

# Agastya Legend and the Indus Civilization

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## 1. Introduction

1.1. It has generally been held that Agastya led the earliest Aryan settlement of South India and introduced Vedic Aryanism there. (For the most recent and comprehensive treatment of this view, see G. S. Ghurye, 1977). This theory has however never been able to explain satisfactorily how the Tamils, proud possessors of an ancient culture of their own and a particularly strong tradition of love for their language, came to accept Agastya, a supposed Aryan intruder, as the founding father, not of the Brahmanical religion or culture in the South, but of their own Tamil language, literature and grammar. There is also no linguistic evidence to support the theory of colonization of the Tamil country by speakers of Indo-Aryan languages in pre-historic times. The interpretation of the Agastya legend in terms of the Aryan acculturation of the South was mainly developed before the discovery of the Indus civilization, considered by most scholars to be non-Aryan and probably Dravidian. Linguistic research in recent years has also brought out the extent of the substratum influence of the North Dravidian languages on the Indo-Aryan from the Vedic times (M. B. Emeneau 1954, 1956; T. Burrow 1958). It has now become possible to take a fresh look at the Agastya legend and attempt an alternative interpretation which would harmonise the two core features of the legend which have hitherto remained irreconcilable, namely, the Northern origin of Agastya and his Southern opotheosis as the founder of Tamil language and grammar. It is proposed in the present paper that the Agastya legend has preserved the memory of the southern migration of groups of Dravidian speakers displaced from the North after the advent of the Aryans into India and that it is possible to trace the ultimate origin of the legend to the Indus civilization.

1.2. The Agastya legend is very ancient and appears even in the Rigveda (*RV*). The story is later embellished by the addition of more details and anecdotes found in the two great traditions, namely the Northern tradition as represented mainly by the Mahabharata and the Ramayana and the Southern tradition of the early Tamil works. The Agastya legend is too well-known to be re-told in detail in this brief

paper. I shall be concerned here mainly with the three essential elements of the legend common to both the traditions namely, (1) the name 'Agastya', (2) the significance of the myth of miraculous birth from a pitcher, and (3) historicity of the Southern migration of Agastya.

## 2. Agastya in the Rigveda

2.1. Agastya is the reputed author of 27 hymns in the Rigveda (*RV*.I, 165-191). He is also referred to in a few more hymns by other Rishis (I.116, 117; VII. 33; VIII. 5; X.60). Agastya is mentioned by name 8 times in these hymns. He and other members of his family are also referred to as Mana, son of Mana, Manya, Manya Mandarya or as the Manas. (Vedic Index).

2.2. The miraculous birth of Agastya along with Vasishtha in a pitcher in which Mitra and Varuna deposited their seed on seeing the celestial nymph Urvasi is referred to in *RV* (VII. 33). Agastya is hence known in later works as Maitravaruni as Kumbhayoni and by other synonymous names meaning 'jar-born'.

2.3. The *RV* does not mention about Agastya's Southern migration, but does give some indication of his special affinity to the Non-Aryan people. In the famous hymn (*RV*.I. 179) of Agastya's dialogue with his wife Lopamudra, Agastya is described as 'the sage of mighty strength, cherished by both Varnas (*uphau varṇau*). Ghurye (1977:20) points out that "in the context of the Rigvedic usage regarding the term 'Varna' it is much more reasonable to construe the expression to mean that Agastya by his austerities and other religious practices brought together and nurtured the two Varnas of the Rigvedic society, those of the Arya and that of the Dasa". It is also mentioned in the *RV* (I. 165, 170, 171) that Agastya effected a reconciliation between Indra and the Maruts, an event important enough to be frequently referred to in the Brahmanas. This may well be an allusion to Agastya's conciliatory mission between the Aryan (represented by Indra) and the Non-Aryan (represented by Maruts, the sons of Rudra). These references in the *RV* assume special significance when viewed in the light of the later tradition of Agastya's migration to the Non-Aryan South.

