



Vol.1

THE RAMAYANA BALA KAND





The route to your roots

Founder Editor: Anant Pai

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THE RAMAYANA
BALA KAND





The *Ramayana* is one of the great epics of the world. The story of Rama and Sita is a timeless tale of heroism, courage, love and loyalty; of human emotions and faults that lead to tragic consequences; and of the triumph of good over evil. An inseparable part of our heritage, the *Ramayana* provides vital clues about India's ancient history and culture.

Composed by Rishi Valmiki in Sanskrit verse more than 5000 years ago, it touched everyone who heard it. There are versions of the story in almost every Indian language, there are dance, drama and puppet theatre versions, and paintings and sculptures depicting scenes from the *Ramayana* in every state. Ramayana songs, composed by great devotees, occupy a special place in Classical and Folk music. The story was carried all over Asia and unique versions are found in countries like Tibet, China, Japan, Myanmar, Thailand, Cambodia, Indonesia (Bali) and the Philippines.

This *Amar Chitra Katha* retelling is based on Valmiki's original epic, which is composed of seven kands, or books, comprising 645 chapters.

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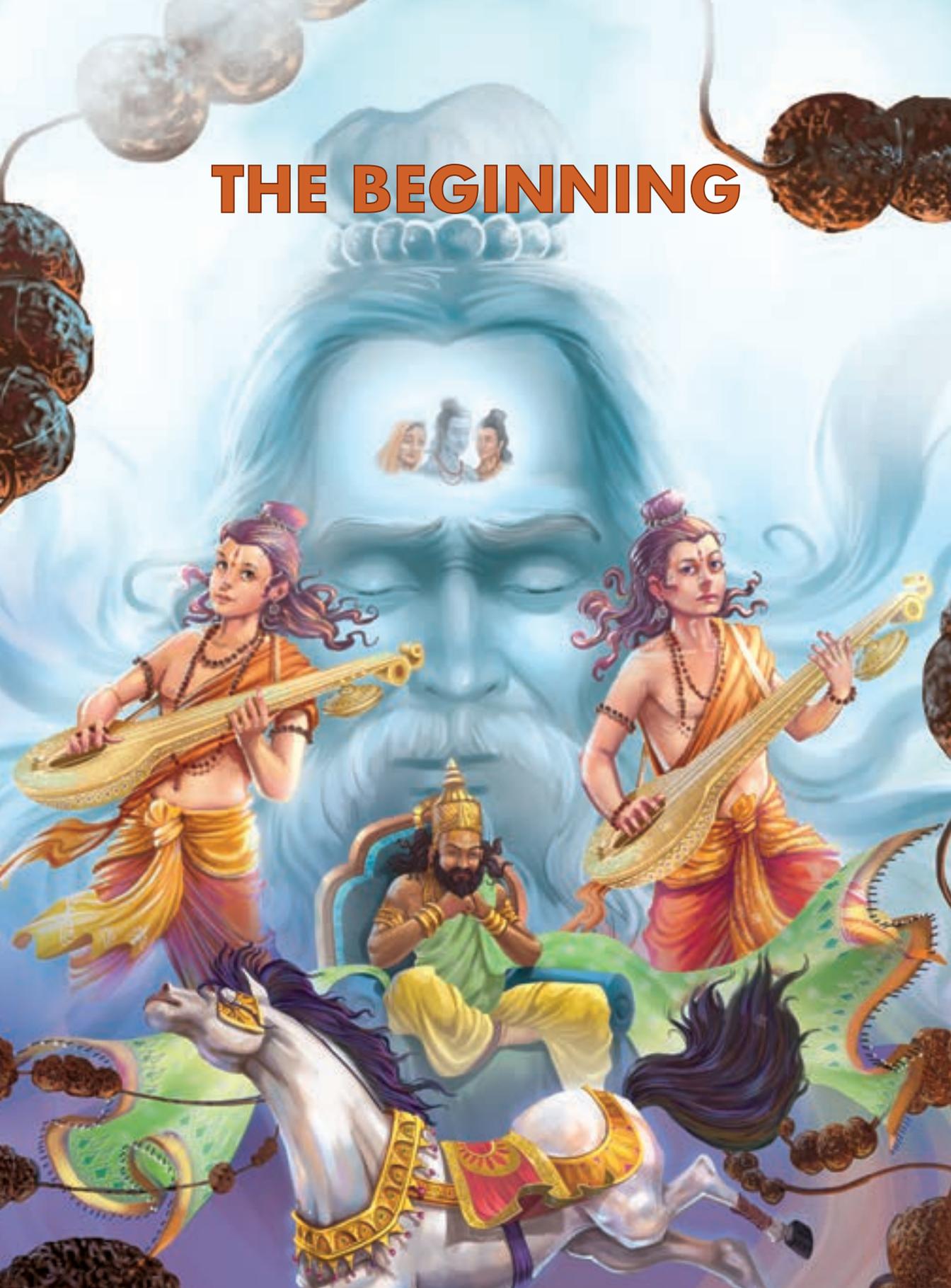
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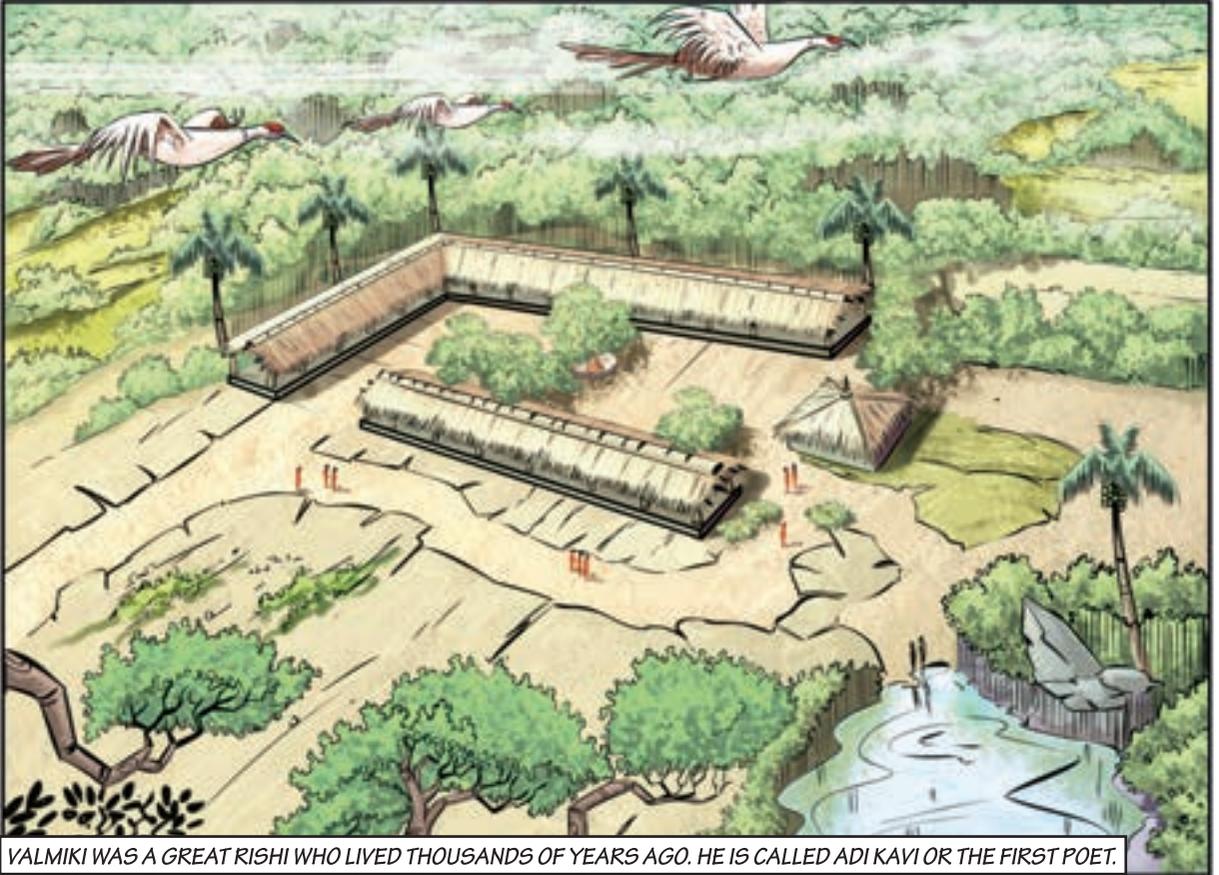
The main translations used in this retelling are:

1. Srimad Valmiki Ramayana in 3 vols. (With Sanskrit text and English translation), Gita Press, Gorakhpur, India, 4th edition, 1995.
2. Online translation by the Rashtriya Sanskrit Vidyapeeth, Tirupathi, hosted by IIT Kanpur: <http://valmiki.iitk.ac.in/index.php?id=translation>
3. Online translation by Sri Desiraju Hanumanta Rao and Sri K.M.K. Murthy: <http://www.valmikiramayan.net/index.html>

The writer wishes to acknowledge the help of her mother, Mrs Ranga Gopalswami, in clarifying many points during the writing of the script.

THE BEGINNING

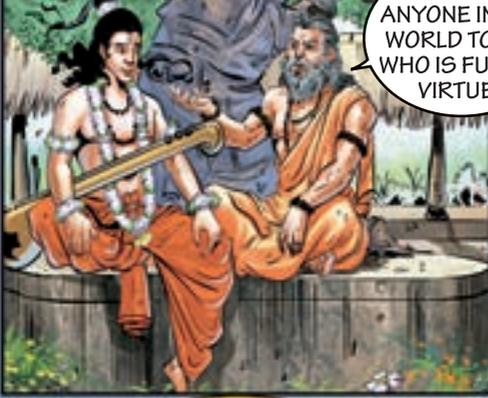




ONE DAY VALMIKI HAD A VISITOR IN HIS ASHRAM.



IT WAS NARADA MUNI, SON OF BRAHMA, WHO ROAMED THE THREE WORLDS* SINGING THE PRAISES OF HARI^.



IS THERE ANYONE IN THE WORLD TODAY WHO IS FULL OF VIRTUE?

YES! KING RAMA, OF THE ANCIENT LINE OF IKSHVAKU, IS STRONG AND RESOLUTE. HE IS PURE OF HEART, EVER TRUE TO HIS PROMISES AND PROTECTS ALL LIVING BEINGS.



RAMA IS AS PROFOUND AS THE OCEAN, PATIENT AS MOTHER EARTH AND TRUTHFUL AS DHARMA. HE IS AS VALIANT AS VISHNU, AND HIS ANGER IS LIKE THE FIRE THAT DESTROYS THE UNIVERSE.



NARADA THEN RELATED THE STORY OF RAMA'S LIFE.



....AND SO, RAMA RETURNED TO AYODHYA AND WAS CROWNED KING. ALL HIS PEOPLE ARE HAPPY. FIRE, FAMINE, DISEASE AND CRIME DO NOT EXIST IN HIS KINGDOM.



*SWARGA (HEAVEN), BHOOMI (EARTH) AND PATALA (UNDERWORLD)

^VISHNU

AFTER NARADA LEFT, VALMIKI WENT FOR HIS MIDDAY BATH IN THE TAMASA RIVER.

SUDDENLY -

HOW LOVINGLY THESE KRAUNCHA BIRDS* ARE CALLING TO EACH OTHER, AND HOW BEAUTIFUL IS THEIR DANCE!

AH! THOSE POOR BIRDS.

OVERCOME WITH PITY, VALMIKI CURSED THE HUNTER.

MĀ NISHĀDA PRATISHTĀM
TVAMAGAMAH SHĀSHVATĪH SAMĀH |
YAT KRAUNCHA MITHUNĀT EKAM
AVADHĪH KĀMA MOHITĀM ||^

VALMIKI WENT HIS WAY, SURPRISED AT HIS OWN WORDS.

HOW STRANGE! WHAT I SAID OUT OF PITY AND ANGER WAS SO MUSICAL - THE LINES CAN BE RECITED OR SUNG!

HE CALLED BHARADWAJA, HIS STUDENT, AND TOLD HIM WHAT HAD HAPPENED.

...BUT AS I CURSED HIM, THE WORDS TOOK ON A RHYTHM.

WHAT AN AMAZING DISCOVERY! OUT OF SHOKA** HAS COME SHLOKA^^!

*THE KRAUNCHA BIRD, OR SARUS CRANE, IS THE WORLD'S TALLEST FLYING BIRD, AND IS WELL KNOWN FOR ITS LOYALTY TO ITS MATE.

^O HUNTER, YOU HAVE KILLED ONE OF A PAIR OF BIRDS IN LOVE, SO YOU WILL NOT LIVE LONG. **SORROW ^^VERSE

VALMIKI RETURNED TO THE ASHRAM, DEEP IN THOUGHT.

THOSE POOR BIRDS... STILL, I SHOULD NOT HAVE LOST MY TEMPER AND CURSED THAT HUNTER... BUT THEN, HOW BEAUTIFULLY WORDED WAS THE CURSE!

SUDDENLY, BRAHMA, THE CREATOR, APPEARED BEFORE HIM.

BHAGWANI BHARADWAJA, BRING WATER TO WASH THE LORD'S HANDS AND FEET.

FORGET YOUR SORROW, O JEWEL AMONG RISHIS! USE THE POETIC VERSE YOU HAVE DISCOVERED TO TELL THE SOUL-STIRRING STORY OF RAMA.

I SHALL GIVE YOU THE VISION TO SEE ALL THAT HAPPENED, EVEN THE THOUGHTS OF THE CHARACTERS. YOUR TRUTHFUL ACCOUNT OF RAMA'S LIFE WILL ALWAYS BE POPULAR IN THE THREE WORLDS.

WITH THE YOGIC POWER GIVEN TO HIM BY BRAHMA, VALMIKI SAW THE ENTIRE LIFE OF RAMA - PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE. HE BEGAN TO COMPOSE THE RAMAYANA.

THE POEM WAS 24,000 VERSES LONG, FORMING SIX KANDS* DIVIDED INTO OVER 500 SARGAS^, BUT VALMIKI HAD NOT YET FINISHED.

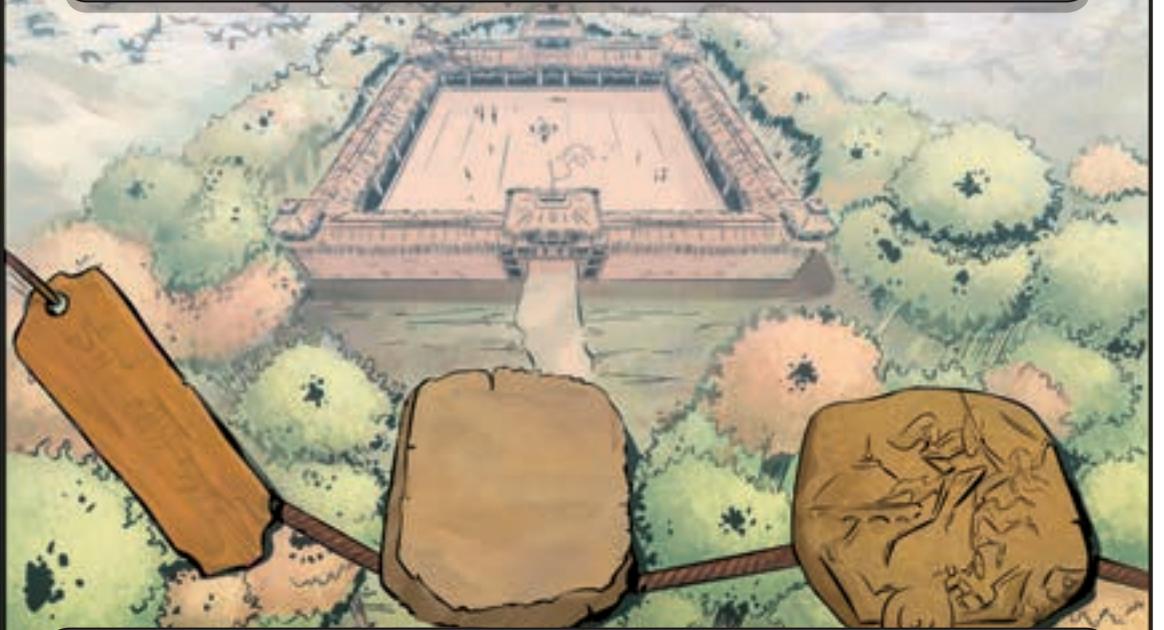
I STILL HAVE TO ADD ONE MORE KAND, ABOUT THE FUTURE EVENTS OF RAMA'S LIFE.

AT LAST, THE RAMAYANA WAS COMPLETE. NOW VALMIKI HAD TO TEACH IT TO ONE OF HIS STUDENTS - SOMEONE WHO HAD A GOOD MEMORY AND COULD RECITE IT TO A LARGE AUDIENCE.

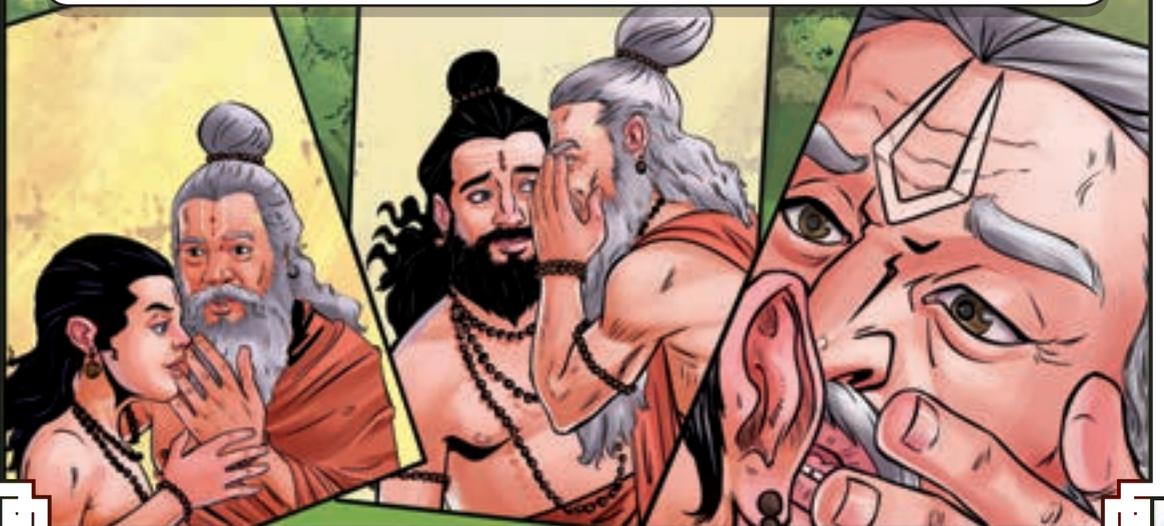
HMMM... WHY NOT LUYA AND KUSHA? THEY KNOW THE VEDAS WELL, THEY HAVE GOOD MEMORIES AND SWEET VOICES.

THE ORAL TRADITION

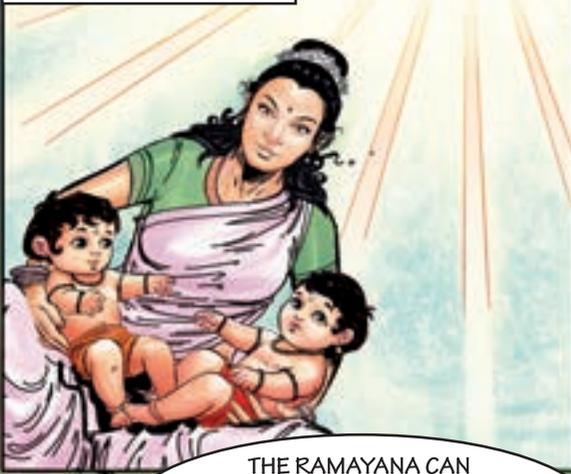
In ancient India, students did not have textbooks or notebooks. Very few people could read and write, although writing had been invented. Most knowledge was passed on orally and students had to learn everything by heart so that they would never forget it. Early poets, philosophers and scientists, like Valmiki, Vyasa, Patanjali, Panini and Aryabhata, all put their work into verse form, which could be memorised easily.



They then taught these verses to carefully-selected students, who would pass it faithfully to their students, without changing a single syllable. They did not teach it to those who could not transmit it faithfully for fear of the texts being corrupted. In this way, the Vedas, epics and other compositions were preserved in their pure form for thousands of years. It is believed that the Ramayana is over 5,000 years old. That's a long time for passing on an oral tradition!



LUYA AND KUSHA WERE THE TWIN SONS OF SITA AND RAMA. THEY HAD BEEN BORN AND BROUGHT UP IN VALMIKI'S ASHRAM AFTER THEIR MOTHER HAD BEEN SENT AWAY FROM AYODHYA. THEY WERE DEVOTED TO VALMIKI.



VALMIKI TAUGHT THEM THE WHOLE RAMAYANA.



THE RAMAYANA CAN ALSO BE CALLED SITAYAHA CHARITAM MAHAT (THE SUBLIME LEGEND OF SITA) OR PAULASTYA VADHA (THE DEATH OF PAULASTYA*).



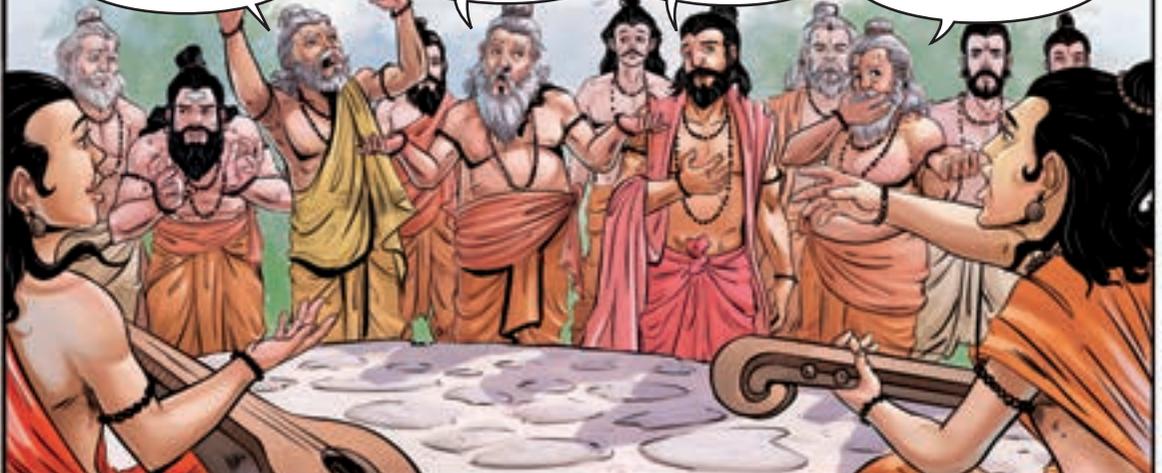
THE TWINS MEMORISED THE POEM AND RECITED IT FIRST BEFORE AN AUDIENCE OF HOLY MEN, AND THEN BEFORE AN OPEN ASSEMBLY.

WHAT BEAUTIFUL DESCRIPTIONS!

WHAT MELODIOUS VOICES!

WHAT CONCENTRATION.

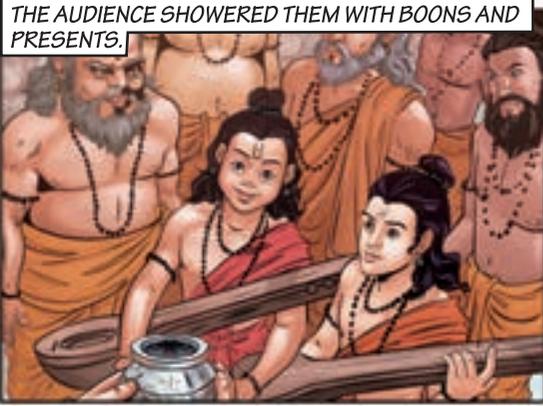
THIS NOBLE POEM CONTAINS ALL THE NINE RASAS^.



*ANOTHER NAME FOR RAVANA, A DESCENDANT OF PULASTYA

^THE NINE RASAS OF CLASSICAL SANSKRIT ARE LOVE, PITY, HUMOUR, HEROISM, TERROR, ANGER, DISGUST, WONDER AND PEACE.

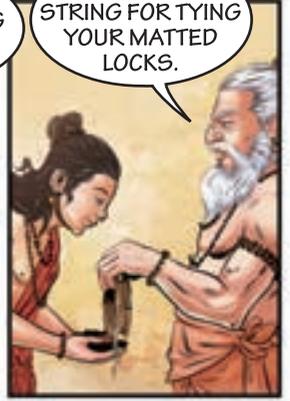
THE AUDIENCE SHOWERED THEM WITH BOONS AND PRESENTS.



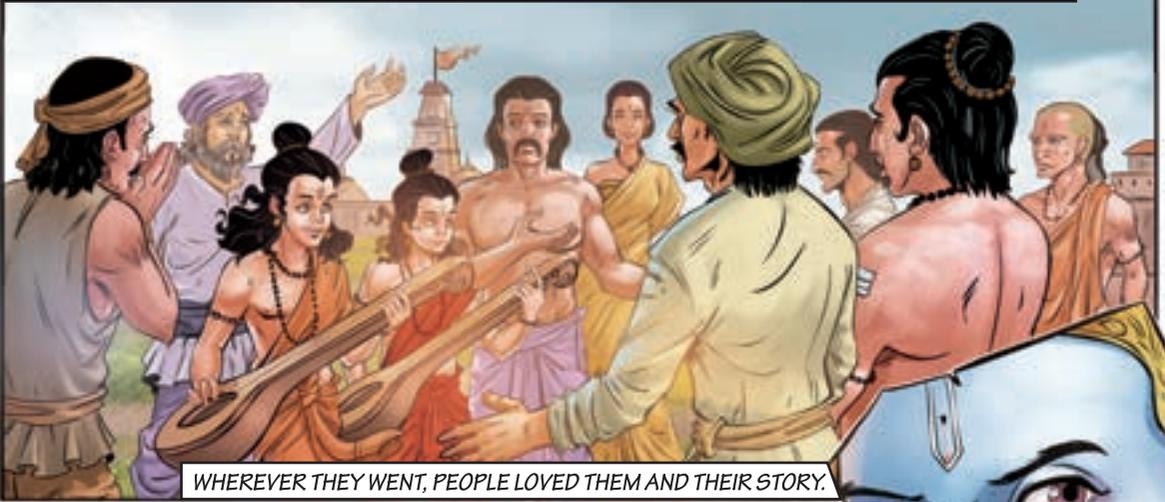
YOU CAN DO TAPAS* SITTING ON THIS DEER SKIN.



HERE IS A STRING FOR TYING YOUR MATTED LOCKS.



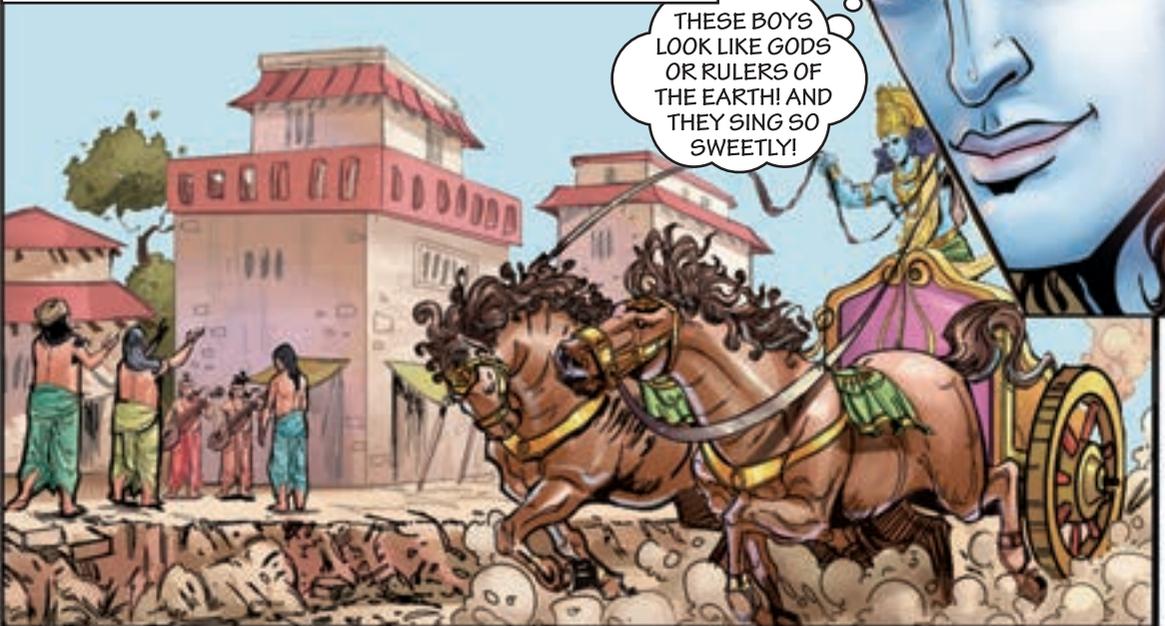
LUYA AND KUSHA WANDERED ALL OVER THE COUNTRY, SINGING THE RAMAYANA IN VILLAGES AND TOWNS.



WHEREVER THEY WENT, PEOPLE LOVED THEM AND THEIR STORY.

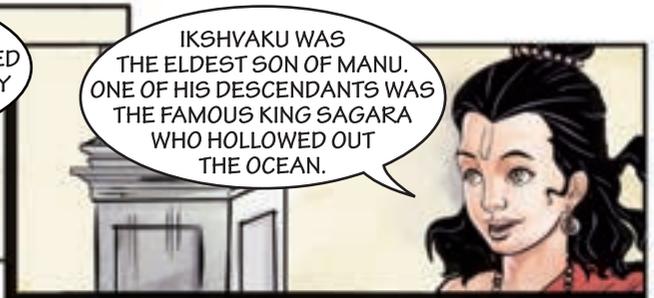
ONE DAY, IN AYODHYA, KING RAMA HIMSELF HAPPENED TO HEAR THEM.

THESE BOYS LOOK LIKE GODS OR RULERS OF THE EARTH! AND THEY SING SO SWEETLY!

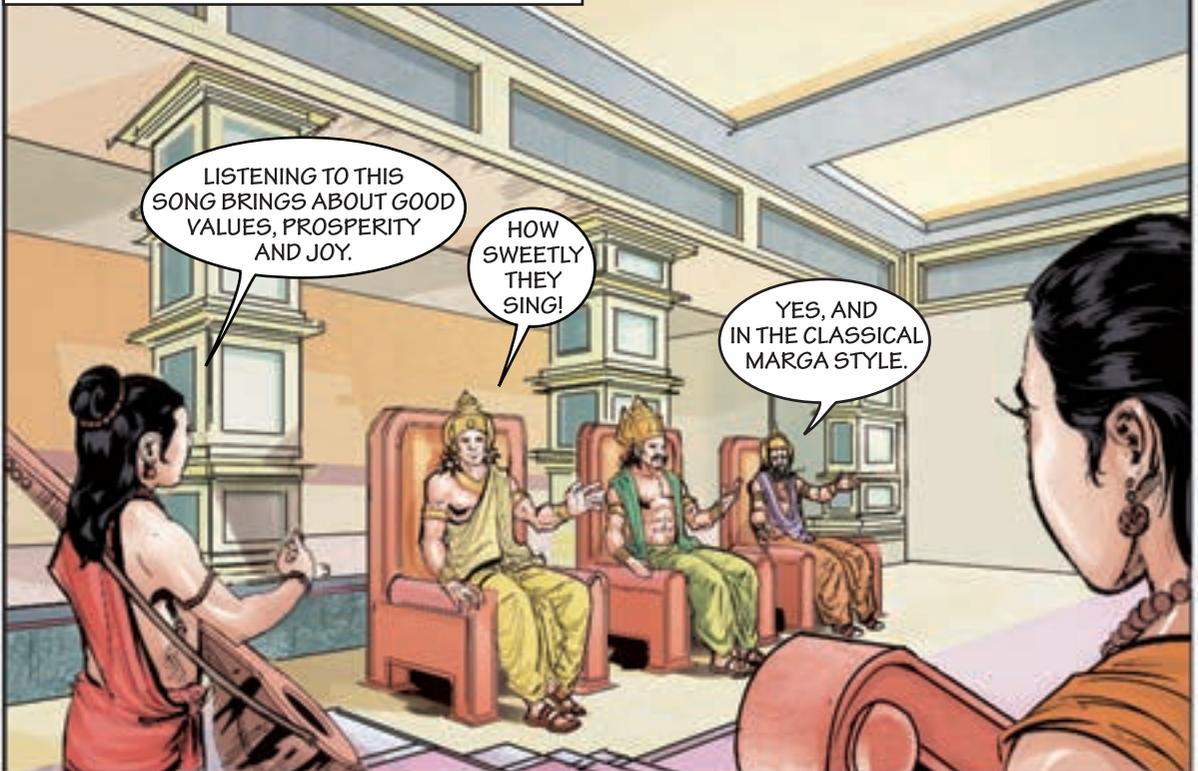


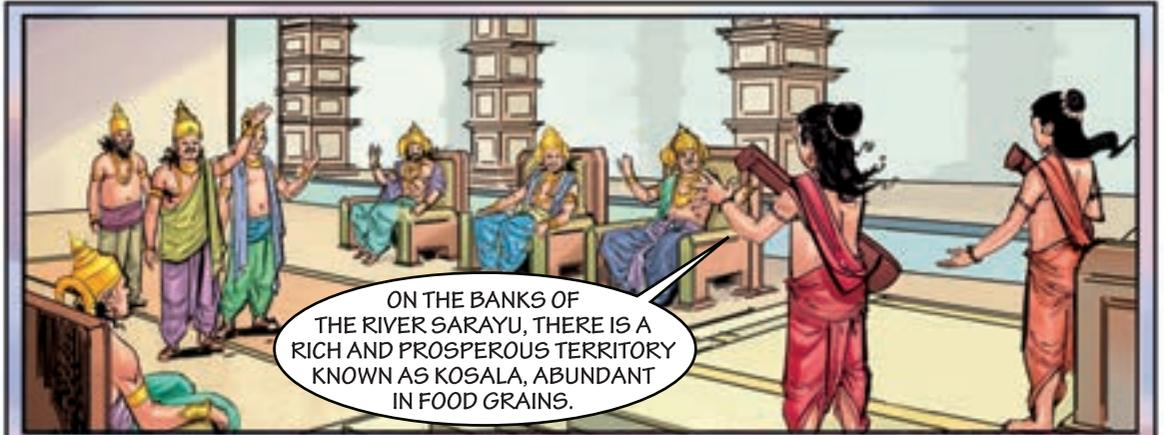
*MEDITATION AND CONTROL OF THE SENSES

RAMA INVITED THEM TO SING AT THE PALACE AND INTRODUCED THEM TO HIS MINISTERS AND TO HIS BROTHERS, BHARATA, LAKSHMANA AND SHATRUGHNA.



