

## CHAPTER V.

### RELIGIOUS IDEAS IN CRAFTSMANSHIP.

THERE is another kind of provision in Eastern society tending to secure the maintenance of a standard in the crafts. I allude to the caste system, some aspects of which we must consider. Without here speaking of the origin and general significance of caste, it will suffice to say from our point of view that it represents a legal recognition of the natural division of society into functional groups. Theoretically, there are four castes only, the *Brahman*, or learned caste; the *Kshattriya*, or warriors and statesmen; the *Vaisya*, or traders, cultivators and craftsmen; and the *Sudra*, craftsmen and servants. Much subdivision and multiplication of castes has taken place, so that there are large numbers of widely distributed, but self-contained communities in India, whose members do not inter-marry or eat together. Caste is hereditary, that is to say, every man is, and must remain, of the caste into which he is born, and this is true even if he should leave the special occupation which is the traditional work of his caste. There is a certain connection between

## NOBLESSE OBLIGE.

the caste and the guild, that is to say, the trade guild consists usually of persons of the same ethnic and sectarian caste ; but when the same trade is pursued by men of different castes, as sometimes, but not often, happens, the guild may include all without reference to caste. The craftsman has always his caste, but is not always associated with others into a guild ; the guilds are mainly confined to the great polytechnic cities, while the village craftsman stands alone. Yet even he is not alone, for he is a member of a great fraternity, the caste ; and how much this means to him, it would be difficult to exaggerate. It means at once his pride and his duty (*dharma*). Caste is a system of *noblesse oblige* ; each man is born to his ordained work, through which alone he can spiritually progress. This religious conception of a man's trade or profession as the heaven-ordained work of his caste, may best, perhaps, be likened to the honour of mediæval knighthood. For the priest, learning ; for the king, excellence in kingcraft ; for the craftsman, skill and faithfulness ; for the servant, service. The way and the life are various, but progress is possible alone each in his own way : " Better is one's own duty even without distinction, than the duty of another, even with excellence ; in another's duty danger lies." And so it is that for each, culture comes in life itself, not as a thing separate from life.

## SVA-DHARMA.

Take the *Vaisya* for example ; he is to be a grazier or a trader : he must, says Manu :

“ Know the respective value of gems, of pearls, of coral, of metals, of woven stuffs, of perfume, and of condiments. He must be acquainted with the manner of sowing seeds, and of the good and bad qualities of fields, and he must perfectly know all measures and weights. Moreover, the excellence and defects of commodities, the advantages and disadvantages of different countries, the probable profit and loss on merchandise, and the means of properly rearing cattle. He must be acquainted with the proper wages of servants, with the various languages of men, with the manner of keeping goods, and the rules of purchase and sale. Let him exert himself to the utmost in order to increase his property in a righteous manner\*, and let him zealously give food to all created beings.”

Thus each man had not only an economic, but a spiritual status in society ; national righteousness is often described by saying that “ each man lived according to the *dharma* of his caste, down even to the dancing girl who excelled in the duties of her calling also.”

The doctrine of *Karma*, the strongest, perhaps, of all sanctions for morality, has something to do also

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\* Cf., the saying of the Tamil poetess *Auvvai*, “ *What is acquired without wrong-doing is wealth.*”

## KARMA.

with craftsmanship. A man's deeds follow him as a cart follows the ox ; whatsoever a man does will react upon himself, sooner or later, in this life or another ; as a man sows, so also shall he reap. These ideas are rather quaintly expressed in some of the technical books of the craftsmen. Here, for instance, are some verses from the *Mayamataya*, speaking of good and evil craftsmen, and their fate in this life and in lives to come :

“ Builders that build houses thus, after their death, will be re-born in a royal family ; painters, if they make images accordingly, in noble families ; cunning and skilful builders, though they should die, are friends of mine, for as they do, they become rulers and nobles, such is the old saying of the sages. One who knows amiss his craft, taking hire wrongfully, the which wife and children eat and enjoy, bringing misfortune on the owner of the house, that builder will fall into hell and suffer—these sayings are in *Mayamataya*, what remedy can there be then, O builders ? There are men who make images of Buddha, though knowing naught of their craft ; put no faith in what they say. Builders and painters both, who know naught of their craft, when hire is given according to the work accomplished, take that money and (leaving their work) rush home therewith ; though they get thousands, there is nothing even for a meal, they have not so

## GOOD AND EVIL CRAFTSMEN.

much as a piece of cloth to wear, that is the reward of past births, as you know ; dying, they fall into hell and suffer pain a hundred lacs of years ; if they escape they will possess a deformed body, and live in great distress ; when born as a man, it will be as a needy builder ; the painter's eyes will squint—look ye, what livelihood can there be for him ? Builders who know their business well will become *rajās* lacking nought, so also cunning painters are meet to become nobles. Builders and painters taking money falsely from other men, thereby grow poor, so ancient sages have declared and shewn ; doubt not this saying was in the *Mayamataya* book of sages lore ; therefore, let builders and painters study *Mayamataya* : misfortunes ensuing in this world and the next are told of in its stanzas, behold how excellently.”

