

## CHAPTER 34

# Guilds in Ancient India

(Antiquity and Various Stages in the Development of  
Guilds upto AD 300)

*Kiran Kumar Thaplyal*

People following the same occupations and crafts, residing at one place, cooperated with each other and formed guilds. No connected or systematic account of guilds in their earlier stages is available. The Harappan civilization<sup>1</sup> had fairly developed arts and crafts, trade and commerce, but in view of lack of documentary evidence, our knowledge of the existence of guild organizations of that period perforce remains nebulous.

Scholars are divided on the issue of whether the guild system was in existence in the early Vedic period. Some consider Vedic society sufficiently advanced to warrant the existence of economic organizations,<sup>2</sup> and take terms like *śrenī*, *pūga*, *gana*, *vrāta* in Vedic literature as indicative of guild organization and *śreshthī* therein as president of a guild. Others<sup>3</sup> consider early Vedic society as rural with nomadism still in vogue, and opine that the Aryans, preoccupied with war as they were, could not produce surplus foodgrains, so vital for enabling craftsmen to devote their whole time in the pursuit of crafts. They also hold that neither terms like *śrenī* and *pūga* in Vedic literature denote guild, nor *śreshthī*, 'guild president'.

However, division of labour under the *varṇa* system was conducive to the emergence of guild organization. Agriculture, cattle farming and trade, the three occupations of the Vaiśyas, in course of time, developed as separate groups. The Śūdras, besides serving other *varṇas*, took up such menial crafts as were looked down upon by the higher *varṇas*, while some non-Aryans, mostly incorporated into the Śūdra *varṇa* of the Brahmanical society, too, came to form separate economic groups.

The emergence of sizable kingdoms, from c. 6th century BC, led to the interlinking of far-flung areas and must have facilitated procurement of raw materials from, and sale of finished goods in distant regions. The pooling of resources and managerial skills could be achieved better by traders and craftsmen organized into guilds. The

growth of towns and cities provided better prospects to artisans and made a number of village artisans migrate to cities. The use of iron became widespread. Iron tools and implements would have been more effective in clearing jungles for agricultural land and ploughing fields. This would have helped in the production of grain in surplus, enabling more artisans to act as whole-time craftsmen,<sup>4</sup> receiving food in lieu of artifacts manufactured by them. The introduction of writing helped in the codification of laws and in keeping accounts while the emergence of money-economy in about the same age gave a fillip to the growth of trade and industry, making it more mobile. These factors were all conducive to the development of guilds.

Buddhism and Jainism, that emerged in the 6th century BC, were more egalitarian than Brahmanism and provided a better environment for the growth of guilds.<sup>5</sup> Material wealth and animals were sacrificed in the Brahmanical *yajñas*. The Buddhists and Jainas did not perform such *yajñas*. Thus, material wealth and animals were saved and made available for trade and commerce.<sup>6</sup> The Buddhists and Jainas would not have been inhibited by fear of pollution in mixing and taking food with people of lower *varṇas* and would have felt less inconvenience in conducting long-distance trade. As shown below, the hereditary nature of professions and the system of apprenticeship also proved helpful in the development of guilds.

A commentary<sup>7</sup> on a passage of the *Bṛihadāranyaka Upanishad*<sup>8</sup> (c. 600 BC) says that Brahmā, on the analogy of the *varṇa* system of men, created gods variously of Brāhmaṇa, Kshatriya and Vaiśya *varṇas* and that the last-mentioned ones were known as *gaṇasah* as they acquired wealth by co-operation. The commentary itself is of a later (9th century) period and *gaṇasah* therein is mentioned with reference to gods, not men. Nevertheless, it may have been the basis for the existence of economic guilds in the time of the composition of the Upanishad (c. 6th century BC) as there are several pieces of evidence regarding the existence of guilds in that period.

The *Gautama Dharmasūtra*<sup>9</sup> (c. 5th century BC) states that 'cultivators, traders, herdsmen, moneylenders, and artisans have authority to lay down rules for their respective classes' and the king was to consult their representatives while dealing with matters relating to them. The Jātaka tales refer to eighteen guilds,<sup>10</sup> to their heads,<sup>11</sup> to localization of industry<sup>12</sup> and to the hereditary nature of professions<sup>13</sup>. The state seems to have come to exercise some control over guilds by appointing an official *bhaṇḍāgārika*, with 'judgeship over all guilds'<sup>14</sup>. In the Jātaka tales, besides internal trade, there are also references to trade with Tāmaparṇi (Sri Lanka), Suvarṇabhūmi (Sumatra), Bāveru (Babylonia), etc.

