

JAMADAGNI

- V.V.B. Rama Rao

Srinivasa Bala Bharati -120
(Children Series)

JAMADAGNI

Telugu Version

Pudi Venkata Ramaiah

English Translation

V.V.B. Rama Rao



Published by

Executive Officer

Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams, Tirupati.

2013



**Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams,
Tirupati**

Srinivasa Bala Bharati -120
(*Children Series*)

JAMADAGNI

Telugu Version
Pudi Venkata Ramaiah

English Translation
V.V.B. Rama Rao

Editor-in-Chief
Prof. Ravva Sri Hari

T.T.D. Religious Publications Series No. 975
©All Rights Reserved

First Edition: 2013

Copies :

Price :

Published by
L.V. Subrahmanyam, I.A.S.
Executive Officer
Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams
Tirupati.

Printed at
Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams Press
Tirupati.

FOREWORD

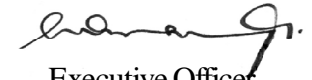
The minds of little children we are rearing with love and affection are pure. They reflect the qualities of culture we present before them. They keep those qualities we teach them and show them throughout their lives. The more virtuous and noble their qualities, the more would they be able to transform and maintain the nation's culture. The need to foster noble qualities right from their tender age is important and immense. However educated and however famous they may rise to, without noble and proper qualities in them, real culture would slowly degenerate engulfing our nation in darkness.

Our effort in these publications is to make children know the stories of sages and seers, our Maharshis. The main object is to place before their plastic minds the high ideals and achievements of our sages and seers.

It is with this intention that Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams brought the series of small booklets Bala Bharati. Many grown ups also have been saying that though called Bala Bharati, the slender books are found illuminating to the elders also. When elders read these and make their young ones read and understand them, our efforts would bear fruit.

I am grateful to the Editor-in-Chief and to those scholars and employees who have worked to produce the series.

In the Service of the Lord



Executive Officer,

Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams,
Tirupati.

FOREWORD

To-day's children are to-morrow's citizens. They need at tender age apt acquaintance with the life-histories of celebrated persons so that they get opportunity to lead their lives in an exemplary way. They will come to know that great things such as Indian culture, basic tenants of life and moral teachings are abundantly available in the life-experiences of great men. It is observed that there is no scope to teach such subjects in school curriculam.

Observing such circumstances the Publication Division of Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams has published about hundred booklets in Telugu about the lifes of famous sages and great men written by various authors under the editorship of Dr. B. Raghunathacharyulu under "Balabharati Series". The response over these books is tremendous and it has given impetus to publish them in other languages also. To begin with some of the books are now brought out with English and Hindi rendering by T.T.D. For the benefit of boys and girls and the interested public.

These booklets primarily intended to the growing children and also generally intended to the elders to study and narrate the stories to their children, will go a long way to sublimate the aspirations of the children to greater heights.

R. SRI HARI

Editor-In-Chief

T.T.D.

WELCOME

Our Bharat has acquired renoun for great culture, moralistic and dharmic ideals even before other countries in other continents could open their eyes to any cultural greatness. Every one born in this land of ours has been fighting against evil and violation of dharma, the holy law of life and living-thus making our lives fruitful and meaningful. Every one has been acquiring Punya (merit) and nearing God. The presence of great minds and sacred souls is our valuable source of Joy. If we understand their ideals, the effect would be very great. Every boy and girl believing and saying that this is our culture and this is our tradition would dedicate himself or herself to the service of mother land.

In fact there have been many great sages and seers, holy men and women born and grown up have laying foundations of our culture and traditions. They helped the pure flow of splendid living to us all. How fortunate we are! We have behind us a great and sublime history and culture. If those great sages and seers; holy and sacred men and women were not born and inspired us, how could this culture and tradition have come to us? Knowing about and understanding those great minds is an education that gives us valuable knowledge and deep wisdom. Their lives and achievements would throw light and illumine us and our coming generations to forge ahead in glory.

It is with this intention that Bala Bharati Series has come up bringing before you the lives and achievements of great sages and seers.

Now is your chance to know about them and grow.

Children! Come! Come forward to read and learn.

Our hearty welcome to you all.