THE TWO BOYS SANG THE RAMAYANA IN RAMA'S COURT.





IN IT IS THE FAMOUS CITY OF AYODHYA, WHERE THE WATER IS AS SWEET AS THE JUICE OF SUGARCANE. AYODHYA WAS BUILT BY MANU, THE RULER OF MANKIND. ITS PEOPLE ARE HOSPITABLE, GRATEFUL, GENEROUS, HEROIC, POWERFUL AND GOOD-LOOKING.



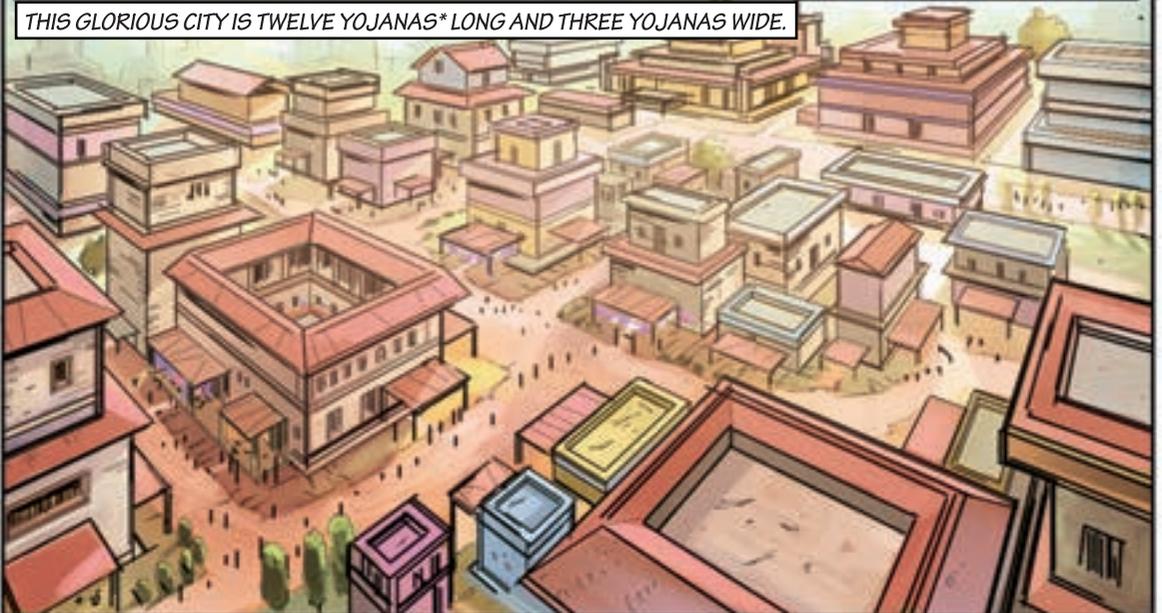
IT HAS WIDE, BEAUTIFUL ROADS...



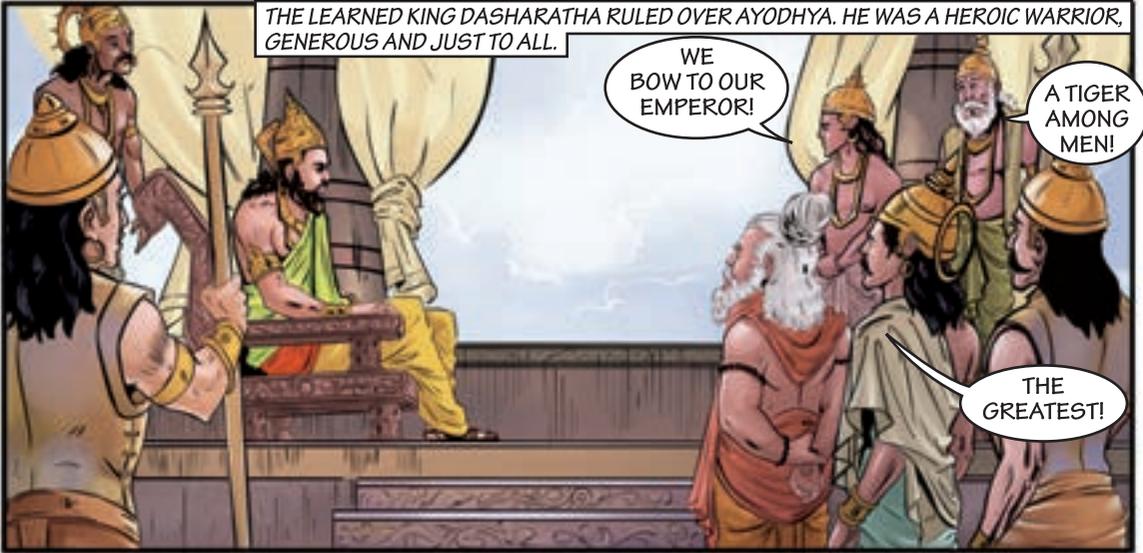
...AND ITS STREETS ARE THROGGED WITH CRAFTSMEN, POETS, DANCERS AND PHILOSOPHERS.



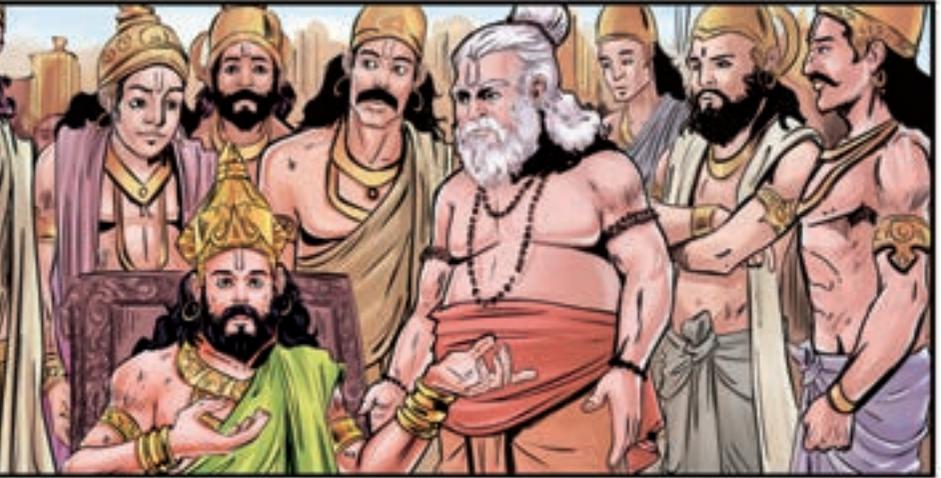
THIS GLORIOUS CITY IS TWELVE YOJANAS* LONG AND THREE YOJANAS WIDE.



*A YOJANA IS THE DISTANCE THAT CAN BE TRAVELLED IN A BULLOCK CART IN ONE DAY, OR ABOUT 10 KILOMETRES.



HIS MINISTERS WERE INTELLIGENT MEN, VIGILANT AND KIND, READY TO PUNISH EVEN THEIR OWN SONS IF THEY BROKE THE LAW. ALONG WITH THE BELOVED FAMILY PRIESTS, VASISHTHA AND VAMADEVA, AND OTHER COUNSELLORS, THEY HELPED DASHARATHA RULE THE KINGDOM.



BUT THIS GREAT KING HAD ONE DEEP SORROW.



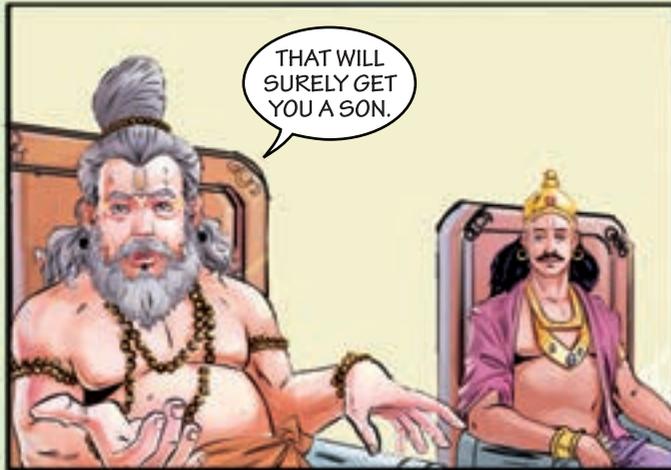
*IN THOSE DAYS, A WOMAN COULD NOT RULE THE KINGDOM, SO THE KING HAD TO HAVE A SON TO CARRY ON HIS DYNASTY.

ONE DAY, DASHARATHA HAD AN IDEA.

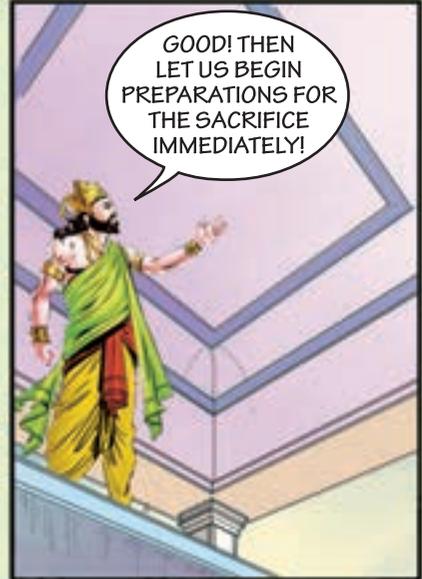
I HAVE BEEN WAITING FOR A SON ALL THESE YEARS. I THINK I SHOULD DO AN ASHWAMEDHA YAGYA* SO THAT THE GODS WILL GRANT ME A SON. WHAT IS YOUR OPINION?



THAT WILL SURELY GET YOU A SON.



GOOD! THEN LET US BEGIN PREPARATIONS FOR THE SACRIFICE IMMEDIATELY!



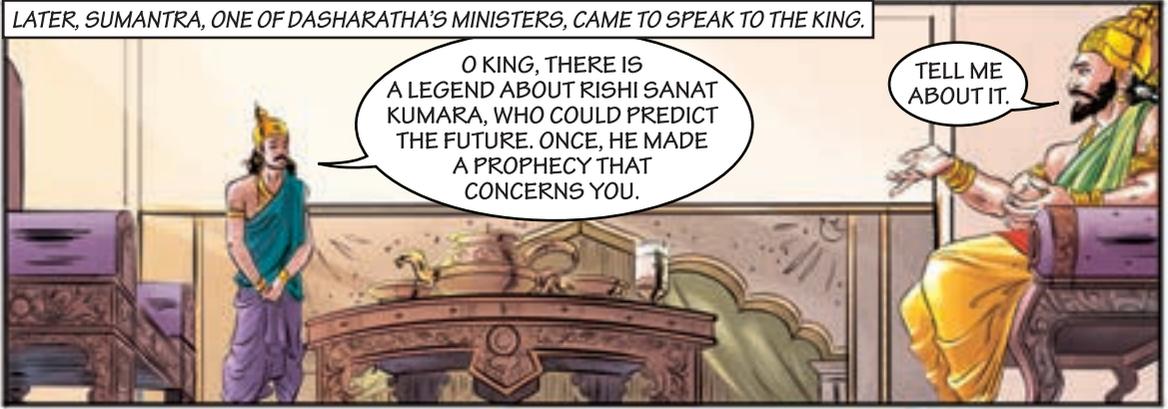
DASHARATHA WENT TO THE QUEENS' APARTMENTS AND TOLD THEM ABOUT THE SACRIFICE HE HAD UNDERTAKEN.

....SO THAT IS MY PLAN. I HOPE WE WILL SOON BE BLESSED WITH A SON.



*HORSE SACRIFICE

LATER, SUMANTRA, ONE OF DASHARATHA'S MINISTERS, CAME TO SPEAK TO THE KING.



O KING, THERE IS A LEGEND ABOUT RISHI SANAT KUMARA, WHO COULD PREDICT THE FUTURE. ONCE, HE MADE A PROPHECY THAT CONCERNS YOU.

TELL ME ABOUT IT.

LONG AGO, HE HAD PREDICTED THAT THERE WOULD BE A GREAT DROUGHT IN THE KINGDOM OF ANGA. THE DROUGHT COULD ONLY BE ENDED, HE SAID, BY A VISIT FROM THE YOUNG RISHI RISHYASHRINGA.

MANY YEARS LATER, THERE WAS INDEED A DROUGHT AND GREAT WAS THE SUFFERING IN ANGA.



ROMAPADA, THE KING OF ANGA, CONSULTED ALL THE LEARNED MEN IN THE COUNTRY.

THE ONLY WAY TO END THE DROUGHT, O KING, IS TO BRING THE YOUNG RISHI RISHYASHRINGA HERE AND GET HIM MARRIED TO YOUR DAUGHTER, SHANTA*.



*SHANTA WAS ACTUALLY DASHARATHA'S DAUGHTER, WHO HAD BEEN ADOPTED BY ROMAPADA.

ROMAPADA SUMMONED HIS PRIESTS.

PLEASE
FETCH RISHYASHRINGA
HERE FROM THE
FOREST AS SOON AS
POSSIBLE.



RISHYASHRINGA LIVED DEEP IN A FOREST WITH HIS FATHER VIBHANDAKA. HE WAS DEVOTED TO HIS FATHER AND HAD NEVER EVEN SEEN ANOTHER HUMAN BEING.

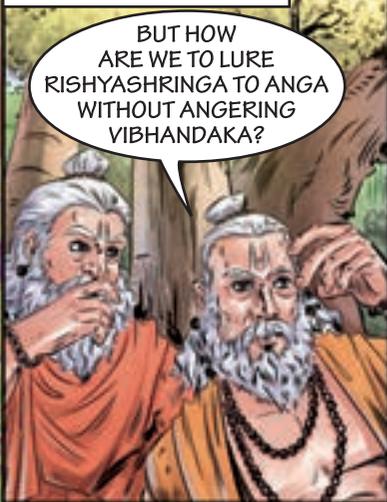


VIBHANDAKA, THE SON OF KASHYAPA, WAS A VERY POWERFUL RISHI. EVERYONE WAS SCARED OF BEING CURSED BY HIM.

FINALLY THEY CAME UP WITH A PLAN.

BUT HOW
ARE WE TO LURE
RISHYASHRINGA TO ANGA
WITHOUT ANGERING
VIBHANDAKA?

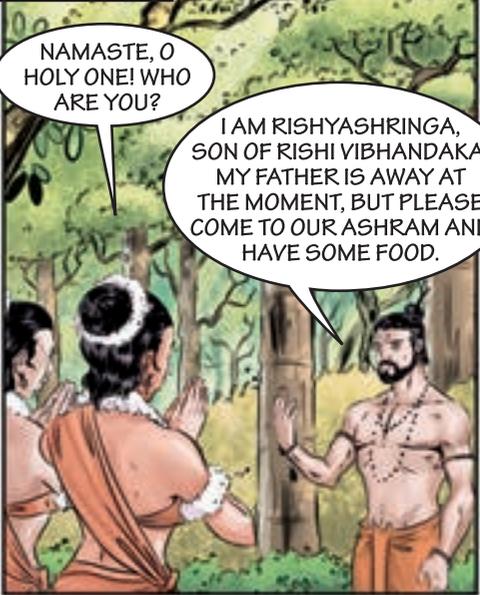
YES, THAT'S
THE ONLY WAY
TO DO IT.



THEY TRANSFORMED THEMSELVES AND APPEARED BEFORE RISHYASHRINGA.



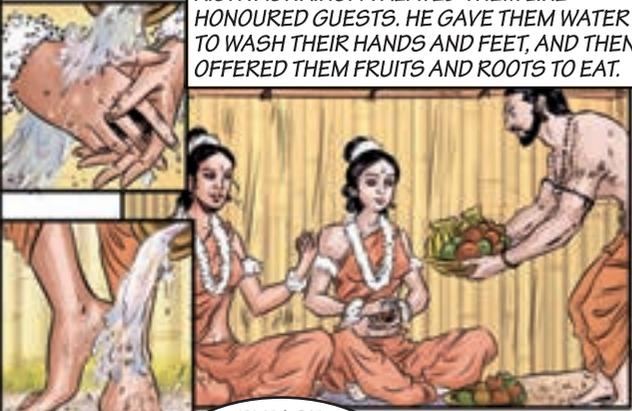
WHO ARE THESE PEOPLE?



NAMASTE, O HOLY ONE! WHO ARE YOU?

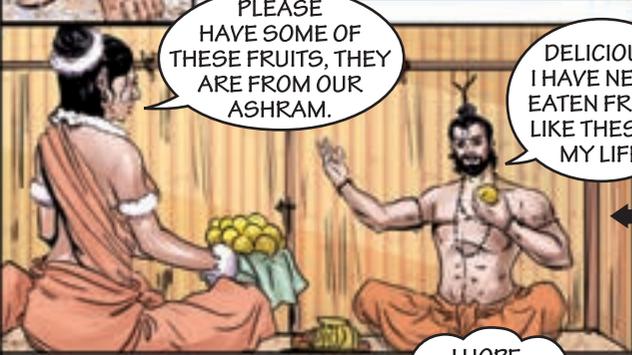
I AM RISHYASHRINGA, SON OF RISHI VIBHANDAKA. MY FATHER IS AWAY AT THE MOMENT, BUT PLEASE COME TO OUR ASHRAM AND HAVE SOME FOOD.

RISHYASHRINGA TREATED THEM LIKE HONOURED GUESTS. HE GAVE THEM WATER TO WASH THEIR HANDS AND FEET, AND THEN OFFERED THEM FRUITS AND ROOTS TO EAT.



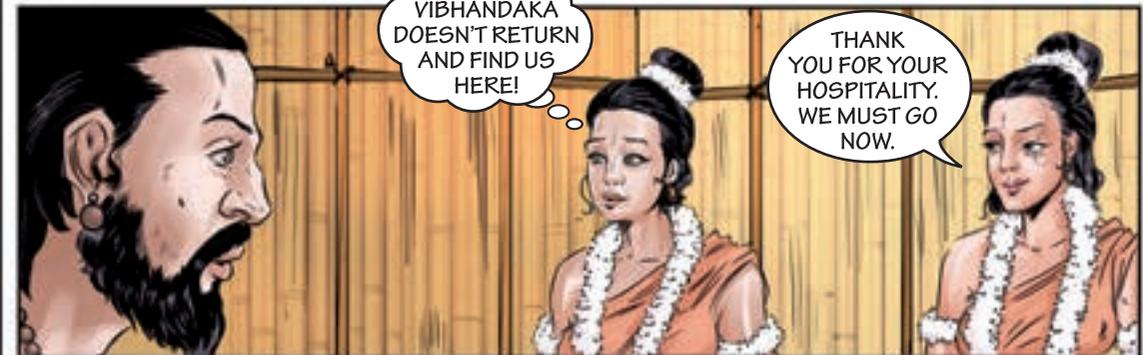
THEY, IN TURN, GAVE HIM RICH SWEETS THEY HAD BROUGHT WITH THEM.

TELL HIM THEY ARE FRUITS. HE WOULD NEVER HAVE SEEN SWEETS!



PLEASE HAVE SOME OF THESE FRUITS, THEY ARE FROM OUR ASHRAM.

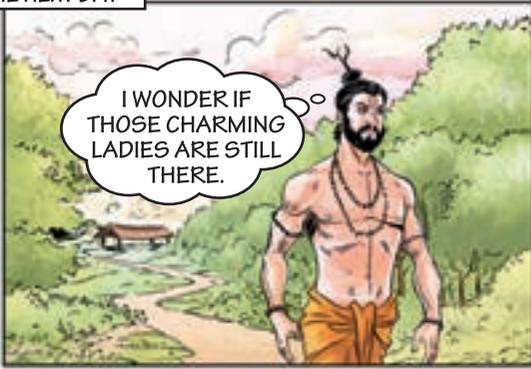
DELICIOUS! I HAVE NEVER EATEN FRUITS LIKE THESE IN MY LIFE!



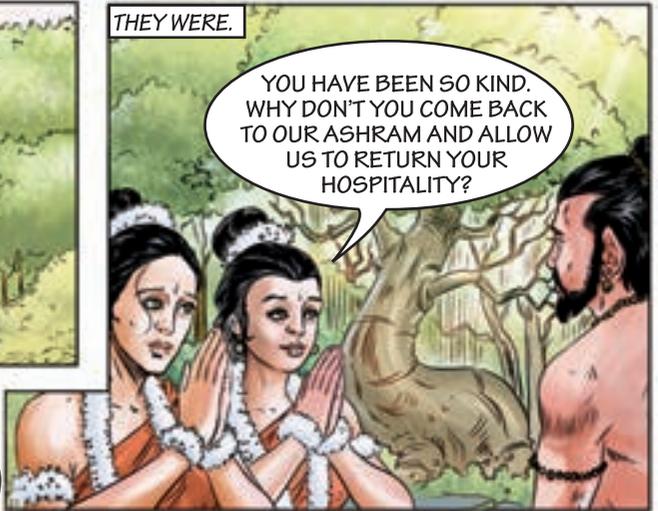
I HOPE VIBHANDAKA DOESN'T RETURN AND FIND US HERE!

THANK YOU FOR YOUR HOSPITALITY. WE MUST GO NOW.

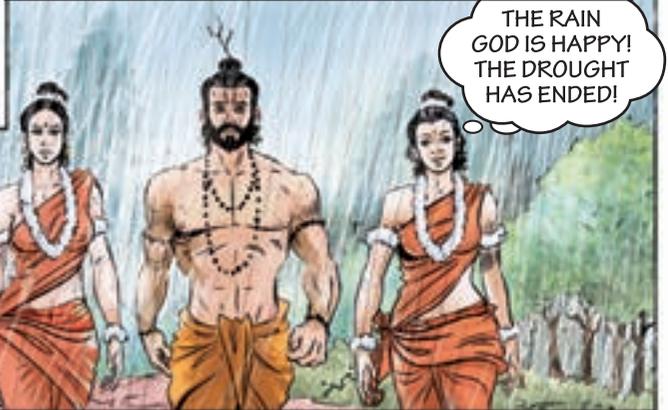
THE NEXT DAY -



THEY WERE.

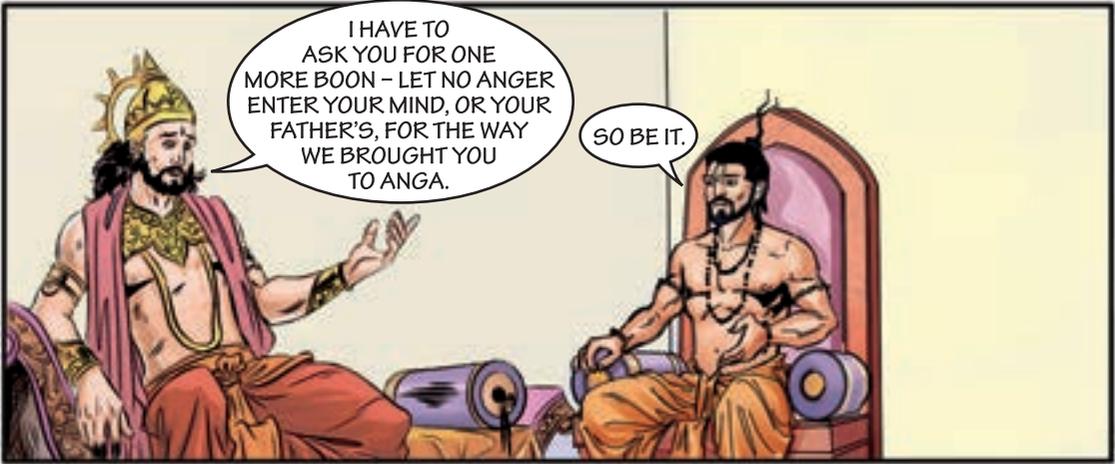


RISHYASHRINGA AGREED AND THEY SET OFF THROUGH THE DENSE FORESTS. AS THEY APPROACHED ANGA PRADESHA -

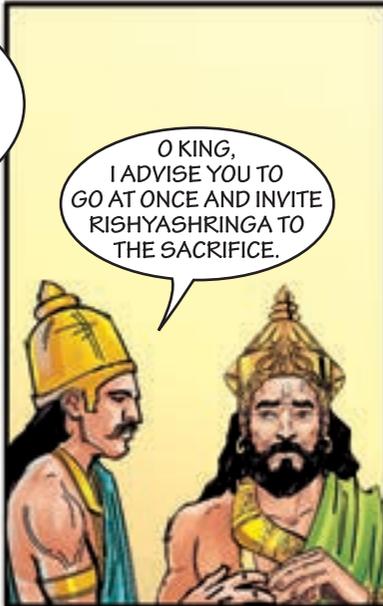
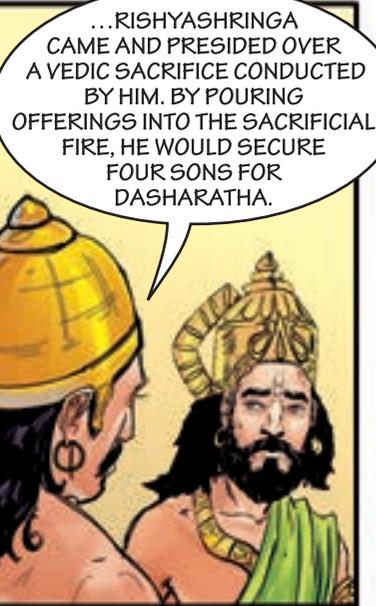
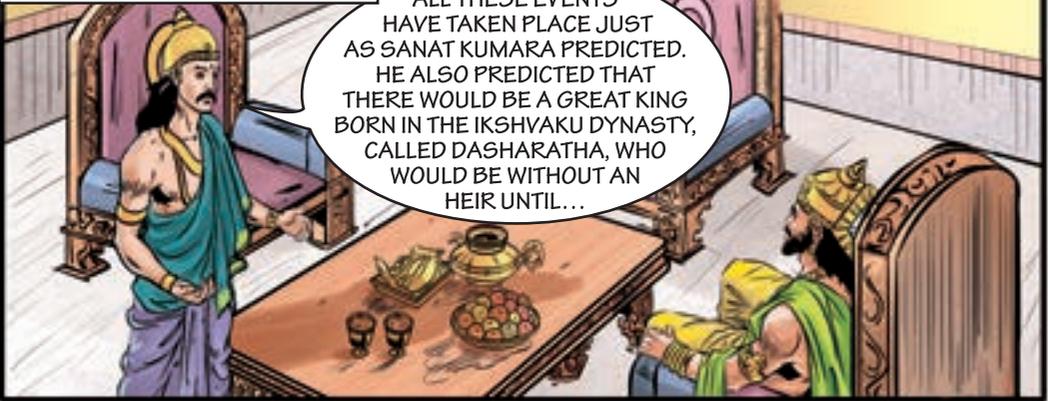


KING ROMAPADA CAME TO WELCOME THE RISHI WITH GREAT HONOUR. HE ASKED HIM TO ACCEPT THE HAND OF HIS DAUGHTER, SHANTA, IN MARRIAGE. TO HIS GREAT DELIGHT, RISHYASHRINGA AGREED.





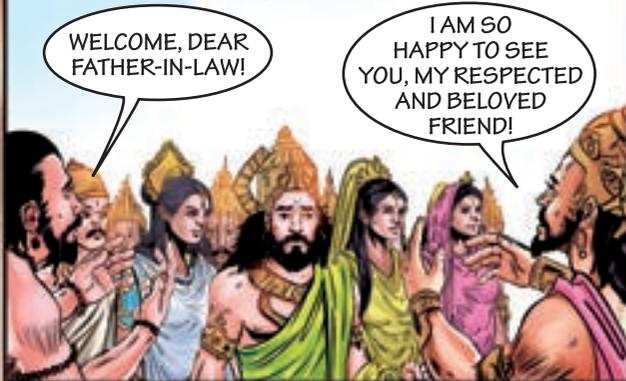
SUMANTRA CONCLUDED HIS STORY.



ACCOMPANIED BY HIS QUEENS AND MINISTERS, DASHARATHA GLADLY SET OFF TO ANGA TO MEET RISHYASHRINGA.

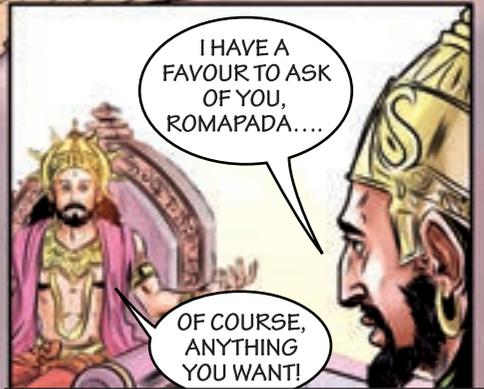


ROMAPADA AND RISHYASHRINGA GREETED THEM WITH GREAT JOY.



WELCOME, DEAR FATHER-IN-LAW!

I AM SO HAPPY TO SEE YOU, MY RESPECTED AND BELOVED FRIEND!

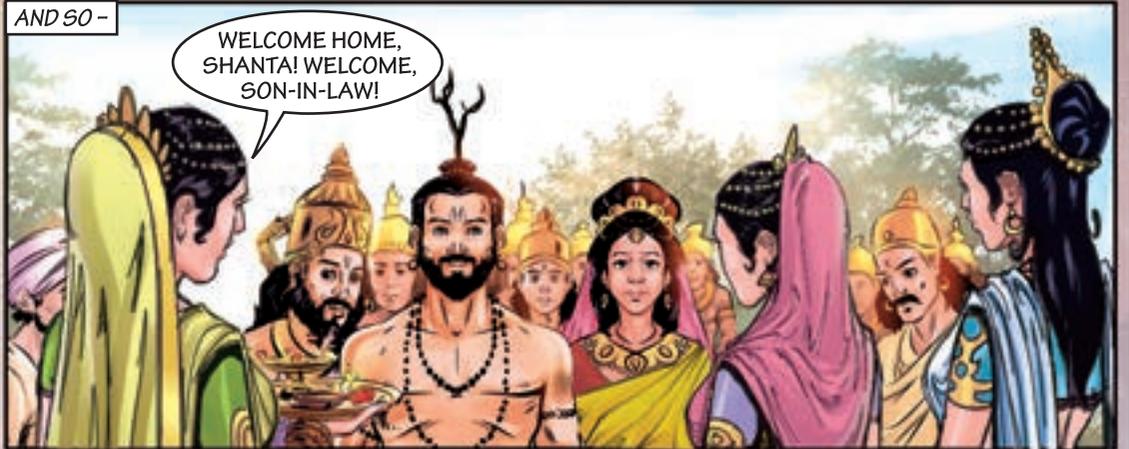


I HAVE A FAVOUR TO ASK OF YOU, ROMAPADA.....

OF COURSE, ANYTHING YOU WANT!

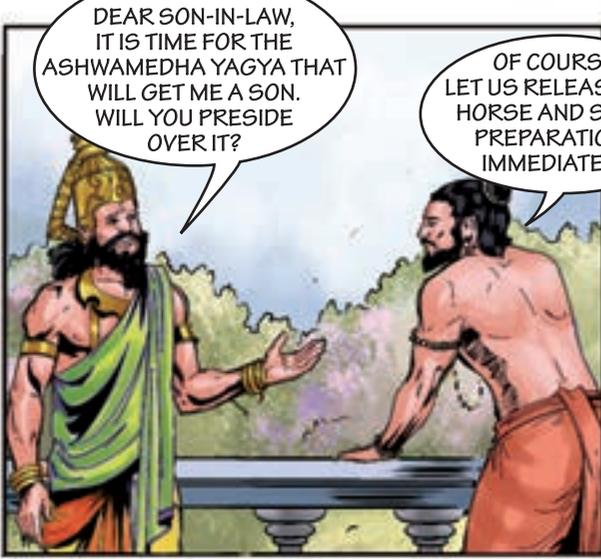
DASHARATHA ASKED ROMAPADA IF HE COULD TAKE RISHYASHRINGA, ALONG WITH SHANTA, TO AYODHYA TO PRESIDE OVER THE SACRIFICE.

AND SO -



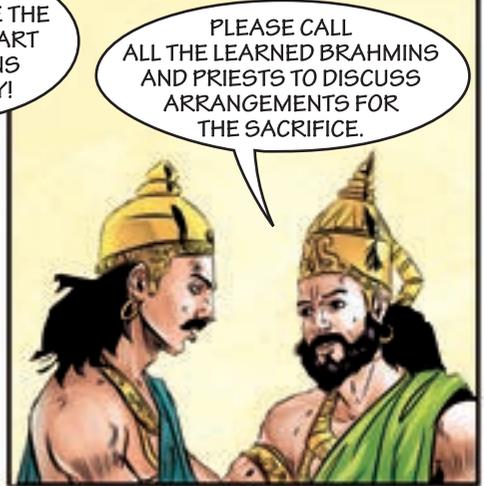
WELCOME HOME, SHANTA! WELCOME, SON-IN-LAW!

