



## HUMAN AND DIVINE MOTHERS IN HINDUISM

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Hinduism is a problematic concept: it is a construct, being mainly the result of western colonization and the dominant social role of *brahmanical* forms of religion (King 96–142). In this chapter the term *Hinduism* loosely presents the numerous multi-faceted religions of India that have very fluid boundaries, share many common features, and have been freely borrowing from one another throughout history. However, despite many differences and an extremely rich variety of expressions, they have remained closely related. The dialectical relationship between religion and society seems particularly evident in Hindu social practices: the links between Hindu goddesses and the role of women in Hindu society are very striking, and so is the interrelatedness between human and divine mothering. When exploring the interplay of divine and human mothering in this context, as in any other context, it is important to be aware of the many parameters in this relationship, such as the historical and socio-economic context (that is, a particular time and place in history, the class and economic system of that period), the locality (village/city), and particular religious background.

This chapter<sup>1</sup> focuses on the characters of two popular Hindu goddesses: the benevolent, wifely goddess Sita, and the terrifying, ambiguous goddess Kali. Sita is the prominent heroine and deity of the *Vaishnava* tradition and she is often regarded as the divine manifestation of Shri-Lakshmi, the wife of the great god Vishnu. Kali is usually an independent goddess but she is also associated with another great male deity of Hinduism, Shiva, and thus linked with the *Shaiva* tradition. The sources for their mythology are mainly literary and they were composed, or at least edited, by educated male elites of India, thus presenting the male vision of the divine. In this chapter I will explore

the roles of mothers, wives, and daughters as prescribed in the *Laws of Manu*—one of the most important constructs of Hindu social and religious life. The *Laws of Manu* that we know at present was probably composed in the beginning of the Common Era by the male priests of that time and was also meant mainly for the audience of priests. It presents an attempt to prescribe the correct conduct, rights, and duties for Hindus, covering all aspects of life. This chapter outlines the interrelatedness, and the parallels and dichotomies between the roles of women as constructed in the *Laws of Manu*, and in Hindu mythology and theology.

### Divine Wives and Mothers

Hindu goddesses play very diverse and multi-faceted roles—some have limited powers and others are all-powerful, some are presented as subordinate consorts to the male gods, and others occupy that supremacy themselves. In some goddesses the divine is revealed as beautiful, blissful, and sublime; in others, as terrible, fierce, and painful. Some clearly belong to the controlled, brahmanical social order, others to the uncontrolled, wild fringes of society. Many scholars, western and Indian, assume that all Hindu goddesses are manifestations of one Great Goddess or one underlying feminine principle. This assumption is also based on several Hindu texts, mostly belonging to later Hinduism.<sup>2</sup> Kinsley (1988 4–5, 197–198) rightly challenges the view that all goddesses are one, arguing that the male Hindu gods have long been recognized and presented by most scholars as individual deities and there is no reason why the female deities should not be viewed similarly.

Hindu goddesses, though diverse in their characters, can be divided into two groups, married and unmarried, and, as pointed out by Babb (215–230), the benevolent goddesses are generally presented as good, subordinate wives whereas the malevolent ones are usually unmarried. This division reflects the fear of female sexuality and the need for a husband to control it, as is well illustrated in many myths. This fear can be easily observed in Hindu society and is clearly expressed in the *Laws of Manu*: women are perceived as powerful and dangerous, they have to be tamed by their husbands, and only in marriage, under male supervision, can they express their sexuality in acceptable ways.

### Kali

Kali is one of the most prominent Hindu goddesses, and in some parts of India, for example, Bengal, her popularity is outstanding: for millions of worshippers she represents the highest manifestation of the divine. She is a dangerous, wild, bloodthirsty, violent deity, often associated with blood, destruction, death, and cremation. Her appearance is terrifying: she is very dark and frightening, usually portrayed naked, with lolling tongue and fanglike teeth, adorned with a garland of human heads, holding a sword, dancing madly and laughing, and intoxicated from drinking the blood of her victims. She is associated with the uncivilized margins of Hindu society, her abode being the battlefield or the cremation ground. As Kinsley says:

She represents, it seems, something that has been pushed to its ultimate limits, something that has been apprehended as unspeakably terrifying, something totally and irreconcilably “other.” She seems “extreme.” (1975 82)