The Mauryan empire (c. 320 to c. 200 BC) witnessed better maintained highways and increased mobility of men and merchandise. The state participated in agricultural and industrial production. The government kept a record of trades and crafts and related transactions and conventions of the guilds, indicating state intervention in guild affairs. The state allotted guilds separate areas in a town for running their trade and crafts (below). The members of the tribal republics that lost political power due to their incorporation in the extensive Mauryan empire took to crafts and trades and formed economic organization. Kautilya, considers the possibility of guilds as agencies capable of becoming centres of power.<sup>15</sup>

The next phase of guilds may be bracketed between c. 200 BC and c. AD 300. The decline of the Mauryan empire (c. 200 BC) led to political disintegration and laxity in state control over guilds, allowing them better chances to grow. Epigraphs

from Sañchī, Bharhut, Bodhgayā, Mathurā and sites of western Deccan refer to donations made by different craftsmen and traders. Guilds of flour-makers, weavers, oil-millers, potters, manufacturers of hydraulic engines, corn-dealers, bamboo-workers, etc. find mention in epigraphs.<sup>16</sup> The period witnessed the elucidation of the seasonality and seasonal changes in wind direction of the south-west monsoon (c. AD 46), leading to closer commercial intercourse with the Roman empire in which Indian merchants earned huge profits. The find of a large number of coins of the period indicates progress in money-economy, so vital for the development of trade and industry. The evidence of the *Manusmṛiti* and the *Yājñavalkyasmṛiti* shows an increase in the authority of guilds in comparison to earlier periods. Epigraphic evidence of the period refers to acts of charity and piety of the guilds (below) as also their bank-like functions (below). There is evidence to show that large merchant guilds had some control over small craft guilds.<sup>17</sup>

### Localization of Guilds

Some towns were specially known for excellence in certain crafts, e.g. Mathurā and Kāśī for their cloth.<sup>18</sup> Certain villages were named after particular crafts or occupations, such as villages variously of smiths, carpenters, fowlers, hunters, etc.<sup>19</sup> Within a town, there are references to separate streets or localities of ivory-workers, perfumers, florists, cooks, washermen, weavers, lotus-sellers, etc.<sup>20</sup> Kauṭilya prescribes allotment of different quarters and streets to the followers of different crafts, and even to merchants dealing with different merchandise.<sup>21</sup> Localization helped consumers in making purchases, the state in administering laws relating to craftsmen and in tax-collection, and guilds in evolving their conventions and usages and in administering their affairs. Children of people following the same craft staying together learnt their family craft without much effort. The segregation of the people following one craft from another created insularity and isolation and contributed to greater bonds among members and also to the formation of castes and sub-castes. However, guilds could migrate. The *Samuddavānija* Jātaka refers to migration of the carpenters of a village *en masse* as, even after receiving advances, they failed to fulfil their commitment of manufacturing articles.<sup>22</sup>

### Hereditary Nature of Professions

The Jātaka stories frequently refer to a son following the craft of his father. Often, *kula* and *putta* occur as suffixes to craft-names<sup>23</sup>, the former indicating that the whole family adopted a particular craft and the latter that the son followed the craft of his father. This ensured regular trained man-power and created more specialization. The hereditary nature of profession in Indian guilds makes them different from the European guilds of the Middle Ages whose membership was invariably based on the choice of an individual. It may, however, be pointed out that adopting a family profession was more common with members of craftsmen's guilds than with members of traders' guilds.

### Guild Laws

Guilds had their laws, based on customs and usage, regarding organization,

production, fixation of prices of commodities, etc. These rules were generally recognized by the state. The laws were a safeguard against state oppression and interference in guild affairs. The *Gautama Dharmasūtra* enjoins upon the king to consult guild representatives while dealing with matters concerning guilds.<sup>24</sup> In Kautilya's scheme, a Superintendent of Accounts was to keep a record of the customs and transactions of corporations.<sup>25</sup> According to him, in cooperative ventures, profits should be divided among members either equally or according to pre-agreement.<sup>26</sup> Manu enjoins that a guild member who breaks an agreement must be banished from the realm by the king.<sup>27</sup> According to Yājñavalkya, profits and losses were to be shared by members in proportion to their shares.<sup>28</sup> This practice assumes significance as it was in contrast to the rights and privileges enjoyed by people determined on the basis of their birth in a particular *varṇa*. According to the *Mahābhārata*, for breach of guild laws, there was no expiation.<sup>29</sup> Yājñavalkya prescribes severe punishment for one who embezzles guild property. According to him, one who does not deposit in the joint fund money obtained for the corporation was to pay eleven times the sum by way of penalty.<sup>30</sup>

The guild rules helped in smooth functioning of the guilds and in creating greater bonds of unity among guild members. In course of time, the status of the guild laws underwent change; in the *Gautama Dharmasūtra* and *Manusmṛiti* guild laws appear as moral codes, but in the *Yājñavalkyasmṛiti* they are treated almost-inviolable.

