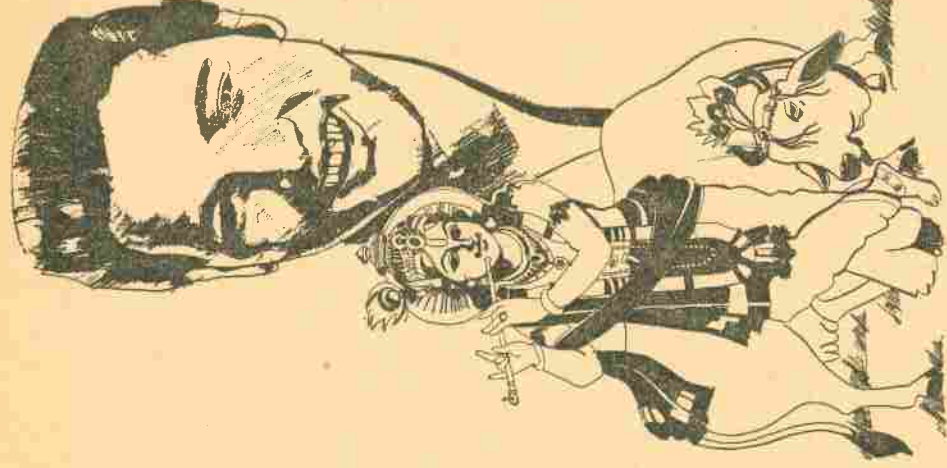
3. Through indirect social reaction: Preetam's case illustrates this. "Everything is all right in my boarding grammar school. I'm the only Indian boy there. Every Saturday afternoon we watch sports on television, and then one of the Pop shows. There's an Indian boy in the dancing crowd. When the camera pans on him, a cry of disgust goes up from the English boys in my hall. That's when I realise what they really think of me. It could be me on television."  
I tried to gauge the reaction of my respondents to the white boys by asking them, "If you were a Negro in America, whose methods would you follow: Malcolm x's or Dr King's?" An overwhelming majority chose Malcolm x. "His method works," Shiv assured me. "After my beating I realised 'why don't we Indians form our own community?' Our number in the school was growing. I made friends with Indians and Pakistanis. Then we began hitting back. Now if some English boy starts by bullying some small Indian boy, we get there and challenge him. We don't wait for him to accept our challenge. We hit him right away: that way he loses confidence. Now the English boys respect us." Roop preferred Dr King. "In the long run, non-violence will get you what you want."

Further, I asked if it were possible to be "neutral" about colour. Even the most anglicised Akram sounded pessimistic. "No," he replied. "How can you? I came here a long time ago. Ours was the only Asian house in the street. I was six or seven then. One day I was standing near a car in my street. Suddenly a ball hit the car. An English woman came rushing out of a house, and shouted 'You black bastard!' I had absolutely nothing to do with the ball. It was some English kids playing. So, how can you be neutral? It's they who have to be neutral, not us. The working class adults are the worst. Not that others are any better. I went to an employment agency once. The woman there said, 'Yes, a department store in Oxford Street wants staff for their music shop.' Backroom job, mind you. Anyway, she picked up the phone. The next thing I know she's staring at me and saying on the phone, 'No, he's all right . . . he's not dark at all . . . he's very light.'"

### Time off

The leisure activities of Asian teenagers—watching television, reading comics or novels, listening to music, visiting friends or clubs and cinemas—are not much different from those of their English counterparts.

Watching television is popular. Even the parents



who do not understand English join in. "My parents pick up many English words that way," Noor said.

All of my respondents had read comics like *Hurricane*, *Hornet*, *Superman*, *Captain America* or *Batman* at one stage. None of them does so now. Very few read any magazines like *True Romances* and *True Stories*. Those who read English novels tend to read thrillers. Most of them read Urdu, Hindi and Gujrati novels. They also read other Hindi and Urdu books, like the biographies of their national leaders.

Social visits among boys of the same group are very common. When large numbers of Indians or Pakistanis live in an area or go to the same school, there is a tendency for the same language group—Punjabi, Gujrati, Bengali—to congregate. Social contacts between Asian and English boys outside school are minimal; though Asian and English girls tend to develop closer relationships. Such sentiments as "Most of my friends are English" tend to be expressed with a false sense of bravado.

Almost all my respondents go to Indian/Pakistani films in Hindi/Urdu. The frequency varies from once a week to once a month. There are exceptions, like Akram. "I don't understand Urdu," he said. All my respondents go to English-language films as well. Their preferences vary. Some, like Shiv and Deepak Singh, feel that "Indian films always have a moral, but English films start off from somewhere and finish off somewhere." However, even they agree that "production standards of English films are very high."

Valiabh, 16, who proudly calls himself a "brown Brummie," prefers English to Indian films because "the majority of Indian films are based on love sort of thing. Not much variety." Roop went further, when he said, "In Indian films when someone dies there's a song, someone marries there's a song, someone falls into a pond there's a song. These songs and films bore me to tears."

