

Aryanisation

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Characters: Agastya, Vishwamitra, Poulava, Vashishtha,

Gautama, Galaba, Sunda, Tadaka, Maricha

A place in between Ganga and Yamuna. The ashram of Rishi Agastya. The evening prayers are just over. After saluting Agastya, the resident students are leaving for their nightly abodes. Agastya is on the river bank, looking forward towards a grove of trees. Poulava, Agastya's disciple, moves towards his master.

Poulava: Any problem, Master?

Agastya: *(startled)* No, nothing.

Poulava: I shouldn't ask. However, you seem to be worried over the last few days. What has happened, Master?

Agastya: *(changing the topic)* Poulava, have you seen how nature seems to be so calm, unstressed. How it is unconcerned about everything, without any pain, sorrow, suffering. No anxiety for anything, for anybody. It appears to be perfectly indifferent, wholly emerged in its own thoughts.

Poulava: Master.

Agastya: But look at us, we humans, even though we are part of nature. We are so full of anxiety and concern, steeped in apprehension, combats, clashes. When do I rise above all these and emerge myself in the quietude of nature?

Poulava: Master, you are trying to reach the goal through *Yoga* and your spiritual journey.

Agastya: Present affairs are the greatest obstacles to reach the goal, Poulava.

Poulava: Master, I can't follow.

Agastya: You are so naive, Poulava. You cannot understand the complexities of contemporary politics.

Poulava: Still –

Agastya: Do you know the guests who are visiting this *ashram* in a short while?

Poulava: Yes, Sir. I know them. I am responsible for looking after them while they are here.

Agastya: So, who are they?

Poulava: Maharshi Vashishtha, Vishwamitra, Galaba, Gautama and other great Aryan *rishis*.

Agastya: Do you know why they are coming?

Poulava: *(shakes his head)*

Agastya: They are all coming to plan how quickly the process of Aryanisation can be properly implemented.

Poulava: Master, what is Aryanisation?

Agastya: To wipe out the native inhabitants from their settlements in this Aryan land along with the distant Southern, Central and Eastern parts of India; to establish the dominance of the Aryan rishis and kings over their land and dwellings, their means of production and individual liberty – and all this in the guise of establishing ourselves as the saviours of the world, as human avatar –

Poulava: Why will the *adibasis* accept this dominance?

Agastya: The first attempt will be to tame them through religious bindings, and the propaganda of the greatness of the king and the mercy of the Gods. If it fails, war.

Poulava: To speak about the welfare of the natives and in reality to harm them – it is self-deception, master.

Agastya: My heart bleeds Poulava – witnessing the endless greed and hunger for power, my heart bleeds. How many times have I stood before tranquil nature, hoping it would balm me? However, with the blessings of Indra, the Lord of the Gods, and Prajapati Brahma, I am back to the crooked labyrinth of political power. I cannot escape from this maze, Poulava – probably none of us can escape.

Rishi Vashishtha, Vishwamitra, Galaba and Gautama enter the ashram. Poulava welcomes them. Everyone takes their respective seats. Agastya chants the swasti mantra. He remains quiet after that. Vishwamitra leaves his seat and strides excitedly. Suddenly he looks at Agastya and speaks out –

Vishwamitra: O great sage Agastya! You are wise, intelligent, foreseer of the future. If you remain silent at this hour of crisis we will all head towards greater catastrophe.

Agastya: I feel helpless, I cannot understand how we can overcome this great crisis. Please express your individual opinions.

Vishwamitra: Maharshi Agastya – I have a humble question.

Agastya: Please go ahead.

Vishwamitra: The *Kshatriyas* once needed the *Brahmans* and the *rishis* for the expansion of the Aryan empire. If the *Brahmans* and the *rishis* did not cooperate to acquire the fertile lands of India, would it have been possible for the few Aryan rulers to overpower the native inhabitants with mere force?

Vashishtha: We have sacrificed ourselves for the cause of our country. So we should avoid being proud of our deeds.

Vishwamitra: Humbleness and sacrifice – however, these qualities have earned us only disregard.

