

The Predicament of Women in Ancient India

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§ 1. Introduction

The present paper has a complex background. For the interested reader we present here (§ 1) a preview which is mainly methodological: **sections I-III** et alia.

(I) Systematic research.

The root of the article is the drive towards completeness; the drive to study 'a subject in toto and from all aspects,' as we would say. This is a question of theory.

We have impressive literature on our subject (women), but we have no survey of all its constituent parts. Starting from our title ("Predicament ...") two movements are possible and necessary. On the one hand internal systematization: the relevant items -- our table of contents -- are to be listed and studied from all aspects. On the other hand gradual extension of the subject is desirable. This second movement would proceed from "predicament of women in ancient India" to ancient Indian women *in general* or to ancient Indian culture *in general*. Subjects would be *varna* and caste, life-cycle rituals (rites of passage), magical practices, festivals, dresses and ornaments, arts and crafts, architecture and town-planning, food and drink, entertainments, prostitution. This list (in this case all subjects of limited extent) is an excerpt from Indological research programmes often designated as 'cultural studies,' and always concentrating on a single text (BRUHN Cu). Intended is by us **extreme itemization** (all items to be considered). This is an explication according to certain principles. The watchword is ultimately 'in defence of the handbook.' See BRUHN Gr II 278 (2000); BRUHN Ea 7 (2003) and Bruhn Ah 65 (2007).

An absolutely different subject (different from the women subject) is an element of the study of the arts. Here we suggest to study *ornate poetry, drama (as a part of ornate poetry), architecture and iconography* independently from the rich theoretical Sanskrit literature. Our aim is again itemization, but in the case of literature-and-art itemization is based on the difference between theory and practice. Literature: BRUHN Co. Iconography: BRUHN An; BRUHN Gr II; BAUTZE-PICRON St, BAUTZE-Picron Cl. Our present article (Predicament) is less complicated and more current than the art subject. We admit that our leap from culture (woman) into art (literature-and-art) is unexpected in the present context. We also admit that the

examples (four titles) are not helpful for the reader without a discussion of the theory/practice issue.

Itemization is probably an antidote against Orientalism.

(II) Orientalism. The second consideration concerns the issue of orientalism. Recent studies (called 'post-colonial') have emphasized the alleged harmful influence of colonial attitudes ('colonialism,' 'imperialism,' Christian mission) on oriental studies. The systematization of this (now widespread) critical attitude stems from E.W.Said who feels that the West has for its own purposes construed a distorted, derogatory image of the East. The 'distortion' is as it were a fight against "wrong consciousness", an expression known from other debates. The very word 'Orientalism' has been redefined. It now describes primarily a line of research, an *attitude*, not a *subject* of research. The new orientalism has its own language. Those who study the old orientalism must make themselves familiar with this language, if they want to take part in the discussion.

To make the reader familiar with technical language we quote ASHCROFT: ... "... Said [E.W.Said] discusses Orientalism as the corporate institution for dealing with the Orient 'dealing with it by making statements about it, authorizing views of it, describing it, by teaching it, settling it, ruling over it: in short, Orientalism as a Western style for dominating, restructuring, and having authority over the Orient'." (167-168)

See also SYED To: 10-13 (10-18) and MacKENZIE (208-209). We shall explain in § 12.8 how far our article is opposed to post-colonial studies.

(III) Human rights. As can be expected, the article has something to do with the issue of *human rights*, to be precise with the rights of women. It is sufficient to refer in this connection to the plight of the Indian widow (as a dark example). We have very old Sanskrit texts which describe the lamentable situation of the widow already existing in ancient India (*Witwenelend*). Widow burning likewise occurred. It is possible that the plight of widows spread along with widow burning, but it is more likely that the plight of the widow was already wide-spread when widow burning was still an exception. We consider both, widow burning and *Witwenelend*. The term *Witwenelend* was coined by WINTERNITZ in a path-breaking monograph written in 1920. Refer for modern India and ancient India also M.A.CHEN (CHEN Ru: 2000).

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Widowhood (*Witwenelend*) is both, hard times in the past and hard times at present, and a consideration of the predicament issue includes automatically essential elements which are contemporary but go back to the past (§ 12.3, 12.5): "traditional India". Without the inclusion of the second level of evidence (present time) a satisfactory treatment of the past (ancient India) is not possible.

What is true of widowhood is even more true of widow burning. We have only very little evidence of the situation before circa 300 A.D., and comprehensive information is merely found in the colonial period before 1829 (year of abolition). The study of *suttee* is therefore automatically a study of *suttee* before 1829 (or before 1987). As far as ancient India is concerned the recent situation (19th/20th c.) must be projected back, at least in broad outline.

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(1) The subject of the status of women is complex. We therefore introduce the instrument of *questions*, already employed on previous occasions. We imagine as questioner an 'interested layman'. He may ask: "Why is the position of women so humble, while numerous female deities are objects of intense worship?" "what is the origin of the fierce goddess Kali and of Kali worship?" "what is behind the sexual motifs in temple architecture and how was (is) the reaction of temporary society?" "why did the Hindus burn widows?" "could widows marry again?" "were widows allowed to return to their natal families?" "why did the Hindus not feel sympathy for widows?" "did *suttee* please the gods?" "was *suttee* connected with a leaning toward self-sacrifice?" "what is the meaning of the *suttee*-iconography?" (*sati*-stones) "why are Indian women (a) idealized, (b) treated with contempt?" "why do husbands not enter the funeral pyre of their wives?" There are also more precise questions: "Were there female manes (souls of the dead)?" "could a family include wives of different *varna*?" "was the *karma* ideology ignored in the *sati* ideology?" "did the *suttee* also lead directly to salvation?" Our exposition is largely an answer to such questions ('frequently asked questions'), although questions do not form the skeleton of our article. See BRUHN Gr II: § 9 (iconography).

(2) A study of Indian women (historical details below) is to a large extent -- not of course exclusively -- a study of *female suffering* and thus closely linked with the issue of human rights (supra). The majority of Indian women could -- perhaps -- always lead a fairly normal life. But this did not solve the problems of a sizeable minority: the sufferers -- widows and wives without sons. It must be borne in mind that normality in the life of Hindu women was dependent on a number of conditions (not being a widow etc.), and that these conditions were in many cases not in existence.

We ask: what is 'suffering' in the context of religion? *Erlösungsreligionen* (religions of redemption) have been of unparalleled consequence in the past and are of great consequence today (Christianity, Buddhism, Jainism, Hinduism in India). But all these creeds are not primarily concerned with multifarious earthly suffering (poverty, disease, death ...). They want to raise the spiritual status of the individual, e.g. overcoming sin in Christianity, reaching *nirvana* in Buddhism, attaining *moksha* (final release) in Jainism, *unio mystica* in philosophical Hinduism. Enlightenment, and similar exploits, are the escape from *spiritual imperfection*. Earthly suffering is not considered..

The faithful are helpless when confronted with evils of religious or quasi-religious origin (witch burning, widow burning etc.) in their own fold. Women (women rather than men) were thus not 'safe' in their own religions. They were directly or indirectly the *victims* of their own creeds.

(3) A few references to early history are likewise necessary. Indian sources do not even refer to Alexander's campaigns (Western India, 327-325 B.C.). This reflects the lack of historical sources in ancient Indian history. As a consequence we have not a single clear date before Emperor Ashoka (accessit 268 B.C.) and almost no dates (literary, political etc.) before the Gupta dynasty (320 to circa 535 A.D. or '500' A.D.). -- Refer for dates to SYED To 39-40, to WITZEL 125-126 and to chronological accents in our Glossary (especially Epics and Gupta period).

(4) Our knowledge of the position of women is largely based on the Dharma Shastras. But the reader is warned that the Dharma Shastras are not uniform in form and contents. We have earlier and later Dharma Shastras, let us say pre-Manu, Manu and post-Manu (JOLLY §§ 2-8). The Manu Smriti does not represent the whole of *dharmic* thought and it is not coherent in all its parts. Conflicting views are normal (Glossary: *dharmā*).

(5) We concentrate in the present study on *Hinduism* and mention Jainism and Hinayana Buddhism only occasionally. Narrative literature in Buddhism and Jainism supply information on the predicament issue but have normally not been considered. We do not include Mahayana Buddhism, Indian Islam, Indian Christianity and Sikhism. Tribal religion is likewise excluded.

We have relied almost everywhere on quotations. A different form of the text is conceivable, but would require a fresh attempt.

The author (*1928), a student of L.ALSDORF (1904-1978), was Professor of Sanskrit at the Free University Berlin (1965-1991) and for a number of years chairman of the Deutsch-Indische Gesellschaft Berlin. His field of specialization is Jainism. In 1999 he published in the present magazine an article on early Jainism: *Five Vows and Six Avashyakas. The Fundamentals of Jaina Ethics (14.05.1999)*. The paper version of the Avashyaka article will be published in India in 2008. The author is grateful to R.RADZINSKI (Berlin) for his efforts to improve the English style of the present study. Furthermore the technical support provided on several occasions by his daughter Nandini BRUHN is highly appreciated.

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§ 2. The Deterioration of the Position of Women

Deterioration is what B.WALKER called a "terrible degradation", viz. degradation of the Hindu women in later times (infra). It is (WALKER 603) the switch from a healthy social system ("healthy-minded Aryans") to a system which is marred by social evils ("The lot of women in the lawbooks was abject".)

We distinguish between actual changes in the course of history which must be studied carefully (the *métier* of the historian) *and* personal views of individuals scholars. These views (as quoted by us) concern single elements of early Indian culture (in one case non-Indian culture).

Child marriage: A.L.BASHAM writes (p.167): "The child marriage of both parties, which became common in later times among well-to-do families, has no basis at all in sacred literature, and it is very doubtful whether the child marriage of girls was at all common until the late medieval period." Subordination of women: B.WALKER observes (602-603): "The notorious subordination of the Hindu woman is believed by many authorities to be entirely due to the lawgivers. To some scholars it is inconceivable that the healthy-minded Aryans who entered the Indian peninsula would have subjected their women to the fate they later suffered under the legalistic dispensation, or indeed that Aryan women would have allowed themselves to suffer the general contumely in which they came to be held. It was inevitable that the patriarchal social system of the Vedic age should place certain restrictions upon the female sex, but these were nothing compared to the terrible degradation of their later estate." Widow burning: ZIMMER

writes (ZIMMER AI 331): "Later Indian culture was moulded by the Brahmans, to a large extent in a disastrous manner. These Brahmans considered the *sati*, common among individual tribes, an established religious custom from long ago. With the Brahmans' consolidation of power the custom was propagated and generalized with all its horrific Indian consequences."

The criticism of the later period is linked with the praise of the early period: WALKER observes (603): "The Vedic Age produced a score of eminent female scholars, poets and teachers; in fact a number of the hymns of the *Rig-veda* were composed by women. But by the time of the lawgivers the literate woman had become anathema." Furthermore: "Certain sacrifices could be performed only by women." But later on "A man could not eat with his wife since she had shudra status even if born of brahmin parents." (All women are Shudras, infra) 603. ALTEKAR thinks that in the Vedic age "Girls were educated like boys and had to pass through a period of Brahmacharya." And that many women "... used to become distinguished poetesses ..." (338). "There was, however, a gradual decline in female education as the period advanced." (340) And "... the general deterioration of the position of women, that gradually and imperceptibly started at about 1,000 B.C., ... became quite marked in about 500 years." (ALTEKAR 345)

More moderate than the first-named authors -- and a bit more convincing in her language -- is K.K.YOUNG. In a long chain of parallel sentences she underscores (p.9) what WALKER had called a "terrible degradation": "Upper-caste women's decreasing status is apparent in these texts [the law-books] written by men. This can be detected not only by how their role changed in the Vedic rituals, but also by how their body was described. Whereas once their womb was understood as a fertile field, now it became but a vessel for male seed. Whereas once their fertility was emphasized, now their impurity was underscored. Whereas once they were married only when mature (after puberty), now they were married before puberty Whereas once they had real input into the choice of marriage partner, now they were marginal to the process of arranged marriage. Whereas once both daughters and sons were viewed as important ..., now sons were not only highly preferred (A man could attain heaven only if his son performed his cremation.) but daughters came to be viewed as serious liabilities."

H.-P.SCHMIDT observes in connection with the reduction of the age of marriage: "the stricter rule will have been the later one." (p.79) This applies to all aspects of the gender problem.

Deterioration was the development in broad lines, but there were deviations. BASHAM says (p.154): "The *Arthashastra*, in many ways more liberal than the religious law-books, lays down regulations appreciably milder than those we have outlined."

Moreover, deterioration was not a single event, but a series of individual processes with little chronological connection. Of special social importance are *niyoga* (condemned by the law-books) and *suttee* (praised by the law-books). See also the Glossary for *kalivarjya*. We add *tonsure* of the widows (recommended), *chastity* of women (prescribed) and *dowry* (possibly encouraged). Deterioration (the switch over from normality to trouble) was hardly spread over a millennium; maybe it was spread over half a millennium, say 300-800 A.D. or 200-700. The Gupta period would be at the beginning of the 'switch over' (320-500). *Witwenelend* existed already in pre-Christian time. The result of deterioration remained unchanged up to the present day, Tantric 'reforms' being an exception.

The general development (broad trend towards deterioration) is unexplained. The same applies to the individual processes (*niyoga* etc.). There are as a rule *traditional* explanations, explanations which cannot convince the modern scholar. See BRUHN Ah for the problem of explanation ('Begründungsproblematik': 18-23) The modern discussion is not free from speculation. Referring to gradual ethnic interpenetration, ALTEKAR observes: "The introduction of the non-Aryan wife into the Aryan household is the key to the general deterioration of the position of women, that gradually and imperceptibly started at about 1,000 B.C., and became marked in about 500 years. The non-Aryan wife [called Shudra in the texts] with her ignorance of Sanskrit language and Hindu religion could obviously not enjoy the same religious privileges as the Aryan consort." (ALTEKAR 345) This development had a negative effect on the position of women, and other factors ("new forces") caused the lowering of the "marriageable age of girls" (ALTEKAR 346 foll.).

ALTEKAR construes a dark period between 200 B.C. and A.D. 300 when the Hindu population was reduced by a series of invasions (25 percent being killed, 25 percent being enslaved). A wave of "despondency," caused by the invasions, facilitated the spread of a comparatively new ideal, the ideal of *renunciation*. According to ALTEKAR this was of course not a final change but a transitional development (350-352, 54-55). The *parents* were now afraid that a fully developed girl might join a Jaina or Buddhist nunnery instead of being married. ALTEKAR: "We may therefore [because of the risk of renunciation] conclude that during the period 400 B.C. to A.D. 100 the marriageable age was being gradually lowered, and the tendency on the whole was to marry girls at about the time of puberty." (ALTEKAR 55) N.J.BARNES observes in fact (*without* drawing specific conclusions) on Buddhist nuns: "The opportunity to lead such a life of personal spiritual development, study and teaching, without time-consuming family obligations, offered possibilities to women that were unusual in the society of the Buddha's day." (42) There was thus indeed the possibility of a secular factor in renunciation: the general problems of the new family and the special problem of growing *dharmic* restrictions could have worked as a deterrent to matrimony. But this is only a theory and has by the way nothing to do with the fictitious wave of despondency.

As a second speculative theory we mention the derivation of early marriage of women from Islam.

BASHAM says "Some have suggested that the fear of marauding Muslims encouraged parents to marry their daughters in childhood and to confine their lives more strictly in their homes; but both these customs existed in pre-Muslim times, so this cannot be the only reason." (167-168) The 'Muslim argument' is probably more common than may appear at first sight since wide circles are not aware of the chronological relation between the events. The Sultanate of Delhi started in 1175, perhaps a millennium after the deterioration. It can nevertheless be argued that the Muslim invasion strengthened an old trend.

WEZLER Do observes in connection with *dowry* "From the point of view of Hindu apologetics, Moslems and the colonial power are responsible for everything bad." (305) This argument appears also in the present context. Refer to OJHA 393-395.

Refer for the general position of women in *Jainism* and *Buddhism* to BALBIR and BARNES.

The relation between Tantrism (§§ 12.2 and 13.4) and Hinduism was close. Tantrism became influential when the process of deterioration (§ 2) was already in full sway (A.D.350 foll.: GONDA II 31). The Tantric ideology no doubt contained unexpected liberal tendencies (position of women), but there were no conflicts between Hinduism and Tantrism, the latter being an offshoot of the former. 'Liberal' Tantrism had little if any influence on 'orthodox' Hinduism.

We are here not concerned with the discrimination of women in other religions. (Discrimination may be found everywhere.) We mention only deterioration in Judaism, Islam and Christianity (in contrast to a satisfactory position of women in *early* Judaism etc.). HEILER has collected the relevant data: "Women were not repressed with respect to religious services until later Judaism." (420) "Such repression of women regarding religious life was also not uncommon to the history of Islam." (421) "Originally, congregations recognized the Pauline rule: Here no-one is considered a mere man or woman for you are all one and the same in Christ ... A counter-movement arose quite early, however, and the norm became *mulier taceat* in Ecclesia." (422) "An unnatural misogyny was particularly widespread among monks, even among great minds of the church such as Augustine, Anselm of Canterbury and Thomas Aquinas." (HEILER 423)

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We use the context of deterioration to include a few words on the purely mythological *yuga* doctrine, the Hindu doctrine concerning the ages of the world. The *yuga* theory presupposes four *yugas* (cosmic periods): *krita*, *treta*, *dvapara* and *kali*, descending in scale from best to worst. The four terms are not derived from different metals as in the case of the analogous Greek concept (gold, silver, brass, iron) but from different throws of the Indian dice game. European authors call the *kritayuga* occasionally the 'golden age' (e.g. VIRKUS 35).

The four *yugas* have been described in the ancient texts with special emphasis on the first *yuga* and on the last. The *kritayuga* was also called the *satyayuga*, 'yuga of truth.' It was the age of righteousness, the 'Golden Age': the rules of caste and the precepts of the Vedas were strictly obeyed. By contrast, the *kaliyuga* was the age of depravity: There was a 'mixture of different *varnas*' (normally anathema), social groups no longer observed the prescribed activities, religious rites were ignored, the subjects were oppressed by the kings, famines and plagues tormented humanity (VIRKUS 35). The *kaliyuga* started according to the orthodox in 3102 B.C. (time of the mythical Mahabharata war). -- JACOBI 201a; WALKER 6-8; MICHAELS 300-303; GONZALEZ 6-8.

In changed form, the *kaliyuga* concept was at some point of time (infra) used in order to explain or justify certain changes in the social structure. The argument possibly started in the Gupta period when the influence of the Brahmans was increasing (VIRKUS 37). The prohibitions were introduced, thus runs the theory, as counterweight to the loose morals in the fourth *yuga*.

The logic of the matter was that in the virtuous early period, hoary past, a license or two did no harm, the righteous forefathers (or the world at large) could afford it. But later humanity was not the same. There was thus a trend (first millennium A.D.) to call the abolished customs and institutions '*kalivarjya*', i.e. '(previously allowed, but) not allowed in the *kaliyuga*' (KANE Ka 213-232). It became habitual to justify changes with this tag; there was no other expedient of introducing and justifying new social rules.

KANE feels "that definite rules on *kalivarjya* began to be prescribed about the fourth century AD" (KANE Ka 218). The abolished customs were inter alia levirate for widows (*niyoga*: § 9.1, JOLLY 71) and the unorthodox types of "sonship" (§§ 4 and 6, JOLLY 73). The abrogation of the levirate must have had perceptible consequences for many women.

Inscriptions of the 5th through 8th centuries conjure up the image of a just king who lives in the *kaliyuga*, but overcomes it (VIRKUS passim). The just king of the present, representing by his very person a new *kritayuga*, is contrasted with the reckless contemporary rulers who stand for the *kaliyuga*. VIRKUS emphasises that in the relevant period (5th-8th C.) the influence of the Brahmans was increasing (VIRKUS 37). The new *kritayuga* (theoretically an advantage for the women) is a topic of court poets.

§ 3. Eight Forms of Marriage and Other Chains

The four *varnas*, the three or four *vargas*, the four *ashramas*, the eight forms of *marriage* and the different forms of *sonship* (e.g. twelve forms of sonship) are important elements of ancient Indian thought. The concepts were developed from the perspective of man (the eight forms of marriage excepted); they demonstrate the patriarchal system.

The great number of chains is typical of the Indian history of ideas. We find inter alia numerous chains in the Indian *ars amatoria* (§ 10.4). Chains are related to the fields of syntax and style. Some chains coordinate facts, other chains are purely speculative, some are rhetorical. A discourse with many chains is, naturally, different from a discourse with few chains. Chains and other structural elements in Sanskrit texts are subjects in their own right.

Partiality for chains is linked with partiality for certain figures (3-4-5-8-12: groups of three etc.). Chains based on figures help to organize the material, but chains with favoured figures also do violence to the material. The actual development of culture is not determined by popular figures.

Four *varnas* It is not easy to describe the '*varna* system' in an adequate manner.

There were four *varnas* or social categories (formerly labelled 'castes'): (1) Brahmans (sacrificers, ritualists, scholars), (2) Kshatriyas (warriors, kings), (3) Vaishyas (merchants, farmers) and (4) Shudras (servants, craftsmen). The caste was determined by the father. Untouchables (outcastes) were outside the system and only in a later period headed in Sanskrit by a general term. -- FICK passim; PANIKKAR 29-50; KANE: 19-104, 268-415; BRINKHAUS passim; GONDA I 298-301; MICHAELS 159-175.

We start with the rite introducing an adolescent into his *varna*.

The male members of the first three *varnas* were 'twice-born' on account of a period of study and asceticism introduced by a particular rite: the investiture of the adolescent with the sacred thread (*vajnopavita*). The investiture is called *upanayana*, a life-cycle ritual. *Upanayana* means 'leading the boy for the sake of the investiture to a religious teacher (the teacher is a Brahman).' HILLEBRANDT §§ 24-36; JOLLY § 56; OLDENBERG 464-468; GONDA I 119-121; MICHAELS 71-99. There is no very specific ceremony demarcating the *end* of the study. The student merely has to take a ceremonial bath. *Upanayana* stands for the initial rite but also for the whole course of study and ritual. The initiation bestows upon the initiated important

ritualistic rights. For the *duration* of study, the law-books give exaggerated figures (up to 48 years).

Shudras were excluded from the investiture and they never attained the status of twice-born men. Before the investiture, *everybody*, Brahman, Kshatriya, Vaishya, man and woman, was a Shudra.

There was no investiture (*upanayana*) for women, and the marriage ceremony served as a substitute (was there *upanayana* in an *earlier* period?) "In fact, we can view the marriage ceremony as a very abbreviated period of 'studentship' for the bride" (JAMISON 47: Manu). But what was the *varna* of an unmarried adult woman? Was she living in a *varnic* no-man's-land?

The exclusion from the true *upanayana* implied for women the life-long exclusion from the study (implying hearing) of the Veda, not of course exclusion from the sacrifice. But the *actual* sacrificer is male and twice-born, see § 8.3. Recitation of a *mantra* by women was anathema.

Before continuing the discussion we have to mention customs for women reflecting the better *varna* situation (*upanayana*/study in general) in an early period. KANE says at any rate about Manu "this [certain ceremonies] shows that in the day of the Manusmriti, *upanayana* for women had gone out of practice, though there were faint glimmerings of its performance for women in former days." (295)

In a twice-born family all children (boys and girls) were actually Shudras, whatever that implied for the daily practice (Shudras and twice-born in the same family ...).

The twice-born status of Kshatriyas and Vaishyas (formalizations, not the actual rank) was sooner or later on the decline, but we do not have many details. "... from comparatively early times the *yajnopavita* [sacred thread] came to be regarded as the peculiar indicator of the wearer's being of the brahmana caste." (KANE 296) In other words: Kshatriyas and Vaishyas (whatever that meant in early days) wore no longer the *yajnopavita*. -- Is there a study of the *yajnopavita* in iconography?

The importance of the *upanayana* follows inter alia from the typical over-detailed rules for the ceremony. In the case of the sacred thread the texts prescribe white cotton for Brahmans, red wool for Kshatriyas, yellow linen for Vaishyas, to give just one example (see MICHAELS' Table 7 on p.81 for further details). The age of initiation is between 8 and 16, between 11 and 22, and between 12 and 24 respectively. The thread runs over the left shoulder and is worn life-long. The boy (the young man) has the status of an ascetic, and his temporary life with the teacher or *guru* is subject to ascetic rules. He has to study (to study and to memorize) the Veda (Vedic *mantras*) and to observe numerous injunctions (not to take a bath, to live from begging, to wear an animal's skin etc.). See GONDA I 119-121.

The law-books consider the old fourfold *varna* system (however theoretical it is) a reality. We read time and again that such are the rules for *varna x* and such (but different) the rules for *varna y*. See the following: different materials of the sacred thread (supra); different forms of marriage ... (infra); different punishments ... (JOLLY 127; § 9.4); different forms of greeting ... (HOPKINS Re 8; MICHAELS 176). E.W.HOPKINS has studied the relation between the structure of the *dharma* (specific rules) and the fourfold *varna* system in detail (HOPKINS Re: Manu Smriti).

The *varna* system may be called theoretical. Even more theoretical is the doctrine of the 'mixed castes' (infra). There are thus two different theoretical levels (*varnas* and 'mixed castes'). 'Mixed castes' originate when the parents of a person belong to different *varnas*: the child of a Brahman woman and a Vaishya man is a 'Vaidehaka' (a Vaidehaka is actually a citizen of Videha in Northern India). Members of 'mixed castes' are the products of inter-*varna* marriages. Maybe such marriages existed. See KANGLE 146-151 (detailed).

The *varna* system in its totality (not to speak of the system of mixed castes) disintegrated in the course of time. Only the Brahmans have persisted to this day as a well-defined, though not very uniform group. The *varnas* are relevant to the present article mainly because women are Shudras with the well-known consequences.

Refer for a critical approach to the *varna* system and to the Dharma Shastras to PANIKKAR: "The fact is that the four-fold caste is merely a theoretical division of society ... It is a sociological fiction." (33) "The great Hindu Legal Codes [Manu etc.] are based on the caste [*varna*] system. Manu especially ordains different kinds of punishment for different castes and holds up *varna-sankara* or the mixture of castes as the greatest of evils [see also p.84]. But no divine character was at any time claimed for the Dharma Shastras, even by the Brahmins themselves." (41) PANIKKAR wants to say that the caste system is neither based on facts nor linked with religion. Modern Hindu leaders will, on the contrary, emphasize the unity of religion and culture (e.g. unity of religion and caste). See also KANGLE 146-148.

For mixed marriages, where the husband belongs to a lower *varna* than the wife, the Sanskrit uses the expression *pratiloma* (incorrect marriage, *pratiloma* = against the grain, hypogamy). The opposite case, the correct case (husband belongs to a higher *varna* than the wife), is called *anuloma* (with the grain, hypergamy). The two terms appear often in references to marriages.

The "mixed castes" and further lists of names comprise all sorts of people: Aryan and Non-Aryan, "castes", "tribes" and "stems" (e.g. KANGLE 146-150; BRINKHAUS 208, graph; BROCKINGTON 209-210; WITZEL 48-50). What was their language and religion, what was the position of the women, what was the material culture?

Three *vargas*. *Trivarga* designates the three (*tri*) spheres of human activity. They are (1) material riches, (2) sexual love, and (3) socio-religious duties (*artha*, *kama*, *dharma*). Later on, spiritual efforts (4) have been added: striving for liberation (*moksha*). This produced a group of four (*catur-varga*, *catur* = four). *Varga* actually designates class or category in general

Trivarga is mentioned by us as it calls to mind the *ashrama* concept (infra). The three positions of *trivarga* correspond also to the well-known compendia or disciplines (different in extent etc.) of Artha-, Kama- and Dharma Shastra. See MICHAELS 96..

Four *ashramas*. The other categorization of human life is the *ashrama* chain just mentioned: (1) *brahmacarin* (novice after *upanayana*), (2) *grihastha* (householder, head of a family), (3) *vanaprastha* (hermit, living in a hermitage in the forest, attending to the sacrificial fire), (4) *parivrajaka* (wandering mendicant who lives without the sacrificial fire). See Manu 4.1 combined with Manu 6.33; SPROCKHOFF 376-377; GONDA I 283-284 combined with 287-288; MICHAELS 95-96. -- As everything else, *varga* and *ashrama* are conceived from the

point of view of the male. The *ashrama* doctrine demonstrates moreover (1, 3 and 4) the emphasis on renunciation as forming a contemporary trend.

Eight forms of marriage. There exists an octad of more or less different forms of marriage (*not* of eight well-defined forms of ritual). The octad is the best known list of this type. Refer for the history of the octad, and for divergences (number etc.), to JOLLY (p.53). The octad: (1) Brahma-marriage, (2) Daiva-, (3) Arsha-, (4), Prajapatya-, (5) Asura-, (6) Gandharva-, (7) Rakshasa-, (8) Paishaca-. The eight words are well known, but their connection with the traditional marriage forms is in most cases not clear. -- JOLLY § 16; ALTEKAR 35-49; KANE: 516-526; JAMISON 210-250 (210-212: overview); MICHAELS 114, Table 9; Manu Smriti 3.27-34.

It is difficult to supply a rational overview of the different forms of marriage or to detail the eight forms one-by-one. The marriage forms are attributed to different *varnas*, e.g. in one Sanskrit verse nos. 1-6 to Brahmans, nos. 5-8 to Kshatriyas, nos. 5-8 (with the exception of no.7) also to Vaishyas and Shudras. Another verse (structure irregular) attributes nos.1-4 to Brahmans, no.7 to Kshatriyas and no.5 to Vaishyas and Shudras. Further verses state that nos.1-4 produce good sons and nos.5-8 bad sons. The attribution differs from verse to verse (not only from text to text). The entire situation (different attributions) is anarchic; see JAMISON 296, footnote 10 (examples quoted from Manu 3.23 etc.).

The octad is not arranged according to the principle of mutual exclusion. There are thus links between Gandharva, Rakshasa and Paishaca: capture and abduction (JAMISON), and between Asura and Arsha: bride-price and quasi-bride-price. Brahma, Daiva, Arsha and Prajapatya are standard (no special elements of any importance), if we ignore the quasi-bride-price (*quasi-shulka*) of Arsha (bull and cow). Gandharva, Rakshasa and Paishaca are midway between legal and illegal. Asura is *condemned* on account of the bride-price. In nos.1-5 the bride is given to the bridegroom by her father, in 6-8 the situation is different. The act of giving is otherwise in all centuries central to the marriage. JOLLY § 16.

The bride-price was strongly criticized by the authors of the law-books: "The writers of Dharma Shastra literature almost lose their temper in condemning the custom of the bride-price." (ALTEKAR 40)

The famous Svayamvara form of narrative literature is not contained in any *shastric* list (but see JOLLY 53). In the Svayamvara form (narrative reality rather than reality in actual life) the girl chooses the husband herself. Best known instances are the stories of Satyavan and Savitri (JAMISON 245-247; § 11.2 infra), and of Nala and Damayanti (JAMISON 238-239). The Svayamvara motif (in its widest sense) is widespread in narrative literature, and in India it is occasionally linked with the rule that a father who does not give the girl in marriage in time commits a grave sin. A Svayamvara is here the way out of the difficulty. SCHMIDT 76-109 (forms of Svayamvara), 91-106 (Svayamvara in other countries). § 11.2 (Savitri).

There are various discussions on the Gandharva form in juridical texts: THIEME 460-466.

The Rakshasa marriage (abduction), also called Kshatra (= Kshatriya) marriage, solves (theoretically) the general problem of the Kshatriyas: they are not supposed to accept gifts. As a consequence they cannot accept the bride as a gift from the father-in-law; they must win her by force -- although this is illegal in other respects (JAMISON 235).

Forms of sonship. SCHMIDT observes "To have a son is of paramount importance for a man in most societies." (44). The priority of sons is strengthened in India by the significance of the 'ancestor worship,' i.e. by the view that only males can feed the ancestors. See adoption (§ 6.3) and *niyoga* (§ 9.1): necessity of a son.

There are generally twelve types of sonship (JOLLY 72-73) and, in addition to that, other twelve-son-lists and further lists. The Manu Smriti has the following two hexads (9.159, 9.160), translation by BURNELL and OLIVELLE. Refer also to the list in Manu 9.166-180 (OLIVELLE 324). The five sons by adoption (explained in JOLLY's commentary) are asterisked:

(1) A son of the body, (2) a wife's son (*infra*), (3) *a son-given, (4) *a son-made, (5) a son-in-secret, and (6) *a son-rejected (*infra*),

(7) a son by a girl, (8) a son taken with the bride, (9) *a son bought, (10) a son of a twice-married woman, (11) *a son self-given, (12) a son by a Sudra woman (*infra*).

Commentary. (1) A legitimate son (THIEME 477), (2) a son by the wife from a brother etc. (*niyoga*, Manu 9.167), (3) *an adopted son who had been given by the parents, (4) *a son who is adopted as an adult, (5) an adulterine son (borne during the absence of the husband?) (6) *a son who is cast off and has been taken by others, (7) the son of an unmarried girl, (8) a son of a wife by an earlier partner? (9) *a son sold by his biological parents to the receiving parents, (10) a son of a first or second husband? (11) *a son who arranges his adoption himself, (12) a son by a Shudra woman. The meaning of these short definitions is not always clear. 5-2-7-8 are not fathered by the husband (OLIVELLE 324).

The twelve forms of sonship are to some extent derived from reality. The order is not clear. See JOLLY 73 for the varying claim to inheritance. The well-known *putrika* (§ 6.2) is missing in the above list, but considered in other cases (JOLLY 72, lines 13-20 and following). Differences between the different twelve-son lists are moderate. See the treatment in JOLLY 73. There are also lists of three or five forms of sonship (JOLLY 72).

The whole § 3 consists of concepts, apparently basic for any description of the culture of the period. The difference between theory and practice is not considered a fundamental question.

§ 4. The Son and the Beyond

In connection with 'man's destiny after death' we have to distinguish between [a] the belief in the origin and reality of the ancestors and the description of the dead man's way to the ancestors; [b] the lifelong funeral rites to be performed by the son and by other relatives for the sake of the ancestors. § 4 is an attempt to describe [a].

We give an impression of the 'beyond' on the basis of several quotations from **BUTZENBERGER** (59-92, Vedic religion).

"After his death [and inhumation], the deceased is transferred into a closed subterranean realm ... Probably, the deceased was supposed temporarily to remain as a weak or powerless image of himself in his subterranean refuge, an image which was, when buried improperly, capable of interfering with the world of the living. It must be emphasized that there is no concept of a soul in (A 0) [*A 0 = section A zero*]; it is the deceased in his entirety who is transferred into 'yonder world'" (BUTZENBERGER 64-65). "As is assumed in (A 0), the deceased is transferred into a new reach or realm in his entirety, a realm where he is supposed to continue to exist at least for a certain period of time." (BUTZENBERGER 72)

A 0 = the early period; *A 1 to A 3* (infra) = the subsequent periods.

A 1: "The changes induced [in the course of time] by incineration, on the other hand, are dramatic and complete [incineration instead of inhumation]. So, it would appear to be highly questionable whether the deceased may still be considered present after the process of incineration has been gone through, and whether an afterlife is possible at all." B. adds: Actually, the fire-god (!) restores the body and guides the dead to heaven (72). But the dead is not brought directly to heaven. In the first phase he is a *preta* (spectre), singular, existing still in the world of the living. In the second phase he joins the (more respectable) *pitris* or fathers, plural, existing in heaven, at least in an upper realm of the next world. The *pretas* meet with various events: OLDENBERG 555-566, esp. 556; BUTZENBERGER 77-79; OBERLIES Rg 306-312. The diversity of the different *preta* motifs (their experiences, their conditions) is remarkable.

Skt. *pita* is related to English 'father', Latin *pater*; Skt. *mata* is related to English 'mother', Latin *mater*. -- Skt. *pitarah*: fathers, ancestors; Skt. *matarah*: mothers (female ancestors are not mentioned very often).

OBERLIES Rg 299-312 concentrates on early Vedic religion. He stresses the social aspect: relation between son and ancestor, common ancestor worship of the living. As we proceed in our presentation, it is here that the *son* enters the stage. There are changes in the course of time, but the basic responsibility of the son remains the same throughout the centuries.

"A significant portion of funeral and burial rites was intended to achieve cohesion even in the face of death's obvious time of disruption -- cohesion of family, group or society. Cohesion in this sense was not in the first place a connection with the deceased but rather a connection of the survivors among themselves." OBERLIES Rg 300. 307-308: In the ... 'sacrifice with rice balls for the ancestors'... the deceased of the individual families were mainly fed ... rice balls. These correctly performed rituals link the deceased with the family over three generations (the deceased, his father and his grandfather), not counting the living as a fourth generation. ..."

According to OBERLIES there were two types of offerings for the ancestors (fathers, *pitris*): (i) Soma sacrifice for the fathers [*soma* = sacred beverage] by a group of individuals [agnates?] once a year. And (ii), monthly offering throughout the year, donation to the deceased of one and the same family (mainly offering of rice-balls and water). OBERLIES Rg 312. In the first case the deceased form a wider circle. In the second case the relation with the ancestors is more direct and the responsibility for the service is with the householder (*pater familias*).

Fathers of daughters are forced to marry the daughters off as soon as possible; see the next section. What is expected is the birth of a (*grand*)son. There is, of course, no communication between the *pitris* and the living, no *pita* (singular) can instruct a father to arrange instantaneously a marriage for his daughter. (An exception is mentioned in MEYER We 113.) The *pitris* and their demands are nevertheless a reality. It is not impossible, perhaps probable, that secular thoughts (definite chastity of the bride) were an additional motive for marrying girls off at an early age. -- Early marriage of sons has no comparable status.

Pitris live mainly on rice-balls and water; refer for a description of the ritual to DUMONT 16-20 *ubi alia*. We know that the *pitris* must always be fed; see ABEGG 246-247 on their shocking food habits. ABEGG's materials form a handbook on *preta* law. -- The son is responsible for the feeding of the *pitris*. He has also to kindle the fire of the burial, probably from time immemorial (e.g. LEINMÜLLER 159: pyres of his parents).

Bibliography. OLDENBERG 523-590 (all aspects of the ancestor theme); MONIER-WILLIAMS sub voce *shraddha*; HOPKINS My: §§ 14-15 (*pretas* and *pitris* in the epics); ABEGG passim; WALKER 39-40, 146-149, 427-429; GONDA I 130-138; BUTZENBERGER 55-92; OBERLIES Rg 299-312; MICHAELS 131-149.

The importance of the son is dogmatically embedded in the concept of the three 'debts'. There are three religious debts: study of the Veda (debt towards the *rishis* or divine sages), procreation of a son (debt towards the ancestors) and sacrifice (debt towards the gods): *Manu Smriti* 6.35-37.

According to MALAMOUD De (39-62), indebtedness to the manes defines in some way human existence in early Indian religion. Paying one's metaphysical debt and fathering a son go together. MALAMOUD observes: "... il suffit qu'un homme ait vu le visage de son fils qui vient de naître pour qu'il soit dégagé de sa dette aux Pères, et assuré de gagner l'immortalité." (52) And furthermore he quotes "il est dit que le fils est un sauveur simplement parce qu'il existe." (54) Also: "La dette due aux Mânes occupe donc une place centrale dans l'idéologie brâhmanique. Elle est un élément essentiel de la définition religieuse de l'homme." (55)

A famous text, used by Ch.MALAMOUD in his discussion on debt (1980: 54), is contained in a well-known narrative (story of Shunahshepa), a narrative which is in turn embedded in a Vedic work on the sacrificial art (*Aitareya Brahmana*). In spite of its uncertainties the tract gives a good idea of the importance of the *son* and the *mother* in those days. We supply HAUG's translation: HAUG II 461-462. The tract comprises nine verses and ends with a prose passage (portion ten).

(1) The father pays a debt in [sic] his son [MALAMOUD De 54-55], and gains immortality, when he beholds the face of a son living who was born to him. (2) The pleasure which a father has in his son, exceeds the enjoyment of all other beings, be they on the earth, or in the fire, or in

the water. (3) Fathers always overcame great difficulties [great darkness] through a son. (In him) the self is born out of self. The son is like a well-provisioned boat, which carries him [= them, the fathers?] over [over the great difficulties]. (4) "What is the use of living unwashed, wearing the goatskin [skin of the black antelope, garment of the Vedic ascetic], and beard? What is the use of performing austerities? You should wish for a son, O Brahmins!" [marriage, rendering ancestor worship possible, is more rewarding than asceticism]. (5) Food preserves life, clothes protect from cold, gold (golden ornaments) gives beauty, marriages produce wealth in cattle [dowry?], the wife is the friend, the daughter object of compassion [grief? § 8.9], but the son shines as his [his father's] light in the highest heaven [translation not verbatim]. (6) The husband enters the wife (in the shape of seed), and when the seed is changed to an embryo, he makes her mother, from whom after having become regenerated, in her, he is born in the tenth month. [Verse 6: conception ..."makes her mother" (?) ... birth] (7) His wife is only then a real wife when he is born in her again. *The seed which is placed in her she develops to a being and sets it forth* [* ... * text not clear]. (8) The Gods and the Rishis endowed her [the wife] with great beauty [brilliance]. The gods then told men, *this being is destined to produce you again* [* ... * text not clear]. (9) He who has no child has no place (no firm footing) [He who has no son does not possess 'the world']. This even know the beasts. Thence the son cohabits (among beasts) even with his mother and sister. (10) This is the broad well-trodden [broad and prosperous] path on which those who have sons walk free from sorrows. Beasts and birds know it [they see the path]; thence they cohabit (even) with their own mothers.

