

EQUAL PARTNERS OR SILENT WITNESSES? WOMEN'S RIGHTS IN THE ANCIENT INDIAN MARITAL TRADITION

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Abstract

This paper explores the theme of gender equality in ancient Indian marital traditions, focusing on the role of women as equal partners. The objective is to analyze how Vedic and early post-Vedic texts represented wives not as subordinates, but as *saha-dharmachāriṇīs*—spiritual and domestic equals. Using a qualitative textual approach, the study examines sources like the Ṛgveda, Dharmaśāstra texts, and epics, to trace women's ritual, emotional, and legal status within marriage.

Findings reveal that early Indian thought honored women as co-owners of the household (*daṃpattī*), protectors of dharma, and rightful heirs through *Strīdhana*. Hymns, mantras, and legal codes all affirm their centrality in sustaining familial and social harmony. Despite later shifts towards patriarchy, the ideal of marital partnership endured.

The paper concludes that early Indian traditions envisioned marriage as a balanced and reciprocal union, offering valuable insights into the historical roots of gender equity.

Keywords: Saha-dharmachāriṇī, Daṃpattī, Strīdhana, Vedic Marriage, Gender Equality, Ancient Indian Tradition

Introduction

“In that family, where the husband is pleased with his wife and the wife with her husband, happiness will assuredly be lasting.”¹

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Indian culture is one of the richest in the world, renowned for its spirituality and rituals. Sacred texts such as the Vedas, Upaniṣads, Dharmasūtras, and Dharmaśāstras form the backbone of this profound cultural heritage. Among these texts, the concept of *Samskāras*—or sacraments—occupies a crucial role in understanding the individual's journey within society and toward spiritual fulfilment. These are the series of personal rites which an individual goes through during his or her life. According to *Gr̥hyasūtras* or household Ritual texts, these rites begin at conception and end at death.²

According to Kane, there is a divergence of opinion among the *Smṛtikāras* or the writers of the *Smṛti* texts regarding the number of *Samskāras*.³ Traditional Hindu thought recognizes a vast system of rituals and sacraments known as *saṃskāras*, with the number traditionally identified as up to forty distinct rites marking significant stages in an individual's life. Among these, sixteen primary *saṃskāras* have attained an almost canonical status due to their foundational importance in shaping a person's spiritual, social, and cultural identity. These *saṃskāras* are primarily derived from the *Gr̥hya Sūtras* and *Dharmaśāstra* texts.

1. *Garbhādhāna* – Conception (rite for impregnating the wife)
2. *Pūṃsavana* – Rite performed during the third month of pregnancy (for a male child)
3. *Sīmantonayana* – Hair-parting ceremony (during pregnancy, for protection of the fetus)
4. *Jātakarma* – Birth ritual (immediately after the birth of the child)
5. *Nāmakaraṇa* – Naming ceremony (usually on the 11th or 12th day)
6. *Niṣkramaṇa* – First outing or taking the child out of the house (usually in the 4th month)
7. *Annaprāśana* – First feeding of solid food (around 6th month)
8. *Cūḍākaraṇa* – Tonsure or first hair-cutting (usually in the 1st or 3rd year)
9. *Karna-vedha* – Ear-piercing ceremony
10. *Vidyārambha* – Beginning of education (initiation into learning)
11. *Upanayana* – Sacred thread ceremony (initiation into Vedic study)
12. *Vedarambha* – Commencement of Vedic studies
13. *Samāvartana* – Completion of formal education (graduation from the Gurukula)
14. *Vivāha* – Marriage ceremony

15. *Vānaprastha*—Transition to the life of a forest-dweller or hermit (optional, symbolic)

16. *Antyeṣṭi*—Last rites or funeral ceremony

These *saṃskāras* serve not only as rites of passage but also as symbolic acts that sanctify the transitions between different phases of life, embedding the individual within the larger cosmic and social order.

Within this comprehensive framework, three *saṃskāras*—*upanayana*, *vivāha*, and *antyeṣṭi*, stand out as particularly significant and are widely regarded as obligatory in contemporary Hindu practice. Each of these rites carries profound religious and societal implications: *upanayana* initiates the spiritual and educational journey of an individual; *vivāha* is central to the continuation of family lineage and social order; and *antyeṣṭi* facilitates the soul's transition from the physical world.

