

## Women: The Power (Shakti) Strong Willed Women in Vedic and Shakespeare' Time

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### Abstract

The Vedic times were free from many of the social evils that harmed the Indian society in the later eras. Child marriage and a harsh dowry did not then exist. Widows were free to marry. They inherited rights to the dead husbands' properties. Seclusion of women or Sati was not practiced; nor was untouchability.

Women were generally not discriminated against merely on grounds of gender. Men and women had equal status in matters of education, marriage, Re-marriage, in managing the household, right to property, intellectual pursuit, participation in public debate and some women even participated in battles along with their men folk. There is a mention of a certain warrior Queen Vishpla who lost her leg in battle and was fitted with a metallic prosthesis; she returned to battle and continued to fight.

Women shared an equal standing with their men. There were women teachers, scholars, Brahnavadins and highly respected rishis. There were women warriors with bows. There were also the prostitutes who made a living and followed certain regulations.

“Among the many societies that can be found in the world, we have seen that some of the most venerating regard for women has been found in Vedic culture. The Vedic tradition has held a high regard for the qualities of women, and has retained the greatest respect within its tradition “- Stephen Knapp- Women in Vedic Culture.

They inherited and possessed property; they took share in scarifies and religious ceremonies; they attended the assemblies and state occasions; they also distinguished themselves as intellectual companions of their husbands, as friends and partners in their religious duties.

No male was considered complete without his spouse, she was his *Ardangini*. No auspicious ritual could be conducted or a submission made to family deities without accompanied by the wife. Why! The dead body of the husband could not be taken out for cremation without the permission of wife.

Nonetheless, the social life portrayed in Rig Veda reveals a tolerant and moderately unbiased society characterized by sanctity of the institution of marriage, domestic purity, a patriarchal system, an equitable position in the society for men and women and high honor for women. The women did receive a fair and an equitable treatment and they were empowered to deal with issues that mattered in the life around them.

"Women enjoyed far greater freedom in the Vedic period than in later India. She had more to say in the choice of her mate than the forms of marriage might suggest. She appeared freely at feasts and dances, and joined with men in religious sacrifice. She could study, and like Gargi, engage in philosophical disputation. If she was left a widow there was no restrictions upon her remarriage." Will Durant - Story of Civilization: Our Oriental Heritage

There are many civilizations in the world where respect for women and their role in society are prominent and others where regard for them and their status should be improved. Yet the level of civility along with moral and spiritual standards in a society can often be perceived by the respect and regard it gives for its women. Not that it glorifies them for their sexuality and then gives them all the freedom men want so they can be exploited and taken advantage of, but that they are regarded in a way that allows them to live in honor for their importance in society with respect and protection, and given the opportunity to reach their real potential in life.

Among the many societies that can be found in the world, we have seen that some of the most venerating regard for women has been found in Vedic culture. The Vedic tradition has held a high regard for the qualities of women, and has retained the greatest respect within its tradition as seen in the honor it gives for the Goddess, who is portrayed as the feminine embodiment of important qualities and powers. These forms include those of Lakshmi (the goddess of fortune and queen of Lord Vishnu), Sarasvati (the goddess of learning), Subhadra (Krishna=s sister and auspiciousness personified), Durga (the goddess of strength and power), Kali (the power of time), and other Vedic goddesses that exemplify inner strength and divine attributes.

### **Even divine power in the form of *shakti* is considered feminine.**

Throughout the many years of Vedic culture, women have always been given the highest level of respect and freedom, but also protection and safety. There is a Vedic saying, "Where women are worshiped, there the gods dwell." Or where the women are happy, there will be prosperity. In fact the direct quotes from the *Manu-samhita* explains as follows:

"Women must be honored and adorned by their fathers, brothers, husbands, and brothers-in-law, who desire their own welfare. Where women are honored, there the gods are pleased; but where they are not honored, no sacred rite yields rewards. As in Sanskrit :

***YatraNaryastupujyante! RamantetatraDevata!..***

**(Where WOMEN are respected, GODS make their HOME)**

Where the female relations live in grief, the family soon wholly perishes; but that family where they are not unhappy ever prospers. The houses on which female relations, not being duly honored, pronounce a curse, perish completely, as if destroyed by magic. Hence men who seek (their own) welfare, should always honor women on holidays and festivals with (gifts of) ornaments, clothes and (dainty) food." (*Manu Smriti* III.55-59)