In later Hinduism many attempts have been made to see Kali as a manifestation of one Great Goddess or as an active, female aspect of the god Shiva. This view has been accepted and reiterated by many western and Indian scholars to the present day. But even a brief encounter with Kali's mythology and theology leaves no doubt that she has strong, individual characteristics and an identity of her own. Kali has many faces: she is a destructive goddess, uncontrolled lover, and a gentle mother. When associated with a male god she is always with Shiva, a wild and ambiguous god. This reflects an attempt to place Kali into the mainstream Hindu traditions by subjecting her to Shiva through marriage, the usual way of taming a wild goddess. In many stories they appear dancing together, usually in a tumultuous cosmic dance, threatening to destroy the world. Although Shiva defeats her in their dance contests she is never totally subdued by him. In most Hindu traditions Kali is uncontrollable, and when portrayed with Shiva she is often depicted in a dominant position: standing on Shiva, engaging him in sexual intercourse, or provoking him into dangerous and destructive behaviour. In the *Devi-bhagavata-purana* Kali reveals to Shiva that she is the universal goddess, the creator and destroyer of the universe. Her dominant position is most clearly expressed in the Tantric tradition and Shakta devotional movements.

Her character is completely contrary to the expected social roles of women in Hindu society as prescribed in the orthodox Hindu Law Books. Kali is free from all social norms and expectations. She is associated with blood and death, both regarded by mainstream Hindu society as the most polluting aspects of life, requiring rituals of purification. Kali is usually portrayed naked, with wild, dishevelled hair, in complete contrast to Hindu social convention that expects women to look modest, with their hair tightly bound. Kali is also sexually powerful and aggressive. With her long, lolling tongue she is portrayed as a consumer of blood, demons, and sacrificial offerings. Kripal (243–252) interprets her tongue in the Tantric context as representing sexual gratification and consumption of the forbidden—that is, enjoying what society regards as forbidden or polluted.

In her mythology Kali has no motherly role; she does not give life but rather takes life and feeds on life. There are only a few stories where Kali has some motherly attributes, such as the *Linga-purana*, a sacred text of the Shaiva tradition (1.106.20–28), where she is mothering her husband. In this story Kali killed a powerful demon and saved the world. After the battle, drunk on the blood of killed demons, she could not stop raging, and was threatening to destroy the world herself. To pacify her Shiva appeared in the battlefield as an infant, helplessly crying. Seeing him distressed Kali picked him up and nursed him, and she became calm. This is how Shiva tamed and pacified her and prevented the destruction of the universe: her disguised husband provoked her motherly feelings. Her devotees often act like a helpless child and address her as the Great Mother. In the devotional Shakta tradition, most common in Bengal, Kali is usually approached as a mother. In her devotee's eyes, she is the ultimate Mother who has to be accepted and loved by her children, despite being wild and destructive. Only through complete surrender and total child-like devotion can the fear of her be overcome (Kinsley 1975 120–1). As a loving mother, she can comfort her children, if they totally surrender, with unconditional love and devotion.

There have been many attempts to interpret Kali from various perspectives—cultural, political, sociological, and psychological. Psychologists, mainly Freudian and Jungian, often see Kali as the archetype of the Great Mother (Neumann 147–72) or a devotee's regression to childhood and non-individuality (Zimmer 213). Kakar (173) and other psychologists interpret that Kali provides her (male) devotees with a ritual and symbolic integration of the two faces of

Hindu motherhood: the “good” and the “bad,” the trust and the fear, the loving care and the fear of abandonment.

Kinsley (1975 132–149) argues that Kali needs to be interpreted on her own plane of reference, as a representation of the Hindu vision of reality and of the divine. She expresses several central Hindu themes. She depicts the illusionary nature of the world, which is just a magical creation, and she shows the path beyond it by presenting the unpredictable, frightening “other” dimensions of this world, thus urging one to seek the Eternal. Her identification with death reminds her devotees of the finite nature of everything in this world. The person who has fully accepted her frightening side becomes child-like, open, flexible, and delighted in the world, which is seen as Kali's play. As Kinsley says:

Kali is Mother to her devotees not because she protects them from the way things really are but because she reveals to them their mortality and thus releases them to act fully and freely, releases them from the incredible, binding web of “adult” pretense, practicality, and rationality. (1975 145–146)

Kali is undeniably one of the most non-maternal goddesses of Hindu mythology, but she is also one of the goddesses most often approached as the ultimate divine Mother.