The word 'debt' occurs only in the difficult verse 1, and the ancestors are not mentioned in the tract, a eulogy on the son. Verse 6 can be compared with Manu 9.8 / OLIVELLE 323. -- The text is not directly connected with the Shunahshepa story (the narrative). But the Shunahshepa story is about a man who has no son.

The well-known etymology of *putra*, or son, is missing in our tract. One author, probably later than the tract, invented a hell 'Put,' a linguistic artefact. On this basis he etymologized *putra* as one who 'protects' (-tra) his father against reincarnation in the hell 'Put' (hell for the sonless). MALAMOUD De 53; SCHMIDT 45. There is also another *putra* etymology. The two etymologies were probably not yet known at the time of our tract. -- The birth of a son creates tremendous joy, while lack of sons is a terrible blow (SYED To 129-147).

The importance of the son is for everybody a simple fact, but a fact which can be traced back to primitive forces (production of daily bread, protection against enemies). Later on the functions of the son were extended (performance of sacrifices). SYED To 138; CHIN Ru 202.

Ancestors, receiving oblations (fathers), and (DUMONT 17) persons offering oblations (sons) are basically male. However, women can also offer oblations (DUMONT 20) and receive oblations (WINTERNITZ 15, DUMONT 18). The matter (male and female in ancestor worship) is not absolutely clear. Refer for ancestresses, and oblations offered by *devadasis*, also to MARGLIN 81-83.

Brief information on disposal of the body will be found in WALKER 146. The custom requires further study.

§ 5. Early Marriage of Girls

There exists a generally accepted doctrine which says that any period of the unmarried daughter without intercourse is a crime, a killing of the potential embryo (THIEME 444, SYED To 118). The term for this 'crime' is *bhrunahatya*, killing of the embryo: *bhruna* = embryo, *hatya* = killing (WEZLER Bh 627-628). According to tradition, the criminal character of the deed is apparent from the *blood* of the menstruation. In the case of omitted intercourse the family's *pitris* drink the menstrual blood of the girl. This is, however, not clearly communis opinio. The beginning of the macabre motif cannot be dated (ABEGG Pretakalpa 247; KANE 444; SYED To 118). The Pretakalpa, which contains an early reference to this strange belief, must be comparatively late since it already mentions the *suttee* (ABEGG 18-19). There is earlier evidence of the hungry *pitris*, but even then the motif cannot be very old. The rule of early marriage of girls is certainly earlier than the motif of the blood drinking *pitris* and perhaps even earlier than the (more general) *bhrunahatya* doctrine. It started apparently after Manu and was in the first stage (when?) restricted to Brahman girls. Still later (when?) non-Brahmans were also included. KANE 442-452.

Whatever the belief in the idiosyncrasies of mythical ancestors, it is a matter of prestige, reasons not absolutely clear, to arrange in time a marriage for one's daughter. To have pubescent but still unmarried daughters in the house is disgraceful for the family. -- The future husband has to cohabit with his wife every month. See SYED To 118-119.

We add a few mutually divergent opinions. ALTEKAR observes "that marriage in the Vedic age took place when the parties were fully grown up." (51) JOLLY says about the following (later) time as far as reflected in the law-books: "The rule that the marriage must precede the puberty and that the bride must be *nagnika* [naked] is common to all smritis" (56). A different matter is the reinterpretation of *nagnika* by THIEME. According to him, *nagnika* means "not yet but soon in the marriageable age." (443). This would imply a marriage shortly before the menarche (not earlier). *Nagnika* may also have the literal meaning 'naked'. At least in one case very early marriage (true nakedness) is prescribed, the term *nagnika* being clearly implied (THIEME 442). The early Dharma Shastras (the later Dharma Shastras anyway) thus suggest an early age (early or very early, THIEME 441) which is not in keeping with the view of the historians who ascribe the lowering of the age to a later period. ALTEKAR describes the gradual reduction of the marriage age of girls and writes "From about 200 A.D., pre-puberty marriages became the order of the day." (56) On the other hand "Sanskrit poets and dramatists [200-800 A.D.?] always depict that the heroines in their works are grown-up at the time of marriage ..." (KANE 446). The same applies to the epics. There is thus an unsolved conflict between Dharma Shastra and literature (poetry and epics).

In the Manu Smriti and elsewhere in the Smriti Literature the age of marriage was expressed in terms of years, but not in unequivocal form. There is a directive that a bride should be much younger than the bridegroom (Manu 9.94 has 30:12 and 24:8); THIEME 436-437. There is another rule that in case of problems a girl may be married three *years* after the begin of puberty, but there is the corresponding rule that a girl should be married three *months* after the begin of puberty (ALTEKAR 53-54; THIEME 437-438). A radical formula prescribes for the girl 4-6 as the minimum and 8 as the maximum of years (JOLLY 56). Post-Christian medical texts recommend the quasi-realistic ratios of 21:12 and 25:16 (WINTERNITZ 33). The Brahma Purana suggests a marriage-age between 4 and 10 (THIEME 441-442). Refer for the lack of uniformity in *dharmic* prescriptions to the Glossary (*dharmic*). -- JOLLY 56-57, WINTERNITZ 32-35, ALTEKAR 49-65, SCHMIDT 78-80.

We add a verse by the poet Bana (A.D.606-647): "At the time when her breasts become visible, a daughter, growing from year to year [and still living with her parents], hurls her father into the whirlpool of despair, just as a river destroys its bank in the whirlpool of its current" (SYED To 117, § 8.8). Here the marriageable girl is no longer a true *nagnika* and not yet an adult female (as in the epic). ALTEKAR demonstrates in one case the social difference between pre-puberty and post-puberty marriages. He says: "In the Deccan also during the Vijayanagar_rule [1336-1648] while pre-puberty marriages were common among the Brahmanas, post-puberty ones were frequent among the non-Brahmanas [Marathas?]." (ALTEKAR 58)

Refer for the entire complex of early marriage to THIEME 435-445. -- The marriage age of a *son* is not subject to precise rules. -- The problem of unmarried mothers (Europe!) obviously did not exist.

The old marriage ceremonies (existing from Vedic days to the present) suit the requirements of more or less mature couples. When 'child marriages' had come to stay, a second marriage was introduced, so that the (second) marriage took place when the girl (girl and boy) had reached the necessary age. Before that event, and after the first marriage, the future bride stayed in the house of her parents. JOLLY 56: "fresh ceremonies at the beginning of married life" (the fresh ceremonies and the early ceremonies are not described separately, however).

In the Manu Smriti and perhaps in all law-books, the eldest son is the only son that matters (MALAMOUD De 52, fils aîné). This rule makes a consideration of the other possible cases (eschatological role of a second son, of an adopted son) less relevant. There nevertheless existed the obvious wish to have more than one son (SUTHERLAND 88).

The negative *medical* consequences of the early marriage of women have been studied in modern times (WINTERNITZ 27-36; MAYO Ch.3-5). See also SYED To 111-116.

§§ 4-12 must be taken for what they are worth -- strictly speaking we do not know 'what actually happened' in ancient India (§ 5 supra). On the one hand we do not know how far Manu (or any Dharma Shastra) was taken into consideration in real life, on the other hand it is not clear which parts of India were in the course of history under the direct control of Hindu kings and which were not. Were parts of India 'non-Hindu' or 'semi-Hinduized'? The subject of ignorance of the past recurs in various contexts. There is the old saying that we do not know what in the past *every fish-wife* knew.

§ 6. Avoiding Lack of Sons

In the Christian perspective, praying for sons would be the main way of securing offspring; but it seems that in Hinduism ritual is stronger than prayer and stronger than spontaneous requests made to the gods. The standard expression for all religious actions of human beings is *puja* ('worship') which is physical, verbal and mental. True prayer, no doubt, also existed and exists, but we have little information.

Pilgrimages for obtaining sons are apparently not uncommon (SYED To 147). But there were few Hindu temples, structural or rock-cut, before the middle of the first millennium A.D. Moreover, fertility cults have not produced remarkable temples in any period.

§ 6.1. Obtaining sons through magic

There is, in connection with the wish to obtain a son, a continuum of ritual starting from the marriage of the parents and ending with the delivery of the mother. The relevant rites are thus either preconceptional or prenatal..

Marriage rites belong to the former category. During the marriage ritual a boy whose mother has given birth to boys only (boys who are still living) is placed on the lap of the bride (SYED To: 49 with footnote 17). There is also the rule that during the circumambulation of the sacred fire (as part of the marriage ritual) the bridegroom should grasp the bride's fingers if he wants daughters, her thumb if he wants sons, her hand if he wants both (KANE 528, SYED To 49). It seems that 'preconceptional' rites are mainly woven into the (very complicated) marriage ritual. Even then the marriage ritual is not decidedly orientated to sons. Maybe it is earlier than the time of extreme preference for sons. Refer for the marriage rites to KANE 526-541. KANE remarks: "In connection with the rites of marriage it is necessary to observe that the greatest divergence prevailed from very ancient times." (527)

Prenatal rites. The time of the *pumsavana* ritual, ritual for obtaining a son, is controversial (e.g. 2nd, 3rd, 4th month of pregnancy). The pregnant wife has to eat two beans and a barley corn (sexual symbolism), offered in sour milk (SYED To: 48, 68-69). Medical texts of a later period recommend *pumsavana* before the foetus is visible (SYED To 69). Another son-oriented prenatal ritual is connected with the *Nyagrodha* tree (fig-tree). Powder produced from a *Nyagrodha* sprig (symbol of the semen) is introduced into the right nostril of the expectant mother. The *Nyagrodha* sprig can be replaced by other suitable objects ('allomotifs' in DUNDES' terminology). A third prenatal ritual for obtaining a son is 'making the *parting of the hair*'. The act of parting is combined with a long list of sub-rites, e.g. manipulation with *Udumbara* fruits. The raw *Udumbara* fruits (U. is another fig-tree) are wrapped round the wife. SYED To 69, 77; KANE 218-220.

The prenatal ensemble with its numerous variants is bewildering. See HILLEBRANDT §§ 9-11. WALKER observes: "More than one sacrifice was devised, and dozens of rites prescribed (e.g. *pumsavana*), and hundreds of *mantras* and prayers composed, for the specific purpose of obtaining male progeny ..." (WALKER II 423).

§ 6.2. *Putrika* as a substitute for a son

Complexities of kinship relation surface in the *putrika* concept. If a father has no son, a daughter may be a substitute for a real son, mainly in connection with ancestor worship. But, naturally, it was always safer to have a true son.

Putra means son, and *putrika* is the daughter who technically replaces a missing son. The "daughter herself is considered a son." "The dilemma in which the son-in-law [husband of the *putrika*] found himself could be resolved by having the *putrika-putra* [son of the *putrika*] perform the *shraddha* [daily offering for the benefit of dead relatives] for both his own father and his maternal grandfather." The *putrika-putra* was "continuing two separate lineages" (SCHMIDT 39-40). -- For the *putrika* the construction had probably more disadvantages than advantages. See SCHMIDT 33 on "the predicament faced by the brotherless daughter." SCHMIDT 38: "The aversion to marrying a brotherless maiden was motivated by the fear that the bride's father would claim the future son and leave the bridegroom with the prospect of remaining without a son of his own who would continue his lineage and offer the ancestor worship." -- Was there a rite to inform the public that a girl was henceforth considered a *putrika*? -- The *putrika (putrika-putra)* custom disappeared when the *kalivarjya* rules came out.

JOLLY 72 and 73; KAPADIA 234-235; KANE 435-436; SCHMIDT 30-75; SYED To 165.

§ 6.3. Adoption

Adoption was not favoured in the earliest literary source (Rigveda: SCHMIDT 40, footnote 12). It never became a perfect substitute for one's own son. "What is born of other loins may not be considered (true) progeny" ZIMMER A1 318. It was the own son that mattered and poets composed encomia on the son. "A male seed shall touch this lap, entering in like an arrow into its quiver. A hero will be born of this seed, a son in ten months" (ZIMMER A1 319, early Veda); KARVE 76.

Even then adoption became an important institution up to the present. For the discussion of adoption the reader is referred to JOLLY 72-76 and to our § 3 (sonship). In later days, all forms of sonship except son-1 (a legitimate son) and son-3 ('a son given,' standard form of adoption?) were abolished as *kalivarjya* (details: JOLLY 73). But this had no influence on adoption as a general custom. Moreover, adoption was always a solemn act, based on shastric theory (JOLLY 74-75, Manu 9.168). JOLLY says on pp.73-74: "Side by side with the moral progress [abolition of *niyoga*?] and the increase of child marriages ... adoption was juridically elaborated and became one of the most important institutions of Indian law." This is not to say that adoption was everywhere the same and that it was of unchanged importance during the last two millennia. JOLLY 74-76. Adoption was practised by all families without sons and by widows without sons. It was certainly a blessing for women (widows) without sons, but it seems that the continuation of the line of the husband was the main consideration. The complexity of the adoption rites gives the impression that the adopted son had a reasonable status although his status was not identical with that of true sons.

§ 7. Marriage

§ 7.1. Dowry and bride-price

Dowry: There is no unequivocal Indian word for dowry (TURNER 6290), and the English word is used all over India. The provision of a dowry by a girl's father was thought to contribute to the bride's future security. Dowry has also been described as "pre-mortem inheritance" (SUTHERLAND 85). The ancient texts use occasionally the word *stri-dhana* (DERRETT 185), different from *stri-dhana* as mentioned in § 9.6. ALTEKAR mentions numerous examples of rich dowry from narrative literature (p.70: Mahabharata etc.). In Kalidasa's Raghuvamsha we read that a princess was provided with rich presents for her marriage. ALTEKAR insists that dowry in ancient India was without "pre-nuptial contract of payment" and *therefore* different from the problematic dowry in our days. See also § 12.6 infra.

Refer for 20th century dowries to KAPADIA 108-109 and MICHAELS 119 (infra), and refer for dowry *murder* to the Glossary. The following sentence of DERRETT seems to indicate that, historically speaking, ill-treatment of the bride preceded full-fledged dowry-criminality: "A bride whose finery and dowry are inadequate by the standards of her mother-in-law and her sisters-in-law is penalised, and maltreated, and her relationship with her husband is seriously affected thereby." (183) Ill-treatment may be the basis for criminal treatment.

Dowry became widespread in Rajasthan (Rajputana) "from about the 13th or 14th century A.D." But allegedly it assumed only (late) in the ninetieth century "scandalous proportions." (ALTEKAR 71)

Nor was that all. Dowry *murder* started in the seventies of the 19th century. A recent book title runs "Brides are not for Burning. Dowry Victims in India" (see WEZLER Do 291). "... at least a dozen [brides] die each day [in India] in 'kitchen fires'... " (WinI). A modern manual ... recommends as part (!) of the dowry "clothing and cash for the father-in-law, brother-in-law, and sisters-in-law as well as their children ... In the wealthy strata of Indian cities today, weddings are produced like film scenes with much glamour and electronic glitter. All legal attempts to stem the giving and taking of dowries have so far been unsuccessful." (MCHAELS 119)

If the father of the bride has at least one son, he can redirect the gain of one marriage (son) to another marriage (daughter) to close the deficit. That is theoretically (!) possible in families with sons and daughters. -- In India it was never possible to send one daughter 'to the monastery' as it was the custom in many Catholic families in Europe.

Dowry means that "the movement of money and brides is all in one direction" whereas bride price or *shulka* means that "money moves in the direction opposite to the direction in which brides are given" (KARVE 180).

Shulka has been interpreted as *sale* of the bride. (The father of the bride sells his daughter.) There are old records of girls in the marriageable age being exposed for sale in the market-place. This was hardly reality in ancient India, but it can help to understand the old aversion to *shulka*.

The authors of the law-books condemn *shulka*. "The writers of Dharmasastra literature almost lose their temper in condemning the custom of the bride-price. Baudhayana [author of a law-

book] warns the guardians that they will go to the most terrible hell if they sell daughters in marriage" (ALTEKAR 40-41). And: "Only aged, defective, or inferior bridegrooms, it was thought, would need to purchase a bride." (SUTHERLAND 85) In other words, the purchase of a bride took place only under dire circumstances [when the wealth was more important for the parents than the daughter] and ruined the status of the girl. The prohibition of *shulka* more or less excluded the possibility of such undesirable unions and protected the girl against evil reports.

Even then we know from narrative literature that bride prices (prices or presents for the bride's father) were actually paid, probably pretty often (JOLLY 52). King Dasharatha (father of Rama) had to pay a bride-price for Kaikeyi_(his third wife) to her maternal grandfather. He had to promise succession for a future son (Bharata) by Kaikeyi, instead of making Rama (son of Kaushalya) his heir. The denial of kingship to Rama was the hinge round which the development of the entire action of the Ramayana turned (POLLOCK 26-28, 297-298, 507-508). Furthermore, in the Mahabharata, Pandu had to pay a good bride-price (gold and jewels, elephants and horses) for Madri to Shalya, Madri's brother (JOLLY 52).

The reader will remember that two of the eight forms of marriage are connected with *shulka* (Asura and Arsha): § 3.

JOLLY 51-52; ALTEKAR 39-42, 69-72; DERRETT; SUTHERLAND (85-87); WEZLER Do [WEZLER quotes on p.297 RANJANA KUMARI, *Brides are not for Burning*, New Delhi 1989]; MICHAELS 119-120.

7.2. Marriage and married life

Marriage has many aspects. One aspect is ritual. We have already mentioned ritual in connection with the wish to obtain a son (§ 6.1).

The marriage ritual is long and complicated and differs from place to place. As can be expected P.V.KANE describes the various ceremonies in great detail. He summarizes the ritual material: "There are certain rites that are preliminary, there are then a few rites that are of the essence of the samskara [central section] viz. panigrahana, homa, going round the fire [parinaya] and the saptapadi, and there are certain rites like the seeing of the pole star &c. that are subsequent to the central rites." (531) KANE has a long list of observances (526-541), HILLEBRANDT (63-68) gives a list of sixteen (fifteen) ceremonies. There is no fixed order, and probably no way to describe Hindu marriage in a short form which is generally applicable. We record the following:

Panigrahana: grasping the bride's hand (534), and *parinaya*: leading the bride round the fire (528). *Saptapadi*: seven steps: there are seven small heaps of rice, and the bridegroom makes the bride step on each of these seven with her right foot. "This (the *saptapadi* -- taking seven steps together) is the most important rite in the marriage ritual." KANE 529, 538; HILLEBRANDT 66. *Homa*: offerings of fried grain (528-529). In the night after the main ceremony the bridegroom shows to his bride [in the house of the bridegroom?] the *Pole Star* and the small star *Alcor*: the wife is advised to be as faithful and obedient to her husband as Arundhati (Alcor in Ursa major) to Vasistha (Mizar in Ursa major); and the husband shall be as firm as the pole star. Arundhati is described in various stories as the model of female loyalty. After death, Vasistha and Arundhati entered the firmament and became the two neighbouring stars just mentioned. KANE 530.

The marriage implies separation of the girl from her family (and early marriage implies early *separation*). The separation is a general problem, but more particularly a problem in connection with (a) the patriarchal organisation of the family and (b) in connection with specific views on ownership. The daughter does not belong to her father (b) but to her future husband. Through the marriage the girl passes into the hands of the in-laws, where she finally belongs. The daughter is a trust, and the father of the girl is merely a trustee (SYED To 163-164: Mahabharata and Harsha biography), the daughter is a unilateral gift to the bridegroom's family (MICHAELS 115-120).

The separation of the daughter from her family may not be absolute. SCHMIDT suggests that "even juridically the ties of a woman with her own family are never completely cut" (SCHMIDT: 63; see also KAPADIA 235). But the connection of the daughter with her natal home seems to be purely theoretical in many or in most cases. Even under extreme circumstances a wife cannot run away to find refuge in her native family, if the local custom (family of the husband, native family) does not tolerate such a course. This is the situation in 'traditional India', including the distant past.

The separation of the girl from her parents must have produced a serious crisis: a loved family lost, an unknown family won. The son remained in *his* family. Whether he paid much attention to the new member of the family (the bride) or not, depended on the circumstances. "They don't know each other, they ignore one another but try cautiously to get close to one another. ... They do not talk much with one another, do not eat together, hardly go out together, do not travel together." (MICHAELS 126) The marriage had consequences for almost all members of the two families, but the bride was the real sufferer. The sorrow of the father over the loss of the daughter is occasionally described in Sanskrit literature (SYED To 164-165, Harshacarita et alia).

The quasi-philosophical background of marriage, although not mentioned in the ritual, is the concept of the "ideal oneness of the married human couple." Here belongs the common saying that the wife is one half of the husband. But LESLIE insists, naturally, that the relation is not strictly symmetrical: the wife has to serve the husband in one way or another (and not vice versa). LESLIE 30-31, 312 (wifely obedience). -- WINTERNITZ 13, 16-17 (wife is one half of the husband); JAMISON III, especially 270 footnote 59 (wife participating in sacrifice).

The ritual partnership of man and wife does not prevent polygamy (JAMISON 31, WINTERNITZ 14), nor does the story of Rama, the hero of the Ramayana, inaugurate monogamy. The concept of Shiva who is in art often shown with his family (one wife, two sons) has also no influence on the social system. In agreement with literature one form of Shiva shows the god as half-male and half-female. The androgynous motif demonstrates a positive attitude to the female principle, but it is no concrete message. See C.D.COLLINS 76-81 for the famous Elephanta relief and for the literary spread of the androgynous motif.

A.MICHAELS presents on pp.124-131 a text on "The situation of the Woman", i.e. of the married woman. The pages are a substantial supplement to the relevant portions of the present essay. See also the bibliographical data in MICHAELS' footnote 199-200 (pp.124-125):

MICHAELS (129): "In marriage, the young wife is initially isolated, confused, desperate, and homesick for her parents's house. All her life she internalizes the conflict between her parents's house and the husband's house. The wedding can be a trauma for her." Here and elsewhere

religion and culture form a continuum. The loyalty of the wife is a central element in Indian *religion* (Hinduism).

Marriages of choice are apparently not a subject of interest in Indian thought. It is taken for granted that the *almighty family* makes the necessary decisions and arrangements. All marriages are arranged, the partners being minors. On the other hand, choice of the partner seems to be the rule in narrative literature, where arrangements by the family are no subject and where the partners are adults.

"They don't know each other; they ignore one another but try cautiously to get close to one another." (MICHAELS 126) This applies to the present and to the past.

§ 8. Daily Life (of Wives and Women)

§ 8.1. Housework

We use as a supplement to our other sources a manual by a certain Tryambaka describing the ideal wife as seen by the orthodox. The rules for work and ritual of *men* have been explained in the ancient texts in detail. The role of *women* is included in those texts, forming a special section, but the relevant injunctions do not occupy much space. LESLIE writes (p.3): "Scholars from all over the world have spent lifetimes studying the contributions of the pandits of this rich classical past. Where then are the great debates on the status and role of women? Is there not a Sanskrit-text on the subject from within this orthodox Hindu tradition? Indeed there is." There is Tryambaka's manual: A useful survey of all the rules for women (embedded into the general ritual which is basically a ritual for men) was written in an 18th century work by a minister of this name in the court of Tanjor (Thanjavur).

Instructive are two illuminated Oriya manuscripts of the 17th and 18th c. describing the daily rulings for the wife (LESLIE figs.1-13, British Library). Fig.7 has a miniature showing a "Woman standing to serve her husband while he sits and eats."

Tryambaka's manual has no divisions, and our references will be given via LESLIE. The manual makes ample use of traditional stories quoted for the purpose of demonstration. We have used LESLIE repeatedly, and in the present section we are concerned with Tryambaka's treatment of the *daily round* (LESLIE 44-245).

Hinduism covers human life in its entirety with a network of observances (when to clean the teeth ...). Apart from abstract discussions, Tryambaka explores the minutiae to their fullest possible extent. The observances are different for the two sexes, and they include also basic elements: does a woman worship god or does she worship her husband, does a woman remarry like a widower or does she become an ascetic (saint)? The observances divide Hinduism as it were. If somebody is asked 'what is Hinduism', he has to make sure: 'Hinduism for women or Hinduism for men?' Husbands (men) have numerous ritual duties, e.g. organizing burials and looking after the *pitris*. But in particular they have *rights*; the rights define their existence.

In the present section we mention details from Tryambaka's description of the daily round. LESLIE subdivides the subject as follows: Before Dawn (51-101), At Dawn (102-155), Day (156-233), Evening (234-245). Summaries: vii-ix, 48, 47-50.

It is difficult to recapitulate in a systematic manner which work (etc.) of the wife is done during which division of the day. We first quote from p.51 "rising before dawn is prescribed for everyone [!] from the Vedic student to the householder ..." (LESLIE). But Tryambaka also says, more specifically: "a woman should rise before her husband does." (52)

(Before dawn;) "In addition to most of the duties prescribed also for men [ablutions], a woman must prepare the day's quota of rice or millet, sweep the house and smear it with cow-dung, perform the ritual of threshold worship, and attend to the cows. When her husband performs the morning fire sacrifice, she assists him. LESLEY 47. At dawn, she makes an offering to the sun. In the morning while her husband studies the Veda and works at his profession she attends to her household duties. At midday, when he performs the five great sacrifices, she assists him. 47. When he eats, she serves him, eating what he leaves 47." [Daily round continued ...] Her final daily duties concern going to bed and sexual intercourse (LESLIE 236-245).

There are numerous rules: "If a woman makes love with her husband when her feet are wet, she deprives her husband of long life and goes to hell herself." (241) The frequent quotations include the lifting of prohibitions: "While it is proper for a wife to touch her husband's feet, therefore, the reverse is unthinkable except in the special context of love-making". In that context "a variety of otherwise impossible positions for sexual intercourse " is permitted for husband and wife. (242)

To give an idea of Tryambaka's *procedere* we select the subjects of teeth cleaning (LESLIE 78-82) and eating (213-229). As students of Indian village life know, the teeth are cleaned with a twig ("which is chewed at one end to form a brush"). We mention a calendar ruling: "One should avoid cleaning one's teeth on a day when offerings are made to the dead, on one's birthday, on the day of a marriage, when one is suffering from indigestion, when one is observing a vow, and on a fast day." (79). The explanation of the rules (teeth cleaning in this case) is difficult, and the matter becomes still more complex, if further rules for women are considered. If the husband is at home, the wife need not fast and accordingly not observe the prohibition on teeth cleaning [necessity of hygiene], but [like a PB] she should not clean her teeth when her husband is not at home [asceticism]. (80-81, 291; § 9.5). Teeth cleaning has something to do with personal pleasure and with hygiene.

Rules concerning the meals of husband and wife are numerous. "A man should not eat in the vicinity of his wife or his offspring will be without strength." (214-215, numerous parallels, but see 216 and fig.7). Again Tryambaka says "when she [the wife] is serving, she should not serve the food and so on by hand." (217). "When alms-food, salt and condiments are served by hand, whoever eats them becomes impure and whoever serves them will not go to heaven." (217). Further rules: "She should pay homage to her husband's feet before she eats." (221) " ... the wife should eat what is left after her husband has eaten." (222) This is an important rule, and it belongs in a wider ritual context. The leftovers of the husband are '*prasad*' (favour), just as food offered to a god is afterwards '*prasad*'. The husband is here as elsewhere the *god* of the wife (224).

An indirect description of some duties of a housewife is found in the Kama Sutra (CHANDRA 79): "Like a good housewife she [the courtesan] used all the means at her command to economize. She collected the old and tattered clothes of the hero. She dyed them and distributed them among the servants."

In conclusion we quote an old saying: An ideal wife "is like a slave in her work, like a courtesan in bed, a mother with regard to food, and a counsellor in adversity." (LESLIE 214)

§ 8.2. Wife and husband, wife and parents-in-law

Tryambaka begins his treatise inter alia by emphasizing the duty of the wife towards her husband: "Obedient service to one's husband is the primary religious duty enjoined by sacred tradition for women." (LESLIE 29) § 7.2.

The wife must not leave the service for her husband to others, neither to servants nor in the case of polygamy to junior wives: "If the wife is there, no one else should ever attend to (make the preparations for) her husband's bath, toilette, teeth-cleaning, collyrium, oblations to the gods, offerings to the ancestors, or anything else relating to his religious duty." (165) LESLIE compares the duties of the wife towards her husband with the duties of the student (*brahmacarin*) towards his teacher: "... attending to his teacher's morning toilet, rubbing his body with oil, helping him bath [sic], eating the remains of his meal ..." Moreover he has to do everything himself and must not delegate the work to anybody else "while he himself stands apart." (167) We can add that some such rules of worship had even to be observed by a certain king, an ancestor of Rama, who wanted, following a vow, to propitiate a divine cow (standing when the cow stood, going on when she went on). Raghuvamsha 2.6. The duties (or virtues) of the obedient wife are described more than once: JOLLY 79; LESLIE 273-274, 280-283.

Radical authors have made great demands upon the wives. However repellent the husband, the wife has to adore him like a god (Manu 5.154). "Be a husband aged, infirm, deformed, debauched, offensive, a drunkard, a gambler still a wife should regard him as a god." (WALKER 605; see also § 9.1: Manu). Such extreme words are no exaggerations. One has to remember that old bridegrooms who marry young girls are a well-known social evil (sometimes depicted in films). The husband is to be 'worshipped like a god' -- this is to some extent understandable in the case of a monogamous marriage, but hardly in a polygamous marriage where the husband is exposed to the quarrels of two or more wives and has quarrels himself.

A general expression for a loyal wife is '*pati-devata*': She who regards her husband (*pati*) as a god (*devata*). Another expression is '*pativrata*': She who observes the vow (*vrata*) concerning her husband (*pati*), in short: the loyal wife. The husband/god equation is expressed in many ways." E.g.: "After his [the husband's] death, she may worship Vishnu but only if she keeps the image of her husband in her mind" The husband is superior to the god (LESLIE 323-324). Mythological models of loyal wives are Arundhati, Parvati, Savitri and Sita (LESLIE 2; 29-33).

The wife has to pay obedience to her parents-in-law (LESLIE 161-164, 167-168). LESLIE refers to Rama's admonition to Sita (before agreeing to go with her into exile): In connection with the morning worship to the gods, Sita should pay homage to Rama's father, to his mother and (!) to his (Rama's) two step-mothers (LESLIE 162).

The proverbial bad mother-in-law does not seem to appear in *shastric* or narrative literature. But it goes without saying that the bride, in particular the young bride (not to speak of a young widow), had to follow the instructions of her elders. ALTEKAR gives the usual negative picture of the mother-in-law (92). MEYER's description is positive (the mother-in-law in the epics: MEYER We 301-302). WINTERNITZ is cautious (21), and in modern descriptions of the family the mother-in-law is perhaps not dominant. She has at least a share in the dowry murders.

Wives may be beaten (and *are* beaten):

Manu 8.299-300 (LESLIE 243). When they misbehave, a wife, son, slave, pupil, or uterine brother may be beaten with a rope or a bamboo strip

on the back of their bodies and never on the head. If he beats them in any other way, his liability is the same as for theft.

§ 8.3. Wife and ritual

Nobody can underestimate the importance of the Vedic institution of sacrifice. JAMISON speaks of "a culture with sufficient resources to allow a not inconsiderable portion of its population to devote a good deal of its time to behaviour that was not (at least directly) economically productive ... " (29).

A few words are necessary on the difference between great sacrifices (solemn public rituals) and domestic rituals. "These ritual manuals [huge body of texts] describe not only the solemn ... rites, requiring a number of priests ... but also ... the domestic ... rituals to be performed within the household as a part of daily life and at prescribed stages of life" (JAMISON 9). We refer to the two types as 'great sacrifices' and 'domestic rituals.' See also MICHAELS 247-248 and the Glossary.

The sacrificer is as a rule a man, and yet the role of women (wives) in sacrifice is greater than is generally assumed (JAMISON).

The presence of the wife in sacrifices and other religious observances requires a comment. The situation must be described from case to case (the different sacrifices) and from text to text. For a rough general assessment (women in ritual accepted or not accepted) the reader can consult WINTERNITZ 13-15. See also § 3 supra: strictly speaking women are Shudras (!).

Besides being a twice-born male, the sacrificer must be accompanied by his wife. MALAMOUD puts the matter in the following words: "Dans la plupart des sacrifices brahmaniques, le *yajamana* [the institutor of a sacrifice, the 'sacrificer'] ne peut être qu'un homme, puisque seuls les hommes reçoivent *l'upanayana* proprement dit; mais la présence de sa femme, *patni* [his wife], est, le plus souvent indispensable" (MALAMOUD Sa 157; JAMISON 30). In the case of the great sacrifices, the continuous presence of the wife of the sacrificer is a *sine qua non*. "A ritual without a wife is not a ritual at all ..." (JAMISON 30). And " ... a whole ritual machinery has been developed to deal with any temporary inability to take part because she [the wife of the sacrificer] is menstruating or in childbirth. It probably comes as no surprise that menstrual blood is too polluting to be allowed in the ideal world of the ritual ground, ..." (JAMISON 32). The 'machinery' included cases of substitution. See JAMISON 30-36 on the problem of the wife's

absence from ritual. When Rama lost Sita after her final repudiation, he used a golden statue of her as a substitute at sacrifices (as we know he did not take another wife). Steps to be taken in the case of the wife's absence must be described from case to case.

The activities of the sacrificer in the great sacrifices are limited: "What he does not do is *sacrifice*, in the narrow sense. Most of the action, both physical and verbal, is the province of the various priests he has assembled" (JAMISON 30). One has thus to distinguish between the sacrificer ("a person who employs a priest or priests to sacrifice for him") and the priest(s). The activities of the wife are restricted (JAMISON 10). But "She acts independently of her husband; she is not merely his double or shadow in ritual performance." (JAMISON 38) Generally speaking, the wife was very important. Only the role of the sacrificer as the *number one* was denied to her.

There is a far-reaching (but not complete) parallelism of husband and wife. "The two [sacrificer and wife] undergo [in the great sacrifices] identical purificatory procedures, don similar garments, are vested with similar accoutrements, and endure the same privations with regard to food, speech, freedom of movement, and sleeping arrangements." (JAMISON 48) Again "The wife [of the sacrificer] does not just tag along with her husband, sharing his lot, but has her own dwelling [a separate hut on the sacrificial ground], priest, and cow. The major difference between their experiences is that the actions undertaken for the husband are accompanied by *mantras* [hymns, verses, formulas], while hers are done silently ... ", i.e. *mantras*. JAMISON 48.

For *wife of the sacrificer* a special word-for-wife is used, viz. *patni*, linguistically related to *pati* or 'husband'. Three huts have to be constructed on the sacrificial ground, one for the priest, one for the husband and one for the wife (WINTERNITZ 10, JAMISON 40). Unless the wife has to perform specific rites, she has to sit at her place throughout the ritual. JAMISON describes the role of the wife in detail but points out " ... that for large portions of any particular ritual, she is silent and immobile" (38). Her personal presence is nevertheless important.

In the famous *horse-sacrifice* (a sacrifice consolidating the power of an already powerful king) we notice a special rite uniting the wife of the sacrificer (king) with the dead horse: Under a blanket the queen puts the penis of the killed horse in her lap. The whole scenario is highly erotic: "showcasing of extreme public sexuality" (JAMISON 65, 65-72). In the *Vajapeya* sacrifice (a sacrifice ensuring also strength for the sacrificer) we hear that the sacrificer and his wife climb a ladder to the top of the sacrificial post: "let us two mount to the sun". WINTERNITZ 12-13; JAMISON 270. Refer to § 8.4 (Vajapeya sacrifice).

The importance of the wife is not restricted to individual sacrifices. She also plays a more general part: "The three major areas in which the wife operates are the domestic, the realm of sexuality and fertility, and that of hospitality and exchange, but as we will see, these areas cannot really be separated." (JAMISON 39). One example (two quotations from old Sanskrit-texts): The place of the wife on the sacrificial ground is in the west, and in terms of the sacrificial ground she is "the hind half of the ritual" (41), the major actions being performed in the east of the sacrificial ground (41). And again "from the hind half of a woman offspring are born." (42). "So the wife is seated in a place associated by nature with sex and generation [place in the west], as well as with the household and domestic sphere [householder's fire, also west]." (42).

Different from the question of mere participation of the wife is the issue of an *independent* role of the wife in the great sacrifices (wives as officiating priests, wives as sacrificers). In a few cases such participation takes place (WINTERNITZ 13-14, JAMISON 38). But the sacrificial art is so complex that we cannot go into any details. There were also historical changes (position of the wife in earlier times better than in later days). Gradually, the great sacrifices lost their importance, and the sacrificial activities of the wife became automatically restricted to the domestic scene.

Refer for the role of women in ritual (in religion) to WINTERNITZ 9-15; See ALTEKAR 194-207 (women as 'custodians' [207]); JAMISON 1-17 ("Introduction") and 29-149 ("The wife in ritual": sexuality, hospitality etc.).

In the domestic scene the wife is omnipresent as far as ritual is concerned. The domestic rites are, naturally, not public, they are (basically or in their specific form) confined to private houses and individual families. The husband is responsible for the maintenance of the domestic fire, but the wife can act for him. If the fire goes out by mistake, husband or wife or both must fast before a new fire is lit. Similarly husband and wife fast together during the fortnightly (new moon and full moon) sacrifice. Here too, the wife acts for the husband if he is not at home. A list of the sacrificial duties of the wife (mainly domestic) has been prepared by WINTERNITZ (10-11).

Tryambaka describes deportment and ritual of women in his words. We follow in this connection LESLIE's summary (273-276) with its two sections: "General rulings on behaviour" and "Things to be avoided."

Items of the first category: "A woman should not expose her navel, ankles or breasts" -- "She should eat her husband's left-overs, saying 'This is a great *prasada*'." (§ 8.1). -- "She should never be alone, nor bathe naked." -- "She should never answer back even when scolded, nor show her anger or resentment even when beaten." -- "If she wants to bathe in a sacred place, she should [instead] drink the water used to bathe her husband's feet, for her own husband is superior to even Sankara or Visnu;" -- "The good wife never loves another man -- ... if he looks at her, she does not meet his eyes; if he smiles at her, she does not smile back ..." -- Refer to LESLIE 137 for bathing in a sacred place: it is not permitted for women.

In the second category we find a verse with the following list of six sins [!] of women: "recitation of sacred texts, austerities, going on pilgrimages, renunciation, chanting of *mantras*, worship of deities." (275, text abbreviated). Also, another hexad, "Women have to serve their husbands, women who are devoted to their husbands should never engage in *japa* recitation [muttering prayers], austerities, offerings into fire, religious donations, or any other religious observance or ritual, as long as their husband is alive." (275, text again abbreviated). Such rules can only be understood in connection with the 'husband = god' equation (husband alone to be worshipped etc.). Are they idiosyncrasies of the author?

Restrictions for women present ritual dialectics.

(a) Women cannot take a ritual bath with *mantras* "their ritual bath is 'silent': the recitation of *mantras* is forbidden." (LESLIE 83). -- (b) According to a general rule one should meditate before dawn on one's favourite god *or* on the meaning of the Veda. This applies to men and women. The question arises, how this can be performed by women, worship of gods [i], and

knowledge of the Veda [ii] being not permitted in their case (LESLIE supra). Tryambaka rules that wife and husband should together meditate on Vishnu "and then reflect on the requirements of *dharma* and *artha* for the coming day." (other authors have suggested other stratagems). LESLIE 52-53. -- (c) If the wife has become a widow, she may worship Vishnu, but only if she thinks all the time of her deceased husband (LESLIE 53). -- (d) The Mahabharata has a veritable hymn on the sacred cows. The sacred cows grant all wishes (sons, riches) to those who worship them. The epic even gives a *mantra* for the daily worship of the cows (*gomati-mantra*, a ritual for the time before dawn), a *mantra* for man and women. Tryambaka gives passages on the cows derived from verse material in the Mahabharata and includes them among the pre-dawn activities. He clearly accepts them because they are not a true Vedic *mantra* (i.e. not prohibited for women) but Mahabharata passages (conglomerates), and hence admitted for women (*mantra* problem): LESLIE 65-69. -- (e) When the husband is not at home, the oblations into the domestic fire must be offered by the wife. If that is not possible, further substitute officiants take his place: the son, an unmarried daughter, a priest, pupil, teacher, brother, sister's son, daughter's husband. But "the wife and the unmarried daughter should perform the sacrifice without the act of sprinkling (water round the hearth)." Sprinkling water implies the recitation of Vedic *mantras* (LESLIE 148). However, "if the wife is virtuous, she becomes identified with the sacred fires for the rest of her married life. So great is the identification that her presence at the sacrifice is more important than her husband's" (remarkable in the Indian ambience). "The fires and the ritual die with her, albeit temporarily." The widower "should rekindle the fires with a new wife." The widow in her turn is excluded from all contact with the old or new domestic fire which is not hers. (141) -- (f) There is no initiation for women, initiation (*upanayana*) being replaced by the marriage ceremony. (35)

The problem of the absent husband (absence and its consequences) is summarized in the following sentence: "But if a brahmin has business to take care of, he may assign (the responsibility of) the fire to his wife, appoint a priest (to conduct the ritual), and then leave home. But he should not stay away for long unnecessarily." LESLIE 132, also 149.