In the Hindu rite of marriage, **when the bridegroom holds the hand of the bride**, he in a way

promises his companionship on equal terms. When he asks her to tread on the stone, he wants her to be strong like it and not show weakness of any kind in any situation. 'Resist the enemies; overcome those who attack you.'**All this shows in an ideal Hindu marriage the girl is not a commodity but a respectable human being.**

Hinduism teaches that each of us passes through many lives, both male and female. It further teaches the law of karma, which informs us that what we do to others will in turn be done to us—and that ahimsa, non-hurtfulness, must be the guiding precept of our lives. Thus, Hinduism gives no justification for the mistreatment of others, whether on the basis of gender or for any other reason.

Comparing the general position of women in our scriptures with those of any other faith, we will immediately discover their elevated status in Hinduism. The Semitic faiths, by comparison, associated women with evil and mortality.

The Old Testament says, “And a man will choose...any wickedness, but the wickedness of a woman...Sin began with a woman, and thanks to her we all must die” (Ecclesiasticus, 25:18, 19 & 33). The New Testament, too, is partial to men: “A man ought not to cover his head, since he is the image and glory of God” (1 Corinthians 11:7). “And Adam was not the one deceived; it was the woman who was deceived and became a sinner” (1 Timothy 2:14).

"A girl also should be brought up and educated with great effort and care." (*MahanirvanaTantra*); and "All forms of knowledge are aspects of Thee; and all women throughout the world are Thy forms." (*Devi Mahatmya*)

We can inquire, in what major religions besides Hinduism do people worship the Supreme Being as Goddess? While the Western religions are male-centric, the largest pilgrimage site in North India (and second largest in the entire country) is Vaishno Devi. Throughout the country—north, south, east and west—one can see pilgrimage places centered around the shrines of various forms of the Goddess—Durga, Parvati, Kali, Lakshmi, Saraswati, etc.

The Shakta Hindus consider the Mother Goddess to be the Supreme Creator; and even Vaishnavites and Saivites, who worship Lord Vishnu or Lord Siva as the Supreme Deity, affirm that God cannot be approached except through **His Shakti**.

Many of the Vedic rishis were women. Married and single women alike were acknowledged authorities on the Vedic wisdom. The prophetess Gargi composed several Vedic hymns questioning the origin of all existence. Other Vedic hymns are attributed to Vishwawara, Sikta and others.

Rig Veda clearly proclaims that women should be given the lead in ruling the nation and in society, and that they should have the same right as sons over the father's property. “The entire world of noble people bows to the glory of the glorious woman so that she enlightens us with knowledge and foresight. She is the leader of society and provides knowledge to everyone. She is

symbol of prosperity and daughter of brilliance. May we respect her so that she destroys the tendencies of evil and hatred from the society.” (1.48.8)

Atharva Veda states that women should be valiant, scholarly, prosperous, intelligent and knowledgeable; they should take part in the legislative chambers and be the protectors of family and society. When a bride enters a family through marriage, she is to “rule there along with her husband, as a queen, over the other members of the family.” (14.1.43-44)

Yajur Veda tells us, “The scholarly woman purifies our lives with her intellect. Through her actions, she purifies our actions. Through her knowledge and action, she promotes virtue and efficient management of society.” (20.84)

**Examples of Great Women in Vedic Culture** They serve as fine examples of historical importance that have been the basis for inspiration to both men and women for centuries. From the early Vedic times these include such women as Sati, Sita, Anasuya, Arundhatee, Draupadi, Queen Kunti, Shakuntala, Maitreyi, Gargi, Madalasa, Savitri, Ahalya, and others. It is said simply reciting their names removes sins. There are additional women from the last few hundred years whose lives we can recollect as well. Such great women have contributed to the glories and splendor of Vedic culture. So let us briefly review the lives of some of these great women.

**Sita** is fully described in the *Ramayana*. She was the daughter of King Janaka, ruler of Mithila. The king was engaged in ritually plowing the land to help produce food to counter a famine at the time, and while using a golden plow, it revealed a pitcher that had been buried from which Sita appeared. The plow tip is called a *sita*, thus Sita was the name given to her. At the time, the demon Ravana had collected tax from the local sages who had placed their blood in this pitcher. Thus, when the plow later uncovered and churned the pitcher, the life-force from the sages produced Sita, and Sita thus became the cause of Ravana's destruction.