TIME PASSED AND A BEAUTIFUL SPRING SET IN.

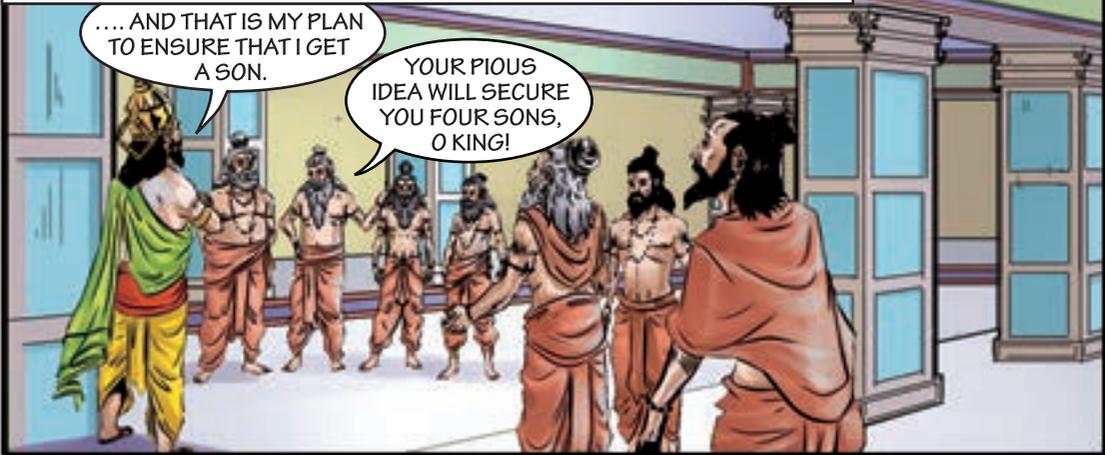


OF COURSE!
LET US RELEASE THE
HORSE AND START
PREPARATIONS
IMMEDIATELY!

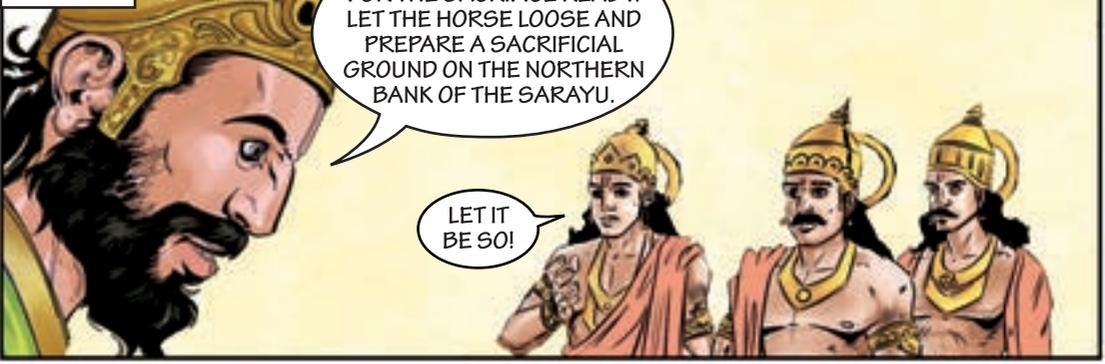
DASHARATHA SPOKE TO SUMANTRA.



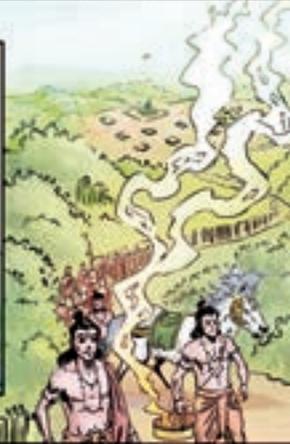
SUMANTRA INVITED A GROUP OF PRIESTS WHO WERE ALL MASTERS OF THE VEDAS.



THE KING THEN CALLED THE
MINISTERS.



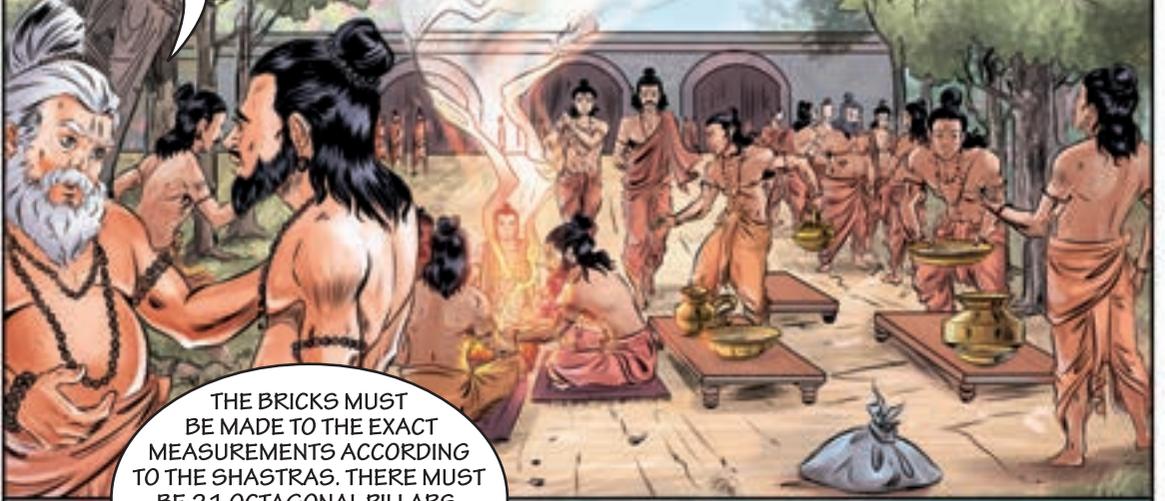
THE SACRIFICIAL HORSE WAS RELEASED UNDER THE PROTECTION OF A CHIEF PRIEST AND A LARGE ARMY OF WARRIORS.



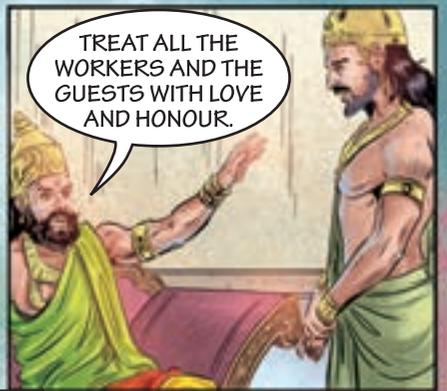
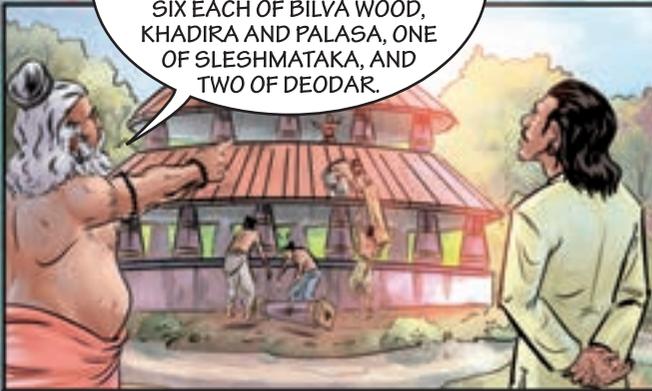
IT PASSED THROUGH MANY TERRITORIES AND WAS WELCOMED EVERYWHERE.

ONE YEAR PASSED AND SPRING HAD COME AGAIN. IT WAS TIME FOR THE HORSE TO RETURN. AYODHYA WAS BUSTLING!

BE VERY CAREFUL! THERE WILL BE BRAHMINS WHO HAVE BECOME RAKSHASAS, JUST LOOKING OUT FOR MISTAKES SO THEY CAN SPOIL THE SACRIFICE!

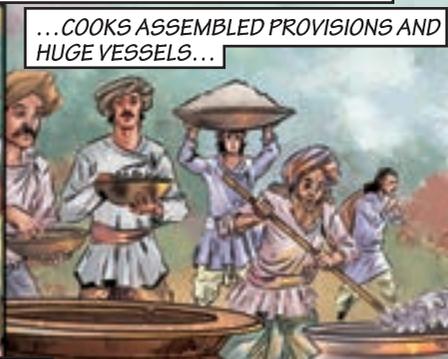
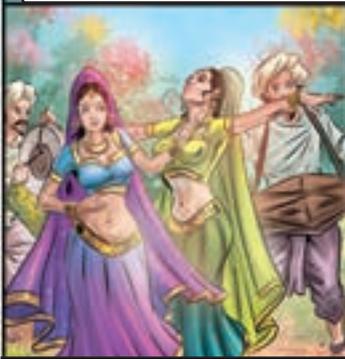


THE BRICKS MUST BE MADE TO THE EXACT MEASUREMENTS ACCORDING TO THE SHASTRAS. THERE MUST BE 21 OCTAGONAL PILLARS, SIX EACH OF BILVA WOOD, KHADIRA AND PALASA, ONE OF SLESHMATAKA, AND TWO OF DEODAR.



TREAT ALL THE WORKERS AND THE GUESTS WITH LOVE AND HONOUR.

AYODHYA BUSTLED WITH THE PREPARATIONS FOR THE FINAL RITUALS.

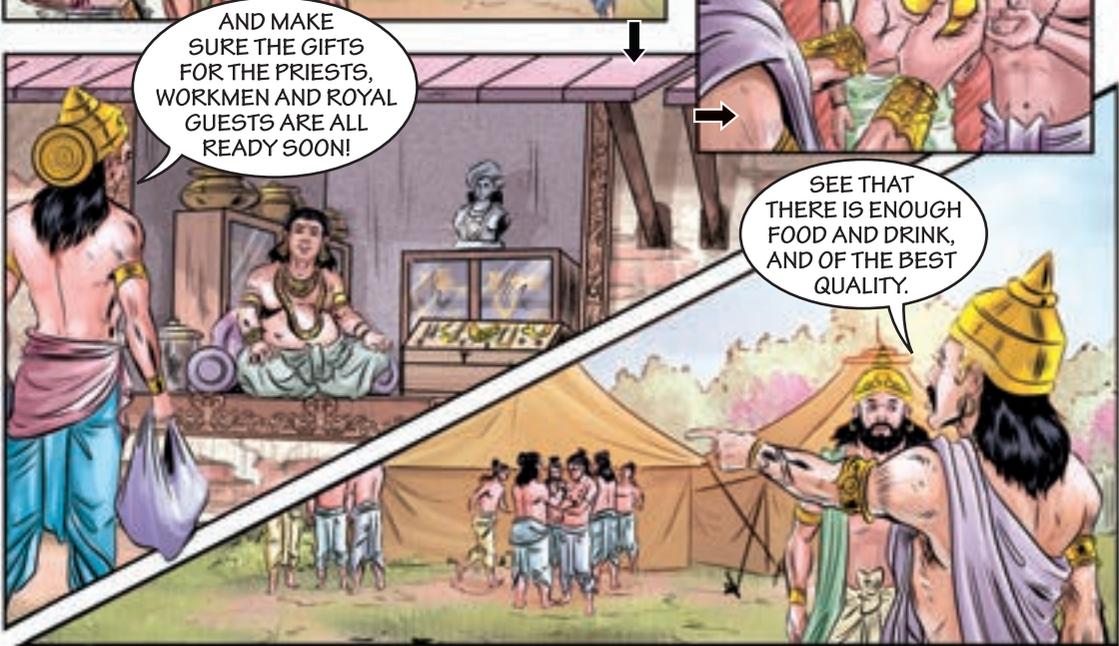
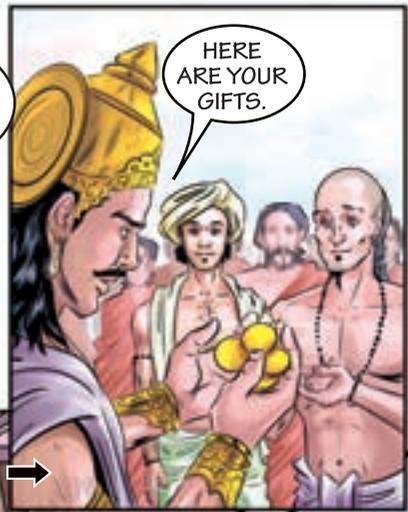
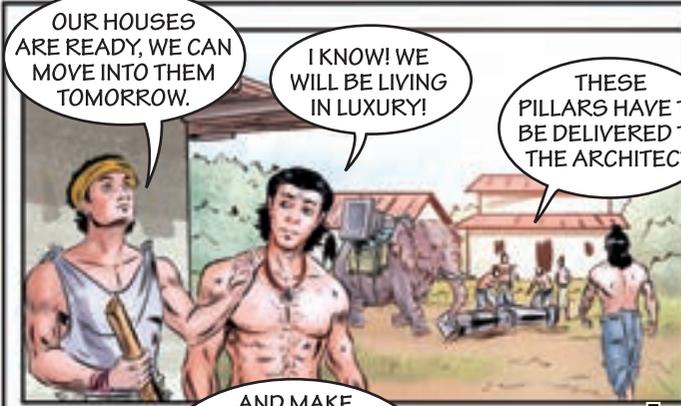


... COOKS ASSEMBLED PROVISIONS AND HUGE VESSELS...

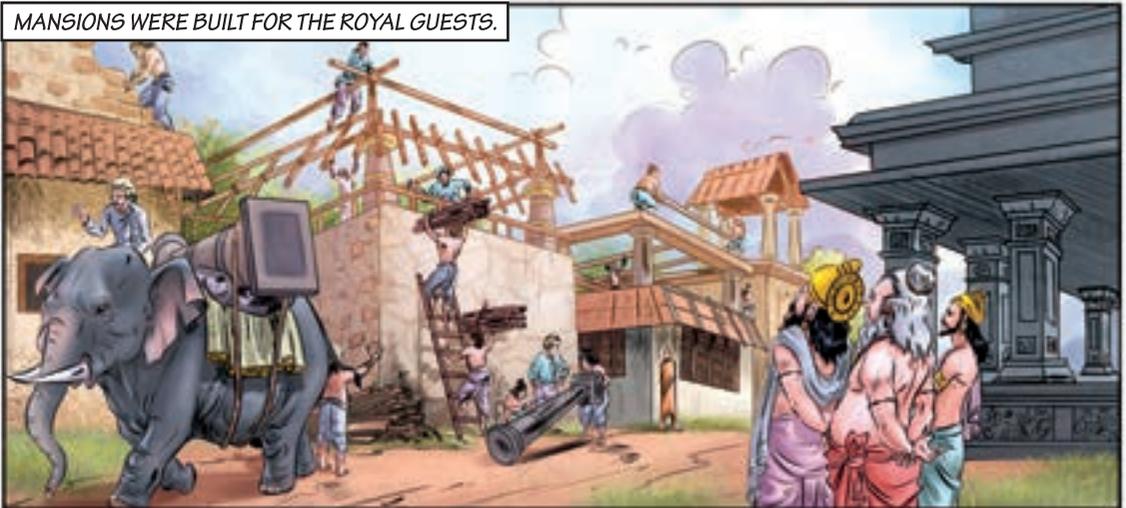


DANCERS PRACTISED THEIR STEPS...

... ASTRONOMERS STUDIED THE STARS FOR SIGNS.

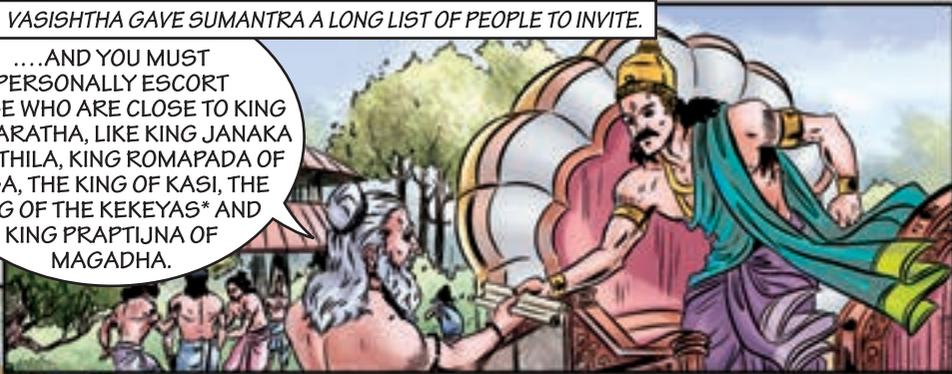


MANSIONS WERE BUILT FOR THE ROYAL GUESTS.

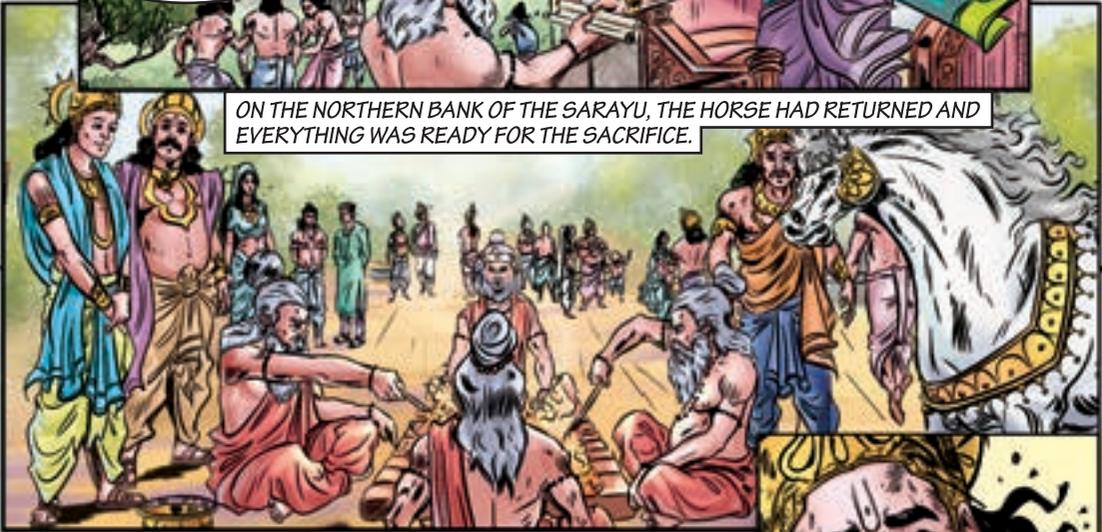


VASISHTHA GAVE SUMANTRA A LONG LIST OF PEOPLE TO INVITE.

... AND YOU MUST PERSONALLY ESCORT THOSE WHO ARE CLOSE TO KING DASHARATHA, LIKE KING JANAKA OF MITHILA, KING ROMAPADA OF ANGA, THE KING OF KASI, THE KING OF THE KEKEYAS* AND KING PRAPTIJNA OF MAGADHA.

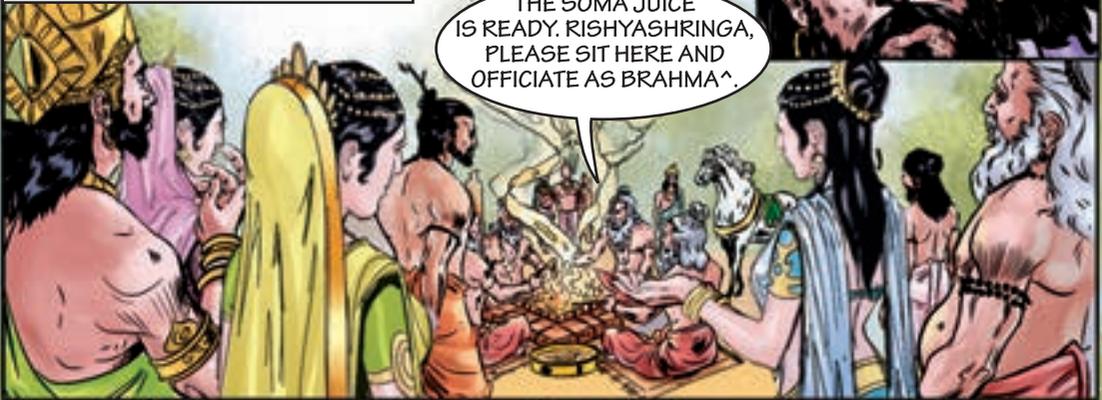


ON THE NORTHERN BANK OF THE SARAYU, THE HORSE HAD RETURNED AND EVERYTHING WAS READY FOR THE SACRIFICE.



DASHARATHA, VASISHTHA, RISHYASHRINGA AND THE THREE QUEENS GATHERED AND THE SACRIFICE BEGAN.

THE SOMA JUICE IS READY. RISHYASHRINGA, PLEASE SIT HERE AND OFFICIATE AS BRAHMA*.



AT THE END OF THE SACRIFICE, THE DELIGHTED KING GIFTED THE FOUR QUARTERS OF THE GLOBE TO THE FOUR PRIESTS.

THIS ENTIRE EARTH IS YOURS.

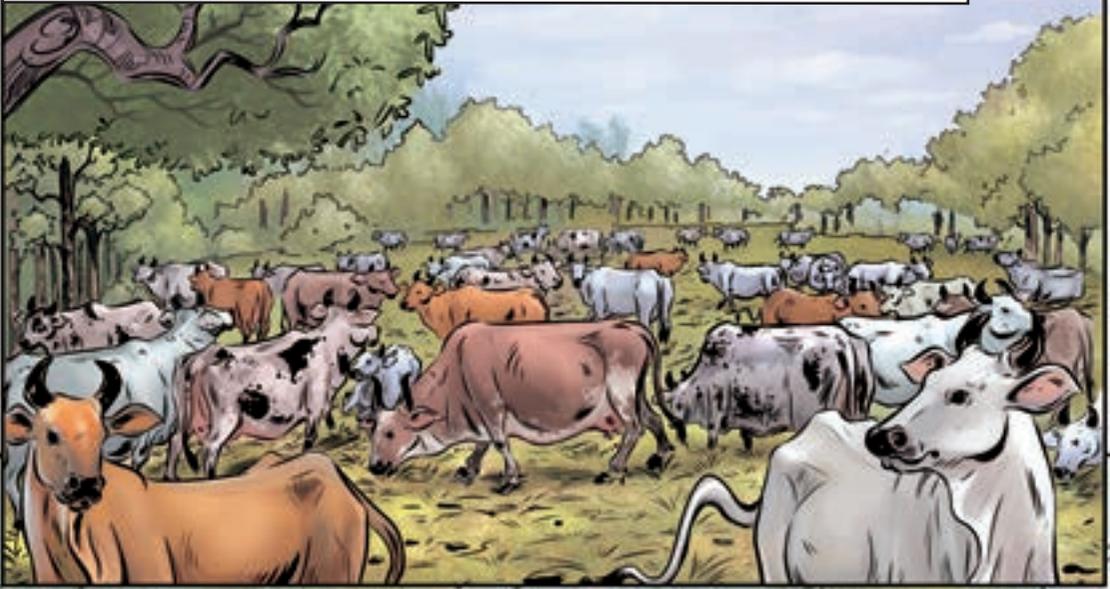
THANK YOU, BUT ONLY YOU ARE CAPABLE OF PROTECTING AND MAINTAINING THE ENTIRE EARTH. PLEASE GIVE US COWS, GOLD OR GEMS INSTEAD.



*DASHARATHA'S FATHER-IN-LAW

^ THE FOUR MAIN PRIESTS CONDUCTING A SACRIFICE ARE CALLED BRAHMA, HOTA, ADHWARYU AND UDGATA.

DASHARATHA GAVE THEM TEN LAKH COWS, A THOUSAND LAKH GOLD COINS AND FOUR THOUSAND LAKH SILVER COINS. RISHYASHRINGA AND YASISHTHA DISTRIBUTED THEM AMONG ALL THE PRIESTS.

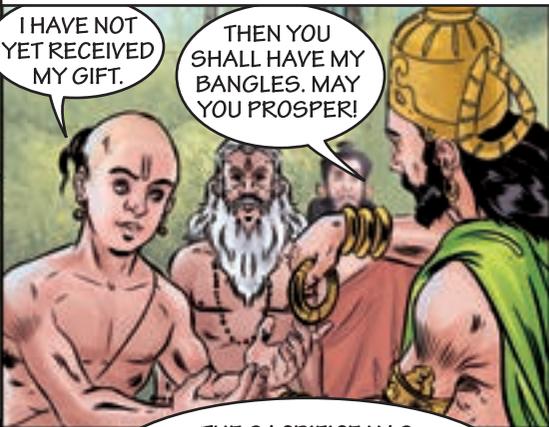


THEN DASHARATHA GAVE AWAY A HUNDRED LAKH GOLD COINS TO THE BRAHMINS WHO HAD COME FROM OUTSIDE. WHEN ALL THE MONEY WAS EXHAUSTED -

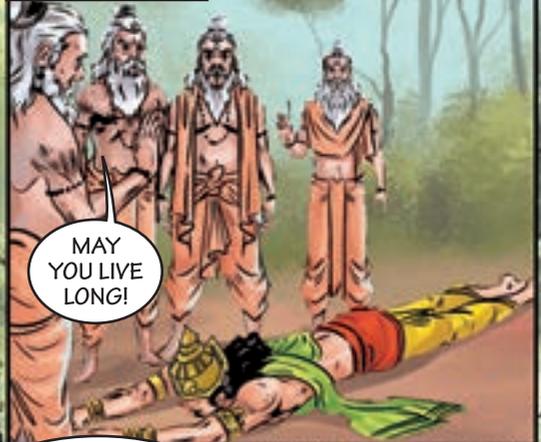
THE KING WAS HAPPY THAT THE SACRIFICE HAD GONE PERFECTLY.

I HAVE NOT YET RECEIVED MY GIFT.

THEN YOU SHALL HAVE MY BANGLES. MAY YOU PROSPER!

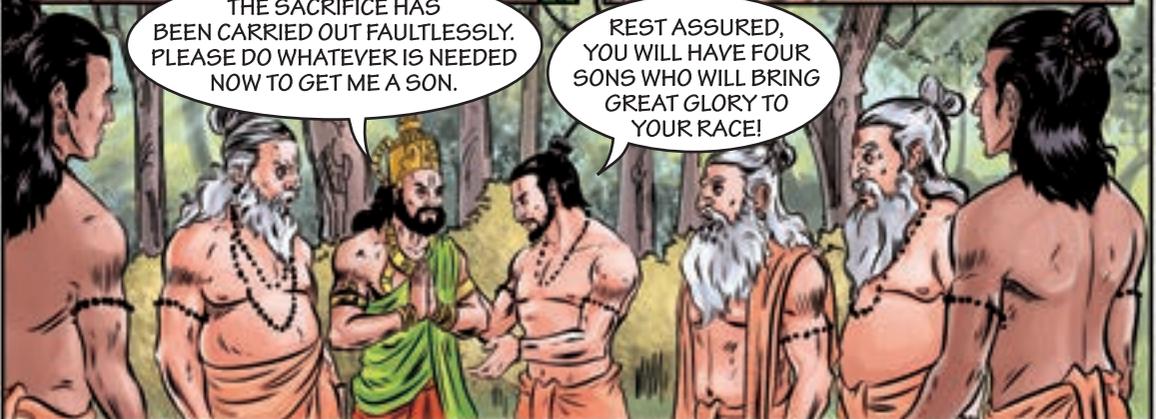


MAY YOU LIVE LONG!



THE SACRIFICE HAS BEEN CARRIED OUT FAULTLESSLY. PLEASE DO WHATEVER IS NEEDED NOW TO GET ME A SON.

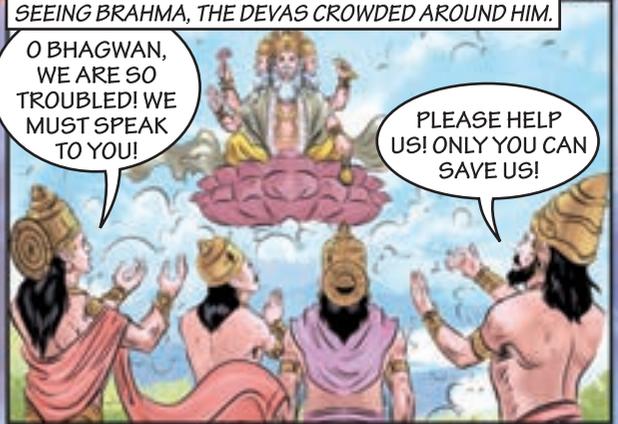
REST ASSURED, YOU WILL HAVE FOUR SONS WHO WILL BRING GREAT GLORY TO YOUR RACE!



RISHYASHRINGA DECIDED TO CONCLUDE WITH A PUTRIYESHTI SACRIFICE*. SUDDENLY, A HOST OF DEVAS AND OTHER HEAVENLY BEINGS APPEARED.



BHAGWAN!
WELCOME! PLEASE
ACCEPT OUR HUMBLE
OFFERINGS!



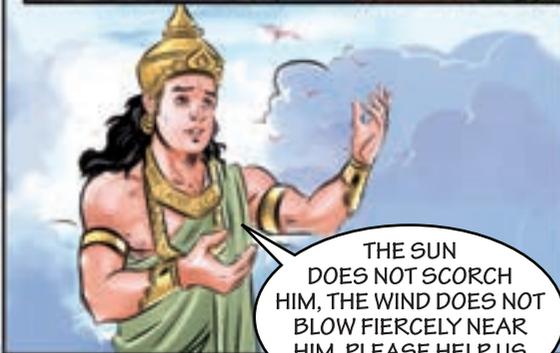
SEEING BRAHMA, THE DEVAS CROWDED AROUND HIM.

O BHAGWAN,
WE ARE SO
TROUBLED! WE
MUST SPEAK
TO YOU!

PLEASE HELP
US! ONLY YOU CAN
SAVE US!



RAYANA, THE
RAKSHASA KING,
HAS
BECOME ALL-POWERFUL.
YOU GRANTED HIM A BOON
THAT NO ONE COULD HURT HIM.
NOW HE IS FULL OF PRIDE.
HE HATES US AND
TORTURES US.



THE SUN
DOES NOT SCORCH
HIM, THE WIND DOES NOT
BLOW FIERCELY NEAR
HIM. PLEASE HELP US
GET RID OF HIM!



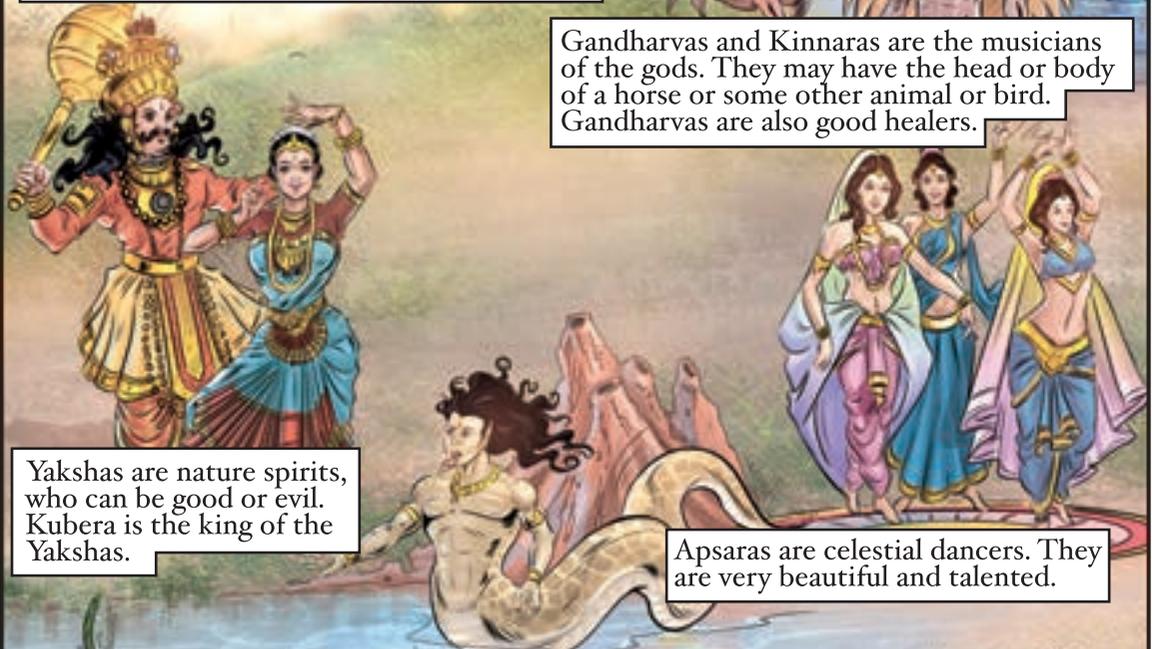
*A YAGYA CONDUCTED TO ATTAIN CHILDREN

SUPERNATURAL BEINGS IN HINDU MYTHOLOGY



Devas are gods, each with special powers and qualities. They look regal and handsome.

Gandharvas and Kinnaras are the musicians of the gods. They may have the head or body of a horse or some other animal or bird. Gandharvas are also good healers.



Yakshas are nature spirits, who can be good or evil. Kubera is the king of the Yakshas.

Apsaras are celestial dancers. They are very beautiful and talented.

Nagas are part-human and part-snake. They are strong and handsome, and can be good or evil.

Vanaras are children of the devas. They look like apes and are strong and intelligent, though they have poor memories.

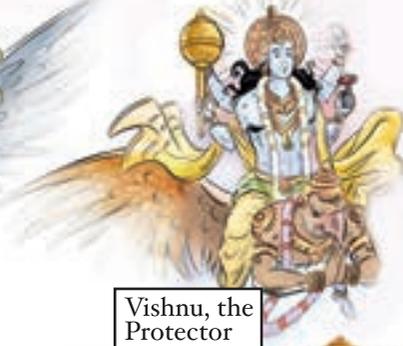
Sidhas and Charanas are enlightened souls and demigods.

Rakshasas and Asuras are huge, powerful and enemies of the gods, though there are exceptions like Vibhishana and Ghatotkacha.

