

= Mandodari =

Mandodari ( Sanskrit : मन्दोदरी Mandodarī , lit . " soft @-@ bellied " ; ) was the queen consort of Ravana , the king of Lanka , according to the Hindu epic Ramayana . The Ramayana describes Mandodari as beautiful , pious , and righteous . She is extolled as one of the Panchakanya ( " five virgins " ) , the recital of whose names is believed to dispel sin .

Mandodari was the daughter of Mayasura , the King of the Asuras ( demons ) , and the apsara ( celestial nymphs ) Hema . Mandodari bears three sons : Meghanada ( Indrajit ) , Atikaya , and Akshayakumara . According to some Ramayana adaptations , Mandodari is also the mother of Rama 's wife Sita , who is infamously kidnapped by Ravana . Despite her husband 's faults , Mandodari loves him and advises him to follow the path of righteousness . Mandodari repeatedly advises Ravana to return Sita to Rama , but her advice falls on deaf ears . Her love and loyalty to Ravana are praised in the Ramayana .

Different versions of the Ramayana record her ill @-@ treatment at the hands of Rama 's monkey generals . Some versions say they disturb a sacrifice by Ravana , and some that they destroy her chastity , which was the last protection for Ravana 's life . Hanuman tricks her into disclosing the location of a magical arrow which Rama uses to kill Ravana . After Ravana 's death , Vibhishana ? Ravana 's younger brother who joins forces with Rama and is responsible for Ravana 's death ? marries Mandodari on the advice of Rama . [ Citation needed . Going by unauthentic versions is meaningless )

= = Birth = =

The Uttara Ramayana narrates a story about the birth of Mandodari . Mayasura ( Maya ) , the son of sage Kashyapa is married to the apsara ( heavenly nymph ) Hema . They have two sons , Mayavi and Dundubhi , but long for a daughter , so they start performing penances to seek the favour of the god Shiva .

Meanwhile , an apsara named Madhura arrives at Mount Kailash , the abode of Shiva , to pay her respects . In absence of his wife Parvati , Madhura has clandestine coitus with Shiva . When Parvati returns , she finds traces of ashes from Shiva 's body on the breasts of Madhura . Agitated , Parvati curses Madhura and sends her to live in a well as a frog for twelve years . Shiva consoles Madhura and says she will become a beautiful woman and be married to a great valorous man . After twelve years , Madhura becomes a beautiful maiden again and cries out loudly from the well . Mayasura and Hema , who are performing penance nearby , answer her call and adopt her as their daughter . They bring her up as Mandodari .

= = Marriage and later life = =

Ravana comes to the house of Mayasura and falls in love with Mandodari . Mandodari and Ravana are soon married with Vedic rites . Mandodari bears Ravana three sons : Meghanada , Atikaya , and Akshayakumara . Mandore , a town located 9 km north of Jodhpur , is believed to be the native place of Mandodari . Ravana is treated as a son @-@ in @-@ law among some local Brahmins and has a temple dedicated to him here .

Despite Ravana 's faults , Mandodari loves him and is proud of his strength . She is aware of Ravana 's weakness towards women . A righteous woman , Mandodari tries to lead Ravana to righteousness , but Ravana always ignores her advice . She advises him to not to subdue the Navagraha , the nine celestial beings that govern one 's destiny , and not to seduce Vedavati , who would be reborn as Sita and cause the destruction of Ravana .

Ravana kidnaps Sita , the wife of Rama , the exiled prince of Ayodhya , who is an incarnation of the god Vishnu . Mandodari advises Ravana to return Sita to Rama , but to no avail . Mandodari knows this lust will bring the downfall of Ravana .