We do not know the contemporary ritual of Shudras, Chandalas, and non-Aryan natives. But women possibly had in these societies more rights than in the world of contemporary Hinduism (no *varnas*, no "castes"?).

§ 8.4. Menstruation, impurity of women in general

Female impurity has many aspects: impurity of the menstruating woman, impurity of the woman in confinement, impurity of the widow. The impurity of the *woman* cannot be separated from general views on *human* impurity in Indian traditions. "It is the degree of permanent purity or pollution, ... that ordains who may marry whom; who may cook for or eat with whom; who may work for whom, or work with whom, or worship with whom" (H.N.C.STEVENSON 50). Impurity is transferred by contact. Due to the burden of prohibitions, an impure woman incurs the constant risk of interfering with the daily life of others, of causing inconvenience to others.

Menstruation is explained by an aitiological myth: God Indra had killed a dangerous demon who had turned *Brahman*. He had transferred the materialized sin of Brahman-murder to three parts of the cosmos: He had persuaded the earth, the trees and the women to accept, each, one third of his guilt. Hence the fissures in the *earth*, the resin in the *trees* and the menstrual *blood* of the women. There are variations such as 'rivers, mountains, earth and women' (typical example of

allomotifs: DUNDES 69). Women are always present in the mythological lists of recipients (menstruation as inevitable example of received guilt). -- MEYER We 266-267; KANE 801-802; O'FLAHERTY Ev 146-160 (esp. 157-158); LESLIE 250-251; KHANNA 117.

The menstrual discharge is a medium of special power and gives rise to temporary pollution. MEYER (We) feels that menstruation is generally perceived as 'eery and corrupting' (*'unheimlich und verderbenbringend'* 171, 169-171). The word for menstrual blood is *rajas*, and the menstruating woman is a *rajasvala* (woman during her menses). The menstruating woman has to observe numerous injunctions which are different in character, partly unexplained, and amounting to almost complete social immobility: The woman in her menses must not clean her teeth, must not look at the planets, must not sleep or eat during daytime, etc. The woman should take a bath after the lapse of three days to return to her original condition. The period of impurity lasts for three days and three nights. The woman is purified by a bath on the fourth day. "... after menstruation a woman becomes pure like a [brass] utensil cleaned with ash ..." (BROCKINGTON 223; infra; §§ 8.7 and 9.3). -- The persons around the *rajasvala* are subject to various restrictions. The husband should not speak to her. A Brahman on his alms-round should not beg in a house with a *rajasvala* and in a house of Shudras. The *rajasvala's* glance is polluting, and she must not touch a twice-born. If a student of the Veda has to talk to a menstruating woman he must talk to a Brahman before and after he talks to the *rajasvala*. A person who celebrates the meal for the ancestors must not look at a menstruating woman, and he must not be seen by one. The menstruating woman appears in a long list of 'untouchable' persons/beings: Somebody who has touched a menstruating woman or an expectant mother, or a bearer (at funerals), or a Chandala, or a dog (etc.) must take a bath in his clothes (JOLLY 156). -- WINTERNITZ 40; JAMISON 14-15. Impurity in general (animals, plants, inorganic substances) is a different matter. There are degrees of impurity, but impurity is probably one worldwide quality. JOLLY 156-157.

Impurity during confinement requires also caution. WINTERNITZ compares impurity during confinement with impurity due to death (a 'full parallel': p.39, infra). A Veda-teacher should not even look at a woman in child bed. A person who touches a woman immediately after delivery should take a bath in his clothes. Food prepared for a woman lying in is impure. Impurity lasts ten days as a rule. WINTERNITZ 39.

Impurity also occurs after the death of a family member (of a relative). The rules to be observed depend on the status, age etc. of the deceased, on the closeness of relationship and on the status, age etc. of the bereaved. Again the time of impurity lasts for two, three, six, twelve days. Domestic sacrifices are suspended. A purification follows after the end of the period of impurity. General rules prescribe two days fasting, prohibit cooking, dictate sleeping on the ground, prohibit (in the case of men) study of the Veda, disallow (in the case of men) the cutting of hair and beard. The fight against impurity is, in this case, a common legacy of both sexes. JOLLY 155-156 and GONDA I 133 (impurity of the survivors); MICHAELS 178-187 (long list of polluting situations and substances).

Impurity through widowhood can be mitigated by virtue. According to Tryambaka a widow is basically impure/inauspicious (the general belief). "Of all inauspicious things, the widow is the most inauspicious; there can never be any success after seeing a widow. ..." But he adds: only the widow without good character is impure/inauspicious; the widow is pure if she has a good character (LESLIE 303). In that case she is happy in this life, will attain the same heaven as her

husband and will be married again with her husband in the subsequent birth. But this is only a simple list of promises.

For the Vajapeya sacrifice (§ 8.3) the wife of the sacrificer has to be girded with *kusha* grass. She is impure below the navel (H.N.C.STEVENSON 50-51), and her body must be purified by the sacred grass. The priest arranges this and can therefore be polluted by touching the woman (apparently below the navel). According to a late author like Tryambaka the priest is in this case *like the wife's father*, who need not avoid physical contact (WINTERNITZ 12-13, 42; LESLIE 176; JAMISON 270). See Manu 5.132 infra.

WINTERNITZ emphasizes the traditional classification of women along with Shudras (42). We quote: "nothing is more characteristic of the Indian view on the social position of the woman than the ubiquitous linkage 'women and Shudras' as found in the entire Brahmanical literature." We must probably distinguish between two deficiencies: low rank in terms of the *varna* system, and impurity in terms of the daily dichotomy of purity and impurity. *Varna* and purity/impurity are the basis of two parallel systems.

T.N.MADAN has introduced a distinction between pure and auspicious. The birth of a child, let us say a son, is auspicious (the event), widowhood or death are inauspicious. A temple is pure, a cremation ground is impure, a prepubescent unmarried girl is pure, the mother after childbirth is ritually impure even in the best of circumstances. MADAN 15-16, 17-18.

We distinguish between purity, impurity, purifying agents and methods of purification, and we have collected a few Manu verses demonstrating the rich vocabulary in this area:

Manu 5.108. What needs cleaning is cleansed by using earth and water, a river [is cleansed] by its current, a woman defiled in thought [is cleansed] by her menstrual flow, and Brahmins [are cleansed] by renunciation.

5.130. A woman's mouth is always pure; so is a bird when it makes a fruit to fall, a calf when it makes the milk to flow, and a dog when it catches a deer. [?]

5.132. All orifices above the navel are ritually clean; those below are ritually unclean, as are the foul substances that shed from the body.

5.134. To purify oneself after voiding urine or excrement and to clean any of the twelve bodily impurities, one should use a sufficient amount of earth and water.

5.135. Body oil, semen, blood, marrow, urine, feces, ear-wax, nails, phlegm, tears, discharge of the eyes, and sweat -- these are the twelve impurities of man.

5.139. A man who desires bodily purification should first sip water three times and then wipe the mouth with water twice; but a woman or a Sudra sips and wipes just once.

Women have, theoretically, a unique means of purification (supra). Every month their sins are taken away by the menses.

Before birth, women are in order enjoyed by the gods Soma (beverage of the gods, juice of a plant), Gandharva (celestial musician) and Agni (god of fire); it is only afterwards (after birth) that they go to a man. The motif is interesting but unexplained. The conflict of this belief with the necessary virgin status of the bride was probably realized at a later stage. THIEME 433-434, 465; O'FLAHERTY An 267-274; § 8.7 (LESLIE 252-254); § 8.6 (Soma and Agni).

A peculiarity which may be mentioned in passing is the widespread rule of the defilement of rivers during the rainy season: The rainy season is compared to the period of menstrual discharge -- the rivers transfer their impurity to bathers (SALOMON). The periods of defilement differ considerably for the different rivers, and there is a tendency to prohibit bathing in a river during the respective time of defilement. But the times of defilement (as given by different authors for different rivers) differ wildly: Ganges three days, Ganges two months, Ganges never defiled (167-168). SALOMON writes: "The descriptions of the various *smrtis* must all be accepted as equally authoritative, and therefore apparent contradictions must be resolved by any of a variety of interpretive devices." (167).

The Jainas have developed in post-canonical times a bizarre and complicated theory which is perplexing from the point of view of non-Jainas. "According to the unanimous Jaina view, certain portions of a woman's body, particularly orifices and indentations such as the genitals, the space between the breasts, the armpits, and the navel, give rise to vast numbers of minute and subtle living organisms ... These creatures, sometimes seen as arising specifically from menstrual and other bodily fluids, are, the argument goes, destroyed in vast numbers by the ordinary activities of the woman whose body is their host and so she is seen as inevitably the agent of massive involuntary *himsa*, or injury to living beings." (GOLDMAN xix). And [if], "as they argue, the vaginal canal is infested with vast swarms of minute beings, then it follows that the powerful friction of the sexual act must slaughter them in huge numbers. Indeed the Jaina authors frequently cite verses to the effect that with each 'blow' hundreds of thousands perish." (GOLDMAN xxiv [JAINI] 179). The doctrine of the small beings reduces the sexual act (forth Great Vow) to *himsa* (violence, first Great Vow). The argument can be called pan-*ahimsism* (BRUHN Ah 13-32).

§ 8.5. Pardah

'*Pardah*' (*pardah*) is a Persian word, defined by WHITWORTH as follows: "A veil, screen, a curtain, especially one used to exclude women from public view." The common Sanskrit-word for veil is *avagunthana*, but there are also paraphrases such as '(with) hidden face.' It seems that the law-books do not refer to the use of the veil, but the texts (epic etc.) mention it.

The context says expressly in connection with *pardah* customs that the *face* is meant; the breasts are covered anyhow in one way or the other (jacket and bodice, sari). There is a difference between art and texts in so far as, in art, the upper part of the body of women is mostly uncovered, while there is no indication of bare breasts in literature. Refer for the problem of uncovered breasts in art to ALTEKAR 280-289: art follows its own law.

Pre-epic literature does not tell us much about material culture and social customs of the day. By contrast, the epics are a mine of information.

BROCKINGTON has collected epic data, treating Mahabharata and Ramayana separately. On pp.219-220 he writes on the Mahabharata "... women were not particularly secluded even after marriage," and he mentions public events (festivities including drinking-bouts) where women mix with the crowd, obviously without any form of *pardah*. On the other hand, Draupadi (wife of the five Pandavas), is mishandled by an impudent adversary and claims in the assembly that she has been touched by a rascal -- she who has before *not been seen by wind or sun*. The saying refers to a woman living in strict seclusion: In Sanskrit, wind and sun are masculine (!)

In the case of the Ramayana, BROCKINGTON mentions again public events and appearances of women in public (434). But on the basis of his chronology (§ 11.1) he emphasizes "the steady trend away from women's participation in public life to their almost complete seclusion within the home ..." (433). He mentions many examples of the general deterioration of the position of women (435). "... widows were not regarded as inauspicious in the earlier parts of the texts, although in the fourth stage ['circa 4th to circa 12th centuries'] it is stated that widowhood is the greatest calamity that can befall a woman ..." (434-435).

Sita, the heroine of the Ramayana has a complex character: a strong woman on the one hand and a soft-hearted, devoted wife on the other. A famous episode with Sita centres around the subject of *pardah* (here *pardah* in its widest sense):

After a long separation (see § 11.3: abduction and exile) Sita was expected to be reunited with Rama, her husband. Rama asks Vibhishana, the brother of Ravana (Ravana: the defeated and killed abductor, Vibhishana: the ally of Rama), to bring Sita to him. She should come in festive appearance. Sita objects: She wants to come at once -- and without ceremony. But Vibhishana repeats Rama's instruction, and Sita obeys. Vibhishana for his part is generous and kind-hearted; he wants to create for Sita an atmosphere of *seclusion* (following the custom as he understands it) and sends away the people (monkeys!) near the road to Rama. But Rama decides to make the meeting a public affair. He stops Vibhishana and declares that Sita need not be screened off against the public, even less when her husband is with her. The armies (monkeys, bears, demons) *shall see Sita*. This is on the one hand an unexpected affront, because Sita obviously wants reunion in privacy. On the other hand, the circumstances and Rama's explanation of his directive show that on the whole (whatever Sita's feelings), seclusion was in those days not the rule. Rama says that (a) a woman is protected by her behaviour, not by dress, houses, walls etc. This is an argument which was perhaps typical of the day when proponents and opponents of *pardah* (whatever the form) met. Rama continues (b) with general arguments, enumerating occasions like war, sacrifice and marriage where a woman can show herself. The present moment is such an occasion (war being just over). Finally, Sita comes as instructed. But she is overcome by shame and absorbed in herself. Rama comes to the point: After her stay in the harem of Ravana, Sita cannot possibly have preserved her purity. Now she may marry somebody else (Rama's brother, Ravana's brother etc.: a sort of *niyoga*). The episode ends with the fire-ordeal and the ultimate rehabilitation of Sita. Our conclusion is that under certain conditions a woman can expect privacy, but that she should show herself in other cases. It is not said that Sita is veiled when she meets her husband. -- Refer for the encounter between Rama and Sita to § 11.3 *infra* (... Sita twice repudiated) and to RUBEN 339-340.

ALTEKAR has collected considerable material showing that in post-Christian centuries the situation was mixed (169-176). References to the veil were now more direct. "... soon after the beginning of the Christian era, a section of society began to advocate a greater seclusion for women" (169). The use of the veil depended on the place in society, on the circumstances (at home / in the street) and on local customs. There are no *shastric* injunctions, and this probably added to the general confusion. Muslim influence (in later times), or no such influence, there were, depending on the definition, traces of *pardah* up to the 20th century. "Women of the peasant and working classes could of course not afford to remain in seclusion; they had to move out for their daily work. They used to move the lapel of their *saris* slightly over their faces when a stranger passed by them." (ALTEKAR 176) By contrast, women of the upper classes (who possibly stayed at home) could use the *pardah* up to the present, although it may now be extinct..

Interesting is a long monologue in a Buddhist text where a newly married woman (the wife of Buddha Shakyamuni!), when asked to cover her face, claims that virtue is more important than the veil (MITRA 198-199). This corresponds to Rama's above statement in the Ramayana. The saying in the Ramayana recurs much later in an eleventh century Sanskrit work (treasure of stories). ALTEKAR 174 -- M.CHANDRA observes (96) that "... a highly placed lady walked in the streets covering herself with a veil." This was the custom in the time of the Kama Sutra.

NARASIMHAN remarks: "To this day [1990], the archetypal Rajasthani woman is one of the most heavily veiled among all Indian communities." (126). See § 12.4 on the customs and atmosphere of Rajasthan.

On her way to the funeral pyre a *sati* can show her face, for the first time in her life (when the veil was compulsory), to the public (ZACHARIAE 567).

§ 8.6. Greatness of the son, greatness of the mother

The *son* is important for the *mother* because he stabilizes her status in the family, because he is a support in hard times (especially when the mother becomes a widow), because he loves, adores the mother, because he is a guarantee against supersession (§ 9.2, supersession often practiced if the wife is childless or without sons) and because a father with sons is, or should be, a happy and loving husband. By contrast, the wife without sons must suffer: She has a low status in the family.

The son is all-important. In a Vedic text we read: "O Agni [god of fire], this woman should find a mate, for Soma [here the personification of the famous divine beverage], the king, makes her a happy person; bearing sons, she should become the chief wife; gone to her spouse, this blessed wife shall rule." (SYED To 146) And the opposite case (also Vedic): "A wife without sons is an abandoned one ... A wife without sons is in the clutches of the *nirriti* (calamity, destruction personified)." (SYED To 146) WINTERNITZ summarizes "O woe is the woman who does not carry out the provided role of a mother [birth of sons]. O woe the unmarried, woe the childless, woe the mother of daughters, the widow." (21).

The following verse is hyperbolic:

Manu 2.145. The teacher is ten times greater than the tutor, the father is a hundred times greater than the teacher, but the mother is a thousand times greater than the father. [Tutor is Sanskrit *upadhyaya*, teacher is Sanskrit *acharya*.]

KANE quotes: "A father who is an outcast may be abandoned, but a mother ... [though an outcast] is never an outcast to the son." (580).

In a modern text (WINTERNITZ 21) we read: "The happiness of an Indian woman is inextricably linked with her being the mother of a son. Motherhood increases at the same time the respect she is accorded in the family."

WINTERNITZ cites two verses in praise of the mother from the Mahabharata (DEUSSEN 437-444, WINTERNITZ 20):

A man is old, a man is unhappy, a man's world is empty -- when he loses his mother.

There is no (refreshing) shadow like the mother, no refuge like the mother, no shelter like the mother, no loving being like the mother.

We have lists of faults which entitle the husband to marry another woman (supersession), and lack of sons is among the accepted faults. Typical is Manu Smriti 9.81 (§ 9.2) in: OLIVELLE: 9.77-9.84 'Repudiation of a Wife':

9.81. A barren wife may be superseded in the eighth year; a wife whose children die, in the tenth; a wife who bears girls, in the eleventh; but a foul-mouthed wife at once.

WINTERNITZ furthermore says (21) that in a Vedic text a "repudiated woman" is defined as a "woman without sons." But he also mentions (22) a virtuous wife who will attain heaven even if she has no son (Dharma Shastra), a ray of hope in the depressing atmosphere.

The greatness of the wife is praised time and again: KANE 579-580. -- 579:

Oh! how great is the audacity of wicked men who heap abuse on women that are pure and blameless, like robbers who while themselves stealing raise a hue and cry 'stop O thief!' Man in privacy utters words of cajolery to woman, but there are no such words after the woman dies; while women, in gratitude, clasp the corpses of their husbands and enter the fire. -- Varahamihira, 6th c.

The mother is to be worshipped as a member of the sacred triad: mother, father, teacher, although she has no special place in the triad (Manu 2.225-237).

§ 8.7. Perpetual tutelage

The situation to be described in this subsection is in the first place *patriarchy* pure and simple. This is what we read in Manu's manual:

Manu 5.148. As a child, she must remain under her father's control; as a young woman, under her husband's; and when her husband is dead, under her sons'. She must never seek to live independently.

5.149. She must never want to separate herself from her father, husband, or sons; for by separating herself from them, a woman brings disgrace on both families [natal family and husband's family].

Manu 9.3. Her father guards her in her childhood, her husband guards her in her youth, and her sons guard her in her old age; a woman is not qualified to act independently.

The concept of tutelage is the normal attitude of a patriarchal society. The Sanskrit-root *raksh-*, 'to protect, guard, take care of, watch, rule', opposed to the noun *svatantrata* or 'independence', deserves a careful translation (SYED To 161). OLIVELLE uses 'Guarding the Wife' as a title for Manu 9.2-21 (20 verses, not very homogeneous; 9.2ab: "Day and night men should keep their wives from acting independently"); and he uses 'Lack of Independence' for Manu 5.147-150 (5.148d: "she must never seek to live independently"). SYED To mentions the alleged female licentiousness (and the consequent need of protection and control) on pp.160-161. WINTERNITZ likewise mentions the proverbial need of protection: women are not reliable (44-45).

Protection against evil-doers, criminals, culprits is hardly of much importance. Protection is mainly protection against *sexual impulses of women* and against any authority of the female sex.

A related topic is the internal wickedness of women. We quote the following misogynistic statements:

Manu 9.14. They pay no attention to beauty, they pay no heed to age; whether he is handsome or ugly, they make love to him with the single thought, 'He's a man!'

9.15. Lechery, fickleness of mind, and hard-heartedness are innate in them; even when they are carefully guarded in this world, therefore, they become hostile towards their husbands.

9.17. Bed, seat, ornaments, lust, hatred, dishonesty, malice, and bad conduct -- Manu [here the secondary creator] assigned these to women.

The Mahabharata (13.38) also presents a detailed text on female vices, including the following:

Fire is not contented with fuel, the ocean is not contented with rivers, death is not contented with creatures, women are not contented with men.

S.W.JAMISON gives a long list of misogynistic sayings taken from the Mahabharata. We mention the following (p.13): "Women are speakers of untruth." "Fickleness is the norm in women." "Countries where a woman, a gambler, or a child rules sink helplessly like stone rafts in a river." "Don't put confidence in a woman, or a coward, a lazybones, a violent man, a self-promoter, a thief, an ingrate, much less an atheist." "Women are the root of faults and have weak understanding." "Nothing else more wicked exists than women." NARASIMHAN quotes from

a Vedic text the following: "Women, *shudra* (the lowest of the four castes), dog and crow embody untruth, sin and darkness." (28-29)

ALTEKAR mentions that "In one Jataka story a woman of 120 is represented as falling in love with a youth of 20." (320). HARA (2004) refers to a hyperbolic verse (Hitopadesha) about the intensity of the sexual urge of women:

The food of women is twofold, her intelligence is fourfold, her determination is sixfold, her sexual urge is eightfold.

All this is a misogynistic strand which possibly originated in Indian asceticism.

Following ALTEKAR we have used the term "perpetual tutelage." ALTEKAR uses it to describe the position of women in India, Europe etc. (India after 400-200 B.C.). The term is not directly taken from Sanskrit but in keeping with the Sanskrit vocabulary. ALTEKAR even calls "perpetual tutelage" a traditional theory (328).

We conclude with a topic introduced by Tryambaka.

Tryambaka asks: "If women are *inherently wicked*, as they are traditionally supposed to be, then how can they possibly have *any interest* in learning what Tryambaka is at such pains to teach them? Why does he bother to teach women at all?" (LESLIE 246) Three answers: (a) Before marrying a human the woman has married in turn three gods and received from each a divine gift. Three mystical unions, three forms of purity. See 252-254, §§ 8.4 and 8.6. (b) The sins of women are every month swept away by menstruation. "Menstruation ... is the mark of an all-encompassing purity unique to women." 254; see § 8.4. (c) "Even bad people can improve". 260 (260 ff.). The last thesis is supported by a discussion about the difference between a woman's wicked nature (*stri-svabhava* -- negative) and her ordained function as a good wife (*stri-dharma* -- positive).

Vocabulary: Women are inherently or by nature (*sva-bhava*) wicked and unreliable (*papa, capala*): this is their original sin (*stri-svabhava*). 'Virtuous behavior of wives' constitutes what is called their *stri-dharma*. Refer for the alleged corrupt character of women (female sexuality opposed to male yearning for release) inter alia to SYED To 159-160.

§ 8.8. The daughter

S.STEVENSON has started her book on the "Twice-born" with a chapter on "Birth and Babyhood." We read inter alia (p.6): "... immediately after the umbilical cord is cut, the child is bathed in warm water. If a girl, it is bathed in an earthen or brass vessel, if a boy, in a bell-metal vessel; but in either case the vessel has to be given to the midwife as one of her perquisites."

Following an old saying in Sanskrit (infra), R.SYED has isolated the subject of the unwelcome daughter, using the saying for the title of her book ("Ein Unglück ist die Tochter", "A daughter is ill-luck"). SYED To 159-173:

An early text (early Vedic literature) describes the daughter as a *kripana*, and *kripana* means according to MAYRHOFER I 'Jammern, Elend', corresponding to the adjective: 'pitiable,

wretched, deplorable'). See SYED To 27 (*kripana* = 'ein Unglück, ein Jammer oder ein Elend') and 161 (early elaborations and variations of the *kripana* topic: Manu etc.). Differently: SYED To: 170, footnote 9: "the daughter is an object of compassion and tenderness" (MANJUSHREE).

The word for daughter (*duhita* = English daughter) has been etymologized so as to have a negative meaning: The daughter (*duhita*) is welcome (*hita*) if she is far away (*du* < *dure* = far away). Or: the daughter is mis-laid (read: *dur-hita*). 161-162. Compare for grotesque etymologies of this type an old explanation of *putra*/son (§ 4).

The daughter is unwelcome in the sense that she is unwelcome when a son is expected. The marriage of a daughter is a critical, not a happy event. The daughter must be married sooner or later. Marriage is emotionally loss of the daughter and financially loss of wealth by way of dowry. But marriage is also a success and imparts prestige.

The family of a bridegroom need not accept a particular girl -- they can agree or disagree; they are not in a hurry. The family of the bridegroom may be interested in the marriage: birth of a son (continuation of the line), financial and tactical advantages; but nobody jumps at the girl. It is not easy for the natal family to marry a girl off.

The old wooer who marries a young girl is often mentioned. Extreme cases of aged bridegrooms were (and are) a well-known social evil.

The negative image of the daughter is at any rate a fact, and it originated at an early date. Many examples are given by R. SYED. One of the earliest Vedic texts has the following phrase:

Let God [the creator] grant the daughter to be born *somewhere else*, let him grant the son to be born *here*. (SYED To 162).

Follows the epic:

The Mahabharata: People of the same status and of a lower status despise the father of a daughter in this world, even if he is God Indra on earth. (SYED To 162-163)

The Ramayana: To be father of a daughter is ill-luck for men who long for honour. (SYED 163)

R.SYED has noticed that the daughter is apparently always missing in the old enumerations of family members e.g. "father, mother, wife, son, sister, brother". (SYED To 166)

The poet Bana (§ 5) complains that the rules of society bring sorrow to the father of a daughter. "This is the all-powerful strength of the heat of the fire called grief that honest people are distressed (burned) when a daughter is born [daughter will be claimed by the bridegroom], although offspring (procreation) is alike (sons and daughters)." (SYED To 164)

R.SYED mentions two passages in ancient texts which praise the daughter against the current preference for the son (SYED To 164). We finish our section with a *benevolent* quotation from the Mahabharata according to SYED (To 171, footnote 27):

There are men that hold that a father loves his son more than his daughter -- I do not. I love them both as much, though on the son rest the worlds and continuity and bliss eternal.

§ 8.9 Miscellany

We come across statements which convey the idea that the position of women was after all better than would appear at first sight. But such evidence is meagre and unconvincing in one way or another.

At the beginning of Chapter 3 of Manu OLIVELLE has isolated a section 'marriage' with several subsections, one being 'Honoring Women' (3.55-59). In the Indian ambience this is a comfort, and not a matter of course. Verses 3.55-56 run as follows:

3.55. If they desire an abundance of good fortune, fathers, brothers, husbands and brothers-in-law should revere their women and provide them with adornments.

3.56. Where women are revered, there the gods rejoice; but where they are not, no rite bears any fruit.

See also MEYER We 370-371. -- ALTEKAR mentions moral instruction of the wife which includes granting relative independence (328-331). He mentions Manu 9.11. We quote also 9.10:

Manu 9.10. No man is able to thoroughly guard women by force; but by using the following strategies, he will be able to guard them thoroughly [guard: *raksh-*].

9.11. He should employ her [his wife] in the collection and the disbursement of his wealth, in cleaning, in meritorious activity [*dharmā*], in cooking food, and in looking after household goods.

According to ALTEKAR female education had a high standard in the past (§ 2), but "literacy among women rapidly declined during the last two thousand years." (360). Actually we do not know much about 'female education' during the last two thousand years, and even less about female education before the two millennia. A female philosopher (Gargi) is mentioned in an Upanishad but remains an exception. The fields of educated females were ritual and literature (listening to recitation, personal recitation), and useful technicalities (calendar, law). The script was in use since the third century B.C. (inscriptions of emperor Ashoka), but we do not know which persons could read and write. Probably even men were normally "illiterate".

Killing of a woman is a crime, and there are several lists, mentioning women, children, cows (or women alone are mentioned) as beings who must not be killed (WINTERNITZ 19; MINORU HARA VI 42). Moreover, killing a Shudra woman is equated with sodomy with a cow. Killing a pregnant woman, a menstruating woman and an *atreyi* is a great crime. *Atreyi* is a technical term designating a woman who has taken her bath soon after her menstruation (Manu 11.88; OLIVELLE 341). Refer for protection of women in general to WINTERNITZ 17-19; MEYER We 364-366; KANE 575, 593-594; BROCKINGTON 175. A man achieves success (attains heaven) when he has sacrificed his life while defending Brahmans or cows, women or children

(Manu 10.62). Rules for the protection of women are part of more general protection rules. privileges for women are part of a more general code of behaviour.

Privileges are numerous. Like ascetics and Brahmans, women are exempted from tolls on a ferry (Manu 8.407). One has to clear the road for expecting mothers (2.138). Expecting mothers shall be fed before (other) guests: Manu 3.114. The husband should not shave when his wife is pregnant (?): WINTERNITZ 18; MEYER We 367-368.

Further items. The speculations about the last period of the world (*kaliyuga*) include some evil omens for women. SYED mentions several passages which state inter alia that women will in number outgrow men and that beasts of prey will outgrow cows (To 168-169 ubi alia). VIRKUS informs us that in the *kaliyuga* women will select their husbands on the basis of the fortunes of the latter (35), and that there are many other anomalies. Ultimately, Vishnu in his tenth incarnation restores order (35).

We mention in this connection also fabulous reports on adultery in primeval times (JOLLY 48-49).

Gods (and epic heroes) commit various sexual acts, normal or anomalous: adultery, violation of the *guru's* bed, *niyoga*, incest, polyandry. Gods are no paragons of virtue (DONIGER 166-183), and Dharma Shastras are only conceived for human beings.

§ 9. Specific Events in the life of women

§ 9.1. *Niyoga*

The most common form of *niyoga* " ... is that of a brother or kinsman siring sons in his dead brother's name with his widow." (SUTHERLAND 77) The new husband was a brother or a close relative or a distant relative of the deceased husband (or merely a member of the same caste). *Niyoga* is the same as English 'levirate' (from Latin *levir* = brother of the husband). The word *niyoga* stands for 'assignation,' i.e. for assigning or appointing a new husband to the widow. JOLLY 70; THIEME 453, footnote 3; SUTHERLAND 83. -- Refer for the widow in general to § 12.

Considering the enormous importance of male offspring in India (§ 4, § 8.6) it became inevitable to make an arrangement for wives who became widows without having a son. *Niyoga* meant that a surrogate father had to father a son who performed the funerary rites (*shraddha*) for the deceased husband of the widow. Refer also to Manu 9.167 for *niyoga* in the case that the husband is dead, impotent or sick (§ 3, Son-2). A drastic description of the horrors of lack of sons is given in an old narrative mentioned by SUTHERLAND (80: childless ascetic Jaratkaru).

A humanitarian aspect of the situation is the widow. The possibility that a widow (in particular a widow without sons) returned to her family is nowhere mentioned, but it may have existed (perhaps in all *varnas*). Remarriage in one form or another is apparently sanctioned in early law-books (§ 9.5), but it was probably soon a thing of the past (not recommended by Manu). *Niyoga* alone persisted up to the first millennium A.D. (circa 'fourth c. A.D.') when it became *kalivarjya*.

Considering the importance of a son one wonders why remarriage (in whatever form) became something of a problem, even if the widow had no son. There must have been an ascetic ideology which put more value on the ritual status of the widow than on the birth of a son.

SUTHERLAND says about *niyoga* in the Mahabharata: "In the Mahabharata, historical information about the practice of *niyoga* is interwoven with the use of *niyoga* as a mythical narrative device." (101) He also mentions that Brahmans often (myth and reality) father sons with Kshatriya women. We quote an example from the Mahabharata:

King Vicitravirya (wives Ambika and Ambalika) died without offspring. His mother Satyawati (husband: Shantanu) asked her son Vyasa (Brahman, famous *rishi*), half-brother of Vicitravirya, to father sons (one each) with the two widows of Vicitravirya (Kshatriya women). Ambika bore Dhritarashtra, Ambalika bore Pandu, and a maid servant (Amba) bore Vidura (birth by way of a ruse). Pandu became (through Kunti and Madri) the father of the three-plus-two Pandavas, Dhritarashtra became (through Gandhari) the father of a hundred sons (the Kauravas) and a daughter. Vidura (righteous, wise, impartial) had no sons.

In short: Vyasa (mythical author of the Mahabharata) became by *niyoga* the father of the central figures of the Mahabharata: Dhritarashtra's family and Pandu's family, both estranged.

ALTEKAR supports the orthodox criticism of *niyoga*, calling it "a relic of barbarism," but accentuates its relative justification: "It cannot be, however, gainsaid that Niyoga served a useful purpose in its own days. ... The custom of Niyoga solved the widow's difficulty to some extent by permitting the brother-in-law to raise issues on his sister-in-law under certain circumstances. Niyoga served as a half-way house between a formal remarriage and an absolute celibacy, especially in earlier days when three sons were allowed to be raised under it. Of course it indirectly encouraged polygamy [?], but we should not forget that society was already tolerating it [?]. It also helped in improving the economic condition of the widow. When she had no son, she could get no share in the family property. When she got a son by Niyoga, she could get a share, if not as an heiress, at least as the guardian of her minor son." (149) ALTEKAR does not say what he thought was the social reality in the early days of *niyoga*. Was it correct by contemporary standards or was it institutionalized moral looseness?

There are special rules for sexual intercourse of *niyoga* partners. "Let him [the surrogate husband] approach the widow ... [... three quarters of an hour before sunrise] ... without dallying with her and without abusing or ill-treating her." (THIEME 447, SUTHERLAND 81). The ordinary and normal time for sexual intercourse is after sunset (LESLIE 239). The later law-books expect that the surrogate father does not engender more than one son (originally one or two, if not three). Correct *niyoga* was close to celibate, but correct *niyoga* was probably rare. Little if anything is said about ritualization.

SUTHERLAND accentuates the moral aspect (83): "Against the obviously strong and natural inclination to assign ownership of the son to his begetter ..., the dead man's surviving family took every precaution, in consulting family elders and seeking to control the nature of the assignation. ... The strict official and ritualistic nature of the sexual relationship [in *niyoga* unions] had to be adhered to in order to avoid public charges of adultery or incest, the Scylla and Charybdis governing all contact between members of the opposite sex in an Indian household who were not married to each other." SUTHERLAND also compares *niyoga* (as determined by emotional

detachment) with the "ritualised sexuality of medieval Tantrism" (83). But Tantrism is historically different.

The male partner of the widow was married or not (ALTEKAR 151, CHEN 86). As indicated by ALTEKAR, sexual life in the days before the prohibition of *niyoga* must have been unconventional.

At a later time *niyoga* fell into disrepute, and it became *kalivarjya* (as mentioned repeatedly). Already in the Manu Smriti (infra) celibacy of widows and celibacy of (pious) men were praised side by side, while *niyoga* was criticized:

Manu 5.157. After her husband is dead, she may voluntarily emaciate her body by eating pure flowers, roots, and fruits; but she must never mention even the name of another man.

5.159. Untold thousands of Brahmins who have remained celibate [*brahmacharins*] from their youth have gone to heaven without producing offspring to continue their family line.

5.160. Just like these celibates, a good woman, though she be sonless, will go to heaven when she steadfastly adheres to the celibate life after her husband's death.

The abolition of *niyoga* was not the last word. Tryambaka insisted that *niyoga* was a sin, but he also insisted on the necessity of a son. Tryambaka squares the circle: The problem is solved when the husband in his lifetime desires a son (traditional emphasis on the son). LESLIE 302.

SUTHERLAND emphasizes in connection with *niyoga* the usefulness of Brahmins as "surrogate fathers." "Because of their being usually unpropertied, mobile, and dependent on patronage, Brahmins make ideal surrogate fathers, who are unlikely to obtrude or make claims upon the heirship procedures of the non-Brahmanical family they serve." (101)

Niyoga is not a monolithic custom but subject to historical changes. It is almost a standard example for the introduction of *kalivarjya* rules. "Eventually [*niyoga* being no longer in keeping with the Zeitgeist], *niyoga* was given up as being inconsistent with increasingly pristinised and Brahmanised standards for marital chastity and devotion." (SUTHERLAND 78) According to KANE Ka 218, the *kalivarjya* rules started in the 4th century A.D.

Manu 9.57-70; JOLLY (70-71); ALTEKAR 143-150; KANE 599-607; LESLIE 300-302, 309-310, 324; SUTHERLAND; BROCKINGTON 221-222.

§ 9.2. Polygamy and Monogamy

KANE says: "Though monogamy seems to have been the ideal and was probably the rule, the Vedic literature is full of references to polygamy" (550). As can be expected, kings had several wives. Rama's father had three wives, and the conflict between the three women concerning succession was the nodus of the plot of the Ramayana. Polygamy (in the epics and elsewhere) is best demonstrated by the institution of the principal queen (principal queen in contrast to other queens or simply to women of the high society). See JOLLY 65 and KANE 559-560 on the different status of different categories of wives and on the distinction between legal wives and concubines: "... though the eldest wife alone is entitled to take part in religious rites, all wives

(except a sudra wife) may be cremated with the *srauta* fire [chief fire in ritual]." (KANE 559) Polygamy as such was institutionalised by the requirements of certain sacrifices (JAMISON 31: "rituals with more than one wife"). The presence of the wife (chief wife [!]) always ensures the full profit of the sacrifice. Different wives may belong to different *varnas*, theory or practice (KANE 559).

The problems of polygamy have been described by S.STEVENSON: "... the two who hate each other most are condemned to lifelong imprisonment together, hearing all the tittle-tattle of the servants, who carry tales from one part of the house to the other, while the mother-in-law is always at hand to stir up strife and cast fresh fuel on its flames, ..." (130).

The position of monogamy is at least equally strong. KAPADIA says: "supersession [infra] being more of the exception than the rule, Apastamba's [A. is author of a law-book] dictum to live with one wife represents the normal practice" (100). In the Mahabharata we read that King Shvetaketu enforced monogamy after a past time of sexual promiscuity (THIEME 430-431; BROCKINGTON 223). The Manu Smriti demands mutual loyalty between husband and wife (singular):

Manu 9.101. Fidelity to each other should be observed until death -- this should be recognized as the highest Law between husband and wife put in a nutshell.

9.102. A husband and wife, after they have completed the marriage rite, should give constant heed lest they are unfaithful to each other and thus being split apart.

KANE quotes examples of the union of man and wife in various ritual observances (556-558). We have protestations that *marriage is permanent* (KANE 619-620, "Let mutual fidelity continue till death ...", supra). Rama's fidelity and monogamy are well known (§ 11.3 infra). Animal stories also point in the direction of fidelity and monogamy. Monogamous tendency: JOLLY 65; THIEME 469; § 7.2 (Shiva and Parvati!).

The matter is complex because we find, besides polygamy and monogamy, (i) *niyoga* (supra: practised by the woman) and (ii) supersession (infra: practised by the man only).

Supersession is midway between real punishment of the wife and deliberate polygamy. The reasons for supersession are mentioned in long lists (§ 9.4). A wife who does not give birth to healthy sons may be the main reason. Supersession seems to be restricted to monogamous unions. There is little justification in polygamous marriages.

Nothing prevents the husband from contracting a second (third ...) marriage, even if there are no special reasons; There is no clear-cut line of demarcation between supersession and simple polygamy. JOLLY 64. The *superseded wife* probably remains in the house and in the family, she is thus a financial liability. We do not know much about her life. THIEME 467. -- The *varna* situation (wives and children belonging to different *varnas*) is no argument in the field of supersession. We do not know much about families with different *varnas* (supra).

The inequality between man and wife requires no discussion. The husband can take another wife (qua supersession and without divorce from the first wife), but the wife (i.e. the wife with serious complaints against her husband) has no comparable instrument.

Women in the harem are a subject in its own right. As we know little about harems and royal families in ancient India, it would be valuable to have detailed studies in court life under colonial rule. Refer to §§ 10.1-2, to GAUBA 180-190 (an Indian harem in the nineteenth century) and to AGRAWAL (Muslim harems, matrimonial alliances etc.). -- JOLLY 64-67; MEYER We 352-356; KANE 550-554.

§ 9.3. Adultery

Roughly speaking we have to take the following points into account: extramarital sexual union with mutual consent (lover responsible or women responsible); rape (man guilty, woman innocent); contact between a man and the wife of a man's *guru* (an abominable crime). The Sanskrit vocabulary is limited.

Punishments for women are numerous. They are tolerable or barbarous, real or fictitious, they lead to supersession or not. JOLLY 66, 121, 128; MEYER We 389-391; WINTERNITZ 52-53; ALTEKAR 212-215; KANE 571-572; KAPADIA 99-100; THIEME 467-474; LESLIE 255, 287-288: atonements and punishments. -- Punishments for men: WINTERNITZ 52-53; JOLLY 128.

Manu 9.29. A woman who controls her mind, speech and body and is never unfaithful to her husband attains the worlds of her husband, and virtuous people call her a "good woman."

9.30. By being unfaithful to her husband [committing adultery], on the other hand, a woman becomes disgraced in the world, takes birth in a jackal's womb, and is afflicted with evil diseases.

LESLIE quotes an ancient authority: "In the case of a woman convicted of adultery, Kautilya rules that if her husband is not ready to forgive her, she should have her nose and ears cut off, whereas her lover should be killed." (LESLIE 56) Refer to LESLIE 56-57 for noselessness in different contexts (and meanings).

KANE 571 quotes a Dharma Shastra with the following words: "an adulterous woman should be deprived of her authority (over servants etc.), should be made to wear dirty clothes, should be given food just sufficient to enable her to live, should be treated with scorn and made to lie on the ground (not on a cot)"; [see also THIEME 468] a woman becomes pure from adultery when she has her monthly period after that, but if she conceives in adulterous intercourse she may be abandoned and also when she is guilty of the murder of her foetus ..."

