

India's Traditional Caste System

India's castes are ancient, and create social levels into which each person is _____. That caste determines your _____ and your _____ status.

People born into the **Brahmin** caste supposedly have great purity, _____, and faith. There are very few Brahmins, and they are _____ and _____.

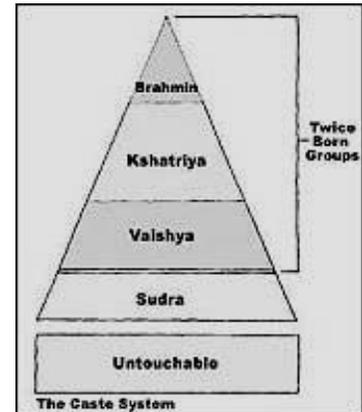
Those born into **Kshatriya** are supposedly resourceful, _____, generous, and noble _____. The _____ and _____ traditionally came from this caste.

_____ and _____ are the traditional work of the **Vaishya** caste. Mohandas _____ was born into the Vaishya caste.

The _____ three caste groups have "_____ _____" ceremonies for the _____. Traditionally, Brahmin boys must be 8, Kshatriyas 11, and Vaishyas 12. A "sacred _____" is tied over the left shoulder, symbolizing being "twice born." (It is replaced yearly.) After they ceremony, they can learn the Sanskrit _____, _____ the Vedas, and perform religious _____.

The **Sudras** are the _____ caste. They do _____ qualify for being "twice born." Traditionally, they are _____ allowed to learn Sanskrit or to study the Vedas. The work of the Sudra is to _____ the twice-born. They are _____, making things the higher castes need. And they are _____ workers, taking care of crops and animals for the higher castes. Sudras also include _____ jobs such as _____, gardeners, and _____ workers.

The ideas of the caste system are based in the _____ belief of _____. According to this belief, people earn their birth _____.



status, based on how they lived their _____ life. If you are born into a _____ caste, you must _____ it and _____ in that caste so you can _____ the right to be reincarnated into a _____ caste.

In all castes, careers are traditionally _____ from your parents. If your parents are florists, you will _____ a florist, _____ a florist, and _____ your children to be florists. That has changed in _____ times. Now, many children follow their parents' profession. But it is _____ required.

There is one group which does _____ even _____ a caste. They are the "_____." (This term is impolite in modern India.) Mahatma Gandhi called them "Harijans," which means "children of God." Today, they are usually called _____, which means "downtrodden" or "oppressed." Traditionally, **Dalits** do jobs that are _____ for caste members to do, such as tanning _____ and making leather goods, preparing people's _____ for cremation and guarding the funeral pyres, collecting and discarding of _____ (like the sacred cattle that wander Indian villages), and unclogging _____ systems. "Untouchability" was made _____ in India in 1950. But _____ still exists. In many places – especially _____ – Dalits are not allowed to draw water from common wells or pump, separate utensils are used to serve them in _____ and food stands, they are not allowed into the _____, and Dalit students are made to sit at the _____ of the classroom. The best places for Dalits are often the _____, where family background is not so _____ and personal _____ is often respected more than caste.

But even in urban areas, there are often _____ based on caste. The last remains of a culture's old prejudices often show up in its _____ traditions. And Indians still consider _____ important in marriage.