Usha, however, is very fond of Indian film songs, because she thinks "there's so much feeling in them, the words are poetic, not like this *ye-ye* type." Admiration for Indian music and songs does not preclude listening and appreciating western music. Many names of western singers were mentioned: Elvis Presley, the Beatles, Billy Fury, Petula Clark. Tom Jones seemed to be the favourite. Most of my res-



## The young Asians of Britain

ponents were appreciative of "background" western music but derisive of the lyrics.

### Views on Britain

All of them have, by now, formed opinions about the British people and environment. I found nothing original in them. There were the usual remarks about the weather—its "constant changeability"—and the people—"cold and reserved." Most of them had some unjustifiable notion that the British people were "nice chaps, really cooperative"; but it had not turned out that way. As a rule, they find the British very polite. "In fact too polite." Yes, sir' and 'No, sir' in your face; and then read the letters they write in local papers: 'Send Indians back home; they smell'—that sort of thing," Shiv said. "I tell you they're dirty. They never bathe; they cover up their smell with all the perfumes and smelling salts."

Most of them tend to view the British political parties in terms of their policies toward immigration and immigrants. "My friend down the street tells me that if Tories came to power they'll chuck us out, but I said to him, 'The Tories were in power when my father first came in. They can't chuck us out like that. No,'" Rasheed said. Once again Roop had an original idea: "We had both Tories and Labour. Neither of them is any good. So I say give the Liberals a chance."

Most of my Indian interviewees were familiar with the names of Gandhi, Nehru, Bose and Patel. They had either read about them in history books or had heard them being discussed by their parents at home. Parents form a vital link to their past: their religion, language and literature, and their attachment to—and continuing interest in—their "mother-country." When asked to choose the leader they most admired they chose Bose, Patel, Gandhi and Nehru—in that order. The Pakistani teenagers know Jinnah very well, but not Liaquat Ali Khan. I did not discuss present-day national leaders in either country.

Their plans for the future varied. "A girl's future

lies in marriage," Mahtab said. "Right now my mother is in Pakistan, looking for a husband for me." Akram, on the other hand, has no desire to return to Pakistan: "I'll feel foreign there. I'm planning to be an actor. I've already joined a drama school. Acting is a serious business." Deepak Singh plans to be a fighter pilot with the RAF. "If that doesn't work out, I'll try the Indian Air Force. I'm in the Air Training Corps here." Vallabh is interested in business: "My uncle is minting money in shirt manufacture. He wants to take me on. This is the country for me. There's money here; pound-sterlings! Roops is keen on education. 'I'll go as far as I can in my education here. I've been back to India twice for holidays. I like it there. I'll go back.'" Noor proposes to be an electronics engineer. "Yes, in this country."

### How anglicised?

It is rare to find a totally orthodox or totally anglicised Asian teenager: in my sample, Noor and Akram come nearest to these two types. In between there are three broad categories: semi-orthodox, like Rasheed, Usha, Mehtab and Deepak Singh; the middle-zoners, like Shiv and Vallabh; and the semi-anglicised, like Preetam and Roop.

The major factors that bear on anglicisation are:

1. Time of arrival. The early arrivals (of the mid-1950s) were more prone to anglicisation because they arrived when very young and they were totally surrounded by the British environment. In contrast, the late arrivals were older in age, and found themselves surrounded more and more by their compatriots.
2. Period of stay: Longer stay helps anglicisation, but only up to a point. The change is swift in the beginning, but soon tapers off.
3. The racial composition of school and residential area: Concentration of Asians in schools and residential areas tends to retard anglicisation.

I am, of course, using the term "anglicisation" in a neutral sense: it is neither good nor bad.

## SOCIETY

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Therapeutic communities or institutes. This is the question that has to be faced in residential work in the future. The Work Committee, which has been considering the problem for five years, is pressing for proper recognition of the skill and dedication necessary to do this kind of work adequately. (See *Caring for People: staffing residential homes*, Books, last week.) It emphasises the present acute shortage of training for and paints an alarming picture of the numbers of "caring staff" who will be needed by 1975 to provide a skilled service for the old. A proper training system is possible, but basic to all kinds of residential work is specialising in various branches, professional status and accompanying shorter hours and recognition of professional needs for privacy, space and time for side interests like other people.

The three child care organisations—Residential Child Care Association, Association of Children's Officers and Association of Child Care Officers, a joint statement, have welcomed the but regretted that in some of their recommendations the committee did not go far enough. It is suggested that it was a pity, for instance, that they were not able to suggest a subject of salaries as an integral part of their terms of reference, and this cost is likely to be echoed by many both in the service and outside it, in connection of work and interest.

How well known are the facts concerning salary scales and hours of work in residential establishments of various kinds? It appears to be a general lack of awareness of conditions which in most occupations would lead to either industrial action or almost total lack of recruitment. The satisfaction which some residential workers feel in clearly observing how other beings have been assisted by their help has made them relatively less aware of the need and means for their preservation in their working lives, most of their counterparts in the community.

Their salaries and emoluments and conditions of work at present are controlled by a variety of negotiating bodies, from the Whitley Councils to the Joint Advisory Committee and this has led to a number of anomalies and historical accidents make comparisons of one set of conditions with another very difficult. One of the factors, however, with the exception of

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