2.4. Canopus, the most brilliant star of the Southern hemisphere was named after Agastya before C. 600 B.C. commemorating Agastya's association with South India before that date. According to the tradition recorded in the *Matsyapurāna* (202, 12-13), Agastya's are classified as 'rakshasas'. Pargiter (1922, P. 241) interprets this as indicating the association of Agastya with Non-Aryan tribes.



### 3. Agastya in the Northern Traditions

3.1. Agastya of the Northern traditions as recorded mainly in the *Mahabharata* and the *Rāmāyaṇa* is essentially an Indo-Aryan hero whose mission was to subjugate the Rakshasas in the South and make the land safe for Brahman colonists and the performance of Brahmanical rites. The humbling of the Vindhya symbolises the removal of obstacles in the way of the Aryan advance into the South. The story of Vatapi who was swallowed and digested by Agastya is illustrative of the encirclement and assimilation of the Non-Aryan by the Aryan-ism. Agastya even drank all the waters in the ocean so that the Kaleyas who were killing off Brahmanical hermits and who were hiding on the ocean floor could be exposed for extermination by the Devas. Is this an allusion to the influence of Agastya spreading to the South-East Asian Countries?

3.2. Ghurye (1977:17) after collating the Western (*Mbh.*) and the Eastern (*Ram.*) traditions of the North identifies three Agastyas belonging to different epochs, namely,

- (1) The Nahush-humbler Agastya who lived sixty generations earlier to Rama;
- (2) The Ocean-drinking Agastya (who is the husband of Lopamudra) who lived one or two generations before Bhagiratha;
- (3) The Vatapi-digester Agastya who lived two or three generations before Rama.

3.3. According to Ghurye, it is the third of his Agastyas who stopped the growth of the Vindhya and opened the route to the South, as Ilvala's dominion was evidently in the South. However, as I shall mention presently, the Southern traditions are radically different from the Northern ones and the Tamil Agastya had his own characteristics which set him apart from all the Northern Agastyas identified above. It is also obvious that the currently-held view of the Aryanising role of Agastya is almost wholly derived from the Northern sources and hardly takes into account the Tamil traditions.

### 4. Agastya in the Southern Traditions :

4.1. References to Agastya in early Tamil works have been collected together in the essay on 'Akattiyar' by R. Raghava Iyengar (1941). The secondary sources available in English are noticed and succinctly summarised by Ghurye (1977:57). While the Tamil Agastya shares the basic myths of his Northern counterpart, namely miraculous

birth in a pitcher and Southern migration from the North across the Vindhya, he is given a very different role by the Tamil tradition. Here Agastya is so totally identified with the Tamil language that he is termed *Tamiḷ muṇi* ('Tamil sage') and the Tamil language is named after him as *Agastyam*. Agastya received the Tamil language from Siva (or Skanda) and gave it to the world. The Tamil Buddhists claimed that Agastya learnt Tamil from Avalokiteśvara (*Viracōḷiyam* by Buddhamitra). Agastya wrote the first Tamil grammar called *Akattiyam* (not extant now). His grammar dealt with three aspects of Tamil literature, namely prose, poetry and drama. He had twelve disciples including the illustrious Tolkappiyar (whose grammar *Tolkāppiyam* is now the oldest extant work in Tamil). Agastya's prestige as a Tamil scholar was so immense that for centuries many works on astrology and medicine written by others were fathered on him. Even today Tamilnadu has the largest number of Siva temples dedicated to the 'Lord of Agastya' (Agastyeśvara), a feature almost unique to Tamilnadu, as noted by Ghurye (P. 72). According to most competent scholars it is from South India that the Agastya cult was carried to the South-East Asian countries.

4.2. The references to the Agastya legend in the early Tamil works are reviewed by R. Raghava Iyengar (1941) who concludes that Agastya, the *Tamiḷ Muṇi*, cannot be identified with any of the Northern Agastyas known to the Vedas and the two epics. He points out that, apart from the chronological impossibility of positing a single Agastya for all ages, neither the *Rāmāyaṇa* nor the *Mahabharata* mention Agastya's proficiency in Tamil (the dominant theme in the Tamil tradition) though the epics know of the Pandya country and Agastya's association with the Pandya kings.