### Sita

If Kali often personifies the “bad mother” then Sita is certainly a perfect (male) construct of a “good mother.” Sita, the devoted wife of Rama, is the most popular heroine of the great Indian epic the *Ramayana*, a significant literary work that has had a profound influence on Indian society and the cultures of Southeast Asia. The main story of this epic concerns Prince Rama and his wife Sita: it narrates how he was disinherited and exiled, accompanied by his wife and brother, to the wilderness for 14 years; how his wife Sita was abducted by the mighty demon Ravana, and how her husband Rama heroically rescued her.

Sita is an ancient Indian goddess who was known long before the *Ramayana* was composed. She was a goddess of the ploughed fields: the word *sita* means “furrow” (Kinsley 1988 67–70). Since the composition of the *Ramayana*, she has been almost entirely associated

with Rama, representing his exemplary wife. The early *Ramayana* does not emphasize her divinity, but in later vernacular versions of the story she has become increasingly identified as the divine manifestation of Shri-Lakshmi, one of the most benevolent, demure, and good-natured deities of Hinduism (Kinsley 1988 65). Sita stands in Indian culture as the divine model of the perfect wife and forms an important part of Indian psyche:

From earliest childhood, a Hindu has heard Sita's legend recounted on any number of sacral and secular occasions; heard her qualities extolled in devotional songs; and absorbed the ideal feminine identity she incorporates through the many everyday metaphors and similes that are associated with her name. Thus, "She is as pure as Sita" denotes chastity in a woman, and "She is a second Sita," the appreciation of a woman's uncomplaining self-sacrifice. If, as Jerome Bruner remarks, "In the mythologically instructed community there is a corpus of images and models that provide the pattern to which the individual may aspire, a range of metaphoric identity," then this range, in the case of a Hindu woman, is condensed in one model. And she is Sita. (Kakar 64)

Sita has no independence: her status is defined entirely in relation to her husband Rama. She is a perfect *pativrata*—a virtuous, totally devoted wife, constantly worshipping her husband—the ideal wife as described in the *Laws of Manu*: "A virtuous wife should constantly serve her husband like a god ... it is because a wife obeys her husband that she is exalted in heaven" (5 154–155).<sup>3</sup>

Throughout the epic, Rama is considered the ideal king and perfect husband, although he treats his wife abusively: he doubts her chastity, he allows her to undergo the ordeal by fire, and later he banishes her from his kingdom, though she is pregnant with his unborn sons. And throughout these ordeals Sita remains devoted to him, and blames only herself for her misfortunes.

Her role as a mother of children is insignificant in comparison to her role as a wife. Apart from mentioning that she gave birth to twin sons when she was in exile, the text is silent about her mothering of her children. The epic is entirely focused on her mothering of her husband—she is a perfect (male) construct of a "good mother."

It is in her relationship to others, primarily to her husband, and in her complete sacrifice of self-will that the ideal feminine role has been

constructed in Hindu society. All women's religious practices—prayers, sacrifices, fasts, and pilgrimages—are for the benefit and salvation of her husband and for procreation of sons. Sita represents a model *par excellence* of a perfect wife, and Hindu women have been strongly influenced by that model to the present day.

### The Laws of Manu

The *Laws of Manu* is one of the earliest literary sources providing valuable information on all aspects of Hindu social structure, family life, and religion. Reputedly the first Hindu legal text, it has been regarded as an authority on most Hindu social, legal, and religious matters. It is an important construct of Hindu religion and society. The *Laws of Manu* is the priests' vision of how life should be lived, reflecting to some extent the social circumstances of that time: we do not know how the text was really applied, but a large part of it was probably wishful thinking rather than a description of reality.

The *Laws of Manu* gives much attention to the complexities of family life and the position of women. The text became, and remains, the basis of the Hindu marriage code. It depicts women both in general and in specific roles as daughters, wives, mothers, and widows. The text expresses a firm belief in a natural hierarchical order of society. There is no "universal human nature," and there is no law that would be common for all human beings. Therefore all the laws are given only in the context of class, gender, and stages of life, always with male priests on the top of the social hierarchy.

The text views women as naturally inferior to men: women's nature is defined as untrustworthy and corrupted and therefore women are unfit for any independence. "It is the very nature of women to corrupt men here on earth; for that reason, circumspect men do not get careless and wanton among wanton women (2.213). By running after men like whores, by their fickle minds, and by their natural lack of affection, women are unfaithful to their husbands even when they are zealously guarded. Knowing that women's nature is like this, as it was born at the creation by the Lord of Creatures, a man should make the utmost effort to guard them (9.15–17). Even women from a man's own family are viewed as a dangerous sexual threat to him: "No one should sit in a deserted place with his mother, sister, or daughter; for the string cluster of the sensory powers drags away even a learned man" (2.215).