Among these three pivotal *saṃskāras*, the marriage rite (*vivāha-saṃskāra*) holds a uniquely vital role within the Hindu lifecycle. It is often considered the most important sacrament because it marks the union of two individuals, establishing a new household and ensuring the perpetuation of *dharma* through progeny and social responsibility. Marriage in Hindu tradition is not merely a social contract but a sacred covenant that binds the couple spiritually and ethically. While the precise rituals and customs associated with *vivāha* may vary across regions, communities, and texts, there remains a unanimous consensus on its indispensable role. The institution of marriage is viewed as essential for the fulfillment of both individual duties and communal harmony, thereby underscoring its preeminent place in the cycle of *saṃskāras* in Indian life.

Crucially, embedded within this central role of marriage is the equally significant place accorded to the woman. In this philosophy of womanhood, a woman is seen not only as a partner in the sacred union but as the foundation of the family and the source of individual and societal well-being through her nurturing power. It becomes the responsibility of her father and brother to ensure her marriage, which is viewed as a means of protection and social integration.⁴ Within the household, she plays a central role—as wife and mother, she sustains the domestic structure, manages resources, and is revered as *Lakṣmī*, the goddess of wealth and prosperity. Her presence is so vital that no ritual or ceremony can be performed without her, and her *strīdhana* (property given at marriage) is legally and ethically protected for her use. In public life, she is accorded precedence over even her father

and teacher, reflecting her esteemed and powerful role in ancient Indian society.

Marriage: The Foundation of the Householder Stage

A man transitions into the *Gr̥hastha āśrama* or the Householder Stage through marriage (*vivāha*), a sacred sacrament that follows the completion of *Brahmacharya* or a path of inner purity, focus, and spiritual discipline. Marriage serves as the cornerstone of this stage, laying the foundation for fulfilling both societal and spiritual obligations. It marks the beginning of shared responsibilities, with most duties carried out jointly by husband and wife.

Key responsibilities of a householder include maintaining the household fire (*gr̥hapatya agni*), performing the five great sacrifices (*pañcamahāyajñas*) to honor ancestors, gods, sages, guests, and all living beings, as well as discharging debts to these entities.⁵ The role of the householder is considered fundamental in sustaining the social and spiritual order of society. According to *Manusmṛiti*, “Just as all creatures subsist by deriving support from air, so do the other states subsist by deriving support from the householder”⁶ The verse emphasizes the central role of the *Gr̥hastha āśrama*, as it supports and nourishes all other stages of life.

The *gr̥hasthāśrama* or householder stage occupies a particularly esteemed place within the framework of Hindu life.⁷ While the later stages of *vānaprastha* (retirement to the forest) and *saṃnyāsa* (renunciation) are often discussed in classical texts, they do not seem to receive the same level of emphasis or practical relevance, especially in the context of *Kali Yuga*. Some ancient lawgivers even questioned their suitability for this age. Textual authorities such as Manu, Vāsiṣṭha, Dakṣa, and the *Viṣṇu-Dharmasūtra* give clear precedence to the householder stage, considering it the most essential for sustaining individual duty (*dharma*), social order, and spiritual merit.

Vivāha: The Sacred Union in Hindu Tradition

Marriage (*Vivāha*) occupies a unique position among the *Saṃskāras*, serving not just as a social agreement but as a sacred union that harmonizes the couple’s life with *dharma*. It is an ancient institution that validates and legalizes the union of a man and woman.⁸

According to the *Tāṇḍa Mahā Brāhmaṇa*, Heaven and Earth were once united but eventually separated. To restore their union,

they established marriage, symbolizing cooperation and harmony.⁹ Similarly, the *Śatapath Brāhmaṇa* emphasizes that an unmarried man is considered incomplete, reinforcing the doctrine of triple-debt, wherein marriage becomes essential for repaying ancestral obligations through progeny.¹⁰ According to *Gṛhyasūtras* marriage unites two individuals who share responsibilities while supporting each other in the pursuit of *dharma* (righteousness), *artha* (prosperity), *kāma* (desires), and ultimately, *mokṣa* (spiritual liberation). The various terms describing marriage underscore different dimensions of this sacrament.¹¹ For instance:

- *Udvāha*: The act of taking the bride from her parental home.
- *Vivāha*: Taking her for a special purpose, such as to establish a marital partnership.
- *Pariṇaya*: The ritual of circumambulating the sacred fire (*pradakṣiṇa*).
- *Upayama*: Bringing the bride closer and accepting her as one's own.
- *Pāṇigrahaṇa*: The symbolic act of taking the bride's hand in marriage.