As related in the *Ramayana*, Lord Rama won Sita's hand in marriage. But due to political intrigue, Rama's father, Dasharatha, had to keep a promise he had made to his second wife Kaikeyi, who wanted her own son to ascend the throne and not Lord Rama. So she had Rama and Sita thrown into exile and made to wander the forests. During that time, Ravana abducted Sita and kept Her in the Ashoka-Vatika, the garden of Ashoka trees. He tried to force her to marry him but she would not. During that time Rama and Lakshmana wandered the forests in search of Her. In time they found out she had been taken by Ravana, and having learned where he was, Lord Rama finally put the end to him and rescued Sita.

Even though some citizens doubted Sita's purity, she had undergone the Agni-Pariksha, or witness by fire to attest to her purity as a devoted wife. Even then it was over-heard that a washerman had doubts of Sita's character, having spent so much time in Ravana's house. So to help ward off any criticism, Rama exiled Sita to the forest ashrama of Valmiki. While there she gave birth to, Lava and Kush, the twin sons of Lord Rama. Valmiki once brought Sita and her sons to Ayodhya, the capital of Lord Rama, where the sons sang the *Ramayana* in front of Lord Rama. Valmiki also proclaimed that Sita was as good as purity and chastity incarnate.



Though Sita's life was full of struggle and hardship, she was innocent and pure. She gave up all comforts to serve her beloved husband and uphold sanctity, faithfulness, virtue and moral standards. Thus she holds one of the highest places among women in Vedic culture and of woman's character.

**Draupadi** was the daughter of Drupada who was the king of Panchala. She was born from the fire ritual and for this reason was also called Yajnaseni. Her dark complexion also gave her the name of Krishnaa. Queen Kunti was the mother of the five Pandava brothers, Arjuna, Bhima, Yudhisthira, Sahadeva and Nakula. When the Pandavas brought Draupadi back to their home, they wanted to show her to their mother, but Kunti, without having seen Draupadi, told them that whatever they have they must all share equally. So Draupadi became the wife of all five Pandavas. It is said that Draupadi in a previous life had been the wife of Indra, the King of heaven, and she took five separate forms in serving her Pandava husbands. Thus, she was most devoted to her five husbands and was also a great devotee of the Supreme Lord, and regarded Lord Krishna as her ultimate protector.

One episode that shows this was when in the court of the Kauravas, wicked Dushashana tried to disrobe her in front of everyone. Draupadi became hopeless and fervently prayed to Krishna for protection. Krishna heard her prayers and though He was in Dwaraka, He protected her by providing an endless supply of cloth to her sari so that it never ended, and she was always covered and not dishonored in such a way.

Another time was when Durvasa Muni, who was known for his quick anger, suddenly decided to drop in on the Pandava camp, along with his many thousands of disciples. He would also want something to eat for himself and his followers. But the Pandavas had just ate and there was nothing more to prepare. Lord Krishna asked for whatever remnant grains were left in the pot. Being the Supreme Lord, if He was satisfied, then everyone would be satisfied. So He took what few grains were there and when Durvasa Muni arrived, they were all so full that they no longer wanted anything to eat, and thus left peacefully.

In Draupadi's service to her husbands, she had said that she rises before anyone else, tolerates hunger and thirst, and goes to bed after the others. She also gave birth to five sons, all of whom were killed by the wicked Ashwatthama. But since he was the son of the family guru, and she had such respect for their gurus, he forgave him.

When the Pandavas had reached the end of their lives and were setting out to ascend to heaven by climbing up into the mountains, she was the last in line. But she was the first to fall and thus rise to heaven after her death. Her dedication and devotion make her one of the great personalities of Vedic culture.

**GREAT WOMEN IN MORE RECENT TIMES****Rani Lakshmi Bai of Jhansi** was one of the most brave and legendary of warrior women of India. The city of Jhansi was an important center in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, but in 1803 the British East India Company took over control of the state. The

last raja at the time died without a son in 1853. The British had passed a law that allowed them to assume control of any state under their patronage if the ruler died without a male heir. The Rani of Jhansi, however, did not like this enforced retirement and preferred to rule on her own. So she was ready for the rebellion at Jhansi when the Indian Mutiny began. The British in Jhansi were killed, but the next year the British took Jhansi because of the disunity among the rebel forces. The Rani fled to Gwalior and while there made a defiant last stand. Disguised as a man, she rode out to battle against the British, but was unfortunately killed. Her qualities of boldness, patriotism, and generalship were highly appreciated, even by her foreign rivals. Since then she has been a heroine of the independence movement of India.