A few more words may be said as to the craftsman's religious conception of his craft.\* I do not refer to the application of the craft to religious ends, but to the conception of its intrinsic religiousness. In “pagan” lands, there is no hard line drawn between the secular and the religious things in life ; religion is not so much a formula, as a way of looking at things, and so all the work of life may be a sacrament, may be done as it were unto the Lord.†

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\* *Appendix VI.*

† *In this connection, it is interesting to quote from so modern a work as Baha u'llah's 'Words of Paradise'*

## VISVAKARMA.

Hindu craftsmen in certain parts of India "worship" the implements of their labour at the Dasahrā festival. This Hindu custom has survived amongst some Muhammadan converts, e.g., the *thavais* of Northern India, who worship their tools at the *Id al-gitr*, making offerings of sweetmeats to them.† In Gwalior, in the modern State workshops, the workmen prepare models of trains, machinery, etc., on which they have been engaged and pay honour to these at the Dasahrā festival.

There is a God of the arts and crafts, whose name is Visvakarma, who is described as the 'lord of the arts, the carpenter of the gods, the fashioner of all ornaments, who formed the celestial chariots of the deities, on whose craft men subsist, and whom, a great and immortal god, they continually worship.' The Indian craftsmen, or, at least, the most

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*the following pronouncement: "It is incumbent on every one of you to engage in some employment such as arts, trades, and the like. We have made this, your occupation, identical with the worship of God, the True God." Compare with this conception of a man's life-work the following modern teaching of the Soto School of Buddhists in Japan: "Not only the building of a bridge or the provision of a ferry-boat is a work of charity, but so are all forms of benefiting life, commercial and industrial."—Rep. Third Int. Con. Religions, Oxford, 1908, I., pp. 324, 153.*

† Arnold, *Hindu Survivals among Indian Muslims*, Rep. III. Int. Con. Relig., 1908, I., 319.

## VISVAKARMA.

important guild or caste of craftsmen, claim to be descended from the five sons of this deity, of whom one was a blacksmith, the second a carpenter, the third a founder, the fourth a mason, and the fifth a goldsmith ; and the followers of these crafts in Southern India form still one compact community.

We find some curious and suggestive mystical ideas, not without practical applications, associated with the personality of the craftsman. His work is regarded rather as a sacred mystery, as a sacrament, than as a secular "trade." In illustration of this I quote an extract from the *Srimahavajrabhairavatantra*, translated from the German version of Grünwedel\* :

"The painter must be a good man, no sluggard, not given to anger, holy, learned, self-controlled, devout and charitable, free from avarice—such should be his character. The hand of such a painter may paint on Sura-cloth. Would he attain to success, then enters the gift of the Sura into him. He should draw his design in secrecy, after having laid the cloth quite flat. He may paint if besides the painter only a *sadhaka* be present, but not if a man of the world be looking on."†

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\* " *Mythologie des Buddhismus,*" p. 102.

† *Interesting, though unfortunately abbreviated, details of the ritual preparation of the painter or imager for his work are given by Foucher, 'L'Iconographie Bouddhique de l'Inde,' II., pp. 7-14.*

## VISVAKARMA.

The Indian craftsman conceives of his art, not as the accumulated skill of ages, but as originating in the divine skill of *Visvakarma*, and revealed by him. Beauty, rhythm, proportion, idea have an absolute existence on an ideal plane, where all who seek may find. The reality of things exists in the mind, not in the detail of their appearance to the eye. Their inward inspiration upon which the Indian artist is taught to rely, appearing like the still small voice of a god, that god was conceived of as *Visvakarma*.† He may be thought of as that part of divinity which is conditioned by a special relation to artistic expression ; or in another way, as the sum total of consciousness, the group soul of the individual craftsmen of all times and places. Thus, king *Duttha Gāmanī* having enquired of a master bricklayer in what form he proposed to build the monument required, it is stated that “at that instant *Visvakarma* inspired him. The bricklayer, filling a golden dish with water, and taking some water in the palm of his hand, dashed it against the water in the dish ; a great globule, like a ball of crystal, rose to the surface ; and he said, ‘ I will construct it in this form.’ ” It is added that the delighted *rāja* bestowed upon him a suit of clothes

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*The subject, however, belongs rather to the domains of art-philosophy and mysticism than to that of the craftsman, socially considered. † Cf., Appendix VI.*



## RHYTHMIC ARCHITECTURE.

worth a thousand pieces, a splendid pair of slippers, and twelve thousand pieces of money.\*

All this is an expression of a religious conception of life, and we see the working of such ideas in actual practice. A few years ago a reproduction was made of a room in a palace belonging to the Mahārāja of Bhavnagar. The head carpenter was ordered to follow the ancient rules of his craft. As the work progressed, he observed that the finger of God was pointing the way, and that accordingly mistakes were impossible. In support of this, he quoted the ancient rules of his craft.

