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## 100 words

258

## 100 words on transgenderism in the Indian sacred text Ramayana

## Jessy Fenn

The earliest documented account of transgender people is in the *Ramayana*: a sacred Indian text written around 5 BCE. When King Rama left for his 14-year exile to the forest, he told his subjects who followed him not to mourn and asked all men and women to go back. On his return, after 14 years, he found transgender people where he had left them as he had asked only 'men and women' to return. Impressed by their devotion, he granted them the boon to bless people. To this day, transgender people in India sing, dance and offer blessings on auspicious occasions.

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