Understanding the Eight Marriage Vidhis in Hinduism

Traditional Hindu texts offer a detailed account of marriage practices, both approved and disapproved. The *R̥gveda Saṃhitā* (10.85) provides early evidence of formal marriage rites, suggesting that such ceremonies were expected to follow well-defined rituals. Later texts, such as the *Dharmasūtras* and *Smṛtis*, elaborate on eight distinct types of marriage: *Brāhma*, *Daiva*, *Ārṣa*, *Prājāpatya*, *Āsura*, *Gāndharva*, *Rākṣasa*, and *Paiśāca*. While several of these were considered legitimate and in line with religious and social norms, others were tolerated under specific circumstances or explicitly discouraged. Interestingly, some forms—like the *Gāndharva* marriage—later became associated with divine or celestial figures, though they are thought to have originally referred to marital customs among non-Aryan groups encountered by the Aryans in earlier period.¹²

Gāndharva marriage: The *Gāndharva* marriage, characterized by mutual consent and romantic desire, is described in ancient Sanskrit texts as a voluntary union based on love and attraction. Though viewed as socially undesirable by orthodox standards, it gained popularity among the *kṣatriyas*.¹³ Kālidāsa's *Abhijñāna Śākuntalam* recounts how sages accepted such unions for their daughters.¹⁴ Vātsyāyana praised

this form as the most pleasant and straightforward, emphasizing its foundation in mutual affection.¹⁵

Āsura marriage: Āsura marriage involves the groom voluntarily giving as much wealth as he can afford to the bride and her family.¹⁶ Though it was once more common among pre-Aryan communities who practiced bride-purchase, this form became viewed with contempt over time. Manus allows it but with limitations—gifts may be accepted, but not demanded. It was tolerated as a remnant of older traditions, not as an ideal form of marriage.

Rākṣasa marriage: This form involves abducting the bride by force, sometimes with violence against her family. It was associated with the demon-like Rākṣasa of ancient lore and deemed unworthy though kṣatriyas (warrior class) practiced it to demonstrate valor.¹⁷ Examples include Kṛṣṇa's abduction of Rukmini and Arjuna's of Subhadrā.

Paiśāca marriage: Considered the most sinful and disgraceful form, it involves seducing or violating a woman while she is asleep, drunk, or mentally disturbed. Manus ranks this as the lowest type.¹⁸

Despite their unethical nature, these marriages were recognized to ensure rights for women, compelling the husband to give them some legal and social status.

Ārṣa marriage: A refined version of the Āsura marriage, where the bride's father accepts a cow and a bull from the groom. It reflects earlier practices of bride purchase, gradually ritualized and symbolic in nature.¹⁹

Daiva marriage: This occurs when a priest officiating at a sacrifice is given the bride as a reward.²⁰ It was exclusive to Brahmins. A key example is the marriage of Ṛṣyaśṛṅga and Śāntā following a successful Yajña that brought rain.

Brāhma marriage: Regarded as the most ideal, where a Vedic scholar groom is respectfully chosen by the bride's father.²¹ The daughter is adorned and given as a gift, a form still prevalent in Hindu tradition.

Prājāpatya marriage: Similar to Brāhma marriage but distinct in its emphasis on shared dharma. The bride's father blesses the couple with the words "May you perform your duties together."²² The differences between Brāhma and Prājāpatya are unclear and possibly overlapping.