### Apprenticeship

Young trainees were attached to master-craftsmen in various guilds. Yājñavalkya was the first to refer to industrial apprenticeship, which subject has been treated later (c. 5th century) elaborately by Nārada. The parents or guardians of the pupil entered into an agreement as regards the duration of apprenticeship beforehand, and this was adhered to.<sup>31</sup> Epigraphic evidence shows that both Gomitaka, the sculptor of the Parkham Yaksha, and Nāka, who manufactured the statue of Yakshiṇī Lavayā, were disciples of Kuṇika.<sup>32</sup> Though it was natural for the pupil to follow the style of his preceptor, yet one with an innovative mind could introduce new trends. In ancient India, the credit of successful training of craftsmen, so vital for the development of arts and crafts, goes largely to guilds.

### Guild Structure

The guild was a compact organization. It had three components—the General Assembly, the Executive Officers, and the Alderman, each with its well-defined sphere of jurisdiction and so placed as not to dominate or create hurdles in the functioning of the other.

#### (a) *The General Assembly*

No information is available in the texts of the period under review about such formalities as undergoing an ordeal or securing a guarantee of good character or written agreement, which find mention in the *Bṛihaspatismṛiti* (AD 6th century) for admission in the guild.<sup>33</sup> *Jātaka* stories<sup>34</sup> give round figures 100, 500, 1000 as members of different guilds. There is a reference to 1000 carpenters of a locality (Vārāṇasī) under two heads.<sup>35</sup> This could be because the number was considered large enough

to make the guild unwieldy, though it may be pointed out that a few references to 1000 members of a guild, without division, do occur.<sup>36</sup> But, more likely, it was due to bickerings within the guild. References to the Buddha's bringing about reconciliation between quarrelling guild chiefs,<sup>37</sup> and the state appointing *bhaṇḍāgārīka*<sup>38</sup> for settling guild disputes, indicate that bickerings within guilds would not have been infrequent. However, it is also possible that the two chiefs, though headings 500 members each, still remained part of the same guild. The Nasik Inscription of the time of Nahapāna refers to two weavers' guilds at Govardhana (Nasik).<sup>39</sup> Either one guild branched off into two because of feuds, or the creation of two guilds was deemed necessary because of the large number of weavers there, or one of the guilds had migrated to that place from outside.

(b) *The Guild Head*

The head of a guild is often referred to as the *jeṭṭhaka* or *pamukkha* in early Buddhist literature.<sup>40</sup> Often he is referred to after the occupation followed by the guild of which he was the head, e.g. 'head of garland makers' (*mālākāra jeṭṭhaka*), 'head of carpenters' guild' (*vaddhaki jeṭṭhaka*), etc.<sup>41</sup> Caravan merchants were guided by their leader, *sārvavāha*, who instructed them regarding halting, watering, etc. and precautions against robbers, etc.<sup>42</sup> *Seṭṭhis* were merchants-cum-bankers and often headed merchant guilds. They were big businessmen in cities and also held landed property in villages, and played an important role in both rural and urban economy.<sup>43</sup> Often the chief *seṭṭhi* of the city was named after that city, e.g. *Rājagaha seṭṭhi*.<sup>44</sup> Normally the head *seṭṭhi* of a city would be from among the *seṭṭhis* of that city. But, curiously, there is an instance of appointment to that office of one not only from outside the town but also outside the kingdom. At the request of Prasenajit, king of Kosala, Bimbisāra, king of Magadha, sent one Dhanañjaya Bhaddiya to hold the office of *nagara-śreṣṭhī* of Sāketa, the Kosalan capital.<sup>45</sup> *Seṭṭhis* are often referred to as present in the king's court, mainly for protecting interest of their guilds. The mention of *seṭṭhi-thāna*,<sup>46</sup> (office of *seṭṭhi*) may indicate that he also held an office in king's court. As pointed out by Fick,<sup>47</sup> in Jātaka stories he is referred to as taking leave of the king before journeying or as seeking permission for resigning the office, or for turning an ascetic, or for distributing his wealth in charity.<sup>48</sup> A Jātaka mentions a *seṭṭhi* as a king's favourite (*rājavallabha*).<sup>49</sup> There are frequent references to the great wealth (often referred to as eighty crores) of the *seṭṭhis*.<sup>50</sup> They were present in all important royal ceremonies and events of state and were consulted by kings. The guild head could punish a guilty member even to the extent of excommunication, and the king approved it if he found that the punishment had been justly meted out.<sup>51</sup>