S.B. Raghunathacharya

Cheif Editor

Great incarnations assume human form with sublime intentions. As they choose to take incarnations in a particular place or a particular time, they choose their parents too. The Supreme Being in ten incarnations (we call them dasaavataaras) has saved innumerable people. In his sixth incarnation also he has selected his father and mother. Consequently there came about a combination of the radiance of the Brahmin and Kshatriya qualities that contributed to the welfare of the worlds. Bhagawan Vishnu, the Supreme Lord, roared like a warrior and killed evil kings and rulers not just once but twenty-one times and is acclaimed by all.

Who could be the father of such a valiant one? The one having mastered Dhanurveda (the art of archery) and horrified the sun himself, the one who with his power of tapas (intense contemplation) has created Kamadhenu (the celestial wish-fulfilling cow) is the one named Jamadagni. He is the very name of valour, kindness and patience. Renuka was his wife's name.

The patience, tolerance, dynamism, holiness and purity of Maharshi Jamadagni have to be our ideals now. Only by following his ideals we can have the opportunity to give the world such an incarnated divinity



JAMADAGNI

Our heritage:

Our sages and seers are called Maharshis. They are revered as right worshipful. They inspired and promoted spiritual values. They preached Dharma, the ideal way of living according to holy law. They paved the way to mukti, salvation. In this regard they gave alms to the entire mankind.

Making truth, non-violence and rectitude their base, they paved the way of rectitude and righteousness. They spent their lives in forests eating only tubers and such simple food. They spent all their time in Tapas (intense and deep contemplation, dhyana). They dedicated a part of their Punya (merit) to all. They gave away their powers and intelligence to the kings in the land. They helped them perform fire rituals (yagnas and yagas) besides performing such rituals themselves. They wrote scriptures (sacred writings) besides legends, history, sciences and commentaries and explanations of the Vedas and Upanishads. Through these, the sages and seers laid the foundation for moral and spiritual values. They advocated dharma chintana (thinking of dharma) (the sacred law of behaviour and action), noble qualities and righteous thinking. This has been their effort down the ages. For this reason gotras are linked-even today with Maharshis. There are several gotras with the names of these sages and saints. Kasyapa gotra, Bharadwaja gotra, Atreya gotra and Kaundinya gotra are a few of these signifying the genealogies of Rishis.

Violating even the divine being or God to establish or refurbish the sacred law (Dharma):

Our Maharshis laid down dharma, a law and a way of life and action in a manner that it could not be changed or violated. But the Maharshis sometimes went against even god and even cursed divines, heavenly ones. Being in such a sublime condition they inspired faith in man. Sri MahaVishnu had to take birth as Rishis twice as Vamana and Parasurama. Their renown is eternal. The stars glowing in the sky as Saptarshi Mandala are symbols of the greatness of our renowned Maharshis.

Who are Saptarshis?

The most renowned among the Maharshis are Vasishtha, Atri, Gautama, Kasyapa, Bharadwaja, Jamadagni and Vishwamitra. Each of these has a wonderful history. All these Maharshis belonged to Vaiwaswata Manu. Manu is the law giver and ruler. At the time of each Manu there used to be ten sages and seers as officers of law and dharma. The Saptarshis are among these.

The tradition and lineage of Bhrugu:

In the world of sages and seers, the lineage of Bhrugu, Bhrugu vamsa is highly revered and renowned. The originator of this lineage (vamsha) is Bhrugu Maharshi. He was born from the heart of the creator Brahma. All those in the lineage are called Bhargavas. Chyavana was Bhrugu's son. Aurva was Chyavan's son. Aurva's son was Rucheeka, also called Ruchika. Maharshi Ruchika had a splendid strength of tapas (deep and intense

dhyana and contemplation) committed to truth. He also knew dhanurveda (the veda related to archery) completely. All the four Vedas are in his hand, idiomatically as gooseberries in his palms.

Give your daughter in marriage:

In those days king Gaadhi was the ruler. He belonged to Jahnu Vamsa. It is also called Kushika Vamsa. One day Ruchika Maharshi went to king Gaadhi. Satyawati, his daughter was an extraordinary beauty. The Maharshi was enamoured of Satyawati and wanted to marry her. Then he spoke to the king.