Summary of the Eight Types of Marriage:

Brāhma – Gift of a daughter to a learned and virtuous man

Daiva – Given to a priest at a sacrifice
 Ārṣa – Exchange of a daughter for symbolic gifts
 Prājāpatya – Marriage for shared dharma and household duties
 Āsura – Groom pays wealth to bride's family
 Gāndharva – Voluntary love-based union
 Rākṣasa – Forcible abduction of the bride
 Paiśāca – Seduction of a helpless girl

While Brāhma, Daiva, Ārṣa, and Prājāpatya reinforce patriarchal norms, Gāndharva, Āsura, Rākṣasa, and Paiśāca show varying degrees of non-patriarchal elements, particularly Gāndharva. However, Rākṣasa, Āsura, and Paiśāca still often disregard the woman's consent, contradicting the idea of female agency.

Women's Right to Choose Their Husband: The Tradition of Svayambara in Ancient Texts

In ancient Indian society, women were granted significant agency in matters of marriage, particularly in their right to choose their husbands. The Rigveda (10.27.12) reinforces this notion of a woman's autonomy in marriage, stating, "How many a woman has been gratified by the flattering praise of man's desire, when the bride is fortunate and beautiful, she of herself chooses her husband among men." This passage reflects the idea that women were capable of exercising their will and making choices that best suited their desires and interests, particularly when it came to matters of marriage.

According to Manu²³, a young woman is advised to wait for three years after reaching marriageable age before making the decision to select a bridegroom for herself, one who is of equal varna and rank.

The practice of Svayambara, where women chose their husbands from among eligible suitors, became prominent in the epics such as the Ramayana and Mahabharata. However, the roots of this custom can be traced back to the Vedic period. The Rigveda (1.119.5) alludes to the practice of Svayambara, which was open to girls from all varnas, thus allowing women across different social strata to exercise their right to choose their life partner.

This custom not only underlines the agency women had in their marital choices but also offers a glimpse into the cultural understanding of marriage as a union based on mutual consent and personal choice, rather than solely on familial arrangements. Such practices highlight the progressive recognition of women's rights within the social and cultural fabric of early Indian society.

The Role of Women in Marriage: A Reflection of Equality and Reverence

Marriage was an established institution in Vedic times, where husbands and wives were regarded as equal partners. Hymn 10.85 of the *R̥gvēda*, known as Surya's bridal hymn, illustrates the marriage of Sūrya, the daughter of the sun and a manifestation of the dawn, who is portrayed as a typical bride. Here, the bridegroom takes her hand, likely in front of a fire, and declares, "Gods... have given thee to me to be my household's mistress." Later, he prays, "O Pushan, send her on as most auspicious, her who shall be the share of my pleasure; her who shall twine her loving arms about me and welcome all my love and embraces."

In the Vedic conception of marriage, the bride is expected to win the hearts of her in-laws, embodying a central and revered position in her new household. The marriage mantra from the *Rigveda* (10.85.46) speaks directly to this idea, encouraging the bride to act as a queen in her relationships with her in-laws: "Be a queen to your father-in-law, be a queen to your mother-in-law, be a queen to your husband's sister, be a queen to your husband's brother." This reflects the profound respect and authority afforded to women within the family structure, as well as the expectation of mutual respect and affection between the bride and her in-laws.

The wife is addressed as both the mistress and queen of the household, without any implication of inferiority or servitude to her husband. The Vedic term *dāmpatī*, which collectively signifies husband and wife, etymologically means "joint owner of the house," highlighting the egalitarian nature of marriage.

The marriage vows further reinforce this notion of partnership and equality. The husband, during the marriage ceremony, vows to his bride, "I take your hand for good fortune, that you may attain old age with me as your husband" (*Rigveda* 10.85.36). Commenting on the mantra, Dayanand Saraswati states, "O lady, I take you as my wife for the happiness of the household ashrama. I pledge that I will never disrespect or hurt you by my deeds. The wife also makes a similar promise, committing to mutual respect and harmony in their household."²⁴ The groom pledges to protect and honor his wife, ensuring her wellbeing and happiness, while the bride vows to support and respect her husband.

Within the family, the wife held a central role as her husband's partner in religious duties, earning the title of *dharma Patnī*, a religious wife. Vedic philosophy viewed a woman as the complementary half of

a man, and a wife as the other half of her husband. Consequently, a man was considered incomplete until he acquired a wife who bore him a child. Upon obtaining a wife and having a child, he attained completeness. The same concept appears in the Taittirīya Saṃhitā, where the wife is similarly described as the other half of her husband.