GODS OF THE HINDU PANTHEON



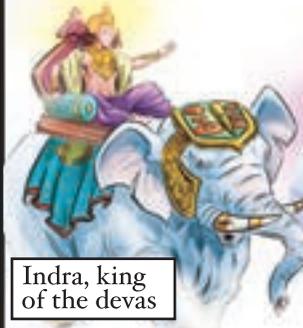
Brahma, the Creator



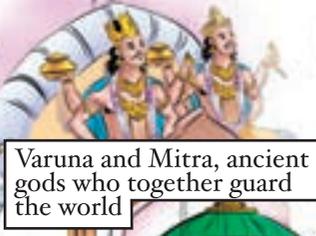
Vishnu, the Protector



Shiva, the Destroyer



Indra, king of the devas



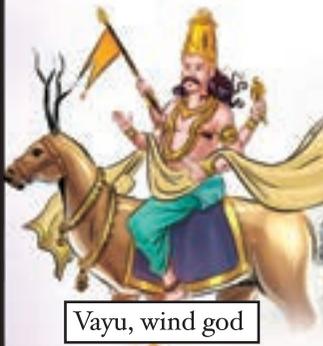
Varuna and Mitra, ancient gods who together guard the world



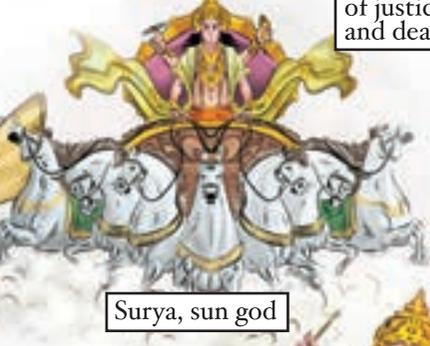
Yama, god of justice and death



Agni, fire god



Vayu, wind god



Surya, sun god



Kubera, god of wealth



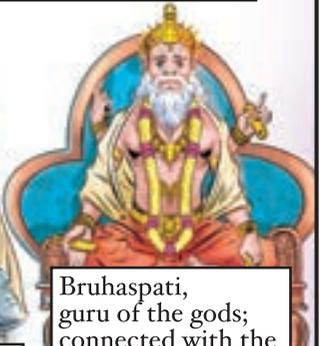
Parjanya, god of rain



Ashwini Kumaras, twin physicians of the gods



Vishwakarma, architect of the gods



Bruhaspati, guru of the gods; connected with the planet Jupiter

AFTER HEARING THE COMPLAINTS OF THE GODS, BRAHMA THOUGHT FOR A WHILE.

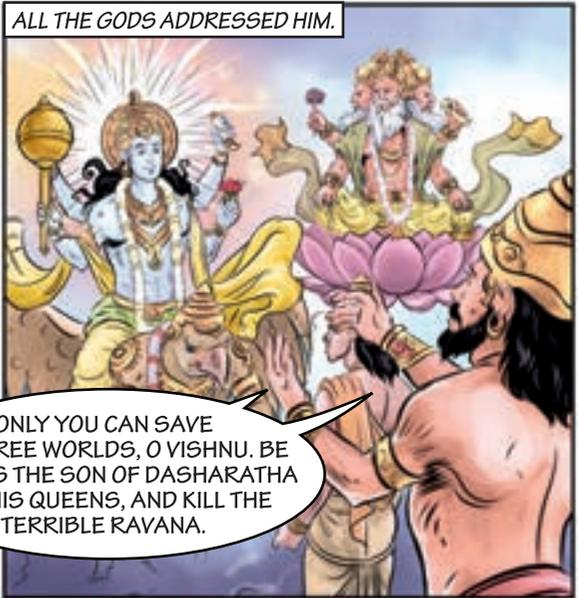


HMMM... THERE IS ONE WAY. THE BOON I GRANTED RAVANA WAS THAT NO DEVA, GANDHARVA, YAKSHA OR RAKSHASA COULD HARM HIM. HE DID NOT ASK FOR PROTECTION AGAINST HUMANS, BELIEVING THEY COULD NOT HURT HIM.

JUST THEN, VISHNU ARRIVED.

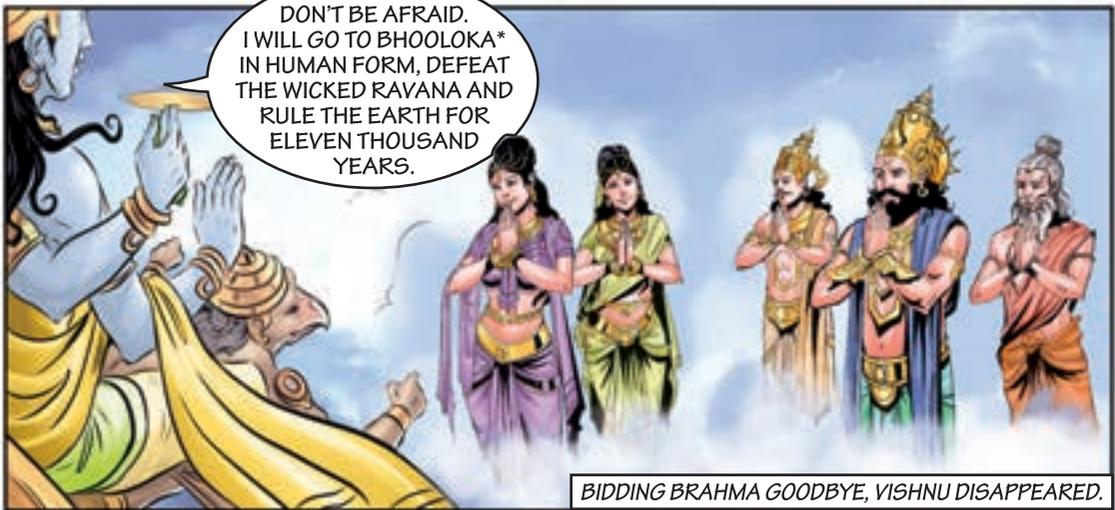


ALL THE GODS ADDRESSED HIM.



ONLY YOU CAN SAVE THE THREE WORLDS, O VISHNU. BE BORN AS THE SON OF DASHARATHA AND HIS QUEENS, AND KILL THE TERRIBLE RAVANA.

DON'T BE AFRAID. I WILL GO TO BHOOLOKA* IN HUMAN FORM, DEFEAT THE WICKED RAVANA AND RULE THE EARTH FOR ELEVEN THOUSAND YEARS.



BIDDING BRAHMA GOODBYE, VISHNU DISAPPEARED.

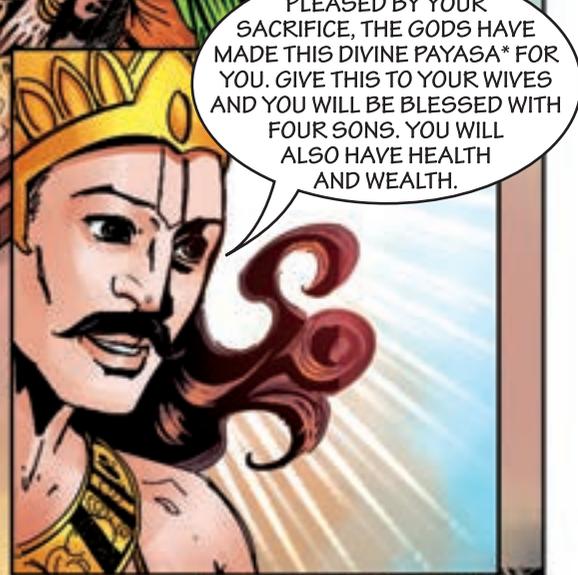
*EARTH, THE MORTAL WORLD

AS DASHARATHA AND HIS GUESTS WATCHED, A CELESTIAL BEING EMERGED FROM THE SACRIFICIAL FIRE.



WELCOME, LORD!
WHAT CAN I DO
FOR YOU?

O KING, I
HAVE BEEN SENT
BY VISHNU.



PLEASED BY YOUR
SACRIFICE, THE GODS HAVE
MADE THIS DIVINE PAYASA* FOR
YOU. GIVE THIS TO YOUR WIVES
AND YOU WILL BE BLESSED WITH
FOUR SONS. YOU WILL
ALSO HAVE HEALTH
AND WEALTH.



I AM INDEED
BLESSED!

*MILK PUDDING

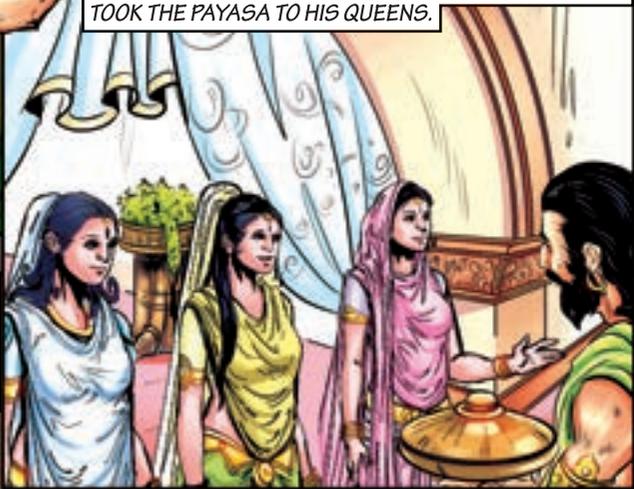
YOUNG PRINCE RAMA



DASHARATHA RECEIVED THE PAYASA WITH GREAT JOY AND GRATITUDE.



THE MESSENGER THEN VANISHED AND DASHARATHA TOOK THE PAYASA TO HIS QUEENS.



HE FIRST GAVE HALF THE PAYASA TO KAUSALYA, THE ELDEST. THEN HE GAVE A QUARTER TO SUMITRA, THE SECOND QUEEN. HE GAVE HALF OF WHAT WAS LEFT TO KAIKEYI, THE YOUNGEST, AND THEN THE LAST ONE-EIGHTH TO SUMITRA AGAIN.

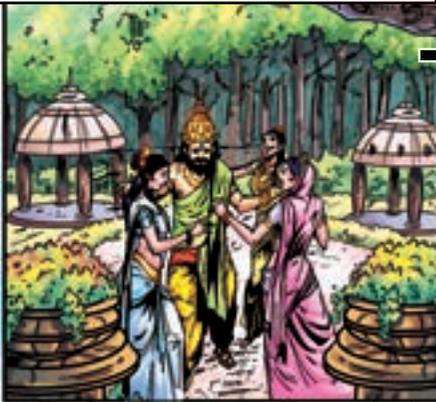


AFTER THE SACRIFICE, THE GODS RECEIVED THEIR SHARE OF THE OFFERINGS AND LEFT. THE GUESTS ALSO TOOK THEIR LEAVE.

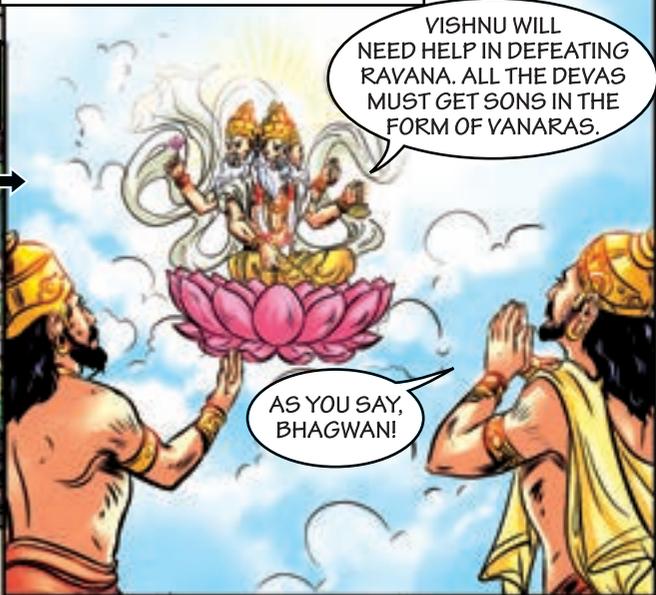


MEANWHILE VISHNU WAS GETTING READY TO BE BORN, AND BRAHMA WAS MAKING ARRANGEMENTS TO SUPPORT HIM. HE SPOKE TO ALL THE HEAVENLY BEINGS.

DASHARATHA AND HIS QUEENS RETURNED TO THE PALACE, HAPPY ABOUT THE CHILDREN THEY HAD BEEN PROMISED.



VISHNU WILL NEED HELP IN DEFEATING RAVANA. ALL THE DEVAS MUST GET SONS IN THE FORM OF VANARAS.



AS YOU SAY, BHAGWAN!

I HAVE ALREADY CREATED JAMBAVAN*, THE FOREMOST AMONG BEARS.

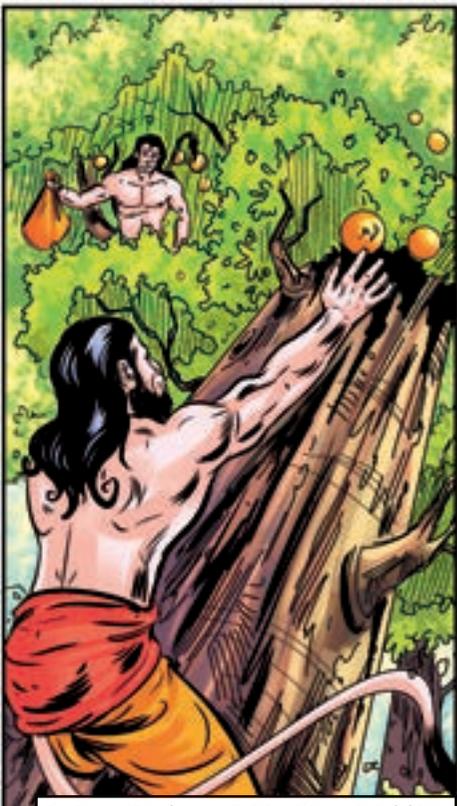


*JAMBAVAN WAS OLDER THAN THE GODS AND WAS BORN FROM BRAHMA'S SNEEZE.

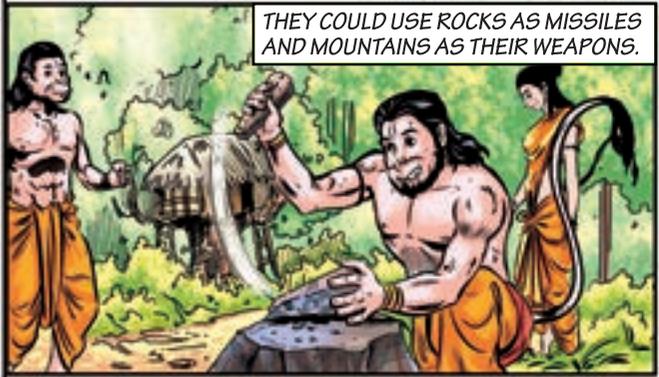
THUS WERE BORN THOUSANDS OF INTELLIGENT AND VALIANT VANARAS, INCLUDING TARA, DAUGHTER OF BRUHASPATI; NALA, SON OF VISHWAKARMA; NILA, SON OF AGNI; AND HANUMAN, SON OF VAYU.



THE MOST POWERFUL OF THEM WERE VALI, SON OF INDRA, AND SUGRIVA, SON OF SURYA. BORN OF APSARAS, NAGAS, GANDHARVAS AND YAKSHINIS, THE VANARAS ROAMED ABOUT IN THE FORESTS.



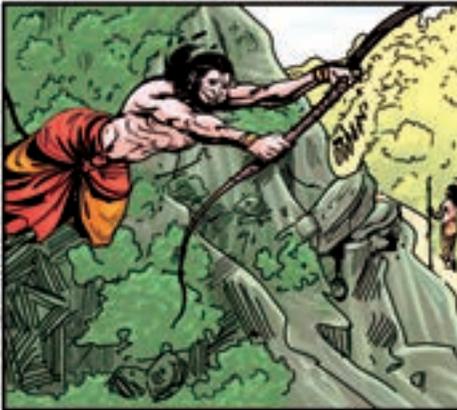
THEY LIVED ON WILD FRUITS AND ROOTS.



THEY COULD USE ROCKS AS MISSILES AND MOUNTAINS AS THEIR WEAPONS.



THEY COULD FLY INTO THE SKY...



...AND LEAP ACROSS VALLEYS.

TWELVE MONTHS PASSED. IT WAS THE NINTH DAY OF THE MONTH OF CHAITRA* WHEN KAUSALYA'S SON WAS BORN.



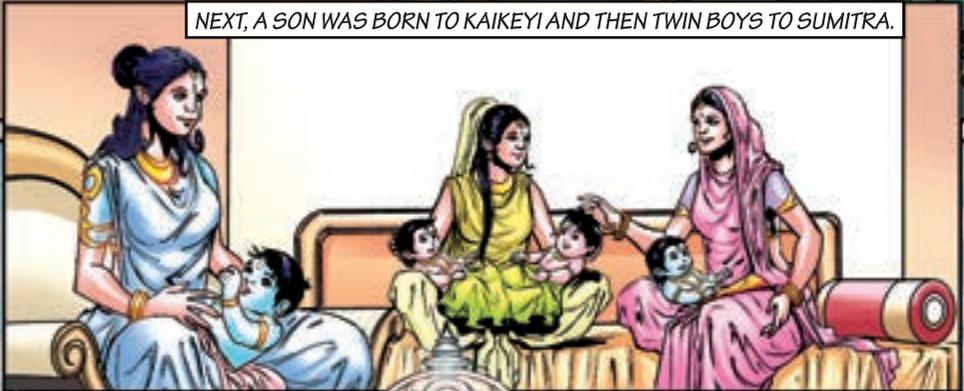
MY FIRST BORN!

HE LOOKS DIVINE!

HIS VOICE IS LIKE A KETTLE DRUM!

QUEEN KAUSALYA'S BABY HAS A WONDERFUL HOROSCOPE.

NEXT, A SON WAS BORN TO KAIKEYI AND THEN TWIN BOYS TO SUMITRA.



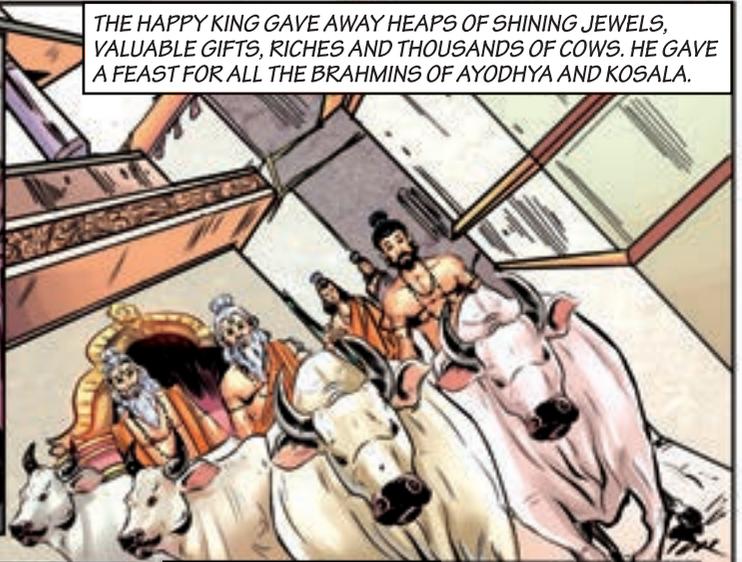
THERE WAS GREAT HAPPINESS EVERYWHERE.



*THIS DAY IS CELEBRATED AS RAMA NAVAMI EVERY YEAR.

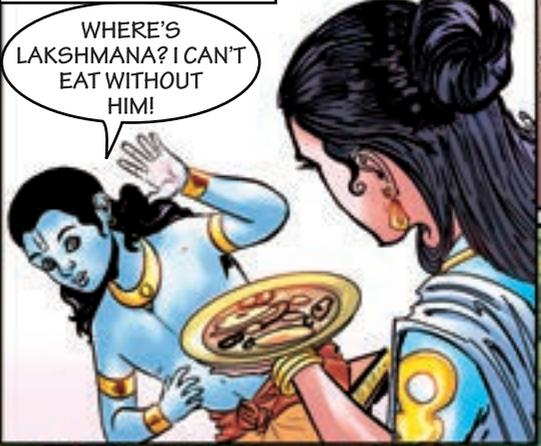
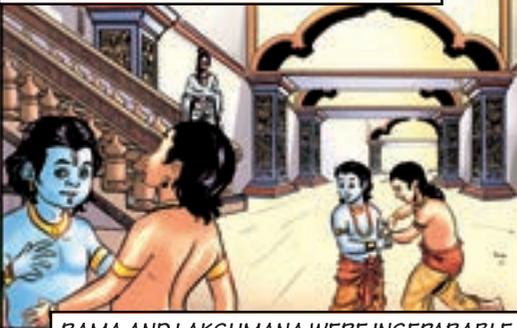
VASISHTHA NAMED KAUSALYA'S SON RAMA, KAIKEYI'S SON BHARATA, AND SUMITRA'S TWINS LAKSHMANA AND SHATRUGHNA.

THE HAPPY KING GAVE AWAY HEAPS OF SHINING JEWELS, VALUABLE GIFTS, RICHES AND THOUSANDS OF COWS. HE GAVE A FEAST FOR ALL THE BRAHMINS OF AYODHYA AND KOSALA.



THE FOUR BROTHERS WERE DEVOTED TO EACH OTHER, RIGHT FROM THE BEGINNING.

EVEN AS THEY GREW UP -



WHERE'S LAKSHMANA? I CAN'T EAT WITHOUT HIM!

RAMA AND LAKSHMANA WERE INSEPARABLE, AS WERE BHARATA AND SHATRUGHNA.

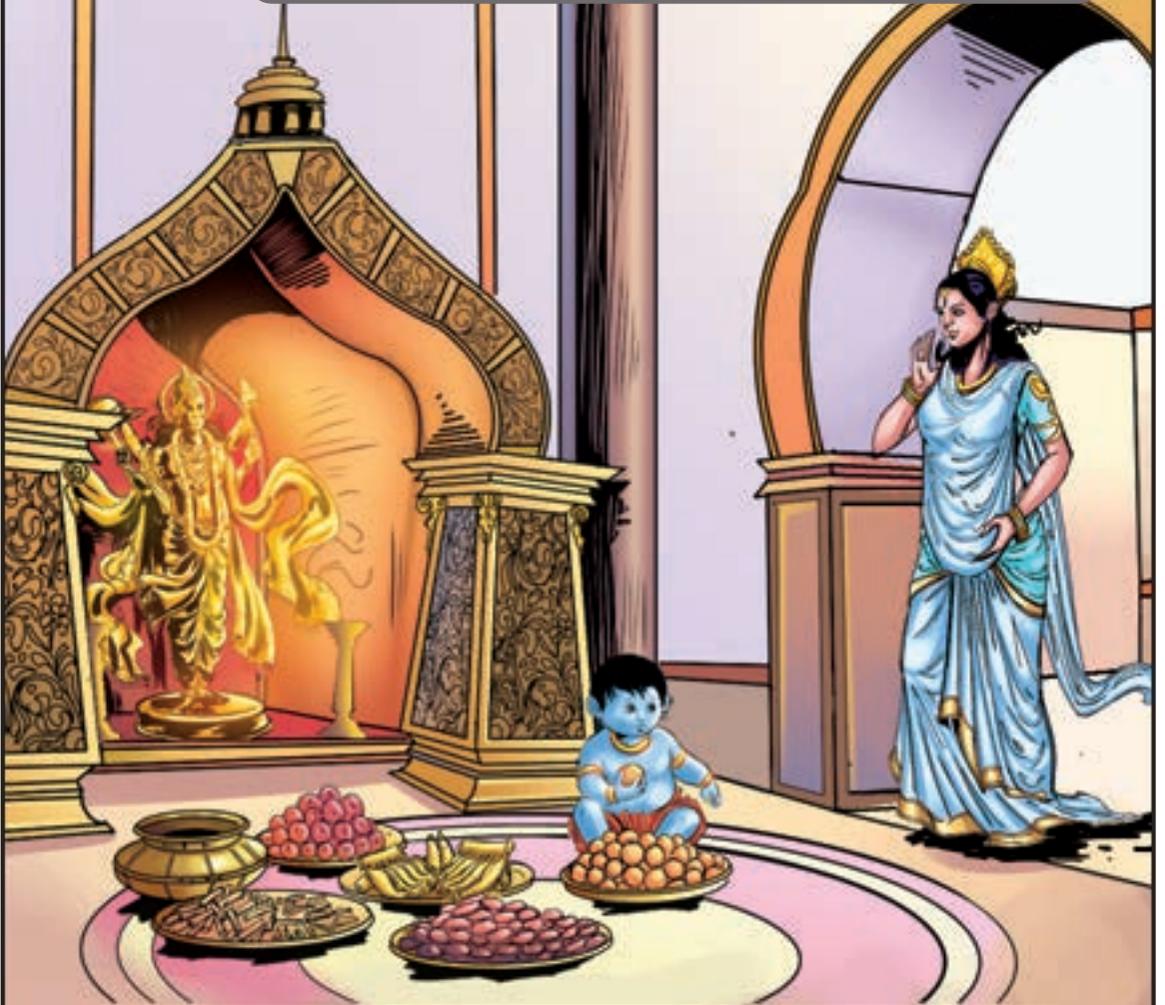
JUST LET ANYONE TRY AND HARM MY RAMA!



RAMA'S INFINITE FORM

One day, when Rama was an infant, Kausalya put him to sleep in his cradle and went to say her prayers and offer sweets to god. Suddenly, she saw little Rama there, helping himself to the sweets! But she had just left him in his cradle. How could he have got here so fast?

She ran to the cradle and saw that he was still asleep. She ran back to the pooja room and found Rama there too, gobbling up the sweets! Her head began to spin. What was happening? How could there be two Ramas?



The Rama in the pooja room, seeing her confusion, smiled gently and revealed to her his marvellous, infinite form. Every pore of his skin contained millions of universes. Kausalya could see countless suns, moons, Shivas and Brahmas, mountains, rivers, oceans and forests, time itself, knowledge, and many things she had never heard of.

Trembling and speechless, she bowed her head to the lord of the universe, whom she had dared to think of as her child. Then Rama comforted her and told her not to speak about it to anyone. "Lord, please make me forget what I have seen," she replied.

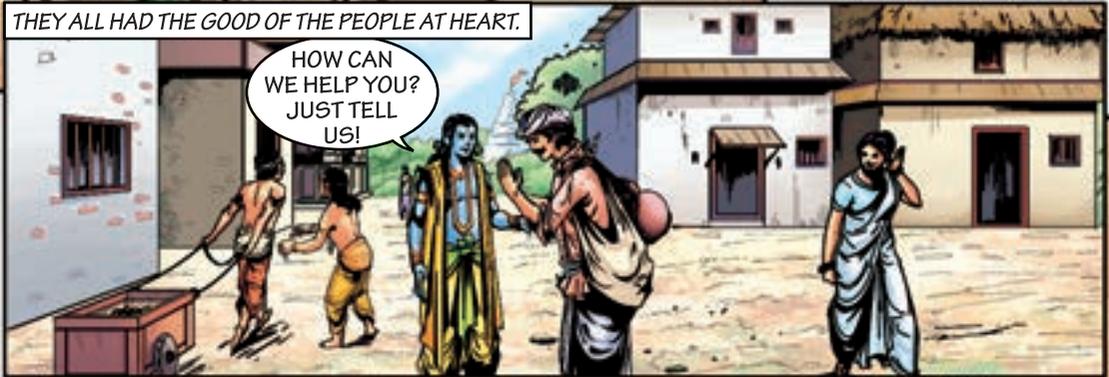
VASISHTHA LOOKED AFTER THE SPIRITUAL NEEDS OF THE PRINCES, FROM JATAKARMA TO UPANAYANA*.

DASHARATHA'S FOUR SONS WERE INTELLIGENT AND GOOD.



THEY MASTERED THE VEDAS, HORSE- AND ELEPHANT-BACK RIDING, DRIVING A CHARIOT, AND ARCHERY.

THEY ALL HAD THE GOOD OF THE PEOPLE AT HEART.



BUT IT WAS RAMA WHO EXCELLED IN EVERYTHING. HE WAS DEVOTED TO HIS FATHER AND TO THE PEOPLE OF AYODHYA.

ONE DAY -

THE BOYS HAVE ALMOST COMPLETED THEIR STUDIES. I THINK IT IS TIME TO THINK OF THEIR MARRIAGE.



THE YEARS WENT BY. DASHARATHA WITH HIS FOUR BELOVED SONS FELT LIKE BRAHMA WITH INDRA, VARUNA, YAMA AND KUBERA PRESIDING OVER THE FOUR QUARTERS.



*IN JATAKARMA, A NEWBORN IS GIVEN A MIXTURE OF HONEY AND GHEE. UPANAYANA (THE SACRED THREAD CEREMONY) IS THE BEGINNING OF A BOY'S FORMAL EDUCATION.

JUST THEN, AT THE PALACE GATES -

TELL THE KING THAT RISHI VISHWAMITRA, THE SON OF GADHI, DESCENDED IN THE LINE OF KUSHA, HAS ARRIVED.

GASP!

DASHARATHA WELCOMED VISHWAMITRA WITH GREAT HONOUR AND HOSPITALITY.

I HOPE ALL IS WELL WITH YOUR KINGDOM, TREASURY, RELATIONS AND FRIENDS, O KING?

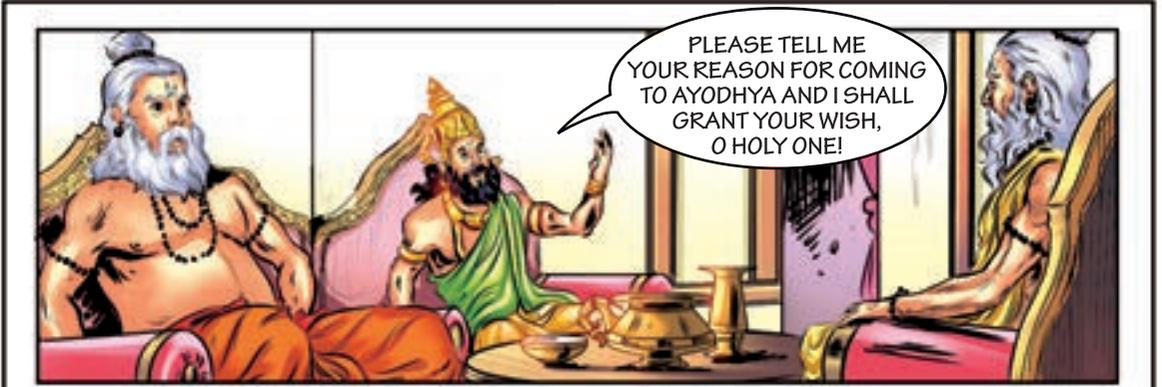
YES, HOLY ONE.

ARE YOUR VASSALS* OBEDIENT AND YOUR ENEMIES SUBDUED? HAVE YOU DISCHARGED YOUR DUTIES TO THE GODS AND TO HUMANITY? ARE THE MINISTERS ALL DOING WELL, AND YASISHTHA AND VAMADEVA?

ALL IS WELL, GREAT RISHI!

O FOREMOST AMONG RISHIS, YOUR PRESENCE HERE IS LIKE RAINFALL IN A DRY LAND!

*LANDLORDS WHO PAY TRIBUTE TO THE KING



PLEASE TELL ME YOUR REASON FOR COMING TO AYODHYA AND I SHALL GRANT YOUR WISH, O HOLY ONE!

VISHWAMITRA WAS HAPPY TO HEAR THE KING'S WORDS.



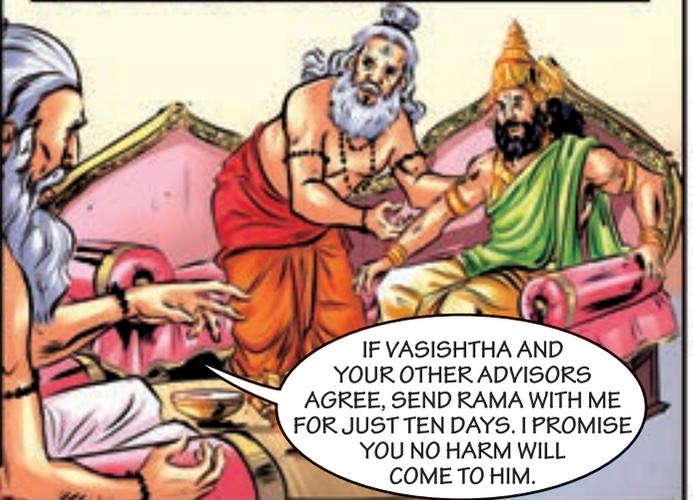
NO ONE ELSE ON EARTH COULD MAKE SUCH A GENEROUS OFFER. I AM CONFIDENT THAT YOU WILL FULFIL YOUR PROMISE.



O KING, I AM PERFORMING AN IMPORTANT SACRIFICE. BUT TWO POWERFUL RAKSHASAS, MARICHA AND SUBAHU, RAIN FLESH AND BLOOD ON THE ALTAR AND SPOIL THE YAGYA. BOUND BY MY VOWS, I CANNOT CURSE THEM.



PLEASE ALLOW ME TO TAKE RAMA. UNDER MY PROTECTION, HE WILL DESTROY THOSE RAKSHASAS. HE IS THE ONLY ONE WHO CAN ACHIEVE THIS.