Refer once more to KANE 571: "The humane character of the legislation of the Indian sages is seen by the fact that even for adultery they do not allow the husband to drive the wife out of the house and to abandon her." There was obviously a tendency to speak lightly of adultery. How great was the difference between legal father and begetter? P.V.KANE has isolated seven propositions in connection with adultery. We quote Nos. 3 and 5: " ... the wife who has committed adultery but has undergone penance is to be restored to all the ordinary rights of wives ... " (572). No.5: "... a wife, who commits adultery with a Shudra or [sic!] has had a child thereby, who is guilty of killing her foetus or of attempt to kill the husband or guilty of one of the

deadly sins ... is to be deprived of her right to participation in religious rites or conjugal matters and is to be kept confined in a room or in a hut near the house and to be given starving maintenance and poor apparel, even after she undergoes penance ..." (573). ALTEKAR 313; WALKER 4; SUTHERLAND 83.

S.NARASIMHAN refers also to the humane legislation in Hinduism: "A religion that said -- as Hinduism did -- that even a woman who was a *patita* [fallen] was not to be abandoned and that if a woman had a lover she could, after expiation, be accepted by her husband as his partner in the conduct of even religious rites, could never have required a woman to burn herself as a sati." (152)

THIEME mentions vacillation between harsh and mild punishment (467-474) and also vacillation between inculcation of the wife and inculcation of the *lover*. See also § 9.4 (Manu 8.317: sin transferred to the *husband*); MEYER We 155.

ALTEKAR mentions *shastric* statements reflecting leniency towards innocent women: "With a broadmindedness that is indeed admirable, a number of ... [law-books] declare that women, who had the misfortune of being made prisoners, or of being assaulted criminally, should be treated with sympathy, and not with contempt, and be accepted back by their families after they had performed certain purificatory rituals." (308) ALTEKAR mentions several authorities who declare that a ravished woman is free from guilt (308, 308-316). This is clearly leniency if we consider the difference between ancient thought and modern thought.

R.SYED observes that rape may be a means of humiliating a family and destroying its honour (*izzat*, p.151). Such cases have been mentioned by *Amnesty International* (e.g. May 2001, p.13, Uttar Pradesh).

Draupadi (Mahabharata) had five husbands (the five Pandavas). This was a clear deviation from the rules of Aryan society. But polyandry, hetaerism, adultery, promiscuity and obscenity (to use the modern vocabulary) existed as elements of a mythical past and as strange non-Aryan habits (mentioned in the epics). They existed also as alleged prehistoric trends and as customs of historical castes and tribes. JOLLY 47-48; MEYER We 82-104; WALKER 3-5; BROCKINGTON 223-224.

We conclude the present section with a few observations on chastity.

A girl to be married had to be a virgin. This probably created occasional problems in the early period, but in later times child marriage should have excluded lapses of this type (§ 5). MEYER We: 104, footnote 1; JOLLY 59; SYED To 147, footnote 1; THIEME 430-434. Chastity of the husband and of the wife is encouraged, but the rules for the husband are (naturally) less rigorous (THIEME 475-476, also MEYER supra). Shiva is the model of chastity and fidelity. The early marriage in general (ignoring the calculation of years) was certainly a method of securing the virgin-status of the future wife (§ 5, THIEME 445).

Menstruation is a purifying agent (§ 8.4; KANE 571; THIEME 471). The blood of the menstruation purifies a woman after adultery, an unexplained tradition. The magic force of chastity occurs frequently in narrative literature (infra). The Ramayana relates at the climax of the plot that the innocent and virtuous Sita was twice rejected by Rama (during the long exile she

could not have preserved her virtue!). This indicates an oversensibility of the Ramayana populace to the question of chastity, but the accentuation of chastity is perhaps hyperbolic (literary). The two rejections of Sita are a climax. See also § 11.3.

In a series of articles in Japanese, MINORU HARA has discussed the women subject (*Women in Ancient India*, MINORU HARA i-ii) on the basis of gnomic and narrative literature. -- Ch.1-2 of Pt.i are on "Chastity" and on "The Miraculous Powers of Chastity." Ch.1: ... "The husband as god ...", ... "Obedience to the husband ..." Ch.2: ... "The sun does not rise ... The sun falls down upon the earth ...". See also KANE 567-568 (power of female virtue).

§ 9.4. Sins of men and sins of women

The present section is again concerned with sins and punishments.

OIIVELLE has isolated in Manu Book 8 a section labelled by him 'Sexual Crimes against Women' (352-385). The section demonstrates to some extent the structure of ancient Indian ethics, e.g. Shudra versus twice-born (for example in the case of rape), *pratiloma* and *anuloma* relations, punishments calculated on the basis of *varna*, punishments calculated on the basis of the guarded/unguarded dichotomy, punishments in general. (Glossary sub voce Guarded).

An example for '*varna* calculation' (not always clear) is Manu 8.268 "A Brahmin should be fined 50 for abusing a Ksatriya, 25 for abusing a Vaisya, and 12 for abusing a Sudra." What counts is the *varna* of the victim as well as the *varna* of the culprit. Manu 8.267-278 ('Verbal Assault'). HOPKINS Re.

For sins of **men** against women we quote 8.367-368 (assault); 374-375 and 382 (adultery).

Manu 8.367. If a man arrogantly violates a virgin by force, two of his fingers ... should be cut off immediately, and he should also be fined 600.

8.368. A man of equal status who defiles a willing girl shall not be subject to the cutting of his fingers, but he should be compelled to pay a fine of 200 to deter repetition.

8.374. When a Sudra has sex with a guarded or unguarded woman of the twice-born class -- he loses a limb [his penis] and all his possessions, if she was unguarded. If she was guarded, a Sudra loses everything [property and life];

8.375 a Vaisya is imprisoned for a year and all his property is confiscated; and a Ksatriya is fined 1.000 and his head is shaved using urine. [374 continued?]

8.382. If a Vaisya has intercourse with a woman of the Ksatriya caste who is guarded, or a Ksatriya with a woman of the Vaisya caste (who is guarded), they both ought to pay the fine (which is imposed for a similar offence) toward a woman of the Brahman caste who is not guarded. [8.382: BURNELL]

Verses 8.382-385 (on illegal intercourse) are all difficult.

The following seven verses (except 9.79) describe the misbehaviour of a married wife towards her husband, and her punishment. Verse 9.79 (husband insane) forbids punishment of the wife. In 9.80 (wife drinks liquor ...), 9.81 (wife has no sons) and 9.82 (wife is sick) the consequence is supersession. In 9.77 (wife loathes husband) and 9.78 (husband is intolerable) minor punishments are prescribed. If a superseded wife (9.83) does not behave properly, she should be locked up or repudiated.

Manu 9.77. For one year let a husband tolerate a wife who loathes him; after one year he should confiscate her inheritance and stop cohabiting with her.

9.78. If a wife commits a transgression against her husband who is deranged, drunk, or sick, deprived of [without] her ornaments and belongings, she should be cast out for three months.

9.79. If a wife loathes a husband who has become insane, fallen from caste, or impotent, who is without semen (?), or who has contracted an evil disease, she must neither be abandoned nor deprived of her inheritance.

9.80. When a wife drinks liquor or is dishonest ..., cantankerous, sick, vicious, or wasteful, she may be superseded at any time by marriage to another wife.

9.81. A barren wife may be superseded in the eighth year [after marriage]; a wife whose children die, in the tenth; a wife who bears girls, in the eleventh; but a foul-mouthed wife, at once.

9.82. If a wife is sickly but affectionate and rich in virtue, he may marry a wife to supersede her with her consent; [but] she should never be treated with disrespect.

9.83. If a woman who has been superseded leave (her husband's) house in wrath, she should be locked up immediately or repudiated in the presence of the family.

The following ideology is different:

Manu 8.317. The killer of an embryo [?] ... rubs his sin off on the man who eats his food, an adulterous wife on her husband, a pupil and a patron of a sacrifice on the teacher, and a thief on the king.

§ 9.5. Remarriage of women

Besides *niyoga* (supra) there are sundry instances, mutually overlapping, of remarriage of women in different contexts. The term *punarbhū* ('become [a wife] again') indicates this, but its meaning is not uniform (THIEME 447-460 [esp. 459], JOLLY 60 and the triad infra). The term was used in closely related but different cases. There is little information about the form and practise of remarriage. THIEME 452-457 discusses remarriage as negation of *suttee* (two Vedic verses, § 12.1).

(1) We mention first of all the wife whose husband does not return or does not return in time from a journey, the so-called *proshita-bhartrika* (abbreviation 'PB') 'the wife whose husband is

away.' Such a wife is handled like a widow, and her life resembles that of an ascetic. She is not supposed to wear jewellery, to show herself in a window, to use cosmetics, to open her braids of hair, to eat sweetmeats, to enter other peoples' houses, to attend festivals and so on (JOLLY 69; THIEME 429). The institution of the *proshita-bhartrika* is unexplained.

Similar but not identical is the case of Shakuntala. When King Dushyanta in Kalidasa's drama *Shakuntala* is reunited with his wife Shakuntala after long separation he describes her (being still unrecognized by her) in the following words: "Ah, this is her ladyship Shakuntala: Who, wearing a pair of dusky garments, with face emaciated by her observance of vows, having her hair tied up [!] once and for all and of pure conduct, has been practising one long vow of separation, from me, extremely cruel (unto her)." Dushyanta's cruelty was his repudiation of Shakuntala. In this case the problem was solved by reunion, not by remarriage.

The life (living condition) up to *actual remarriage* depends on the case, Manu 9.76: "A wife should wait for eight years when her husband has gone away for a purpose specified by Law [*dharma*], for six years when he has gone for learning or fame, and for three years when he has gone for pleasure [love]". This may be followed by remarriage. -- Before starting his journey, the husband should make arrangements for the wife's livelihood (Manu 9.74). "... but if he leaves without providing for her, she may maintain herself by engaging in respectable crafts." (Manu 9.75) The case (PB) is mentioned in the law-books (Manu etc.), but we do not know to what extent and in which form it was reality. See THIEME 429 (Rama's exile: Sita does not want to be left behind).

WINTERNITZ 53-54 (PB); OLIVELLE 326 (9.76, PB). WINTERNITZ mentions the not unusual case of a wife whose husband has turned ascetic (in our days). Our knowledge of PB-cases in ancient India is limited.

(2) The following three cases form a group of remarriage modes which have no common denominator but belong as a triad to the Dharma Shastra tradition. The woman in question is always designated as a *punarbhu*, as a remarried woman. LARIVIÈRE (40-41) has discussed one of the relevant Sanskrit-texts. A *punarbhu* is (i) a virgin who has not completed the marriage ceremony and must marry again. We do not know why such a girl should wish another husband instead of the first. In the second case (ii) the married woman has left her husband, commits adultery and later on returns to her original husband. The second case is also unexplained. The third and last case (iii) of the triad is a widow who has no brothers-in-law. A *niyoga* is (nevertheless) intended, and the woman enters into a levirate marriage with a man of the same caste (LARIVIÈRE 41, JOLLY 60).

(3) There is an often-quoted verse which sanctions in a generalizing manner five cases of remarriage of women. Remarriage is allowed: when the husband has disappeared, has died, has become a monk, is a eunuch or an outcaste. See JOLLY 60, KANE 610-611, LARIVIÈRE 38, DATTA Co 7-10. -- JOLLY mentions that the traditional fivefold chain has been used by the modern propagators of the remarriage of widows.

Remarriage in general: "The rules of Manu [etc.] ... directly or indirectly attest to the remarriage of married women as a social reality that they had to record as a rule because the practice was embedded in tradition. At the same time, the lawmakers seem to find such a social reality

unpalatable and attempt to alter it by eulogizing constancy to one husband and one alone as the ideal for married women." (DATTA Co 10)

(4) The Artha Shastra permits divorce. The permission does not depend on any of the above-mentioned conditions, the only condition being "mutual hatred" (KANE 621-622). This would allow both parties to marry again. In other words, divorce is the same procedure for both parties. "Moreover, the rules found in these sections [Artha Shastra] show a breadth of outlook which is generally wanting in the Smrtis." KANGLE 153 Several cases of divorce and remarriage (effected by the wife) are contained in Buddhist literature (ALTEKAR 85-86). There is thus frequent deviation from the "ideal oneness of the married human couple." (§ 7.2)

Widow remarriage and *niyoga* existed side by side and probably disappeared simultaneously. According to ALTEKAR, remarriage of adult widows vanished between circa 300 B.C. and 200 A.D. (152). Remarriage of adult widows became *kalivarjya* (155). However remarriage of child widows lingered on for many centuries. But ALTEKAR writes "From about 1000 A.D. the prohibition of remarriage began to be extended even to the cases of child widows." (155) Girls betrothed by word or even by thought [!] should not be allowed to marry again after the death of their husbands. (155)

Remarriage of Shudras, outcastes etc. was probably wide-spread, perhaps no problem at all. CHEN In 83: "Widowhood [in non-Brahman lower castes] is not marked by the kind of dramatic break in the life of woman as in high caste society."

One text has discussed the subject of the unsuitable husband in unusual detail (LARIVIÈRE 38-40, JOLLY 59). The same text (and that is even more unusual) prescribes an examination of the man *prior* to the marriage ("One should examine a man's virility ..."). If the man failed, the marriage did not take place and inconveniences for the wife were avoided. The *examination* helps to avoid remarriage.

JOLLY §§ 18-20 (esp. 59-61, 64-67); MEYER We: 303-312 (esp. 304, footnote 1); WINTERNITZ 53-54, 95-96; ALTEKAR 83-86, 150-156; KANE 608-623; SUTHERLAND 79; LARIVIÈRE; BROCKINGTON 222; THIEME 447-460; DATTA Co (remarriage, pro and contra, an old discussion).

§ 9.6. The widow's right of inheritance.

We mention the quotations (mainly ALTEKAR 250-270) as an *introduction* to a complex subject. Refer for further information to JOLLY 85-86, 87-89; and to SONTHEIMER Chapters 3, 6 (iv) and 7(iii-iv).

We begin with a few words on female property.

The property of a woman is *stri-dhana* (*stri* = wife, *dhana* = property). DERRETT 185. There was an old view that women had no property, they *were* property (Manu 8.416; ALTEKAR 219).

Manu 8.416. Wife, son, and slave -- all these three, tradition tells us, are without property. Whatever they may earn becomes the property of the man to whom they belong.

But "It was only with reference to immoveable property that Hindu society was for a long time unwilling to invest the wife with full or exclusive ownership. ... As far as moveable property like ornaments, jewelry, costly apparel, etc. was concerned, women's right to own it was recognized at a very early date. All this property went under the category of Stridhana or Women's Special Property. The story of its development is a very interesting chapter in the history of Hindu law." (ALTEKAR 217). Moreover: "From about the 7th century A.D., we find a general tendency to enlarge the scope of Stridhana." (ALTEKAR 221). Refer for *stri-dhana* to ALTEKAR 212-233.

It would appear that in ancient times the widows simply remarried (mostly *niyoga*). "Very often they used to [re]marry, and so the question of giving them a share in their dead husband's property would not arise at all. The refusal to recognize the widow as an heir to her husband was thus causing not much actual hardship in society." (ALTEKAR 250) "We therefore find that down to c.300 B.C., the right of the widow to inherit her husband's property was not recognized by any jurist." (ALTEKAR 251)

The change began "at about the beginning of the Christian era." (ALTEKAR 252) The same time which reduced the life of the widow to penances proved charitable in other respects. Since the widow could no longer marry again or submit to *niyoga*, the widow's claims had to be redefined.

The recognition of the widow's right was a slow progress. There were limitations (only maintenance allowance for the widow, only moveable property devolving upon the widow, only a limited maximum amount of money to be given to the widow). ALTEKAR points to the coexistence of an orthodox and a liberal school or line since early days. "The school of reformers ... insisted that the widow's right to inherit the full share should be recognized." (255) This was an important innovation.

Well known is the difference between Mitakshara (a law-book, 11th-12th c.) and Dayabhaga (part of another law-book, 11th c. or later). We quote a description of the main tenets of the two schools. "Among Hindus, the economic status of the widow was governed by one of the two legal schools which determined the laws of the division of assets and inheritance -- the Dayabhaga and the Mitakshara. The Dayabhaga school, operative in Bengal, strongly favoured the individual's right to inherit and dispose of ancestral property without restrictions from the joint family. It also held that even in an undivided family, the widow succeeded to her husband's share on his death, provided he left no male heir ... The Mitakshara school, prevalent in other parts of northern India, held that only male descendants -- sons, grandsons or great grandsons -- acquired by birth the right to ancestral property. Women did not have a share in such property and a widow without sons was entirely dependent on the joint family for maintenance." (SOGANI 30-31) As just stated, both rules apply only if the widow has no sons. ALTEKAR writes: "The Hindu Women's Right to Property Act of 1937 extends the Dayabhaga principle to the whole of British India, and invests the widow with the right to inherit her husband's share in the family property ..." (270).

While the Dayabhaga rule was in favour of the widow as the heir of the deceased husband's property, the Mitakshara school granted her only a maintenance allowance. Under these

circumstances it seemed natural that many Dayabhaga widows were asked to commit *suttee* to secure for the husband's family the fortune of the dead testator. Such a derivation of above-average *suttees* from Dayabhaga is, however, not supported by the facts (FISCH 280-281). There were (in Bengal) no especially high *suttee* figures in Dayabhaga districts and no especially low *suttee* figures in Mitakshara districts, and there were also other reasons which did not support the derivation.

ALTEKAR mentions inter alia the following instances of heritage: "A 13th century inscription from Madura district narrates how two childless widows wanted to give a garden to a temple, how their relations would not sanction the transaction, and how eventually they could achieve their object only by securing the permission of some other reversioners ..." (ALTEKAR 266). ALTEKAR adds: "There are, however, other records, equally numerous and hailing from the same part of the country, which record sales or gifts of landed property by widows made for religious purposes, but which are silent about any permission of the reversioners." (ALTEKAR 266).

ALTEKAR continues "... a 15th century record mentions a Brahmana widow building a temple and giving to it a gift of land for the spiritual benefit of herself and her husband; a 17th century inscription describes how a Brahmana lady gifted away a whole village to a temple." (ALTEKAR 266). A 12th century inscription from Tanjore district "declares that a lawfully wedded wife inherits the whole property of the husband, including land, cattle, slaves, jewels and other valuables." (ALTEKAR 258). The donation of temples and sanctuaries by widows is not unusual.

§ 9.7. Feticide and female infanticide

Ancient India. Female infanticide seems to be mentioned in three related but not identical early, in this case Vedic, sentences (1-3). The three sentences refer to childbirth, and in each case it is said that "they" throw a daughter aside ('abandon, expel, reject'). By contrast it is said that "they" lift up a son (1) and that "they" do not throw a son aside (2-3). E.g. (1): "... they deposit [throw away] a daughter on birth, a son they lift up" (the two other texts accordingly); SYED To 87. The custom may be female infanticide (by exposure) or, more likely, a symbolical act indicating the inferiority of a female. ALTEKAR 7-8; SYED To 87-90; KANE 509. Under the circumstances, the three sentences are not sufficient indications of female infanticide in pre-epic times. In the epic we have "no decisive evidence for the exposure of female babies" (BROCKINGTON 224). Manu does not forbid (does not mention) female infanticide. Non-institutional, private infanticide does not appear in the texts. That the three sentences give expression to a low estimate of the female sex is nevertheless obvious.

According to the law-books abortion is a great crime. There are mutually related lists of great crimes including abortion, murder of the husband, murder of a Brahman and sexual intercourse with a man of a lower caste (SYED To 71). Abortion is close to *himsa* (violence, the opposite of *ahimsa* or non-violence). It destroys a human being (male or female), also a fetus. The demands of the ancestors (*pitris*) are not mentioned in this context, and the sex of the fetus was not known in ancient days. But Manu (11.88) mentions abortion in a list of crimes, adding that abortion is a crime if the sex of the fetus cannot be identified (?):

One must perform the same observance [aforementioned atonement] for killing an unknown [!] fetus, a Ksatriya or a Vaisya who is engaged in a sacrifice, or an *atreya* [§ 8.9].

Punishment for abortion is severe, inter alia exclusion of the woman from the caste. Evidence for abortion is limited in ancient India, but the existence of the practice follows from the numerous prohibitions. -- Refer for abortion in ancient India to SYED To 71-74 and to WEZLER Bh: 636, footnote 78 (bibliographical references); see also Manu 5.90 (women who "harm their fetus or husband").

Traditional India and modern India. R.SYED states that female infanticide is found in many parts of the country, but always restricted to certain groups which present only a small part of the population (To 83-84). See SYED To on Tamil Nadu (86) and Rajasthan (86-87); a certain Venkatramani reports on the poisoning of new-born girls in a caste in Tamil Nadu (SYED To 84), and WEINBERGER reports on the conditions in the Shekhavati District of Rajasthan (190, footnote 37). R.DUBE has studied the changes in the course of time (DUBE Chapter 1).

Female infanticide was in modern time not eradicated, but largely replaced by other methods of eliminating female progeny: abortion and neglect; see WICHTERICH 103-112 and WEINBERGER 265. According to rough estimates, more than two million or even five million female foeticides take place in India per annum (SYED To 65: 1999; this against a population of more than one billion). Prenatal diagnostic techniques (SYED To 66, 45-47) make abortion of female fetuses nowadays practicable (abortion of male fetuses hardly exists). However, due to the high cost, female infanticide is to some extent preferred to abortion in the hospitals. The sex ratios reflect the female survival chances: 1981, Kerala 1,032 : 1,000; Punjab 879 : 1,000. (FORBES 238)

Substantial dowry (supra) almost automatically induces abortion and female infanticide. Whatever dowry meant in old times, it probably *existed* in one form or another; the extensive employment of female infanticide in most parts of India has not shot up over night. There might have been several reasons, but a basic reason like dowry cannot be ruled out. Women are at any rate an "endangered population" (WEINBERGER 265). Early reports on female infanticide (Mughal period?) are mentioned but rarely; infanticide was no subject for travellers.

§ 10. Varia

§ 10.1. *Devadasis*

According to general usage, *devadasis* ('dancing girls'; literally: females in the service of gods) are women who are closely connected with a temple where they sing and dance for the god. They are mostly unmarried and have sexual relations with the priests (and with the king). '*Devadasi*' is the current designation for the category. Our description is correct in general, but applies in particular to the situation in Puri (atypical role of the king). The *devadasis* of the Puri temple (Orissa, Puri District) are our main subject. The principle deity of Puri is Jagannath (English spelling, used until recently, 'Juggernaut').

L.C.ORR has criticized the generalization of *devadasi* (in the usual sense) and introduced for the Tamil area the Tamil term 'temple women.' The following quotation from her book is based on Tamil inscriptions: "She [the 'temple woman'] is said to have some function in the temple or

matha and/or to receive on a regular basis food, rice, cloth, or gold, or rights over land from the temple." (37-38) Obviously such 'temple women' had no sexual relations with the priests.

ORR's study is based on Chola-inscriptions (Tamilnadu). Refer for "temple women terms" or for "prostitute terms" in inscriptions *outside* the Tamil area (Karnatak and North India including Puri) to ORR 49-51.

A German magazine (September 2006) recorded that in spite of prohibition (1988) the state of Andhra Pradesh had about 25,000 temple prostitutes (dancers), belonging mostly to the low caste of Madigas. "There are now efforts under way to eradicate the institution." Another record, perhaps more precise (WICHTERICH 1986: 90-95), mentions *devadasis* in Northern Karnatak. Their goddess is Yellamma (SYED To 100-101, 108). It seems at any rate that the institution of *devadasis* exists up to this day at more than one place.

Temple prostitution was a wide-spread phenomenon in ancient India (including or excluding the Tamil area), starting somewhere in the first millennium A.D. and not ending before the twentieth century. BANERJI has prepared a small All-India overview, his general tendency being emphasis on the wide distribution of temples with *devadasis* and on the equation of *devadasis* with prostitutes (132-148). Prostitution or no prostitution, dedication of a *daughter* to a temple was not rare (BANERJI 132-148: several examples). We also hear that a Kashmirian king presented a hundred women of his harem to a Shiva temple (BANERJI 134).

Possibly we have to distinguish between the introduction of the *devadasi* institution and its degeneration, assuming that the sexual factor was a later development. But there is also the view that temple prostitution in India is very old, as old as the *devadasi* institution (GONDA II 50: prostitution guarantees fertility).

ALTEKAR 182-184; GONDA II 49-50 (religious prostitution as part and parcel of Indian culture); CHANDRA 207-211; DEVA 161; ORR 3-17 (the temple woman, interpretations), 161-180 (the role of temple women in Chola history.) An early inscription (3rd/2nd century B.C.) already mentions a '*devadasi*.' (CHANDRA 45)

Whatever the individual *devadasi* felt about her life, the very status of such a woman -- she is after all in many (though not necessarily in all) cases a prostitute -- is hardly much more bearable in the eyes of a modern observer than the status of an ordinary prostitute.

The following overview is based on MARGLIN's book on the *The Rituals of the Devadasis of Puri*. The great temple in Puri (11th-12th century), a well-known pilgrimage place, had *devadasis* until the end of the last century (MARGLIN). The *devadasi* institution was declared illegal in the province of Madras in 1947, but until 1955 there were still 30 *devadasis* in the Jagannatha temple (MARGLIN 8, 11, 27).

Refer for the archaeology of the Jagannath temple in Puri to MOELLER 117-118, to HARLE (251, 514), and (mainly for Puri in general) to STARZA-MAJEWSKI: frontispiece and fig.121.

The temple is enclosed by a double boundary wall and is open only to Hindus. "Close to 1,500 persons have some ritual duties in this temple, all of whom are male except for the small group of devadasis. The women ritual specialists dance and sing in the temple on a daily basis as well

as participate in several calendrical festivals." (MARGLIN 18) The three central deities with their cars are Jagannatha, Subhadra and Balabhadra (MARGLIN 252-253), *Krishna*, his *sister* and his *brother*. The origin of the triple concept is not known. HARLE calls the temple (for want of a better description) "a Vaisnava shrine of Krsna" (251). The famous car-festival is described on pp.248-263 of MARGLIN.

We concentrate on the biography of a *devadasi* as described by MARGLIN. The main events in the life of a *devadasi* are her dedication to the temple ('marriage') in the pre-menstrual phase, the menarche and the consummation. The girl to be dedicated is in a good physical condition (not deaf etc.).

First of all the mother has to send a written petition to the court of the god-king, stating that she wants her daughter to be accepted as a *devadasi*. After this the court finds out whether the girl has the necessary accomplishments (including proper caste). Once the mother is informed of the positive outcome of the examination a day is fixed for the 'wedding ceremony.' Naturally, the day is filled with rituals. The girl receives a *mantra* from a *guru*, is brought to the temple, has a special cloth tied round her head, circumambulates the temple, returns to her house (accompanied by music etc.), receives blessings in the form of a long *puja* etc. After that follows the feasting of Brahmans and the presentation of presents to the girl. In the evening the girl is led to the king. There are again rites, and the girl is now considered married to Jagannath. The dedication ceremony is analogous to an ordinary wedding. The girl can now perform certain rites in the temple (other rites will follow after puberty). 67-72.

The puberty ceremony takes place seven days after the menarche. In the morning of the seventh day the girl takes a ritual bath in a tank. This is followed by rites in the house and by a feast with a great number of guests. Soon after the puberty ceremony the girl (aged eleven or twelve) is invited for the consummation, the king *or* a Brahman priest being the first to enjoy her. The *devadasi* is now a servant of the temple and can perform the prescribed rites (72-77).

When the king dies there are no unpleasant consequences for the *devadasis*. The king is followed immediately by his successor, and, as the king, "living embodiment of Visnu," never dies, the queen as well as the *devadasis* never become widows (77-78).

The *devadasis* have children, but due to the use of contraceptives their number is limited, most children being adopted. Fathers must be residents of Puri and members of a respected caste. Expectant *devadasis* can continue their service, dancing alone being excepted. As a rule, true children are also called 'adopted.' Children (mainly girls) are adopted when a daughter has been promised to Jagannatha (to cure the illness of another daughter), when poor families cannot afford the expenses of a marriage, and when the mother is a widow (and has been driven from her house or has left it). A girl born to the brother of a *devadasi* is also adopted by her and becomes automatically a *devadasi* herself (78-80).

The kinship organization of the *devadasis* is, naturally, different from the general pattern. "Some of the *devadasis* told me that only a daughter should perform funeral ceremonies because the ancestresses would not get the food and the water offered by a son." (82).

Sexuality in the *devadasi* milieu is a complex subject. Sexual intercourse *in* the temple is prohibited (as *devadasis* are impure they are not even allowed inside the inner sanctum).

Sexuality must take place at night and at home. Certain high-class Brahmans even avoid sexual contact with the *devadasis*. The partners of the *devadasis* are mainly the Brahman priests doing service in the temple. In addition, the *devadasis* have upper caste partners (citizens of Puri). They do not change their partners very frequently, and they receive land etc. from wealthy patrons (89-95). -- As is well known, the temple economy in classical antiquity (temples of Aphrodite etc.) included sexual services of female temple servants (*hierai gynaiques*).

The king had, analogous to the *devadasi* group for the *temple*, female servants for the *palace*, residing like the *devadasis*, generally, in their own houses. "... they had sexual relations mostly with temple brahman servants and members of the royal entourage." The female servants "were not expected to bestow their favours exclusively on the king." (26).

The authoress tells us that 'Puri is full of widows' (54). They do not seem to suffer any hardship, and some of them are temple attendants (waving fly-whisks etc.).

Generally, the *devadasis* did not speak openly about sexual matters. However, F.A.MARGLIN had a 'totally uninhibited' *devadasi* informant who felt: "Why should I hide these things?" (37).

Different from the institution of *devadasis* is the concentration of widows in centres of pilgrimage. "In *Prema* (1907) Premchand [distinguished Hindi author] vividly describes the decadent atmosphere around the temples and ghats [steps on the bank of a river] of Benaras where corrupt priests and their strongmen harass young, unprotected women, particularly widows in their quest for sexual titillation." (SOGANI 41) And "The miserable state of widows of all ages in Vrindavan [centre of pilgrimage near Mathura] has been graphically described by Indira Goswami in her novel *Neelkanthi Braja* (1976)." (SOGANI 42) We do not know since when well-known centres of pilgrimage are connected with prostitution. Maybe, temple prostitution is as old as the early temples.

§ 10.2. Prostitution in general

We read on child-prostitution: "The sexually misused girls have as a rule no mind of their own and no chance to offer resistance. They have learned to suffer. 'Silence, sacrifice and sufferance are some of the moral qualities specifically extolled among the girl children.'" (SYED To 100) Prostitution demonstrates lack of self-determination.

CHANDRA writes "In spite of the rural bias of Vedic culture there is evidence which clearly points to the fact that prostitution existed in Rig Vedic times." (p.1) Epic evidence of prostitution is not missing, but it is part of the scene, and prostitutes do not enter the action (MEYER We 198-205; CHANDRA 9-11; BROCKINGTON 434). Early Buddhist works of the same period include a number of stories where courtesans have active roles (CHANDRA Chapter 2). We concentrate below on literature in the *post-Christian* period when the culture of courtesans had reached its climax.

The world of courtesans -- let this be said at the beginning -- is not the world of the sacrificial ground where *priests* murmur sacred formulas; it is not the world of *rishis* contemplating in the forests on the absolute; nor the world of *warriors*, fighting innumerable duels with fantastic weapons. The world of the courtesans is a peaceful world of richness and luxuriance -- of enchanting parks and delightful rivers, of drinking-bouts and amorous plays, of capricious

costumes and intriguing cosmetics, a world which is dominated by diversion and entertainment. The overarching concept is *krida* or 'play.'

If we translate *krida* by 'pleasure' we find, in the relevant texts, pleasure-hills (*krida-saila*), pleasure-grounds, pleasure-groves, pleasure-ponds, pleasure-houses, pleasure-peacocks, pleasure-monkeys, pleasure-deer, pleasure-cups (liquor-cups), pleasure-cars. There was time and money; there were women of pleasure and idle capitalists, and there were, obviously, long periods of internal and external peace. Courtesans (well organized) were moreover part of the palace (satisfying the demands of the king and of the nobility), and courtesans in general (the rich courtesans?) were necessary as tax-payers. On the other hand, it is nowhere said in which way the many courtesans for the *palace* were 'procured': Widows of enemies killed in battle? Widows in general? Women (girls) from impoverished families? There is sufficient room for speculation. Probably the necessary women were always available. Rich townsmen had concubines and connections with the numerous brothels.

There was a class of educated men, dominating the world of pleasure and linked to the courtesans. They were the so-called *nagarakas* (Kama Sutra). "The *nagarakas* [men-about-town] were cultured men of refined taste who lived luxuriously and devoted their leisure and wealth to the cultivation of fine arts, including dance, drama, music, poetry, wit and humour." (DEVA 189) The *nagarakas* met in a socially influential club in the city.

Nagarakas and partners of the same stratum (courtesans, wives) were linked with the concept of the *kalas* or arts. Here was their world. There is a list of sixty-four *kalas*, some for men and some for women (prepared by the author of the Kama Sutra: CHANDRA 60-66). The list is artificial but not atypical. The words may end in '*kala*'. *Kalas* typical of men include skill in gambling, experience with animal fights, knowledge of the conventions of writing poetry, training elephants, art of warfare, physical exercises. The *nagaraka* is above all a connoisseur in the fields of music and poetry. Typical of women are *dancing postures and gestures*, "drawing up [with grains of rice] patterns on the floors of the temples," "wreathing flowers, knowledge of earrings, cooking," "the art of wearing a torn garment in such a way that it looks whole." Musical competence (singing and instrumental music) is expected from both genders.

Another list of sixty-four *kalas* contains a subsection on sexuality. It is written by the commentator on the Kama Sutra: The courtesan must practice inter alia the following: "gauging the feelings of the lover," "offering the limbs in embrace," "untying the *sari* knot before sexual union," "appeasing the angry lover" (CHANDRA 59). BANERJI mentions a third list of sixty-four *kalas*: only sexual items, and always groups of eight, e.g. eight kinds of mutual embrace, eight kinds of putting nail-marks on the woman's body; 113-116. See ultimately CHANDRA 38-41 for a fourth list, containing seventy-two *kalas* (most items connected with men: fighting etc.). -- The non-vegetarian diet and the popularity of animal fights demonstrate the total indifference towards *ahimsa* or non-violence (CHANDRA 62, 220-221: non-vegetarian diet; 64, 217-218: animal fights).

Festivals, games and pastimes of all description were an important element of city-life. The festivals were mainly organized by *nagarakas*. The Kama Sutra has a long list which includes the well-known festivals of Diwali and Holi (CHANDRA 70-72). The list also includes minor entertainments where grams, mango fruits and lotus roots were eaten and people were dressed with crest ornaments of Ashoka flowers and lotus flowers. There is finally a shorter list of

festivals (ad hoc festivals, all the names *ending* in *-krida*, pleasure): water-pleasure (*jala-krida*), forest-pleasure (in spring), vegetation-pleasure, sand-pleasure, drink-pleasure, etc. (CHANDRA 218-221). Water-pleasure: "He [the king] dallied with them [the women] for some time and threw gold coins and precious stones in the *vapi* [tank] to encourage his women to dive and claim them." The purpose of diving was obviously the presentation of the human body in different postures. Diving amusements were often linked with competitions, mainly musical contests (CHANDRA 29). The atmosphere was jovial, the conversation light, the amusement great.

Kautilya's Artha Shastra includes valuable information on the organization of the courtesans: "... the *ganika* [courtesan], who is allowed a suitable establishment by the state, is expected to entertain visitors according as the king may direct her. A refusal to obey the king in this respect means heavy punishment." (KANGLE 164) The state was responsible for everything: "The principle of providing some sort of old age pension to the old and infirm prostitutes shows the benevolent attitude of the state towards them. Their profession gave them an opportunity to meet all sorts of people, both native and foreign and taking full advantage of this, the state employed them as spies." (CHANDRA 44) *Ganikas* were under state control. There was probably a distinction between *ganikas* inside and *ganikas* outside the palace, between *ganikas* and other prostitutes.

About the ceremonial functions of the courtesans the following is said in the Artha Shastra: "They held the royal umbrella [parasol], the golden pitcher and the fan when he [the king] was seated in the royal litter [vehicle], the throne and the chariot." (CHANDRA 46) This is reflected in the royal iconography of deities and spiritual heroes (Tirthankaras).

As can be expected, a pleasure-loving society is mirrored in many works of literature (drama, narrative literature, verse literature). The odd Indian theory of drama (a construction) describes various standard roles of which the *vita* type at least [male] is a child of contemporary eroticism. See § 1.

Sexual scenes on the temples are unexpected for the western observer. We mention Khajuraho and Orissa (DEVA and DONALDSON). The modern descriptions of temples refer very often to *surasundaris* (heavenly nymphs) and *mithunas* (amorous couples). Female chowry-bearers and parasol-bearers (supra) form an additional field of iconographic eroticism. There are no dancing girls in the technical sense. Coital scenes appear at Khajuraho in friezes (DEVA 172-173, e.g. 5" inches high) or, more conspicuous, in figure compositions on the outer walls (DEVA 176, e.g. 2'5" to 3'5"). Numerous sexual motifs on Orissan temples have been demonstrated by DONALDSON. § 13.4 We do not know how the society reacted to the eroticism (but see MERTENS 336-337: action of a Kashmirian king against immoral behaviour in a sect). "The gods and goddesses are spiritual entities, but their forms are often blatantly sensuous, if not erotic." (Pal 13)

Refer for vivid descriptions of courtesans, with additional information, to MEYER Da (52-63, 205-208) and to MEYER We 198-205. See also JAMKHEDKAR 67-71.

In modern India, prostitution has been studied mainly in Bengal, where it was, and is, a regular theme in the press and in novels. Prostitution, in Bengal or elsewhere in India, has an alarming dimension. See BANERJI 150-180 (Bengal) and 191-204 (India in general). Refer to SYED TO

100-102 for child prostitution, prostitution in general and *devadasis* in modern India (mainly statistics) and for stray remarks (105-106, 108) on the situation in ancient India.

An Indian author (2000, SYED To 100) speaks of about 2,000,000 prostitutes below the age of fifteen in a population of 1,020,000,000 (2001). According to a study of the UNICEF there were in the beginning of the nineties circa 300 000 child prostitutes in India (SYED To 100).

§ 11. The Woman in the Epics

§ 11.1. General

The epics are a literary corpus in its own right. The extent and character of the material and the systematic study by J.BROCKINGTON recommend a careful treatment of the epics in our article. The recorded facts are almost always based on the life in the royal houses.

Mahabharata and Ramayana. The Mahabharata is a combination of different genres: narratives, Dharma Shastra (close connection with the Manu Smriti and with other Dharma Shastras: JOLLY § 10) and philosophy (Bhagavadgita etc.). The Ramayana is much shorter than the Mahabharata and epic throughout (main story and interpolated stories); didactic matter is limited: BROCKINGTON 14.

We add a few general references (mainly chronological). J.BROCKINGTON: 1-40 (Introduction); 485-486 (Mahabharata and Manu Smriti); 148 (dating of the epics: partial results); 377-379 (dating of the Ramayana [and of the short Ramayana version in the Mahabharata]); 379 (formation of the two epics: according to one author: 400 B.C.-300 A.D.).

Dates of the Ramayana suggested by BAILEY xvi and BAILEY 353 (following J.BROCKINGTON): Ramayana Stage 1 500-300 B.C.; Stage 2 300 B.C. to 100 A.D.; Stage 3 zero to 300 A.D.; Stage 4 circa 4th to 12th centuries A.D. -- Stages 1-2 = Books 2-6, Stage 3 = Books 1 and 7, Stage 4 = later passages (with good manuscript support).

We do not know 'which of the two epics is the earlier one'. See below 'social aspects' and see 'Gupta period' in the glossary.

MEYER We: The author has a carefully organized Register, e.g. '*devara*' (vicarious father), 'Brautpreis' (bride-price), 'Buhldirnen' (prostitutes), 'Ehebruch' (adultery), 'Gatte' (husband).

Mahabharata: Cultural and social aspects (204-231). Below follow items (BROCKINGTON 217-231) which are connected with the position of women:

In the Mahabharata *sati* "was regarded as normal" (BROCKINGTON 217 / 217-218), and *Witwenelend* was not unusual (222-223). Female ascetics were rare (218-219). It was "a woman's duty to serve her husband faithfully" (219). But "women were not particularly secluded" (219-220). "... marriage did not normally take place till after puberty" (220), but marriage before puberty was prescribed in at least one book of the Mahabharata (220-221). Misogyny had started (221). A bride-price was condemned but dowry was discussed (221). "Perpetual tutelage" (women are never independent) had started (221). *Niyoga* was obviously not rare (221-222, 225). In the husband's family a wife is to be treated friendly (221). Food prepared by a menstruating

woman was not to be eaten (223). A wife's period must be used by the husband (223; Savitri's father, see below). Preference for sons does not seem to be very pronounced (224).

Suttee was not infrequent, it was 'normal' (supra). No doubt, the widows of the innumerable slain warriors did *not* commit *suttee*. Remarriage in one form or another no doubt existed. But here as elsewhere the world of fiction need not be identical with the world of reality, i.e. there were perhaps more *suttees* in those days than admitted by the author(s) of the Mahabharata.

Regarding the subject of deterioration in the Mahabharata, BROCKINGTON observes "... the position of women in the *Mahabharata* tends to deteriorate over time. A degree of freedom implied by various incidents of the main narrative gradually gives way to an increasing emphasis on a woman's subordination to her husband ..." (pp.224-225).