“The breadth of the room should be divided into twenty-four parts, of which fourteen in the middle and two at each end should be left blank, while the remaining two portions should each form windows or *jalis*. The space between the plinth and upper floor should be divided into nine parts, of which one should be taken up by the base of the pillar, six parts by the column, one by the capital, and one by the beam over it. He then added that should any departure be made from these rules, the ruin of the architect and death of the owner were sure to follow.”†

The science of house building, says the *Brihat Samhita*, “has come down to us from the *Rishis* (sages), who obtained it from *Brahma*.”

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\* *Mahavamsa*, Ch. XXX.

† Sir George Watt, “*Indian Art at Delhi*.”

## A CRAFT RITUAL.

Can we wonder that a beautiful and dignified architecture is wrought in such a wise, and can such conceptions fail to produce serenity and dignity in life itself? Under such conditions, the craftsman is not an individual expressing individual whims, but a part of the universe, giving expression to ideals of eternal beauty and unchanging laws, even as do the trees and flowers whose natural and less ordered beauty is no less God-given. The old-fashioned Eastern craftsman speaks with more than a touch of scorn of those who "draw after their own vain imagining," and there is much to justify his view.

Finally, I give an account of the ceremony of painting the eyes of an image, as performed in Ceylon as illustrating a gorgeous and beautiful episode in the craftsman's life, and showing him in the performance of priestly functions. I omit many details, more fully related in my "Mediæval Sinhalese Art." The ceremony, being the concluding episode in the construction or redecoration of a temple, often occupying several years, and an occasion graced by the presence of the patron of the work, in many cases the king himself, was an occasion of general rejoicing and festivity. Crowds of men and women from neighbouring villages, dressed in white cloths, and bringing offerings of arecanut flowers, money, or other gifts to offer to

## A CRAFT RITUAL

the new image, or to the artists, found accommodation in temporary booths. In other booths were those who sold provisions. A *bana maduva*, or preaching hall, would be erected, and there would be much reading of *sutras* or Buddhist sermons. There would be abundance of white flags, music and dancing, gossip and edification.

Sometimes there was no royal patron, but the *vihāra* was erected by the subscriptions and assistance of the villagers themselves, who dedicated, with royal permission, small parcels of land for its maintenance. In one such case we read that the eager villagers were in such a hurry for their consecration festival, that they borrowed images from another temple for the occasion, before their own were ready. But let us suppose the king had ordered the temple to be erected by the state craftsmen of the court and district. The night before the ceremony the king and officers of the court, and often the ladies of the royal household, arrived, and found accommodation in special pavilions.

Ceremonies began with the recitation of the *Kosala Bimba Varnanava*, a legend of the making of a sandal-wood image of Buddha in his own time. Upon this followed the elaborate placing of eighty earthen pots, with offerings to Brahma and Vishnu, and the erection of altars to the regents of the

## IN CEYLON.

eight points of the compass, with suitable offerings. Altars were also erected for the guardians of the door, whose images in ivory or wood had already been set on the jambs of the door of the image house, and an altar to the guardian of the site, the *genius loci*. These guardians of the temple are conceived of as pure and sweet natural powers, protectors of the shrine and guardians of the spiritual atmosphere about it. Within the temple an altar was erected to Gana Deviyō, and a rag figure prepared, afterwards to serve as a scapegoat to receive the first "glance" of the newly-painted eyes. All these arrangements were made by youths of the craftsman's caste, dressed as Brahmans. Another man, wearing a red dress, made the offerings, recited mantrams, and circumambulated the temple sun-wise. Tom-tomming and other music was kept up continuously.

The final ceremony took place at five a.m., in memory of Buddha's attainment of enlightenment at that hour so long ago in Kosala. The eyes of the image were painted by the king himself, or, in his absence, by the foreman craftsman in royal costume. The painter, accompanied by a second man, also robed, but less elaborately, and both with veiled heads, entered the temple, all others standing aloof. The second man carried the brushes, black paint, and a mirror. The latter was held