A woman is always the property of men, first of her father and then of her husband, and she is often listed together with other objects that a man possesses. At the same time, a woman's body is a source of pollution: blood from her body—from menstruation, miscarriage, or giving birth—is extremely polluting, especially for priests; even looking at a woman menstruating or giving birth demands ritual cleansing (4.40–44).

Though women are represented in these ways, the *Laws of Manu* gives the greatest attention to the role of the wife—it is presented as the most important role in a woman's life. The wife's dependence is not only economic but extends to all areas, including religion and, according to the *Laws of Manu*, the focus of a woman's religious practice should be the worship of her husband: "[a] virtuous wife should constantly serve her husband like a god.... It is because a wife obeys her husband that she is exalted in heaven" (5.154–155).

Chastity seems to be the most important feature of a "good" wife, and also the main factor in her spiritual salvation: "A virtuous wife who remains chaste when her husband has died goes to heaven...." (5.160); "A woman who is unfaithful to her husband is an object of reproach in this world; (then) she is (re)born in the womb of a jackal and is tormented by diseases born of her evil" (5.164). The text allows a widower to remarry as soon as the funeral rites for his deceased wife are completed, but prohibits remarriage of widows (5.161–162). The fate of widows was, and still is, extremely miserable. In the medieval period it was regarded as the highest fulfilment for a widow to end her life on her husband's funeral pyre (the custom of *sati*). The prohibition of remarriage of widows, although legally nullified since 1856, still affects Hindu society, especially among the upper classes where it is socially unacceptable for a widow to remarry.

The greatest expectation from a wife is the mothering of her husband and the bearing of sons: only a son can perform rituals for his ancestors in the patriarchal family structure (9.137–138). In her role as a good wife and mother (of sons) a woman is compared to the great goddess Lakshmi:

There is no difference at all between the goddesses of good fortune who live in houses and women who are the lamps of the houses, worthy of reverence, and greatly blessed because of their progeny. (9.26)

The mother's relationship with children is not much discussed. In talking about mothers the text always implies mothers of son(s) and mothers are presented as passive producers of sons.<sup>4</sup> There is an ambivalence in the mother-son relationship: on the one hand the woman is dependent, on the other hand there is the apotheosis of the mother—she has to be venerated and obeyed by her sons. The emotional link between mother and son reverses the roles between man and woman; the mother exercises considerable influence on all his decisions (Mies 102). There is, indeed, a conflict between the two sets of rules: the son should obey the mother and the mother should obey the son. The rule prescribing that the mother should obey the son may represent an attempt to check the great influence of mothers on sons that actually existed and still exists in Indian society (Mies 46).

By contrast, the status of a mother of daughters only is almost equal to the status of a childless woman: "A barren wife may be superseded in the eighth year; one whose children have died, in the tenth; one who bears (only) daughters, in the eleventh...." (9.81). A daughter is a misfortune for a mother, especially if she has no sons. It is considered to be the wife's fault if she produces only daughters. Daughters are discussed mainly in the context of marriage laws—how a father should marry off his daughter to a man of the same class, according to the rules of his class. While staying with her parents, a daughter should be always strictly controlled. One of the most important reasons for this constant supervision is the preservation of her chastity: a daughter's virginity is crucially important. The father makes all decisions about his daughter and gives her away in marriage. Child-marriage is encouraged: "A thirty-year-old man should marry a twelve-year-old girl who charms his heart, and a man of twenty-four an eight-year-old girl" (9.94).

Daughters are also mentioned in the context of property and inheritance: patrilineal law is advocated in all respects—the lineage continues through the eldest son. If a man has no son he may appoint his daughter's son to continue the lineage for religious purposes (9.127). Only in this context can a daughter be regarded as equal to a son (9.130): if a man dies sonless, his daughter's son should inherit his entire property (9.131), and take on the duty to perform all rituals for ancestors of his mother, and of his father (9.139). The inheritance right is her son's; she herself has no rights over the property.