Ramayana, Cultural and social aspects (pp.425-440)

In the case of the *Ramayana*, the gradual deterioration of the position of women is visible in a chronological summary: BROCKINGTON employs in many cases his system of four stages (supra). There are, naturally, some events which do not fit in this picture.

The respect for the father (Dasharatha) and for the three mothers (Rama and his three brothers) is noteworthy: The four sons and one daughter-in-law show extreme loyalty to their parents (429). The mutual affection between Rama and Sita is proverbial. In a general way, female devotion towards the husband grows in the course of the epic. The rejection of the innocent Sita is, however, "totally out of character with the rest of the narrative" (431). There is no pressure to produce children (431); Rama's twin-sons are shadowy figures, born at the end of the epic when Sita is exiled. The age of marriage is no criterion of an earlier or later stage, but Rama and Sita probably married as adults (432). Polygyny was normal, inter alia in the family of Rama (432-433, supra). Rama's monogamy and his refusal to marry again, when he had banished Sita, are unusual (433). Adultery was possible in the first stage of the Ramayana (the monkey-chief: 433). Emphasis on chastity (guarding the wives) existed from the second stage onwards: 433. Seclusion of women of the royal family increased in the course of time: In the earliest period the royal women appeared openly in the city, but gradually an elaborate harem system was introduced (433-434). There is only one reference to menstrual impurity, whereas it is mentioned frequently in the Mahabharata (434). We hear of married women living in *ashramas* and of single female ascetics (434). *Witwenelend* is mentioned but once, and in a later stage of the epic (435: fourth stage; see § 12.3). *Niyoga* was still current (435), but not frequent (433), at any rate rarer than in the Mahabharata (433). *Suttee* does not start before the third stage (435) and does not figure in the main plot. "... widowhood is the greatest calamity that can befall a woman" (435, fourth stage).

Savitri (Mahabharata, infra) and Sita (Ramayana) are paragons of female devotion. It is worthy of note that LESLIE quotes on p.2 two critical feminists: "Sita, Savitri, Anusuya [sic] and various other mythological heroines are used as the archetypes of such a woman [the ideal Indian woman] and women themselves are deeply influenced by this cultural ideal ..." ... [But] "Now we must refuse to be Sitas ..."

BROCKINGTON summarizes: "The growing strictness with regard to sexual morality is reflected in the steady trend away from women's participation in public life to their almost complete seclusion within the home and especially the inner apartment of the king's palace" (433, details above).

§ 11.2. Mahabharata: Story of Savitri

We are following VAN BUITENEN (760-778 translation of the critical edition; 760-761: abstract). See also JAMISON 245-247.

A king named Ashvapati had a daughter, Savitri, as his only child, and even this daughter was conceived only through the help of a goddess. When she had reached the marriageable age (eighteen years according to a later manuscript), Savitri had the radiance of a goddess, an internal brightness which frightened the wooers away -- rather than attracting them. The king faced the problem shared by most fathers of daughters: how to marry her off. Unsuccessful himself, he asked his daughter to find herself a worthy husband (Svayamvara marriage, § 3) and to inform him, so that he might give his consent. The king himself quotes a verse from the Manu Smriti (9.4) which enumerates the established duties towards a daughter:

A father who does not marry off his daughter in time, a husband who does not have intercourse with his wife at the right period, a son who does not protect his widowed mother -- all these are blameable.

In search of a suitable husband, Savitri perambulates, accompanied by an adequate escort, the *tapo-vanas* (groves with *ashramas* or hermitages). After her return, she tells her story before the king (Ashvapati is accompanied by Narada, the famous sage). There is a dispossessed king (Dyumatsena) who lives with his family in the forest, blind and now an ascetic. His son Satyavan was born in the paternal residence but brought up in the forest. On account of his noble qualities Savitri wants to marry him. The sage Narada now prophecies that Satyavan will die after the lapse of a year. Satyavan is endowed with all conceivable virtues, imminent death being his only misfortune. But Savitri is adamant. The king gives his consent.

Ashvapati goes with his daughter to the *ashrama* of the blind Dyumatsena. Dyumatsena should accept Savitri as his daughter-in-law. Dyumatsena warns Ashvapati that his daughter will not be able to endure the hardships of life in the forest (frequent topic). But Ashvapati does not change his mind and gives Dyumatsena, who now agrees, his daughter. The marriage (Savitri and Satyavan) takes place; Dyumatsena receives an adequate dowry from Ashvapati, and Ashvapati returns.

Savitri *never forgets the prophecy* of the sage. She counts the days allocated by the prophecy. Three days before the impending death of her husband she stands motionless without a break. Nobody knows her design. On the fourth day, early in the morning of the expected last day of Satyavan's life, she finishes her penance and performs the morning rites. She greets the ascetics and her parents-in-law, and the ascetics "pronounced blessings for her never to be widowed" (767). The parents-in-law now ask Savitri to break her fast and to eat, but she will not eat before sun-set. Meanwhile Satyavan starts for the forest to bring fruit and fuel for the family. Husband and parents-in-law give Savitri their permission to go also into the woods. Both set out on their expedition. But when Satyavan is splitting wood he does not feel well and faints away. Savitri

sits down on the ground and puts his head on her lap. The very moment of his death is approaching, and in fact the God of Death (Yama) appears and looks down on Satyavan. Savitri recognizes him as a god and asks: "Who are you, what is your design?". He is Yama and has come to fetch Satyavan. With a noose Yama draws the soul (described as a tiny man) out of Satyavan. Satyavan dies. But Savitri follows Yama who was within an ace of carrying Satyavan's soul away for good.

Yama asks Savitri to go home. But Savitri does not go. She explains to Yama the duty of a wife: "I too must go where my husband is led, or goes by himself ..." Yama is pleased and grants her a boon, a boon except the life of her husband. She asks Yama to grant her father-in-law restoration of his eyesight.

Five times does Yama ask Savitri to return, five times she puzzles him by her wisdom, five times he grants a boon, five times she expresses a wish: The eyesight of Dyumatsena may be restored (supra); Dyumatsena may regain his kingdom; sonless Ashvapati may father hundred sons; hundred sons may be born from her womb to Satyavan; and Satyavan *shall live*. The boons one to four had been granted on condition that Savitri did not choose the life of her husband, but the fifth and last boon was granted *without* condition. Perhaps Yama was literally forced to release Satyavan, as Savitri says: "You have given the boon that a hundred sons will be born to me, yet you take my man. I choose the boon that Satyavan live! Your very own word shall now come true!" Yama now loosens his nooses [no details] and returns to the realm of the dead.

Savitri retreats to her husband's corpse. Comforted by Savitri, Satyavan returns to consciousness: "I lost consciousness when I fell asleep in your embrace. Then I saw a terrible darkness and a dreadful person. Tell me if you know whether it was a dream I saw, or was it real?" Savitri does not give any answer. She wants to spend the approaching night with her husband in the forest, but Satyavan is afraid his parents might be worried, extremely worried, if son and daughter-in-law do not return in time. So Satyavan and Savitri hasten on to the hermitage.

At the crucial time Dyumatsena regains his eyesight. But the happy event is overshadowed by the deep concern for the young people, in the first place concern on the part of Dyumatsena and his wife: "Ah son, ah good bride, where are you, where are you?" But also concern on the part of the ascetics staying in the *ashrama*. Eventually Satyavan and Savitri appear, and the curiosity is immense. What happened that the couple returns only in the dead of night? Savitri explains everything, starting with Narada's prophecy and ending with the happy return. She is praised by the assembled seers.

On the next morning Dyumatsena's erstwhile ministers come from the king's land. They inform the king and all those present that the usurper and his followers have been killed by his own minister. The usurper's army has fled. The subjects are now keen to reinstall the old king to his throne. Accordingly, the royal family leaves the *ashrama* and returns to the capital. Dyumatsena is consecrated anew, and Satyavan becomes crown prince. In the course of time, Savitri gives birth to a hundred sons, and Ashvapati fathers also a hundred sons, brothers of Savitri.

The components of the story:

The marriage by Svayamvara is practised, although the term *svayamvara* (§ 3) does not occur and although female independence is limited. The father sends Savitri out in search of a husband,

but on her way she is accompanied by ministers, and later on she has to persuade her father to permit her marriage with Satyavan. All her activities are centred on one person, the husband-to-be; in the crisis, Savitri comes to his rescue. All the time Savitri is a model of female devotion and submission.

Ashvapati has asked the goddess for sons, but is happy to father a daughter (as promised by a goddess). It is in fact the daughter who helps him to sons (the *sons* are only *mentioned*). The verse, *supra*, about the duties of father, husband, and son (towards daughter, wife and mother) mentions the traditional duties within the family.

The generous Yama does not realize that Savitri will become a widow if he does not release Satyavan. This point is not mentioned by the narrator. Five wishes: as mentioned by Savitri the fifth wish is actually implied by the fourth wish.

One cannot imagine that Satyavan will marry a second and a third wife later on (his father-in-law had of course several wives). In fact, the ideal hero is sometimes monogamous even though monogamy is nowhere prescribed; there seems to be an undercurrent of monogamy (combined with inner-worldly asceticism?). Cf. Rama in the Ramayana.

Motifs of the story: the god of death, devotion to the husband, daughter-in-law and parents-in-law, Smart Woman and Feckless Man (JAMISON 15), dowry, colony of ascetics in the forest.

§ 11.3. Ramayana: Sita twice repudiated

Rama's wife Sita has been abducted by the demon king Ravana. After a long succession of adventures, ending with the killing of Ravana, Rama gives order that Sita (then still kept in the harem of Ravana) should appear before him. Sita is a model of chastity and loyalty, and Rama was driven to despair when she had been abducted, but at this crucial moment he has suddenly lost all interest in Sita: He has liberated Sita only to preserve his good name; he is no longer concerned with her; he does not hasten to see her (and to frighten the she-demons in Ravana's harem away). Now follows the description of the meeting between Rama and Sita, and of Sita's repudiation (*see* § 8.5). As a consequence of the repudiation, Sita asks Rama's brother (Lakshmana) to prepare a pyre and to light it (ordeal). She jumps into the fire, but soon the god of fire (Agni) emerges in person from the flames and attests to her purity. The God Agni hands Sita over to Rama who now declares that he had never doubted her virtue.

Nor is this the end of the matter. Some time after Rama had returned with Sita from the campaign against Ravana to his residence in Ayodhya (Northern India), there were rumours in the population that Sita could not possibly have remained chaste while in the hands of Ravana. Her presence as wife of Rama might now have an adverse effect on the general state of morals. Rama sends Sita to the hermitage of Valmiki (alleged author of the Ramayana) near the border of the empire. Sita knows the reason but remains calm and composed. Later on Rama celebrates a great sacrifice. Sita and Valmiki are present. Valmiki testifies to Sita's innocence, and Rama declares that he is convinced. Sita for her part takes an oath: She is innocent, the Goddess Earth may receive her. The Goddess appears, embraces Sita and disappears with her in the earth. Rama is now driven to despair: The goddess should return Sita; but Sita does not come back. Rama for his part does not marry again. For his sacrifices he uses a golden likeness of Sita. His conduct is a rare symbol of monogamy (§ 9.2).

Rama's twofold (!) rejection of his wife Sita is unexplained. The double motif belongs to the core of the Ramayana. It cannot be explained away as a later accretion (in a time when morals had indeed become very strict). Students of sexual crimes will suggest that Ravana wanted to *humiliate* Rama and his family by violating Sita (SYED To 151, footnote 39). Such an argument could perhaps explain the twofold rejection (intensified annulment of the harassment by Ravana) --. BROCKINGTON: 431; RUBEN: 339-348.

§ 12. Widowhood and *Suttee*

Suttee was abolished in British India by Lord Bentinck in 1829/1830; the princely states, not directly subject to the British administration, followed in the course of time (FISCH 439-446). The British penal code (condemning *suttee*) was taken over by the Indian government in 1947 (FISCH 446-449).

§ 12.1. *Suttee* as recorded up to about 300 A.D.

We admit right from the start that there is no clue to the origins of *suttee*. Early sources are Diodor (Greek author) on the one hand and epic references (India) on the other: see below. We do not know whether *suttee* was imported or autochthonous (see FISCH 227). J.FISCH's book on 'Totenfolge' ('following the dead') is an interdisciplinary approach, covering all cultures where the relevant custom (i.e. Totenfolge in general and *suttee* in particular) was found.

The main foreign source for *suttee* is the Greek author Diodorus (first century B.C.) who gives an interesting but not always reliable description. The exact date of his source (Cleitarchus) is not known. There are different dates, 280 B.C. to 100 B.C. (GARZILLI 339). Diodorus quotes from his source the following (GARZILLI 344-347):

A Hindu general named Keteus, commander of an Indian army in the time after Alexander the Great and embroiled in the ensuing disorder, had lost his life in battle. He left behind two wives who had accompanied him and who both loved him dearly. However, in India there was a law that marriage partners were not selected by the parents but by the parties themselves. This resulted in unhappy marriages (the partners being too young). As a consequence, the following situation had arisen. The wives often preferred a paramour to their legitimate husband and poisoned the latter. Therefore a law was enacted that the wives should be burned along with their husbands. This did not apply to wives who were expectant or had children. Also it applied only to *one* wife. But Keteus had two wives. It was therefore ruled that the younger wife should have the privilege of death with her husband, the elder one being with child. The younger one was overjoyed, the elder one was wild with rage. The younger one entered the funeral pyre and reclined on the side of her husband. Before the pyre was kindled the armed army circumambulated it thrice. When the flames progressed, the woman did not utter the least sound. The *Indian* spectators praised her or expressed extreme pity. Different was the reaction of some of the *Greeks* who were present. They called the custom cruel and painful.

The year of this event is 316 B.C. Keteus was defeated by Antigonos. We are faced with the question of the spread of the Keteus story in Greek literature. The

unknown Indian source is in itself partly fictional (poisoned husbands). The Mahabharata parallel (Madri) is mentioned below. See ALTEKAR 122; GARZILI 344-349; FISCH 221-224.

A peculiar reference to *suttee* is found in the Rigveda (1300-1000 B.C.). The widow has to lie down on the funeral pyre by the side of her dead husband. But she leaves soon (after the cremation of her husband) the funeral pyre in order to marry again. It is possible to conclude that in the Rigveda, and in a related text (Atharvaveda), widow burning was remembered (a few difficult verses), but not practised (ZIMMER AI 331), while much later (in the Mahabharata) widow burning was actually undertaken and thus perhaps reanimated. This was of course only a first step; a gradual but lasting activation ('activation' according to the theory) occurred in the first half of the first millennium A.D. Refer for the Rigveda (and the related text) to THIEME 452-457 (452-458), furthermore to OLDENBERG 586-587, KANE 624-636 and SPROCKHOFF 422-423. ZIMMER AI proposes that the *suttee* still existed in ancient India in some tribes of the Vedic period, but for that we have no support.

We find the first unequivocal references to *suttee* in the epics, in a dramatic form and in connection with the death of King Pandu. Pandu had two wives, Kunti and Madri, but it was prophesied to him (by way of a curse) that he would die in the sexual act. One day he was overcome by passion and approached Madri, the younger of the two. His death was instantaneous. Madri is determined to die with her husband. The assembled sages try to dissuade her from her plan, but she does not change her mind. She explains why she, and not Kunti, deserves the honour of being united with her husband in death. *She*, Madri, is the cause of his death, *she* is too young to control her passions, and *she* would find it difficult to treat her sons and stepsons (her own sons and the sons of Kunti) justly. This may or may not be called a competition, there is at any rate some similarity (even historical connection) with the account of Diodoros. Madri then enters the funeral pyre. Her three arguments obviously reflect an old discussion on *suttee*, they are not invented *ad hoc*.

The epics seem to demonstrate that *suttee* was rare and remarriage no great exception. This at least is the view of some authors. But BROCKINGTON feels that "incidental references as well as minor components of the plot indicate that the practice of women burning themselves on their husband's pyre was regarded as normal" (Mahabharata: BROCKINGTON 217). The opposite line of argument would emphasize that the slain warriors in the two epics left behind scores of widows who had *not* entered the funeral pyre (*supra*). Also, the almost complete absence of *suttee* in the Ramayana makes it unlikely that in the Mahabharata the custom of *suttee* was already in full sway.

Kalidasa (5th century A.D.) gives the impression that *suttee* had come to stay: Compare the fourth chapter of his court epic Kumarasambhava (SYED Ku: 32-37, 173-177). *Suttee* must have become an established custom before Kalidasa's days. Epigraphic evidence starts early, but not before 400 A.D. (MICHAELS 149-150: 464 A.D., 510 A.D). The two inscriptions point chronologically in the same direction. See 'Gupta period' in the Glossary. Refer to § 12.2 for '300 A.D.').

SPROCKHOFF compares widow burning with the death of the old man who was in times past forced to leave the house (being an economic burden) and to terminate his life in the forest (SPROCKHOFF 425, 425-428). In India, the old man was indeed sent to the wilderness (Manu 6.2-4). The texts present a typology of aged ascetics: GONDA I 287-288.

Bibliography on *suttee* in ancient India (before and after '300 A.D.'): JOLLY 67-69; GARBE; MEYER We 307-312 (rarity of true *suttee* cases in the epics); WINTERNITZ 55-85; ALTEKAR 120-121 (*Suttee* rare in the Mahabharata, still rarer in the Ramayana); 123 (*Suttee* found [inter alia] in two Bhasa dramas, Bhasa 3rd/4th c. A.D.?); KANE 624-636 (*suttee* and *suttee* ritual); BROCKINGTON 142, 217-218 (Madri etc.), 223, 435; SYED Ku 175-176 (Sanskrit authors).

KANE writes: "... if Frenchmen can feel pride in the deeds of their Emperor Napoleon who tried to enslave the whole of Europe and yet are not held up to ridicule or rebuke, there is no reason why poor Indians cannot express admiration for the sacrifices which their women made in the past, though they may condemn the institution itself which demanded such terrible sacrifice and suffering." (636).

Suttee is only a *variety* of the more or less universal Totenfolge. There are apparent parallels to *suttee* (Euripides, FISCH 46-48), but no close parallels. The gradual *extension* of the custom (*first* from rulers to ordinary Kshatriyas, *then* to Brahmans and *then* -- or simultaneously -- to further castes) is only found in India (§ 12.2). There is no prospect of a convincing explanation of *suttee*.

§ 12.2. *Suttee* after 300 A.D.

Information on *suttee* 'after 300 A.D.' is much richer than information on *suttee* 'before 300 A.D.' According to ALTEKAR, *suttee* was in full sway since '700 A.D' (126, infra). Our organization of § 12 uses '300 A.D' (pre-Gupta) for the beginning of the increase of *suttee*. '300 A.D.' also means 'before Kalidasa'. Below we try to mention all relevant details. § 12.2-5 demonstrate 'traditional India' as defined in § 1 and in the Glossary.

We do not know the course which a *suttee* usually took in the early days, i.e. the ritual and the ideological background. Possibly the procedure was already similar to the procedure in the last centuries. Widow burning is a part of Hinduism, but it is not certain that *suttee* was from the very beginning marked by Hinduism, or by any form of Indian religion.

Suttees have been mentioned in ornate poetry since the early centuries of our era (SYED Ku 175-176, ALTEKAR 123, WINTERNITZ 62-69). The great authorities are Kalidasa and Bana; Bana is the court poet of king Harsha (606-648 A.D.). Kalidasa describes in his court epic Kumarasambhava the widowhood of the wife of the god of love and her intention to commit *suttee*. In Bana's famous novel Kadambari (K. is the name of the heroine) the hero explains to a young widow, ready to ascend the funeral pyre, that *suttee* is absolutely useless and without logic: "... It [*suttee*] is a mistake of stupendous magnitude. It does no good whatsoever to the dead person. It does not help him in ascending to heaven; it does not prevent him from sinking into hell. It does not at all ensure union after death; ..." ALTEKAR 124, WINTERNITZ 64-65. The widow abandons her plan. Bana was also the author of a biography of Harsha. The mother of King Harsha committed *suttee* immediately before the death of her husband and in spite of the protests of her son. The incident is described by Bana in his Harsha biography (COWELL/THOMAS 149-155, WINTERNITZ 63). See CHEN Ru 71, footnote 27 on "pre-suttee deaths."

The law-books are our main source. The custom of *suttee* is not mentioned by Manu, but it is named by later authors (JOLLY 67-68). ALTEKAR specifies on pp.123-124 jurists who were at

an early date *opposed* to *suttee* (124). Medhatithi_(9th/10th C.) criticised *suttee* (ALTEKAR 124), and there were thus pro-*suttee* authors (perhaps also anti-*suttee* authors) before him. But "From about 700 A.D. fiery advocates began to come forward to extol the custom of *suttee* in increasing numbers." (ALTEKAR 126) "During the period 700-1100 A.D., *suttees* became more frequent in northern India and quite common in Kashmir" (ALTEKAR 126-128). "The enthusiastic advocacy of the Sati custom by medieval commentators [names?] began to have an appreciable effect on society only after about 1300 A.D." (ALTEKAR 130). The chronological arrangement given by ALTEKAR is useful, but we do not know the lifetime of the relevant authors. A collection of *suttee* references in law-books (post-Manu) has been prepared by COLEBROOKE (COLEBROOKE 1795, JOLLY 67): Essay "On the duties of a faithful Hindu widow." Refer also to ZACHARIAE 550 for short Sanskrit-texts on widow burning and to KANE Ch.15 for further historical sources.

Suttee was not mentioned by Manu. This was a devastating argument against *suttee* (infra). But all these problems (authorities and traditions) did not destroy the belief in the blessing of *suttee* as a "fundamental article of faith." (WEINBERGER 215-216) See also § 12.4.

Noteworthy epigraphic records commemorating *suttees* are less frequent than one would expect; e.g. ALTEKAR 130-131, 135-136; WINTERNITZ 68-69; KANE 629.

Sati-stones (memorial stones erected in honour of a *sati*) are a comparatively late development, on the whole rare in the first millennium A.D., but already found in South India in the 8th and 9th centuries. A volume on memorial stones published by SETTAR and SONTHEIMER presents more hero-stones than *sati*-stones (whatever the reason), but nevertheless gives an overview of *sati*-stones in different regions. See SONTHEIMER (277-281) and LEHMANN (41-56, Abb.2-25) for *sati*-stones.

Suttee is a uniform phenomenon, but there are varieties. Ramification has been caused mainly by the extension of the custom to Bali (Indonesia), § 14, by the growth of *jauhar* in Rajasthan (§ 12.6), by the *sati*-ideology (also in Rajasthan), and by the local custom (Eastern India) of burying the widow alive: See FISCH 277, also Datta Sa 31 and MANI Co 19. Little is said about minor differences between different castes and regions. In India there have been cases of strangling, and in Bali stabbing to death was not rare (§ 14).

We have records of the self-immolation of royal widows in the second millennium: JOLLY 68-69; PENZER IV 263-272: Panjab (Sikhs), Kashmir, Vijayanagara (South India), Rajasthan etc.; NARASIMHAN 109-112: *suttees* in all parts of the country. Refer for *suttee* in Vijayanagar and under Muslim rule to DATTA Sa 9-15 (according to a traveller mentioned by DATTA "the Mughals looked with absolute disfavour on the practice, because they were hostile to the barbarous custom," 12-13). Refer for "Suttee in Indian States" to DATTA Sa 151-184. The number of women burned at the death of a ruler depended on his rank. V.N.DATTA mentions one case where "ten wives and three hundred unmarried ladies of his [Raja Suchet Singh's] zenana committed suttee." (DATTA Sa 160; also NARASIMHAN 111). The figure 'three hundred' is certainly exaggerated, but many *suttees* must have been alarming due to the sheer number of immolations. -- There is a psychological difference between rough estimates (ten *suttees* ... twenty *suttees* ...) and the shocking description of an individual *suttee* (§ 12.4).

In the law-books *suttee* was discussed in detail. A *suttee* was not permitted when the widow was expecting a child, was in child bed, had a small child or had the menses (JOLLY 68; see in particular WINTERNITZ 62). In such cases the cremation could be postponed. It could also be postponed when the husband was not at home. See FISCH 268-270 on postponement.

Prospective *satis* were told that they would go straight to heaven to be united with their husbands and to save their husbands from sins (the former sins of the widows themselves are unquestionably also expiated by the burning).

The position of the husband is not clear. It seems the widow needs her husband's permission to die with him (permission given during his life-time). In that case one would, however, ask whether the husband can or cannot confirm in the presence of reliable witnesses that his wife should *not* commit a *suttee*. He probably can. But we never hear that husbands are afraid of their wife's immanent *suttee*. Theoretically, each *suttee* can be prevented by the husband, but in such situations the family has the last word (a bedridden husband can not stop the *suttee* if the family insists on its performance). The public takes the permission probably as granted (if there is no evidence to the contrary).

A traditional argument against *suttee* was the general condemnation of suicide (ALTEKAR 124, KANE 632, LESLIE 292-293). The *karma* theory was another impediment. It was objected against *suttee* that husband and wife had different *karmas* (that was correct) and would not be incarnated at one and the same place (both in heaven, both in the same heaven, both on earth, both at the same place, and so on). The popular belief in the existence of the deceased as *preta* (spectre) and as *pitri* ('father'), no doubt earlier than the belief in transmigration (and accompanied by *preta/pitri* lore), was a further obstacle. *Suttees* had no influence on the concept of *pretas* and *pitris*.

Originally (ALTEKAR 128), *suttee* was the privilege of the Kshatriyas (the royal houses) who had initiated the custom. Amongst Brahmans, *suttee* was initially not merely unusual, it was strictly prohibited (helping a Brahman widow to the funeral pyre was murder [!] of a Brahman according to a Purana: ALTEKAR 128). But later on (ALTEKAR 129: "soon after 1000 A.D.") Brahmans started to adopt *suttee* in order to preserve their social prestige (*suttee* standing for spiritual heroism). The earlier Dharma Shastras (KANE 627) which forbade *suttee* to Brahmans now had to be reread: ALTEKAR 129. The custom also spread to castes outside the field of Kshatriyas and Brahmans (WINTERNITZ 68-69; LESLIE 297; FISCH 465-466; ALTEKAR 130: "weaver, barber and mason classes"). If we had sufficient material we could try to reconstruct in some detail the expansion of *suttee* from Kshatriya widows to Brahman widows and to further widows. The admission of Brahman widows is an example of a manifest change in the perennial, allegedly unchanging *dharma* tradition. However, the Brahmans never accepted *suttee* whole-heartedly (see also LESLIE 297-298: special rules for Brahman widows).

The widow was permitted to die after the husband on a separate pyre (e.g. together with her husband's turban). But for unknown reasons this (not *suttee* in general) was prohibited to Brahman women: KANE 627-629; LESLIE 297-298; FISCH 255; WEINBERGER passim. There are also records (ZACHARIAE 559-560, 569) which mention, in the Dharma Shastra style, differences in the *suttee* ritual between different *varnas* (Kshatriyas and Shudras different from Brahmans and Vaishyas).

Prescriptions for the performance of the rite of self-immolation are rare. One work has, according to KANE, the following content: "The Suddhitattva [a little known manual] sets out the procedure of widow burning. The widow bathes and puts on two white garments, takes kusa blades in her hands, faces the east or north, performs *acamana* (sipping water); when the brahmanas say 'om, tat sat' she remembers the God Narayana ... and then makes the *samkalpa* [declaration of resolve] set out below. ... then the brahmana recites the Vedic verse ... and a Purana verse 'may these very good and holy women who are devoted to their husbands enter fire together with the body of the husband,' [then] the woman utters 'namo namah' and ascends the kindled pyre. ..." (KANE 633-634, details in KANE 1268). See also ABEGG 140-142.

"That the practice of Sati was mainly a medieval development is also proved by the circumstance that its procedure has not been described in detail even by those few late Smritis, which recommend the practice. We get detailed information on the point only from some late medieval Puranas (date?) and records of foreign merchants and travellers." (ALTEKAR 133) ALTEKAR writes inter alia "The Sati was an object of the highest veneration, and so was taken out to the accompaniment of music in a grand procession through the town to the cremation grounds." (133). But 'grand processions' were no the rule.

WEINBERGER reproduces two very elaborate descriptions of suttees (97-101), the second having taken place in Surat (Gujarat): "In September 1741 A.D. ... Shivabai, a lady of the Nagar community, came to know about the death of her husband. ... Shivabai took the letter conveying the news upon her lap and gave out that she would burn herself. She then threatened the people with curses if they refused to believe her.... Lala Sadanand [a relative] requested her if she would care to proceed riding a mare or a *Rath* [chariot]. Satima asked to get ready a bullock *Rath*. She then proceeded with pomp and dignity. Her sister and maternal aunt sat by her side. The *Rath* passed through the principal streets of the city, followed by a huge crowd shouting 'Jai Ambe, Jai Ambe' [Long live the Goddess Amba]. The *Sati* alighted at Lal Darwaja (the city gate) and made hand impressions with 'kumkum' on the doors. ... [A torch was lighted at dusk] ... The lady came to the river-bank (Tapti) all elated early in the morning. She [Shivabai] dipped herself one hundred and eight times ... all alone. ... She once more took her bath and performed 'Tarpan' (... the act of propitiating the dead). ... [Then] The *Sati* asked to cease beating the drums as she would not scream or shriek. She then took 'ghi' [clarified butter] and put it on the pyre. ... She took the letter [announcing the death of her husband] upon her lap and remembered her lord. ... At first the *Sati* set fire to her hair [with the torch she held in her hand] and then ignited straw all around. ... The event became memorable in the annals of the people. Thus the *Sati* went to heaven by Viman [celestial vehicle]." (100-101) -- It was not unusual that the widow personally set fire to the hut in which she was going to be burned (ZACHARIAE 564, footnote 1).

In his law-code for women, Tryambaka Yajvan, the 18th century *pandit*, supports *suttee*. LESLIE 8: "Tryambaka's rather laboured recommendation of *sahagamana*, or becoming *suttee*, is of particular interest." The status of a widow, i.e. of a widow who has *not* committed *suttee*, depends according to Tryambaka on her conduct; the virtuous widow will be united with her husband in heaven (same husband in her next earthly life, after heaven). The dishonourable widow (malicious, irascible) has to suffer. (LESLIE 303)

In the case of kings, *suttees* of wives and concubines seem to have been normal and hence, as a rule, involuntary. The women were not asked (?) If only part of the concubines were to be burned, selection was probably made by the palace.

In some cases religious suicide (head offering etc.) is held in respect in Hinduism (WEINBERGER 14-18). Ministers etc. often died with their kings (KANE 629-630; WEINBERGER 13-14, 112).

That the husband followed his wife into death happened but rarely (NARASIMHAN 112). There were cases where mothers followed their sons (NARASIMHAN 112).

When ordinary citizens died, there remained one single widow if the relation was monogamous; perhaps two or three in the case of polygamy. But Kulinism resulted in *suttees* with scores of victims (§ 12.4). Multiple *suttees* were rare after the abolition in the British territories (DATTA Sa 154: multiple *suttees* in Idar State in 1833 and 1835; Ranjit Singh *infra*).

In *shastric* literature voluntariness is taken for granted, but the existence of last-minute refusals is not denied: JOLLY 68. Reality is full of attempts at escape, successful or unsuccessful: NARASIMHAN Ch.5 (79-105) is based on observations of early travellers and witnesses in the colonial period. The author mentions numerous cases of women who tried (generally without success) to escape from the funeral pyre at the last moment. See also FISCH 296-323. § 12.7. Possibly there were also cases where the widow objected shortly before entering the funeral pyre. But cases of escape from the pyre (half-burned widows) are probably mentioned more frequently.

Examples of escape have been recorded by early travellers and by a Kashmir historian: Queen Didda, 950-1003, escaped from the funeral pyre. ALTEKAR mentions as many cases of refusal (135) as of completion (136-137; KANE 629). There have been examples of extreme heroism. A 17th century traveller "... states that it is impossible to describe the brutish boldness [!] or the ferocious gaiety depicted on the woman's countenance [before the *suttee*]; her step was undaunted, her conversation was free from all perturbation; her easy air was free from all dejection, her lofty courage was void from all embarrassment." (ALTEKAR 136) See also FISCH 26.

Once a widows has resolved to commit *suttee*, she must not, under any circumstances, retreat from her resolve (JOLLY 68). In India, retreat could be effected by having recourse to "low caste men" who were already waiting [!] for the widow (ALTEKAR 135). Women who changed their mind at the last moment were not accepted back "by their castes and families" and had to become members of low-caste families. But ALTEKAR emphasizes that "barring a few exceptions, most of the widows, who used to become Satis, were free agents [!] in their own choice." (137). Refer to § 12.4 for the issue of voluntariness and involuntariness.

Related to but not identical with voluntariness is the question of affection and disaffection. The ancient texts mention divorce and supersession, but the problem of possible disaffection and indifference has never been discussed. Emotions may vary considerably in cases of polygamy and in cases of extraordinary *suttees* (women in the harem, victims of Kulinism in Bengal). The world of *dharma* does not guarantee perpetual harmony between the partners. The texts mention partners of ill-tempered and cantankerous nature (women) and drinkers etc. (men). But the *sati* discourse does not consider empirical details; the husband is at any rate godlike and beyond all discussion.

Intoxication of the widow was used in order to alleviate the pain (§ 12.4) *or* in order to stimulate supernatural faculties, like foreseeing the future (ZACHARIAE 561, footnote 1; 597; MANI Co 172). But under the influence of narcotics the widow was often not even in a position to circumambulate the funeral pyre (part of the ritual) and had to be carried by a relative on his arms (ZACHARIAE 563, footnote 3). The attempts at escape show that many victims were nevertheless in a normal psychological condition.

An Indian *suttee* followed in some cases within 24 hours after the husband's death (FISCH 268). The extreme speed (here an astrologer was obviously not required to suggest the time for the ceremony); and the deafening *hullabaloo* almost demonstrated to those present that the widow had to be liquidated as soon as possible and without much ado. There was no time for elaborate rituals. But ZACHARIAE also mentions cases where rich widows were led around in the city on horse-back or on elephant (556; Shivabai's *suttee* supra). This makes the *suttee* a public event, and it also creates an opportunity to model the *suttee* on marriage (e.g. *suttee* procession corresponding to nuptial procession). See ZACHARIAE 557, footnote 1, and 571 for further correspondences. DATTA Sa has studied *suttees* in princely states. "The four ranees [royal widows] clad in the richest apparel and jewels worth many lakhs of rupees accompanied the procession bestowing now and then some portion of the jewels and ornaments to the singer and the Brahmins." (DATTA Sa 158, Ranjit Singh's death 1839). But on the whole, *suttees* were simple (FISCH 268).

A special feature of the *suttee* ideology is the sat speculation in Rajasthan, studied by L.HARLAN. *sat* has been described as "a moral heat not unlike *tapas* (ascetic heat)", HARLAN 81; "as explosive moral substance" HARLAN 90. And 1987: "The girl, they say, acquired *sat* -- a supernatural power which is akin to a trance-like state where the woman's body burns to the touch and her eyes redden and glow. ... Roop Kanwar, they say, had only raised her hands and the pyre lit itself." OLDENBURG 113 (quotation).

The *sat* is the agent which initiates a widow's threefold soteriological progress: It is a moral quality: "... the fundamental idea Rajputs have of the sati's death is that it represents a manifestation of the virtue of *sat*, a moral and substantive quality that is inherent but latent in the Rajput *pativrata* [loyal wife]. *Sat* causes the *pativrata* to become a *sati-vrata* [woman ready to die] if her husband predeceases her, and it manifests itself in flames [automatic *suttee*], which prove that the woman has been a *pativrata* even as they [the flames] transform her into a *sati-mata* [deified woman who has committed *suttee*]." (HARLAN 83-84) Little is said about local scepticism, but claims that a widow had *sat* were not accepted by everybody (CHEN Ru 62: was Roop Kanwar possessed by *sat*?). The entire *sat* complex came only down as part of the oral tradition (CHEN Ru 61: interviews).

It is possible that the worship of *sati-matas* is fairly old ('after A.D.1000', CHEN Ru 64).

Not directly connected with the *sat*-ideology are other cases which NARASIMHAN describes on pp.88-97 ("*sati mystique*"). Refer for further details to § 12.4.

The exact percentage of widows who ascended the funeral pyre (by region and by period) cannot be ascertained easily. We need for a statistical estimate the year(s), the definition and extent of the region, the population total, the number of widows and the number of *suttees*. Reliable is the following: "In the early 1800s, when records of reported *suttee* cases were maintained, the

Bombay and Madras Presidencies averaged fifty cases per year; central India averaged three to four cases per year ... whereas the Bengal Presidency averaged 580 cases per year." (CHEN Ru 51) The number of *suttees* per widows is generally estimated as one widow among a thousand.

There is (naturally) no connection between Indian widow burning and European witch burning. Both are irrational extremities. See LEVACK.

To give an idea of the course of the contemporary debate we add observations by SUGIRTHARAJAH (125 ff.) and OLDENBURG Co (170-171) on the subject of traditional *suttee* criticism. See also § 12.7.

SUGIRTHARAJAH wants to show (against J.LESLIE) "... that Hindu patriarchy is not monolithic but complex ... [in the case of *suttee*: "liberating" traditions versus orthodox traditions] ... [that there are] significant divergences within patriarchal representations of women" (126). Opposition against patriarchal traditions is rare but not missing.

The early poet Bana is quoted with the following: "This following of another to death is most vain! It is a path followed by the ignorant! It [*suttee*] is a mere freak of madness, a path of ignorance ..." (Kadambari, supra).

Much later than Bana are anti-*suttee* tendencies in Shrivaishnavism. SUGIRTHARAJAH observes: "There are ... *Srivaisnava* texts which contain liberating images of women." SUGIRTHARAJAH further writes that the existence of such liberating texts within the Hindu tradition ... "indicates that brahminical patriarchy, however oppressive it may have been, has not always been static or permanently frozen." ... "Srivaisnava women are not to choose the path of *suttee*; their salvation is not tied up with that of their husbands". Widows in Shrivaishnavism are in one case clearly called *auspicious* against the Hindu tradition where they are *inauspicious* (126). See SUGIRTHARAJAH 127 and 126 (with quotation from K.K.YOUNG; 126). It would appear that the "liberating images of women" are a partial but significant tradition of Shrivaishnavism (S. is in the first place 'strong devotion to the Lord')..

OLDENBURG Co mentions Dharma Shastras which criticize *suttee*, e.g. Medhatithi (10th c.): *suttee* is "non-scriptural" (*a-sastriya*, 170), *suttee* is not supported by any authoritative law-book. Other critics of *suttee* belong to the twelfth century (170-171).

Furthermore "The *Mahanirvana Tantra* [beginning of 18th century?] carries respect for the feminine principle from the realm of myth to social reality by enjoining a whole day's fast upon the man who speaks rudely to his wife, and by encouraging the education of girls before marriage" (171). SUGIRTHARAJAH quotes the following from the Mahanirvana Tantra: "A wife should not be burnt with her dead husband. Every woman is the embodiment of the goddess. That woman who in her delusion ascends the funeral pyre of her husband, shall go to hell" (127). Refer for the Mahanirvana Tantra to GOUDRIAAN Hi (Goudriaan 1981, 98-101).

It would be useful to know the exact extent and date of the 'liberating images'.

OLDENBURG mentions that the ashes of a *sati* (Om Kanwar) "had to be guarded for thirteen days by young armed Rajput volunteers" because "tantrics and local lower-caste villagers" were

against *suttee* (OLDENBURG Co 171). Local Rajputs were afraid that the ashes might be dispersed by dissidents.

One wonders whether all these unorthodox views, more or less Tantric, had any influence on social reality. We can speculate that the liberal climate of Tantrism existed after all in certain houses though hardly in public. Refer to § 13.4 for GOUDRIAAN In (Goudriaan 1979, 32: "Returned into ordinary life .. social taboos.").

The beginnings of Tantrism are much earlier than the beginnings of transmitted Tantra literature. Early elements of the doctrine: 424 A.D.; appearance of single Tantra works: circa 7th century; composition of the Mahanirvana Tantra: beginning of 18th century (?). Refer for Tantrism to GONDA II 26-39 (chronology of Tantrism: II 31), to GOUDRIAAN Hi (Goudriaan 1981, 22; again chronology) and to § 13.4. Buddhist Shaktism started in the 7th/8th centuries (GONDA II 45); Shaktism spread in Kashmir in the 10th and 11th centuries (GONDA II 348).

§ 12.3. Widowhood after 100 B.C.

Little is known about widowhood before 100 B.C. A.S.ALTEKAR feels that *niyoga* was probably more frequent than "regular remarriage" (151). But early widowhood is hardly an important chapter in Indian history. We follow the title of the present subsection.

It is not unexpected that the subject of *suttee* with its horror and exoticism has found more publicity than the subject of widowhood. The widow is a mere shadow throughout her life and she is meant to remain a shadow. No artist has painted the melancholy of a widow, and no poet has described the life of a widow. Following WINTERNITZ we use for the widows's plight the German word *Witwenelend*.

Witwenelend is the result of "enforced widowhood." It is not connected with old age, and it may already start in childhood ("child marriage": § 5). For two or almost two millennia remarriage was not possible (not possible for a large part of the population). And when enforced widowhood prevailed, widows were widows for life.

Child marriage and enforced widowhood were introduced in the course of centuries, but the way in which they spread is unknown. Customs were always changed by Brahmans. Somehow the Brahmans managed to exercise their influence everywhere.

