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.