“Maharaja! I am impressed by your daughter's beauty. I wish to marry her. My heart, mind and intellect got fixed on her. Have kindness on me and give her to me in marriage.”

The rishi's words caused anger, surprise and fear in the king. Surprise because the rishi was a poor Brahmin. Fear that, if he refused, he might be cursed; anger that such a man should ask for a princess. He thought for a while and cleverly said.

“Maharshi! I consent and give my daughter in marriage to you, but on one condition. You have to give her Vunkuva or Oli, a gift.”

“Yes, Maharaja! I would give whatever you ask me to,” said the Maharshi.

Then said the king: “Listen to me. You should bring a thousand white horses with black ears. Then I would give my daughter in marriage to you.”

Rishi Ruchika replied that he would give the horses as desired and left. He went to the north bank of the river Ganga, had his bath and contemplated on Varun. Varun appeared and told him that he would get them whenever he asked for them. The rishi went to the king with the horses created by him. The king was surprised by the rishi's ability but felt happy that it was good to have one such as a son-in-law and performed the marriage.

Bless my mother too-to have a male offspring!

Ruchika went to his asram (hermitage) with his wife. Satyawati served him as an ideal wife. Time went by. One day the maharshi thought of begetting progeny (children). He went to his wife and told her that time was going to be favourable for them and that she would become a mother. Satyawati was immensely pleased. She requested her husband for another blessing.

“Swami! You have rich power of penance. You can do anything. My mother asked me to seek your blessing for her also. She has no male offspring. Bless her with your grace to have a son.”

The Maharshi listened to his better-halves request. Immediately he created with his powers two blessed food balls of boiled rice (charuvus) and two havis (ghee in the yajna). Of these one charuvu would give an effulgent son into tejas (great radiance) and the other a valourous and heroic son. One would be a pious and devout Brahmin and the other a warrior like Kshatriya.

Showing the two blessed balls of cooked rice the maharshi told his wife.

“While you are in your monthly period you embrace a fig tree. You ask your mother to embrace in her periods a peepal tree. Later you take the ball of cooked rice which would make you give birth to an effulgent and devout Brahmin. Your mother takes the other ball of cooked rice which would make her give birth to a valorous and invincible Kshatriya like son.”

So telling the Maharshi went to the river for a bath.

Charuvus (blessed cooked rice balls) changed:

King Gaadhi and his queen came to sage Ruchika's asram to see their daughter and son-in-law. Satyawati honoured her parents. She showed the blessed cooked rice balls to her mother. She told her what they were asked to do. Since both of them happened to be in their periods, they went to the trees to embrace them. By Gods will the fig tree that should be embraced by Satyawati was embraced by her mother. The Peepal tree that should be embraced by her mother was embraced by the daughter. The mother and daughter also took the charuvus wrongly.

What they thought and what happened:

Maharshi Ruchika returned to his asram and was happy to see his in-laws. While in conversation, the Maharshi saw in his divine vision (divya drushti) the mistake. The mother and daughter made the same mistake. He called his wife and told her:

“The saying that one thinks of something God thinks of something and else is true.

You and your mother have made an error in embracing the trees and taking the blessed cooked rice

balls. For that reason there would be a difference in the sons you give birth to as prescribed. You give birth not to a splendid son with Brahmin effulgence-but to a cruel one, a killer of Kshatriyas and your mother would give birth to a son with the radiance of a devout taapasi (one also does tapas).”

Satyawati trembled listening to her husband’s words. She broke into tears and fell at the rishi’s feet, praying for his mercy and kindness. She prayed to him not to give her a son who would be cruel.

The merciful rishi took pity on his wife. But the blessed cooked rice balls he created will surely give the effect they believed to produce. The Maharshi thought that this was all Gods will and doing. Still, he said, he would change the effect in another way. The cruelty would come to her grandson and not to her son. This comforted Satyawati a little bit.

Jamadagni’s birth:

In due course Satyawati and her mother were pregnant. After nine months at an auspicious moment, Satyawati and her mother delivered male babies. Gaadhi the king’s son was named Viswamitra. Ruchika named his son Jamadagni.