The text is silent about the mother-daughter relationship, apart from a few brief passages on a daughter's inheritance of her mother's

property (9.192–193; 9.194–195). Since daughters were married off as children, the relationship between mother and daughter was not as clearly defined as the mother-son relationship. The mother's task was to prepare the daughter for her future role as a daughter-in-law: she had to train her to be obedient and subservient to her future in-laws since she would fill the lowest position in her in-laws' family until she gave birth to a son. From the earliest historical records to the present day a consistent strong preference for sons has been expressed all over India. All Hindu texts give abundant evidence of strong patriarchal values and cultural devaluation of girls and women.

The birth of a son is always rejoiced at, whereas the birth of a daughter is regarded as a sorrowful event. The religious roots of this can be found in the oldest recorded Hindu texts. A son has a ritual significance in securing a place for his ancestors in heaven, whereas a daughter is considered an economic burden because a dowry is expected upon marriage. Moreover, because the daughter leaves her parents' home, she does not contribute to her family's income.

It is obvious that the oppression of women in modern India—pronounced preference for male infants (resulting in an unbalanced sex-ratio in India), child-marriage, dowry,<sup>5</sup> abuse of widows, etcetera—was articulated in the *Laws of Manu*.

### Wives and Mothers

Feminine ideals of past and present Hindu society centre around marriage and children; the sorrow of unmarried or childless women is well recorded in all periods of Indian history. The woman's role is always presented in her relationship to others, primarily to her husband, and in her complete sacrifice of self-will. This is reflected in women's religious practices, which usually focus on longevity for her husband and for many sons. The *Laws of Manu* and the *Ramayana* both prescribe the role of wife as the most important role in a woman's life. Both texts emphasize the rights and duties of wives rather than mothers, and express the same image of social perfection for women: although a married woman should produce sons (not daughters!), all her devotion and affection must go to her husband. Only through "husband worship" could the wife attain spiritual salvation.

It is obvious that both texts were composed by the male upper classes of India. The *Laws of Manu* was composed by the male priests

of that time, and the *Ramayana*, though initially *kshatriya* literature and addressing a primarily *kshatriya* audience (that is, the politically dominant class), became, during its oral and later written transmission, increasingly appropriated by the brahmanical classes of India (Pollock 9). Not only the *Ramayana* but also other myths and theologies within *Vaishnava* traditions reflect the subordination and control of femininity, as do the heroines and goddesses of the *Vaishnava* tradition.

It is important to remember, when studying early literary sources, that they were mainly literary constructs of a social order as envisaged by men from the upper classes, belonging to the brahmanical Hindu tradition, and also that they were meant for a similar audience of men. Men have been almost exclusively controlling public and formal religious practices and institutions from the earliest recorded history of Hinduism till present day. We have to be aware, too, of the discrepancy between social norms written by male priests and actual social practices. Women of all classes belonged to unrecorded, illiterate Hindu traditions—they had no access to study mainstream Hindu religious texts, which were mostly written in Sanskrit. The numerous ancient cults of village mother-goddesses, probably of pre-Aryan origins, continue to play an important role in Indian villages, and belong to unrecorded women's traditions (Mies 38–41). If hardly any historical records of women's religions exist, there is certainly a rich body of evidence of women's traditions in today's Hinduism, which is a continuation of the past beliefs and religious practices, handed down orally through countless generations of women—for example, rituals around childbirth (Jacobsen), family, and household rites (Wadley), rituals of middle-aged women (Freeman), the well-known women's active role in numerous devotional traditions, and so on.

The dominant recorded men's religious traditions and unrecorded women's traditions have been parallel and interrelated, encompassing tensions, ambivalence, and contradictions, as well as a continuous process of integration—they have been influencing one another and freely borrowing from one another throughout history. The recorded texts, like the *Laws of Manu* and the *Ramayana*, reflect the ever-present tension in Indian society between the dominant brahmanical patriarchal order and non-orthodox, non-brahmanical traditions of India that had some matriarchal components. There is tension between controlled social order and the "other"—all aspects of life that can never be under a man's control, like the unpredictability of disease and death. The perfect control, the predictable social order, is personified in Sita whereas the

untamed, unpredictable "other" is personified in Kali. Both of them have an important role in the Hindu world. Sita is a demure, submissive wife; although she is the mother of two sons she is portrayed exclusively as a wife. Her devotees see in her a divine model of a good wife who is a "good mother" to her husband. Conversely, Kali has a limited wifely role and hardly ever displays any motherly nature. Although in her mythology she is perceived as a devourer of life rather than a giver of life she is often addressed and worshipped as "Mother." In Shakta tradition, she represents the ultimate Mother and her devotees often take the role of her children.