Vashishtha: Sacrifice is the *rishi's* dharma. Being a *rishi*, why do you crave for the outcome?

Gautama: Vishwamitra, we should avoid any direct confrontation. A *Brahman* must be gentle, well behaved; yet, clever and crafty.

Vishwamitra: Maharshi Vashishtha, Maharshi Gautama, if we do not hit back at our enemies, despair and frustration shall grab us. Our life force shall be wasted.

Galaba: If we, the *Brahman rishis* lose our self-control, how are we different from the lower caste people?

Vishwamitra: People consider our self-control to be cowardice. The *Daitya*, *Rakshasha*, *Asura* – all the low-caste forest dwellers are abusing us – destroying our ashrams and maltreating the residents of the ashrams. At this moment we should help the Aryan kings.

Galaba: You are correct. The native forest-dwellers are very well organised at the moment.

Gautama: The long suffering, deprivation and discontent has turned the *Rakshasha*, *Asura* and other forest-dwellers vengeful.

Vashishtha: I have heard that the pre-Aryan people from the South have united under the leadership of *Rakshasha* chief Ravana, to diminish the dominance of the Aryans.

Galaba: Situations may go out of hand any moment.

Agastya: We should take measures before we lose control.

Vashishtha: How?

Agastya: Through deceits (*Murmurs heard, Agastya raises his hand to stop everyone*). The fire of deprivation in the *Adibasi* heart cannot be quenched with any *mantra*. Nor can it be controlled through anger.

Vashishtha: None of us are experts in weaponry.

Agastya: Neither warfare nor scriptures can tame the *Adibasis*.

Vishwamitra: What's the way?

Agastya: We have to draw them through diplomatic means – pretend we are friends; win them over our side through persuasion, through religion or reduce their numbers through clandestine murders.

Vashishtha: – and place such murders before the people as instances of religious miracles.

Gautama: – so that in future these people always succumb before religious discipline.

Galaba: It is easy to rule people who do not look straight into our eyes, who remain bowed.

Agastya: You are right. The Aryan rulers will not be against this measure – they are too afraid of their lives. If they do so it will only bring forth the conflict within the Aryan society.

Vishwamitra: Good proposal. But how to bring the *Adibasi Rakshashas* before us? Who is going to bell the cat?

Agastya: I am arranging a *yagna* next full moon. We have to invite the *Daitya* king Sunda and his wife Tadaka on the occasion. When Sunda is here, we have to agitate him, cause his nerves to fail and scorch him in the sacred fire of the *yagna*. And then we will propagate the great Agni deva has himself accepted Sunda as a part of his own body. Everyone will stand mesmerised by the miracle and our wish shall be fulfilled.

Vishwamitra: But who is going to invite Sunda in this *ashram*?

Agastya: You, Vishwamitra.

Vishwamitra: Me?

Agastya: You have transformed yourself into Rajarshi Vishwamitra from the Kshatriya Viswanar. You have amalgamated the energy of the Brahman and the dharma of the Kshatriya. You can be the right catalyst behind the annihilation of Sunda and Tadaka, Rajarshi Vishwamitra.

Vishwamitra: Will they trust me?

Agastya: You will don the cloak of humbleness and sacrifice, enthrall them with all your sweet talk and your charm – and then bring them in this ashram. In the meanwhile, I shall make preparations for the *yagna*.

Vishwamitra: But?

Agastya: No more questions Rajarshi. Look there is some commotion in the forest nearby. Some *Rakshashas* must have gathered there. Move quickly to that place (*Vishwamitra moves away a little hesitatingly*). Aryan *rishis* please come inside my *ashram*. Let us prepare for the *yagna*.

(Agastya, Vashishtha, Gautama and Galaba move inside. Poulava comes forward and picks up the asanas of the rishis.)

Poulava: If the face of religion is so ugly, so horrible, make me blind O my God! The light that beams through darkness – let me search Thy there my Lord.

(Poulava goes away. Vishwamitra can be seen at a corner of the forest. We can see Sunda and Tadaka on the other corner. Tadaka is requesting Sunda to have his food. But Sunda is refusing to do so.)