Mandodari is described as a beautiful woman in Valmiki 's Ramayana . When Hanuman , the monkey messenger of Rama , comes to Lanka in search of Sita , he is stupefied by Mandodari 's

beauty when he enters Ravana 's bed chambers and mistakes Mandodari for Sita . When Hanuman finally finds Sita , he finds Ravana threatening to kill Sita unless she marries him . Ravana raises his sword to behead Sita when she refuses . Mandodari saves Sita by holding Ravana 's hand . Mandodari says that the murder of a woman is a heinous sin and thus Ravana should not kill Sita . She asks Ravana to entertain himself with his other wives and give up the idea of having Sita as his wife . Ravana spares Sita 's life , but does not give up his wish to marry Sita . Though Mandodari considers Sita inferior to her in beauty and ancestry , Mandodari acknowledges Sita 's devotion to Rama and compares her to goddesses like Sachi and Rohini .

When all attempts for a peaceful return of Sita fail , Rama declares war on Ravana 's Lanka . Before the final battle against Rama , Mandodari makes a last attempt to dissuade Ravana , but to no avail . Finally , Mandodari stands by her husband in the final battle like an obedient and faithful wife , though she also advises her son Meghanada , alias Indrajit ( " One who had conquered Indra ; the god @-@ king of heaven " ) , to not to fight Rama .

The Valmiki Ramayana narrates : When all of Ravana 's sons and warriors die , Ravana organizes a yajna ( " fire sacrifice " ) to assure his victory . Rama sends a troop of monkeys headed by Hanuman and the monkey prince Angada to destroy this yajna . The monkeys create havoc in Ravana 's palace , but Ravana continues the yajna . Angada drags Mandodari by her hair in front of Ravana . Mandodari pleads to her husband to save her and reminds him what Rama is doing for his wife . The enraged Ravana abandons the yajna and strikes Angada with his sword . With the yajna disturbed , Angada 's purpose is served and he leaves Mandodari and escapes . Mandodari again implores Ravana to surrender Sita to Rama , but he refuses . Other Ramayana adaptations present more gruesome descriptions of the incident . The Krittivasi Ramayan narrates that the monkeys dragged Mandodari .

Ravana fights the final duel with Rama . Rama fails to kill Ravana with his ordinary arrows , but finally kills with a magical arrow . While Valmiki 's Ramayana narrates that the magical arrow was given to Rama by Indra , in other versions the magical arrow is hidden in Mandodari 's bed chambers or under her bed . While Mandodari is engrossed in worshipping the goddess Parvati for Ravana 's wellbeing , Hanuman comes to her disguised as a Brahmin . After winning her confidence , he tricks her into revealing the secret location of the arrow . Hanuman seizes the arrow and gives it to Rama , leading to Ravana 's end . Mandodari appears at the death scene of Ravana in a disarrayed state and laments his death . In this battle , Mandodari loses her husband , her sons , and her kinsmen .

After the death of Ravana , Rama advises Vibhishana to take Mandodari as his wife , even though he already has a wife . A theory suggests that Ravana 's race may have had matrilineal families and thus , to restore order in the kingdom after Ravana 's death , it was necessary for Vibhishana to marry the reigning queen to get the right to rule . Another theory suggests it may be a non @-@ Aryan custom to marry the reigning queen . The marriage between Mandodari and Vibhishana is purely an " act of statesmanship " , rather than a marriage based on their " mutual sexual interference " . Mandodari may have agreed to marry Vibhishana , her younger brother @-@ in @-@ law , as this would lead the kingdom to prosperity and stability as allies of Rama 's Ayodhya , and she would continue to have a say in governance . Another reason for the marriage is as an alternative to suicide for the widowed Mandodari , which is averted by Rama .

= = Mother of Sita ? = =

Though Valmiki 's Ramayana does not record Mandodari as being the mother of Sita , some later adaptations of the Ramayana depict Mandodari as the mother of Sita or at least the cause of the latter 's birth .