## A CRAFT RITUAL

before the image to receive its "glance." A white cloth was spread by the village washerman for the painters to walk on as they passed from door to image. While the painter put in the eyes, or, in some cases, separate sclerotics of crystal or other material were affixed, the second man recited Sanskrit charms, and held up the mirror. The ceremony was repeated for each image of Buddha or of the gods. Immediately on its completion the painter veiled his eyes, and thus blindfolded was led out and away to a vessel of water already prepared. Here he purified himself by bathing his head, repeating the Indian formula of water-consecration, "Hail, O ye Ganges, Godāvārī, Sarasvatī, Narmadā, Indus, and Kāverī, come and hallow this water." Then the painter cut the water with his sword, and the vessel was shattered. The painting of the eyes was deemed to be so sacramental, so great a mystery, that such purifications were needed to ensure immunity from evil that might fall upon the presumptuous mortal thus establishing a link 'twixt heaven and earth. Returning to the vihāra, the doors were opened. By this time the grey dawn had passed into day, and the sun was up. The patron and the foreman stood together on the threshold facing the people. The craftsman, repeating Sanskrit charms, sprinkled the people with water. The patron and the people then made

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offerings to the temple and to the craftsmen. The offerings of money, cloths, etc., made during a certain number of days, were set apart as perquisites of the craftsmen, in addition to the special remunerations already agreed upon, for in the case of important work, such as temple building, making of images, etc., payments in goods or money were agreed upon, in addition to the mere provision of sustenance during the progress of the work.

After such offerings, the people entered the temple to lay flowers on the altar and admire the paintings, with cries of *Sadhu*. After the festival had lasted several days, the people and craftsmen dispersed to their homes, the latter completing their purification by a *pirit* service—the only direct part in the proceedings taken by Buddhist priests. Throughout the rest of the ceremony all priestly offices had been performed by the craftsmen themselves, acting as Brāhman priests. The whole ceremony, though, here described in Ceylon, is essentially Hindu in character, and is typical of the sacerdotal functions of the Kammālar craftsmen. It is of necessity, from the nature of their work in making or repairing images, moreover, that the right of entry, otherwise belonging only to Brahmans, should be given to the craftsmen also. In some parts of Southern India they claim, and occasionally possess, a social prestige equal to that

## RELIGIOUS ENDOWMENTS.

of Brāhmans. Otherwise, they would be classed as “good Sūdras,” whose touch does not defile. It is said in Manu : “The hand of a craftsman engaged in his art is always ceremonially pure.”

It is recorded in a Sinhalese grant of the early twentieth century that after such a ceremony as that described, the king (the last Kandyan king) appointed ecclesiastes for the temple service, and granted lands for its support, offering a palm leaf charter to the temple by laying it upon the altar.

Of the two manors dedicated, the king said that one was his mother's, and she joined in the offering. Then the royal group walked round the temple, and the king, seeing a bare space of rock, ordered the charter to be cut on the stone, and this was done; and it is there still. About two months later the king and his mother and sister visited the vihāra again, and the vizier read aloud the stone inscription, which was compared by the king with the original charter, in the presence of the chief priests, and praising the stone-cutters, he ordered them to be paid from the treasury.

And so in the old days religious architecture was the stronghold and foundation of the arts and crafts, and both together were fostered by successive kings, of whom it is said in the chronicle that they “were one with the religion and the people”; but what was all that to the Georgian Christian

## THEN AND NOW.

Governor? What did he care for the religion, the music, or the art of a people so utterly alien to himself in culture and traditions? The royal craftsman found himself unsupported and unappreciated; and now, like so many other descendants of the Indian craftsmen, he is merely an agriculturist, perhaps even works on a tea estate, or he lives only to make brass trays and other pretty toys for passing tourists whose lives and manners he does not understand, and for whom, as he well knows by experience, any bungling is good enough, since they know nought of good or bad craftsmanship even in their own land, and still less in his.

And now, instead of the king going in the grey dawn with his mother and sister to be present at the consecration of a temple built by his minister and vizier, we see—the Governor, a mere five years' visitor, ignorant even of the people's language, much more so of their traditions and their ideals, as he goes with his English wife and her fashionable lady friends to open a bazaar in aid of the local missionary school for the daughters of Kandyan chiefs. Instead of the self-contained and independent village community, with its cultivated and forest lands, and its communal cultivation, there are the tea and rubber estates, and planters clamouring for a hut tax to induce the villager to work for them at



## CIVILISATION.

profitable rates,—rates profitable, that is, to the canny shareholder away in England and Scotland ; instead of the king's palace, we see the usual type of Government building, even uglier than in England, and a good deal more out of place ; instead of the king's craftsmen, we see the government clerks, slaving away for a ten cents bonus for every error detected in somebody's accounts. O Sacred Efficiency, what things are done in thy name !