Jamadagni was slowly growing. He was very calm and peaceful. He was always interested in dhyana and contemplation. He learnt and mastered all the four Vedas. Maharshis living in the asrams used to feel delighted seeing the little boy. The radiance of Brahmateja used to be

seen on his face. In addition to that Rishi Ruchika his father made his son imbibe Dhanurveda (the science and art of archery) fully. He became extremely proficient in it. There was none equal to him in archery not only among the Rishis but also in the entire world of Kshatriyas or rulers. He was comparable only to himself. His infancy and boyhood passed he became youthful.

Without cause there is no effect:

Satyawati and her mother embraced the wrong trees and used the charuvus balls of cooked food wrongly. Why did this happen so? There must be some cause or reason without which nothing would take place. In Brahmhaloka all the celestials were in an assembly discussing many things. Among them Varna samkara is one subject. Varna samkara is the inter mixture of castes. Brahma said that soon there was going to be Varna samkara between Bhrgu (Brahmin) and Kshatriya (kingly/royal) kushika lineages. Bhrgu’s son Chyavana was in the assembly. He heard this and began thinking as to have to stop that. He wanted to stop the inter mixture to protect the Brahmin lineage and its renown. This is a very adventurous action. He knew that it was not easy to go against the creator’s decision. Chyavana wanted to destroy the lineage of Kushiks. He went to the king of Kushiks. The king and the queen served him with obedience showing their reverence for him. Chyavana examined the couple in many ways. But they served him so well that he could find no reason to be angry. The king and the queen drew the chariot in which they seated the sage and seer. They bore the whippings that horses

would get. They bled but did not lose their reverence for the Maharshi. They served him for twenty one days without having food or rest. Chyavana did not have a chance to give them a curse. He thought that it was impossible to curse them. Then he revealed the secret behind his visit to the king and the queen.” Your son Gaadhi’s daughter to be born (Satyawati) was going to marry my grandson Ruchika. They would have a son Jamadagni. He would get Dhanurveda imbibed in him through his father. This would shine further in his son Parasurama. Parasurama with his extraordinary skill in archery would destroy all Kshatriya rulers. He is the sixth incarnation of Sri Mahavishnu. That is Parasuramavatara. This is god’s decision.”

You see! Because of this cause the mistake was made by Satyawati and also by her mother. How can there be anything different from what Ruchika Maharshi said earlier? In this is involved an incarnation of MahaVishnu. Related to that is Ramaavatara also.

The sacred cow that can give all and everything:

Jamadagni married Renukadevi, the daughter of Prasenajit, a king of the Ikshwaku lineage (vamsa). After his son’s marriage, Jamadagni’s father left family life and went away for penance.. His mother Satyawati became the river kaushiki and flowed. Jamadagni was in the family state called Grihasthaasrama. He was radiant with sama and dama peacefulness and austerity in a subdued state mortifying, his flesh and not paying much attention to the body with the splendid powers of Penance, he

acquired Kaamadhenu, a sacred wish fulfilling cow which gave him all he needed and wanted. This cow could give him whatever food he wanted and however much he wanted. Renuka Devi and Jamadagni were leading a happy and pious life.

I would make the sun collapse!

Jamadagni had the habit of testing his skill in archery every now and then. His wife Renuka used to help him in getting back the arrows he shot to a great distance. One day after midday, when the Sun was very hot Renuka was a little delayed in bringing back the arrows. Jamadagni was angry and asked why she returned so late. She was a very delicate woman and she was very tired.

“I could not come back quickly because I was stopping in the shade of the trees. It was very hot with the Sun shining hot above. This made Maharshi angry with the Sun god. "The Sun made my wife suffer with his heat. So I would make him fall down from the sky." He said and he took up his bow and arrow.

This is the first creation:

The sun god was trembling . He came down as an old Brahmin. He came to Jamadagni and said O Maharshi! It is because of the Sun that the clouds are giving rain. Is it not with the rain water that medicinal plants and food crops are growing ? It is with his work that the celestials are getting havyas, ghee from fire rituals. Is it right for you to punish the friend of all worlds? You are a hermit and a taapasi, is it fitting that such a one as you should act so cruelly?”