## 5. Agastya and the Vēḷir migration :

5.1. There is another notable difference between the Northern and the Southern traditions in the treatment of the Agastya legend. While the Agastya of the Northern traditions is an indefinite figure without a historical context, as pointed by Pargiter (1922), Agastya is described in the Tamil tradition as the leader of the Southern migration of the well-known Vēḷir clan and thus comes within the reach of a definite historical tradition.

The earliest reference in Tamil literature to the Agastya legend and the Southern migration of a Northern people is found in verse 201 of *Puranānūru* (a compilation of 400 poems dated at the beginning of the Christian Era, but containing much older traditions). In this poem, the



poet Kapilar addresses Irungovel, a Vēḷ Chieftain, and describes him as having been descended 'through forty-nine generations' from the Vēḷir who arose 'from the pitcher of a Northern sage' and ruled over 'Tuvarai' (Dvārakā). The 'Northern sage' is not named in the poem, but may be identified with Agastya from the reference to the pitcher, his constant accompaniment in sculptural representations. A parallel legend is mentioned in the early Tamil epic *Maṇimēkalai* (c.5 cent.A.D.) about the origin of the river Kaveri 'from the pitcher of Akattiyan, the 'immortal sage'. This is an allusion to the introduction of irrigation by the vēḷir.

5.2. Another version of the legend on the Southern migration of the vēḷir from Dvārakā under the leadership of Agastya is narrated by Naccinarkkiniyar in his commentary on *Tolkāppiyam* (*Pāyiram; Poruḷ.34*). According to this legend the gods congregated on the Mount Meru as a result of which the earth tilted, lowering the Meru and raising the Southern quarter. The gods thereupon decided that Agastya was the best person to remedy this situation and requested him to proceed to the South. Agastya agreed and, on his way, visited 'Tuvarapati' (Dvārakā) and led the descendants of 'Neṭu-muṭi-aṇṇal' (Vishnu or Krishna) including 'eighteen kings, eighteen families of the Vēḷir and the Aruvāḷar' to the South, where they settled down 'clearing the forests and cultivating the land'. The sage himself finally settled down on the Potiyil hill.

5.3. The Vēḷir constituted a large and powerful ruling class in the early historical Tamil society. The frequent phrase *vēntar-um vēḷir-um* ('the Kings and the Chieftains') in the Caṅkam poems (e.g. *Patir*, 30, 49, 75, 88) indicates the high position occupied by the Vēḷir in the Tamil polity next only to the three great crowned kings. The Vēḷir ruled the smaller principalities as Chieftains and also served at the court of the crowned Kings as nobles, Ministers and Generals. It is mentioned (Naccinarkkiniyar on *Tol. Purattiṇṇai*, 79) that the Vēḷir had the right to give their daughters in marriage to the Royal princes. The Vēḷir chiefs known as Vallals were famous for their liberality and patronage of Tamil poets. The Vēḷir of the Caṅkam Age, the Vēḷir of the medieval period, and the Vēḷāḷar, the great mass of Tamil peasantry down to the modern times, all seem to belong to the same stock. Naccinarkkiniyar (*Tol. Poruḷ. 34*) mentions that the Vēḷāḷar were men at the command of the Vēḷir, and divides them into two classes, namely those who owned the land and those who actually cultivated it. The

attachment of the *Vēlālar* to the land is so proverbial that the word for agriculture in Tamil is *vēlānmai* (abstract noun formed from *vēlā*). The folklore of the Tamil *Vēlālar* still preserves the tradition that they are Gangeyas ('Children of the Ganga river').