To express the idea that neither is whole without the other, the term *daṃpattī* is used in the Vedas. In fact, in the case of Vedic marriage, the last step in the seven- step process desires friendship between the two.”²⁵ Marriage was seen as a spiritual companionship. The Ṛgveda reinforces this notion, stating, “May the universal gods unite our hearts; may the waters blend them; may Mātariśvan (the god of Wind), Dhātā (the Creator), and Sarasvatī (the bountiful goddess of wisdom and arts) bring our hearts together in unity.”²⁶

Tripathi also notes that terms like *gṛhaṇī* and *daṃpattī* in Sanskrit literature reflect women’s ownership of the household. In matriarchal societies, a woman is the mistress of her own house, overseeing its management and maintaining control over financial resources.²⁷ These expressions highlight the crucial role and authority women held in domestic affairs, emphasizing their autonomy and leadership in early Indian culture.

While Vedic philosophy uses several terms for women, such as *jāyā*, *jani*, and *patnī*, it is striking that the word *bhāryā* (meaning one who is nurtured) is not used.²⁸ Over time, as economic structures changed, the concept of male guardianship over women took shape. As a result, women began to be referred to more often as *bhāryā*, and men as *bhartā* (the nurturer), replacing the earlier use of *patnī*. Despite these shifts, the imagery of the wife as *Ardhāṅga* (half of the body) continued to be present in the Smṛtis, epics, and later writings. Though social customs transformed, the wife’s role remained vital, and the term *Ardhāṅginī* remained in usage, highlighting the lasting importance of women.²⁹

The epic literature of ancient India also underscores the honour and significance granted to a wife. According to the *Mahābhārata*, “A wife is one-half of a man’s body, his closest companion, and the foundation of righteousness, prosperity, and livelihood. For a man seeking to face the trials of life, his wife serves as his chief support and resource.”³⁰ The text also declares, “A house cannot be considered a true home without a wife; in her absence, it resembles a forest.”²⁸

Such early sources clearly demonstrate the esteem afforded to women, highlighting their essential role in nurturing stability and wellbeing within both the household and society.

Wife's Inheritance Rights

As soon as a woman becomes a wife, her *Strīdhana*—that is, her discretionary wealth (the wealth to be used at her discretion)—becomes a crucial right. Many *Smṛti* writers have explained this concept in detail. *Strīdhana* refers to the property given to a woman at marriage, which is to be safeguarded for her exclusive use. Hindu society recognized women's right to *Strīdhana* early on and progressively expanded its scope.

Yājñavalkya contributed significantly to inheritance and partition laws, recognizing for the first time a woman's right to inherit the property of a sonless male. He clearly defines the order of succession: a man's wife, daughters, parents, brothers, nephews, gotrajas, bandhus, disciple, and fellow student. He also favored daughters over sons and husbands as heirs to *Strīdhana*. Additionally, he stipulated that if a wife had not received *Strīdhana* from her husband or father-in-law, she should receive an equal share as the sons at the time of property division (Ya. 2.115).

Manu includes six types of gifts under *Strīdhana*: (1) what is given before the fire, (2) at the time of departure, (3) in token of love, (4) from the brother, (5) the mother, and (6) the father³¹ Viṣṇu further adds three more categories: gifts from the son, other relatives, and compensation for supersession.

Early society placed significant emphasis on securing women's means of sustenance. Though daughters and married women were not considered direct heirs to their father's or husband's estate, specific guidelines instructed brothers to provide their sisters with a share of the inheritance—failure to do so would result in social exclusion.³² One passage affirms, “The son is like one's own self, and the daughter holds equal status to the son; therefore, as long as she retains her true identity, how can anyone else claim his property?”³³ This principle is echoed in the *Mahābhārata*, which upholds the rightful entitlement of daughters to family property.