Ancient texts do not specify whether the office of the head of a guild was elective or hereditary. There are references to a mariner<sup>52</sup> and a *seṭṭhi*<sup>53</sup> being succeeded by their sons. A head-smith<sup>54</sup> was succeeded by his son-in-law, as also a *seṭṭhi*.<sup>55</sup> It appears that normally headship of a guild went to the eldest son, and in the absence of a son to some close relation, provided that the person to succeed was himself an expert in the trade or craft; and the guild assembly, as a routine, would confirm such successions. Succession is mentioned only after the death of the head and not in his lifetime, which would suggest that the head remained in office life-long. This is also supported by the evidence of two Damodarpur Copper-plate inscriptions of the 5th century AD taken together; it shows that one Ribhupāla held the office of *nagaraśreṣṭhī* for well nigh half a century.<sup>56</sup>

*(c) Executive Officers*

To assist the guild head and to look after the day-to-day business of the guild, Executive Officers came to be appointed. The earliest reference to Executive Officers is met with in the *Yājñavalkyaśmṛiti*.<sup>57</sup> Their number varied according to need and circumstances.<sup>58</sup> Yājñavalkya says that they should be pure, free from avarice and knowers of the Vedas,<sup>59</sup> the last-mentioned qualification suggests the presence of Brāhmaṇas in the Executive Council. It is not specially stated whether the Executive Officers were elected by the Assembly or were nominated by the guild head.

## Guild Offices and Other Aspects

The guilds had their own offices. Structures depicted on some *nigama* sealings from Rajghat<sup>60</sup> perhaps represent guild-office buildings. The house in the foundation of which a *nigama* sealing was found at Bhita has been identified as 'House of the Guild'<sup>61</sup>. The 'subterranean chamber' at Vaiśālī in which 273 of *śreṣṭhī-sārthavāha-kulīka nigama* seals of the Gupta period have been found<sup>62</sup> was perhaps a refuge room of a guild office. The *Harivaṃśa Purāna* refers to separate pavilions earmarked for the members of different guilds to witness wrestling bouts,<sup>63</sup> each marked by banners bearing the insignia of the guild.

There were checks and balances in the functioning of the guilds. The members had the right to speak in the guild assembly. But a speech that was not sensible or that created hurdles in the functioning of a guild was punishable.<sup>64</sup> The heads had considerable power over guild members, but they had to work within the framework of the usage and customs of the guild; transgression of guild rules made them liable to punishment at the hands of the General Assembly.<sup>65</sup> The reference in a Jātaka story to a guild head offering the hand of his daughter to the bridegroom before the guild Assembly indicates his regard for that body.<sup>66</sup> A member harassed by a headman could seek redressal from king.<sup>67</sup>

## Sources of Income and Items of Expenditure

Considerable amount of money in guilds came from the subscription of their members. Profits earned in executing orders formed an important source of income. Fines recovered from erring members were added to guild funds. Gifts bestowed by kings on guild heads and Executive Officers became the property of the guilds.<sup>68</sup> Besides, at times, the guilds might also receive subsidies from the government.

Expanding guild activities, procuring raw material in the case of craft guilds, and commodities and finished goods in that of trade guilds, travelling and transport, octroi duties, wages of labour, would involve sizable expenditure. Some money was spent on maintenance of guards for protection of men, merchandise and treasury, and arranging for forest guards for safety while travelling through forests.<sup>69</sup> Rewarding members whose acts brought profits<sup>70</sup> to the guild and providing legal protection to members<sup>71</sup> were also items of expenditure. Besides, the guilds spent a good deal of money on works of charity and religious piety and in providing help to the poor and destitute.<sup>72</sup>

## Functions of the Guilds

*(a) General Economic Functions*

The guilds trained workers and provided a congenial atmosphere for work. They

procured raw materials for manufacturing, controlled quality of manufactured goods and their price, and located markets for their sale. They provided a modicum of safety to the members and merchandise and accorded social status to the former.

*(b) Functions Related to Religious Piety and Charity*

Guilds made compacts to alleviate distress and undertake works of piety and charity as a matter of duty. They were expected to use part of their profits for preservation and maintenance of assembly halls, watersheds, shrines, tanks and gardens, as also for helping widows, the poor and destitute in performing religious rites or alleviating their economic hardships.<sup>73</sup> Epigraphic evidence of the period refers variously to the gifts of gateways,<sup>74</sup> caves and cisterns,<sup>75</sup> pillars or seats<sup>77</sup> made by guilds or individual members of the guilds.

*(c) Bank-like Functions*

The reference in the *Arthasāstra*<sup>78</sup> to the king's spies borrowing from guilds, gold, bar-gold, and coin-gold on the pretext of procuring various types of merchandize, shows that guilds loaned money to artisans and merchants. It does not contain any reference to guilds loaning money to the general public. Guilds established their efficiency and integrity, and epigraphic evidence shows that not only the general public but even royalty (who could very well have made recurring grants through their treasury) deposited money with them as trust funds on the terms that the principal sum would remain intact on a permanent basis and the interest alone would be used for performing some pious act of donor's choice. No deposit was made solely for safety purpose or for earning simple or compound interest in cash. Thus the guilds had limited scope in banking in comparison to modern banks.