Tadaka: Does the food seem bland?

Sunda: My very life appears to be bland, Tadaka.

Tadaka: You are the leader of this tribe, Sunda. These words do not fit you. Hundreds of people, trusting your words, are risking their lives to fight the Aryan offensive.

Sunda: That's why I am worried Tadaka; so many people rely on me. Will I be able to live up to their expectations?

Tadaka: Why are you so hesitant, my Lord? You did not become a leader all by yourself. Your sacrifice, valour, contribution, humbleness and sincerity have propelled you as a King. The people are with you for the sake of the tribe. Keep your faith on them.

Sunda: I am serving only because I trust my people. But I am worried about the growing nexus between the Aryan kings and the Aryan *rishis*.

Tadaka: Why are you anxious? All of us have come together. Still –

Sunda: Still anxious Tadaka. I know, the Aryans cannot defeat us in the battlefield. But when it comes to deceit and shrewdness we are no match for them. We cannot fight treacheries and deceptions with emotion.

Tadaka: Then, what's the way?

Sunda: I have thought a way out. Messages have been sent to your relative Ravana at Lanka, the island at the southernmost corner of the forests. Communications have also been sent to the leader of the Vanara tribe, Bali – and Griddharaj Sampati. If we can unite all the tribes of India, we can probably then stop this Aryan aggression.

Tadaka: The native tribes have been deprived of their due respect, honour and homage. If we can fire the anger born out of such deprivation, the tribes will all rise to the occasion and the process of Aryanisation can be checked.

(Vishwamitra comes before Tadaka and Sunda. He is escorted by their son Maricha.)

Maricha: Father, Rajarshi Vishwamitra is here to pay you a visit.

Sunda: *(startled)* Rajarshi Vishwamitra!

Vishwamitra: King Sunda, please call me friend Vishwamitra.

Tadaka: Rajarshi, can a transformation in the outer garb bring about a change in the heart's desire?

Vishwamitra: I really seek your friendship, Rani Tadaka.

Sunda: Some ulterior motive must be guiding you for seeking our friendship. Otherwise, an Aryan rishi cannot pursue the friendship of Daitya Sunda.

Tadaka: It is unbelievable that you have come here without any self-interest.

Vishwamitra: Obviously there is an interest. However, it concerns us both – both the Aryans and the non-Aryans.

Sunda: What is it?

Vishwamitra: Please listen to me carefully, Sunda-Tadaka. Before the Aryans arrived in this land, your life depended on hunting and animal rearing. You were not experts in cultivating lands. If there was a forest fire, you satisfied yourself by feeding on the burnt crops. You have never lived an organised life. But we, Aryans –

Sunda: Oh yes, you know farming. You also know how to tame wild animals, especially the horses. But with that you have stolen our cattle, you have grabbed our homeland.

Vishwamitra: True, but you are ignoring the main point, Sunda. The main obstacle behind the social mingling of the Aryans and the non-Aryans are the two diverse ways of our lifestyle – while we are organised, structured, you are spontaneous. If we can remove this obstacle, India will emerge as a new force in the world map with the union of the Aryans and the non-Aryans. I

have come here to invite you to our *ashram*, King. Maharshi Agastya is eager to meet you.

Sunda: But –

Vishwamitra: There cannot be any ifs and buts, Sunda. Just think about this – is not there any difference among the native tribes – do you believe Ravana wholeheartedly? Is there a true alliance between Bali and Ravana? Without being dependent on the squabbling native tribes, why don't you think about allying with the friendly groups of Aryan *rishis*? Won't it usher in advancement of your tribe? What do you think?

Tadaka: If the safety of King Sunda is compromised there?

Vishwamitra: This kind of suspicion is without any basis. I myself have trusted you to come to this *ashram* of the Daityas.

Sunda: Well, let us go –

(Maricha, so long quiet speaks out.)

Maricha: Father, I don't think it would be right for you to travel alone to Rishi Agastya's *ashram*. I and my mother, Tadaka shall accompany you.

Sunda: I have confidence in my ability.