The hilltop fortress of Chittorgarh was another but more general example of the chivalry of the Rajputs and the warrior spirit of the women. The fort has a long history. In 1303 was when the Pathan King of Delhi, Ala-ud-din Khilji, attacked the fort in an attempt to capture the queen Padmini, wife of Bhim Singh, the Rana's uncle. When it was obvious that defeat was inevitable, the Rajput noblewomen, which included Padmini, committed Sati while Bhim Singh, knowing of his certain defeat, nonetheless took his men and put on the saffron robes of martyrdom and rode to battle and to their deaths. Honor was more important than death to them, and the women also would rather die than submit to the enemy and certain humiliation.

Another such event at Chittorgarh took place in 1535 when the Sultan of Gujarat, Bahadur Shah, besieged the fort, and once again the Rajputs did what they could. It is said that 13,000 Rajput women and 32,000 Rajput warriors died in the battle. The last of such scenes took place in 1568 when the Moghul Emperor, Akbar, took the town. The women again performed Sati and 8000 saffron clad warriors rode out to their deaths. Again death was better than submitting to the Muslim invaders.

**Jijabai** was not exactly a warrior herself but was the mother of Shivaji, one of the great protectors of the country and its religion. She was the guide who shaped his mind from his early years. She was the embodiment of self-respect. She nurtured her child to fight and bring back Hindu Rastra and became a constant source of inspiration to her heroic son.

Same we can see the conditions of females in England and how Shakespeare's most powerful female characters across all of his plays had shown their courage and their power (Shakti). Social and political power was entirely in the hands of the men in Elizabethan England and particularly, well-born men. Both women and men in the lower classes were powerless but women in the upper classes were in a particularly unenviable position as their value was generally reckoned to be a rich or powerful man's path to more riches or more power: daughters were considered to be possessions and were passed from father to husband to forge alliances between the rich and powerful. The father had the sole right to make the decision about his daughter's marriage. Once she was married her function was to produce an heir, and daughters who could be used for the family's further advancement.

One cannot therefore talk about **Shakespeare's powerful women in the social or political sense**, but there are number very powerful women in Shakespeare, in the personal sense. They sometimes have political influence behind the scenes, working on their husbands to bring about some political result. Also, using the Elizabethan theatre convention of women disguising themselves as men, Shakespeare is able to present some women in a way that allows them to be taken seriously. At the end of the plays where he does that, however, the women always revert to their female role and the conclusion is marriage and declarations of their subservience to men and their reversion to the conventional female role. Perhaps even Shakespeare failed to imagine the model of equality that is so familiar to us and which we take for granted.

Nevertheless, all the men in those cultures are surrounded by women, some ineffectual but many very strong. Every male has a grandmother or a mother, a sister, or a daughter who he knows to be strong, even though she may be wearing clothes that signify her submissive condition, such as head and face covers, whole body coverings etc.

One of the most interesting things in Shakespeare is his presentation of strong women.

#### Cordelia **in** King Lear

The vain and foolish Lear decides to retire as king and give all his lands and money to his three daughters, their portions based on their declarations of how much they love him. The two older daughters, Goneril and Regan, go overboard in their hypocritical statements. Cordelia says she loves him according to her duty as a daughter and the bond between a parent and child

Unhappy that I am, I cannot heave  
My heart into my mouth. I love your Majesty  
According to my bond; no more nor less.

Act I, scene 1, line-95

Enraged, he banishes her and tells her two suitors, both princes, that whoever wants her can have her but without the dowry they had been expecting. The Duke of Burgundy declines but The King of France agrees to take her for herself. She has stood up to her father, showing great courage.

Good my lord,  
You have begot me, bred me, lov'd me; I  
Return those duties back as are right fit,  
Obey you, love you, and most honour you.  
Why have my sisters husbands, if they say  
They love you all? Haply, when I shall wed,  
That lord whose hand must take my plight shall carry  
Half my love with him, half my care and duty.  
Sure I shall never marry like my sisters,  
To love my father all.

