APPENDIX-IV

Rules of good conduct

It is announced with pleasure that the demand of the Chitrakars to be treated as caste Hindus during the coming census operations has been acceded to by the West Bengal Government. But a demand on paper to be counted as caste Hindus is not enough. The Chitrakars must conduct themselves as such. Appropriate directions for their guidance in this matter are given below in the verse form. These must be learnt by heart by all of them, including the children of their families, and the rules followed.

Observance of rules, humility, learning, steadfastness, visits to sacred places, devotion, a blameless way of life, discipline and charity— these nine qualities are the insignia of a caste claiming to be high.

Wake up and rejoice, ye, my brothers, the chitrakars! The auspicious day has come. So shed all fear. Look, the darkness of the night has melted away and a bright day has dawned. Advance on the path of truth with a hero's mien. Install yourself without loss of time, in the house that is yours. Let all grievances, sorrows, indecisions and sense of guilt come to an end. Have you not heard the saying in the Shastras,— the truth of all truths,— that he alone is high of caste who follows the Shastric rules of good conduct? Who ever has violated the rules and trodden the path of inequity and yet been held in high esteem? It is one of the rules of providence that he, who is truthful, continent, selfless and full of devotion, is the one
adored by all. That is why I ask you to obey the rules of good conduct, if you must take your place among castes that are high. Wake up before sunrise, attend to Nature's call and bathe yourself. Then chant, for as long a time as you can, the mantras prescribed by your religions preceptor. Install the image of a deity in the house. Plant a "Tulsi" (Basil) plant in the yard. Blow the conch-shall and burn incense every morning and evening. Put the house, you live in, in good order. Cleanse it by scrubbing the floor and plinth with cow-dung. The clothes, the bed and everything else in the house must be kept scrupulously clean. Read a little of the Gita; Chandi; Bhagabat and the Ramayana every day. Bow down to your elders and at places of worship every morning and evening, with all devotion. Always honour your religious preceptor, the sacred places, the Brahmins (men of learning), the hermit the elders, the incarnations of God, the gods and goddesses, and be full of devotion to the cattle. Your parents and elder brothers are as gods to you and there is a special merit in worshipping their feet. The women among you must be devoted to their husbands just as 'Sita' was. They should know it for a truth that their husbands are, to them, the worthiest preceptors. They should wear, on their foreheads, the vermilion mark with its heavenly glow and conch-shall bangles on their wrists, for ever. A spirit of service, devotion, modesty of bearing, bashfulness and simplicity of mind are qualities which, if acquired, will make a goddess of a woman. The wives of others are like mothers to all men; know this, -- which all the Sastras say, to be an inviolable truth. If you harbour evil thoughts about them, you will surely fall into the eternal hell. Banish the use of toddy, hashish, and wine. Indulgence in them will degrade you. So
banish the habits forthwith, or else they will bring ruin to you.
For funerals; marriages and religious festivals call in a Brahmin
priest. The celebrations thereof should be within the limits of your
means. Do not fall out with your neighbours or with the members of
your own household. In your eating habits, recreation, in your clothes
and the ornaments that you wear, in your ways of life, in your thinking
and actions and in the principles behind those actions, be a Hindu
out and out, and guide yourselves by the Shastric habits. Avoid the
evil word and the company of evil men, and then and then alone will
you be regarded as men of culture. Do not hesitate to lay down your
life for the sake of your own religion and race. This code of rules
has been prepared after charming study of a sea of books of religion.
If the chitrakars will hold fast to these rules in a spirit of great
joy, it will help them to wake up and to take their rightful place in
India.

Bangiya Chitrakar Unnayan Samiti
(Society for the advancement of the Chitrakars of Bengal)
Published from 2A, Parbati Chakrabarti Lane.

To be bound and hung up in every house

Translated from a Leaflet written in verse.