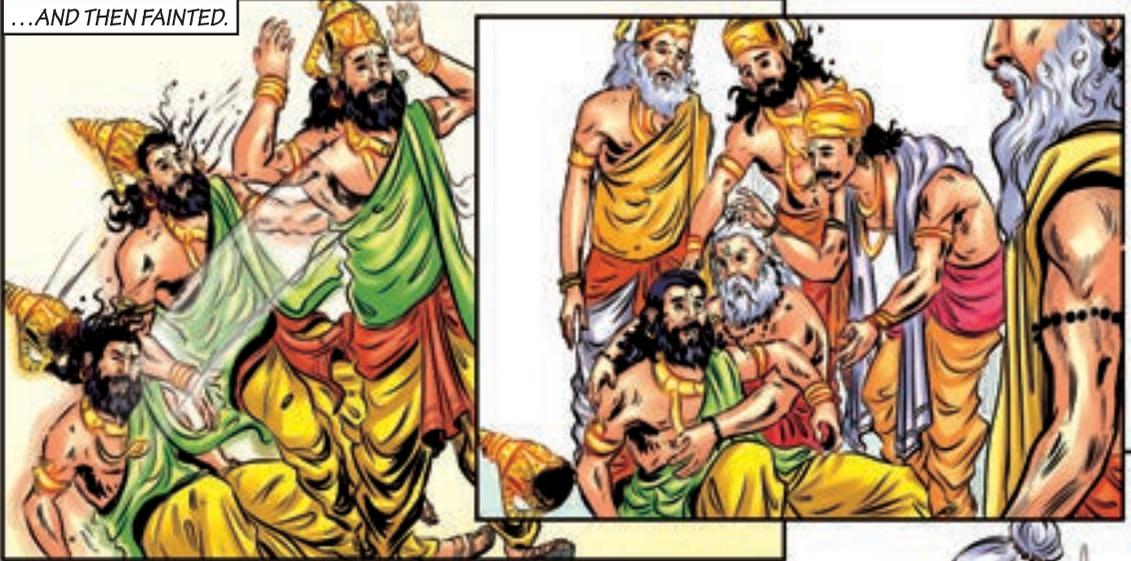


IF VASISHTHA AND YOUR OTHER ADVISORS AGREE, SEND RAMA WITH ME FOR JUST TEN DAYS. I PROMISE YOU NO HARM WILL COME TO HIM.

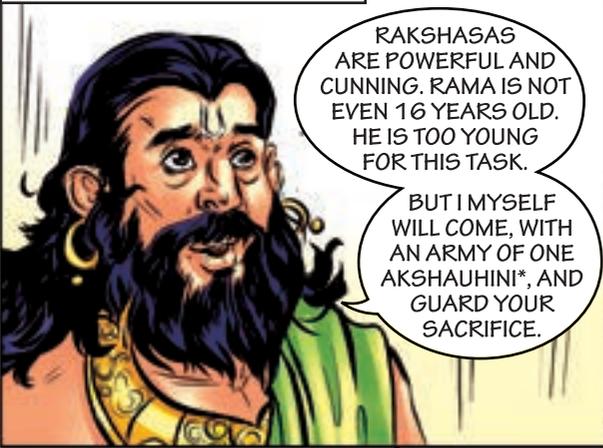
HEARING VISHWAMITRA'S WORDS, DASHARATHA WAS OVERCOME WITH FEAR. HE TREMBLED...



...AND THEN FAINTED.

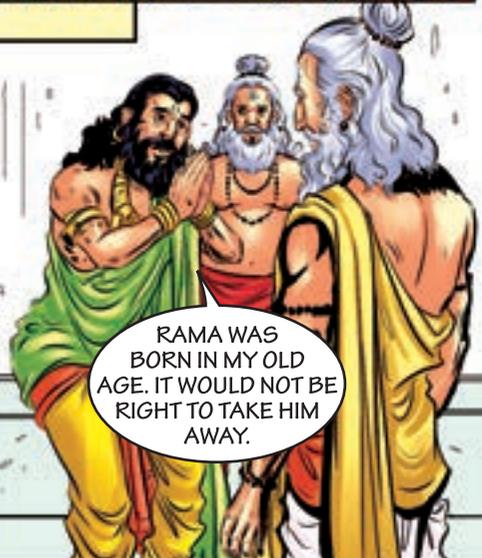


WHEN DASHARATHA RECOVERED -



RAKSHASAS ARE POWERFUL AND CUNNING. RAMA IS NOT EVEN 16 YEARS OLD. HE IS TOO YOUNG FOR THIS TASK.

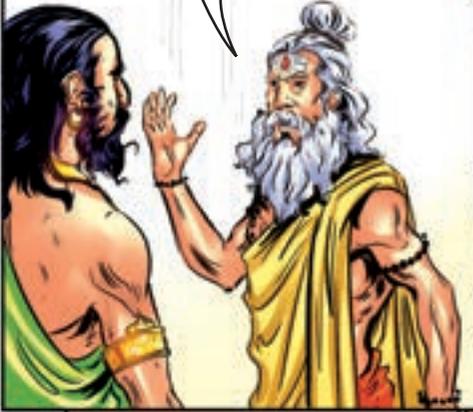
BUT I MYSELF WILL COME, WITH AN ARMY OF ONE AKSHAUHINI*, AND GUARD YOUR SACRIFICE.



RAMA WAS BORN IN MY OLD AGE. IT WOULD NOT BE RIGHT TO TAKE HIM AWAY.

*ANCIENT BATTLE FORMATION OF 21,870 CHARIOTS, 21,870 ELEPHANTS, 65,610 HORSE-MOUNTED WARRIORS AND 1,09,350 FOOT SOLDIERS

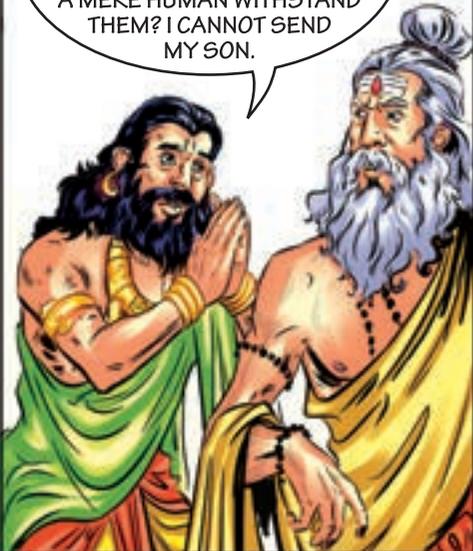
THERE IS A POWERFUL RAKSHASA KING CALLED RAVANA, A DESCENDANT OF PULASTYA*, HIS FATHER IS THE RISHI VISHRAVA, AND HIS BROTHER IS KUBERA.



AFTER A LONG TAPAS, HE RECEIVED A BOON FROM BRAHMA THAT HE COULD NOT BE KILLED BY ANY IMMORTAL BEING. NOW HE IS TORMENTING THE THREE WORLDS. MARICHA AND SUBAHU ARE HIS FOLLOWERS.

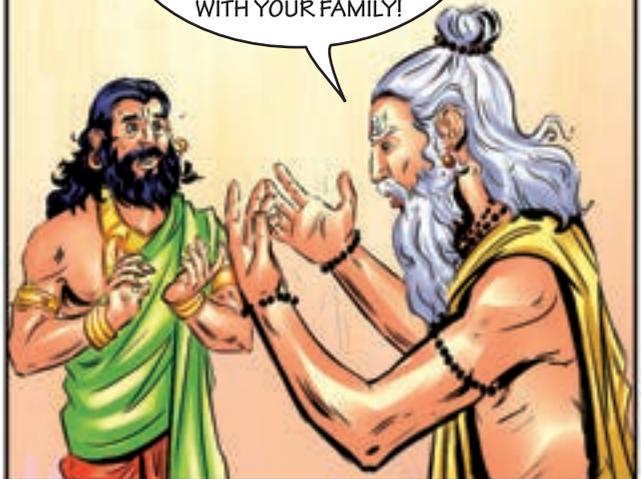


O GREAT RISHI, NOT EVEN GODS, DEMONS, GANDHARVAS AND YAKSHAS CAN DEFEAT THESE RAKSHASAS! HOW THEN CAN A MERE HUMAN WITHSTAND THEM? I CANNOT SEND MY SON.



VISHWAMITRA'S ANGER BLAZED UP.

YOU ARE GOING BACK ON YOUR PROMISE! THIS WILL BRING RUIN TO THE RACE OF RAGHU! IF YOU HAVE MADE UP YOUR MIND, I SHALL RETURN AS I CAME, AND YOU MAY REMAIN AT EASE WITH YOUR FAMILY!

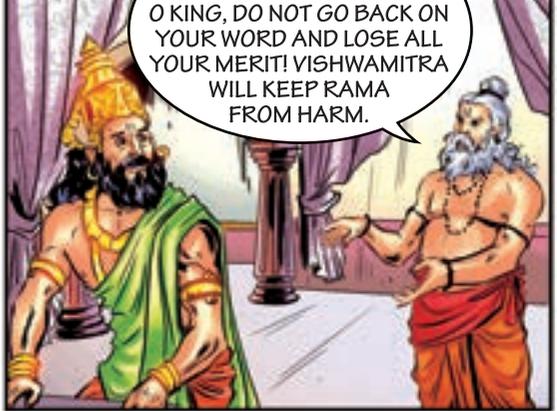


*ONE OF THE NINE MIND-BORN SONS OF BRAHMA, WHO ARE THE ANCESTORS OF ALL CREATION

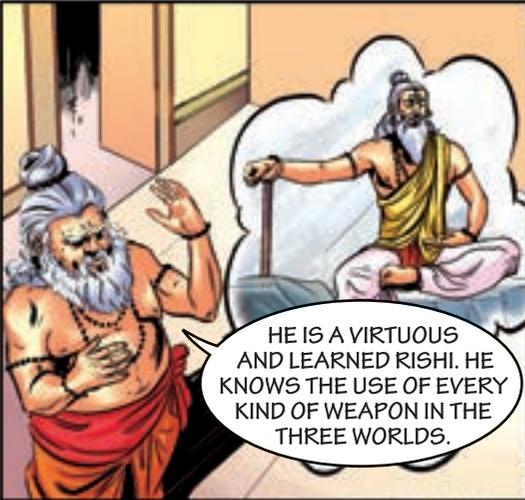
VISHWAMITRA'S ANGER SHOOK THE WHOLE EARTH, AND EVEN THE GODS WERE AFRAID.



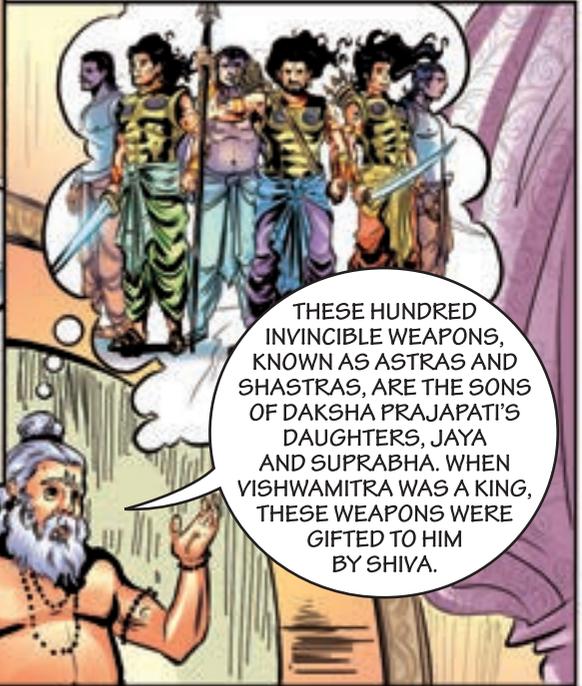
SEEING THE WORLD SO ALARMED, THE GREAT AND WISE VASISHTHA SPOKE TO DASHARATHA.



O KING, DO NOT GO BACK ON YOUR WORD AND LOSE ALL YOUR MERIT! VISHWAMITRA WILL KEEP RAMA FROM HARM.



HE IS A VIRTUOUS AND LEARNED RISHI. HE KNOWS THE USE OF EVERY KIND OF WEAPON IN THE THREE WORLDS.

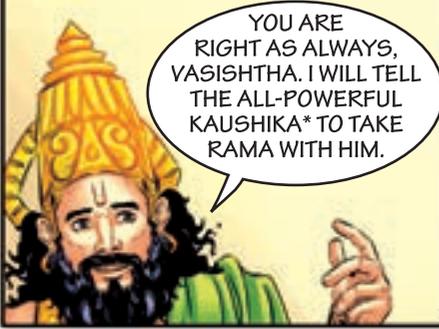


THESE HUNDRED INVINCIBLE WEAPONS, KNOWN AS ASTRAS AND SHASTRAS, ARE THE SONS OF DAKSHA PRAJAPATI'S DAUGHTERS, JAYA AND SUPRABHA. WHEN VISHWAMITRA WAS A KING, THESE WEAPONS WERE GIFTED TO HIM BY SHIVA.



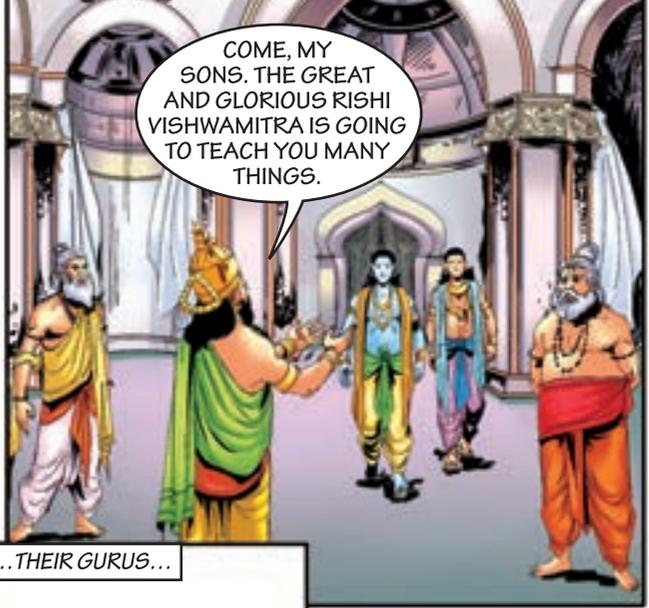
THIS GREAT RISHI IS EVEN CAPABLE OF CREATING NEW WEAPONS. HAVE NO FEAR FOR RAMA. VISHWAMITRA WILL DO ONLY WHAT IS GOOD FOR HIM.

HEARING VASISHTHA'S WORDS, DASHARATHA BECAME CALM.



YOU ARE RIGHT AS ALWAYS, VASISHTHA. I WILL TELL THE ALL-POWERFUL KAUSHIKA* TO TAKE RAMA WITH HIM.

DASHARATHA SENT FOR RAMA AND LAKSHMANA. WHEN THEY ARRIVED IN THE COURT -



COME, MY SONS. THE GREAT AND GLORIOUS RISHI VISHWAMITRA IS GOING TO TEACH YOU MANY THINGS.

AND SO, RAMA AND LAKSHMANA TOOK LEAVE OF THEIR MOTHERS...



...THEIR GURUS...

... AND THEIR FATHER.

DASHARATHA'S HEART WAS PEACEFUL AS HE BID HIS SONS GOODBYE.



I COMMIT THEM TO YOUR CARE, O HOLY ONE!



*ANOTHER NAME FOR VISHWAMITRA

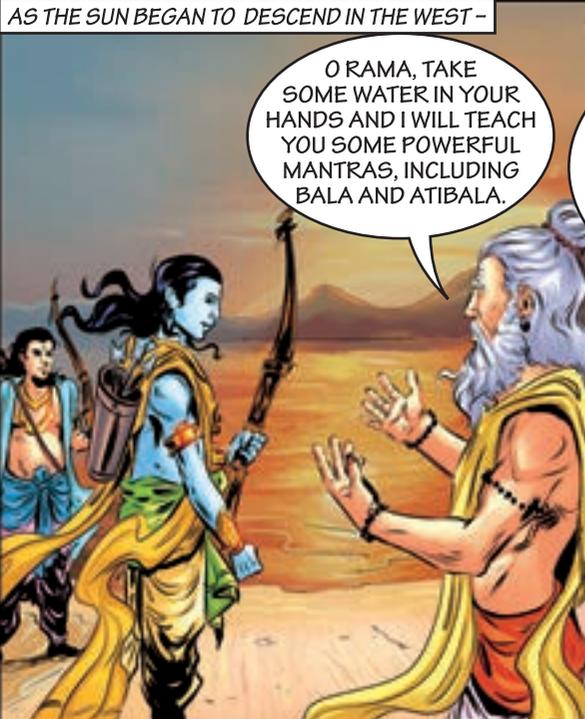
AS RAMA FOLLOWED VISHWAMITRA, A SOFT, DELIGHTFUL BREEZE BEGAN TO BLOW AND THE GODS SHOWERED THEM WITH FLOWERS.



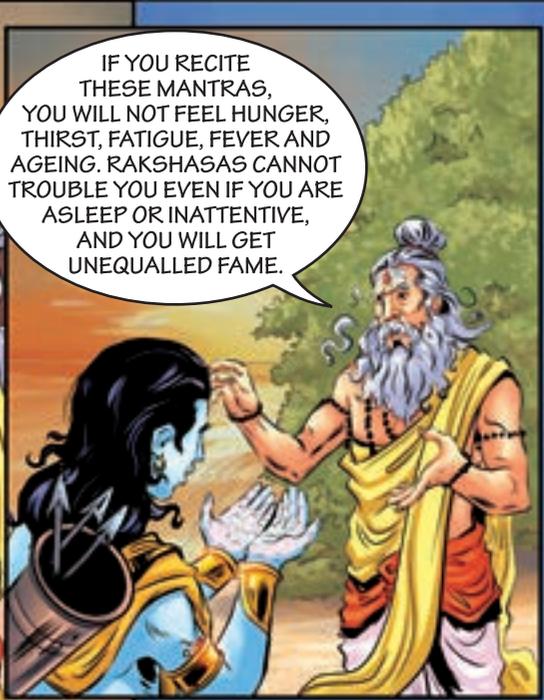
LEAVING AYODHYA, THEY WALKED ALONG THE SOUTHERN BANK OF THE RIVER SARAYU.



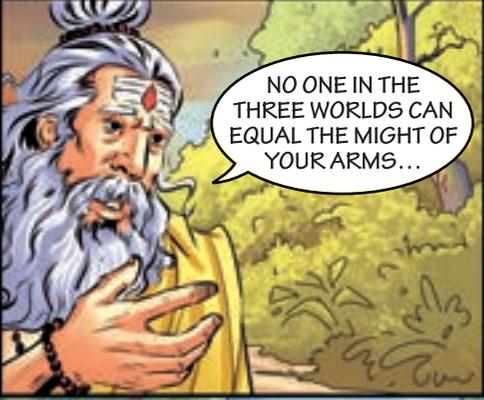
AS THE SUN BEGAN TO DESCEND IN THE WEST -



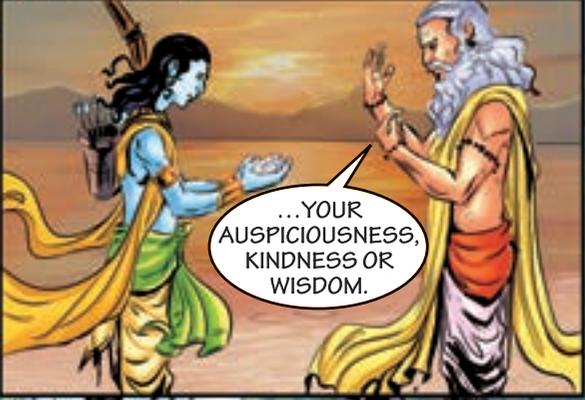
O RAMA, TAKE SOME WATER IN YOUR HANDS AND I WILL TEACH YOU SOME POWERFUL MANTRAS, INCLUDING BALA AND ATIBALA.



IF YOU RECITE THESE MANTRAS, YOU WILL NOT FEEL HUNGER, THIRST, FATIGUE, FEVER AND AGEING. RAKSHASAS CANNOT TROUBLE YOU EVEN IF YOU ARE ASLEEP OR INATTENTIVE, AND YOU WILL GET UNEQUALLED FAME.

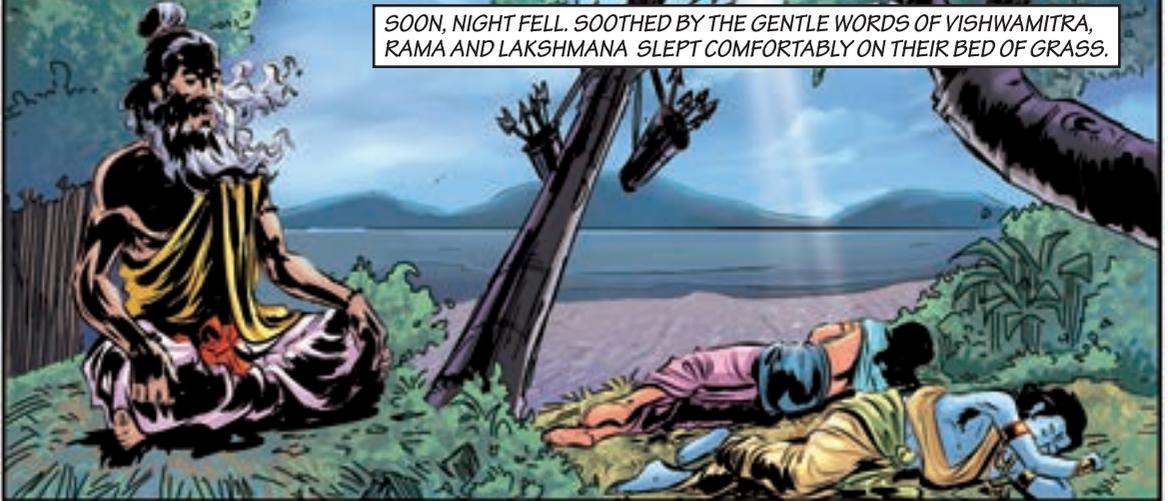


NO ONE IN THE THREE WORLDS CAN EQUAL THE MIGHT OF YOUR ARMS...

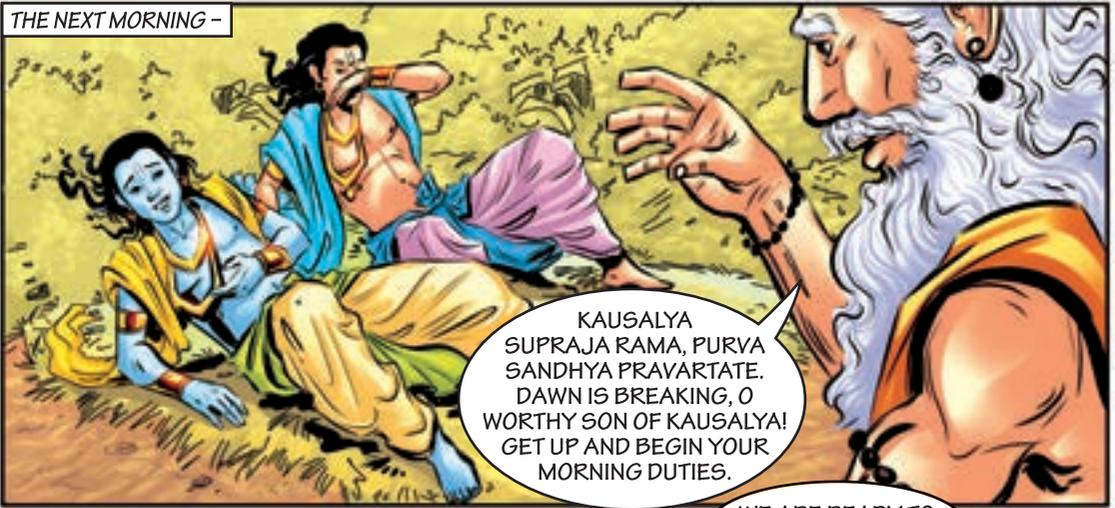


...YOUR AUSPICIOUSNESS, KINDNESS OR WISDOM.

SOON, NIGHT FELL. SOOTHED BY THE GENTLE WORDS OF VISHWAMITRA, RAMA AND LAKSHMANA SLEPT COMFORTABLY ON THEIR BED OF GRASS.

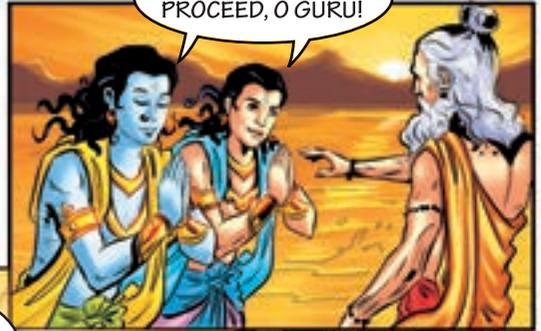
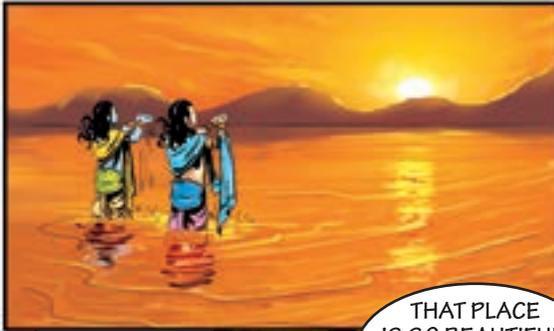


THE NEXT MORNING -



KAUSALYA
SUPRAJA RAMA, PURVA
SANDHYA PRAVARTATE.
DAWN IS BREAKING, O
WORTHY SON OF KAUSALYA!
GET UP AND BEGIN YOUR
MORNING DUTIES.

WE ARE READY TO
PROCEED, O GURU!



THAT PLACE
IS SO BEAUTIFUL!
WHOSE ASHRAM
CAN THAT BE?

THAT EVENING -



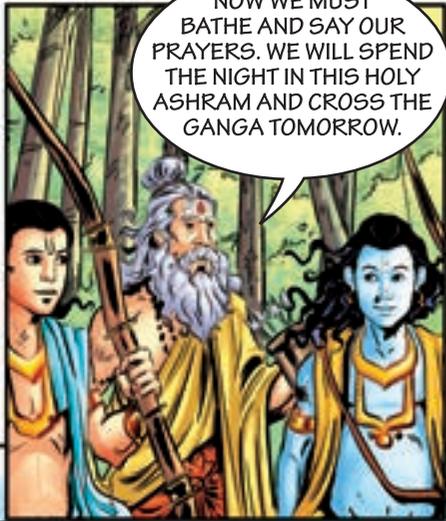
THAT ASHRAM
BELONGS TO LORD SHIVA
AND IS OCCUPIED BY HIS
VIRTUOUS DISCIPLES. AT
ONE TIME KAMADEVA, THE
GOD OF LOVE, LIVED THERE
IN HUMAN FORM.

THE FOOLISH KAMA DISTURBED LORD SHIVA AND
PARVATI IN THEIR MEDITATION. ENRAGED, LORD SHIVA
OPENED HIS FIERCE THIRD EYE, BURNING DOWN KAMA'S
BODY. FROM THAT TIME ON...

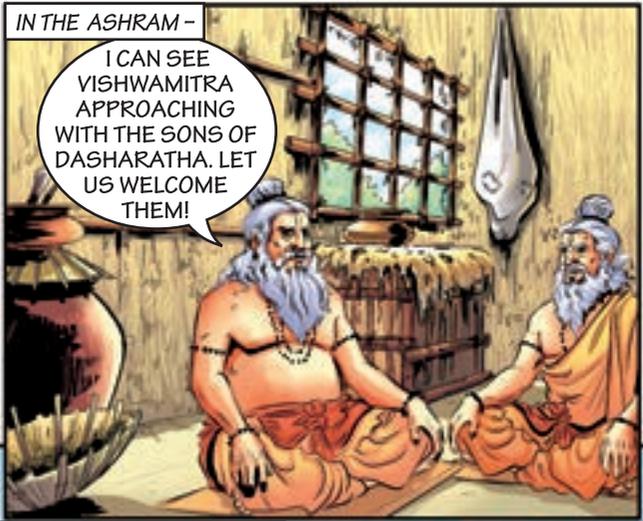


...HE BECAME KNOWN AS ANANGA*. AND
THIS PLACE IS CALLED 'ANGA DESA'.

*WITHOUT A BODY



NOW WE MUST BATHE AND SAY OUR PRAYERS. WE WILL SPEND THE NIGHT IN THIS HOLY ASHRAM AND CROSS THE GANGA TOMORROW.

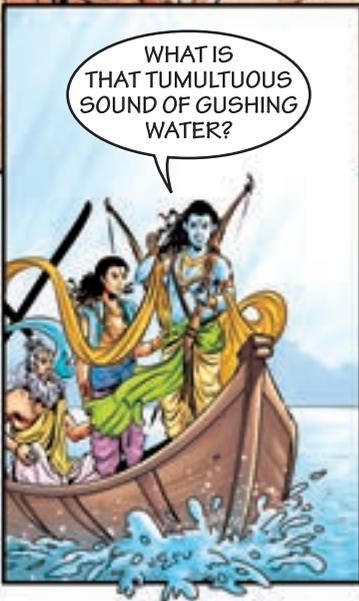


IN THE ASHRAM -
I CAN SEE VISHWAMITRA APPROACHING WITH THE SONS OF DASHARATHA. LET US WELCOME THEM!

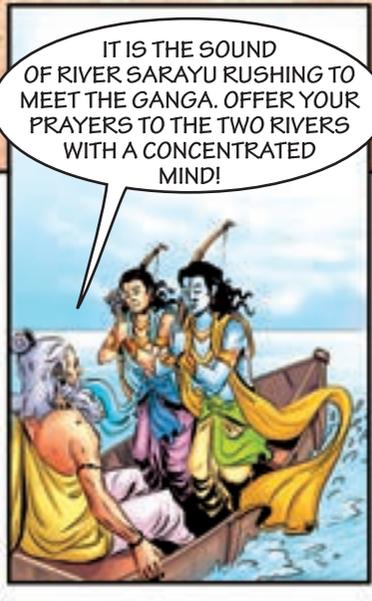
THE TRIO SPENT A COMFORTABLE NIGHT AT THE ASHRAM. NEXT MORNING -



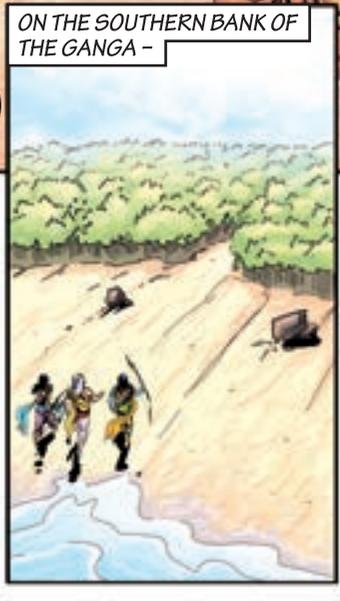
A BOAT AWAITS YOU AND THE MOMENT IS AUSPICIOUS. MAY YOUR JOURNEY PROSPER!



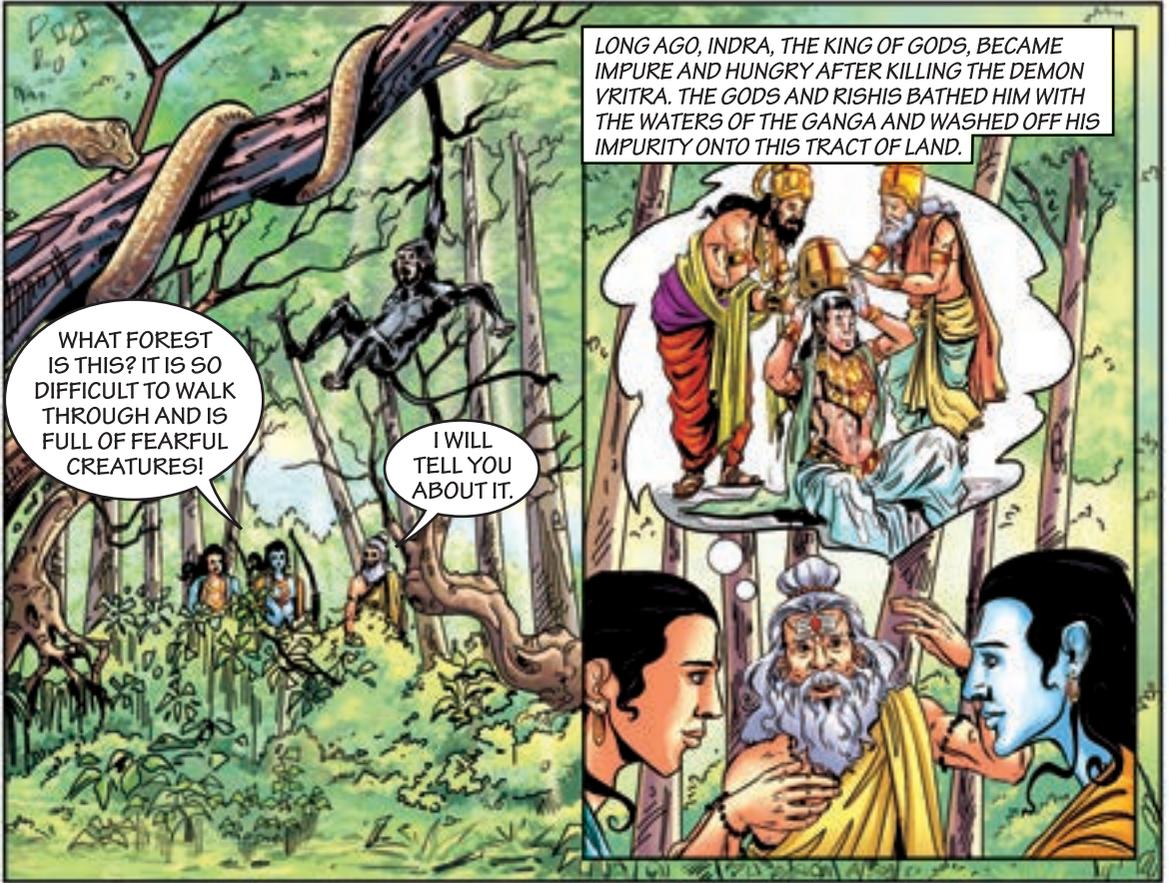
WHAT IS THAT TUMULTUOUS SOUND OF GUSHING WATER?