Act- I,scene-I; lines 100-105

I yet beseech your Majesty,  
 If for I want that glib and oily art  
 To speak and purpose not, since what I well intend,  
 I'll do't before I speak- that you make known  
 It is no vicious blot, murther, or foulness,  
 No unchaste action or dishonoured step,  
 That hath depriv'd me of your grace and favour;  
 But even for want of that for which I am richer-  
 A still-soliciting eye, and such a tongue  
 As I am glad I have not, though not to have it  
 Hath lost me in your liking.

Act I,scene: 1,lines-245-250

Later, when the other two have cruelly rejected Lear and he lies, defeated and imprisoned in a dungeon, she is with him, also imprisoned – she comforts him and raises him up.

O, look upon me, sir,  
 And hold your hands in benediction o'er me.  
 No, sir, you must not kneel.

She has helped him to learn what the bond between a father and daughter is. She has shown great strength throughout, and when her sisters have her hanged. Lear dies of a broken heart.

We are not the first  
 Who with best meaning have incurr'd the worst.  
 For thee, oppressed king, am I cast down;  
 Myself could else outfrown false Fortune's frown.  
 Shall we not see these daughters and these sisters?

**Act V, scene -3,line-3126**

Portia **in** The Merchant of Venice

Portia is unusual in that, since her father's death, having no brother, she has had to perform the role of a man and manage the very wealthy estate he has left her. Nevertheless, he has been able to exercise power over her from beyond the grave by stipulating in his will that those wealthy and powerful men who come to woo her from around the world will have to undergo a test and choose from three caskets, one of which contains the permission to marry Portia.

“Shed thou no blood; nor cut thou less, nor more  
 But just a pound of flesh; if thou cutest more,  
 Or less than a just pound- be it but so much



As makes it light or heavy in the substance,  
 Or the division of the twentieth part  
 Of one poor scruple, nay, if the scale do turn  
 But in the estimation of a hair,  
 Thou diest, and all thy goods are confiscate.”

**(Act IV, scene1, lines322-330)**

When a judge is required by the Duke of Venice to try the case Shylock has brought against Antonio, who is reluctant to yield the pound of flesh he has agreed to give Shylock if he is unable to pay a loan in time. Portia comes disguised as a famous young judge and shows extraordinary qualities in delivering her judgment. Her power lies in her wisdom, recognised by all those who do not know that she is a woman. In a real sense she exercises power over everyone present.

**Beatrice in Much Ado About Nothing**

*Much Ado about Nothing* is a remarkable play in which Shakespeare intertwines an ancient mythological story with an ultra-modern love story invented by himself. Beatrice is a feisty, independent woman, seen by all those around her as such. She does not have to disguise herself as a man because of her reputation in the family as a feisty woman who shouldn't be tangled with. She is highly intelligent and would be regarded as a feminist in our time. There is no question of her being told who to marry, as she will always do as she pleases, but in any case, she has contempt for men. She particularly dislikes Benedick, a soldier who visits Messina regularly and stays in her uncle, the governor's, house. Shakespeare has invented the most incredible wordplay between these two characters, who are both anti-marriage. But they are tricked by their friends into falling in love. Beatrice draws Benedick into a plot to get revenge on Claudio, who has betrayed her cousin, Hero, who was about to marry him. The play ends with the couple confirmed in their love and their decision to marry. Beatrice reverts to the traditional female role but in her case there is a decided edge to it.

Women in India Today Social customs vary from age to age and from place to place. India's customs regarding women were severely impacted by the centuries of invasions and foreign occupation, when the careful protection of Hindu women became essential. All aspects of Indian society have suffered the British-imposed Christian educational system, the tearing apart of families by proselytizing faiths determined to gain converts by any possible means, and the further disruptions caused by a relatively swift change from a historically stable, largely agrarian society to one intensely focused on manufacturing and technology.

Under the influence of the male-centric Western religions, the role that comes most naturally to most women—wife and mother, the children's first guru, **The Shakti of the home**, the preserver and enhancer of the spiritual force field of the home and family—has been effectively disparaged

and has become so despised in the mass mind that any reference to it is now perceived as an attempt at subjugation.

Although the more recently written smriti scriptures show considerable divergence from shruti through the millennia, our revealed holy texts depict the noble place of women in society. As the dawning Sat Yuga returns in its fullness and the entire world comes to appreciate and honor the Sanatana Dharma, we can look forward to the time when women will once again be accorded respect and their rightful place in society—each one revered, whether she chooses to focus on the role of wife and mother or to become a scholar, philosopher, temple priest, medical practitioner, scientist, author, astronaut, artist or states woman.

