

Names of Women

We have already discussed the names of queens in another context. Here we confine ourselves to other feminine names.

1. *Dāmasvāminī* (No. 55, LL. 3-4) :

She is said to have raised a pillar in the memory of her dead parents at Rājghāṭ in Vārāṇasī.

The first part of the name, *Dāman*, means a 'rope' or 'girdle'¹ (originally 'bond', from $\sqrt{dā}$ 'to bind'). But the Amarakośa gives a better explanation which takes us nearer to the original meaning. It explains '*Dāman*' as '*Sandānam*', i.e., a rope tethered to a cow at the time of milking it.² The second part of the name is '*svāminī*' which means 'a proprietress, mistress' or owner of (gen., loc. or comp.).³

The parents might have given her this name out of affection as she was a helping hand in tethering the rope to the cow while milking it.⁴ The name indicates affection by the parents.

2. *Devakī* (No. 13, L. 13) :

The reference comes in the passage which describes how Skandagupta returned victorious to his mother just as Lord Kṛṣṇa went to Devakī after killing his enemy.⁵ Sewell suggests that the name of Skandagupta's mother was Devakī and he has been followed by some other scholars. According to D.C. Sircar the simile may further suggest that some maternal uncle of Skandagupta actually fought against him in support of his rival and that his mother, possibly not the chief queen of his father, had to experience difficulties for sometime.⁶

Devakī is a patronymic formed by adding 'ī' suffix to Devaka, literally meaning 'divine, celestial', who was her father.⁷ She was the wife of Vasudeva and the mother of Kṛṣṇa.⁸

3. *Harisvāminī* (No. 23, LL. 1, 10) :