5.4. In a classic monograph considered a landmark in Tamil historical studies, M. Raghava Iyengar (1913) brought together for the first time literary references, inscriptional data and the evidence of place names to show that the *Vēlir* traditions of miraculous birth from a pitcher, descent from the Yadavas and Southern migration from the banks of the Ganga or from *Dvārakā* were ancient and widely shared by many of the Dravidian dynasties including the Chalukyas and the Hoysalas. Thus, M. Raghava Iyengar's work enlarged the scope of the Tamil tradition into a wider Dravidian tradition which itself was linked by him through the Yadavas ultimately to the still wider Indian historical tradition of the Age of the Mahabharata.

#### 6. Contrast between Northern and Southern Traditions :

6.1. The notable differences between the Northern (Indo-Aryan) and the Southern (Dravidian-Tamil) traditions relating to the Agastya legend can now be set forth in the form of a Table :

#### Agastya Legend

Northern (Indo-Aryan) Traditions	Southern (Dravidian-Tamil) Traditions
1. Migrates from North to South	Migrates from North to South
2. Kills the Rakshasas	Clears the forests
3. Promotes Vedic Aryanism	Promotes agriculture and irrigation
4. Leader of Brahman colonists	Leader of the <i>vēlir</i> clan
5. Indo-Aryan or Sanskrit Speaker (implicit in the claim of Northern extraction and Aryan leadership)	The greatest exponent of Tamil Language; author of the earliest Tamil grammar
6. Has no definite historical context.	Linked to the Indian historical tradition of (a) <i>Vēntar-Vēlir-Vēlālar</i> hierarchy of Tamil <i>Caṅkam</i> Polity (b) Dravidian ruling classes claiming descent from a pitcher (c) Yadavas, and (through them) the Andha-Kuru-Vrishni-Bhoja tribes of the Mahabharata Age.



6.2. The comparison between the two traditions shows that the Northern tradition is basically a historical, and is nothing more than a collection of incredible fables and myths dimly remembered from a very remote past with which those who recorded the tradition had lost living contact. On the contrary the Southern tradition rings much truer and appears to be a down to earth account of a historical event, namely the mass migration to the South of the *vēḷir* who are identified as part of a living tradition at the time of the *caṅkam* polity described in the earliest Tamil works.

6.3. The fact of Agastya's leadership of the *Vēḷir* clan rules out the possibility that he was even in origin an Indo-Aryan speaker. The *Vēḷir-Vēḷār-Vēḷāḷar* groups constituted the ruling and the land-owning classes in the Tamil country since the beginning of recorded history and betray no trace whatever of an Indo-Aryan linguistic ancestry. The Tamil Society had of course come under the religious and cultural influences of the North even before the beginning of the *Caṅkam* Age, but had maintained its linguistic identity. From what we now know of the linguistic prehistory of India, it is more plausible to assume that the Yadavas were the Aryanised descendants of an original Non-Aryan people than to consider the Tamil *Vēḷir* as the later offshoot of the Indo-Aryan speaking Yadavas. The Agastya legend itself can be re-interpreted as Non-Aryan and Dravidian even in origin and pertaining to the Pre-Vedic Proto-historical period in the North.

## II

### AGASTYA LEGEND IN THE INDUS CIVILIZATION

#### 7. The JAR Sign :



7.1. The most important clue linking the Agastya legend with the Indus Civilization is the pictographic JAR sign in the Indus texts. (I. Mahadevan, 1977, Sign List, No. 342). Hunter (1934:55) suggested that the shape of the sign resembled a vase or a jar with two handles, the upper horizontal elements representing the lips of the vase, the lower its handles. He compared the variant shapes of the sign with early Sumerian and Egyptian pictographic signs (Ibid. p. 201, no.1) The Finnish scholars who identified the sign as a 'ship' have since withdrawn their suggestion (A. Parpola 1974). The Soviet scholars (Yu. V. Knorozov 1965, 1970) have proposed that the sign represents

the asvattha tree on the basis of a comparison of the sign with the representation of the tree in some of the pictorial motifs depicted on seals (e.g. Seal No. 2430). I have not however come across any variant shape in the inscriptions to justify this comparison. Recently B.B.Lal (1975, 1978) has made an exhaustive survey of the original material and, on the basis of new evidence provided by some of the inscribed potsherds from Kalibangan, has proved that the shape of this sign is in all likelihood derived from that of a goblet or a vase.