The widow has to suffer (e.g. WINTERNITZ 86-105). There are negative and positive lines of estimation. The negative line stresses, besides *Witwenelend* in general, the great number of child widows and the consistent spread of enforced widowhood to low-caste families (WINTERNITZ 92: M.F.Billington). The negative line also mentions expulsion of the widow, going astray (prostitution) and liquidation. The positive line emphasizes the gradual improvement in the life of the widows: birth of a son or of more than one son, growth of the children, improved status in the family due to advanced age. But not all widows have sons, and not all widows are satisfied when they think of an improvement of their life in a distant future.

Manu prescribes for the widow an ascetic form of life: "After her husband is dead, she may voluntarily emaciate her body by eating pure flowers, roots, and fruits; but she must never

mention even the name of another man." (5.157, supra § 9.1). *Child* widows (what does Manu suggest in their case?) are hardly a subject for the law-books. See LESLIE infra.

We would expect a deterioration of the status of the widows somewhere in the middle of the first millennium A.D., but not earlier, contemporary with the increasing disappearance of *niyoga* (§ 9.1) and contemporary with the introduction of "child marriage" (§ 5). But the chronology of *Witwenelend* cannot be derived from other developments (also not from *suttee*). In the case of the widow the deterioration started earlier than one would assume (300-100 B.C.?). Manu already condemned *niyoga*, i.e. remarriage (Manu 5.157-160). *niyoga* was the sheet-anchor for many desperate widows. There are epic epigrams describing the suffering of the widow. "The greatest danger that can overcome a woman is widowhood, says the Ramayana" (ALTEKAR 164). BROCKINGTON mentions the description of the *Witwenelend* by a Brahman woman in the city of Ekachakra (Mahabharata). "She [the woman] goes on to say that it is better for women to die before their husbands, just as Bhadra [another woman] ... declares that a widow is better off dead, since her situation must be due to sins in a previous life, and that she will from then on [beginning with widowhood] lie on a bed of *kusa* grass" (222). There was an old anti-*niyoga* current, and probably many widows already had to suffer in pre-Christian centuries because *niyoga* was no longer accepted. *Niyoga* was not always a good solution, but probably it was in most cases better than ritual isolation.

The most important early evidence is found in a famous Jataka: the story of prince Vessantara. Vessantara is exiled (he has to leave the paternal palace and to enter the forest), and his wife Maddi presses her father-in-law for permission to accompany her husband. The father-in-law warns her: she will not endure life in the wilderness. But Maddi describes the agony of widowhood which would be much more painful than the hard life in the forest. [As in the Savitri story the wife needs the permission of her father-in-law when she wants to leave the house and to accompany her husband.]

Seven Jataka verses in a long monologue (directed to Maddi's father-in-law, 185-191) contain the burden "O terrible is widowhood, great chariot-driver [addressing her father-in-law], go I will." Actually Maddi would only become a woman whose husband has not returned from a journey (PB, wife-whose-husband-is-gone-abroad: § 9.5), by no means a widow; but the local rules (or Maddi's fears?) were probably different. Here, 'once gone' meant certainly 'gone for good'.

The seven verses mentioned describe the *Witwenelend*:

(187) Knocked down and smothered in the dust, haled roughly by the hair -- A man may do them any hurt, all simply stand and stare. O terrible is widowhood! great monarch, go I will.

(190) Naked are rivers waterless, a kingdom without king, A widow may have brothers ten, yet is a naked thing. O terrible is widowhood! Great monarch go I will.

MINORU HARA (ii) 42/191; SYED Ku 176-177. The Jatakas (Jataka verses) are pre-Christian (Glossary).

Earlier than *Witwenelend* was probably misogyny. It can be speculated that there was some subconscious connection between both. See § 8.7.

The life of the widow is forcefully described in the law-books. Manu (5.157-160 supra) demands asceticism and chastity. "... a good woman, though she be sonless, will go to heaven when she steadfastly adheres to the celibate life after her husband's death." Many additional details are mentioned in later texts: "[A widow] should give up adorning her hair, chewing betel-nut, wearing perfumes, flowers, ornaments and dyed clothes, taking food from a vessel of bronze, taking two meals a day [only one meal being permitted], applying collyrium to her eyes; she should wear a white garment, should curb her senses and anger, she should not resort to deceits and tricks, should be free from laziness and sleep, ... should sleep on the ground at night on a mat of kusa grass, ..." (KANE 584). The restriction of sleep (only a minimum permitted?) is an interesting element.

There are hyperboles and absurdities, both betraying magical origins. "The widow is more inauspicious than all other inauspicious things; at the sight of a widow no success can be had in any undertaking; excepting one's (widowed) mother all widows are void of auspiciousness; a wise man should avoid even their blessings like the poison of a snake." (KANE 585)

According to a Purana "... the tying up into a braid of the hair by the widow leads to the bondage of the husband; therefore a widow should always shave her head [KANE 585; FITZGERALD 667]. She should always take one meal a day and never a second. ... A widow who sleeps on a cot would make her husband fall (in hell). ... she should not sit in a bullock cart even when about to die, she should not put on a bodice, should not wear dyed garments ... "(KANE 585). -- "If a widow wears after the death of her husband an indigo-coloured [instead of a white and undyed] garment, then her husband will go to hell, and she will follow him." (KANE 585; WINTERNITZ 96) The expressions 'will go to hell/heaven' for offenders/protectors reflect the well-known *dharmic* language (Glossary: *dharm*).

The tonsure of widows is a special case. "It appears that the practice was gradually evolved after the 10th or 11th century" (KANE 587-593; ALTEKAR 159-162). The custom " ... is referred to by several European merchants and travellers from the 16th century downwards." (ALTEKAR 160) "Some of the *smṛiti* texts only refer, if at all, to one shaving on the husband's death, but there is no *smṛiti* passage prescribing continual shaving for widows." (KANE 592) Permanent tonsure followed the example of Buddhist and Jaina nuns? (ALTEKAR 161). Whatever the situation in a monastic surrounding, in a Hindu family permanent tonsure was social death. "'Baldhead' is a swearword for widows" (WINTERNITZ 87). In a modern novel a young widow faces tonsure. But "The hapless girl jumps into a well to escape the dreaded ritual." (SOGANI 37) And "The widows in south Maharashtra are so terrified of being tonsured that they run away from their homes to escape the tyranny of the priests." (SOGANI 38) On pp.134-138 M.A.CHEN describes what she calls "Disfiguring the Body" (of a widow). "... a widow is expected ... to refrain from ... looking at herself in the mirror. ... But for many widows the ultimate expression of their mistreatment is the forced shaving of their head." (135)

Tonsure of widows is also discussed by U.CHAKRAVARTI. "Forced to wear a distinctive garment and shave her head to symbolize her degraded status, she is publicly defeminized." (CHAKRAVARTI Ge 82). The widow must be "completely unsexed" (72). Contact with a widow is dangerous. "... even dreaming of a widow augurs ill." (81)

In the context of her publication on "The Hindu widow in [contemporary] Indian literature", R.SOGANI attaches considerable importance to North Indian Vaishnavism: "Vaishnavism as a non-conformist Hindu sect was popular in most regions of India, particularly in Bengal, because it took a liberal view of caste and marriage rules, assigned a sublime value to human love, and promised liberation to its followers through devotion." (13-14) § 12.2 supra.

"The opposition of Srivaishnavas to the custom [tonsure] was most vehement; they declare that a woman who shaved her head would go to the most terrible hell; she would become a Chandali in a subsequent life." (Reversal of the orthodox prescription of the tonsure, ALTEKAR 161.)

A special development within Vaishnavism is the support of the religious reformer Chaitanya (1486-1533). The movement changed at some point of time its character. "Professing love to be the central tenet of their faith, they changed partners whenever it suited them. By the nineteenth century, these sects had bifurcated and multiplied, and lived mainly in small settlements called *akhras*, usually built on donated land." (SOGANI 125, 126) "Here, the disenfranchised of all castes gathered into a secondary parallel society, ..." (SOGANI 126). Chaitanya's experiences were prepared by much earlier "Devotional traditions focussed on Krishna the Cowherd." (FLOOD 138-139)

SOGANI concentrates on the desolate situation in the *akhras* or religious centres in West Bengal and in religious centres generally speaking. "... Numerous Hindu widows found refuge in Vaishnavism and lived away from their families in the pilgrim towns of Kashi and Vrindavan, and in the *muths* [ascetic seats] and *akhras* of Vaishnava gurus. ... Respectable society often sneered at Vaishnavism seeing it as an order of debauchery under the cloak of religion, and attitudes towards it were ambivalent." (SOGANI 14) M.A.CHEN even remarks that many *akhras* in West Bengal served as "abortion centres." (In 142) But see also CHEN Ru 147-151.

M.A.CHEN's reaction to the *akhras* is not absolutely negative, but, naturally, the authoress is cautious. "To earn a daily ration of food and cash, they [the widows who were cast off by their families] must sing for eight hours. The image of hundreds of widows huddled in dimly lit halls chanting devotional songs has captures public attention and generated much speculation." (CHEN Ru 149) Emotions (directed to Krishna, as child, or Radha) can be compared with similar experiences of Christian nuns. "... many widows experienced the genuine healing power of their faith ..." (ibid.)

Bengal Vaishnavism in the *akhras* was thus ambiguous: "... the stigma attached to her [the widow's] fallen status makes it almost impossible for her to re-enter the society that has cast her off. She remains isolated and unfulfilled, harbouring feelings of guilt which prevent her even from becoming a part of the community of other fallen women." (SOGANI 124) SOGANI here isolates impoverished upper-class women (widows) who were, due to their style of living, "frowned upon by respectable society." (SOGANI 124, 125)

Refer for the whole range of problems facing Bengali widows to SOGANI's treatment of Bengali literature (B.P.Muley and others). We quote from p.41: "The orthodox Hindu community turns a blind eye to the debauchery prevalent at centres of pilgrimage." There are comfortable lies on the life of the widows in their families: "They [the orthodox] claim that Hindu widows are comfortable in their homes [!] where they are cared for by their families and kept busy in

household and religious activities; they get accustomed in time to the austere routine and even the loss of their husbands." (42).

Almost unknown is the opposition of South-Indian Virashaivism (GONDA II 243-252) to Hindu tenets. The Virashaivas ascribe equal status to men and women, condemn child-marriages, and permit remarriage of widows (246). The movement started in the 12th century (Maharashtra and Karnataka).

An old parallel to the widow is the ascetic (CHEN Ru 147-151). LESLIE (299) mentions the following (late) Sanskrit sentence: 'the ascetic (... *yati*), the celibate student (*brahmacari*) and the widow should avoid (chewing) betel ... anointing (their bodies with oils or unguents ...), and eating off copper and brass vessels ...' There are similar restrictions for women-whose-husbands-have-gone-abroad (= PB, § 9.5). When her husband is away a wife should not laugh with her mouth open (LESLIE 291). Menstruating women could be added to the list of quasi-ascetics (§ 8.4).

YULE 666-671 (old reports on *suttee*); JOLLY 69-70 (widows and PB.s: special restraints); CHEN In 76-79 (tonsure, mainly of widows: history and explanations). Tonsure existed already in the 2nd century A.D. (Tamilnadu: 76).

Books on Indian religion or Indian history treat *suttee* and widowhood only in a marginal manner. Separate books on Indian culture (as the redactional roof of *suttee* etc.) do not exist.

§ 12.4. *Suttee*, mainly 18th and 19th centuries

§ 12.4 is based on direct observation and can be called a supplement to § 12.2.

Suttee is usually categorized as an event like the death of a soldier in war. But actually every *suttee* includes a biography. The biography has episodes. If we prefer more analytic language we can distinguish between the narrative (*suttee*) and its "subplots."

S.NARASIMHAN writes: "... a combination of indoctrination, resignation, economic distress and the threat of familial and social contumely" may urge a widow to end her life (NARASIMHAN 87). "Rather than bear the agony of daily torture on account of perpetual widowhood the woman preferred to die. To save herself from the sense of suffocation inflicted by social compulsions she could very well conclude 'well, parafin is cheap.' The agony of a few minutes on the pyre was probably a less painful experience than the long torture of mind and body during widowhood." (DATTA Sa 208)

E.Molony, Acting Magistrate, Burdwan, writes: "... It is fair to suppose that the resolution to become *suttees* cannot proceed so much from their [the womens'] having reasoned themselves into a conviction of the purity of the act itself, as from a kind of infatuation produced by the absurdities poured into their ears by ignorant Brahmins, most of whom if asked, would be found unable to give a reason for the doctrines which they inculcate. ... I am persuaded, in my mind, that 99 out of 100 women sacrifice themselves more under the influence of this infatuation than from any conviction of their minds." (DATTA Sa 213)

V.N.DATTA himself writes: "Were they [the widows] motivated by the desire to win heaven, to unite themselves with their husbands in paradise, to rescue them from hell and to bring about the spiritual welfare of their husbands and of their own? It is difficult to say whether a woman committing suttee had such lofty ideas." (209). *Suttee* paves the way to heaven for both bride and husband. Both will spend as many years in heaven as the woman has hairs on her body (350 x 100,000 years). What happens after heaven? Again, a peculiar local custom has been noticed: "Before dying, a suttee will sometimes utter or make a hand gesture to indicate two numbers, whose sum (x plus y) is always seven. The meaning here is that she has already burned herself x number of times with this same husband, and that she has still to burn herself y number of times before attaining liberation." (WEINBERGER 147).

The actual biography starts when a small girl hears for the first time what a *suttee* is or was (and what widowhood is or was). Up to the death of her husband she has to "live" with the threat of widowhood, afterwards she *is* a widow. Widowhood is no abstract threat but something very real, and Indian women are absolutely aware of the imponderables of life (sometimes small girls decide that they want to be burnt or, on the contrary, that they refuse to die).

The decision to die is not in all, but in most cases based on the eschatological prophecies and on the horror of widowhood. The widow (the *sati*) who is prepared to die makes a formal announcement (before she loses her consciousness as is often the case). The decision is important, but the de facto condition of the widow often prevents her from speaking clearly, and the noise of the music makes it often impossible for those present to understand anything. In a number of cases the widows have indicated that her motives were not religious (it is only thanks to modern diaries that such confessions have been put on record). See MANI Co "Nothing in what the widow is reported as having said points to a 'religious' basis for *suttee* or suggests it is the result of wifely devotion." (167)

We have a vivid description of the antecedents of a *suttee*: "The man dies. Naturally there is gloom all around. People gather in short time. The widow suffers the most. She is stricken with grief, sometimes absolutely dumb with her eyes red and downcast and hair dishevelled. She is also seen beating her breast and thighs till she is left with no power to speak or to move. She is in a stupor now. She has no time to think. On this occasion, the family members, the Brahmans and the crowd sometime in thousands assemble to organize the great show. Consent is extracted from the widow in unguarded moments when she is dazed with sorrow and grief. Everybody seems to be in a desperate hurry and the whole business to be successful has to be finished with the rapidity of thought. No time is permitted to the widow for reflection." (DATTA Sa 216, from the *Friend of India* 1818.)

There was no solace from any side: not from the Brahman, not from the mother-in-law, not from the gods and not from the sacred texts. Final release (*moksha*) hardly existed, solace was no category, and nobody 'prepared' the widow for the execution. She was left alone but had to *cooperate* with her surroundings. Preparation was often performed with the help of drugs.

Part of the *suttee*-biography is furthermore the funeral pyre. This may be a pyre of the usual type, but it is sometimes a hut or a pit (FISCH 272-273). Efforts to escape were as a rule rendered impossible, a much discussed subject. "The dead body, the living women [plural in this case] and the large logs of wood were all tied together with two or three ropes." (DATTA Sa 217) "The technology of widow immolation was geared to ensure incineration, not escape." (MANI Co

171) In the days of *suttee* there was possibly the official view that all widows entered the funeral pyre voluntarily (as prescribed by the *dharmic* texts). But naturally many participants (perhaps not all) knew the truth. Interviews (with men, women, children) were rare.

There is also the biography of the marital family. The decision to carry out the *suttee* was ultimately in the hands of the family. Who heard the preceding discussions, who took part in them? How far were the children informed?

Many children lose their mother when a *suttee* takes place. Interesting is a report (1815) of a widow who changed her mind when she heard the "most bitter lamentations" of her 10 year old daughter (MAJOR 154). Cases where a mother deserted her child to enter the funeral pyre have given rise to many critical commentaries: "Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the infant of her womb?" (MAJOR 155) Under the Indian conditions (joint family) the children could probably easily be entrusted to relatives among the in-laws. Even then the authoress feels that (sometimes) "Mothers Become Monsters" (152-158, title of the section). But probably cases where the mother changed her mind when seeing her child were not quite rare.

The experience of pain is the climax, but it is not discussed by all authors. The stupor of the widow (frequent) is not mentioned or not accentuated. FISCH emphasizes that it was not intended to inflict unnecessary pain on the widow (273-275). The pain is nevertheless multiple: horror of burning alive, duration of suffering (approximately one minute), prolonged cremation (*more* than a minute). The burning widow has sometimes to be pushed back (while trying to escape). Apart from simple intoxication (§ 12.2) there were possibly methods to produce insensitivity to pain (autosuggestion? influence of the individual *sati*?). The numerous illustrations show only 'successful' *suttees*; failures were no subject for the artists. MAJOR has stressed the pain of the widow in the process of being burned: "Tortured Bodies: The Spectacle of Pain" (133-145). A witness quoted by MAJOR wrote inter alia: "Similarly, John Poynder cites this account from the *Bombay Courier* of a sati who escaped from the pile: 'I cannot describe to you the horror I felt on seeing the mangled condition she was in: almost every inch of skin on her body had been burned off; her legs and thighs, her arms and back, were completely raw; her breasts were dreadfully torn; and the skin hanging from them in threads; the skin and nails of her fingers had peeled wholly off, and were hanging to the back of her hands. In fact, I never saw, and never read of, so entire a picture of misery as this poor woman displayed.'" (134-135) -- MANI Co 175-177.

The use of physical force was normal, and this was often *open* force. "The French traveller Francois Bernier recorded a sati incident at Lahore when a 'twelve-year-old widow, trembling and weeping bitterly', was forced onto the pyre by three or four Brahmins and an old woman, after they had tied her hands and feet." NARASIMHAN 80-81 ubi alia.

Often, a *suttee* was an economic problem. Being buried alive was sometimes (ZACHARIAE 554, footnote 2) a cheap substitute for a cremation, and we also hear that poor widows had to beg for wood for the funeral pyre, or were simply strangled. Sometimes the pyre was deficient (not sufficient wood, oil and clarified butter). As a consequence a poor widow "was repeatedly heard to cry out 'more fire! more fire!' and shriek with agony until the noise of the instruments drowned out her cries." (MAJOR 170)

Endurance is no personal act when the widow is fettered, but it is remarkable, when the widow has the chance to escape from the flames (for a moment at least), but remains steadfastly on the pyre. Naturally, the strong widow is an important argument in pro-*suttee* discussions.

The cases where a *sati* (sometimes half-burned) ran away from the funeral pyre deserve special attention. A visitor recalls "that she came upon a half burned woman who had been lying under a tree for two days on the outskirts of Jaipur, after escaping from the pyre of her husband. Her relations [parents? relatives?] had refused to have anything to do with her since she had disgraced the family by being unable to go through the 'ceremony'. The woman lay in agony, unable to move, for over forty-eight hours before death mercifully put an end to her suffering." (NARASIMHAN 82) Last minute escape means that the widow had been strong up to the end, but that her strength failed at the very last moment when she saw or felt the flames. In a number of cases the escaped woman survived.

Considering the trouble caused by a widow in the family, the *suttee* is a present for the inlaws; it does away with the expenditure for a useless person and with sexual complications. A surviving widow on the other hand perpetuates the well-known difficulties.

The *sati*, whatever the circumstances, is not an ordinary woman but a woman who satisfies the almost desperate yearning for miracles, the yearning for an air of transcendence. In an atmosphere where rivers, mountains, trees and stones are sacred, where idols and minor images, public shrines and private niches exist everywhere, every available bit of transcendence or holiness is exploited. The consequences are inter alia miracles encircling all or almost all *suttees*. The whole complex is linked with the *sat*-ideology or just with *sati* mysticism (NARASIMHAN, § 12.2 supra). The humanity and human helplessness of the widow are forgotten or no longer remembered by the worshippers, and the chance of *darshana* (visiting temples and worshipping idols) is all-important: NARASIMHAN 101-102.

A shrine is often built over the spot where a *suttee* took place; in the shrine the deceased widow is worshipped. There is an image (*murti* in Hinduism), showing the widow alone or together with her husband (WEINBERGER Figs.25, 30-32; FISCH Abb.21-26). Here we find an important aspect of living Hinduism (over 150 *sati* temples in Rajasthan, NARASIMHAN 129). Refer to § 12.2 supra for *sati*-stones.

Devotional objects and miracles are available. "In Calcutta, a widow set herself on fire inside the house in 1911, and there was a rush of hysterical women to the place to pick up relics" (NARASIMHAN 95). See also CHEN 75 ("a piece of silk").

If a Rajput woman is possessed by *sat* (§ 12.2) she has supernatural powers: On the funeral pyre she is automatically inflamed to perform *suttee*, moreover she can open locked doors and by the touch of her foot she can even convert cow-dung cakes into coconuts (HARLAN 83-89, CHEN Ru 61-63).

The *suttee* of Roop Kanwar took place in 1987 at Deorala in Rajasthan. There is already a growing cycle of legends "woven around Roop Kanwar's death" (NARASIMHAN 91). "... stories about how she whispered in her [dead] husband's ear to seek his permission (for her immolation) and how he had come alive for a moment to grant it, were all part of the interleaving of fact and fiction that has always gone into the making of the *sati* mystique." (91). -- One

"author records that *suttees* are considered 'posthumous wielders of power'... It is therefore believed that veneration of a *suttee* can bestow all kinds of boons." (91). -- "For the first time, one report claimed, she [Roop Kanwar] had removed the *ghunghat* (veil) in front of her in-laws while declaring her intention of becoming a *suttee*; and for the first time, another said, she pronounced the name of her husband (which wives brought up in a conservative tradition would not normally do)." The reports as such are fabrications, but the details throw light on the life in an orthodox family.

A *sati* is not a woman who has entered the stage of *widowhood* (a rite of passage): She does not become a widow but remains a woman; her status is not changed, she is even deified. See HAWLEY 13 (footnote 22-23) and CHEN Ru 74 (footnote 51).

Hinduism includes ritual killing in one form or another. Human beings are killed (by the sect of the thugs), or they commit religious suicide (occasion of car festival, hero-stones), animals are sacrificed, mythology is full of violence. To call widow burning an element of a typically Indian weird atmosphere is mere guesswork, however. Parallels do exist in other cultures (death for the chieftain: FISCH), but the phenomenon is out of character with its normal Indian context.

A comprehensive history of the Brahmans has not yet been written. *Suttees* and burials (to mention only these two occasions) were an important source of income. In the case of the death of the husband it was necessary to persuade the widow to perform a *suttee*. "They [the Brahmans] were greedy, avaricious and crafty. They acted in a subtle manner and cleverly induced the widow to burn herself." (DATTA Sa 212). -- See also BHATTACHARYA.

The alleged 'greed' of the Brahmans probably has historical roots. Many Brahmans had after the disappearance of the great sacrifices, and due to the receding interest in Brahmanical services (Muslim influence etc.) no sufficient income in spite of royal grants. This explains the conduct of the Brahmans to some extent. A seventeenth century author wrote: "As soon as the fire [of the *suttee*] was out the Brahmins would go and gather all the melted gold, silver and copper." (DATTA Sa 213) Presents to the Brahmans on special occasions (supra) are an important element of Hinduism. A Hindu always has (had) an uneasy feeling when he does not pay due attention to Brahmans.

The Brahmans also inaugurated what became known as Kulinism (WINTERNITZ 111-113). It was the tolerated custom of 'Kulin Brahmans' in Bengal to marry an exorbitant number of women. In 1799 a Brahman died in Bengal who had more than one hundred wives; thirty-seven committed *suttee*, and the fire burned for three days (FISCH 268). "Kulin Brahmins had many wives including some who were married to them on their death-beds." (DATTA Sa 197) Kulinism was also mentioned in the press of the day (e.g. "Serampore Circular *letter* of February 1812", DATTA Sa 197). The relevant Brahman subcaste of high rank, the Kulin Brahmans, derived from Kulinism material profit, while the families of the wives (Shrotriya Brahmans, a Brahman subcaste of lower rank) raised their prestige (WEINBERGER 201). Marriage of a daughter with a Kulina Brahman raised the status of the Shrotriya family and eliminated the risk of an unmarried daughter (HUTTON 53-54).

Whereas Kulinism was limited to East Bengal (DATTA Sa 197), burning of concubines on a huge scale was practised by the royal houses (by all royal houses?), especially before the Muslim

and later the English rulers had established their power. Descriptions of *suttees* in a harem are not mentioned.

In order to make *suttee* understandable to critical observers, proponents of *suttee* conjured up the image of a happy monogamous marriage, of the tragic death of the husband, and of the unbearable grief (NARASIMHAN 83) of the widow; but Kulinism shows, with unusual clarity, the limits of idealization. "When a Kulin male died, it was not uncommon for his crop [!] of secondary wives to be gleaned from the villages they had never left to be burned in a great fire." (WEINBERGER 201)

Statements by educated proponents of *suttee* may interest a student of rhetoric. "'These are exaggerated reports that were deliberately distorted by the British' insists the journalist who filed a writ petition in the highest court of the land today, against the [Rajasthan] Sati (Prevention) Act. 'Not a single woman has been forced to become a sati', he avers. 'And even if the woman screamed', he argues, 'it is not unnatural. Is it not a fact that sometimes one shrieks in the state of ecstasy? Do not women scream violently at the time of childbirth? ... The real reason they (the British) banned sati was to wipe out the higher ideal of self-sacrifice and unbelievable courage from the hearts of the Hindus.'" NARASIMHAN 81-82, Deorala.

The Shankaracharya of Puri (NARASIMHAN 4-5) was an ardent advocate of the right of the woman to commit *suttee*. When in November 1987 (after the *suttee* of Roop Kanwar) the Rajasthan Government promulgated their *Rajasthan Sati (Prevention) Ordinance* (NARASIMHAN 73), the Shankaracharya "called the ordinance 'a great insult to democracy,' insisting that widow-immolation was enjoined by the scriptures and that the government had no right to forbid a religious practice that he claimed was part of the Hindu dharma ..." (NARASIMHAN 4). -- The same spiritual leader or pontifical head wrote "... ever since this anti-sati law was enacted [November 1987], nature has been revolting. Today, when we should be feeling the heat of summer, it is cold." NARASIMHAN 132 (also 93).

Short, almost casual, utterances are effective in a conversation. In connection with a 1980 *suttee* in Rajasthan, "the Inspector General of Police is reported to have said that

'religion and the law aside, one will have to admit that it was a courageous act.'" (NARASIMHAN 89).

We mention two figures given by A.NANDY: "This survey (*Times of India* 1987) showed that 63.4 % of the respondents ... supported *suttee*, and that 50.8 % refused to accept it as a crime. This 160 years after *suttee* was legally banned." NANDY 148, footnote 23.

Suttee was an important element in the European history of ideas. LEWIS emphasises, in a *Comment* on FIGUEIRA (*Sati in European Culture*) the different reactions of German and French thinkers on the one hand and British thinkers on the other: "... French and German thinkers of the Enlightenment and post-Enlightenment were, with the possible exception of Herder [*suttee* an "unnatural practice"], fundamentally concerned with moral philosophy and metaphysics, rather than with the reform of Indian society. On the other hand, nearly all British treatments of *suttee* in this period are marked by a strong sense of personal emotional involvement ... [concern for the widows]." (LEWIS 75)

"Johann Gottfried von Herder, a vociferous critic of Indian social customs [1744-1803], deplored the practice of widow burning." (FIGUEIRA 59; *ibid.* 71-72, footnote 35: Herder on false sympathy and lacking sympathy in Hinduism).

Suttee statistics: FISCH 483. -- "To generalize is to be an idiot. Truth only exists in minutely organised particulars." William Blake. DATTA Sa vi.

§ 12.5. Widowhood, mainly eighteenth to twentieth centuries

S.NARASIMHAN mentions a person who felt "it would be a reform to reintroduce *suttee*" (187, footnote 22).

C.WEINBERGER feels: "In India one must avoid being either a dog or a widow" (vi, quotation and motto).

We isolate general facts and typical items, mainly on the basis of CHEN Ru 115-165. Cruelty to widows (different cases) has been described vividly by S.STEVENSON 203-208; by WEINBERGER 146-148; and in THARU I 358-363. -- §§ 12.4 and 12.5 (with parallel titles) are both concerned with "traditional India".

We cannot consider the social and economic situation of widows (CHEN Ru Part II). Our text concentrates on the more homogeneous *dharmic* regulations, existing or disappearing: see CHEN Ru Part I.

A study of contemporary India will, naturally, pay constant attention to the changes (reforms) in the last 100 or 200 years. A typical passage is the following statement on changes: "Nowadays ... widows no longer have their heads shaven (unless they personally want to), now wear all colours of saris (not the mandatory white or mud-coloured saris), and now wear blouses [formerly prohibited]." CHEN Ru 145. To this must be added the opposite movement in other cases: "... while the upper castes have begun to relax the rules regarding widowhood, many middle and lower castes have begun to tighten the rules." (CHEN Ru 144: Sanskritization). Relaxation is nevertheless the dominant trend..

The attachment of a woman to her dying (loyal or disloyal) husband may be so strong (husband-god equation) that she gets neurotic when she receives the news of his impending death. The following case is unusual, but it explains many things. (Suffering of a metropolitan woman:) "Several years ago, suddenly one morning, her husband deserted her. She was then not yet thirty. She brought up her three children, all by herself, suffering untold hardships in the process. Twenty years later, when the children were grown up and settled in life, a message was brought to her one day saying that her husband was very ill and dying in a town far away. ... For two days she was like one possessed, praying and crying by turns, till the news of the man's death was brought. "She cried as we had never before seen her cry in all those years, not even when she went through some terrible times", her daughter said.." NARASIMHAN 39-40. Due to indoctrination the mental agitation of a widow can be very real, even in an absolutely modern surrounding..

Widespread are the verbal abuses of the widows."More offensive than anything else, the widow is never again referred to as 'she' but instead by the neuter 'it' [?] Widows are ridiculed and,

commonly, they are the butt of jokes. From then on the widow is called *prani*, animal." (CHEN In 82-83) It would appear that to this day many Hindus do not consider widows real human beings. Do the orthodox consider widows ('animals') at least *good Hindus*? In our days "... activists resolved to campaign against the use of pejorative terms for widows." (CHEN In 15) See also WEINBERGER 147 "The catalogue of insults on the theme of female widowhood comprises (in Rajasthani alone) some fifty expressions: epithets, adages, aphorisms, couplets, and proverbs ...".

Widows have to avoid 'hot' food (meat, eggs, alcohol, onions, garlic etc.). "Eating a vegetarian diet free of all hot foods ... is thought to reduce a widow's sexual desire and passion." (CHEN Ru 133)

A widow is impure, and the mere sight of a widow is polluting or inauspicious. Widows are often not supposed to be visible in the exceedingly important marriage ceremonies (for example in the widow's own daughter's marriage: CHEN Ru 115). "For a long time, probably a year (unless the mourning is lightened), she will continue to sit in that corner [in a small closet], and never go out, even to answer the calls of nature, save at twilight." (S.STEVENSON 204) One woman said that food was "pushed towards her with a stick" (CHEN Ru 131); obviously because there was the fear of pollution in the case of serving food with physical contact.

A description of the fate of a widow (just widowed woman) which we quote in part is almost incredible on account of the reported heartlessness and cruelty. We do not know how far the report can be generalized:

"Once the husband dies, the torture of his wife begins ... None of her relatives will touch her to take her ornaments off her body. That task is assigned to three women from the barber caste [outcasts]. ... No sooner does the husband breathe his last than those female fiends literally jump all over her and violently tear all the ornaments from her nose, ears, etc. In that rush, the delicate bones of the nose and ears are sometimes broken. Sometimes while plucking the ornaments from her hair, tufts of hair are also plucked off. If she is wearing any gold or silver ornaments, these cruel women never have the patience to take them off one by one; they pin her hands down on the ground and try to break the bangles with a large stone. And many a time her hands are severely wounded in the process. Why, these callous women torture even a six- or seven-year-old girl, who doesn't even know what a husband means when she becomes a widow!" (THARU I 359)

(Cremation of the husband:) "The place for cremation is usually on the bank of a river or a lake. When the procession reaches the site, the widow is pushed into the water [so that she may not be seen by anybody?]. She has to lie there till the corpse is burned to ashes and all the people have had their bath and dried their clothes. When people are ready to go home, they pull her out of the water. Whether the water is cold as ice or the sun scorches down fiercely she has to stay there until everyone has finished." (THARU 359-360)

(The way home:) "I will never forget how the scorching heat of the sun was literally burning us on our way. We used to halt at regular intervals to rest a while and drink water. But that poor widow did not dare to ask for water. Had she asked for it, she would have lost her honor [reason?] The women with her could have given her some [!], but they felt no pity for her. Finally she collapsed unconscious. ... Later on, when this poor forsaken woman did not even

have the strength to crawl, she was tied up into a bundle as if of rags, and then dragged off ... (THARU 360).

A widow may return to her natal family. That is, however, not a provision of the law-books. The law-books consider the wife/widow the property of the new family to whom the girl had been given by agreement between both sides (marriage = giving [away] one's daughter). PANIKKAR writes: "A girl born into a family is, according to old thinkers, like an ornament held in pawn to be surrendered to the rightful owner when he demands it." (57). A widow may nevertheless return to her own family (S.STEVENSON 205 and 207). But NARASIMHAN says in a generalizing manner "that it is shameful for her [for the widow] to return to her natal home, whatever the provocation." (48) There is regional variation. "The percentage of widows living in their natal or parental village is significantly higher in south India ... than in north India ...": CHEN In 32. Living in one's natal 'village' is apparently the same as being close to one's natal 'family'.

The present subject suggests a consideration of the religious feelings of the women: The widows have distinctive problems (emptiness, loneliness, despair) and express their emotions in interviews. But there is no study of the religion of widows. We know that all Indian women spend many hours on their *puja*: *puja* at home and *puja* in a temple, silent *puja* or songs. There is female worship of Radha and Krishna in the *akhras* of Bengal and in the great centres of pilgrimage like Vrindaban. Worship of fertility goddesses could be added. A great step is the decision of a widow to become an ascetic (CHEN Ru 150-151).

Witchcraft (Indian) is more than a local peculiarity. Widows and witches are "believed to perform black magic and witchcraft", ... "widows are believed to have 'eaten' their husband and are rumoured to devour people more generally." (CHEN Ru 118-119) A witch may be murdered but there is no ritualized killing. The accusation that the widow has "eaten her husband" seems to be fairly common (the widow as "human-devouring ogress": CHEN Ru 152, footnote 7). Morris Carstairs notes an "all-pervasive fear of the village witch" (CHEN Ru 120). A different line is the accusation of widows as witches because the in-laws want the *land* of the deceased husband (CHEN Ru 281-284).

Widowhood is the result of evil karma (resulting from crimes committed in earlier existences). The greater the suffering of the widow, all the greater the committed crimes (!). According to this logic, child widows (the worst sufferers) have the worst *karmic* balance (S.STEVENSON 204), whereas the rich sinners have possibly been virtuous in previous existences.

The acting persons (mother-in-law etc.) were not forced to ill-treat a daughter-in-law. There was no divine command to support or reinforce the course of *karma*, nor was ill-treatment of daughters-in-law prescribed by the *dharma*. We are only concerned with human nature and conduct. According to the Indian background human beings do not deliberately support the course of *karma*, and there is no interaction between human initiatives and metaphysical mechanisms. Aged widows with sons suffered less than young widows without sons (almost invisible beings), an attitude which is natural but not connected with the logic of *karma*.

"A fear of female sexuality and, therefore, the need to control it, have been felt in many societies and civilizations. This control has assumed different forms in different societies. In colonial

Haryana [a state in North India], the custom of widow remarriage emerged as one of the most effective and socially valid forms of this control." (CHOWDHRI 93)

SOGANI mentions three possible tragic fates of the widow: immediate death (*suttee*), "segregation and drudgery", and "subjection to clandestine sexual exploitation by the males of the family or locality" (SOGANI 7). "A widow's youth also carries an element of risk, since pregnancy would cast an indelible stain on the reputation of her husband's lineage. The crowded living conditions of the joint-family encourage sexual abuse, and a young widow is easy prey since she has no one to protect her. If she becomes pregnant, she is thrown out into the street, and since her own family usually refuses to take her back, all that remains for her is to make good on her reputation as a 'whore'." (WEINBERGER 147) "... there are easy methods of getting rid of an unwanted widow: simply to turn her out of house and home; to push her down a well; to give her poison; to take her on a pilgrimage and either lose her or sell her, or to set fire to her and burn her to death." (S.STEVENSON 207)

Chastity (and *suttee*) are closely connected with pride and honour (§ 12.6). NARASIMHAN: "Since male honour is primarily concerned with the sexual purity and exclusiveness of women within a kinship group, the death of the woman [supra] is preferred to loss of patriarchal honour through possible sexual misadventure on her part." (58) "Honour is one of the most valued ideals in Hindu culture ... Most communities 'pay constant attention to gaining and maintaining honour.'" (CHEN Ru 23)

"In terms of social norms, widow-remarriage is prohibited by most upper castes and is allowed by most lower castes." (CHEN Ru 76)

Every wife hopes with all her heart that she would die before her husband. The prospect of widowhood is a life-long sword of Damocles. Widowhood with all its consequences is as a rule not unexpected, and to die while the husband is still alive "is, in the Indian reckoning, considered the greatest good fortune." (NARASIMHAN 187) As can be expected there are numerous rites whose purpose is to preserve a husband's life (CHEN Ru 26-28).

Two specialists "estimate that roughly one third of Indian widows remarry" (CHEN Ru 107). This may be precise or not, but remarriage has many forms, and in discussing the status of a 'married' Hindu woman one wants to know above all the exact nature of the marriage arrangement and the precise status of wife, husband, children etc. Under the circumstances we have an endless number of local rules and customs. See p.100: "... some castes in the village [Bihar] perform remarriages secretly in the middle of the night, so that the couple can leave the village before dawn." The problem is not widowhood but absence of good remarriage (if adequate remarriage is wanted). See "social norms" (supra) and '33 million' (infra.) -- *Niyoga* (§ 9.1) is only established in Haryana. See CHOWDHRI 96-97, 93-123. "The land-owning peasantry [Haryana]... needed both her [the wife's] productive and reproductive labour." (CHOWDHRI 115)

M.A.CHEN distinguishes between seclusion and confinement (two parts of ritual mourning), often "seclusion in a dark inner room" followed by "confinement in the husband's home." One formula is seclusion "for at least one month" and "confinement for one year." (Rajputs)

In the case of sensitive widows one expects mental problems calling for neurological attention (NARASIMHAN 39-40 supra). Some widows almost fast to death to make amends for former sins (being the fancied reasons of widowhood: S.STEVENSON 207). The widow is isolated. "As a result, some widows develop neuroses or experience depression." (CHEN Ru 143). The security (German '*Geborgenheit*') in the joint family has been praised repeatedly. Be that as it may, it does, on the whole, not include the widows. For the law-books protection of widows is no subject. (CHEN Ru 169-170)

M.A.CHEN has described in detail the costs incurred by the death of the husband; costs of medical treatment, costs of death ceremonies, costs of widowhood. "... meals served to guests, rice distributed to guests, drinks served to men, and donations to the presiding priest." (CHEN Ru 126) Often the widows have to take loans to pay for the expenses (CHEN Ru 128-129). During the period of mourning a widow is not supposed to have contacts with male relatives and with her own family. This is "precisely the time when her in-laws often take major decisions without consulting her ... about her rights to land and other property." (CHEN Ru 130) Sometimes the in-laws keep the jewellery (CHEN Ru 129). The case of *child widows* deserves special consideration (not mentioned in this case).

The life of married women with children varies from case to case, but the lives of widows are still more varied. Unmarried widows are exposed to the in-laws, married widows have new husbands, grown up sons and daughters are sometimes cooperative and sometimes indifferent..

WINTERNITZ gives an overview of the number of widows according to the all-India Census of 1901 (p.87). There were 19,487 widows under five years of age, 115,285 under ten years, and 391,147 widows under fifteen years. Among 1000 women were 180 widows; of these one was under the age of 5, five were between 5 and 10, eighteen between 10 and 15, forty-four between 15 and 20. The figures also give a rough idea of the extent of child marriages in 1901.

"There are more than 33 million widows in India, comprising about 8 per cent of the total female population of the country." (CHEN In 19; 1991) "In rural India, widows represent about three per cent of all younger women (15-35), 30 per cent of all middle aged women (35-39), and 60 per cent of women above 60 years of age." (CHEN In 28)

Witwenelend: WINTERNITZ 86-105; S.STEVENSON 202-208; NARASIMHAN (Chapter 'But Hell on Earth'); WEINBERGER 146-148; SOGANI (passim); FORBES (passim); CHEN In; CHEN Ru. -- An early publication is B.M. MALABARI, *Infant Marriage and Enforced Widowhood in India*, Bombay 1877, mentioned in WEINBERGER 246 (not available to me). -- Widows in the film: *Adarya* (Dr. (Ms) SANTWANA BORDOLOI) and *Water* (DEEPA MEHTA).