Maricha: I still have doubts regarding the words of the Rajarshi. I shall accompany you to see that you are not held responsible for any immoral act committed during your stay at the Aryan *ashram*.

Vishwamitra: Maricha, you are not yet an adult. That's why you dare to speak about immoral activities at the Aryan *ashram*.

Maricha: If I begin to give instances of the immoral and imperialist activities of the Aryan *ashram* that I have witnessed as a child, you will be ashamed Rajarshi.

Vishwamitra: Stop. Let's not dwell in murky waters. I am inviting you and your mother along with King Sunda. Come, let's go.

(Vishwamitra proceeds along with Sunda, Tadaka and Maricha. The yagna has commenced at Agastya's ashram. The Gayatri mantra rings the air. Vishwamitra enters the ashram along with Sunda, Tadaka and Maricha. They are welcomed. Tadaka is led to the inner chambers of the ashram. Sunda and Maricha are offered asanas, where they seat. They are offered wine to do away with their fatigue. Maricha refuses, while Sunda accepts. Gautama, Galaba and Vashishtha come forward. They begin to converse with Raja Sunda.)

Vashishtha: Raja Sunda, you are welcome at this Aryan *ashram*.

Sunda: My reverence to you, Rishi Vashishtha.

Vashishtha: Let me introduce – Rishi Gautama and Rishi Galaba.

(Sunda salutes them. Gautama and Galaba chant the swasti mantra.)

Gautama: We are pleased for your agreeing to meet Maharshi Agastya.

Galaba: You are the chief architect in paving the path of unity between the Aryans and the non-Aryans.

Sunda: I really don't know what the role of such an architect would be? Nor do I understand what do you want to achieve by placing me in such a role? But being a leader of the *Daitya* tribe, I realise that being the chief architect in this *ashram* by giving up the rights and freedom of my tribe, is equivalent to deviate from my *dharma*. If one strays from the path of *dharma*, one's life becomes meaningless. I hope you have not invited me to this *ashram* with the intention of murdering me.

Vashishtha: You are getting us wrong, King.

(Galaba offers wine to Sunda. He drinks.)

Sunda: How am I mistaken, Rishi Vashishtha? In nature's kingdom, each one of us have the same right to live. The society of the native forest-dwellers developed on the basis of communal living. We had no concept about private property. Proper behaviour, respect towards women and consumption according to one's need were the pivots on which our society revolved. And I must say we lived quite satisfactorily.

Vashishtha: Not so satisfactorily, King Sunda. You were closeted in an unknown arena, with an unknown future to accompany. No rule governed society can emerge without governance and control. Is it not better to have a political system, a society administered by laws with a power-governed graduated social structure, than an unknown future for the forthcoming generations?

Sunda: Servitude is the key word in the political system propounded by you.
(Drinking) There is no value for friendship, trust, simplicity, submission or affection in your social structure.

Vashishtha: Who says so? We are eager to be your friend, King Sunda.

Sunda: But friendship must be among equals.

Vashishtha: We consider you to be our own.

Sunda: If you really think so, then surely you will sympathise with us to criticise the invasion of the Aryan kings in our land.

Vashishtha: Has such an incursion actually taken place?

Sunda: The Ganga-Yamuna-Saraswati valley, so long the homeland and the grazing fields of the native tribes, has now been grabbed by the Aryan kings, who are intent on sugarcane cultivation. Would you criticise the Ikshaku tribe for this aggression? In Dandaka forest the tribes have again been uprooted in search of copper and mica. A few days back, the farmlands and cattle of the Khattangas living on the banks of the Sarayu has been looted. Would you rishis criticise all these? (*Drinking, a bit tipsy*) I know you won't be able to do so. You are the counsellors, the mentors of the Aryan kings. Vashishtha, Galaba, Gautama – your advice has made the Ikshaku king, the destroyer of enemies – the greatest of the Kshatriya rulers. If you write from the abuses as we the Daityas, Rakshashas and Asuras do, then only can you be sympathetic to our cause. You cannot douse the anger of the native tribes only with your words.

(Agastya comes forward.)

