

SOUTH INDIAN GILDS

(Illustrated)

WITH A NOTE FROM

The Late Dr. MARSHALL OF CAMBRIDGE

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DEDICATED BY KIND PERMISSION
TO
THE REVERED MEMORY
OF THE LATE
Dr. ALFRED MARSHALL
BY THE AUTHOR,
A HUMBLE STUDENT OF HIS WORKS.

A Note from the Late Dr. MARSHALL
of Cambridge

BALLIOL CROFT,
MADINGLEY ROAD,
CAMBRIDGE.

March 21, 1923.

DEAR SIR,

Very many years ago I took some little interest in the relations between Indian guilds and early English guilds. I never knew much about either side of this matter and I used to regard as a special form of caste, what I now gather might properly be regarded as a guild. But, I am deeply interested in the fact that the term 'guild' is appropriate for use in describing some forms of Indian caste. The very interesting problems thus raised are not within my range; and my little remaining strength is quickly fading away. . . . If it were necessary to grant you permission to dedicate your work to me, I should have great pleasure in doing so.

Yours very truly

Alfred Marshall

To

K. R. R. SASTRY, ESQ., M.A.

PREFACE

SINCE 1919, the present author has been collecting data of existing trade guilds in South India and particularly in the Districts of Tinnevely, Madura, Trichinopoly, Tanjore, South Arcot, Chingleput and Salem. Mr. (now Sir) Alfred Chatterton's remark (January, 1902) that he was not 'aware of the existence of trade guilds in the Presidency except at Madura,' will, it is hoped, be modified in the light of the data presented in this work. It is contended by this worker that India has preserved her distinct *personality* in the form of these guilds, which are solving partially and bound to solve fully many of the 'isms' of the West, if the suggested lines of resuscitation are considered in time by those in power.

To my Professor Radhakamal Mukherjea of the Lucknow University, I am ever in duty bound to pay homage for drawing my attention to the study of social problems.

When Dr. Marshall (now no more) wrote to me that 'his little remaining strength was quickly fading away,' I little thought that I could dedicate this work only in memory of that great thinker.

I have to thank the Editorial Board of the *Journal of the Indian Economic Society*, Bombay, where a portion of this work appeared in the course of 1922.

The Diocesan Press, Madras, deserves to be remembered for the unfailing courtesy of its staff and the neat get-up of the work.

K. R. R. SASTRY.

THE LAW COLLEGE,
MADRAS,
July 6, 1925.

APPENDIX

ENQUIRY

A. Is Trade organized in Gilds ?

- (1) Name of the gild.
- (2) When established ?
- (3) Are meetings held periodically ? If not, when last held ?
- (4) Where meetings are held ?
- (5) Business days and holidays ?
- (6) Any tradition associated with the gild ?

B. Constitution of the Gild

- (1) Is there a Working Committee ? If so, the composition of the Committee.
- (2) Is there a President or a *Mukhya* ? If so, his functions.
- (3) Rules and Regulations. Is there an amending power vested in any body ?
- (4) Powers of the Executive Committee. Can they levy fines for the infringement of prescribed rules ?
- (5) Are directors (if any) responsible for the conduct of the members ?
- (6) Business honesty. Whether the punchayat can ostracize or excommunicate moral offenders ? Whether adulteration is disapproved ?

C. Powers and Responsibilities of the Gilds

I. MUTUAL BENEFIT OF MEMBERS

- (1) Any *poduppanam* for the Kali or Kamakshi temple ? For religious feasts ?
- (2) Is there a holiday for the death of a fellow-worker ?
- (3) Do they help the poor and the destitute among them ?
- (4) Is any allowance made for sickness, out of work days, accidents and old age ?

II. INDUSTRIAL EFFICIENCY

(i) *Apprenticeship*

- (1) What system followed ?
- (2) Is the nature of the work determined by the demand ?
- (3) Is the number of apprentices determined by the nature of the craft ?
- (4) Are beginners paid ? Or only a small wage varying with their skill ?
- (5) Do the apprentices pay fees for learning the art ?
- (6) Is the training only confined to the family ?
- (7) Duration of the apprenticeship.

(ii) *High Quality of the Work*

- (1) Are rates of work settled by them ?
- (2) Can any one condemn the work done by fellowman ?
- (3) Can any one take an apprentice of a different class ?
- (4) Has the Committee only got the power of choosing the apprentice ? If so, can the Committee fine the artisan for wrong selection and thence dismiss the apprentice ?
- (5) Are skilful maistries selected to train boys ? Or do the boys learn only under their father or nearest relative irrespective of skill ?
- (6) Can the best men be induced to take more apprentices and train them ?
- (7) Are they fixing the hours of labour ?
- (8) Do children of artisans follow their hereditary trade ?
- (9) Are not children put to work too soon in order to add to the family savings ?
- (10) Are better tools and plant employed after demonstration ?
- (11) Any training of master workman ?

(iii) *Missions to study Industrial Processes Abroad*

- (1) Any migration inland for learning particular processes ?
- (2) Foreign missions, if any ?
- (3) Any schools of general training, as evening classes ?

III. COMMERCIAL ASPECT

- (1) Are they disposing of the wares of its members to their advantage by combination ?
- (2) Have they hitherto had recourse to strikes ?

(3) As in the case of lapidaries, goldsmiths and peasants—where there is no employer between the craftsmen and the public—do they regulate prices ?

(4) Any attempt to buy cheaper credit ?

(5) Any attempt to cater for foreign markets ?

(6) Business side. Is advertisement known ?

(7) Are there establishments of commercial agencies for the disposal of goods ?

(8) Do they deal with the commission to brokers as in Sind ?

D. Their Resuscitation

(1) Any suggestion of the headman as to their future ?

(2) Lines of resuscitation.