Throughout the history of India and the traditions of Vedic society, women were also examples for maintaining the basic principles in *Sanatana-dharma*. This honor toward women should be maintained today by the preservation of genuine Vedic culture, either in the country or in the institutions, which has always been a part of India.

Unfortunately, these standards have declined primarily due to the outside influences that have crept in because of foreign invaders, either militarily or culturally. These foreign invaders who dominated India mostly looked at women as objects of sexual enjoyment and exploitation, and as the spoils of war to be taken like a prize. The oppression of women increased in India because of Moghul rule. As such foreigners gained influence and converts, decay of the spiritual standards also crept into Indian and Vedic culture. The educational criteria of Vedic culture also changed and the teaching of the divinity of motherhood was almost lost. The teaching changed from emphasis on the development of individual self-reliance to dependence on and service to others. Thus, competition replaced the pursuit for truth, and selfishness and possessiveness replaced the spirit of renunciation and detachment. **And gradually women were viewed as less divine and more as objects of gratification or property to be possessed and controlled, or even exploited.**

This is the result of a *rakshasic* or demoniac cultural influence, which still continues to grow as materialism expands in society. Money and sensual gratification have become major goals in life, though they alone cannot give us peace or contentment. Instead they cause us to develop more desires in the hopes of finding fulfillment while leaving us feeling hollow and ever-more restless without knowing why.

Mahatma Gandhi once wrote that the way we treat our women is an indicator of our barbarism. Whereas men may have greater physical energy than women, the latter clearly have more internal and emotional energy. It is not without reason then that women are identified with *shakti* in Vedic civilization. If women are kept suppressed, this *shakti* will be denied to the family and the society, thus weakening all of them.

In real Vedic culture it is taught that every man should view and respect every woman, except his

own wife, as his mother, and every girl with the same concern and care as his own daughter. It is only because of the lack of such training and the social distancing from the high morals as this that this teaching is being forgotten, and the respect that society should have for women has been reduced.

In this way, the change in the attitude toward women in India (and across the globe) was due to a loss of culture and of the true Vedic standards and a lack of understanding true Vedic spiritual knowledge. Thus, it should be easy to see the need for organizations that will keep and teach the proper views, which were once a basic part of the genuine Vedic traditions.

When the position of women declines, then that society loses its equilibrium and harmony. In the spiritual domain, men and women have an equal position. Men and women are equal as sons and daughters of the same Supreme Father. However, you cannot bring the spiritual domain to this Earth or enter the spiritual strata if your consciousness is focused on the differences of the sexes, and thus treat women poorly. One is not superior to the other, spiritually speaking, but each has particular ways or talents to contribute to society and to the service of God.

So men should not try to control women by force, but neither should women forcefully try to seize the role of men or try to adopt the masculine nature of men. Otherwise, imbalance results in society, just as a car will not move properly when the tires on one side are too low or out of balance. Of course there are exceptions in which some men are naturally good at feminine roles and some women are talented in masculine occupations. But the point is that women and men must work cooperatively like the twin wings of a bird, together which will raise the whole society.

If there is a lack of respect and cooperation, how can society be progressive? After all, how can there be a spirit of cooperation and appreciation between men and women when instead there is a mood of competition or of disrespect for one towards the other? It is this mood in materialistic society that is increasing in both family and corporate life which contributes to social imbalance and not to a smooth and peaceful society.

**Nowhere do the Vedas say that woman is man's property**, as she came to be considered in certain periods of history. Nor it is enjoined that her role shall be subordinated to that of her husband. This is evident from the sukta of Surya's bridal in the Rig Veda: Enter your house as the household's mistress. May authority in speech ever be yours!' 10.85.26). 'Watch over this house as mistress of the home. Unite yourself wholly with your husband' (10.85.27). 'Here dwell ye, be not parted; enjoy full age, play and rejoice with sons and grandsons in your own house' (10.85.42). 'Act like a queen over your husband's father, over your husband's mother likewise, and his sister. Over all your husband's brothers be queen' (10.85.46).

*Yatra Naryastupujyante! Ramantetatra Devata!..*  
(Where WOMEN are respected, GODS make their HOME)

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