#### APPENDIX IV.

##### E. B. HAVELL ON CRAFTSMANSHIP AND CULTURE.

“THE important part which craftsmen, more especially Oriental craftsmen, have always played in the world’s history as missionaries of civilisation, culture, and religion, is not generally realised by bookmen. Even at the present day the Indian craftsman, deeply versed in his *Silpa Sastras*, learned in folk-lore and in national epic literature, is, though excluded from Indian universities—or, rather, on that account—far more highly cultured, intellectually and spiritually, than the average Indian graduate. In mediæval times the craftsman’s intellectual influence, being creative and not merely assimilative, was at least as great as that of the priest and bookman.”\*

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\* E. B. Havell, “*Indian Sculpture and Painting*,”  
p. 183.

## APPENDIX V.

### E. B. HAVELL ON THE OFFICIAL SUPPRESSION OF INDIAN CRAFTSMANSHIP AT THE PRESENT DAY.

INDIA still possesses a large body of trained craftsmen who practise the art of building on similar principles and produce similar results to those of the great mediæval builders of Europe. They enter no University, for Indian Universities were founded for supplying material for the official machinery, and make no provision for either art or religion. But their ancestors built the Taj, the shrines of Mount Abu, and countless other masterpieces ; they constructed the Mogul palaces, public offices, irrigation works, and everything of practical utility that the art of building could provide.

“ How does our departmentalism provide for these needs to-day ? A certain number of young men with no training either in art or in craft, learn by heart certain formularies for calculating the maximum weight which an iron girder will bear, the smallest dimensions to which a wall can be reduced without collapsing, the cheapest rate at which a building can be constructed so as to bring it within the annual departmental budget. When a department has

## OFFICIAL SUPPRESSION

settled on paper the plan of the building it wants, one of these engineers with an archæological turn of mind puts on to it a "Gothic" or "Classic" front, according to departmental taste, and provides a certain scale of departmental decoration according to departmental rank and dignity. Then the hereditary Indian craftsman whose family has practised the art of building for untold centuries is brought in to learn the wisdom of the West by copying the departmental paper patterns. How bad the art becomes is, perhaps, difficult to be understood by those to whom an archæological solecism is more offensive than an artistic eyesore; but it is easy to explain how wasteful and extravagant the system really is. To build one of the latest and perhaps the best of these archæological structures in Calcutta, a large number of Indian caste-builders were employed. Many of them were both artists and craftsmen—they could design, build, and carve. The structural design had been settled for them departmentally, so they had no concern with that. There was also a considerable amount of ornament to be carved, but that also had been designed for them in proper departmental style, which happened to be Italian Renaissance, so they were not allowed to attempt that. Other men who had been trained in the European archæological style in Bombay were brought over to copy mechanically the paper pat-

## OF INDIAN CRAFTSMEN.

terns prepared for them. These men were paid two rupees a day each. Now there are at the present time in the Orissa district, not far from Calcutta, and famous for its splendid native architecture, a considerable number of masons and builders who, within the last twenty years, have designed and carried out architectural decoration comparable with that of our finest mediæval building in Europe, and infinitely more beautiful than the imitation Renaissance ornament of the building I have referred to. The average earning of these men is four annas a day, or one-eighth of the wages paid for executing the departmental decoration. They and their fellow-artists all over India are constantly in want of work, for departmentalism has no need of their services. Indian art cries out for bread ; we give it museums, exhibitions, and archæology.”\*

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\* *E. B. Havell, Nineteenth Century, June, 1907.*

## APPENDIX VI.

### LAFCADIO HEARN ON CRAFT GODS IN CEYLON.

“**A**NOTHER development of ancestor worship—the cult of gods presiding over crafts and callings—deserves special study. Unfortunately, we are as yet little informed upon the subject. Anciently this worship must have been more definitely ordered and maintained than it is now. Occupations were hereditary; artizans were grouped into guilds—perhaps one might even say castes—and each guild or caste then probably had its patron deity. In some cases the craft-gods may have been ancestors of Japanese craftsmen; in other cases they were perhaps of Korean or Chinese origin, ancestral gods of immigrant artizans, who brought their cults with them to Japan. Not much is known about them. But it is tolerably safe to assume that most, if not all of the guilds, were at one time religiously organised, and that apprentices were adopted not only in a craft, but into a cult. There were corporations of weavers, potters, carpenters, arrow-makers, bow-makers, smiths, boat-builders and other tradesmen; and the past

## CRAFT GODS IN JAPAN.

religious organizations of these is suggested by the fact that certain occupations assume a religious character even to-day. For example, the carpenter still builds according to Shinto tradition: he dons a priestly costume at a certain stage of his work, performs rites, and chants invocations, and places the new house under the protection of the gods. But the occupation of the swordsmith was in old days the most sacred of the crafts: he worked in priestly garb, and practised Shinto rites of purification while engaged in the making of a good blade. Before his smithy was then suspended the rope of rice straw (*shime nawa*), which is the oldest symbol of Shinto; none even of his family might enter there, or speak to him; and he ate only of food cooked with holy fire.”\*

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\* LAFADIO HEARN, “*Japan*,” 1905, pp. 138-139.