A few epigraphs may be referred to here. A Mathurā Inscription<sup>79</sup> (2nd century AD) refers to the two permanent endowments of 550 silver coins each with two guilds to feed Brāhmaṇas and poor from out of the interest money. Of the two Nasik Inscriptions (2nd century AD),<sup>80</sup> one records the endowment of 2000 *kārshāpanas* at the rate of one percent (per month) with a weavers' guild for providing cloth to *bhikshus* and 1000 *kārshāpanas* at the rate of 0.75 percent (per month) with another weavers' guild for serving light meals to them. Another inscription from Nasik of the time of the Ābhīra King Īsvarasena refers to depositing variously 1000, 2000, an unknown amount (the portion recording the figure is mutilated) and 500 *kārshāpanas* with the guild of potters, workers fabricating hydraulic engines, oil-millers, and another guild (name mutilated) respectively. The deposits with four different guilds, instead of a single guild, were perhaps made with a view to distributing the risk, as a guild could suffer a set-back or even go bankrupt.

The providing of cloth by a weavers' guild and oil by an oil-men's guild were a simple affair, being related to the occupation of the guild. But the providing of light meals by the weavers' guild, or medicine by an oil-millers guild, involved extra-professional work, and in such cases guilds might have entered into contract with parties dealing with those items, paying them a major part of the interest accruing from the deposits.

*(d) Judicial Functions*

Guilds could try their members for offence in accordance with their own customs and usages, which came to acquire almost the status of law. A guild member had

to abide by both guild and state laws. Guilds could arbitrate even between members and their wives.<sup>81</sup> Some guild representatives acted as members of the court presided over by the king and advised him, particularly in matters relating to traders and craftsmen. Significantly, guilds also functioned as courts of justice for the general public. Yājñavalkya<sup>82</sup> enumerates four courts in descending order as (i) courts presided over by the officers appointed by the king, (ii) the *pūga*, (iii) the *śrenī*, and (iv) the *kula*.

The *Vaśiṣṭha Dharmasūtra*<sup>83</sup> includes the evidence of guilds as valid in settling boundary disputes. Manu prescribes that, for artisans and merchants forming guilds, other artisans or merchants of the same or other guild could act as witnesses. The jurisdiction of guild courts was confined to civil cases; those involving heinous crimes were dealt by the king alone.<sup>84</sup> Though, according to later commentators, Vijnāneśvara and Viśvarūpa, disputes could be taken to the king's court only through the channel of *kula*, *śrenī* and *pūga* courts, and not direct, yet, in practice, this was not always followed.

Democratic institutions like guild courts flourish in peaceful conditions, and the view<sup>85</sup> that their presence in the pre-colonial era is because anarchical conditions prevented state courts to function, does not hold water. King's courts would have been difficult to approach by people, particularly by those living far away from the capital, and it was sharing judicial and administrative work at lower levels by local bodies like guilds and village assemblies that made it possible for the state to successfully administer large kingdoms, even though rapid means of communication were not available.

All guilds acted as courts for their members but either only important ones, or representatives of various guilds authorized by the state, would have acted as courts for the general public. Guilds, being organizations of people of different castes following the same profession, would also have had some Brāhmaṇa members, some of whom would have been Executive Officers (above), and probably they, with the help of members or Executive Officers of other *varṇas*, would have formed the courts of justice.

#### (e) Administrative Functions

The guilds had a good deal of administrative control over their members. It was necessary for the wife of a member of a guild intending to join the Buddhist *saṅgha* to obtain the permission of the guild. Some guild heads are known to have acted as *mahāmātras*.<sup>86</sup> As stated above, the guild heads were present in royal courts, perhaps in some official capacity. The epigraphic evidence of the Gupta period shows that heads of different guilds acted as member of the advisory boards of the district administration.<sup>87</sup>

### Guilds and Castes

Guilds and castes, though similar in some respects, are basically different. Guilds were economic institutions, castes were social groups. Caste is necessarily hereditary, but not guild membership. One could be a member of only one caste, but one could be a member of more than one guild. However, in areas populated by people of the same caste (above), membership of guild and caste coincided and the head of the guild presided over the meetings of both guild and caste. But elsewhere, specially

in cities, the population being cosmopolitan, guild membership and caste membership were not identical. Till the early centuries of the Christian era, guild-caste equations were not rigid and literary evidence shows that some people did follow professions other than that of their parents. It was only by the early mediaeval period that guilds became considerably fossilized into occupational sub-castes.