Jamadagni cooled down. He realized that he had no *santa*, a peaceful condition of the mind. He felt bad. Meanwhile the Sun God took over his regular form. Jamadagni made a fitting and proper salutation to the Sun God. Surya, the Sun God was happy.

The Sun God created just with his will an umbrella and foot wear that would protect people from his heat. He asked Jamadagni to use them. The Maharshi was surprised. Till now these are not in the creation. “How could you create these,” asked Jamadagni the Sun God.

“Yes, truly these are not in the creation. I created them for you. By using these both your head and feet could be protected from heat.” So saying He added! “By giving in *daana* these things to the peaceful minded people like you, the giver would be satisfied and would acquire merit (*punya*).”

Jamadagni accepted them and along with his wife offered worship to the Sun God. By giving old people these umbrellas and foot wear one would get *punya* (merit). For this reason in the rites for the departed these articles are given. The forefathers, would be pleased. This tradition has come down to us from Jamadagni and the Sun God.

In the ancient times man had to get drenched in rain, or walk under the hot sun. Man used to just stand under a tree to protect himself. Thanks to Jamadagni, the condition came to be changed. How can one have shade without having to go under a tree? This involves knowledge.

If the fence eats away the crop?

In their youth Renuka and Jamadagni once went to the banks of the river Narmada. They came across a beautiful garden. There was none there. There were a number of trees and plants with fruits and flowers. There was cool and sweet smelling breeze. There were beautiful birds and peacocks. The couple had feelings for romance and sexual gratification. They made a flower bed and got into amorous love making. But alone in the sky the (*Karma Saakshi*) witness of Action, the Sun was there. He felt that *dharma* was being violated by the rishi couple. He came down in the guise of an old Brahmin and said.

“Maharshi Jamadagni! You are not an ordinary person. You are the grandson of the creator, Brahma. You are the one who made the Vedas and you are a great *tapasvi*. It is not right that you should fall down to love making in this day time. If great men like you go against *dharma*, ordinary people would follow such actions. So *dharma* is going to come down and get sullen. Since I am the witness of action, I came down to tell you this.”

Would you criticize and object to my action?

Jamadagni was angry with the Sun God. The couple got up from the bed. Renuka being naked ran away in shame. Her going away like that angered the maharshi more. He said.

“Dinakara! With pride and evil arrogance you came down to make me learn. Don’t you know who I am? I was born in *Bhrugu* lineage. I know the four Vedas and

all dharmas and adharms very well. Listen to what I would tell you. Ignorant one (ajnaani) would suffer for his bad deeds and be an inactive dull one. Vijnani (the knowing one) would not get the results of his bad deeds and be every splendid with radiance like the Sun. You are proud and arrogant being the fruit giver and witness of action, Karmasaakshi. I don't need any of your help to be saved. For the knowing ones, Jnaana moortis, and those who have the wealth of tapas the saviour is Sri Maha Vishnu. Not anyone like you. There is no need for us to learn from you or be punished by you. Infact you do not have such capacity either. No one can punish us, not Brahma, not Maheshwara and not even Yama, the God of death. You have disturbed us while we are in copulation. So you be affected by Rahu and lose all your brilliance as a "sinner." thus cursed Jamadagni the Sun God.

An opposite curse:

The Sun God listened to the curse given by Jamadagni and cursed them in return. "you cursed me without reason. So you would be insulted by a Kshatriya and be killed with his weapon".

You would fall down from Eswar's blow:

Angry with the Sun God for his curse, Jamadagni cursed him again "you would fall in the battle field under the power of Eswar".

Brahma, the creator, knew about this from Kasyapa Maharshi. The two made their appearance before the rishi and the Sun God.

Brahmadeva's act of conciliation:

Brahma said pacifying both. "O Bhaskara! One day you would be covered by the clouds. But after a short while you would come out. When the clouds are many or when it is raining you would be swallowed by Rahu. Even then some would see you and some wouldn't be able to see you. Those who see and offer salutations to you would have their sins washed away. Eswar would defeat you in a war he was fighting against Maali-Sumaali". Thus he softened the effect of the curse.

Your death would be the seed for the welfare of the world:

Seeing Jamadagni, Brahmadeva, said.