7.2. The JAR sign is by far the most frequent sign in the Indus Script, occurring 1395 times in 2906 texts and accounting for about 10 percent of the total sign-occurrences. The sign occurs mostly at the end of the texts (971 times) (Mahadevan 1977 : Tables). Analysis has shown that the sign is affixed to single signs or well-defined sign-groups which appear by themselves to be complete words (Hunter 1934:59). The almost constant terminal position of the sign has led most scholars to the conclusion that it must be a post-fixed determinative or an inflexional case-ending or a grammatical suffix of some sort. As the sign is the most common ending on the seal-texts which most probably contain personal names and titles, it is generally considered to be associated with personal names as a nominal suffix of some type.

7.3. None of the attempts to fix the phonetic value of the sign has received general acceptance. It is my view that the almost invariant position of the sign as a terminal element shows that it is not merely a phonetic syllable but has some semantic or grammatical function. The Soviet view (Knorozov 1965 : 58) that it is a case-ending, most probably the genitive or the oblique, does not appear to be correct as the sign occurs (1) doubled in one instance (seal No. 9901); (2) as a complete text (in a recently discovered unpublished button seal from Daimabad) and (3) as the initial element in compound signs (Sign List Nos. 15 and 394). Taking note of these facts I have withdrawn my own earlier suggestion (1970) that the sign represents 'the masculine singular pronominal termination'. I now consider that the sign is most probably used in an ideographic sense to denote the class of persons to whose names it is found suffixed.

7.4. The symbolism of the 'jar' is closely associated in Indian religious tradition with priestly ritual. This association must be very ancient as the miraculous birth of Vasishtha and Agastya from a pitcher is mentioned even in the *RV* (VII. 33). A similar story is told of Drona ('vessel') in the Mahabharata. The Kauravas were born from a hundred jars (in which portions of Gandhari's foetus/were stored). The Sou-



thern dynasties including the Vēḷir, the Pallavas and the Chalukyas claimed miraculous descent from vessels. I may also point out that the prevalence of the jar myth among priests as well as princes is evidence that it may be derived from a priest-ruler tradition antedating the division of four Varnas in the Aryan social order.

7.5. On the basis of the considerations summarised above, I have suggested (1979) that the JAR sign is a pictogram depicting a sacrificial vessel used in priestly ritual and employed as an ideogram suffixed to names to denote the concept of a priest. In later times the jar symbolism continued to be associated with the priestly and ruling classes and gave rise to the myth of the miraculous birth from a jar.

7.6. At an earlier stage of my study of the Indus Script, I attempted to discover the phonetic value of the JAR sign by the technique of homonymy (Mahadevan 1970). I now believe that since the JAR sign was used ideographically to denote a priest, it is not necessary that the words for 'priest' and 'Jar' were homophones in the Harappan language. Strictly speaking, an ideogram, by definition, cannot be phoneticised, as it is intended to convey the meaning directly. However it may be pointed out that the most ancient word for 'priest' in Dravidian was probably \**vēl*, derived from the root, *vēl* 'to pray, to beseech' (DED. 4548) or 'to perform a sacrifice' (DED. 4561). It appears that the word *vēl* came to mean 'a petty ruler, chief' (DED. 4562) even by the time of the caṅkam Age, evidently as a result of the semantic shift from 'priest-ruler' to 'ruler'.

7.7. If the JAR sign stands for \**vēl*, 'priest' it is connected to the Agastya legend in three ways, namely:

- (a) As a pictograph symbolising the 'jar myth' associated with Agastya;
- (b) As an ideograph representing Agastya as the 'Priest' (*vēl*);
- (c) As a confirmation of the historical connection of Agastya with the Vēḷir.