### Guilds and the State

Guilds enjoyed considerable autonomy, which came not as a favour by the state but by their inherent right. The guilds safeguarded the interests of traders and craftsmen against oppression by the king as well as the legal discrimination they were normally subjected to. Manu enjoins upon a king, to acquire knowledge of laws of the *śrenīs* and other institutions while dealing with them.<sup>88</sup> Yājñavalkya lays down that such rules of corporations as are not against sacred laws should be observed.<sup>89</sup> Even Kauṭilya,<sup>90</sup> a champion of state control over all spheres of activity, lays down rules for the protection of artisans. In his scheme, guilds, in contrast to individual artisans, were granted seven days' grace for completion of deals. To protect the interest of village guilds, entry of an outsider guild therein was banned.<sup>91</sup> Manu<sup>92</sup> lays down that a king should employ guards and spies near artisans' shops as a protection against robbers.

Perhaps the punch-marked coins in earlier stages were issued by rich merchants and guilds, may be with the permission of the state.<sup>93</sup> Since the state earned a sizable income from taxation through guilds, it naturally provided facilities to them by maintaining roads for transport of merchandise and perhaps also granted subsidies and loans to them. Some prosperous merchants, as members of the guilds, or otherwise, must have extended financial support to kings in times of emergency.

Kings honoured guild heads by offering them gifts. Guild heads were present at important state ceremonies. The heads of guilds accompanied Śuddhodana in welcoming the Buddha,<sup>94</sup> and also Bimbisāra in paying a visit to the Buddha.<sup>95</sup> They, along with others, waited for the coronation ceremony of Bharata,<sup>96</sup> and also accompanied Bharata to visit Rāma at Chitrakūṭa.<sup>97</sup> The *naigamas* participated in Rāma's coronation ceremony.<sup>98</sup> The *Rāmāyaṇa* refers to kings consulting *nigamamukhyas*<sup>99</sup> (guild heads) and *nigama vṛiddhas*<sup>100</sup> (Elders of the Guilds) on important matters. In the *Mahābhārata*, Duryodhana, feeling humiliated on his defeat at the hands of the *Gandharvas*, was afraid facing guild heads and other notable members of the society.<sup>101</sup>

Kauṭilya advises the king to see that heads of different guilds do not unite against him, and win the support of the guilds 'by means of reconciliation and gifts', and to weaken such ones as are inimical to him.<sup>102</sup> He also advises the king to grant land which is under attack from enemy to the guild of warriors (*śrenībala*)<sup>103</sup>. He prefers state waste land to be inhabited by unorganized people rather than by guilds, as the latter could create trouble for the king.<sup>104</sup> In his scheme, a king in an emergency could rob guilds by unscrupulous means.

There is no evidence of a guild or a combination of guilds attempting to capture political power. The guilds of the period were local in character, with no central organization. Interests of different guilds were of different kinds, sometimes even conflicting and so they could hardly form a joint front against the state. However, in case of contests for succession to the royal throne, they might have helped the claimants of their choice in acquiring it.

Guild quarrels, both internal and external, provided the king with appropriate opportunities to interfere in guild affairs. Yājñavalkya<sup>105</sup> enjoins that a king should settle quarrels among guilds according to their usages and make them follow the established path. The interference of the state in guild affairs would have varied according to such considerations as the distance of their location from state headquarters, the nature and temperament of kings and officials, and the prosperity and occupation of the guild.