In our study the general predicament of women up to the 18th-21st centuries is not treated systematically. We have, however, referred to evils with roots somewhere in the past, but not connected with widowhood: Dowry, Kulinism (§ 12.5), female infanticide and foeticide (§ 9.7), rape in Uttar Pradesh and Rajasthan (§ 9.3), oppression in general (FORBES 242-252 and NARASIMHAN 50-51). Refer to NARASIMHAN 49 for *koorh* (woman is threatened with death or even willing to die in order to avert government actions, West Bengal). Dowry criminality is a recent development (§ 7.1)

§ 12.6. Two Attitudes

Pride and **compassion** are important subjects in Indian thought (largely left aside). We derive their significance in the present context from the connection with the issue of predicament. The negativa (lack of pride, lack of compassion) are also considered.

Our description of pride is based on its main objects -- suttee (i), marriage (ii), battle (iii): Glorious *suttee* versus shameful widowhood, successful marriage versus social fall, victorious battle versus dishonourable defeat. The relation between pride and related concepts (honour, shame, status, prestige, fame) has not been discussed.

Our first item is pride in connection with *suttee*: Pride i. OLDENBURG Ro says in connection with the Roop Kanwar case: "... as time went on, her [Roop Kanwar's] sexuality would pose problems and be perceived as a threat to the honor of both families; a *suttee* would convert impending shame into glory." (OLDENBURG Ro 118; cf. S.STEVENSON 207.) Shame is shame of the widow who is virtually imprisoned, wears a tonsure and remains largely invisible for foreigners. The widow is shame or misery embodied. To have a widow in the house is painful, but a family member who committed *suttee* instils respect. The widow is a picture of misery, the *suttee* transforms the "widow" into a quasi-goddess. The *sati* (goddess or at least person with elevated status) is glory. Modern Hindus have stressed the right of the widow to perform a *suttee*, but (as can be expected) they have not recommended it. See also OJHA 393-395.

Extension of *suttee* to lower castes is well-known (§ 12.2) and part of "Sanskritization": status climbing through the adoption of Brahmanical customs and through the adoption of upper caste customs in general.

Our next subject in the area of pride will be marriage: Pride ii. Preserving the chastity of the bride and of the wives in general is the basic way of protecting the honour, Urdu *izzat*, of the family (SYED To 151). There are additional problems. Before the marriage (perhaps years before the marriage) the situation must be studied by the family: Which girl (in the same village/in another village?) is a suitable bride when local marriage restrictions: caste, exogamy, hypergamy (marrying up), are duly considered? (KAPADIA Ch.5, S.STEVENSON 46-47, ALTEKAR 72-79.)

Considerations of honour as understood in the respective communities have produced decisions (up to death penalty) against inter-caste marriages and (much worse) against Hindu-Muslim unions. "... actions that are inappropriate defile the 'honour' and 'purity' of the caste, family and lineage. ... " "'The prestige of the family is in the hands of its daughter.' " (CAKRAVARTI Fa 310). Hindutva ideology emphasizes "women as the repositories of the 'honour' of the Hindu nation." (CHAKRAVARTI Fa 311).

The other problem connected with marriage is the dowry (§ 7.1), and to the immediate dowry expectations must be added additional demands of the in-laws after the marriage (e.g. on the occasion of a child birth in the family). Dowry *murders* are well-known. Dowry *suicides* were performed by the girls to spare the parents the dowry expenses (WEZLER Do 290-291: wave of suicides). Indologists know that for a marriage even middle class families invite hundreds of guests to a wedding. The father of the bride has to give according to a manual "clothing, gold

chains ... for the bridegroom; a sari, a gold chain ... for the mother-in-law of the bride; a sari and a gold-chain for the sister-in-law; clothing and cash for the father-in-law ... cash for all close relatives of the bride-groom (particularly paternal and maternal uncles) ..." MICHAELS 119. SYED summarizes: to marry off one's daughter is a matter of 'pride and purse' (SYED To 113). The European visitor expects in many cases a financial disaster of the family of the bride. How the family can survive if there are two or three daughters and no son is in fact a mystery. No man in his senses would endure the economic problems (not to speak of the other endless inconveniences), were the marriage not a question of prestige. In other words: it is necessary to marry all daughters off in a correct and respectable manner. S.STEVENSON 58-111 and MICHAELS 115-119. The dowry is theoretically part of an exchange of gifts, but de facto the wealth moves largely from the family of the bride to the family of the bridegroom. The dowry (spending and receiving wealth) can also be seen as an instrument of status climbing.

An important demographic factor is the change of the sex ratio (number of women nowadays reduced by abortion in order to avoid dowry pressures). In some regions there are not enough brides.

Our third subject is the pride of the warrior: Pride iii. In contrast to the two preceding subjects we are now concerned with pride in its narrowest sense, pride of the warrior, pride of the dynasty, pride of the king.

Rajasthan, formerly "Rajputana", deserves a special reference. Rajput history is a unique chapter in Indian history. The Rajputs, ruling caste of Rajasthan (Indians, but not completely indigenous: WITZEL 117), split into numerous dynasties which were hostile to each other, and all Rajputs later became deadly enemies of the Muslim invaders. The Rajputs entered Indian history in post-Christian times. The Rajputs were fighters and they fought for their honour. They were not identical with the Kshatriyas of the old *varna* system.

The general traits of Rajput mentality are well-known: "A glorious death was to be welcomed -- for the men in battle, and for the women in a fiery end through the rites of *jauhar* or *suttee*." (NARASIMHAN 118)

Rajput history and Rajput pride are closely linked with the name of Lt. Col. James TOD: "political agent to the western Rajput states during the nineteenth century" (NARASIMHAN 56). About the infant Rajput, J. TOD observes, "'The shield is his cradle, the dagger his plaything'." (NARASIMHAN 128). "'It is because I love her [my wife] so much that I have to kill her' ... *Ergo*, he 'raises the poniard to her rather than witness her captivity, and he gives the opiate to the infant whom, if he cannot portion and marry to her equal, he dare not see degraded'" (127). "Tod's volumes on Rajasthan are full of narratives illustrating how the Rajputs' impetuosity and recklessness born of an obsession with 'honour' often turned the slightest provocation, real or imaginary, into a fight to death ..." (122). To sum up: we find with the Rajputs oversensibility in the question of honour, and thirst for revenge if honour is violated. King Yudhishtira (Mahabharata), timid and helpless witness of Draupadi's (his wife's) shocking humiliation, is the other extreme.

Jauhar (Glossary) is the equivalent of the male warriors' fight to death. When defeat was imminent, the soldiers found death in battle, while the women died in a *jauhar*. To this must be added individual homicide undertaken by the Rajput to save the honour of his wife and to avoid

humiliating marriages of his daughters (NARASIMHAN 127). The killing of daughters for whom a mate of equal or higher rank could not be found (a husband of lower rank would be a disgrace for the family) is a Rajput variety of female infanticide. The problem of the bridegroom could apparently be seen in advance (when the daughter was still an infant).

The cult of voluntary death existed in Rajasthan also outside the Rajput community. A peculiar brand are the *Charans* (WEINBERGER 58-63 and foll.). These persons practice self-mutilation, voluntary death and "murder in the family" as means of exacting debts. Through some magical causality the crime, combined with adequate curses, was supposed to become a terrible threat to the debtor. -- Rajput women are not timid but resolute. NARASIMHAN mentions "illiterate women retorting and arguing with men and lambasting them, in buses and in shops" (130).

More recently, the collective pride of Rajasthan became the pride of Hindu India. "James Tod's (1782-1835) tales of Rajput chivalry and honour and his accounts of the valour with which they resisted Mughal invaders acquired new currency as they were recreated in stories, poems, plays and even children's books in nearly every Indian language."(THARU II 74)

Compassion. The very concept of "the predicament of women" stimulates a consideration of the forms of possible compassion: Compassion with the child widow who is ill-treated, compassion with the girl who must leave the natal family and move to the family of the bridegroom, compassion with the sonless woman, c. with the superseded wife, c. with the widow who faces the funeral pyre, c. with the surviving widow, c. with the wife who is throughout her life afraid of being burned when the husband dies (or of surviving as an ill-treated widow). There are about a dozen Sanskrit-words for "compassion", but they are mostly synonymous. Cruelty (lack of compassion) is the frequent opposite.

We concentrate on the surviving widow. *Satis* were often burned in a hurry, and were inaccessible to relatives and friends. They could not discuss the matter with their parents or with anybody else (MANI Ey: 402). "... Marshman records that the son of the widow was asked: 'Why have you murdered your mother?' [setting the pile alight] and the son replied, 'What could I do. It is the custom.'" (DATTA Sa 218) A 19th century author describes the mob sneering at the miserable widow on her way to the funeral pyre: "The agony of the expiring victim is made the subject of savage jokes and brutal merriment of the surrounding spectators who look on suttee as an enjoyable spectacle" (DATTA Sa 217). "On the death of her husband she [the *sati*] would not expect sympathy from any quarters. She was a target of abuse, fun and vilification." (218)

All this seems very unlikely. In other cases "'Standers-by look at the initiate with superstitious shudders, viewing her with dumbfounded curiosity, considering her some higher supernatural being.'" (ZACHARIAE 596) There was thus occasional respect (and sympathy), but respect was perhaps not the rule. The European mob enjoyed executions, and we have further descriptions from India which support the above shocking quotations: "Amidst this scene of sorrow and misery it may not be amiss to glance a moment at the behaviour of the surrounding mob. Here nothing but merriment, laughter, noise, and obscenity abounded in all directions." (MAJOR 138-139). The mob (in India : in Great Britain) is a subject in its own right. In the case of the in-laws one would expect more understanding, but little is said about the in-laws. *Satis* who leave the funeral pyre at the last moment (some could try to run away) cannot expect understanding. They are guilty persons, most of them being killed by those present.

It must be mentioned that, apart from the Muslims, the discussion on *suttee* was started by Europeans (merchants, travellers, officials) and -- as far as we know -- not by Indians of the pre-colonial period. Exceptions have been mentioned (Bana, Tantrists).

The Jainas have repeatedly criticized animal sacrifice (Veda etc.), but they never criticized *suttee*. Widow burning (Rajasthan etc.) was no subject in the endless dogmatic discussions of Jaina mendicants in Rajasthan (often discussions on the protection of microscopic or submicroscopic living beings). May be the enormous Jaina literature ignored *suttee* completely.

To describe the life of the widow we give below several descriptions (supplement to § 12.3 and 12.5).

DATTA Sa describes the position of the widow in the family: "A widow seldom inspired any sympathy. She led a miserable life. She bore the brunt of insults and taunts hurled upon her by her near relations and acquaintances. She was held guilty for the death of her husband. A usual comment made in the family was 'well, she is the ill-stared one who has eaten up her husband'" (DATTA Sa 208). § 12.5 supra: *khasam khani*.

In the case of the widow one may speak of a reversal of compassion: "The terrible thing ... is that the younger, and therefore the more unprotected and helpless the widow is, the more it proves how vile her sin must have been." (S.STEVENSON 204) According to this logic, a rich debauchee deserves sympathy because his prosperity should be the reward for virtue in previous existences. See also § 12.5 on sexual abuse of widows (S.STEVENSON 207).

Lack of compassion may be extreme as demonstrated by the autobiographical record of a Marathi lady (§ 12.5). The tenor of that essay is not considerably mitigated by the fact that the suffering of the widow is mainly connected with the first year of widowhood. "After one year, if [!] the widow is staying with her parents, she may be allowed to wear some ornaments." The anonymous authoress also admits the special cruelty in the case of her particular caste, but we do not know whether or not the treatment was much better in other castes. THARU I 358/362.

Life of widows in a north-Indian village has been described by S.WADLEY (1995). Grown-up sons of widows are of paramount importance; contacts with the native family are not rare and often indispensable, and the widow's efforts to develop for a nuclear family a "strategy for survival" are almost in the centre of the report. But we also read about a superseded wife (a young widow, but barren) that her husband "... mistreats her. Clothed in rags, she is often beaten." (WADLEY 112) Reports on beating of superseded women are unusual. WADLEY's article appeared 75 years after the book of S.STEVENSON, and this no doubt accounts for the relative improvement in the condition of widows (WADLEY). Probably the improvement was general.

M.A. CHEN has studied witches (widows treated as witches) in Northern India (Bihar etc.). There is belief in witches, and widows are harassed as such *and/or* harassed and murdered in order to secure land. This is a special form of criminality against women in rural areas. It seems that further studies are necessary to recognize the full extent of the machinations. CHEN Ru 279-284.

Different is general violence (rape, torture etc.) against women (*Amnesty International May 2001*), mainly against marginalised women (tribe women etc.) and committed mostly by upper-caste perpetrators.

It can be objected that compassion or lack of compassion, helpfulness or lack of helpfulness always depend on the case. It is nevertheless clear that institutions are powerful and thus largely responsible for the course of events.

Cruelty against animals is not unknown. Mahatma Gandhi was aware of the problem.

Refer for the two attitudes in *Jainism* to BRUHN Ma (pride) and BRUHN Ah 61-65 (compassion). Compassion is a difficult element in Jaina dogmatics as made clear by W.J.Johnson (see BRUHN Ah). Refer also to WILEY. -- In the Jaina community *suttees* were exceptional (SANGAVE 175).

§ 12.7. Debates on *suttee*

The present section is not primarily a supplement to §§ 12.2 and 12.4 (both directly or indirectly connected with ancient India), but it serves as a supplement to the discussion of theories in § 12.8.

The history of *suttee* (pro-*suttee* and anti-*suttee* movements) prior to the abolition in 1829 is to a large extent a history of debates and discussions (*suttee* to be tolerated or to be abolished?) and ineffective and uncoordinated measurements, 1757-1829. The standard publications are DATTA Sa and MANI Co. There were along with the debates also other activities, e.g. assiduous collection of data (how many "suttees" took place in a given area in a period of time).

In connection with *suttee* the British government was faced with a complex situation. "The immediate reaction of the British officials towards *suttee* was one of complete abhorrence of the rite." (DATTA Sa 23) There was consensus that *suttee* had to be abolished for humanitarian reasons (the Mughal emperors had already tried to eradicate the institution of *suttee*), but there were obstacles, mainly the fear of political destabilization as the consequence of abolition and the fear of violating the principle of tolerance in the homeland. Ultimately "The view expressed was that the 'practice of widow burning is founded on the religious notions of the Hindus and is expressly stated in their laws.'" (DATTA Sa 23) This was the opinion of a prominent pandit and of the law officers. How far this was correct and how long the identification of Hinduism and *suttee* lasted in the minds of the British officers need not be discussed. *Suttee* was prohibited by the old law-books if the widow was "(1) pregnant; (2) under puberty; (3) a mother of an infant (exception being when someone else took on the responsibility of rearing up the child); (4) in a state of uncleanness [menstruation]; or (5) in stupefaction due to the administration of drugs." Moreover the *suttee* had to be voluntary (DATTA Sa 24). *Suttee* was not a traditional law, but it seemed a highly meritorious act.

In 1805 an attempt was made to settle the *suttee* issue with the help of Hindu authorities. There were afterwards extensive reflections on the matter on the part of the Government and the Court, but the result (1812) was not very clear: "The course which the British Government should follow according to the principle of religious toleration, is to allow the practice [of *suttee*] in

these cases in which it is countenanced by their religion, and to prevent it in others in which it is by the same authority prohibited” (recommendations of the Court; 24-25).

On the other hand, the Indologist H.T.COLEBROOKE, Registrar to the Court, "had written in 1794 his first paper on the 'Duties of a Faithful Hindu Widow' in which he showed that the rite of suttee was permitted by certain Hindu texts, though it was not imperative on Hindu women to burn themselves." (25). Also “Sir John Aunstruther, Chief Justice of the Supreme Court (1797-1806), banned suttee in Calcutta.” (DATTA 23) This was an important step, but as a consequence many *suttees* were moved to places outside Calcutta.

“The Government policy of suttee until 1817 [and after 1817] proved a complete failure due to the inherent defects of Circular orders." "... how could it [the Government], however efficient it might be, determine precisely such delicate things as pregnancy, age of the surviving infant or menstruation." (28)

The *suttee* had to be voluntary. If that meant "without physical force", the meaning was easy. Psychological manipulation was a different matter, and it also precluded voluntary action. In fact "There were only a few stray cases in which women showed inflexible obedience on their part to commit suttee" (DATTA 209).

Up to the appointment of Bentinck (1828) there was no progress. In Bengal at least the number of *suttees* increased and there were mainly two opinions among the responsible officers. M.Elphinstone (Bombay Presidency) "wanted the abolition of suttee not through Bengal restrictions which might prevent only a few cases of irregular suttees but by persuasion through an ever-increasing use of enlightened Hindu public opinion and through the Government policy tempered by tact, caution and a sympathetic comprehension of Indian customs and sentiments". (DATTA Sa 42) The Government in fact decided "to follow the policy of wait and watch" (49). But J.H.Harrington submitted 1822 a Memorandum to the House of Commons, emphasizing "that the only way to abolish suttee was through a legislative enactment." (52)

The problems before Lord W.C.Bentinck (Governor-General from 1828-1835) who was determined to abolish *suttee* were foreseeable. But Bentinck abolished *suttee* already the year after his appointment (1829). "As a Utilitarian his whole being revolted against it [against *suttee*] and he decided to give to the practice of suttee a death blow." (DATTA Sa 110) *One* of the consequences was the end of the moral problems of the local officers (a *suttee* legitimized meant: death; a *suttee* not legitimized meant: life).

The abolition was accepted by the Indian population and (as was expected) did *not* cause unrest, although there were activities of "anti-abolitionists" and although the Hindu community was "divided into two hostile groups" (orthodox party, liberals): DATTA Sa 146. "According to Kopf [DATTA Sa 268], the Dharma Sabha [founded in 1830] was the first 'proto-nationalist movement' launched against foreign influence in the internal affairs of the Hindus." (147) The fairly strong opposition of intellectuals (mostly Indians) against the abolition is not without interest..

See also Chapter 1 (pp.14-41) of MANI Co.

§ 12.8. Theories on *suttee*

We are here concerned with “orientalism” in the field of *suttee*, that is to say: “orientalism” (ASHCROFT) or related theoretical categories. See division II of § 1. Colonial writings on *suttee* are a well-defined subject for our discussion on theory, just as textual criticism (studying old texts) is a well-defined subject in GRÜNENDAHL’s criticism of Peter van der Veer (infra).

L.MANI has introduced the concept of free agency in the discussion of the *satis*. She criticizes the victimization of the *sati* (infra) in the colonial discourse (MANI Co 31: "the widow nowhere appears as a subject-in-action"; 31-32). The *sati* is no doubt not free in her decision: the force of external pressure (controlling, pushing, tying) is emphasized everywhere. But this is the physical plane (our expression), the plane of the colonial discourse. The *satis* must also be viewed on the upper plane, the heroic plane as it were, and that means that they are to be viewed (to some extent, in some cases at least) as "free agents." In spite of external compulsion they are free in their spirit. This is the post-colonial discourse.

L.MANI quotes from a long description (*India Gazette* 1828) of the fate of a widow who decided to commit *suttee*, but escapes afterwards from the funeral pile and returns to her relatives "who also appeared quite reconciled to the course that the affair had taken" (MANI Ey: 398). Apart from the happy ending the process is in no way remarkable (no special heroism of the widow), But L.MANI analyses the language of the (European?) narrator: The text of the narrator undervalues the activity of the woman. It is clear from the words of the widow, recorded by the narrator (and by the commentator), that she does not believe in the *sati*-ideology but has rational reasons for her escape. Even then the narrator describes the widow as "infatuated creature." Here is the lack of logic and the conflict with the modern commentator (i.e. with L.MANI). "Whilst the shock of her narrow escape might indeed have made her appear barely conscious of her surroundings, the logic of her decision-making process hardly warrants the adjective 'infatuated'." (MANI Ey 398)

The adjective *infatuated* ignores the free agency of the widow and presents the colonial discourse. The description "occludes the agency of the widow, both in her decision, albeit overdetermined, to submit to destruction, and in her leaping off the pyre. It fails, in other words, to acknowledge her as capable of evaluating the conditions of her life, and overlooks her part in her own rescue, not to mention the rationality of her response to fear and pain." (Ey 398). It is difficult to understand the text of L.MANI, unless one appreciates her efforts to register reactions of the persons involved (the narrator) and unless one understands her special wish to isolate the "colonial discourse" (in this case present in the expression *infatuated*).

NARASIMHAN's line (to mention a counterexample) is different: She calls her Chapter 4 "Lamb to the Slaughter." Also she does not criticize a narrator who describes in a few words a futile attempt to escape: "A Hindu, one of the police ... raised his sword to strike her, and the poor wretch shrank back into the flames ..." (79). *Sati* accounts of this type (force and nothing but force) are normal; they leave no room for “free agency”.

L.MANI’s example (infatuation ...) demonstrates in the eyes of the authoress the alleged disastrous influence of the colonial discourse.

A related (related to L.MANI) but somewhat different view on agency is presented by J. LESLIE. J.LESLIE describes certain *satis* "as the active agents of their own positive

constructs." (SUGIRTHARAJAH 110) If we are not mistaken J.LESLIE gives to some *satis* the status of shining examples. "First, *sati* remains as an ideal. While the numbers of women who died in this way have always been statistically small, the ideal of such women and such a death is revered throughout traditional India today. *Sati* evidently needs to be practised sometimes in order to serve as a model, but it becomes irrelevant how many times it is actually practised because its social effect as a model of the good (that is, socially-valued) woman remains." (SUGIRTHARAJAH 123) However, discussing LESLIE's line, SUGIRTHARAJAH observes "What appears on the surface to be a positive construct turns out in effect to be a conventional feminine role and identity, and in the process we are offered a picture of a fixed and unchanging tradition and a frozen Hindu patriarchy." (110). In other words: the "shining examples" proclaim according to SUGIRTHARAJAH no new and progressive message.

Neither L.MANI nor J.LESLIE give a number of historical examples of active and heroic widows who boldly enter the pyre or boldly refuse to leap into the fire (MANI Ey 397 not sufficient).

Our second focus of attention is A.NANDY. We follow EMBREE and DATTA Sa. EMBREE describes NANDY's line in the following words: "At the end of the eighteenth century, in the urban world of greater Calcutta that grew up as a result of the commercial and political activities of the East India Company, upper caste Bengalis (the *bhadralok*) experienced, according to Nandy, a deep sense of anomie [sic], of being cut off from their roots in the traditional society." (EMBREE 152) This class encouraged *sati* as a *substitute* for older upper class norms which were irretrievably lost. NANDY derives the situation from colonial rule (involving adoption of Western mentality by the deracinated upper classes). "Sati at that time arose, as he put it in another essay, out of the 'pathology of colonialism, not of Hinduism.'" (EMBREE 150) See also NARASIMHAN 117 (similar argument but limited conclusion).

NANDY goes even one step further. He argues (according to EMBREE 150-151) "that the hundreds of cases of suttee reported in Bengal were responses to foreign [British] rule". In the eyes of NANDY this was not the first case of this type: The epidemic of *suttee* was not restricted to Bengal. Extending his observations on Bengal (*bhadralok*) to *jauhar* in Rajasthan and to *suttee* in Vijayanagara he establishes a sort of law: *Suttee* increased as a reaction to British rule in Bengal, to Mughal rule in Rajasthan, and to the Muslim Sultanates in Vijayanagar. *Suttee* was thus connected with foreign rule, whatever the mechanism. The 'response' theory is no doubt speculation.

"Akbar ... thought, as did the later Mughal rulers, that the custom was barbarous but that to ban it would provoke the Hindus to rebellion, as they would see such a prohibition as an interference with their religion." (152) Refer also to WEZLER in § 2 (condemnation of Muslims).

"Nandy quotes Marshman who had written that the 'increasing luxury of the high and middling classes and their extreme imitation of European habits made them eager to avoid the expense of maintaining widows.'... Thus, according to NANDY (and Marshman), suttee was a primitive Malthusian means of population control in the famine-ridden Bengal." (DATTA 200) V.N.DATTA observes: "Nandy's thesis, though ingenious, is unconvincing. He assumes that suttee flared up suddenly during the British period and ignores the whole past history of suttee." (DATTA 200)

We do not quote D.M.FIGUEIRA but R.J.LEWIS' (§ 12.4) comment on D.M.FIGUEIRA (the same volume). LEWIS: "This last image [FIGUEIRA explains the suicide of Karoline von Günderrode], of the act of sati as an erotic climax consummated in the "lustful flames" of the funeral pyre, is very remote -- almost blithely so -- from sati's meaning in the Indian context: nothing better illustrates the essential self-absorption of Western representations of India than this transformation of the chaste sati into the author of an act of radically individualistic erotic self-indulgence. This wholesale appropriation of Indian cultural symbols suggests parallels with the material appropriation of India's wealth and labour that was taking place at the same time." (73) LEWIS presents a long list of European misunderstandings and misuses of *suttee*, the "ghost of Günderrode" (FIGUEIRA 68, also 57) being in the centre. The abolishment of *suttee* (and the history of the abolishment) are hardly mentioned.

According to GRÜNENDAHL, „Van der Veer maintains that beneath all the philological gestures [example given], 'we may glimpse the nationalist gesture' -- which suggests a connection between the *colonial, textualizing project of modernity* [textual criticism] and a supposed Romantic German search for self-definition [nationalism]. Thus the search for the 'golden age of European civilization in Sanskrit Ur-texts' ultimately fed into a larger discourse of nationalism, in which Indian philologists like Vishnu Sitaram Sukthankar, first editor-in-chief of the Mahabharata, used philology in the way the Germans used it in their own country. Sanskrit philology provided [Indian philologists] with the tools to dig up the origin and essence of the nation, that is, the Hindu nation“ (p.2)

In other words: German textual criticism led to Indian textual criticism, and Indian textual criticism led to Hindu nationalism, eventually to the destruction of Babar's mosque in Ayodhya.

§ 13. Woman in Hinduism (Varia)

§ 13.1. Introduction

Our description of the life of the Hindu wife would be one-sided if Hindu iconography and Hindu mythology were excluded. They form the religious world of the last two millennia, iconography originating somewhat later than mythology.

Hindu gods and goddesses are worshipped by both sexes. How far women worshippers prefer female deities and male worshippers male deities is not really known. Women with all the trouble inflicted on them by society cannot expect and do not expect special assistance from the innumerable Hindu goddesses. But women fast, perform their *pujas*, watch ceremonies, visit the temples more frequently than men and listen to *gurus*. The women live with their gods and goddesses, but we hardly know why a woman prefers a particular deity and whether she worships only one deity or several deities. Goddesses who bestow children have, of course, a special position.

What surprises the observer is the psychological contrast between the shyness and modesty of the women (young women in particular) and the femina triumphans in iconography and mythology.

PANIKKAR writes: "Also it is important to remember that Hindu religion has never taught the inferiority of women. There is no parallel in Hinduism to the story of man's fall as a result of

Eve's temptation and no stigma attached to womanhood as a whole. Ardhanareeswara, the god who is conceived half-woman and half-man [Shiva and Parvati combined, Shiva as half-female], represents the integral view of Hindu religion in relation to woman ..." (62-63). Refer for Ardhanarishvara to C.D.COLLINS 76-81, 245, 298. In contrast to Christianity, Hinduism has no temptation story and no concept of original sin (peccatum originis). But this "gap" does not help the women, and in the Dharma Shastras the inferiority of the woman has become a dogma (§ 2).

§ 13.2. The female in Hindu iconography

Below we outline what may be called a quasi-classification, an attempt to produce order in an apparent chaos. The reader should not get the impression that all the goddesses are unexplained and that one ought to know "much more" about the meaning of the figures than is normally the case (e.g. before entering a museum). Some goddesses are puzzling, but not all, and we think that the "quasi-classification" is on the whole a simple road to clearness. Our classification or arrangement is *based* on literature, but it is not *identical* with any form of literature. It is often difficult to bring art and literature together.

Some goddesses like Sarasvati (mainly goddess of learning and music), Lakshmi (mainly goddess of fortune), Tripurasundari (cf. Lakshmi), Uma (Shiva's consort), the two river-goddesses (Ganga and Yamuna) and the goddess with child are benign, others like the goddess Chamunda-on-the-corpse are generally fierce or terrifying. The goddesses have different aspects: benign, terrifying (standard terms, e.g. PADOUX 279b), heroic, neutral. See also CHEN Ru 24-25. Indian gods and goddesses are not timeless. The heroic Durga-killing-the-buffalo becomes a monster in a late *myth* (§ 13.3). Almost all goddesses (sculptures) are "lifeless" in the later standard iconography.

Chamunda-on-the-corpse, Kali, Durga killing the buffalo demon, Uma combined with Shiva (the couple with or without their two sons Skanda and Ganesha, a homely motif), the seven or eight divine Mothers and the sixty-four *Yoginis* (with different animal heads often bordering on the grotesque), the resting queen with or without child (no identity), a single "mother" (compare the divine mothers), all these are in the field of iconography corpuses, units in their own right. Gods and goddesses may change their character and their identity in the course of time: Chamunda -- standing on a male body (whoever that may be) -- is eventually transformed into "Kali", the goddess standing on the body of Shiva; there is thus a Chamunda-Kali corpus (MUKHERJEE). Shiva/Uma are the only married couple in the pantheon.

Corpuses (Kali etc.) are small quasi-systems and help to study an iconographic area (e.g. goddesses in Hinduism) -- 'area' as a set of such micro-corpuses.

Different from the above is the situation in painting (Miniatures, Bazaar prints). The late form of Kali (Kali lolling out her tongue) is prominent, the motifs of the Krishna baby, of Krishna and the milkmaids, of Krishna and Radha are omnipresent. Krishna and Radha are a great subject in religious literature. Mandalas (goddesses "in circulo") do not occur.

Groups of goddesses are rare: the *matrikas* (7 or 8) and the *yoginis* ("64"). The numerous lists in Tantric texts (10 Mahavidyas etc.: infra) are hardly reflected in art.

Loosely connected with Hindu iconography (or not connected with it at all) are the following goddesses:

In the first place we mention females in terracotta and stone in early Indian art (generally not identified). Different is the case of "village goddesses". Maryamman or Shitala (goddess of small-pox), Manasa (snake goddess) and Muvalankuli-Camundi (terrific goddess) are examples of important goddesses who do not belong to Hinduism in its narrowest sense. Village-goddesses are either "hot" (passion) or "cool" (detachment). Village deities are almost always hot and female. FLOOD 193-196, pl.19.

The gods and goddesses do not watch over the execution of the female *dharma* (LESLIE), but narrative literature says what a woman is expected to do (Sita). *Puja* (image worship) is dominated by local and regional factors. Only goddesses bestowing offspring and curing diseases have well-defined functions.

It is difficult to establish general rational categories for the universe of art.

A dichotomic classification of the goddesses has been attempted by O' FLAHERTY, who is quoted by FLOOD: "WENDY O'FLAHERTY has referred to two distinct categories of Indian goddesses ... "goddesses of tooth" who are "erotic, ferocious and dangerous", and "goddesses of the breast"... who are "auspicious, bountiful and fertile" (O'FLAHERTY Be 90; FLOOD 174). Compare also O'FLAHERTY Be 91 et passim ("high-ranking goddesses" and "low-ranking goddesses," "cow and mare").

In Eastern India we see numerous many-armed goddesses with weapons, but also goddesses with child. BAUTZE-PICRON 5 distinguishes the "déesse armée" from the "déesse protectrice de la fertilité." -- The eastern goddesses were introduced into Jaina iconography (mainly as subsidiary deities), although Jainism is a religion of non-violence and asceticism.

The said opposition can furthermore be conceived as existing in one and the same great being. The Great Goddess (FLOOD) is a central figure: "The Goddess is a contradictory and ambivalent figure in Hinduism. On the one hand she is the source of life, the benevolent mother who is giving and overflowing, yet on the other she is a terrible malevolent force who demands offerings of blood, meat and alcohol to placate her wrath." (174). But this is a general interpretation rather than the description of a single deity.

We conclude by quoting WEINBERGER who calls Durga "a goddess diffracted into an infinite number of divine beings, whose names vary according to time, place, caste, and sectarian affiliation." (14).

§ 13.3. Hindu mythology

Mythological themes with a great female deity in the centre are largely connected with Durga (Uma, Chandī, Sati, Parvati ...). Interesting is the story of "Sati's" death in the Daksha cycle. The **Daksha cycle** as such (numerous versions) is ignored by us, as we are only interested in the fate of Sati/Parvati and in the erroneous identification of the *suttee* custom with the death of the goddess.

Daksha (son of Brahma, father-in-law of the Moon, follower of Vishnu ...) is a great performer of sacrifices. He invites eight of his nine daughters along with their husbands, all sages, to his place, to the sacrificial hall. His ninth daughter Sati, not invited, is enraged, repairs uninvited to her father and asks him why she was not called to his place. The reason: Daksha abhors Sati's husband, Rudra, later the god Shiva. Daksha stands for orthodox Hinduism, Rudra is an outsider according to some versions, and of unattractive appearance at that. After a long dispute with her father, Sati (who is now a widow) declares that she is prepared to die. She hopes that she will be reborn as Rudra's wife (again loyally devoted to her husband) in her next existence. She then performs an act of fiery yogic concentration. This produces in the end a real fire which, burning from inside, reduces her body to ashes. Rudra condemns and curses his father-in-law Daksha. ("Daksha will be without success".) Daksha curses Rudra in return. ("Rudra will be excluded from the sacrifice".) Sati will be reborn as Parvati, daughter of Himalaya, wife of Shiva and future mother of Kumara (god of war).

Sati, actually the good, virtuous woman (Mahabharata), is used as the proper name of the above goddess (otherwise known as Uma etc.). Refer for this Sati myth to MERTENS 84-86, 92-99, 100-101, 114 (Brahma Purana and Shiva Purana). Kalidasa's famous court-poem *Kumarasambhava* deals with Sati/Parvati's biography.

The story of Sati's death has some relationship with the *suttee* custom. Possibly the death of Sati in the myth was modelled on old forms of widow burning (99-101). The self-immolation of the goddess is reminiscent of the *sat*-ideology of Rajasthan.

Different from the suicide tradition is the story of the **dismemberment of Sati's body**:

Shiva is inconsolable because he has lost his Sati (supra). Devi, highest being in the context of the relevant myth, comforts Shiva and asks him to carry Sati's corpse around. Shiva follows her instructions and with Sati on his head he performs his dramatic cosmic dance (different from the South-Indian Nataraja motif). Shiva considers the corpse the real, living Sati, a trick of the Devi. He is filled with joy to the point of sexual excitement. The Devi then asks Vishnu to cut off Sati's limbs with the help of his *chakra*. This he does, and when falling to the earth, the limbs are transformed into sanctuaries of the Devi. Shiva discontinues his dance, the world is saved. In the end, Shiva and the primordial Devi are reunited on the metaphysical plane. MERTENS 330-342 (Mahabharata Purana).

The story is a true myth, but emphasis is on the Devi's sublimity, on Shiva's cosmic dance and on the foundation of the Devi's sanctuaries -- rather than on a logical and transparent interaction of the dramatic personae. The solemn figure of sanctuaries (*pithas*) is fifty-one: MERTENS 259. Nowadays sanctuaries of Sati/Kali are found in many parts of India (e.g. In Kalighat in Calcutta/Kolkata).

Another, also Puranic, form of the Great Goddess ("Durga") is derived from old art traditions: A goddess defeating a **buffalo-demon** is already depicted in early Indian sculptures (supra), but not described in the epics. The art theme is later on transformed into an elaborate Puranic myth with the typical multiplicity of gods and demons, of beasts and weapons, with transformations and emanations:

The starting point of the buffalo myth is a comparatively late motif or sub-motif: *Mahisha-asura* (= buffalo-demon) has deprived the gods of their power. They do not receive their proper shares of sacrifice (ERNDL 24). To overcome the demon (he is invincible to all beings save a woman: KHANNA 111) the powerless gods resort to a stratagem: the creation of an extraordinary deity. They emit from their angry faces supernatural flashes of light, and all the brilliant emissions combine to form a female figure, a great Goddess: her face coming from Shiva, her arms from Vishnu, her hair from the God of Death, her breasts from the Moon -- and so on. Moreover all the gods provide the Goddess with a weapon or emblem: Shiva with a trident, Vishnu with a disk, the God of Death with a judicial staff, the Himalaya with a lion, and so on. The armies meet. One general of the demons musters 60 000 chariots, another general of the demons "millions," yet another general fifty millions. A terrible fight ensues. The Goddess crushes the enemy's soldiers. She also discharges entire armies from her breath. Finally the enemy's forces are destroyed. At this stage the angry generals of the buffalo demon attack the Goddess personally. They have no chance, she prevails. One by one she kills Chikshura, Chamara, Udagra, Karala and Uddhata.

The defeat of the buffalo demon himself is the climax. First the buffalo demon attacks the army of the Goddess, at the same time creating chaos in the world, then he attacks the Goddess herself. He assumes in turn the forms of a lion, of a man-with-a-sword, of an elephant, and again of a buffalo. The goddess defeats all these fiends successively. In the end she jumps on the buffalo and pierces his neck with her trident. Now the demon tries to escape through the buffalo's mouth (buffalo and demon are at this stage separate), but the Goddess cuts off his head when half of his body has emerged. The battle is over. The gods praise the Goddess. (She has saved the world.) The killed demons, purified (!) by the weapons of the Goddess, go to heaven. The Goddess has finished her fight. She withdraws.

The myth shows that the *avatara* motif (*avatara* pattern) is not restricted to Vishnu. For KHANNA, the masculinity of the Goddess is relevant: "As a battle queen, she is shown playing a 'male' role and assumes an independent and autonomous status." (KHANNA 111). The myth eventually becomes a horror scene: "Laughing terrifyingly, she 'flung the elephants into her mouth', crunched horses and chariots with her teeth ..." -- ZIMMER Ma 480-486; ERNDL 22-25; KHANNA 112; STIETENCRON (Devi Mahatmya and later versions).

§ 13.4. Tantrism and Shaktism

Before discussing the role of women we have to give a general introduction. Refer also to § 12.2 for Mahanirvana Tantra and history of Tantrism, to the end of the present section for Tantric iconography, and to the Glossary for *chakra*.

Tantrism. T.GOULDRIAN writes: "The extremely varied and complicated nature of Tantrism, one of the main currents in the Indian religious tradition of the last fifteen hundred years, renders the manipulation of a single definition almost impossible. ... In a wider sense, Tantrism or Tantric stands for a collection of practices and symbols of a ritualistic, sometimes magical character (*mantra*, ... *chakra*, *mudra* ...). They differ from what is taught in the Veda and its exegetical literature but they are all the same applied as means of reaching spiritual emancipation (*mukti*) or the realization of mundane aims, chiefly domination (*bhukti*) in various sects of Hinduism and Buddhism." T.G. In (Goudriaan 1979: 5-6).

Bhukti (general meaning: enjoyment) can be used in a political sense, domination, and in a sexual sense, sexual intercourse as the way to salvation (*bhukti* leading to *mukti*). Under *bhukti* T.GOULDRIAAN understands elsewhere enjoyment of the "good of life:" T.G. In (Goudriaan 1979: 63). Sexuality is an element of Tantrism, but its meaning and relevance must be analysed from case to case.

Further observations on Tantrism will be found below (GÜNTHER et al.). What is said of Hinduism in general (no common denominator) is true of Tantrism in particular.

Mantras as just mentioned are sacred syllables and verses. *om, hum, khat, phat* are early examples (post-Vedic literature). GLASENAPP 18 *krim, srin, vam* are sobriquet-syllables for the goddesses Krishna and Shri (Lakshmi) and for the god Varuna. HOENS Tr (Goudriaan 1979: 105.)

Recitation of the following four pieces (*mantras*) is prescribed for the four *varnas*: GOUDRIAAN In (Goudriaan 1979: 33). *om* plus Gayatri-verse (for the 1st *varna*), *srin* plus Gayatri-verse (for the 2nd *varna*), *aim* plus Gayatri-verse (for the 3rd *varna*). And "... the Sudras, traditionally not entitled to the Veda, should use an adaptation of the Gayatri directed to Kali [fem.] instead of the real Gayatri (with Savitar, masc.). But, at least in recent practice, there are groups of Brahmans who give the true *om* (*om* plus Gayatri) to Sudras and women." The tradition is interesting ("reform") although we do not know what is meant by Shudra.

The Gayatri (hymn to the sun) is a verse in the Rigveda (GRASSMANN 105):

Gayatri: *tat Savitur varenyam bhargo devasya dhimahi, dhiyo yo nah pracodayat.* May we attain that excellent glory [radiance] of Savitar the God, who may stimulate our prayers.

Tantrism is largely the domain of ritual. GOUDRIAAN In (Goudriaan 1979: 7-9) isolates eighteen constituents of Tantrism. Selected examples: **(3:)** teaching "the practice of a special variety of *yoga* destined to transform the animal instincts and functions by creating an upward movement in the human body along nerve centres (*chakra*). The process is most commonly expressed as 'rousing, or 'raising', the Kundalini.'" See *chakra* in the Glossary. **(6:)** "... use of partly unintelligible formulas (*mantras* ...) invested with supernatural power by means of definite ritual procedures ...". **(7:)** "... use of devices like intricate formulas, geometric designs (*mandala, chakra* ...), gestures (*mudra*) for the expression of metaphysical or other abstract principles." **(8:)** "creation of mental images ... of gods and goddesses who may be worshipped internally." **(11:)** "contact -- often performed only mentally -- with socially disapproved persons or entities such as meat, wine, low-caste women or bodily excretions". Such contact should open the way to a better understanding of the double-sided nature of (human) existence.