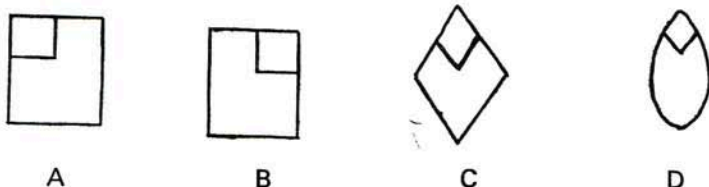
## 8. The PALACE Sign :



8.1. It is possible to identify some of the signs of the Indus Script as place names (Mahadevan 1981). We know from later historical inscriptions, especially in the Dravidian languages, that place names generally precede personal names. Many of the Indus seal-texts begin

with one or the other of a few standard opening formula or phrases which appear to be regularly placed before names, but which are too few and too universal to be part of personal names. Hence these opening phrases are likely to contain place names. This supposition receives further confirmation from the use of small super-script suffixes immediately after the place signs, and functioning like grammatical particles. Since however the same opening signs are found at all major Harappan sites, they cannot be identified with the name of any particular Harappan city. The place signs must then refer to some important place or institution present in each Harappan city, for example, palace, temple, etc.

8.2. One of the most frequent signs in the Indus Script (sign No. 267) is a pictogram which appears to depict a 'house' within an 'enclosure' and with a large 'courtyard' in front. As the illustration shows, this sign appears to be very close in shape to the Egyptian ideogram or determinative with the meaning 'castle, mansion, palace temple or tomb'. (Gardiner 1973, Signlist No. O. 6).



Ideograms for Palace

(A : Egyptian; B : Kalibangan; C & D : All major sites)

8.3. The PALACE ideogram is the fourth most frequent sign in the Indus Script (376 times) and is by far the most frequent opening sign in the texts, occurring 298 times initially. The position and the frequency of the sign suggest that it represents an important concept in the Harappan polity. It is therefore interesting to find evidence to equate the sign with palace or temple or more generally with the palace-temple-citadel complex constituting the seat of authority in the Harappan polity. We can thus interpret the seal-texts commencing with this sign as referring to officials or functionaries acting in the name of the palace/temple.

8.4. Identity of the Indus and the Egyptian ideograms for palace/temple suggests another parallel. It is well known that the title 'Pharaoh' of the ancient Egyptian rulers literally meant '(Great) House' from *pr* 'house' (Gardiner 1973:75). Since the Indus seals also seem to



refer to a 'palace' rather than to a 'king', we can look for a parallel Dravidian expression deriving the concept of the rulership from the institution of the palace. Consider the following entries in DED. 8 :

<i>aka-m</i>	: house, place, inside
<i>aka-ttu</i>	: within, in the house
<i>aka-tt-ā</i>	: master of the house, householder.

Kathiraiver Pillai's Tamil Dictionary (1918; 1981 reprint) lists three meanings for *akatti* thus :

- akatti* : (1) *Akattiya Munivan* (Agastya)  
 (2) *Uḷḷirukkiran* (Insider')  
 (3) *Orumaram* ('Agasti grandiflora')

8.5. The PALACE ideogram is almost invariably followed by a small superscript suffix consisting of two short parallel strokes raised above the line (Sign No. 99). This is the second most frequent sign in the Indus Script (649 times) and appears to be a grammatical suffix. The suffix is very probably the oblique case-ending (\*-tt in Dr.). Thus

the most frequent opening pair of signs in the Indus texts



corresponds to Dr. *\*aka-tt(u)* meaning 'inside (the House)', or *\*aka-tti-* 'one who is inside (the House)'. These expressions probably connoted the ruling class of the Harappan polity with its power centre or seat of authority 'inside' the 'House' (the palace - temple - citadel complex) present in every large Harappan city. In course of time *\*akatti* probably became a clan title passing into IA, as the loan words *agasti/agastya*. There is no satisfactory etymology for *agasti* in IA. One can also point out to a parallel phonological development in IA, *agasti* (the tree 'agasti grandiflora') which is almost certainly borrowed from Dr. *akatti* with the same meaning (DED.6).