This phenomenon of "mother-worship" displays the deep-seated ambivalence of Hindu men towards women: the ambivalence between the horror of women as the embodiment of all impurity and the passionate veneration and idealization of the mother (Mies 46–47). The mythologies of Hindu goddesses can be viewed as a reflection of the male experience of a woman that is split into a pure, benevolent, nurturing "good mother" and a threatening, malevolent, seductive "bad mother." The "good mother," like Sita or Lakshmi, is reassuring, nurturing, and life-giving; she is what Kakar (85) calls a "good (M)Other." The "bad mother"—the Dark and Terrible Mother, as Neumann (149–153) calls her—is the seductive, demanding, devouring, and destructive maternal image that encompasses two themes: her destructive, aggressive role and her sexually seductive role.

The "good" and the "bad" versions of the maternal-feminine expressed in the innumerable images of various mother-goddesses, who are often the main deities of Indian village life, are reservoirs of both constructive and destructive energies (Kakar 109–110). Both these themes are presented in the most grandiose form in Sita, the ultimate "good mother," and Kali, the "bad mother."

## Conclusion

Are all Hindu goddesses ultimately mothers? We could answer "Yes." Yet, although Hindu goddesses are ultimately mothers, their mythologies can be viewed mostly as male constructs of "good" and "bad" mothers; usually the "good mothers" are married goddesses who are "good" wives, and the "bad mothers" are the wild, unmarried goddesses. When presented as mothers, they are mothers of sons; however, they are presented as mothering their husbands much more

than their children. Interestingly, their devotees more often view the ambiguous and terrifying goddesses, rather than the benevolent ones, as mothers. But mothering is not their only role; they can be the source of creation and destruction, either for a small village or for the entire universe, or they can be the ultimate divine principle, the ultimate Mother. Could we reduce the wide spectrum of divine mothers to many manifestations of one Great Goddess, one divine Mother? What is the underlying "deep structure" of Hindu goddesses? Is there an ultimate female divine principle, which is manifested on the surface in innumerable goddesses of the Hindu pantheon? I would rather view the "deep structure" of Hindu goddesses as a wide spectrum of divine mothers who range from ambiguous, fearful, and non-motherly goddesses, to benevolent, submissive, divine wives, mothering primarily their divine husbands. Probably the majority of Hindu goddesses could be situated somewhere in the middle of this spectrum.

Human mothering, in Hindu society, is in many aspects parallel to divine mothering. Being a mother of son(s) is the most empowering role of a Hindu woman. Giving birth to son(s) will give her a purpose and identity and a respected position in society—there is nothing else that could contribute more to her social status. It gives her power and authority in the patriarchal family. Only the birth of a son emancipates a woman from the situation of absolute subordination in which she entered the family as a young daughter-in-law.

Although Hindu society is far too complex to bear any generalizations, it could still be stated that being a mother of sons is one of the major factors that contribute to her empowerment and respect within her family and society. If a woman is a mother of daughters only, or childless, or unmarried, it will adversely affect her social status. Yet, there are many roles a woman can take in Hindu society, depending on her class, geographical area, or particular religious tradition, and there are numerous questions about human and divine mothers in Hinduism that need to be explored.

Many parameters, many possible interpretations, and many ambiguities will arise whenever we explore any aspect of the extremely diverse Hindu traditions, where the meaning of any phenomenon is always multivalent. Yet it is possible to uncover some unifying aspects of mothering themes throughout the Hindu society.

## Endnotes

1. In this chapter, Sanskrit words are transliterated without diacritical marks.
2. The earliest text expressing this idea is probably the *Devi-mahatmya*, from about the sixth century CE, followed by several other texts.
3. All quotations from the *Laws of Manu* in this chapter are from the latest English translation of the Sanskrit original by Doniger and Smith.
4. The mother's role is represented in this way in the following passage: "The husband enters his wife, becomes an embryo and is born here on earth. That is why a wife is called a wife (*jaya*), because he is born (*jayate*) again in her. The wife brings forth a son who is just like the man she makes love with; that is why he should guard his wife zealously in order to keep his progeny clean" (9. 8-9).
5. The problem of bride-price in the text indicates that brides were purchased in ancient India, but this practice is strongly condemned, especially for the priestly class: the custom of bride-price is equated with daughter-selling and is even not advised for servant classes (9. 98).

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