See also, for religious ceremonies performed by craftsmen, “*Mediæval Sinhalese Art*.”

## APPENDIX VII.

### LAFCADIO HEARN ON CRAFT GUILDS IN JAPAN.

“ IN feudal times . . . all craftsmen and all labourers formed guilds and companies ; and the discipline maintained by those guilds or companies prohibited competition as undertaken for purely personal advantage. Similar, or nearly similar forms of organization are maintained by artizans and labourers to-day ; and the relation of any outside employer to skilled labour is regulated by the guild or company in the old communistic manner. Let us suppose, for instance, that you wish to have a good house built. For that undertaking, you will have to deal with a very intelligent class of skilled labour, for the Japanese house-carpenter may be ranked with the artist almost as much as with the artizan. You may apply to a building company, but, as a general rule, you will do better by applying to a master-carpenter, who combines in himself the functions of architect, contractor, and builder. In any event, you cannot select and hire workmen ; guild regulations forbid.



## GUILDS IN JAPAN.

You can only make your contract ; and the master-carpenter, when his plans have been approved, will undertake all the rest—purchase and transport of material, hire of carpenters, plasterers, tilers, mat-makers, screen-fitters, brass-workers, stone-cutters, locksmiths and glaziers. For each master-carpenter represents much more than his own craft-guild : he has his clients in every trade related to house-building and house-furnishing, and you must not dream of trying to interfere with his claims and privileges. He builds your house according to contract ; but that is only the beginning of the relation. You have really made with him an agreement which you must not break, without good and sufficient reason, for the rest of your life. Whatever afterwards may happen to any part of your house—walls, floor, ceiling, roof, foundation—you must arrange for repairs with him, never with anybody else. Should the roof leak, for instance, you must not send for the nearest tiler or tinsmith ; if the plaster cracks, you must not send for a plasterer. The man who built your house holds himself responsible for its condition, and he is jealous of that responsibility : none but he has the right to send for the plasterer, the roofer, the tinsmith. If you interfere with that right, you may have some unpleasant surprises. If you make appeal to the law against that right, you will find that you can

## GUILDS IN JAPAN.

get no plasterer, carpenter, tiler or plasterer to work for you on any terms. Compromise is always possible, but the guilds will resent a needless appeal to the law. And after all, these craft-guilds are usually faithful performers, and well worth conciliating . . . Apprentices bound to a master-workman, were boarded, lodged, clothed, and even educated by their patron, with whom they might hope to pass the rest of their lives. But they were not paid wages until they had learnt the business or trade of their employer, and were fully capable of managing a business or workshop of their own. . . . These paternal and filial relations between employer and employed have helped to make life pleasant and labour cheerful; and the quality of all industrial production must suffer much when they disappear.”\*

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\* LAFCADIO HEARN, “*Japan, an Interpretation,*” pp. 440-445.

*Note.—It is stated in the “Indian Trade Journal” for Feb. 19, 1907, that the Japanese, in preparing to compete with European nations for commercial prosperity, are showing a distinct reversion to former ways and methods. Amongst other things, steps were being taken to reorganise the old Trade Guilds. The “Trade Journal” comments: “As the various guilds grow in power and influence they will be able to dictate to European or American traders, unless the latter also enter into combination.”*

## APPENDIX VIII.

### SER MARCO POLO ON CRAFT GUILDS IN CHINA.

[T is stated in Yule's Marco Polo (1903, 3rd ed., II., 186), that in the great city of Kinsay there were twelve guilds of the different crafts. "The document aforesaid [description of the great city of Kinsay] also went on to state that there were in this city twelve guilds of the different crafts, and that each guild had 12,000 houses in the occupation of its workmen. Each of these houses contains at least twelve men, whilst some contain 20 and some 40—not that all these are masters, but inclusive of the journeymen who work under the masters. And yet all these craftsmen had full occupation, for many other cities of the kingdom are supplied from this city with what they require.

"The document aforesaid also stated that the number and wealth of the merchants, and the amount of goods that passed through their hands, was so enormous that no man could form a just estimate thereof. And I should have told you with regard to those masters of the different crafts who are at the head of such houses as I have mentioned, that neither they nor their wives ever touch a piece

## CRAFT GUILDS IN CHINA.

of work with their own hands, but live as nicely and delicately as if they were kings and queens. The wives, indeed, are most dainty and angelical creatures! Moreover, it was an ordinance laid down by the king that every man should follow his father's business, and no other, no matter if he possessed 100,000 beyants." It is also recorded that there were "officers appointed by the king to decide differences arising between merchants or other inhabitants of the quarter."