## REFERENCES

- <sup>1</sup> For important references to the Harappan Civilization, see A. Ghosh, *An Encyclopaedia of Indian Archaeology*, I, p.89.
- <sup>2</sup> R.K. Mookerji, *Local Government in Ancient India*, 3rd ed., p.40; A.M. Buch, *Economic Life in Ancient India*, I, p. 300; A.N. Bose, *Social and Rural Economy of Northern India*, 2nd ed., p. 283.
- <sup>3</sup> E.g. Beni Prasad, *Theory of Government in Ancient India*, 2nd ed., p.309; G.L. Adhya, *Early Indian Economics*, p.83.
- <sup>4</sup> See D.D. Kosambi, *JBBRAS*, XXVII (ii), pp. 193-5; *JESHO*, V (iii), p.313.
- <sup>5</sup> E.W. Hopkins, 'Ancient and Modern Hindu Guilds I' *Yale Review*, May 1898, pp. 24 ff; II; *ibid.*, August, 1898, pp. 197 ff.
- <sup>6</sup> D.D. Kosambi, *JBBRAS*, XXVII (ii), pp. 191-2.
- <sup>7</sup> As quoted by R.C. Majumdar, *Corporate Life in Ancient India*, 2nd ed., p. 12.
- <sup>8</sup> *Bṛihadāraṇyaka Upanishad*, i.4.11-12.
- <sup>9</sup> *Gautama Dharmasūtra*, XI. 23.
- <sup>10</sup> E.g., Jātaka no. 538 (Mūgapakkha Jātaka).
- <sup>11</sup> E.g., see below.
- <sup>12</sup> See below.
- <sup>13</sup> See below.
- <sup>14</sup> Jātaka no. 445 (Nigrodha Jātaka).
- <sup>15</sup> *Arthasāstra*, V.2.
- <sup>16</sup> For references, see R.K. Mookerji, *op. cit.*, pp. 88-91; Kosambi, *JASB*, XXX, pp. 50 ff; R.N. Saletore, *Early Indian Economic History*, p.574, etc.
- <sup>17</sup> See K.K. Thaplyal, *Studies in Ancient Indian Seals*, p.241.
- <sup>18</sup> For Varāṇasī and Mathurā as centres of quality cloth production, see Jātaka no.297 (Kāma-vilāpa Jātaka) and *Mahābhāshya* of Patañjali, II, 346, respectively.
- <sup>19</sup> See R.L. Mehta, *Pre-Buddhist India*, pp. 214-15.
- <sup>20</sup> For ivory workers, Jātaka nos. 72 and 221; perfumers, Jātaka no. 454; for florists, Jātaka no. 454, for cooks, Jātaka no.315; for washermen, Jātaka no.454; for weavers, Jātaka no.80; for lotus-sellers, Jātaka no.261.
- <sup>21</sup> *Arthasāstra*, II. 36.
- <sup>22</sup> Jātaka no.466.
- <sup>23</sup> For *kula* as suffix, Jātaka nos. 1, 2, 54, 98, 178, 265, 365, 366, 387, 408 etc.; for *putta* as suffix, Jātaka nos. 1, 29, 44, 159, 265 etc.
- <sup>24</sup> *Gautama Dharmasūtra*, XI, 23.
- <sup>25</sup> *Arthasāstra*, III. 7.
- <sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, III. 14.
- <sup>27</sup> *Manu*, VIII. 219-20.
- <sup>28</sup> Yājñavalkya, II, 259.
- <sup>29</sup> *Mahābhārata*, XII, 37. 14 (critical ed.).
- <sup>30</sup> Yājñavalkya, II, 187.
- <sup>31</sup> Yājñavalkya, II, 184; *Nārada*, v.16.
- <sup>32</sup> For Gomitaka, see Lüders' List (*EIX*), no.150; for Nāka, R.P. Chanda, *ASIAR*, 1922-23, p.165.
- <sup>33</sup> *Bṛhaspati*, XVII. 7.
- <sup>34</sup> E.g., Jātaka nos. 156, 387, 466.