"Maharshi! Leave the Sun God suffering from insult now. With the power of your splendourous brilliance all the worlds would be burnt in a minute. You have such effulgence in you. But you are wasting your power because of your anger and fury. Both of you are great, both of you are worshipful. In the future you would have insult, defeat and death because of Kartaveeryarjuna. Even then Sri Mahavishnu would be born as your son. Going round and searching again and again, he would kill Kshatriyas in this world twenty times. Your demise (death) would be the seed for the welfare and joy, of the world."

So saying Brahmadeva left. Surya and Jamadagni congratulated each other and went to their abodes (places of living).

In the asram, Renuka offered her services to her husband. With his grace she gave birth to five sons,

Rumanvanta, Suveshana, Vasu, Viswavasu and Parasurama in that order.

Pot cannot be made of sand:

One day Renukadevi went to the river to fetch water. She saw accidentally the Gandharva king Chitraradha in copulation with his wife. She felt joyful seeing them in their love play. Thus she committed a sin and her wifeliness got sullen. For that reason the pot in her hand fell down and got broken. Whenever it happened Renuka used to make another pot with her sacredness. She tried to do it again, but could not. The pious and devoted wife realized her mistake. She wanted to take away her life by falling into the river. But she felt that it would be wrong to do so without telling her husband. She went back home empty handed..

Cut off your mother's head!

Jamdagni saw his wife not having the pot in her hands. With his divine vision he learnt what had happened. She looked at a man with some kind of sinful feeling. He hated her for that sin and thought that death was the punishment she deserved. Without thinking further, he called his eldest son and ordered him to cut off his mother's head.

See, Jamadagni's action! He felt that even looking at a man not her own was a sin for a woman. He know that his wife was a Saadhvi, a very devoted and pure woman. Even then, he asked his son to slay her. He felt that his wife should better be killed than bear humiliation and insult. See how respectful the rishi was to his wife!

Children who wouldn't obey him:

Rumanvanta was the eldest son. He was intelligent and knowledgeable knowing the Vedas. Killing the mother was sinful. The Vedas said that mother is god's first form-father the later form. He told his father that he would not be able to kill his mother. The second and the third sons too did not consent to their father's order. The fourth son did the same. Jamadagni, angered, cursed his four sons.

Cut off your mother's head:

The youngest son Parasurama was very intelligent and dynamic. Now he thought his turn would come. If he disobeyed his father he too would be cursed. So he wanted to obey his father first and seek the boons necessary to restore life to his mother and save his brothers too from the curse. He remembered the Veda saying that the father's soul would be only in the son's body. Meanwhile his father called him and gave him his order, Parasurama obeyed it immediately. Renuka's head fell at her husband's feet. Having obeyed his father, Parasurama fell at his father's feet and made a salutation.

My mother should live again!

Jamadagni was pleased with his son's action and asked him to seek boons.

"My mother should live again and my brothers should be freed from the curses" said Parasurama. He also asked for a boon making him long-lived.

Jamadagni said “Tathaastu” may it happen so! Renuka, killed and dead got her life back. The little stain on her character disappeared. Parasurama wanted the welfare of his family and though he obeyed his father, he saw to it that everyone in the family was happy.

Kaartaveeryarjuna, the arrogant:

Kaartaveeryarjuna was the king of the Haihayadesa. He was a great devotee of Dattatreya Maharshi and got many boons from him. He got a thousand hands and powers like anima and garima (ashtha siddhis) renown, strength and strong powers of the senses and so on. Once as per gods will, Haihaya king came to Jamadagni Maharshi’s asram with his followers and his army. Jamadagni wanted to please all his tired guests with a sumptuous feast. Using his kaamadhenu, the wish fulfilling sacred cow all kinds of food items were given with love and affection for all. Every one was happy and contented. They were surprised too. The king was enamoured of the cow and wanted to acquire it. Silently he went back and sent his army to bring the cow to him. The king’s men came and requested the Maharshi to gift the cow to their king. Jamadagni stoutly refused. The king’s men were ready to wage a war against the rishi. Jamadagni made the dhenu (cow) produce thousands of soldiers from the pores of its hide (skin). The Maharshi took up his bow. The king’s army was defeated and killed. The king knew about this and attacked Jamadagni and was defeated by him. Though the king was helpless the rishi did not kill him. Jamadagni preached good conduct to him and left him.