It is interesting to remark the following extract from Marco Polo's will: "I also bequeath . . . four *lire* to every guild or fraternity of which I am a member."

Yule's note on this is as follows :

"The word rendered *Guilds* is '*Scholarium*.' The crafts at Venice were united in corporations called *Fragliae*, or *Scholae*, each of which had its statutes, its head, called the *gastald*, and its place of meeting, under the patronage of some saint. These acted as societies of mutual aid, gave dowries to poor girls, caused masses to be celebrated for deceased members, joined in public religious processions, etc., nor could any craft be exercised except by members of such a guild." [*Roman*, I, 370.]

*Yule's Marco Polo*, ed. 3, p. 72.

## APPENDIX IX.

### BHIKKU P. C. JINAVARAVAMSA ON CRAFTSMEN OF SIAM.

A FASCINATING account of Siamese craftsmen and their social organization is given by Bhikku P. C. Jinavaravamsa, in the *Ceylon National Review* for July, 1907. There were ten groups of artists and craftsmen organised under one State Department of Art and Craft. The ten groups consisted, briefly, of builders, wood-carvers (architectural), wood-carvers (small work), painters, imagers, gilders, stucco-workers, turners, repoussers, and goldsmiths. Twenty-eight other departments were separately constituted under chiefs or under one of the ten main departments according to the king's wishes. Amongst these were founders, puppet makers, tailors, goldsmiths, enamellers, tanners, inlayers with mother of pearl, makers of glazed pottery and tiles, stone-carvers, etc.

“Just as in mediæval Europe the art of decorative painting was taught in the ecclesiastical buildings ; so here drawing and painting are taught in Buddhist temples ; some branches are also taught in palaces.

“There is no such thing as a regular course of lessons or organized training among the different

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crafts. Examples are given by the master for the pupil to 'look at' and 'copy.' The master seems to criticise the pupil's work rather than direct him, and the pupil's endeavour is to imitate the master; this is the nature of the training. Apprentices are generally the master's own children or those of relatives or even neighbours; the pupils crowd round the work on which the master is engaged, and are told to 'watch' and to 'try to do the same,' and are employed in grinding and mixing colours and paints, and also help in handling the work and in any other labour connected with it. In this way I have learnt to do many things from my childhood.

"The only real *school* of arts and crafts is the residence of the head of the Department of Ten Crafts, where all kinds of work are almost always going on, and, in cases of working against time, by night as well as by day. Of course, only such kinds of work as are portable are done here, or work which can be done in sections and afterwards put together *in situ*, such as a bedstead.

"When any of the apprentices show aptitude for any particular craft, he is set to do the simplest work first, such as painting the ground, filling up spaces, washing in the sky and water, and finally tracing the outline of figures and other objects in the picture; illumination and shading are the last stage."

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The following extracts are given to show the characteristic methods of the Oriental craftsman in Siam :

“ In the case of water colour painting on a plaster surface, the surface is first sized with a decoction of tamarind seeds and leaves in two or three coats ; the object of this is to neutralize the alkali and to make the surface firm and non-absorbent.

“ The subject being decided upon (generally a *jātaka*, or the *Rāmāyana*, or some other popular legend), the master painter takes a selected piece of bamboo charcoal (or even a rough piece of charred wood), and proceeds to mark out by zigzag lines the divisions between successive scenes. Within the spaces thus marked out he next makes a rough sketch of the subject, and gradually develops it into a detailed drawing. Then he, or his best pupils, outline the figures or design in some dark colour, often the sediment of the water in which brushes are washed, with a lining-in brush, inserting all detail. The figures are then filled in with white paint, and the ground painted in with appropriate colours representing earth, sky or water. The figures are then finished in colour and detail added in red, or black, or gold. . . . The painter’s tools consist merely of some half-a-dozen brushes made of the hair of cow’s ears, bound in a crow or goose quill, two or three flat brushes made of bark, and

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a 'foot-rule' generally one cubit long, and sometimes divided into inches by mere saw-cuts.

"If the painting be of the nature of a regular pattern or consist of repeated figures, the artist resorts to perforated paper patterns. A thick native-made black paper is used, pieces being joined together if one is not large enough. The designer roughly sketches the pattern on it with a soft limestone pencil (greyish-white or light-yellow) cut to the required size and pointed at both ends. If it is necessary to rub out any lines, the artist uses his finger, moistened in the mouth, but if a large area is to be erased, a piece of the same paper, dipped in water, is used. When the design is thus completed, it is lined in in white with a fine brush; corrections can be made in black.

"The stencil thus made is placed on a cushion and closely pierced or pricked along the design with a needle. It is then ready for use. It is laid on the surface to be decorated, and which has been prepared, and powdered chalk (in a cloth bag of loose texture) is rubbed or dusted over it, so that the pattern appears on the prepared surface as a series of faint dotted lines.