There are attempts in Indology to find a new description of Tantrism. GÜNTHER has called Tantrism "probably one of the haziest notions and misconceptions the Western mind has evolved" (quotation by PADOUX 273), and FILLIOZAT considered Tantrism "only the ritualistic technical aspect of religion, be it Saiva, Vaisnava, Buddhist or Jain ..." (quotation by PADOUX 273). PADOUX objects: to some extent Tantrism "does also exist in itself" (273). "... one can admit Tantrism as a category of its own and define it generally as a practical path to supernatural powers and to liberation, consisting in the use of specific practices and techniques

-- ritual, bodily, mental -- that are always associated with a particular doctrine." (PADOUX 273).

Well-known, but not to be described here, is the Tantric antithesis of "left" and "right." This is taken in the sense of "indecent" and "decent:" GOUDRIAAN In (Goudriaan 1979: 44-45). But the definite place of the function of left-and-right in Tantrism and Shaktism does not seem to be certain.

'Tantra' means within Tantrism 'manual'. Elements of Tantrism are earlier than the middle of the first millennium A.D. (§ 12.2). Shaktism is later (§ 12.2). While Tantrism in general is certainly old, we do not know when exactly the unorthodox (liberal) attitude towards *women* in Tantrism (Shakta-Tantrism) started.

The question of the distinction between **Tantrism** and **Shaktism** is an old problem. T.GOUDRIAAN quotes the expression "two intersecting but not coinciding circles:" T.G. In (Goudriaan 1979: 6). He characterizes Shaktism "as the worship of Sakti ..., i.e. the universal and all-embracing dynamis which manifests itself in human experience as a female divinity. To this should be added that inseparably connected with her is an inactive male partner [Shiva ...] as whose power of action and movement the Sakti functions" (In 7). *Shakti* is originally "strength", and outside Shaktism proper *shakti* is also used for the consort of a particular god or for goddesses in general. -- T.GOUDRIAAN finally defines Shaktism as "a world view oriented towards the Sakti" (dynamis), but Tantrism as "a conglomerate of ritual and yogic practices and presuppositions:" T.G. In (Goudriaan 1979: 7).

The word 'Shaktism' is thus similar to terms like 'Shaivism' or 'Vaishnavism', in other words it is 'religion' or a religious movement. On the other hand, 'Tantrism' cannot be categorized in the expected manner.

We pass to a quasi-philosophical definition of **Shaktism** by KHANNA: "From the minute atom to the galaxy, everything has an androgynous kernel and is an amalgam of the two. Shiva, the male principle, is the static or inert principle, and Shakti is the dynamic aspect of creation." ... "Shiva devoid of energy is unable to accomplish anything but he is empowered ... when he is united with his Shakti." ... "Several sources reiterate that the power and strength of the holy trinity [trinity of Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva] come from the goddess alone. Before her presence, the might of the male deities is humbled." (KHANNA 113) "All women, irrespective of their caste, creed, age, status, or personal accomplishment, are regarded as the physical incarnation of Shakti, the divine cosmic energy, the Great Goddess." (KHANNA 114) We add a praise of woman: "Woman is the creator of the universe, The universe is her form. Woman is the foundation of the world ... In woman is the form of all things, of all that lives and moves in the world. There is no jewel rarer than woman, -- There is not, nor has been, nor will be." (115)

KHANNA describes Tantric ritual (Shakta-Tantra ritual) in detail. "On innumerable occasions, the physical woman is adored as a goddess (119)." Worship in Tantrism has, according to KHANNA, three important forms (119):

The first form is the *puja* of a premenstrual girl, temporarily viewed as a goddess ("as a powerful mother goddess"). This takes place "on certain auspicious days dedicated to the goddess." Seated, the girl is "offered five or sixteen ritual offerings. After the worship, she gets

up and blesses the devotee who has performed the ceremony." -- The second form concerns married and unmarried women. " ... married and unmarried women are worshipped by their husbands or Sakta devotees as living incarnations of Tripurasundari or Lalita [*a goddess if not the goddess*]." After the image of the goddess has been honoured, the power of the goddess is visualized as symbolically transferred to the women. ..." The women incarnated then receive ceremonial worship, are empowered by the goddess, and then, in that mental state, bless the worshipper." -- The third form in KHANNA's triplet consists in the offerings, made to the goddess (woman), offerings of the five *Ma-karas*: wine (*Mada*), meat (*Mamsa*), fish (*Matsya*), parched grain (designated as *Mudra*) and sex (*Maithuna*). *Mudra*, in other contexts 'gesture', stands in the present context for grain. *Maithuna* is ritualized *or* real. *Ma-kara* designates in grammar the letter '*ma*' (*m*). "In this [third] ritual, the physical woman is looked on as the human incarnation [embodiment in '3' more powerful than embodiment in '1' and '2?'] of the goddess on the earthly plane." -- More direct is GUPTA (Goudriaan 1979: 155): "He [the Tantric] drains the cup [of alcohol] and does not drink any more and then, when she has finished her meal [probably meat or fish] and is rested, he has sexual intercourse with her."

KHANNA describes the three ritual procedures as "an attempt to break the impervious boundaries set by caste-ridden hierarchies." (119).

More general is the following observation: "What is noteworthy in these texts is that here, for the first time in Hindu religious history, an attempt is made to actualize the divinity of women on the social plane and thus introduce an ethos of equality and reverence for them." (KHANNA 116) But T.GOUDRIAAN feels that "Returned into ordinary life, no high-caste Tantric would think of breaking the social taboos:" T.G. In (Goudriaan 1979: 32). And G.FLOOD says "Because women are filled with sakti in tantric ideology, they are considered to be more powerful than men, yet this power is generally not reflected in social realities where women have remained subordinate." (FLOOD 191) Also: "It is one thing [for a Brahman] to perform erotic worship with a low-caste woman in a ritual setting, but quite another to interact with her outside that context." (FLOOD 192) One is tempted to say that Tantrism/Shaktism was socially ineffective. The position of women was possibly stronger in Tantric Buddhism than in Tantric Hinduism (FLOOD 296, footnote 29).

An important point is the Tantric "reversal" of the attitude towards the female body which is sacred: "Thus, hair and menstrual flow, traditionally conceived to be impure, unclean, and polluting, are said to be pure, clean, and energy bestowing" (KHANNA 116). Another Tantric text declares: "The menstruation of women emanates from her body, How can it be impure?" (KHANNA 118). To demonstrate the force of the reversal, KHANNA quotes from a pre-epic Brahmanical law-book the *orthodox*, anti-woman description of the menstruating woman: "(During that period) [menstruation] she shall not apply collyrium to her eyes, nor anoint [her body], nor bathe in water; she shall sleep on the ground; she shall not sleep in the day-time, not touch the fire [?], not make a rope [?], nor clean her teeth ... " (118).

Another form of reversal concerns the teacher-disciple relation (120-121). "The Tantras state several times that women have the authority to impart initiation ... Initiation given by a woman is considered to be more efficacious than initiation given by a man" Tantric women may become gurus, sometimes gurus of a high spiritual calibre. There are female *gurus*/teachers in non-Tantric Hinduism as well, but in Tantrism the rank of female teachers is higher.

In Tantrism, the misogynistic idiom, so well-known from Brahmanical texts, is replaced by exuberant praise of women and almost by deification: "One [a man ...] should not beat a woman even with a flower, even if she is guilty of a hundred misdeeds, one should not mind the faults of women, and should make known only their good points." (115)

Bibliography. LAUF; Goudriaan 1979 and 1981; KHANNA. -- Further literature: GLASENAPP 75: Tantric identification with a deity (Buddhist Tantrism). -- GONDA II 26-52: Tantrism und Shaktism (26-28: Definition of Tantrism; 39-40: Definition of Shaktism). -- PADOUX: Tantrism in general (272-274), Hindu Tantrism (274-280). -- § 12.2 (Tantrism).

Opinions: KAPADIA 143-144: "... Tantricism, which was slowly evolving into a powerful force contributing to the looseness of the sex morals." WALKER 484, 482-486: "Tantrism contains the loftiest philosophical speculation, side by side with the grossest obscenities; the most rarified [sic] metaphysics with the wildest superstition. ... its ritual is debased by the most reprehensible practices, ...". LAUF (Motto): "The Indian Tantras as practical guides to the spiritual totality of man."

Pantheon: Hindu Tantrism alone (not to speak of Buddhist Tantrism) offers an endless number of gods and goddesses, mostly arranged in groups (e.g. the ten Mahavidyas, the nine Durgas, the deities of the six *chakras*, the deities of the alphabet). T.GOUDRIAAN mentions no less than 14 lists: T.G. In (Goudriaan 1979: 64-66). However, in Hindu Tantrism the *importance* of lists is limited. -- The ten *Mahavidyas* are: Kali, Tara, Shodashi, Bhuvaneshvari, Bhairavi, Chinnamasta, Dhumavati, Bagala, Matangi, Kamala. See MUKHERJEE and MELZER 44-45 (Chamunda et aliae). The specific Tantra pantheon is not really reflected in art.

Sexualism: Erotic art of Hindu temples includes "divine women," "amorous couples," "coital scenes," and figures displaying *linga* and *yoni* (male and female sex-organs). But the sculptures do not reflect *Tantrism*, and there is also no connection with Vedic ritual (occasionally sexual) and with the Kama Shastra. Eroticism is not prominent in the contemporary or earlier Puranas (where it might be expected). Finally, the "sexual element" of sculpture is not equally pronounced in all parts of India. TH. DONALDSON mentions *beauty* and *protection* (of the temple) as the motifs behind the sexual trend in art (p.97), but that is no explanation. The artists have produced their own world, in eroticism as elsewhere. See also § 10.2.

§ 13.5. Nuns and saint singers in Hinduism

Nuns are rare in Hinduism although there have possibly been fluctuations in their number in the course of time. The comparison with Jainism is useful. "While female renunciators predominate in Jainism, they are a marginal and small minority in Hinduism." (FOHR 159). In her study of Jaina nuns, S.E.FOHR has emphasized time and again the strict rules on chastity to be observed by Jaina nuns: The *Jaina* nuns are protected against their own impulses, and contacts between nuns and male persons (monks in particular) are subject to rigid restrictions.

The estimation in Hindu society is different. "... many Hindus also believe that women are overly sexual. There is a fear that the [female] renouncer life, unrestrained by the limits of marriage, would unleash their supposedly overwhelming sexual urges." (FOHR 159) It is assumed that women are not well-protected outside the family (no "perpetual tutelage" in Hindu *ashramas*), apart from the orthodox Hindu tradition that women must marry, must have

children, must serve their husbands. LESLIE (320-321) accentuates the Hindu image of the dangerous female nature which can only be kept under control in the family (Tryambaka, see LESLIE). The alleged unusual sexual passion of women (even of old women) is perhaps an element of pan-Hindu or Pan-Indian pseudo-psychology.

We are here not concerned with female renouncers in general but with female saint-singers who had genuine religious experiences and whose life *is* religion. The religion is *bhakti* (devotion). A.K.RAMANUJAN analyses on pp.316-324 legendary (to some extent historical?) biographies of women saints in different parts of India (see 365-366, footnote 5).

In the case of women saints, RAMANUJAN details life stories in the form of a chart. "At each stage different saints follow different options (e.g. either marrying a mortal *or* refusing to do so); each choice leads to further choices." (319). The lives of the saints are mainly legendary, see the following specimens of alternatives I-IV (selection on p.318; running text on pp.320-321):

"Her god is her first love; she undergoes no conversion; // will marry no mortal; *or* (*alternative skipped*) // attains her god *or* escapes marriage// ["attains her god" continued:] by becoming a courtesan and getting her god as her lover ... *or* through love and sacrifice ... // ["through love" continued:] offering Him life or limb in worship (Rekavve) ["escapes marriage" continued"] by obstinately refusing to marry even Shiva in disguise (Goggavve) ... *or* by being transformed into an unmarriageable [being] // male (Tilakavve) ... *or* old woman (Avvai) ...

Summaries: "She [the later woman saint] may attain god by a single-minded love, as Antal [Tamil] does, or win him by extreme forms of worship and sacrifice, as does Rekavve [Kanarese] ... who uses a piece of her own flesh to complete the Lord's garland because she cannot find a red flower. Or she may obtain her divine lover as a courtesan: this is how Virasangavve (?) manages to win Shiva. Another possibility is to become transformed into an unmarriageable old woman, like Avvai, or into a male by God's grace, as Tilakavve does." (320).

Further summaries. [Denial of widowhood:] "Mira [Rajasthan] refuses *suttee*; Gauri and Venkamma refuse to shave their heads. It is as if they cannot be truly widowed, being married to God." (320-321). -- [Rebuking men for their sexual advances:] "Karaikkalammai [Tamil] turns into a skeleton before a lust-infatuated male. Mahadevi throws away her clothes and with them the investment in society and the division between male and female that differential clothing signifies; abandoning modesty, she walks naked, covered only by her tresses. Some of her most poignant poems are in defense of her nudity." (321).

Reversals: There is a fundamental difference between the male and the female saint. "The males take on female personae, they are feminine, yearning, passive toward a male god. Before God all men are women. But no female saint ... takes on a male persona. It is as if, being already female, she has no need to change anything to turn toward God." RAMANUJAN 324.

"... [1] men wish to renounce their masculinity and to become as women; [2] upper-caste males wish to renounce pride, privilege, and wealth, seek dishonour and self-abasement, and

learn from the untouchable devotee." (RAMANUJAN 316). Refer for "pride" (general) to § 12.6.

§ 14. Widow Burning in Bali

The island of Bali is to this day culturally a Hindu territory (the remaining part of Indonesia being now Muslim). For the Balinese widow burning we have to rely on WEINBERGER and FISCH. The latter also informs us about the history of the custom (Bali and Java, widow burning since the 6th c.; FISCH 195) and about the available sources and publications (FISCH 193-196).

Widow burning was stepwise prohibited in Bali by the Dutch government, and this policy came to an end in 1904. The last case with traditional publicity (two widows of a local ruler) was in 1903. After the prohibition the custom came gradually to an end (FISCH 211-212).

WEINBERGER 1-13, FISCH 193-212: The two descriptions (W. and F.) are mainly based on an extensive letter by PIERRE DUBOIS (1830). See WEINBERGER 1-2, 221; and FISCH 195, footnote 12. FISCH has used DUBOIS' manuscript, but also mentions VAN DER KRAAN. Our sources are not adequate. We hope the reader will excuse the loose form of the following text.

The cremation of the widow(s) followed not immediately after the death of the ruler (or princely husband in general) but sometimes months or years later.

One had to wait for an auspicious day to be fixed by the Brahmans. The self-immolation was voluntary, and when the women faced instant death they were generally (though not always) composed: "perfect serenity, ecstatic anticipation." The widows generally belonged to the upper classes (royal families). Husband and wives were burned in separate fires (FISCH 200, footnote 31).

The "architecture" of the cremation ground deserves special attention. A place in the capital is reserved for cremations (WEINBERGER 2). Each woman had her own contrivance: a moveable pyramidal tower with a ladder (up to four hundred porters: WEINBERGER 5). Further structures: the so-called bridge and a pavilion-cum-pit. The connection between "bridge" and "pavilion-cum-pit" is not clear.

Two women (the widow and an escort) stand "atop its upper storey" as the tower moves (the beginning). At its destination the two women are carried "down the ladder," each by two men. The men then carry the two women "up the bridge" [she will jump ... *infra*]. The bridge (ramp?) is the contrivance from which the widow jumps into the fire. WEINBERGER 4-5 (3-9). FISCH 196-197; Fig.7 (full scenario drawn but drawing not clear).

The cremation has drawn an enormous crowd [DUBOIS], and the setting of the widow burning is an impressive architectural scenario ("apparatus of death"). The cremation of the women takes place after the cremation and funeral of the king, a ritual which can be skipped over. There are generally several women who follow the deceased ruler (widows and female slaves), seven women in the case witnessed by DUBOIS. The end of life is by fire ("*suttee*") or, rarer, by the kris.

In the first case, the woman has to jump from the "bridge" into the flames. It is on the bridge that the final drama takes place. It is also on the bridge that the *manko* (escort, WEINBERGER 8, FISCH 196) checks the medical condition of the woman: If she is menstruating (impure), she is restored to life (WEINBERGER 8). Postponement is no alternative. Standing on the bridge and before its end, the widow (the determined widow) loosens her hair, begins to dance as in a trance, afflicts with a kris wounds to her arm and shoulder, applies with the weapon some blood to her forehead (as a demonstration of strength), starts singing together with those around her, and finally leaps into the burning pit. WEINBERGER 8-9, FISCH 197.

If the widow is unable to commit herself to her fate, she is thrown into the flames by her father or by her brother (FISCH 197). Remarkable was the case of a brother who had been appointed to kill his sister. He asked his sister whether she was prepared to die, and the sister nodded. He then begged her pardon, pressed the kris into her left breast, threw the kris away and fled. The widow was still living and standing; one of the nobles present completed the gruesome work (FISCH 206).

As we have seen, the Balinese *suttee* is an upper class custom (FISCH 198), and this is the *sine qua non* for the magnificent arrangement, for the availability of several women (the rule), and for a smooth settlement. The concept is, clearly, different from the often crude and hasty procedure in India (general tendency, very necessary in the case of unreliable women). There is in Bali no parallel to the Indian widow burning in the case of non-Kshatriyas (Brahmans and further castes). It would appear that now and then in Bali widows from lower castes (below the level of nobility) committed suicide. But this was probably rare. The average widow combined moral strength with proper education and with good breeding (compare the Rajput women). Readiness towards self-immolation ran only or primarily through the blood of the nobility.

The lapse of time between death and cremation theoretically facilitated a change of mind. But one feels that the willingness to die did not crumble among the noble ladies when the date was postponed. Change of mind was tolerated if it did not come at the last moment. Involuntary death was the consequence.

It is possible that the number of burned widows was greater before the 19th century than during and after DUBOIS, and that the liberality as indicated by the latter (change of mind no problem) was a more recent development. FISCH 201-204 (201-209). Perhaps the time-span (delay of cremation) was shorter in the past and the psychological pressure greater.

As in India, the widows in Bali expected heavenly bliss and union with the husband (or a good rebirth on earth). It seems that the expectation of heavenly bliss was a fairly concrete motivation in a number of cases (FISCH 293-294). However, the Balinese upper-class widows also expected temporal glory and material gain for their *families* (205). The situation in India (motivation by promises) was certainly similar, but the promises were less ostentatious, and apart from a few exceptions the rite did not have much glamour. -- J.FISCH doubts whether "victims and actors really believed in the promises concerning the next world." (205) The question of religious scepticism has probably not been mentioned in the *suttee* debate (Indian *suttee*).

Some differences between Bali and India are worth noting. In Bali, the widow could choose between fire and kris; there were separate pyres (pits) for the husband and the widow(s); prior to the cremation, the body of the deceased was kept in a coffin; at times embalmed and preserved bodies were kept up to desiccation, i.e. for months and years (WEINBERGER 3). As in the royal funerals of India there were two categories of women for cremation: royal widows and female slaves (concubines). Apparently the distinction was in Bali more accentuated..

In India, the royal *suttees* received less attention than in Bali. At least we have in the case of India not many detailed descriptions of great *suttees*. But see DATTA Sa 156-162: “Suttee among the Sikhs” (§ 12.2).

§ 15. Glossary

Chronological suggestions are underlined. See also WITZEL 125-126 (early history). -- The definitions of many terms (*artha, chakra ...*) are adjusted to the exigences of the present study.

Artha Shastra Knowledge of the practical arts (*artha*), in particular name of a specific work belonging to this field: Kautilya's Artha Shastra. Authorship disputed. Subjects: civil law, policy, warfare, administration etc. The A.S. is famous as the only existing work in its genre. It is related to the Dharma Shastra tradition and is now dated in the 3rd/4th centuries A.D. There is in the A.S. a special chapter on the duties of the Superintendent of Courtesans.

Asana Particular mode of sitting/standing; *yoga* exercise. GONDA I 311, 339.

Asceticism Different categories and forms: *brahmacharins* (§ 3: all to become twice-born), *ashramas* (stages 1-3-4, § 3), widows etc. (§ 12.3 [end], LESLIE 299), “forest hermits” (Manu 6.1-85). -- There is an antagonism between a Vedic or orthodox strand (marriage, family, asceticism-in-old-age) and a heterodox strand (no marriage, no son, life-long asceticism). -- ALTEKAR 350 etc. (orthodox opposition against asceticism).

Ashramas Four stages of life. See § 3 (and § 12.1 for old age). -- Second meaning: abode of ascetics in a grove.

Avatara God Vishnu descends repeatedly in embodied form (human, animal) into the world. Main tradition: ten descents or *avatars*. In one way or another Vishnu restores order in the world. -- § 13.3: *avatara* of a goddess.

Bana See Gupta Period.

Bhadralok(g) "Good people", Sanskrit. "The urbanized upper middle class in Bengal" (HAWLEY 187). "Elite, 'respectable' class" (L.MANI Co: 43, 225).

Bhakti Devotional emotion (theistic orientation), “Bhakti movement”.

Brahmana A class of Vedic texts, explaining the sacrifice and interpreting the universe. -- § 4 quotes from the "Aitareya Brahmana."

Chakra etc. The Tantric *chakras* (circles, centres of spiritual energy in the human body) and the Kundalini (metaphorical snake, spiritual power) are elements of the esoteric anatomy of Tantrism: "The Goddess [i.e. the supreme Tantric goddess] is also associated [is quasi-identical] with the 'coiled' goddess Kundalini, the power lying dormant at the base of the body until awakened by yoga to pierce the centres of subtle anatomy [the *chakras*] and unite with Shiva at the crown of the head." (FLOOD 186). -- Also FLOOD 98-100 (with diagram); GOUDRIAAN In (Goudriaan 1979: 7-8); GONDA II 38. The concept (Kundalini) is strange and we do not know its roots. There is no connection between the *chakras* of Tantrism and the *chakras* of mythology / iconography.

Dalits Members of tribes (e.g. Bhils in Western India).

Dharma *Dharma* in our sense includes numerous themes as known from Manu: ancestors, animals, artisans, ascetics, bath, battle, bed, begging, bird, birth ... (BROCKINGTON: Index). Other meanings of *dharma* (e.g. *dharma* in Jainism, *dharma* in Buddhism) are not relevant to our discussion. "*Dharma*" is often left untranslated (dictionary: "religion, law, virtue, duty, justice ..."). -- Dharma Shastra or Dharma Smriti: "law-book, manual on law, legal treatise". -- Dharma Sutra: (i) short manual on law, (ii) short rule on law. -- *Dharmic*: pertaining to the *dharma* (cf. *shastric*, Tantric). -- We mention occasionally OLIVELLE's subtitles (related verses of the Manu Smriti), e.g. § 9.4 (Manu 8.352-385 = 'Sexual Crimes Against Married Women').

There is a vast literature on *dharma*, and the Manu Smriti (in short: 'Manu', the *Smriti* attributed to the legendary Manu) is the main although not the exclusive authority. -- Relative chronology of the law-books: JOLLY §§ 2-9: Dharma Sutras (§§ 2-4) are before, Dharma Shastras are after Manu, and Manu is discussed by JOLLY in § 5. The whole literature is later than the Veda. -- Extent of Manu: circa 2685 verses. Date of Manu: approximately 2nd century A.D.: BROCKINGTON 486. Refer for Manu and the Mahabharata to § 11.1. Manu does not know *suttee*.

Dharma-texts are not coherent. Examples of incoherence: *pumsavana* and further prenatal rites (§ 6.1), marriage (§§ 5, 6.1 and 7.2), menstrual pollution of rivers (§ 8.4), punishment for adultery (§ 9.4), remarriage of women (§ 9.5). Refer also to JAMISON 8-9. Consecutive *dharma*-verses on a given subject are often unconnected. See BROCKINGTON 29-33 on contradiction.

Offences of *dharmic* rules are to be punished in this world or in the next. But many threats (and promises) are absurd: When victuals "are served by hand, whoever eats them becomes impure and whoever serves them will not go to heaven." LESLIE 217. See BROCKINGTON 33-36 on hyperbole. -- See also § 12.3 (a widow "should not sit in a bullock cart" etc.): apparent absurdities.

- Discourse Foucault: "... a system of statements within which the world can be known."
"... it is through discourse itself that the world is brought into being."
(ASHCROFT 70-71)
- Divorce §§ 9.2 and 9.5.
- Dowry murder Modern crime. Killing a bride because after the marriage the family of the bridegroom is not able to extract sufficient additional money from the parents of the bride. One wonders why the culprits (never unknown?) are not regularly brought to justice. -- § 7.1; SUTHERLAND 86-87; WEZLER Do; VON HINÜBER 226; FORBES 246 ("grizzly murders").
- Epics (chronology)
Refer to BROCKINGTON pp.217-225 (→ Mahabharata) and pp.431-435 (→ Ramayana) for information relevant to the deteriorating position of women, and thereby to chronology. Refer also to § 11.1.
- Great Goddess §§ 13.2 and 13.4. Great Goddess or Great Mother stands for a goddess who is the supreme power of the universe, whatever the current name (Kali etc.).
"Woman is the creator of the universe" (§ 13.4).
- Guarded/unguarded
Punishment of the adulterer is less severe when the woman is unguarded (JOLLY 128).
- Gupta period 320-500 A.D. The Gupta period saw an increased influence of the Brahmans (§ 2; VIRKUS 37). The period can be connected with new strictness in social regulations (see kalivarjya). It coincides -- chronologically -- also with the late epics, where greater strictness became unmistakable (§ 11.1). See WHEELER/BASHAM 172-173: "golden age", "Hindu renaissance".

The increase of *suttees* can be dated with the help of Gupta and post-Gupta sources. See § 12.1 for Kalidasa and for early inscriptions, and § 12.2 for Bana. All evidence taken together, it seems reasonable to ascribe a transition from rare to more frequent *satis* to pre-Gupta days or to "circa 300 A.D."
- Jataka Jatakas are stories describing the previous existences of the Buddha, animal or human, and mostly found in a collection of 547 stories, forming part of the Buddhist canon (of the 'Pali canon'). The size of the Jatakas varies considerably, the Vessantara Jataka (story of the generous Prince Vessantara and his faithful wife Maddi) being the longest: circa 786 verses ('epic structure'). The Jataka collection was finalized circa 250 B.C. (OBERLIES 1996: 300-301). A reference to Vessantara and Maddi is found in § 12.3.
- Jauhar* Collective self-immolation of Rajput women facing victorious invading armies (HAWLEY 189). From Sanskrit *jatu-griha*, a house (*griha*) made of lack (*jatu*) or other combustible material; probably originally a motif of

folktales. TURNER, entry **jatughara-*. -- Short references to *jauhar* in §§ 12.2 and 12.6. See NARASIMHAN 118-131.

Kalidasa Celebrated Sanskrit poet: § 12.1.

Kalivarjya *Kalivarjya*: “to be avoided (*varjya*) in the present, the worst (*kali-*) era”. *Kalivarjya* rules are presented, in theory, as the inevitable consequence of an alleged moral deterioration. The rules begin in the fourth century A.D. (suggested in KANE Ka). Dangerous or potentially dangerous customs (customs no longer in agreement with the *dharma*) were abolished and new, safer customs introduced.

Abolished customs: § 2 (mixture of *varnas*); § 5 (delayed marriage of girls); § 6.2 (custom of *putrikas*); § 6.3 (most forms of adoption); § 9.1 (*niyoga*); § 9.5 (remarriage of widowed women including remarriage of widowed girls). → Gupta period..

The precise connection between socio-religious and political changes is not known. Increased widow burning was contemporary with the introduction of *kalivarjya* rules (remarriage condemned). Refer for the *kalivarjya* concept to § 2 (history); to JOLLY 44 (*kalivarjya* in general) and to KANE Ka: p.218, list of 43 *kalivarjya* cases. The bad situation before the abolition of the *kalivarjya* customs is postulated but not described.

Kama Sutra Manual of erotics, based in a general manner on the earlier → Artha Shastra. The Kama Sutra was composed by Vatsyayana (who used earlier sources in the field of erotics) in the 4th/5th centuries or later. There exists a commentary by Yashodhara. -- The erotic milieu was dominated by *nagarakas* (“men-about-town”), *ganikas* (courtesans) and *goshthis* (“The *goshthi* with its well organized membership ...”). -- M.CHANDRA's book on courtesans is an introduction into the erotic element of Indian literature.

Khajuraho Well-known site with numerous temples, Hindu and Jaina, in Madhya Pradesh; 11th/12th centuries (DEVA 29-31). Impressive architecture, Hindu temples with conspicuous erotic sculptures. §§ 10.2 and 13.4.

Kshetra The wife is the field (*kshetra*), the husband is the owner of the wife (*kshetrin*). The son belongs to the person who owns the field (the legal father) or to the begetter. The status of the begetter is not clear. (Compare Latin: *pater semper incertus*.) Manu 9.32. But 9.52: “... the womb is mightier than the seed.” -- §§ 9.1 and 9.3; SUTHERLAND 82-83; KANE 599-601; OLIVELLE 324 (Manu 9.32: 'controversy').

Kulinism § 12.4.

Kundalini See *chakra*.

Mahabharata	The longer of the two great Sanskrit epics (“nearly 75.000 verses”). Apart from other subjects, the epic describes, with great prolixity, the war between the related Kaurava and Pandava families: King Duryodhana versus King Yudhishtira (Krishna is on the side of Y.). In a hypothetical earlier version sympathies of the author were probably with the Kauravas. § 11. See also → Epics (and → Ramayana).
Mahishasuramardini	Durga M. is the goddess who kills/crushes (<i>mardini</i>) the buffalo-demon (<i>Mahisha-asura</i>). The myth is first related in the Devi Mahatmya (7th c.?) which forms part of the Markandeya Purana. The goddess who kills the buffalo-demon has been represented in Indian sculptural art since early times (2nd century A.D. or earlier) and in different forms (north-Indian and south-Indian versions). STIETENCROON (Devi Mahatmya and later versions) et alii. § 13.3.
<i>Mantra</i>	§ 13.4.
Manu	See <i>dharma</i> .
Misogyny	Misogyny is connected with the well-known concept of the wicked nature of women. § 8.7.
<i>Mudra</i>	§ 13.4.
<i>Nagnika</i>	(Vague:) Naked (small) girl; girl shortly before menarche; girl who will soon be marriageable. <i>A-nagnika</i> : "not naked". § 5. THIEME 435-445.
Patriarchy	" ... a form of social organization in which a male (the <i>patriarch</i>) acts as head of the family/household, holding power over females and children (e.g. in Roman society)." COLLINS 457
Pitris	Ancestors (inhabitants of the next world). §§ 4-5.
PB	<i>proshita-bhartrika</i> . Wife whose husband has gone abroad. § 9.5.
<i>Puja</i>	In Hinduism <i>puja</i> is mainly worship of an anthropomorphic icon (of a <i>murti</i>), possibly combined with bathing, dressing and feeding of the deity (e.g. of Jagannath in Puri). There is also <i>puja</i> of aniconic objects. MICHAELS 241-244.
Punarbhū	Remarried woman. Meaning of the term not uniform. See § 9.5.
Purana	The Puranas form a vast aggregate of religious compendia (mythology, ritual etc.). The P.-literature starts in the <u>4th century A.D.</u> , i.e. close to the late epics (MERTEN 110-111) and extends over 750-1000 years. There are extreme differences in the dating of individual Puranas (ROCHER 147-148). The Mahabhagavata Purana (with Sati-cycle) was written in the 10th to 11th

centuries (ROCHER 190). The Mahatmyas (e.g. Devi Mahatmya) are related to the Puranas, but generally later. The sizes of the Puranas vary considerably: e.g. Vayu Purana circa 11 000 verses, Padma Purana circa 45-48 000 verses. The connection between title and content is loose (Brahma Purana not devoted to Brahma).

Rajas 'Atmosphere, dust, impurity, menstrual discharge.' A *rajasvala* is a menstruating woman. *Rajas* is also a philosophical term (one of the three cosmic properties).

Ramayana The R. is the shorter of the two great Sanskrit epics ("a little under 20.000 verses"). It is ascribed to the poet Valmiki, and it describes Rama's long search for his wife Sita who has been abducted by the demon Ravana and is a captive in Ravana's residence Lanka. After many incidents Ravana is killed and Sita liberated. The Ramayana is clearly the product of gradual growth. In the later stages Rama is identified with the God Vishnu (Rama as an Avatara of Vishnu). §§ 8.5 and 11. See also Epics (and Mahabharata).

Randa Sanskrit/Hindi: whore and widow. Gujarati: *randira*: widow, whore. *rand* is often used for widow as an insult and with the connotation of whore. TURNER: entry **ratta*-'defective.' S.NARASIMHAN mentions on p.40 derogatory words for widow with the second meaning "prostitute" (Kannada, Tamil, Telugu, Marathi). See also § 12.5 ("verbal abuses").

Reversal § 13.4.

Rigveda See Veda.

Ritual In many cases there exists a reduced ritual side by side with the full ritual. In some cases we do not know whether there was a ritual at all.

Ritual or no ritual?

Second and further marriages by men (supersession etc.): any ritual? Ritual as supplement to Gandharva marriage (THIEME 463-464). *Niyoga* union has a reduced marriage ritual or no ritual? § 9.1. WINTERNITZ 94: remarriage of a virgin widow *with* ritual, remarriage of other widows *without* ritual.

Traditional India (infra): S.STEVENSON 130 (rites of second marriage). CHEN Ru 121-123 (death ceremonies); CHEN Ru 97 (secondary marriage slightly inferior); CHEN Ru 14, footnote 3 (child marriage, two rituals, § 5).

Were there any provisions (law, ritual) for intercaste or inter-*varna* marriages, for hypergamous and hypogamous marriages? What happened when a king, or a Kulin Brahman (§ 12.4), married his second, third wife? What happened in all these cases to the first wife (to the previous wives)? What was the procedure when a new concubine was included into the (royal) harem?

Ritual for the appointment of a *putrika* (§ 6.2, description available?). Ritual for the adoption of a son (Jolly 74-75; S.STEVENSON 131-134). Death of a widow (THARU I 362, no ritual). Last rites for a woman who is not a widow?

When a *suttee* was organized, a clear decision of the widow to follow her husband was required (the "resolution"). But the resolution was obviously not formalized (no ritual).

Was the ritual of Shudras, of outcastes and of non-Aryan tribes partially preserved? Was the ritual of these groups influenced by Aryan institutions?

- Sacrifice See § 8.3. There is a dichotomy of great (*shrauta*) and domestic (*grihya*) sacrifices -- without clear separation. HILLEBRANDT § 6, p.41, §§ 58, 62. GONDA I 107. The Horse Sacrifice is *shrauta*, looking after the domestic fire is *grihya*.
- Sanskrit The language of our texts is Sanskrit (Old-Indian); there is only one reference to a Pali or Middle-Indian text: § 12.1 (Vessantara).
- Sanskritization Emulating the upper castes, e.g. by "restricting the freedom of movement for women" (CHEN Ru 103 and 114, footnote 63) or by introducing *suttee*.
- Sati* In Sanskrit, *sati* (the person) was used in the general sense of "virtuous, devoted wife"). We use *sati* for the widow entering the funeral pyre and English *suttee* for the act of widow burning; English *suttee* stands for both. *Sati* (large -s) is the name of a goddess.
- Sati (goddess) See Sati-cycle.
- Sati-cycle What we call "Sati-cycle" consists of two parts. The first part (including the death of the Goddess Sati) is found in different forms in different Puranas. Our short abstract (§ 13.3) is based on MERTENS 84-86 (etc.). -- *Sati* the widow, and *suttee* the act, cannot be derived from the magic death of the Goddess Satī (Durga), who is no (true) widow, as follows from the Brahma-Purana and from other sources. It was probably the other way round (myth derived from the custom). § 13.3. MERTENS 100-101.
- The second part of the Sati-cycle (Shiva's dance with Sati), also our abstract, is based on another text (MERTENS 330-342). -- See DEHEJIA 51, Fig.6 (17th/18th century bronze), Shiva and Sati. -- § 13.3.
- Sati*-stones Stelae for women who have committed *suttee* (Tamil name *mastikal*). Besides, there are stelae for men who have been killed in battle or have committed ritualistic suicide or have followed their king in death (Tamil name *virakkal*, hero-stones). WEINBERGER, pp.13 et passim, figs.11-18; SONTHEIMER He 277-281. -- § 12.2.

- Shakti Great goddess of Shaktism. -- Shakta: adherent of Shakti, follower of Shaktism. § 13.4.
- Shankaracharya One of the religious heads of the Hindu community.
- Shastra* See *dharma*.
- Smriti* See *dharma*.
- Soma According to a certain tradition women have prenatal contact with Gods: Soma, Gandharva and Agni. See § 8.4.
- Sonship Forms of sonship: § 3.
- Statistics WINTERNITZ 87 (widows in 1901); DATTA Sa 278 (*suttees*, “Statistical information”); NANDY (opinion poll 1987; § 12.4); FORBES 181 (prostitution in Calcutta and Bombay); FORBES 246 (dowry deaths); NARASIMHAN 49 (dowry deaths); CHEN In 19 (proportion of widows); CHEN In 28-29 (percentage of widows in rural India); CHEN In 30-31 (mortality of widows); CHEN In 32 (residence of widows); CHEN Ru 51 (*suttees* in Bengal; § 12.2); CHEN Ru 107 (remarriage; § 12.5); NARASIMHAN 54 (widows in Varanasi and Brindavan); SYED To 64-65 (abortion and female infanticide); SYED To 100-101 (rape and prostitution); NARASIMHAN 50 (rape and prostitution); NARASIMHAN 56 (illiteracy in Rajasthan); FISCH 483-495 (*suttees*, tabulation).
- Sutra* See *dharma*.
- Suttee* See *Sati*.
- Tonsure Tonsure of widows: § 12.3.
- Traditional India India as rooted in the undefined past, but continuing (more or less attenuated) to our days, especially in rural areas. § 1. The term “traditional India” is practical, hardly avoidable.
- Tryambaka Author of the *Stri-Dharma Paddhati* (18th c.), a manual on *stri-dharma*, the *dharma* for women (*stri* = woman). The identity of the author (Tr.) is not absolutely certain. In contrast to other Dharma Shastras, the manual does not merely contain a section on *stri-dharma* but is devoted to *stri-dharma* alone. LESLIE: 3-4 (Tryambaka, the author), 10-13 (historical information about Tryambaka). Refer for *stri-svabhava* (wicked nature of women) and *stri-dharma* (role model of the wife) to LESLIE 320.
- Upanayana* § 3.

- Vaishnavism** Hinduism with emphasis on Vishnu is called “Vaishnavism”. An adherent of Vishnu is a “Vaishnava”. -- See FLOOD 135-138, the Shri Vaishnava tradition, Tamilnadu, Ramanuja (11th/12th c.). FLOOD 138-141, Gaudiya Vaishnavism, Bengal, Chaitanya (1486-1533). SOGANI 14 (“eroticism of Vaishnava worship”). -- § 12.2 supra.
- Varga** Three (four) stages of life: § 3.
- Varna** Formerly translated by 'caste'. See § 3. There were four *varnas*, later on four *varnas* plus outcastes (as 'number five', but outside the quadruple system). "Caste" is now merely the modern designation for India's numerous groups, e.g. Karimpur: castes of *Brahmans* ('priests'), of *Sunars* (goldsmiths), of *Dhobis* (launderers), twenty-six groups in all (WADLEY 104-105). Brahmans alone still exist as a group (many subdivisions); they are partly descendants of the old Brahmans.
- Veda** The earliest Indian literature. Vedic works are mostly religious (invocations, descriptions of sacrifices, mythology). GONDA I 106-109, 368-369. The earliest Vedic work is the Rigveda (1200-1000 B.C.), one out of four famous 'collections'. Further Vedic literature (middle Vedic, late Vedic) lasted roughly speaking from 1000 to 500 B.C. WITZEL 24-25.
- The Veda literature is followed by the *dharma* literature. "The fundamental rules of law and their spiritual supports are available in texts which are usually dated between 500 B.C. and A.D. 200." (SYED To 39, quoting DERRETT).
- Virgin** The bride must be a virgin: § 9.3. See also §§ 5 and 8.4, and THIEME 427-428 (terminology).
- Witwenelend** Misery of widowhood. As mentioned in § 1, the German term (used by us repeatedly) was coined by M.WINTERNITZ. Refer for W.'s detailed description to § 12.3. No Indian term for W. has come to stay (Marathi/Hindi neologism: *Hindu vidhvanchi dukhit sthiti* "The plight of Hindu widows", THARU I 358). Sarcasm: “cold sati” (MAJOR 229). -- "Previous initiatives aimed at improving their [the widows'] lives have achieved little and their continuing plight makes a government initiative sorely needed. ... Many widows are dumped by their relatives in religious towns like Vrindavan in northern India." Renuka CHOWDHURI, Minister of State, Aid plan 2007.

§ 16. General Bibliography

§§ 16-17: German quotations have been translated into English.
All underlinings in the text are ours

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