IT IS THE SOUND OF RIVER SARAYU RUSHING TO MEET THE GANGA. OFFER YOUR PRAYERS TO THE TWO RIVERS WITH A CONCENTRATED MIND!



ON THE SOUTHERN BANK OF THE GANGA -



LONG AGO, INDRA, THE KING OF GODS, BECAME IMPURE AND HUNGRY AFTER KILLING THE DEMON VRITRA. THE GODS AND RISHIS BATHED HIM WITH THE WATERS OF THE GANGA AND WASHED OFF HIS IMPURITY ONTO THIS TRACT OF LAND.

WHAT FOREST IS THIS? IT IS SO DIFFICULT TO WALK THROUGH AND IS FULL OF FEARFUL CREATURES!

I WILL TELL YOU ABOUT IT.

INDRA WAS HAPPY AND BLESSED THE LAND. IN TIME, TWO PROSPEROUS KINGDOMS CALLED MALADA AND KARUSHA GREW AND FLOURISHED HERE AS HE HAD FORETOLD.



SOME YEARS LATER, A YAKSHINI CALLED TATAKA APPEARED. SHE WAS VERY STRONG AND CAPABLE OF ASSUMING ANY FORM AT WILL.



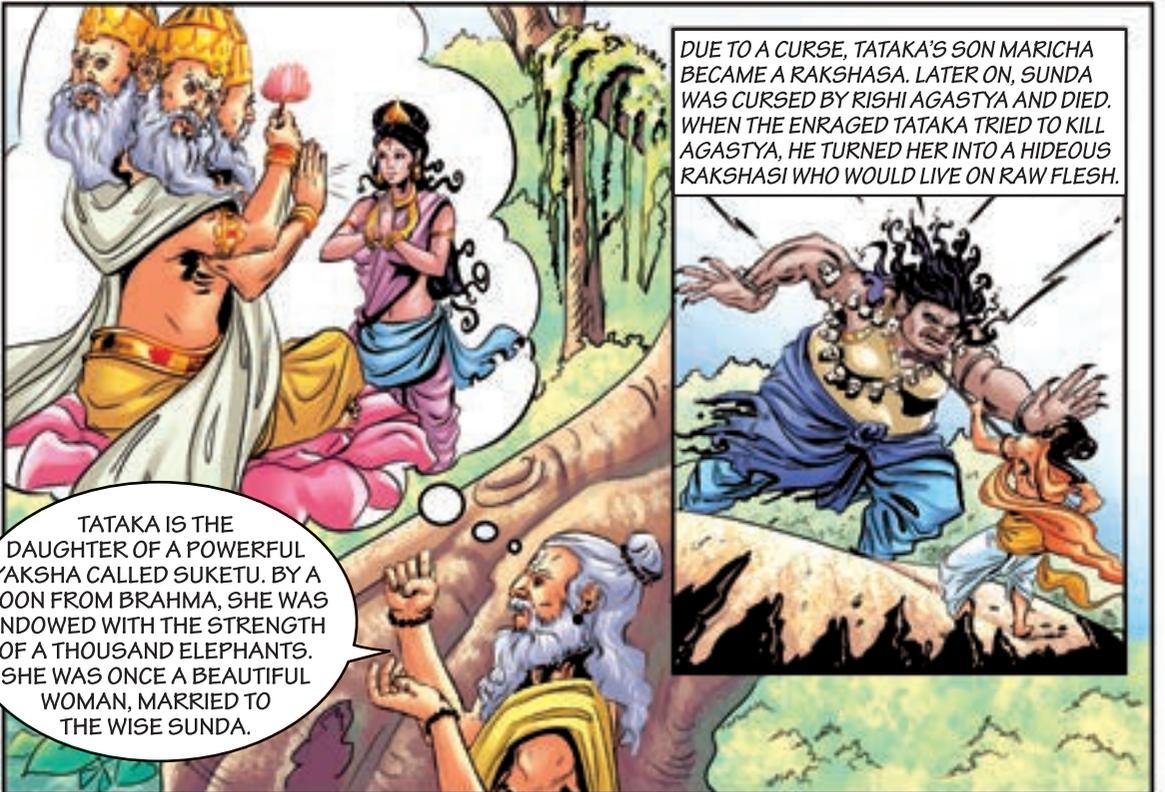
TATAKA RAVAGED THE KINGDOMS OF MALADA AND KARUSHA. HER SON, THE HUGE AND MIGHTY RAKSHASA, MARICHA, ALSO TERRORISED THE PEOPLE. NO ONE WAS ABLE TO VISIT THIS LAND, WHICH WAS ONCE SO HOLY AND BEAUTIFUL.

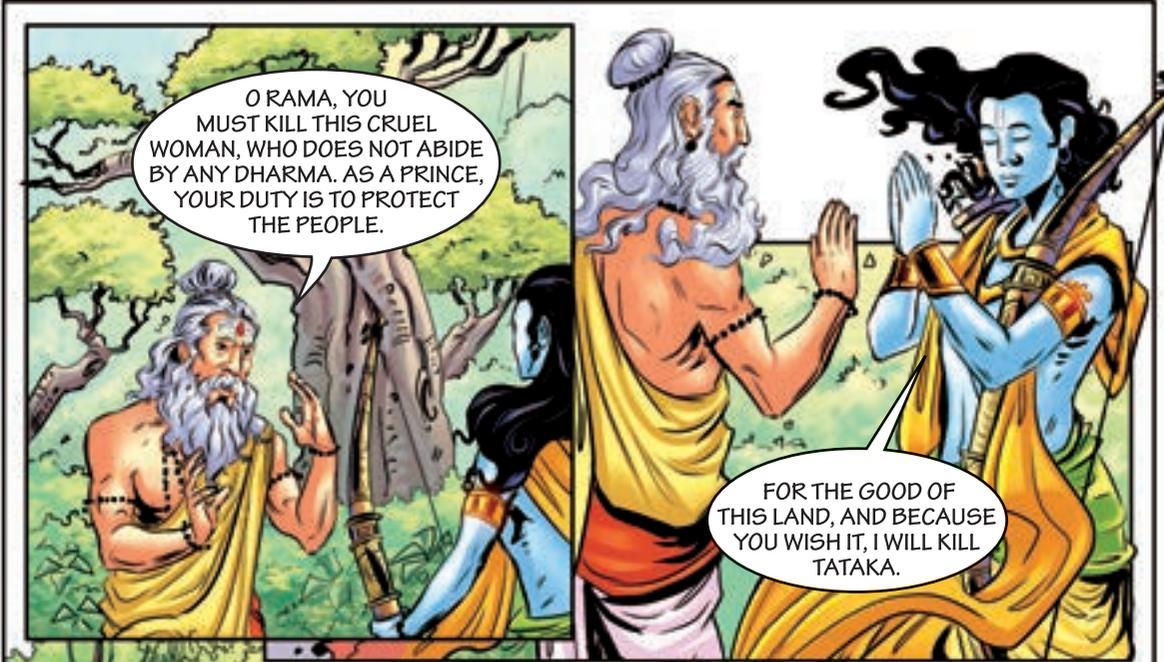


HOW CAN A YAKSHINI BE SO POWERFUL?

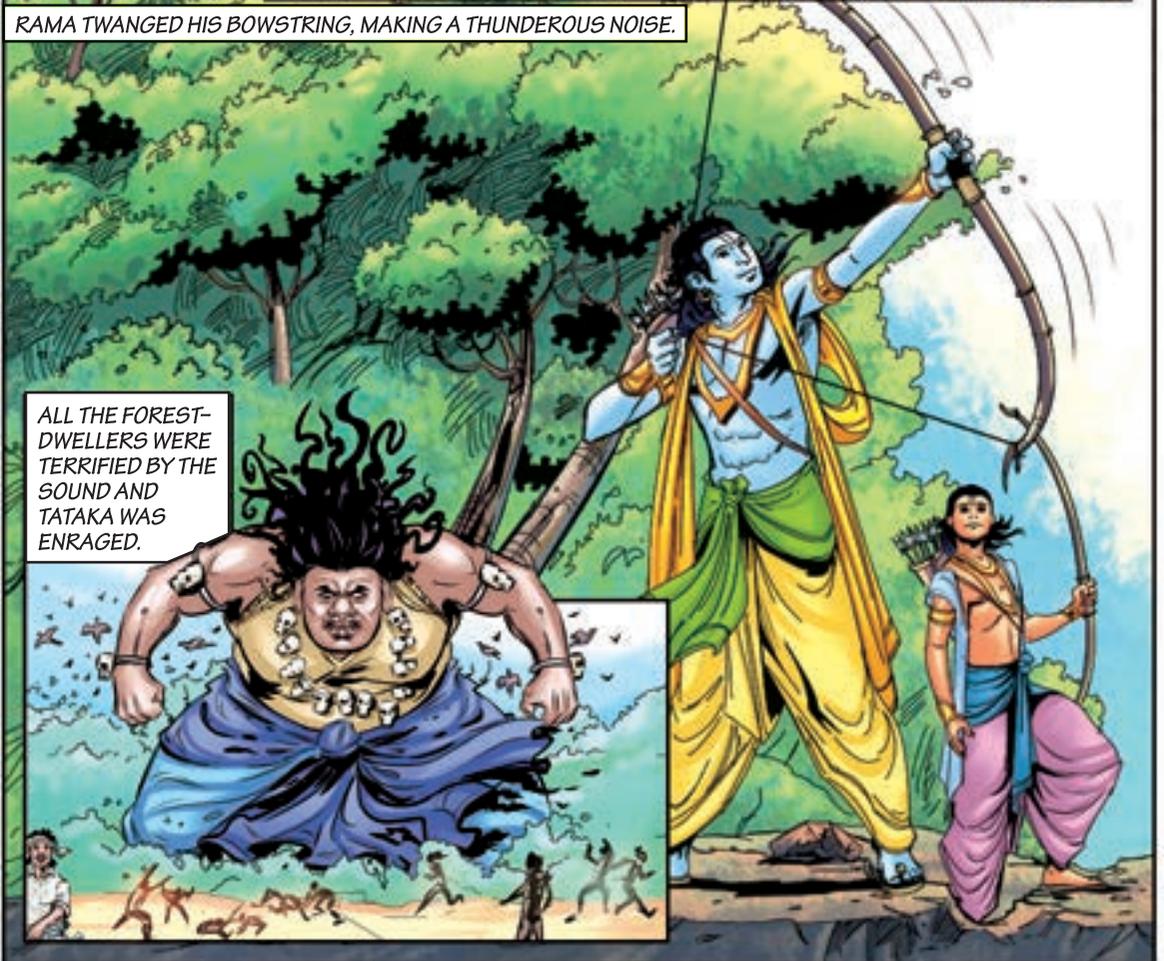
DUE TO A CURSE, TATAKA'S SON MARICHA BECAME A RAKSHASA. LATER ON, SUNDA WAS CURSED BY RISHI AGASTYA AND DIED. WHEN THE ENRAGED TATAKA TRIED TO KILL AGASTYA, HE TURNED HER INTO A HIDEOUS RAKSHASI WHO WOULD LIVE ON RAW FLESH.

TATAKA IS THE DAUGHTER OF A POWERFUL YAKSHA CALLED SUKETU. BY A BOON FROM BRAHMA, SHE WAS ENDOWED WITH THE STRENGTH OF A THOUSAND ELEPHANTS. SHE WAS ONCE A BEAUTIFUL WOMAN, MARRIED TO THE WISE SUNDA.





RAMA TWANGED HIS BOWSTRING, MAKING A THUNDEROUS NOISE.



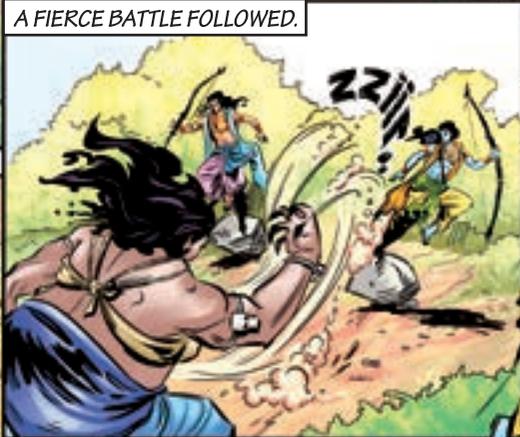


VICTORY TO THE SCIONS OF RAGHU!

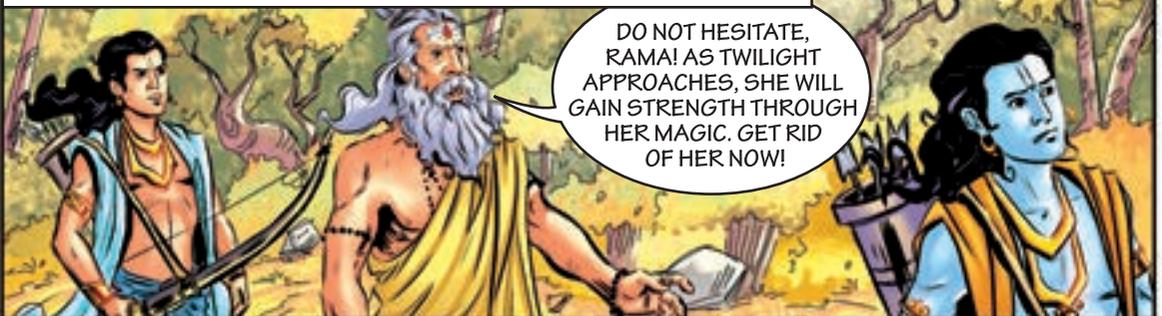
TATAKA RAISED A HUGE CLOUD OF DUST AND THEN SHOWERED THE TWO PRINCES WITH ROCKS.



A FIERCE BATTLE FOLLOWED.



THEN TATAKA MADE HERSELF INVISIBLE AND BEGAN TO DART HERE AND THERE.



DO NOT HESITATE, RAMA! AS TWILIGHT APPROACHES, SHE WILL GAIN STRENGTH THROUGH HER MAGIC. GET RID OF HER NOW!



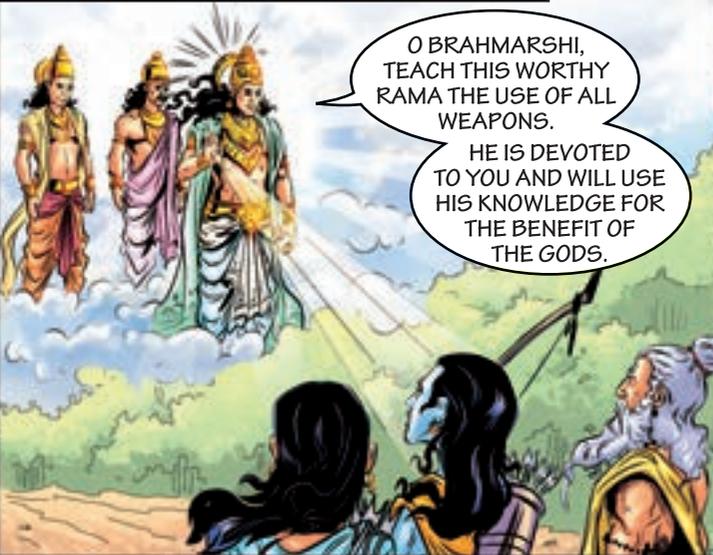
I WILL FINISH YOU OFF NOW, PUNY HUMAN!



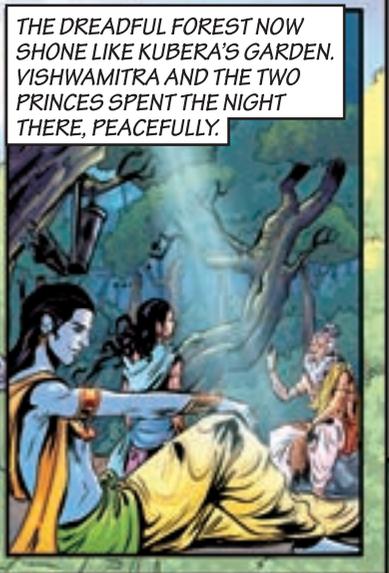
RAMA WAS SKILLED AT HITTING AN INVISIBLE TARGET BY THE SOUND COMING FROM IT.

AAAARGH!!

INDRA AND ALL THE OTHER DEVAS APPLAUDED RAMA.

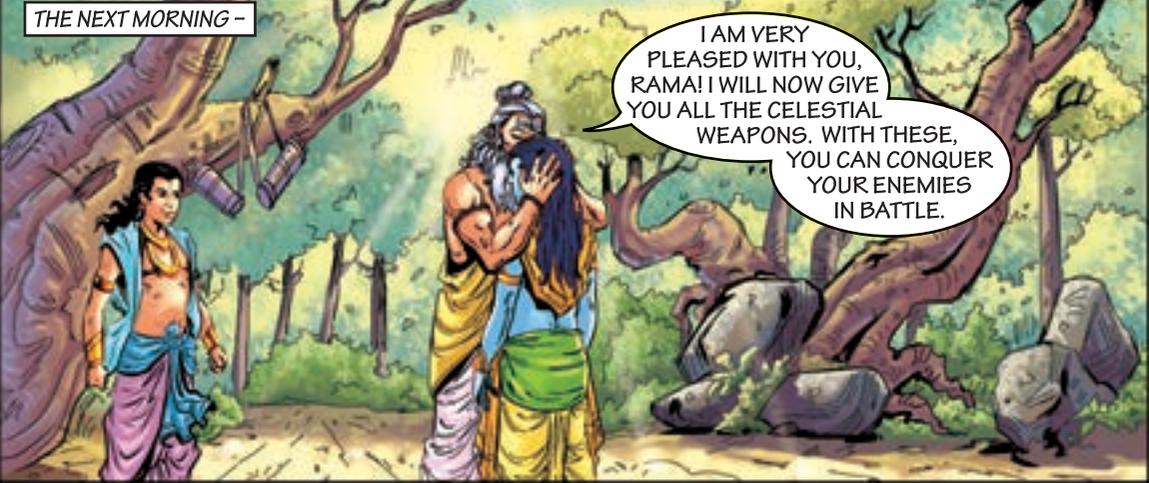


O BRAHMARSHI, TEACH THIS WORTHY RAMA THE USE OF ALL WEAPONS. HE IS DEVOTED TO YOU AND WILL USE HIS KNOWLEDGE FOR THE BENEFIT OF THE GODS.



THE DREADFUL FOREST NOW SHONE LIKE KUBERA'S GARDEN. VISHWAMITRA AND THE TWO PRINCES SPENT THE NIGHT THERE, PEACEFULLY.

THE NEXT MORNING -



I AM VERY PLEASED WITH YOU, RAMA! I WILL NOW GIVE YOU ALL THE CELESTIAL WEAPONS. WITH THESE, YOU CAN CONQUER YOUR ENEMIES IN BATTLE.

VISHWAMITRA TAUGHT RAMA THE MANTRAS THAT WOULD GIVE HIM CONTROL OF ALL THE CELESTIAL MISSILES, INCLUDING THE DANDA CHAKRA, DHARMA CHAKRA, VISHNU CHAKRA, INDRA CHAKRA AND THE INVINCIBLE BRAHMASTRA. THESE WERE VERY POWERFUL AND COULD ASSUME ANY FORM.



RAMA ALSO RECEIVED SHIVA'S TRIDENT. VISHWAMITRA GAVE HIM FIFTY WEAPONS ALTOGETHER, WHICH NOT EVEN THE GODS WERE GRANTED.



RAMA ALSO LEARNT HOW TO RECALL THESE WEAPONS. AS VISHWAMITRA WAS TEACHING RAMA, THESE MANTRAS APPEARED BEFORE HIM.

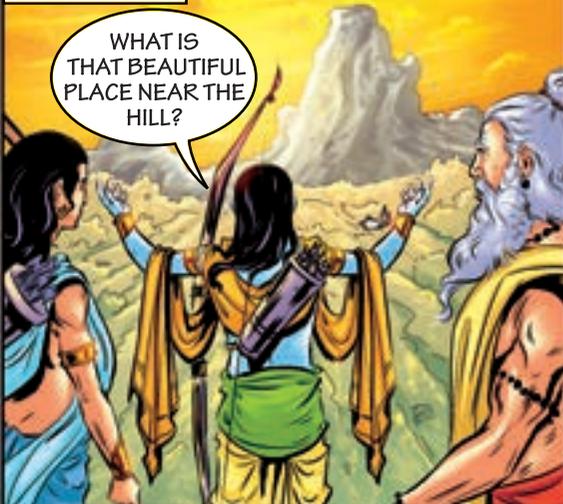


WE ARE YOURS TO COMMAND, SRI RAMA!

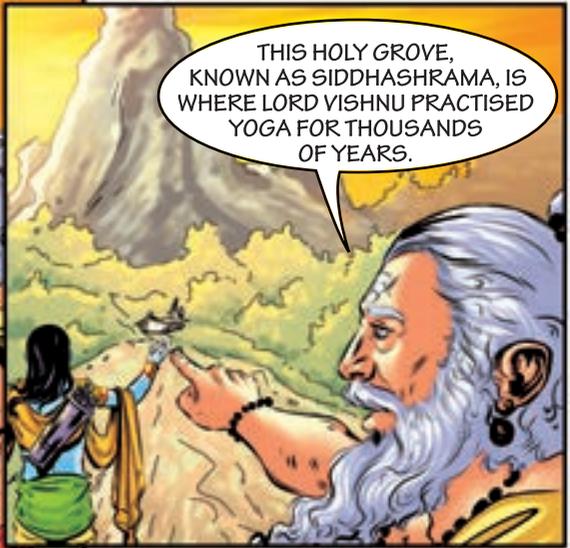
STAY IN MY MEMORY AND HELP ME IN TIMES OF NEED.

SO BE IT.

THE RISHI AND THE TWO PRINCES SET OFF AGAIN, LEAVING THE FOREST OF TATAKA BEHIND THEM. THAT EVENING -

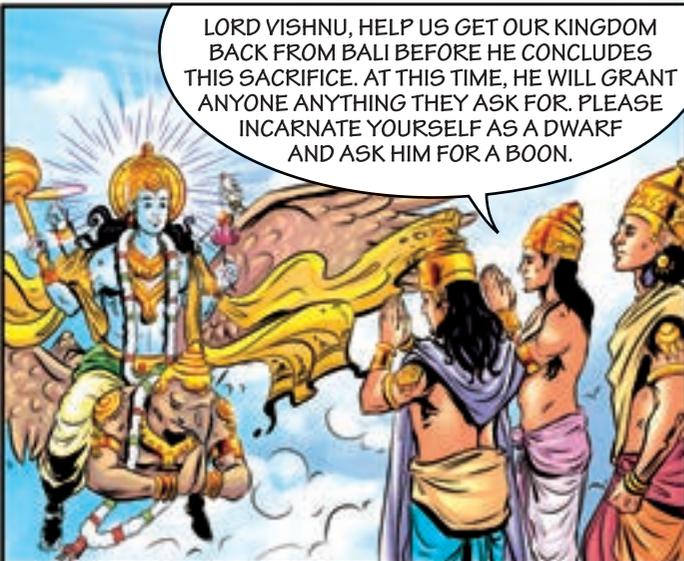


WHAT IS THAT BEAUTIFUL PLACE NEAR THE HILL?



THIS HOLY GROVE, KNOWN AS SIDDHASHRAMA, IS WHERE LORD VISHNU PRACTISED YOGA FOR THOUSANDS OF YEARS.

AT THAT TIME, KING BALI, SON OF VIROCHANA AND GRANDSON OF PRAHLADA, HAD CONQUERED DEVALOKA. HE PERFORMED A SACRIFICE TO CONFIRM HIS POSITION AS THE LORD OF THE THREE WORLDS. THE DEVAS WERE PANIC-STRICKEN.

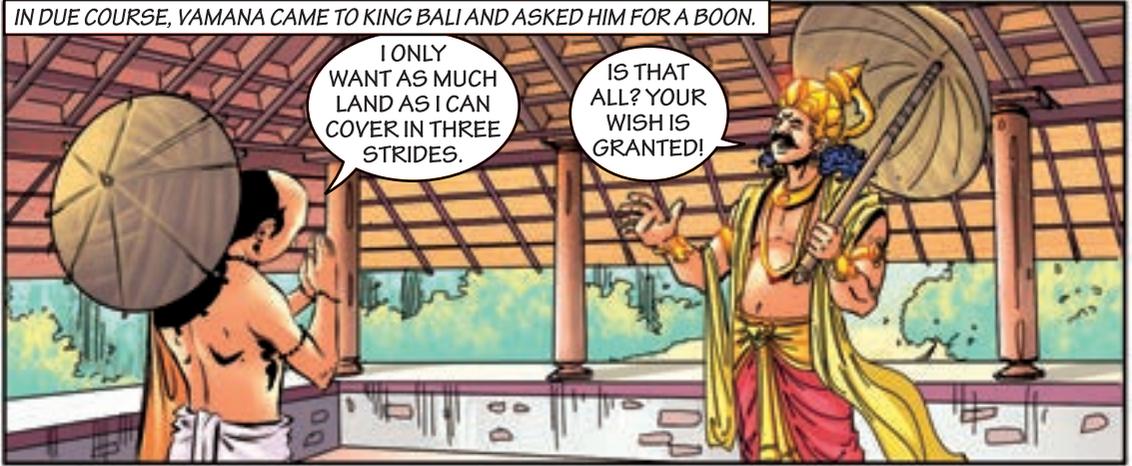


LORD VISHNU, HELP US GET OUR KINGDOM BACK FROM BALI BEFORE HE CONCLUDES THIS SACRIFICE. AT THIS TIME, HE WILL GRANT ANYONE ANYTHING THEY ASK FOR. PLEASE INCARNATE YOURSELF AS A DWARF AND ASK HIM FOR A BOON.

VISHNU JOYFULLY AGREED TO BE BORN AS THE DIVINE DWARF, VAMANA. HIS PARENTS WOULD BE THE GREAT RISHI KASHYAPA AND HIS WIFE, ADITI, AND HIS BROTHER WOULD BE INDRA, THE KING OF THE GODS.

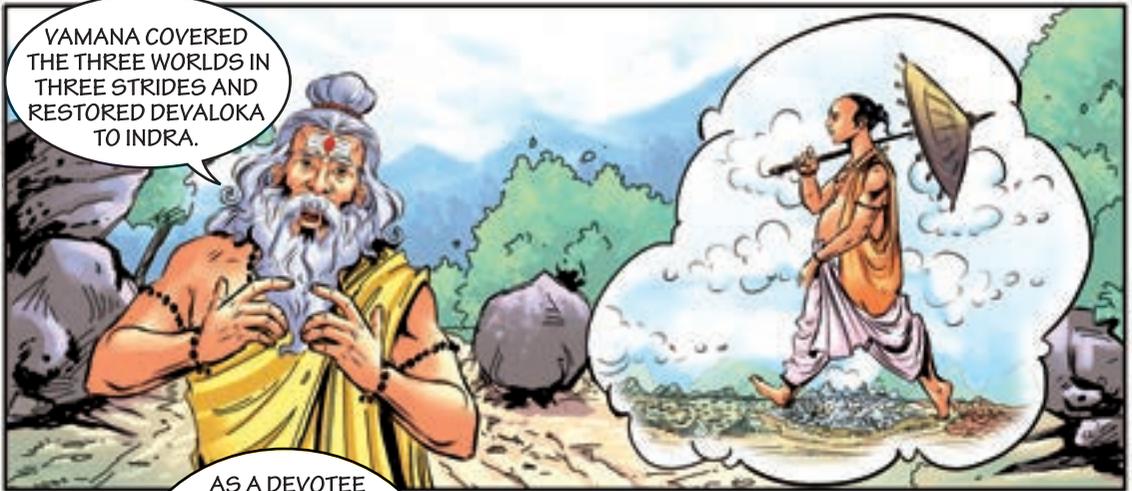


IN DUE COURSE, VAMANA CAME TO KING BALI AND ASKED HIM FOR A BOON.



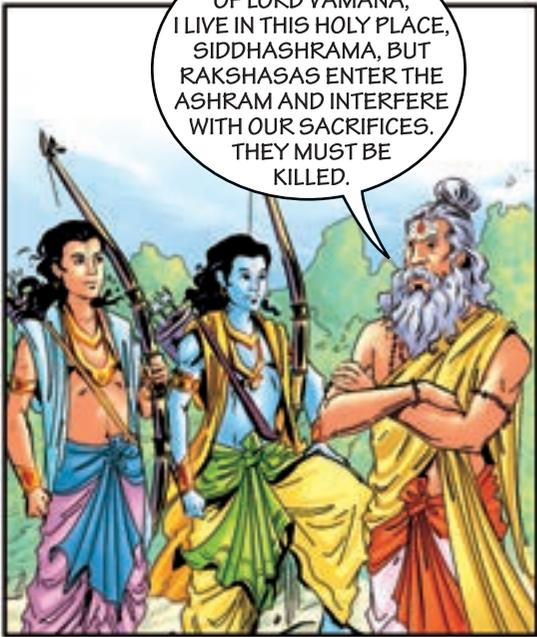
I ONLY WANT AS MUCH LAND AS I CAN COVER IN THREE STRIDES.

IS THAT ALL? YOUR WISH IS GRANTED!

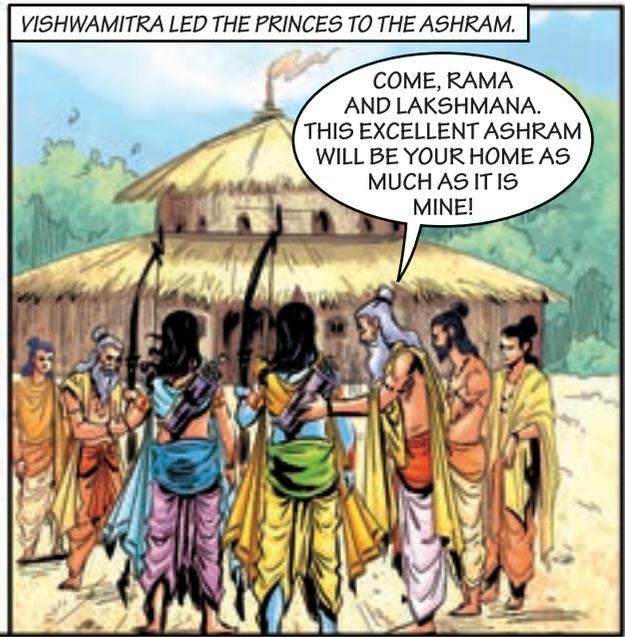


VAMANA COVERED THE THREE WORLDS IN THREE STRIDES AND RESTORED DEVALOKA TO INDRA.

AS A DEVOTEE OF LORD VAMANA, I LIVE IN THIS HOLY PLACE, SIDDHASHRAMA, BUT RAKSHASAS ENTER THE ASHRAM AND INTERFERE WITH OUR SACRIFICES. THEY MUST BE KILLED.



VISHWAMITRA LED THE PRINCES TO THE ASHRAM.



COME, RAMA AND LAKSHMANA. THIS EXCELLENT ASHRAM WILL BE YOUR HOME AS MUCH AS IT IS MINE!

THE NEXT MORNING -

WE ARE READY FOR THE RAKSHASAS. PLEASE TELL US WHEN WE SHOULD BE PREPARED FOR AN ATTACK.



FROM TODAY, KEEP YOUR VIGIL FOR SIX DAYS AND NIGHTS, O SCIONS OF RAGHU. WE ARE TELLING YOU THIS BECAUSE VISHWAMITRA WILL OBSERVE SILENCE UNTIL THE SACRIFICE IS OVER.

ARMED WITH THEIR BOWS, THE TWO PRINCES GUARDED THE SACRED GROVE AND VISHWAMITRA FOR FIVE DAYS AND NIGHTS WITHOUT SLEEP.

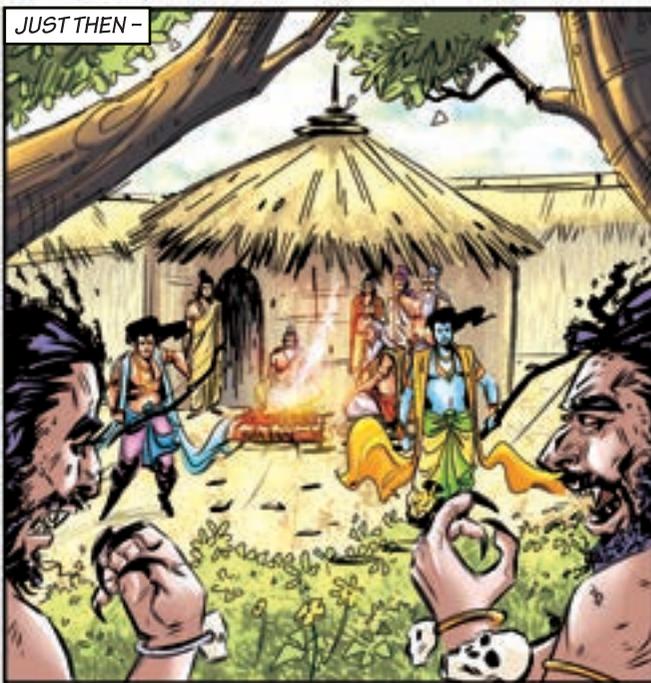


ON THE SIXTH DAY, THE FIRE BLAZED FORTH.