The idea of *Strīdhana* and women's inheritance rights in ancient Hindu society signifies a growing awareness of women's economic independence. Although traditional legal texts like the *Dharmaśāstras* and *Smṛtis* affirmed a woman's entitlement to property, their practical application was often influenced by prevailing social conventions. Despite these constraints, the legal framework emphasized the need to protect women's financial security. Recognizing a daughter's legitimate share in inheritance and treating *Strīdhana* as a woman's personal and inalienable property were crucial developments toward promoting gender justice. These early principles not only enhanced

women's status within the family but also laid the groundwork for future reforms aimed at reinforcing their economic and legal empowerment.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the role of a wife is regarded as equally vital, as she is acknowledged as the *saha-dharmachārīṇī*—a true partner in the shared journey of dharma. Vedic philosophy places deep respect on the position and contribution of women, especially in the context of marriage.

The *Mārkaṇḍeya Purāṇa* underscores the wife's essential role in achieving life's primary goals, emphasizing that a husband must honor and protect his wife. She is not just a companion but a key partner in realizing dharma, artha, and kāma—religion, prosperity, and love. When both spouses support and regulate one another, these three goals are achieved in harmony. The text asks, "Without a wife, how can a man attain religion, wealth, or love?"—highlighting that these pursuits are inherently connected to her. Likewise, a wife cannot fulfill her religious or personal duties without her husband. This triad is deeply rooted in the institution of marriage. The text further notes that men cannot properly conduct rituals for gods, ancestors, dependents, or guests without a wife. Even wealth, if accumulated, is of no use without her presence, or if she is unworthy. It clearly states that genuine love for a man is incomplete without a wife.³⁴

Ancient Indian marital traditions, as reflected in Vedic, *Smṛti*, and epic literature, underscore the profound esteem accorded to women within the institution of marriage. Far from being passive participants, wives were envisioned as *saha-dharmachārīṇīs*—equal companions in the pursuit of dharma, artha, and kāma. The sacred texts depict marriage not merely as a social arrangement but as a spiritual and reciprocal bond where both partners shared responsibilities, rights, and reverence.

From the early *Ṛgvedic* hymns to *Dharmaśāstra* injunctions, women emerge as vital custodians of domestic, ritual, and ethical life. The concept of *daṃpattī* emphasized joint ownership and co-leadership of the household, while the legal recognition of *Strīdhana* and inheritance rights reflected a growing awareness of female autonomy. Practices like *Svayaṃvara* and the mutual vows in marriage ceremonies further point to the acknowledgment of women's agency and dignity.

Although later socio-political transformations introduced patriarchal restrictions, the foundational vision remained rooted in partnership and mutual respect. Re-examining these ancient ideals can inspire contemporary discourse on gender equity, reminding us that the seeds of equality were sown deep within India's early philosophical and cultural heritage.