The Adbhuta Ramayana narrates : Ravana used to store the blood of sages he killed in a large pot . The sage Gritsamada was practicing penance to acquire the goddess Lakshmi as his daughter . He stored milk from Darbha grass and purified it with mantras in a pot so that Lakshmi would inhabit it . Ravana poured the milk from this pot into his blood pot . Mandodari is frustrated seeing the evil deeds of Ravana , so she decides to commit suicide by drinking the contents of the blood @-@ pot ,

which is described to be more poisonous than poison . Instead of dying , Mandodari gets pregnant with the incarnation of Lakshmi due to the power of Gritsamada 's milk . Mandodari buries the foetus in Kurukshetra , where it is discovered by Janaka , who named her Sita .

The Devi Bhagavata Purana says : When Ravana wants to marry Mandodari , Maya warns him that her horoscope indicated her first @-@ born would destroy her clan and should be killed . Ignoring Maya 's advice , Ravana buries his first child by Mandodari in a casket in Janaka ? s city , where it is discovered and grew up as Sita . Jain adaptations of the Ramayana like Vasudevahindi , Uttara @-@ purana , and others also state that Sita is the daughter of Ravana and Mandodari , and is abandoned when she is prophesied to be the cause of the end of Ravana and his family .

In the Malay Seri Rama and the Indonesian @-@ Javanese Rama Keling , Ravana wants to possess Mandodari , the mother of Rama , but instead marries a pseudo @-@ Mandodari , who looks like the real one . Rama 's father has a union with this pseudo @-@ Mandodari , resulting in the birth of Sita , who is nominally Ravana 's daughter .

According to the Ananda Ramayana , king Padmaksha had a daughter named Padma - an incarnate of the goddess Lakshmi . When her marriage is organized , Rakshasas ( demons ) kill the king . The grief @-@ stricken Padma jumps into fire . Ravana discovers her body , which had turned into five jewels , in the fire and takes it to Lanka sealed in a box . Mandodari opens the box and finds Padma inside it . She advises Ravana to cast off the box containing the ill @-@ fated Padma , who led to the doom of her father . When the lid of the box is closed , Padma curses Ravana that she will return to Lanka and cause his doom . Ravana buries the box in the city of Janaka , who discovers Padma and brings her up as Sita .

= = Assessment = =

Ahalya? draupadi kunti? t?r? mandodari tath?

pañcakanya? smarenitya? mahap?taka n??ana?

Remembering ever the virgins five -Ahalya , Draupadi , Kunti , Tara and Mandodari

Destroys the greatest of sins .

Hindus remember the panchakanya - the five virgins or maidens in this daily prayer , though none of them is considered an ideal woman who could be emulated . Mandodari , with Ahalya and Tara , belong to the Ramayana , while the rest are from the Mahabharata . Among the five elements , Mandodari is equated to water , " turbulent on the surface and deep in her spiritual quest " . The writer Dhanalakshmi Ayyer says :

Her story is a reminder that the universal denigration of a group , based on the behaviour of a few , cannot cloud the greatness of the individual . Mandodari defies the stereotype of this racism . She is simple , unswerving , and self @-@ effacing , driven by the light of knowledge which gives meaning to solid materialism in an age that is shrouded by impulse , passion , and desire . She is the instrument that awakens the mind and counsels reason when irrationality becomes the core being . That she goes unheard and unheeded does not change her path . To her , the dharmic part is inward @-@ looking , while the role of the dutiful wife is the external self . Mandodari thought that her duty to her husband on issues of morals and values ended with her telling him what she thought of his actions . She neither put up any brave fight to stop him nor considered it her duty to do so .

Mandodari 's role is short in the Ramayana but very important . She is described as a pious and righteous royal lady . Compared to the rest of the panchakanya , Mukherjee considers Mandodari 's life as " less colourful and eventful " . He adds : " Mandodari seldom got prominence ... Her image lacks substance and fades quickly " , though he stresses on her love and loyalty towards her husband . Pradip Bhattacharya , author of the book Panchkanya : Women of Substance notes that " there is hardly anything special that Valmiki ( Ramayana ) has written about her ( Mandodari ) except that she warns her husband to return Sita and has enough influence to prevent his raping her . "