Agastya: The King of the Daityas, Sunda. Why do you want to disgrace the Aryan rishis? The rishis never utter a lie, it is the uncivilised native Daityas, Rakshashas and Asuras who make a travesty of truth. It's your practice to distort events.

Sunda: Maharshi Agastya, be direct in your accusations. (*Intoxication and agitation make him tremble.*) I cannot tolerate unjust criticism and humiliation of the native tribes. I lose my patience. I cannot control my words during discussions.

Agastya: (*Sneering*) King Sunda, pride, arrogance, intolerance are all in your blood. Your humility lies in your egotism. Impoliteness is the speciality of your culture; and I know, I should not expect you to be an exception.

Sunda: (*Very agitated*) Rishi, I have limits to my tolerance. If you do not mend your words I am going to tear your tongue. Or else I am going to throw you in the fire of the *yagna* for the sake the truth.

Agastya: (*Laughing*) King Sunda, our path is to know, judge, seek knowledge and follow the truth. Habitually I have invited you to my ashram so that you may attain self-realisation through the path of self-criticism. (*Sunda snarls in agitation.*) The rishis are not uncivilised, uncultured and impolite like the forest-dwelling Rakshashas, Asuras and Daityas. They are the worshippers of truth. Our dharma is to win the heart of the people, not through violence but

through love. You are doubting our integrity as you are unaware of the great deeds of the *rishis*.

Sunda: Are you not supporting the Kshatriya kings in conquering our lands?

Agastya: A kingdom is not just not a piece of land, its being depends on the subjects. You people – the Rakshasha king Ravana, the Vanara king Bali, the Laban king Madhu and you the Daitya king Sunda – you are all afraid to regard your people as assets. You want to help them by keeping them away. We do not do so. With regards to the development of the nation, the rising of the populace we have tried to make our *ashram* a platform of varied interests. You are not addressing the issue of uplifting the masses as you are too obsessed with the wellbeing of your respective communities. Can a pool be equal to a sea, King Sunda?

(Sunda rises up in agitation, being too intoxicated – he cannot stand still. Yet, trembling, he goes near the fire of the yagna.)

Sunda: I shall make you pay for this hypocrisy. I shall defile the holy fire, the *yagna* – by defecating here. I deny the dominance of the Aryan interest in the name of truth. I do not know what *dharma* is, I do not worship any god, and I am a castaway of the Aryan culture. Let Aryanisation be destroyed, shattered, let it be inundated in the flood of sin. Oh Nature! Destroy this Aryan civilisation.

(Sunda tries to kick the fire of the yagna. The rishis try to dissuade him saying – “What are you doing, King Sunda?” Sunda spits on the fire. However, he cannot keep himself still. In the jostling Sunda falls in the fire. He is burnt. Bells and drumbeats heard in the ashram. The rishis hail Agastya – “Agastya’s fiery eyes have reduced Daitya Sunda to ashes.” Maricha hurries to see what has happened, then shouts “Mother” and rushes to the inner quarters of the ashram. Vishwamitra stands in a corner, other rishis express their elation at Sunda’s death. Tadaka and Maricha rush to the spot. Everyone becomes quiet. Tadaka stands before Vishwamitra.)

Tadaka: Agastya’s fiery eyes have burnt Sunda to ashes. Is it not so?

Vishwamitra: It’s only an accident.

Maricha: Mother! Oh Mother! – *(he embraces Tadaka)*

Tadaka: Do not shed your tears Maricha. Convert your cries into anger. Learn how the trust, habit, reverence and devotion that man has earned over ages stands on the citadel of falsity and hypocrisy.

Maricha: I shall destroy this ugly facet of politics. Rishi Vishwamitra, I had realised beforehand that you will kill my father so that our free spirit may be chained. My premonitions have come true.

Vishwamitra: Be calm Maricha. Go back to the forest along with your mother.

Maricha: Return to the forest without avenging the death of my father?

Tadaka: Vishwamitra you are our enemies. You have burnt my husband alive. We shall take revenge. Let me see, which hypocrite rishi can use his miraculous power to douse the fire of anger lit in the mother-son duo. (*Tadaka and Maricha spoil the yagna. The rishis remain standstill.*) Listen you Aryan rishis, you have killed my husband, you have destroyed our peace of mind; I shall not allow you to remain in peace. I shall turn your holy forest into a crematorium.