Don’t wage wars:

After some days the king attacked the Maharshi again only to be defeated. Thus Kaartaveeryarjuna was defeated twenty times. At last the king brought all his army and attacked the Maharshi who took out his bow and arrows and came near the cow. The cow told him not to fight at a time which was not favourable to him then. But Jamadagni did not pay heed to the dhenu’s words and began fighting. In the fierce battle the king killed Jamadagni and went into the asram for the cow. But the cow which went away to Indraloka was under Indra’s protection. The king returned empty handed. Renuka in grief fell on her husband weeping for him. She was prepared for sahasgamana, death along with the husband in the same pyre. But aakasavani, the voice of the sky stopped her. Meanwhile Bhrgu Maharshi came and made Jamadagni come to life again by his sacred powers of tapas.

Thousand hands slain:

During the battle between his father and Kaartaveeryarjuna Parasurama was not there. Without his knowledge the battle took place. Later he came to know about his father’s death and grew fierce. The Brahmin effulgence on his face disappeared. It was red showing Kshatriya valour. His eyes glared red like burning coals. His body was shaking in anger. A bow in a hand and an axe in the other, with lines of sacred ash (vibhuti) on his brow with a round vermilion mark at its centre he rushed forward and entered Mahishmati nagara. The king Kaartaveeryarjuna got this information in advance and was well prepared. He faced Parasurama with a huge

army of seventeen thousand akshawhinis (complete armies with horses, elephants and infantry) But to no avail. Parasurama slew the thousand hands of the king and with his axe cut off his head.

We need a lot of patience!

Parasurama went near his father after killing the Haihaya king. He told how he killed Kaartaveeryarjuna. Jamadagni was sad after he learnt this. He told his son:

“My dear one! Elders told us that the king is of the aspect of God himself. You have to respect the king for he is so sacred. It is not proper to kill the king. People like us who are taapasees, people who meditate and contemplate with total commitment, must have great patience. With this quality we become rich. From being rich we would have viveka, a lot of knowingness, discretion and wisdom. This would enable us to get moksha, salvation very quickly. Killing a king is more sinful than killing a Brahmin. For this reason you go on a pilgrimage for a whole year, pray to Parameswar and get your sin washed away.”

Parasurama went away on a pilgrimage as per his father’s suggestion. See how kind was Jamadagni! He showed kindness towards the man who had killed him. His conviction, was that with repentance sin would be washed away.

You take birth as a mongoose:

Once there was a day in Jamadagni's house where he should perform a Pitru karya, a ceremony for an ancestor. He milked a cow and kept the milk safe and went to the



river for a bath. A celestial called Krodha wanted to test the maharshi's sense of calm and peace, the quality called santa. He went there into the house and upset the container having milk in it. The milk fell on the floor. Jamadagni came and saw the milk thus wasted. He also saw Krodha in disguise. Krodha told him that it was an accident. Jamadagni did not lose his temper or get angry. He simply asked the celestial to go away. Krodha in a human form was surprised. He said that those in Bhrgu lineage were renowned as angry and rash. But it was not true in his case. He spoke the truth and went away. That night the Pitru Devatas, manes appeared in Jamadagni's dream and told him that his santa (peaceful mind) is not a virtue." Being silent and calm all the time is not good. Getting angry for some reason, when it is necessary is peace itself. It is a lapse (dosha) to be peaceful when you need to be angry. So for your lapse, or mistake you would be born as a mangoose." They cursed him like this.

Curse would be gone only when dharma is faulted:

Jamadagni simply made salutations to his manes and replied. "Great souls! I kept silent because for a tapaswi anger is not right. It is not my intention to insult you. It is of course my lapse to be silent and peaceful when I should have been courageous and angry. I realize my mistake. Pray forgive me and grace me with a way to save myself from the curse."

The manes pitied him and said: "When you fault a Maha Dharma, right action acceptable in the holy law, you would be absolved of the curse."