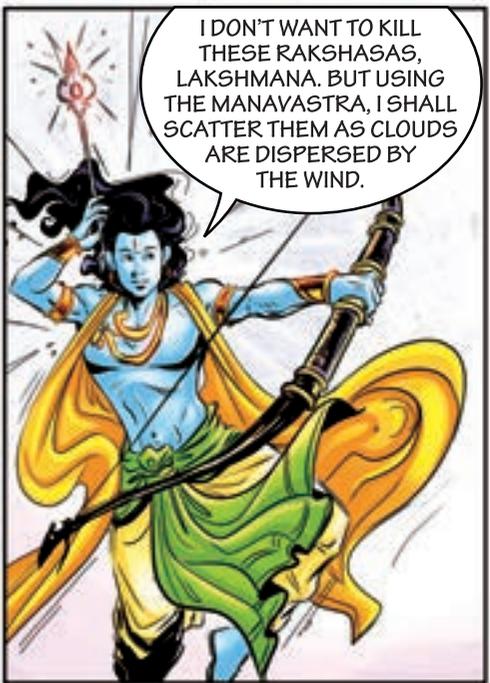
LAKSHMANA, WE MUST BE VERY VIGILANT NOW.



JUST THEN -



I DON'T WANT TO KILL THESE RAKSHASAS, LAKSHMANA. BUT USING THE MANAVASTRA, I SHALL SCATTER THEM AS CLOUDS ARE DISPERSED BY THE WIND.



THE MISSILE OF MANU STRUCK MARICHA IN THE CHEST AND FLUNG HIM A DISTANCE OF ONE HUNDRED YOJANAS.



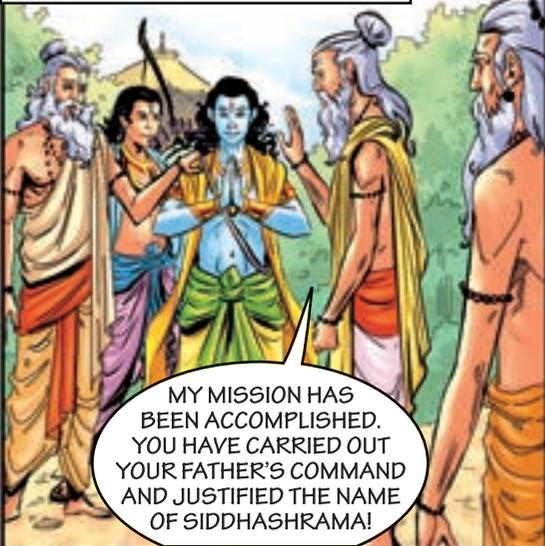
NEXT, SUBAHU WAS KILLED BY THE AGNEYASTRAM* AND THE OTHER RAKSHASAS WERE SCATTERED BY THE VAYAVYA ^.



MEANWHILE, THE SACRIFICE WAS COMPLETED WITHOUT ANY DISTURBANCE.

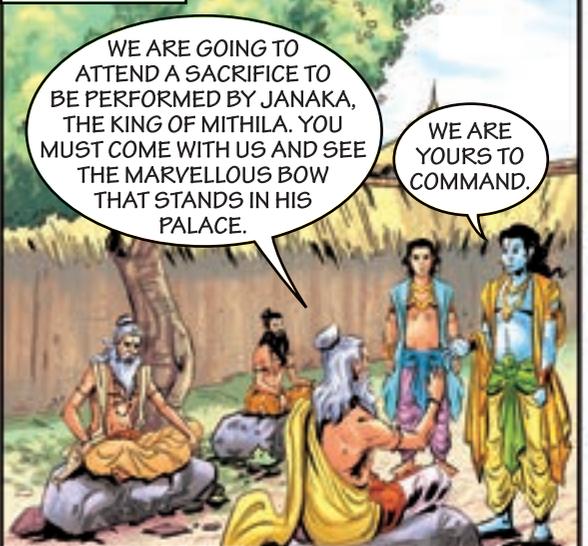


THE JOYFUL RISHIS APPLAUDED RAMA.



MY MISSION HAS BEEN ACCOMPLISHED. YOU HAVE CARRIED OUT YOUR FATHER'S COMMAND AND JUSTIFIED THE NAME OF SIDDHASHRAMA!

NEXT MORNING -



WE ARE GOING TO ATTEND A SACRIFICE TO BE PERFORMED BY JANAKA, THE KING OF MITHILA. YOU MUST COME WITH US AND SEE THE MARVELLOUS BOW THAT STANDS IN HIS PALACE.

WE ARE YOURS TO COMMAND.

*MISSILE OF THE FIRE GOD, AGNI

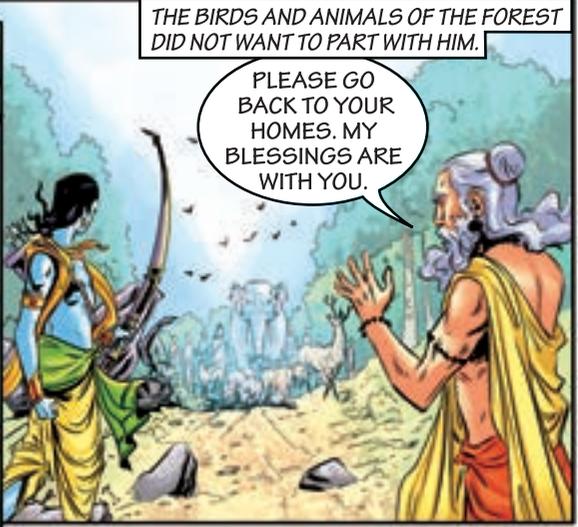
^MISSILE OF THE WIND GOD, VAYU

BEFORE LEAVING SIDDHASHRAMA, VISHWAMITRA TOOK LEAVE OF THE FOREST GODS.



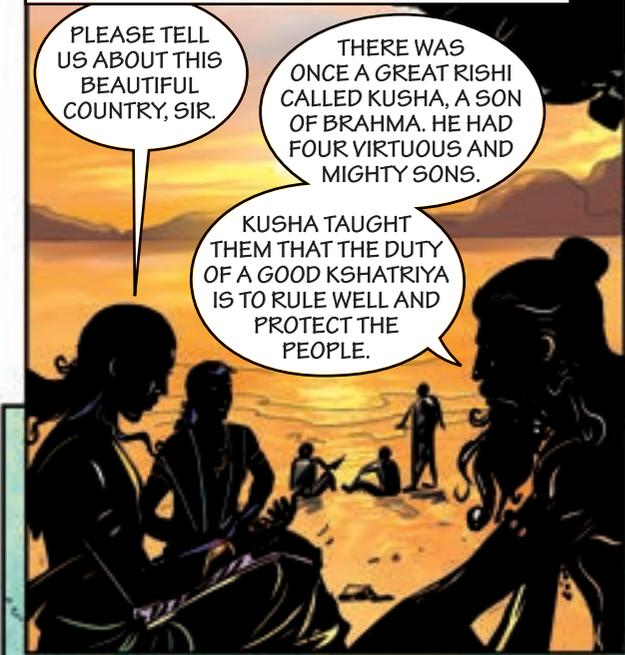
MAY YOU BE WELL! I HAVE ACCOMPLISHED MY PURPOSE, AND WILL NOW LEAVE SIDDHASHRAMA AND TRAVEL NORTH TO THE HIMALAYAS.

THE BIRDS AND ANIMALS OF THE FOREST DID NOT WANT TO PART WITH HIM.



PLEASE GO BACK TO YOUR HOMES. MY BLESSINGS ARE WITH YOU.

THAT EVENING, ON THE BANKS OF THE RIVER SONA* -

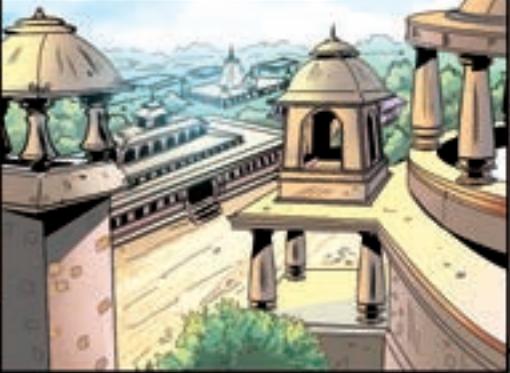


PLEASE TELL US ABOUT THIS BEAUTIFUL COUNTRY, SIR.

THERE WAS ONCE A GREAT RISHI CALLED KUSHA, A SON OF BRAHMA. HE HAD FOUR VIRTUOUS AND MIGHTY SONS.

KUSHA TAUGHT THEM THAT THE DUTY OF A GOOD KSHATRIYA IS TO RULE WELL AND PROTECT THE PEOPLE.

KUSHA'S SONS - KUSHAMBA, KUSHANABHA, ASOORTARAJASA AND VASU - FOUNDED THE CITIES KAUSAMBI, MAHODAYA*, DHARMARANYA AND GIRIVRAJA** RESPECTIVELY.



THE ROYAL SAGE KUSHANABHA HAD ONE HUNDRED DAUGHTERS. THEIR MOTHER GHRITACHI WAS AN APSARA. AS THEY GREW UP, THEY SPENT THEIR DAYS IN THE ROYAL GARDEN, SINGING AND DANCING.



*ALSO KNOWN AS THE MAGADHI ^MODERN KANAUJ

**MODERN RAJGIR

THEY WERE SO BEAUTIFUL AND TALENTED THAT VAYU, THE WIND GOD, FELL IN LOVE WITH THEM.

IF YOU ACCEPT ME AS YOUR HUSBAND, YOU WILL BECOME IMMORTAL AND REMAIN FOREVER YOUNG.

O JEWEL AMONG GODS, WHY DO YOU INSULT US? OUR FATHER KUSHANABHA IS A GOD TO US.

WE WILL NEVER DISHONOUR HIM BY CHOOSING A BRIDEGROOM FOR OURSELVES.

ENRAGED BY THEIR REPLY, VAYU ENTERED THEIR LIMBS AND TWISTED THEM. WHEN KUSHANABHA HEARD WHAT HAD HAPPENED -

KUSHANABHA GOT HIS DAUGHTERS MARRIED TO KING BRAHMADATTA OF KAMPILA. AS BRAHMADATTA TOUCHED THE HAND OF EACH PRINCESS -

MY DAUGHTERS, YOUR PATIENCE AND OBEDIENCE ARE A CREDIT TO ME.

I MUST FIND A WAY TO RID YOU OF YOUR SUFFERING.

LOOK! HIS VERY TOUCH IS CURING THEM OF THEIR DEFORMITIES!

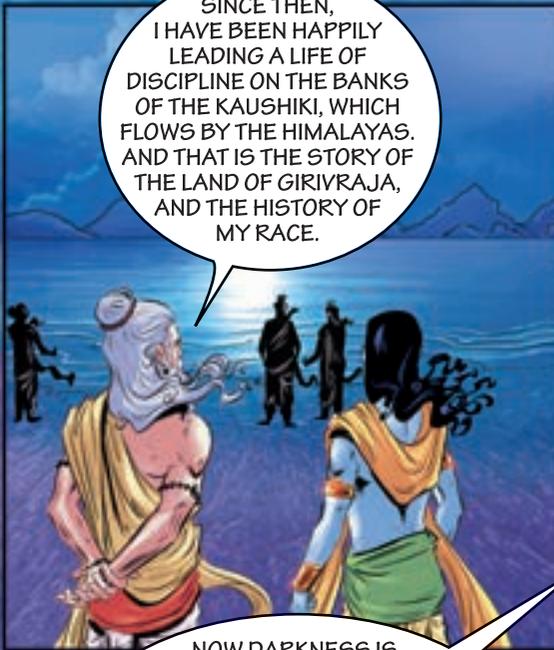
AFTER HIS DAUGHTERS WERE MARRIED, KUSHANABHA GOT A SON - THE VIRTUOUS GADHI, MY FATHER. AS I AM DESCENDED IN THE LINE OF KUSHA, I AM CALLED KAUSHIKA. I ALSO HAD AN ELDER SISTER, SATYAVATI.

SATYAVATI WAS THE WIFE OF RISHI RICHIKA. FOLLOWING HIM TO HEAVEN, SHE TURNED INTO THE DELIGHTFUL RIVER KAUSHIKI* FOR THE BENEFIT OF THE WORLD.

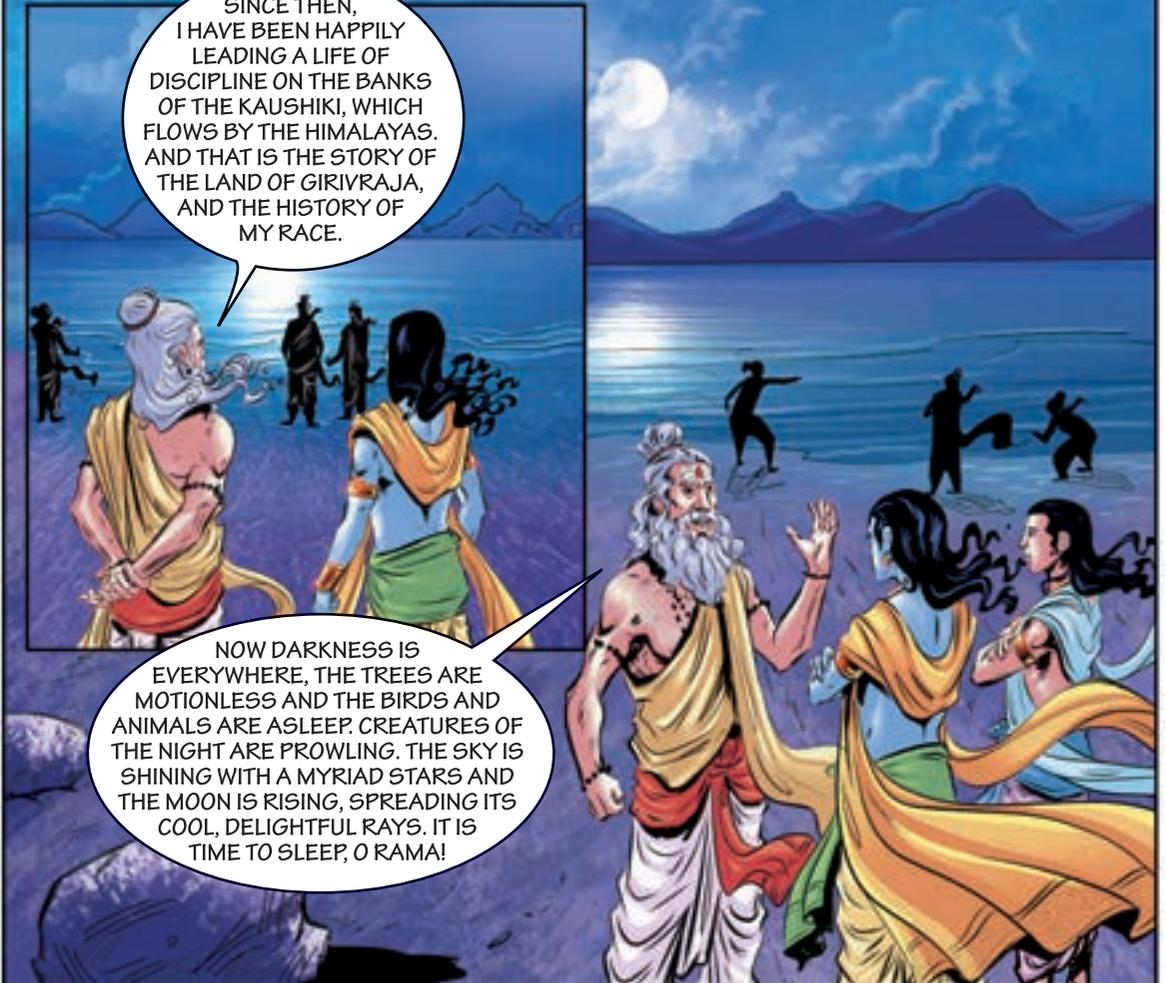
THE KUSHAS HAVE BEEN GREAT, AND DEVOTED TO DHARMA, ESPECIALLY YOU, VISHWAMITRA! AND KAUSHIKI HAS ADDED TO THE LUSTRE OF YOUR RACE.



SINCE THEN, I HAVE BEEN HAPPILY LEADING A LIFE OF DISCIPLINE ON THE BANKS OF THE KAUSHIKI, WHICH FLOWS BY THE HIMALAYAS. AND THAT IS THE STORY OF THE LAND OF GIRIVRAJA, AND THE HISTORY OF MY RACE.



NOW DARKNESS IS EVERYWHERE, THE TREES ARE MOTIONLESS AND THE BIRDS AND ANIMALS ARE ASLEEP. CREATURES OF THE NIGHT ARE PROWLING. THE SKY IS SHINING WITH A MYRIAD STARS AND THE MOON IS RISING, SPREADING ITS COOL, DELIGHTFUL RAYS. IT IS TIME TO SLEEP, O RAMA!



TRAVELLING WITH VISHWAMITRA



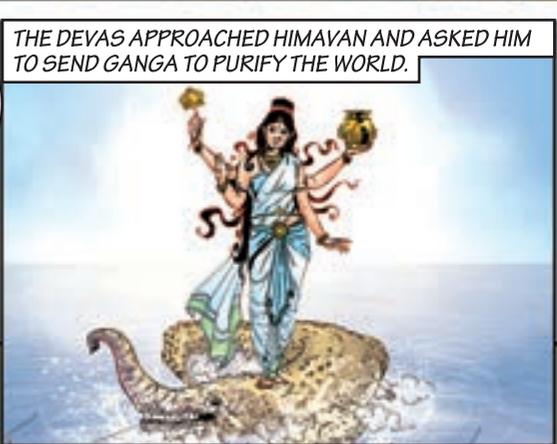
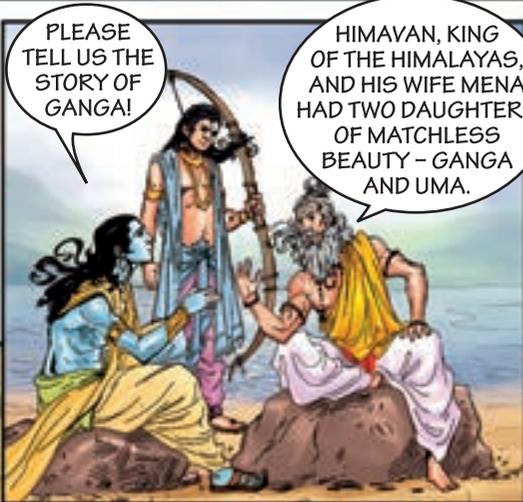
RAMA AND LAKSHMANA WERE TRAVELLING WITH RISHI VISHWAMITRA TO MITHILA. ON THE BANKS OF THE HOLY GANGA -



PLEASE TELL US THE STORY OF GANGA!

HIMAVAN, KING OF THE HIMALAYAS, AND HIS WIFE MENA HAD TWO DAUGHTERS OF MATCHLESS BEAUTY - GANGA AND UMA.

THE DEVAS APPROACHED HIMAVAN AND ASKED HIM TO SEND GANGA TO PURIFY THE WORLD.



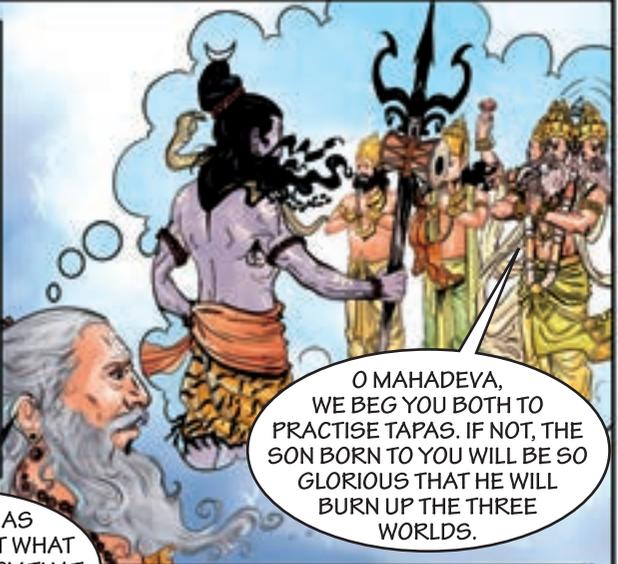
SO SHE FLOWED THROUGH THE HEAVENS, THE SKY, AND LATER THE EARTH, MAKING EVERYTHING PURE.

UMA, ALSO KNOWN AS PARYATI, WAS MARRIED TO LORD RUDRA*.



*ANOTHER NAME FOR SHIVA

AFTER LORD SHIVA MARRIED GODDESS PARVATI, THEY SPORTED JOYFULLY FOR A HUNDRED CELESTIAL YEARS*. ALL THE GODS, INCLUDING BRAHMA, GREW WORRIED.



O MAHADEVA, WE BEG YOU BOTH TO PRACTISE TAPAS. IF NOT, THE SON BORN TO YOU WILL BE SO GLORIOUS THAT HE WILL BURN UP THE THREE WORLDS.

I WILL DO AS YOU SAY, BUT WHAT OF THE ENERGY THAT HAS ALREADY BEEN RELEASED?



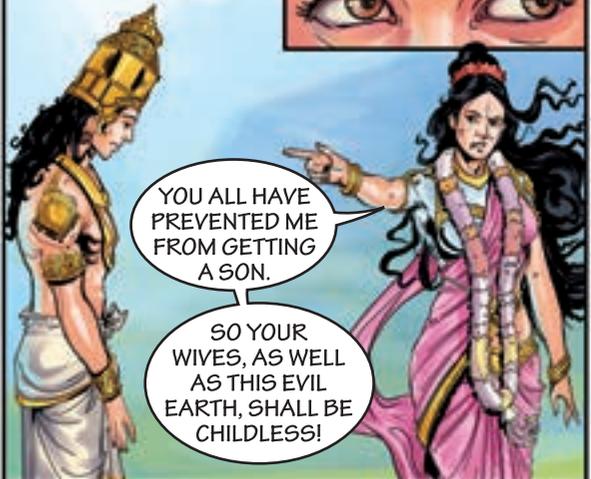
LET THE EARTH RECEIVE IT.



THE ENERGY THAT WAS RELEASED BY LORD SHIVA COVERED THE ENTIRE GLOBE, FORMING A THICKET OF WHITE REEDS, GLOWING LIKE THE SUN. THE GODS WERE DELIGHTED...



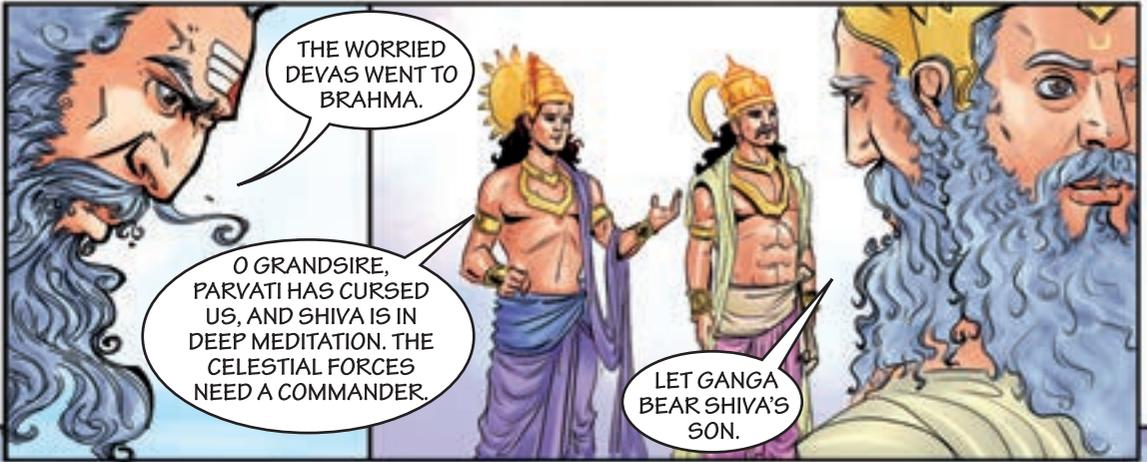
... BUT PARVATI WAS FURIOUS.



YOU ALL HAVE PREVENTED ME FROM GETTING A SON.

SO YOUR WIVES, AS WELL AS THIS EVIL EARTH, SHALL BE CHILDLESS!

*36,000 HUMAN YEARS



THE WORRIED DEVAS WENT TO BRAHMA.

O GRANDSIRE, PARYATI HAS CURSED US, AND SHIVA IS IN DEEP MEDITATION. THE CELESTIAL FORCES NEED A COMMANDER.

LET GANGA BEAR SHIVA'S SON.

GANGA AGREED TO HELP. ACCEPTING THE FIERY SEED OF SHIVA FROM AGNI, SHE PLACED IT ON THE SLOPE OF MOUNT HIMAVAN.

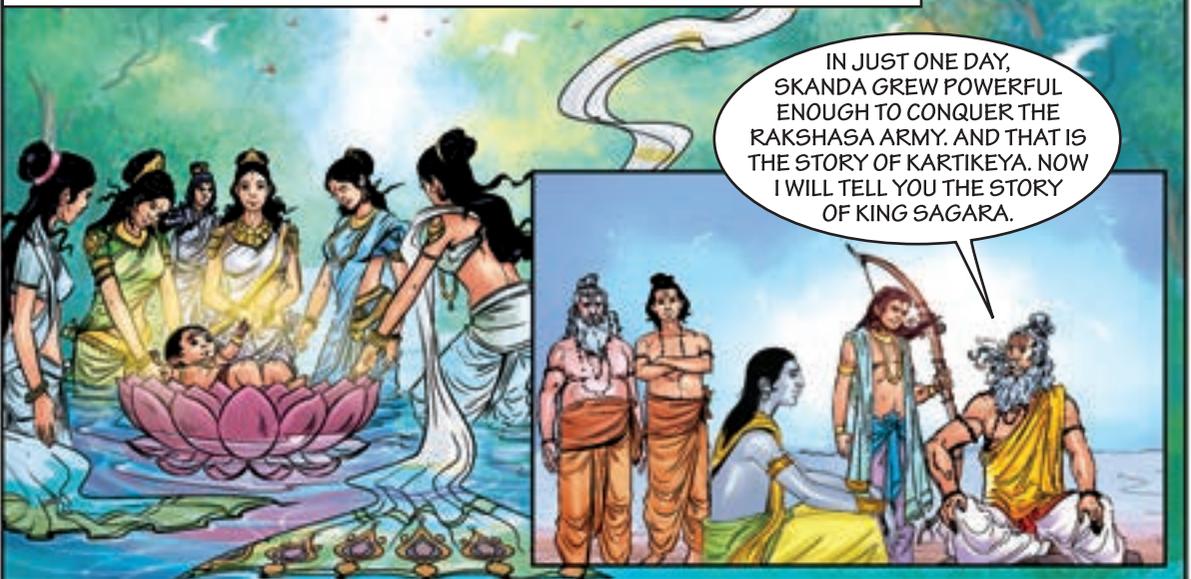


THIS CHILD WILL BE VERY DEAR TO UMA!

THUS WAS KUMARA* BORN, GLOWING LIKE MOLTEN GOLD AND TURNING EVERYTHING AROUND HIM TO GOLD.



THEN THE GODS TOOK THE BABY TO THE KRITTIKAS^, WHO NURSED HIM WITH GREAT CARE.



IN JUST ONE DAY, SKANDA GREW POWERFUL ENOUGH TO CONQUER THE RAKSHASA ARMY. AND THAT IS THE STORY OF KARTIKEYA. NOW I WILL TELL YOU THE STORY OF KING SAGARA.

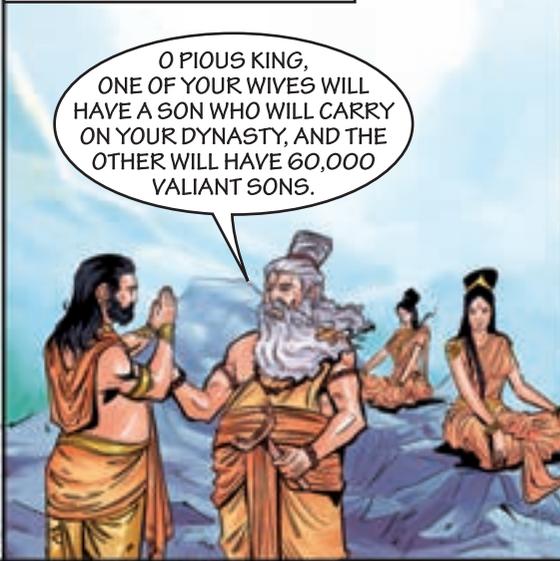
*ALSO CALLED SKANDA (FLOW), AS HE WAS THE SON OF GANGA

69 ^THE SIX GODDESSES OF THE CONSTELLATION KRITTIKA, AFTER WHOM THE BABY WAS ALSO NAMED KARTIKEYA

KING SAGARA OF AYODHYA AND HIS WIVES, KESHINI AND SUMATI, DID TAPAS FOR A HUNDRED YEARS. RISHI BHRIGU GRANTED THEM A BOON.

KESHINI CHOSE A SON WHO WOULD PERPETUATE THE LINE AND SUMATI CHOSE 60,000 SONS. BORN IN A GOURD-SHAPED FRUIT, THE BABIES WERE NURTURED IN POTS OF GHEE. IN TIME, THEY GREW HEALTHY, STRONG AND HANDSOME.

O PIOUS KING,
ONE OF YOUR WIVES WILL
HAVE A SON WHO WILL CARRY
ON YOUR DYNASTY, AND THE
OTHER WILL HAVE 60,000
VALIANT SONS.

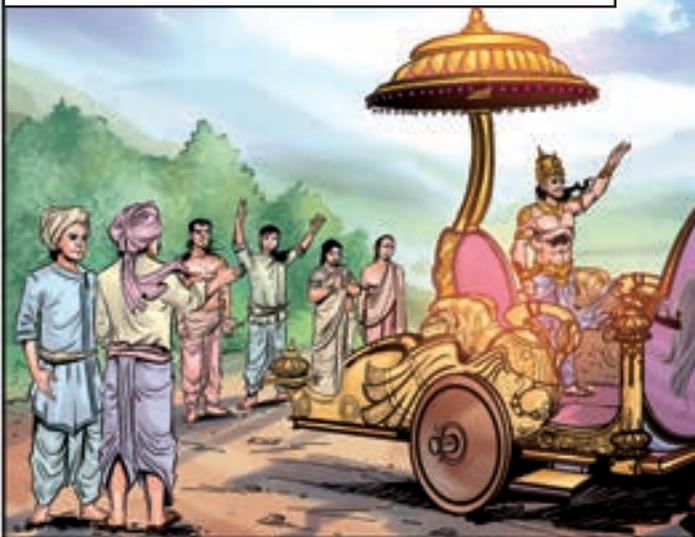


KESHINI'S SON ASAMANJA WAS A CRUEL YOUTH. HE USED TO TORTURE THE CITIZENS AND THROW INFANTS INTO THE SARAYU, LAUGHING AS THEY DROWNED.



ASAMANJA WAS EXILED FROM THE KINGDOM. BUT HIS SON, ANSHUMAN, WAS VALIANT, KIND, AND BELOVED BY ALL.

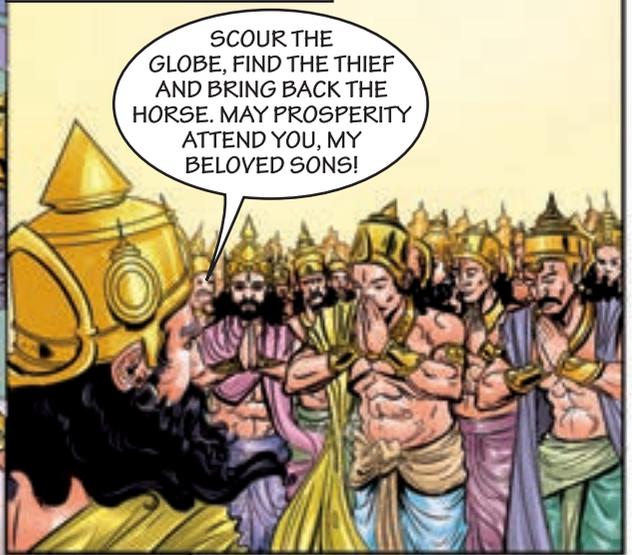
MANY YEARS PASSED. KING SAGARA DECIDED TO PERFORM AN ASHWAMEDHA YAGYA.



IT WAS ANSHUMAN'S DUTY TO PROTECT THE SACRIFICIAL HORSE. SUDDENLY -



SAGARA DID NOT KNOW THAT THE THIEF WAS INDRA IN DISGUISE. CALLING HIS SONS -



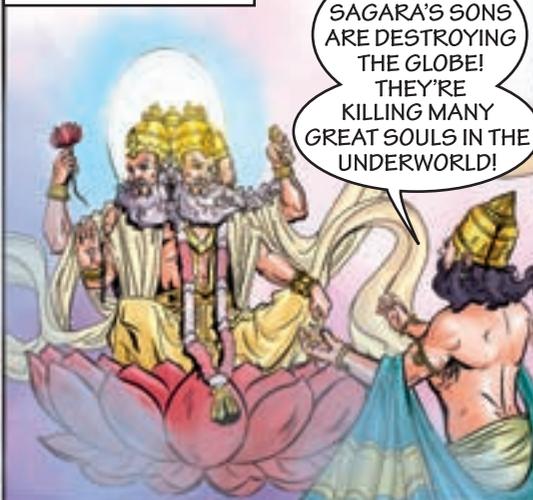
THE MIGHTY SONS OF SAGARA TRAVERSED THE EARTH BUT COULD NOT FIND THE HORSE. THEY EXCAVATED THE WHOLE OF JAMBUDVIPA*.