"A special craft connected with painting is the art of making transparent pictures for what Europeans call, though incorrectly, 'shadow pantomime.' This is a show of moving transparent



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pictures over a screen illuminated by a strong bonfire behind. The scenes represent the favourite Indian drama of Rāmāyana, and are accompanied by music and intoned recitation, and sometimes singing. The method of preparation of these pictures is very interesting. A cowhide is scraped to the required thinness (generally about 1-16 inch), evenly stretched and allowed to dry hard. It is then roughly shaped—oval for a group and long rectangular for a standing figure—the pieces measuring generally from 2½ to 5 feet in height or diameter. A design is drawn on native-made black paper, perforated and transferred as already described, and then outlined in black upon the hide. Flame *kanaka* or other appropriate ornaments or flowers or trees are introduced to connect together the different pieces or projecting parts of a figure, so that when the ground is cut away the hide is held together by these connections and will also hang evenly without buckling. Sky or other open space is represented by small even patterns of a very open character with inconspicuous connections.

“The hide, after cutting in this way, is appropriately coloured with fast bright dyes which penetrate the leather, and are fixed by lime-juice or native vinegar, which help also to brighten the colour.

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“ The greatest difficulty is to estimate how much light will, as they say, ‘ eat up ’ the figure ; for the appearance of the figure is altered by the light from behind, some colours being weakened and others intensified. If, for instance, a human figure is drawn (generally dark) in good proportion, with dress and ornament and the colour of hair and skin correctly represented, the picture will appear badly proportioned when lit up. The artist must be a man of great experience, and the worst of it is that he does not seem able to explain his art nor to set forth in black and white the proportion of this or that colour which will absorb or transmit the light most. It is amusing to see young artists’ attempts at making these apparently simple transparent pictures, with thick white paper beautifully illuminated, but turning out a complete failure when exhibited. The pictures are held up before the screen by four pieces of split bamboo just strong enough for the purpose, and fastened to the picture, two in front and two behind, the lower ends serving as handles. The hide is flexible, so that it can be rolled up round the two sticks. The performer must be himself a trained dramatic artist and dancer to music. He acts the scene, as he would on the stage, with every part of his body except the two arms, engaged in holding up the picture. He seems to live in the picture, and is absorbed in the

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representation he is trying to produce. It is most amusing to see the artist's attitude and observe the very intense expression of his face as he performs and watches the motion of his picture. The same remarks apply to the puppet-show man described below.

“ The puppet-shows also deserve some mention. The construction of moving figures and puppets is carried to a considerable degree of perfection. Beautiful little figures, 6 inches to 18 inches high, representing the characters of the Indian drama of Rāmāyana, are made for exhibition at royal entertainments. They are perfect pieces of mechanism ; their very fingers can be moved and made to grasp an object, and they can be made to assume postures expressive of any action or emotion described in poetry. This is done by pulling strings which hang down within the clothing, or within a small tube attached to the lower part of the figure, with a ring or loop attached to the end of each, for inserting the fingers of the showman. The movements are perfectly timed to the music and recitation or singing.

“ One cannot help being charmed by these lilliputs, whose dresses are so gorgeous and jewelled with the minutest detail. Little embroidered jackets and other pieces of dress, representing the

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magnificent robes of a Deva or Yakkha, are complete in the smallest particulars. The miniature jewels are sometimes made of real gold and gems.

“ Such a thing as this I believe to be only possible when a man has almost unlimited means, both in time and money, to devote to his hobby for months (as was the case with the late and last so-called ‘second king,’ whose puppet-show was the most famous ever called into existence), to complete the work.

“ In their artistic taste the Siamese seem to be guided by an instinctive appreciation of beauty, rather than a self-conscious striving after it. They understand form, and especially curves and their combinations, very well, and use them to advantage. They understand well the filling of space with appropriate ornament, so that odd or awkward spaces become restful and even, or form a contrast to the more ornamental part of the work, making it stand out clearly, fulfilling the function of light and shade in modern work. Composition, or the proper disposition of spaces is carefully studied—if the criticism one constantly hears passed upon this or the other work may be called study. The Siamese artists show accurate judgment of size and distance, light and level; men with such accurate judgment are called *ta jang*, *i.e.*, eye of an expert.

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“An excellent artist is referred to as *nakleng* (hobbyist, connoisseur, ‘well-trained’), and even when the term is applied in the case of bad habits, as to a connoisseur of good wines or to a gourmet, it is a complimentary term. It is also applied to collectors in general. It is, however, understood to imply a morally weak man, one who gives way to passion, but decidedly a jolly good fellow. A rowdy or immoral man, or one noted for quarrels, is also called *nakleng*, in a bad sense.” \*

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\* “*Ceylon National Review*,” No. 4, 1907.