Maricha: The *ashrams* of the rishis will burn in the fervour of vengeance, we shall destroy all hypocrisy in the name of *yagna*, we shall destroy Agastya.

Vishwamitra: Maricha – go back.

Maricha: Yes, I shall go back – but return with hundreds of native tribes. We shall destroy the greed and hatred camouflaged by your cultured look.

Vishwamitra: (*Sudden anger. Hits Maricha, he falls.*) If you utter such words any more I shall not hesitate to kill you.

(*Tadaka rushes forward, Maricha stops her.*)

Tadaka: Do not forget, the Kshatriya blood still gushes within me.

Maricha: Mother, please be quiet.

Tadaka: How can I be quiet, Maricha. Whom do I narrate, who will understand my heartfelt pain? Who is the friend of the Rakshashas – Daityas? Who is going to save the forest dwelling society? The great dissolution – the great destruction is needed in this world. My heart will not be calm till the sacred wood, the rishis are not destroyed.

Maricha: Mother –

Tadaka: Let the sky be cloaked in dark cloud. Let there be thunder, lightning, hail. All you natives make haste – rush to this sacred forest. Let it be desecrated. Let there be disasters. Let the great dissolution overcome this world –

(*She goes away while speaking. Maricha follows.*)

Vishwamitra: (*Looking towards the assembled rishis and resident students*) Have you thought how to protect this sacred forest?

Poulava: The great Agastya has journeyed towards the South. Rishi Vashishtha and Rishi Gautama have also left for their own *ashrams*. Only –

Galaba: I am scared, Vishwamitra.

Vishwamitra: Once you are afraid, you can never confront it.

Galaba: But how do I rid myself of my dread?

Vishwamitra: I am going to the palace of the Ikshaku king, Dasaratha.

Poulava: Agastya has deserted us. If you leave the ashram now death stares us in the face.

Galaba: None will regard it as an act responsibility or duty by the leader.

Poulava: In my opinion, inviting Sunda in the *ashram* and murdering him is equivalent to suicide on part of the ashram-dwellers. Why did you do it Vishwamitra? How can we resist the great warriors like Tadaka and Maricha though non-violent means?

Vishwamitra: I know, that Tadaka and Maricha cannot be repelled in a non-violent way. We require might to resist them. I am going to Dasaratha's palace to fetch two young warriors mightier than Tadaka and Maricha.

Galaba: Would you bring King Dasaratha's son Rama to execute Tadaka?

Vishwamitra: Maharshi Galaba, realising that something similar to the events here might happen I have prepared a liberating force at the end of the forest without your knowledge. I have trained the Kshatriya princes and the sons of the rishis in armoury. I shall now liberate this forest of Tadaka and Maricha with this force under the leadership of Rama.

Galaba/ O great Vishwamitra!

Poulava:

Vishwamitra: I have no intention of saving my skin by running away. I shall do my best to fulfil my duty and intentions. We the Aryan rishis are duty bound to fulfil the dream of Prajapati Brahma – of bringing all the pre-Aryan tribes under the control of the Aryan rule and to establish a united India. None of us can deviate from this commitment.

Galaba/ We are all with you, Vishwamitra.

Poulava:

(Some resident students haste towards the ashram. They report Tadaka and Maricha rushing towards the ashram with a lot of followers.)

Vishwamitra: Immediately desert this sacred forest. Shift to a different location for the time being. I shall soon be back with the liberating force under the leadership of Rama. Till then hold your patience.

(Vishwamitra goes away. The shouts of the approaching forest-dwelling tribes under the leadership of Tadaka and Maricha can be heard from far.)

Galaba/ *(with folded hands)*

Poulava: Thy art my Lord, hued as the new green grass
Dark as the cloud, cloudy is thy mane,
Thy hands red as lotus, bloodshot art thy lips.
Relieve me of pain on thy compassionate lap –
Death – thou art the bestower of immortality.