

शुभं भवतु कल्याणमारोग्यं धनसंपदा ।

शत्रुबुद्धिविनाशाय दीपजोतिर्नमोस्तु ते ॥

‘May we have auspicious prosperity, wealth and riches. Salutation to thee, O flame of the lamp, that the hatred of the enemy may be removed!’ The lady who places a lamp says so and proceeds to put another lamp in another place, and repeats the same there, and so on at every time she lights the lamps. If the lamp is placed by another person the lady of the house will then go and do reverence to the light in the same way. The reverence is generally done first by the matrons who put the lamps in their respective places.

शुद्धान्तवृद्धाजनः ‘the matrons of the house.’ This does not necessarily mean matron-servants, but the elderly ladies of the house. शुद्धान्त is not exactly a harem in Sanskrit but the part of the house which the ladies occupy. Even when a man has a single wife and can have but one, the apartment or apartments occupied by the wife with, it may be, her mother-in-law or mother or mother’s sister, her sister, or sister-in-law, is the शुद्धान्त or अन्तःपुर of the house. The mother, mother-in-law and aunt would be the शुद्धान्तवृद्धाजनः spoken of in this place. Purûravas too it will be remembered had only one wife. The reading शुद्धान्तवृद्धो जनः is the one met with in existing editions and is found in seven of our Mss. It would mean ‘the people grown up in the female apartments of the house’ and not ‘the old servants of the harem,’ as both Lenz and Bollensen wrongly translate. जनः is used at the end of a compound to signify the plural, but not, I think, separately from the noun to which it refers. शुद्धान्तवृद्धजनः might mean ‘the old (male) servants of the harem,’ but शुद्धान्तवृद्धो जनः can only mean ‘the people grown up in the harem.’

Both Lenz and Bollensen have misinterpreted this stanza owing apparently to their ignorance of the household life of a