8.6. It is remarkable that the most frequent opening pair of signs



and the most frequent final sign



accounting for

almost one-fifth of the total sign-occurrences in the Indus Texts, correspond to Dr. *\*aka-tt.....vē!* meaning 'of the House (palace/

temple) : (so and so), (the) priest' and suggesting the Dr. historical names Akattiyā and the Veḷir and also visually depicting a jar recalling the jar myth.

### 9. Evidence :

9.1. In one of my earlier papers (1972) I have suggested that Dr. words and the associated ideograms current in the Indus Civilization could have surfaced in the IA. as loan words/loan translations and as associated symbols. Such borrowings could be identified by the absence of convincing IA. etymology for the words and the arbitrariness of the associated symbolism. In favourable circumstances such investigation may provide corroborative evidence for the identification of the ideograms in question. I shall now present some evidence for a similar process in the present case.

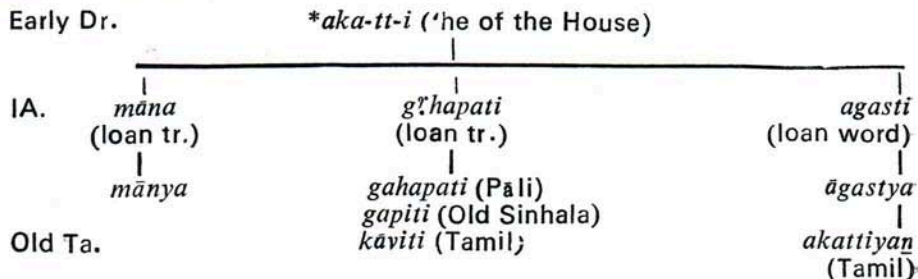
9.2. I have suggested above that IA. *Agasti* (the name of a sage) is probably derived from Dr. *\*aka-tt-i*, 'he of the house, master of the house, householder'. As I have mentioned earlier in this paper, Agastya had another name *Māna* or *Mānya* in the *RV* (Vedic Index). This name is supposed to mean 'pride' (Ibid.). However the word *māna* also means in the *RV* 'a building, house, dwelling' (Monier-Williams). It is therefore likely that *Māna* ('house') and *Mānya* ('relating to the house') could be loan-translations corresponding to the loan word *Agasti* (both from Dr. *\*aka-tt-i*).

9.3. *Gṛhapati* in the *RV* and later is a title or honorific which means literally 'householder' or 'master of the house' (Vedic Index). However, in actual usage, especially in Pāli (*gahapati*), the term connoted the Vaiśya caste, and is in places used even in a pejorative sense, by those of the higher castes. In the Buddhist Jatakas, the title is said to have denoted the lower land-owning nobility and the rich middle class who formed a special class and rank. The word is also of frequent occurrence in Sanskrit and Prakrit literature of the Jains, where it denoted big land-owners as distinguished from the humble artisan class. In Ceylon too the word has become specialised to denote the Vaisya caste (*govi*). In the early Brāhmī inscriptions of Ceylon, *gahapati*, *gapati* and *gapiti* are the titles of several of the donors, all derived from Skt. *gṛhapati* (paranavitana 1970). The word seems to have been ultimately reborrowed in Dr. as it appears in old Tamil in the form *kāviti* with the meanings 'ancient title bestowed on Veḷālar by the Pandya kings, a minister' etc. (Tamil Lexicon). (I have modified my earlier view that Ta. *kāviti* is to be derived from *kā*, 'to bear the burden



of office. Thus *g<sup>h</sup>hapati*, in spite of a good IA. etymology seems really to be a loan translation of the Non-Aryan title *\*aka-tt-i*, 'master of the House'.

9.4. The following chart will clarify the course of borrowings suggested here :



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