For that reason, Jamadagni was born as a mangoose. When Dharmaraja was performing Ashwamedha Yaga, Jamadagni found fault with an act in the Yajna (fire ritual). Jamadagni as a mangoose said that the dana Dharmaraja made was not comparable and equal to the dana of Saktuprastha. He also said that a Yajna with the killing of an animal was not good. When the Brahmins asked the mangoose narrated to them the tale of Saktuprastha. The very next moment his form and appearance as a mangoose was gone. Jamadagni acquired his original form.

I would experience the suffering:

Once the bundle of fibres of lotus (tamara toondlu) which the seven sacred seers kept saved to alleviate their hunger disappeared. One suspected another and everyone took oaths. At this juncture Maharshi Jamadagni took an oath like this:

"If I happen to be the one who stole the bundle, I would suffer the punishment for stealing. I suffer also the punishment that comes from copulating with the wife during the time of her periods; the punishment for promoting or causing discord, or enmities,; the punishment for quarrelling with others; the punishment for honouring one with an intention to get benefit."

See how Jamadagni took an oath which would enlighten our people to live with morality and righteous action.

Mantropasana:

Upasana is a kind of contemplation and observance of religious principles and action. Once Jamadagni went

to Naimisaranya to clear his doubts about mantropasana the deep observance of mantras. He listened to Lomasa Maharshi preaching Devimahaatmyam. He also heard the Maharshi narrating the story of Satyavrata. He learnt the secret and the power of Saraswata beeja mantra, the incantation of the seed, the basis, of saraswata literature. He contemplated and repeated the incantation. He could get absolved of the lapse that was caused by the killing of Renuka Devi.

In the hands of Soora:

Soora, son of Kaartaveeryarjuna knew that his father was killed by Jamadagni. He wanted to wreak vengeance on the maharshi. When Parasurama was not there in the asram he killed Jamadagni. Renuka was extremely distressed on seeing her husband's death. She cried out loudly "Rama! Rama!." She beat her bosom, her chest twenty-one times. Parasurama came after a while and saw the corpse of his father. He was angry and totally beside himself. He was furious and started destroying Mahishmati city. He killed every Kshatriya he came across without any discrimination – He killed Soora and his brothers. He slew innumerable Kshatriyas. He went searching for Kshatriyas twenty-one times, killing all of them he had seen. With the blood of the slain ones he made pitrutarpan, a water offering to his dead and departed father. (This is called Samanta panchaka now). He gave away in dana all the land he acquired by winning battles to Kasyapa Maharshi. Renukadevi offered herself, her body and life to the pyre along with her husband's.

This kind of voluntary death of the wife is called Satee sahadama.

Message: (Samdesa):

Jamadagni's life manifests different curious stages. In youth he was furious – always being angry even for small things and so called mukkopi. After youth, in middle age he was calm, peaceful and peace loving. In old age he became extremely peaceful. He said that even the one to be rightly killed should only be forgiven. He told us of various ways of absolving one's sins. He proved that every one should suffer the consequences for wrong doings. He suffered the consequence of his lapse by living as a mongoose. He showed and illustrated how pilgrimages wash away one's sins and do good. He showed very clearly and powerfully the evil deeds one should not do. He showed practically that the one in the suffering of hunger would not consider what is wrong or what is right. This naked truth he acquired and explained from his own life. He related practically the truths of human life. He gave away his life for a lunatic's action. He looks at us on the earth from the sky in the form of a star. Why?

He wanted to give us useful lessons from his own experiences. We should make use of all those for our benefit.

May the Dharma of Rishis grow!

Translator's note:

Many deeply religious words either in our language Telugu (or Sanskrit) are not easy to translate into English.

For example, tapas. It is an intensely deep meditation, contemplation and self-mortification-all put together along with severe austerities.

We, Indians from all states know many of the Sanskrit words like Tapas. There are other words like yajna and yaga-fire rituals associated with fire. Havis, charuvu are words best used as they are with explanations in detail either at the end of the page or the end of the book.

The word daan (an act of great charity) is not easy to translate in one word. It is not donation for it has a deep religious connotation. Karna cannot be called a mere donor. We call him a data, who gives with sacrificial intent.

Young children should be encouraged to read these books with love and affection, giving explanation to some words and concepts with patience.

* * *