The Debt of Nourishment

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Once upon a time, there lived a beautiful, happy family. Along with the husband and wife, two cows named Godavari and Kaveri, a female and male buffalo named Kali and Baire, two oxen named Tandel and Binne, and a faithful dog named Dasu. They all lived together in perfect harmony. It was said that they possessed twice as much gold and jewelry, safely kept in a large wooden chest.

Having learned about this wealth, a group of thieves hatched a plan. One evening, disguised as a husband and wife, they came to the house and asked, "Is this the house of Lokayya Master? Who are you, and how are you related to him?" The master of the house replied, "I am his son, Chandaya Shetty." The impostors then said, "When we consulted an astrologer about our ancestral roots and family home, we were told it was a schoolmaster's house located to the north, near a water. We searched and came all this way. Now we realize this is our original ancestral home. In the future, whenever rituals for the Naga or Daivas, take place here, please inform us. We will bear all the expenses."

The family was overjoyed to hear this. "Since it is already late, please stay here tonight," they insisted. They went to the coop, caught a hen, and prepared a grand feast.
The guests ate a hearty meal of chicken curry and rice dumplings until their stomachs were full. Afterward, they sat down to chew betel leaves, with the platter placed in front of them. Ever since these new guests had arrived, Dasu, the loyal dog, had been suspicious of their behavior and kept a watchful eye on them.
While chewing the betel leaves, the man took a leaf, rubbed it against his forearm, and applied lime paste. Then, the person dressed as a woman took a leaf but, rubbed it against her forearm just like the man. Seeing this, the dog's suspicion grew stronger. After chewing the betel leaves and before going to sleep, both guests went outside to relieve themselves. Instead of entering the outhouse, both of them walked toward the edge of the plantation. The dog quietly followed and observed them. When both of them stood with their hands on their hips, smoking cigarettes, and urinated while standing, the dog's suspicion was completely confirmed.
Despite trying his best, the dog could not sleep at all. He quietly crept into the backyard of the house and peeked through a gap in the window of the room where the thieves, disguised as guests were staying. What he saw terrified him. The thieves were taking out a sword, a dagger, a knife, and a hammer one by one from their bag, whispering to each other.
Realizing that they were going to murder the master of the house tonight, the dog tucked his tail between his legs and began running around the house, whimpering and crying. He wondered how he could warn the master. He thought, "If I look inside the house and bark, they might just beat me and break my back."

Deeply worried about how to avert the impending disaster, the dog went into the cowshed. Sitting near the manger, he looked into the eyes of the oxen, tears streaming from the corners of his eyes. Seeing the terrified and anxious face of the dog, the pair of oxen sensed that some terrible danger was looming. They began tossing their heads violently, trying to snap their tethers. Seeing this, the dog quickly chewed through the ropes and bit them apart.

As soon as the ropes broke, one ox charged into the front courtyard of the house, while the other ran into the backyard.

The master, who was fast asleep, was jolted awake by the sudden loud clanging of the oxen's bells. He rushed outside in a hurry. Seeing the ox named 'Binne' running loose in the courtyard, he shouted loudly, "Sumathi! Oh Sumathi! Tie up this Binne, I will go and bring Tandel!"

Hearing the master shout, the thieves panicked, realizing their true identities were about to be exposed. tucking their weapons back into the bag, they fled into the night.

Moral: The mute animals we feed and care for will always find a way to repay the debt of the food and shelter they received, demonstrating their ultimate loyalty when it matters most