Notes

1. सन्तुष्टो भार्यया भर्ता भर्त्रा भार्या तथैव च । यस्मिन्नेव कुले नित्यं कल्याणं तत्र वै ध्रुवम् ॥ *Manusmṛti*, 3.60, Translated by Ganga Ram Jha, Motilal Banarsidass, 2016.
2. Kane, P. V. *History of Dharmaśāstra (Ancient and Mediaeval Religious and Civil Law in India)*. Vol. II, Uttar Pradesh Hindi Sansthan, 1992, p. 178.
3. Ibid, p. 177.
4. काममामरणात् तिष्ठेद् गृहे कन्यार्तुमत्यपि । न चैवैनां प्रयच्छेत् तु गुणहीनाय कर्हि चित् । *Manusmṛti*, 9.89. Translated by Ganga Ram Jha, Motilal Banarsidass, 2016.
5. Julius Eggeling, trans., *The Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*, Part V, Sacred Books of the East, vol. 44, Oxford University Press, 1900. Reprint, *Internet Archive*, <https://archive.org/details/satapathabrahman05eggeuoft>, accessed 13 June 2025, 11.5.6.1.
6. यथा वायुं समाश्रित्य वर्तन्ते सर्वजन्तवः । तथा गृहस्थमाश्रित्य वर्तन्ते सर्व आश्रमाः ॥ *Manusmṛti*, 3.77, Translated by Ganga Ram Jha, Motilal Banarsidass, 2016.
7. Kane, P. V. *History of Dharmaśāstra (Ancient and Mediaeval Religious and Civil Law in India)*. Vol. II, Uttar Pradesh Hindi Sansthan, 1992, p. 267.
8. *Encyclopedia of Hinduism*, vol. 11, edited by Kapil Kapoor, Rupa & Co., 2012, p. 423.
9. Tāṇḍya Mahā Brāhmaṇa 7.10.1, as cited in P.V. Kane, *History of Dharmaśāstra*, vol. 2, pt. 1, Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute, 1972, p. 268.
10. Julius Eggeling, trans., *The Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*, Part V, Sacred Books of the East, vol. 44, Oxford University Press, 1900. Reprint, *Internet Archive*, <https://archive.org/details/satapathabrahman05eggeuoft>, accessed 13 June 2025, 5.2.1.10.
11. Kane, P. V. *History of Dharmaśāstra (Ancient and Mediaeval Religious and Civil Law in India)*. Vol. II, Uttar Pradesh Hindi Sansthan, 1992, p. 268.
12. Altekar, A.S. *The Position of Women in Hindu Civilization*. Motilal Banarsidass, 1938, p. 38.
13. इच्छयाऽन्योन्यसंयोगः कन्यायाश्च वरस्य च । गान्धर्वः स तु विज्ञेयो मैथुन्यः कामसम्भवः ॥ *Manusmṛti*, 3.32. Translated by Ganga Ram Jha, Motilal Banarsidass, 2016.
14. Kālidāsa. *Abhijñānaśākuntalam*. Act 3, Verse 20. Translated by Kapil Deva Dwivedi, Ramnarayanlal Vijayakumara, 2015.
15. Vātsyāyana. *Kāmasūtra*. 3.5.30. Translated by Paras Nath Dwivedi, Chaukhamba Sur Bharati Prakashan, 2014.
16. ज्ञातिभ्यो द्रविणं दत्त्वा कन्यायै चैव शक्तिः । कन्याप्रदानं स्वाच्छन्दादासुरो धर्म उच्यते ॥ *Manusmṛti*, 3.31. Translated by Ganga Ram Jha, Motilal Banarsidass, 2016.
17. हत्वा छित्त्वा च भित्त्वा च क्रोशन्तीं रुदतीं गृहात् । प्रसह्य कन्याहरणं राक्षसो विधिरुच्यते ॥ *Manusmṛti*, 3.33. Translated by Ganga Ram Jha, Motilal Banarsidass, 2016.
18. सुप्तं मत्तां प्रमत्तां वा रहो यत्रोपगच्छति । स पापिष्ठो विवाहानां पैशाचश्चाष्टमोऽधमः ॥ Ibid, 34
19. एकं गोमिथुनं द्वे वा वरादादाय धर्मतः । कन्याप्रदानं विधिवदार्षो धर्मः स उच्यते ॥ *Manusmṛti*, 3.29. Translated by Ganga Ram Jha, Motilal Banarsidass, 2016.

20. यज्ञे तु वितते सम्यग् ऋत्विजे कर्म कुर्वते । अलङ्कृत्य सुतादानं दैवं धर्मं प्रचक्षते ॥ Ibid, 3.28.
21. आच्छाद्य चार्चयित्वा च श्रुतशीलवते स्वयम् । आहूय दानं कन्याया ब्राह्मो धर्मः प्रकीर्तितः ॥ Manusmṛti. 3.27. Translated by Ganga Ram Jha, Motilal Banarsidass, 2016.
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30. अर्धं भार्या मनुष्यस्य भार्या श्रेष्ठतमः सखाः। भार्या मूलं त्रिवर्गस्य भार्यामूलं तरिष्यतः॥ भार्यावन्तः क्रियावन्तः सभार्या गृहमेधिनः । भार्यावन्तः प्रमोदन्ते भार्यावन्तः श्रियान्विताः ॥ सखायः प्रविविक्तेषु भवन्त्येताः प्रियंवदाः। पितरो धर्मकार्येषु भवन्त्यार्यस्य मातरः ॥ Vyāsa. The Mahābhārata, Ādi Parva, Chapter 21, Verses 41-43. Translated by Rama Narayanadatta Sastri Pandey, Gita Press, 1951.
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