- <sup>35</sup> Jātaka no. 466.
- <sup>36</sup> Jātaka no. 387.
- <sup>37</sup> Jātaka no. 154.
- <sup>38</sup> Jātaka no. 445.
- <sup>39</sup> *EI*, VIII, pp. 82 ff.
- <sup>40</sup> For *jetthaka*, Jātaka nos. 63, 265, 387, 463 etc. For *pamukkha*, Jātaka no. 155; *Mahābhārata*, XII. 59. 49; XII. 138. 63 (critical ed.).
- <sup>41</sup> For *mālākāra jetthaka*, Jātaka no. 415; for *vaddhaki jetthaka*, Jātaka no. 466.
- <sup>42</sup> Jātaka nos. 1, 2.
- <sup>43</sup> Jātaka nos. 83, 103.
- <sup>44</sup> See *Chullavagga*, VI. 4.1; *Mahāvagga*, VII.1.16.
- <sup>45</sup> *Āṅguttara Nikāya*, 1.7.2.
- <sup>46</sup> Jātaka No. 4.
- <sup>47</sup> See R. Fick, *Social Organization in North-East India*, p. 259.
- <sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>49</sup> Jātaka no. 387.
- <sup>50</sup> *Mahāvastu*, III, p. 402 (trans.).
- <sup>51</sup> *Bṛihaspati*, XVII. 17-18.
- <sup>52</sup> Jātaka No. 463.
- <sup>53</sup> Jātaka No. 40, 45, 171, 425, 450.
- <sup>54</sup> Jātaka No. 387.
- <sup>55</sup> Jātaka no. 4.
- <sup>56</sup> His name occurs in the Damodarpur Copper-plate of the time of Budhagupta, AD 476-94 (D.C. Sircar, *Sel. Ins.* I, 2nd ed. pp. 336 ff) and also in another Damodarpur Copper-plate of the year AD 543 (*ibid.*, pp. 346 ff).
- <sup>57</sup> *Yājñavalkya*, II. 187, 191.
- <sup>58</sup> *Bṛihaspati* (XVII. 9-10) says that the number could be two, three or five.
- <sup>59</sup> *Yājñavalkya*, II. 191. See also *Bṛihaspati* XVII. 9.
- <sup>60</sup> *JNSI*, XXIII, p. 411.
- <sup>61</sup> *ASIAR*, 1911-12, p. 47.
- <sup>62</sup> *ASIAR*, 1903-04, p. 91.
- <sup>63</sup> *Harivaṁśa Purāṇa* (*Mahābhārata*, Gita Press; *Khilabhāga*, *Harivaṁśa*, *Vishṇu Purāṇa*, *Adhyāya* 29, sloka 5).
- <sup>64</sup> *Kātyāyana*, v. 671.
- <sup>65</sup> That a guild assembly could punish guild heads is clear from the expression in the *Arthasāstra*: 'If the corporation punishes the chief. . .' (*Arthasāstra*, XI. 1). See also *Smṛitichandrikā*, (iii) p. 335.2 (*Vīramitrodaya*, p. 335).
- <sup>66</sup> Jātaka no. 387.
- <sup>67</sup> *Bṛihaspati*, XVII, 20.
- <sup>68</sup> *Yājñavalkya*, II. 190.
- <sup>69</sup> Jātaka no. 265.
- <sup>70</sup> *Bṛihaspati*, XIV. 10.
- <sup>71</sup> See *Daśakumāracharita*, *Uchchhuāsa* VI.
- <sup>72</sup> See *Bṛihaspati*, XVII. 11-12, 22-23. The construction of temples, *stūpas*, monasteries, *chaityas* etc. recorded in ancient epigraphs were also important items of expenditure.
- <sup>73</sup> *Bṛihaspati*, XVII. 11-12.
- <sup>74</sup> *EI*, II, no. 31, p. 378.
- <sup>75</sup> Lüdgers' List, no. 1180.
- <sup>76</sup> *EI*, XVIII, no. 36, p. 326.
- <sup>77</sup> *EI*, XXIV, no. 30, p. 253.
- <sup>78</sup> *Arthasāstra*, V.2.
- <sup>79</sup> *EI*, XXI, pp. 66 ff.
- <sup>80</sup> *EI*, VIII, pp. 82 ff; *EI*, VIII, pp. 88-9.
- <sup>81</sup> *Vinaya Piṭaka*, IV. 226 as referred to by Rhys Davids, *JRAS*, 1901, p. 865.
- <sup>82</sup> *Yājñavalkya*, II. 30.
- <sup>83</sup> *Vasishtha Dharmasūtra*, XVI. 13.

- <sup>84</sup> *Bṛihaspati*, I. 28.
- <sup>85</sup> E.g., H.S. Maine, *Village Communities in the East and West*, p. 68, *vide* Altekar, *State and Government in Ancient India*, 3rd ed., p.253.
- <sup>86</sup> See *Jātaka* no. 154.
- <sup>87</sup> E.g., Damodarpur Copper-plate inscriptions of the Gupta years 124 (AD 443) and 129 (AD 447) belonging to the reign of Kumāragupta I (D.C. Sircar, *Sel. Ins.* I, 2nd ed., no. 290f and 292 f).
- <sup>88</sup> *Manu*, VIII. 41.
- <sup>89</sup> *Yājñavalkya*, II. 186.
- <sup>90</sup> *Arthasāstra*, III. 14.
- <sup>91</sup> *Arthasāstra*, IV. 10.
- <sup>92</sup> *Manu*, IX. 261.
- <sup>93</sup> V.A. Smith, *Catalogue of the Coins in the Indian Museum*, I, p.133.
- <sup>94</sup> *Mahāvastu*, text, III, p.114, trans. III, p.114.
- <sup>95</sup> *Ibid.*, III, text, pp. 442-3; trans. III, pp. 443-4.
- <sup>96</sup> *Rāmāyaṇa*, 2.73.4, *vide* A.K. Majumdar, *Economic Background of the Epic Society*, p.100.
- <sup>97</sup> *Rāmāyaṇa*, II. 94 ff, *vide* R. Sharma, *A Socio-Political Study of Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa*, p. 373, n.2.
- <sup>98</sup> *Rāmāyaṇa*, VI, 116. 57, *vide* A.K. Majumdar, *Economic Background of the Epic Society*, p.100.
- <sup>99</sup> *Rāmāyaṇa*, II. 15. 2 (NS), *vide* R. Sharma, *op. cit.*, p.375.
- <sup>100</sup> *Ibid.*, VII. 77. 2 *tathā negama vṛiddhaścha*.
- <sup>101</sup> *Mahābhārata*, III. 238, 15 (critical ed.).
- <sup>102</sup> *Arthasāstra*, XI. 1.
- <sup>103</sup> *Arthasāstra*, VII. 16.
- <sup>104</sup> *Arthasāstra*, VII. 11.
- <sup>105</sup> *Yājñavalkya*, I. 360.