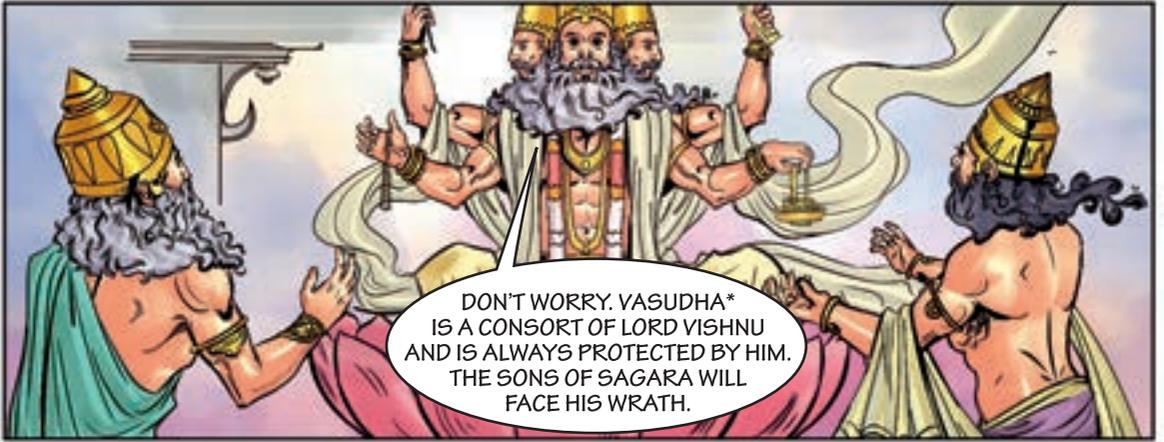
THEIR BLOWS WERE LIKE THUNDERBOLTS. THE EARTH GROANED. NAGAS AND OTHER UNDERWORLD BEINGS ROARED WITH PAIN. SAGARA'S SONS KILLED WHOEVER CAME IN THEIR WAY.



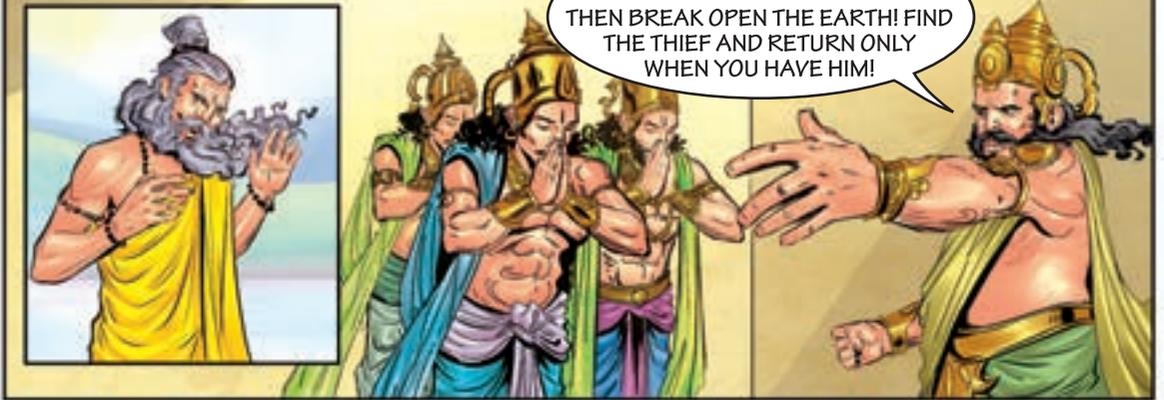
IN BRAHMA'S PALACE -



*THE ISLAND AT THE CENTRE OF THE UNIVERSE, ACCORDING TO HINDU MYTHOLOGY, ON WHICH THE JAMBU TREE GROWS



SAGARA'S SONS RETURNED AND TOLD THEIR FATHER THAT THEY HAD BEEN UNSUCCESSFUL.

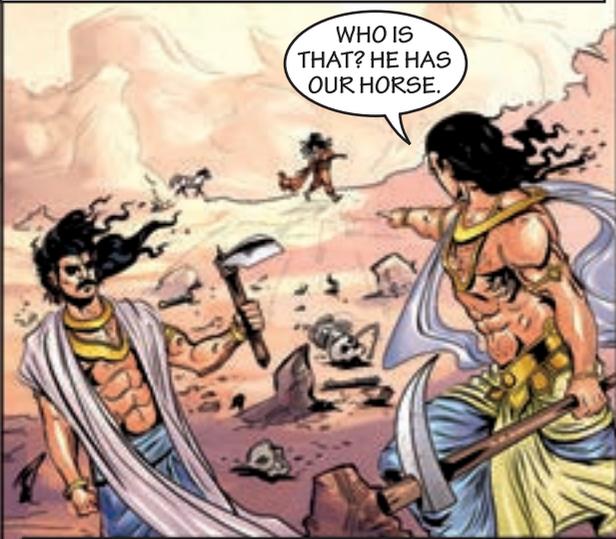


THE OBEDIENT PRINCES HURRIED AWAY TO DIG DEEPER INTO THE EARTH. IN RASATALA, ONE OF THE DEEPEST UNDERWORLDS, STOOD THE FOUR GREAT ELEPHANTS SUPPORTING THE GLOBE - VIRUPAKSHA IN THE EAST, MAHAPADMA IN THE SOUTH, SAUMANASA IN THE WEST, AND THE SNOW-WHITE BHADRA IN THE NORTH.

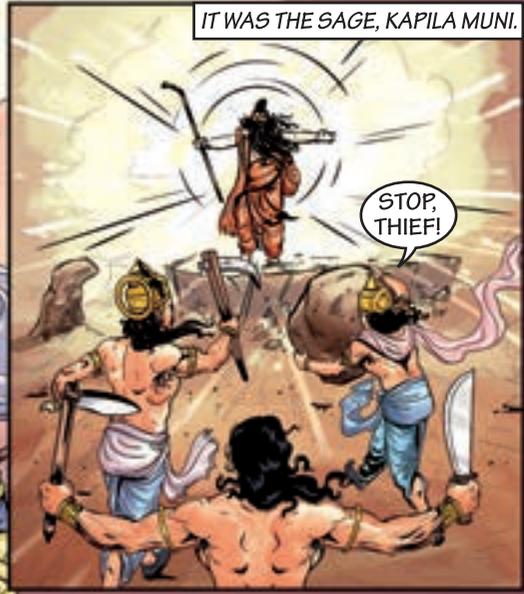


*MOTHER EARTH

SAGARA'S SONS ENQUIRED AFTER THE WELFARE OF EACH ELEPHANT. WALKING CLOCKWISE AROUND THEM TO SHOW RESPECT, THEY BEGAN TO DIG ONCE MORE. SUDDENLY -



WHO IS THAT? HE HAS OUR HORSE.



IT WAS THE SAGE, KAPILA MUNI.

STOP, THIEF!

BUT THE RISHI WAS ACTUALLY LORD VISHNU. HE WAS FURIOUS AT THEIR ACCUSATIONS.



HOOOOOON

THE SIXTY THOUSAND SONS OF SAGARA WERE INSTANTLY REDUCED TO A HEAP OF ASHES.

WHEN HIS SONS DID NOT RETURN, SAGARA SENT HIS GRANDSON, ANSHUMAN.



HAVE YOU SEEN MY UNCLES, SIR? OR THE MAN WHO HAS STOLEN THE HORSE?

O SON OF ASAMANJA, YOU WILL SOON RETURN WITH THE HORSE.

ANSHUMAN WENT ON, FOLLOWING THE PATH OF HIS UNCLES.



OH, HOW DID THIS HAPPEN TO MY UNCLES?

AFTER SOME TIME -



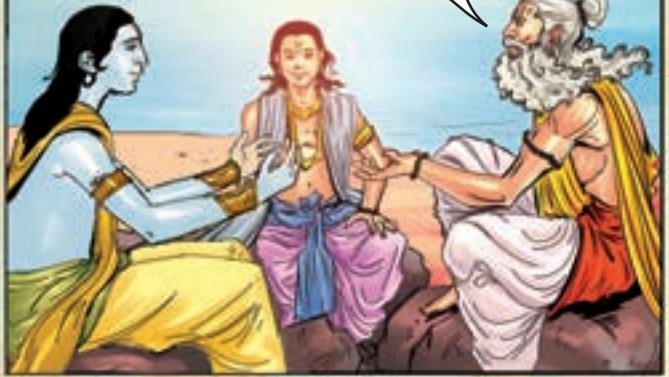
O WISE GARUDA, I AM LOOKING FOR WATER TO OFFER TO MY UNCLES' SPIRITS.

VALIANT PRINCE, THEY WILL GO TO HEAVEN ONLY IF YOU IMMERSE THEIR ASHES IN THE DIVINE WATER OF GANGA.

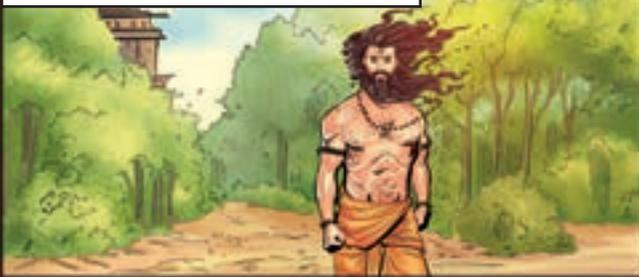
ANSHUMAN RETURNED WITH THE HORSE, AND THE SACRIFICE WAS COMPLETED. AFTER RULING FOR 30,000 YEARS, SAGARA ASCENDED TO HEAVEN, LEAVING THE THRONE TO ANSHUMAN.



NEITHER ANSHUMAN, NOR HIS SON DILIPA COULD FIND A WAY TO BRING GANGA TO EARTH TO WATER THE ASHES OF SAGARA'S SONS.

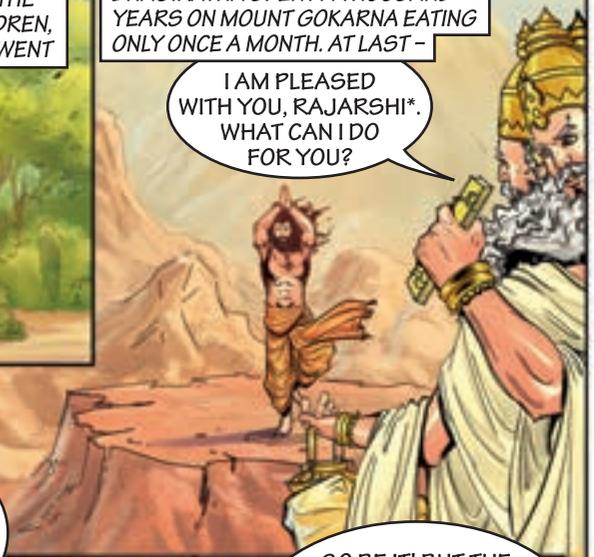


DILIPA'S SON BHAGIRATHA WAS DETERMINED TO SET THE SPIRITS OF HIS ANCESTORS AT REST. HAVING NO CHILDREN, HE ENTRUSTED THE KINGDOM TO HIS MINISTERS AND WENT TO THE HIMALAYAS TO PRACTISE TAPAS.



BHAGIRATHA SPENT A THOUSAND YEARS ON MOUNT GOKARNA EATING ONLY ONCE A MONTH. AT LAST -

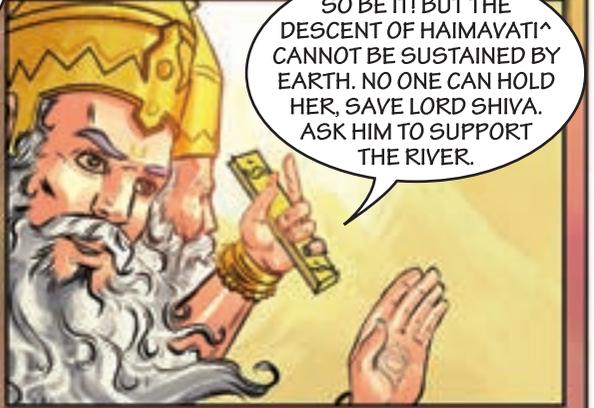
I AM PLEASED WITH YOU, RAJARSHI*. WHAT CAN I DO FOR YOU?



LET THE SONS OF SAGARA, MY GREAT-GRANDUNCLES, RECEIVE GANGA'S WATER FROM ME AND ATTAIN HEAVEN. AND GRANT ME AN HEIR.



SO BE IT! BUT THE DESCENT OF HAIMAVATI^ CANNOT BE SUSTAINED BY EARTH. NO ONE CAN HOLD HER, SAVE LORD SHIVA. ASK HIM TO SUPPORT THE RIVER.

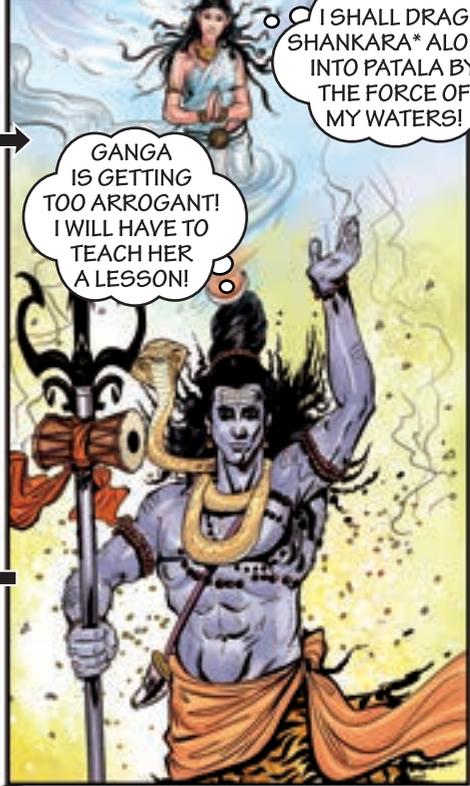


WHEN BRAHMA LEFT, BHAGIRATHA PRAYED TO LORD SHIVA FOR A YEAR, STANDING ON THE TIP OF ONE TOE. AT LAST -



I AM PLEASED WITH YOU, O KING! I WILL RECEIVE GANGA ON MY HEAD.

BUT THE GANGA IS A MOST IRREPRESSIBLE RIVER!



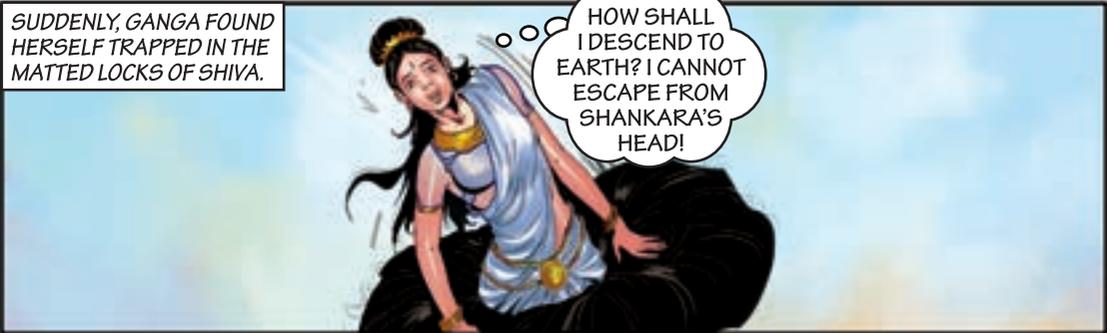
I SHALL DRAG SHANKARA* ALONG INTO PATALA BY THE FORCE OF MY WATERS!

GANGA IS GETTING TOO ARROGANT! I WILL HAVE TO TEACH HER A LESSON!

AND SO -

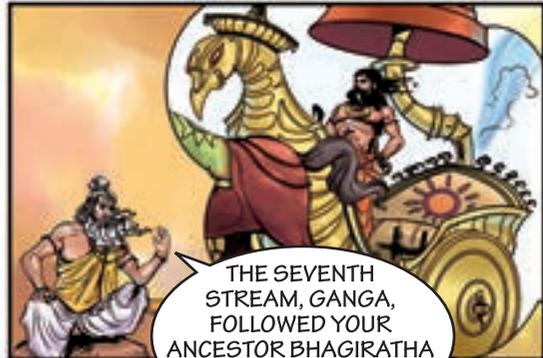


SUDDENLY, GANGA FOUND HERSELF TRAPPED IN THE MATTED LOCKS OF SHIVA.



HOW SHALL I DESCEND TO EARTH? I CANNOT ESCAPE FROM SHANKARA'S HEAD!

IN ANGUISH, BHAGIRATHA AGAIN TOOK TO TAPAS. AT LAST SHIVA RELENDED. HAPPY TO BE FREE, GANGA SPLIT INTO SEVEN STREAMS. HLA DINI, PAVANI AND NALINI FLOWED EASTWARD; SUCHAKSHU, SITA AND SINDHU RAN WEST.



THE SEVENTH STREAM, GANGA, FOLLOWED YOUR ANCESTOR BHAGIRATHA TO EARTH, O SCIONS OF RAGHU.

*ANOTHER NAME FOR SHIVA



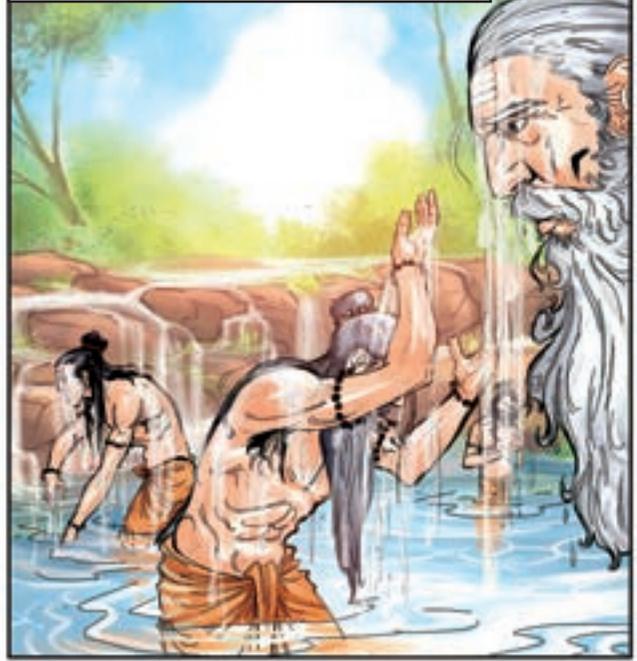
BHAGIRATHA RODE AHEAD IN HIS SPLENDID CHARIOT WITH GANGA FOLLOWING. BEHIND HER, CAME THE DELIGHTED GODS, RISHIS, DAITYAS, DANAVAS, RAKSHASAS, GANDHARVAS, YAKSHAS, KINNARAS, NAGAS, APSARAS, AND ALL THE AQUATIC CREATURES.



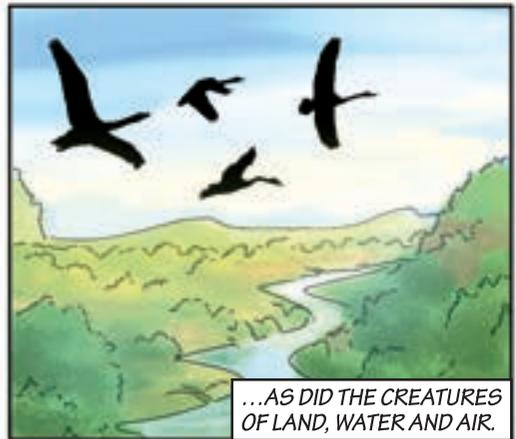
THE RIVER MOVED, MAKING A LOUD NOISE.



HOSTS OF RISHIS TOUCHED THE HOLY WATERS.



THE PEOPLE REJOICED...



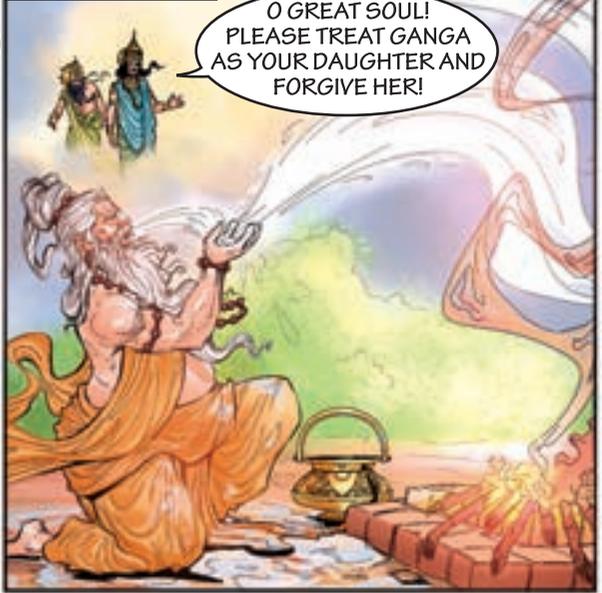
...AS DID THE CREATURES OF LAND, WATER AND AIR.

THE GREAT RISHI JAHNU WAS PERFORMING A SACRIFICE WHEN GANGA FLOODED THE SACRIFICIAL GROUND.



THE ARROGANCE OF THIS RIVER! I WILL TEACH GANGA A LESSON!

FURIOUS, JAHNU DRANK UP THE WATER. THE GODS PLEADED WITH HIM.



O GREAT SOUL! PLEASE TREAT GANGA AS YOUR DAUGHTER AND FORGIVE HER!

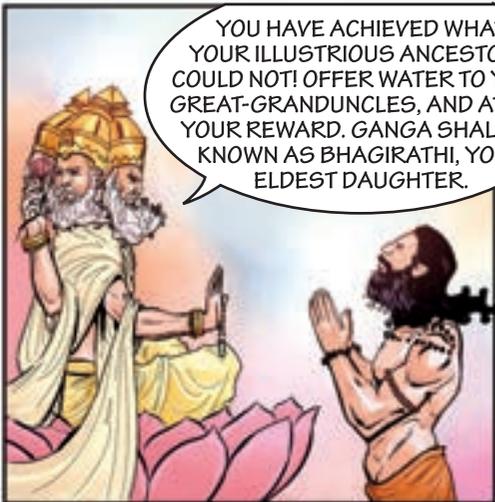
JAHNU AGREED TO THEIR REQUESTS. SINCE HE RELEASED GANGA THROUGH HIS EAR, SHE IS KNOWN AS JAHNAVI, DAUGHTER OF JAHNU.



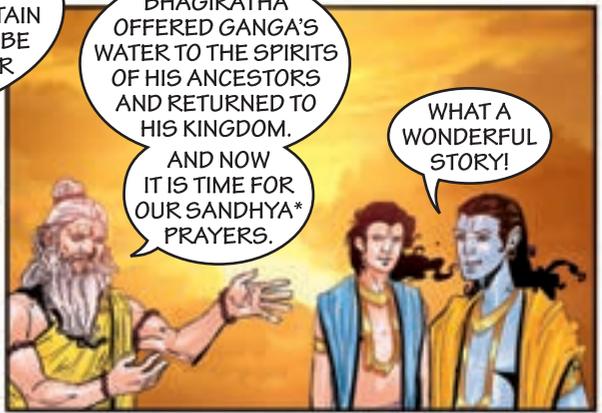
LED BY BHAGIRATHA, GANGA AT LAST REACHED RASATALA, WHERE SAGARA'S SONS LAY IN A HEAP OF ASHES.



YOU HAVE ACHIEVED WHAT YOUR ILLUSTRIOUS ANCESTORS COULD NOT! OFFER WATER TO YOUR GREAT-GRANDUNCLES, AND ATTAIN YOUR REWARD. GANGA SHALL BE KNOWN AS BHAGIRATHI, YOUR ELDEST DAUGHTER.



BHAGIRATHA OFFERED GANGA'S WATER TO THE SPIRITS OF HIS ANCESTORS AND RETURNED TO HIS KINGDOM. AND NOW IT IS TIME FOR OUR SANDHYA* PRAYERS.



WHAT A WONDERFUL STORY!

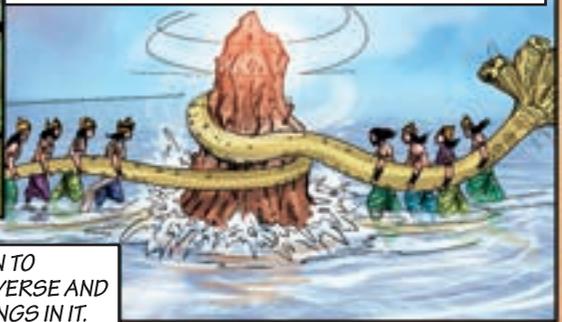
NEXT MORNING, ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE GANGA -

I WILL TELL YOU THE HISTORY OF THE CITY, VISHALA.

LONG AGO, IN THE KRITAYUGA*, THERE WERE TWO SISTERS, DITI AND ADITI, BOTH WIVES OF RISHI KASHYAPA.

DITI'S SONS WERE VERY POWERFUL, WHILE ADITI'S SONS WERE VALIANT AND VIRTUOUS.

THESE INTELLIGENT, YOUNG MEN WANTED TO AVOID OLD AGE, DEATH AND DISEASE. THEY DECIDED TO CHURN THE OCEAN OF MILK AND GET THE NECTAR OF IMMORTALITY FROM IT, USING MOUNT MANDARA AS THE CHURNING ROD AND YASUKI^ AS THE ROPE.



AFTER A THOUSAND YEARS -

THE POISON BEGAN TO CONSUME THE UNIVERSE AND ALL THE LIVING BEINGS IN IT.

ACCOMPANIED BY LORD VISHNU, THE DEVAS RUSHED TO LORD RUDRA FOR HELP.



WHY IS VASUKI BITING THE ROCK?

LOOK! POISONOUS HALAHALA IS RISING UP FROM THE OCEAN!



O LORD OF ALL LIVING BEINGS, SAVE US!

YOU ARE THE FOREMOST AMONG US AND THE FIRST SHARE ALWAYS GOES TO YOU.

PLEASE ACCEPT THE POISON AS A TRIBUTE.



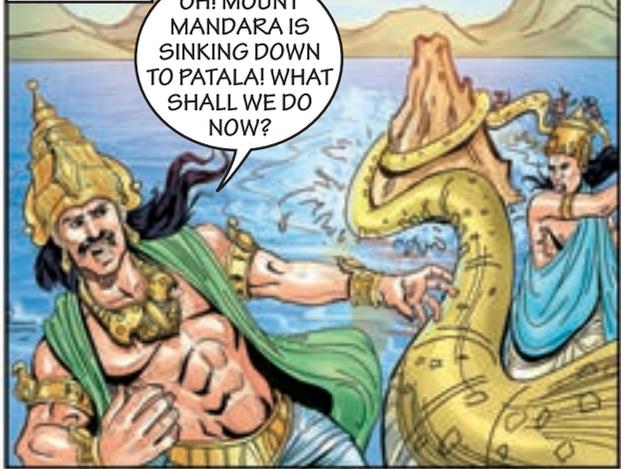
*THE FIRST OF THE FOUR YUGAS THAT FORM THE LIFE CYCLE OF THE UNIVERSE. THE UNIVERSE IS DESTROYED AT THE END OF THE FOURTH YUGA, AND CREATED ANEW.

^KING OF SERPENTS

SHIVA AGREED TO THE REQUEST.



THE SONS OF ADITI AND DITI CONTINUED CHURNING. SUDDENLY -



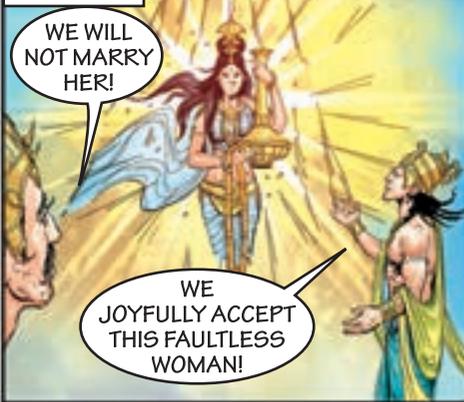
THE DEVAS PRAYED TO LORD VISHNU. HE TOOK THE FORM OF A TORTOISE AND SUPPORTED MANDARA ON HIS BACK.



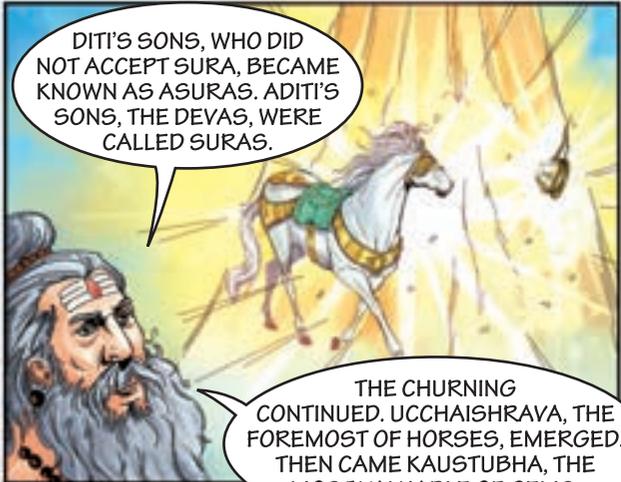
AFTER A THOUSAND YEARS, A RISHI EMERGED FROM THE OCEAN - DHANVANTARI, THE EMBODIMENT OF AYURVEDA. THEN, FROM THE CREAM, CAME SIX HUNDRED MILLION RADIANT APSARAS.



NEXT CAME VARUNI*, THE DAUGHTER OF VARUNA. SHE WAS LOOKING FOR A HUSBAND.



DITI'S SONS, WHO DID NOT ACCEPT SURA, BECAME KNOWN AS ASURAS. ADITI'S SONS, THE DEVAS, WERE CALLED SURAS.

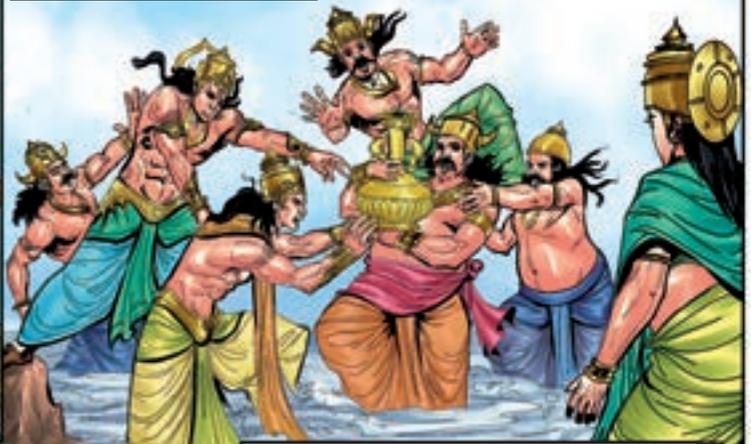


*GODDESS OF SURA (WINE)

AT LAST CAME AMRITA, THE NECTAR OF IMMORTALITY.



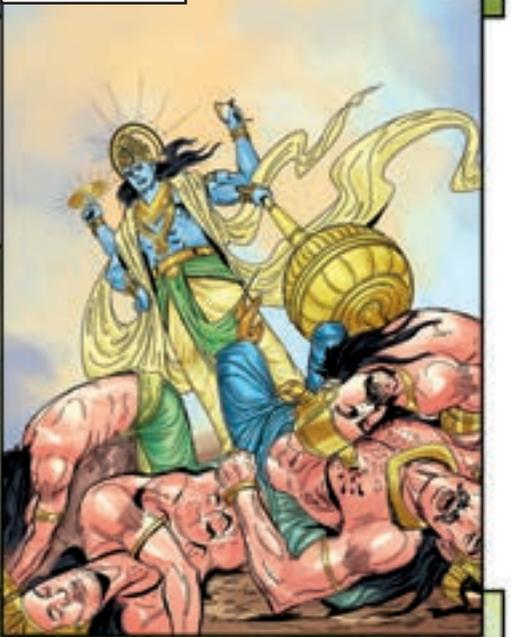
A DISPUTE AROSE OVER THE AMRITA. THE SONS OF ADITI AND THE SONS OF DITI FOUGHT EACH OTHER.



THE THREE WORLDS WERE BEWILDERED BY THAT TERRIBLE BATTLE. THEN VISHNU, IN THE FORM OF MOHINI, STOLE THE AMRITA AWAY...



...AND THOSE WHO OPPOSED HIM IN BATTLE WERE CRUSHED.



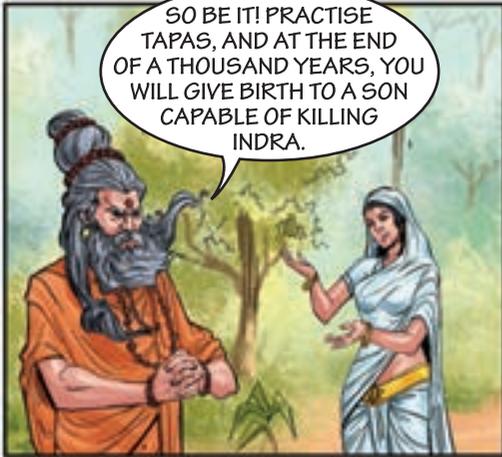
IN THE END, THE SURAS COMPLETELY DESTROYED THE ASURAS. INDRA BECAME THE RULER OF THE THREE WORLDS.



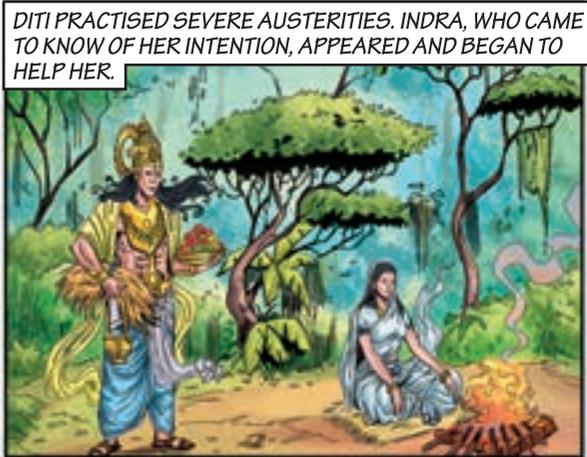
DITI WAS HEARTBROKEN. SHE WENT TO HER HUSBAND, KASHYAPA.



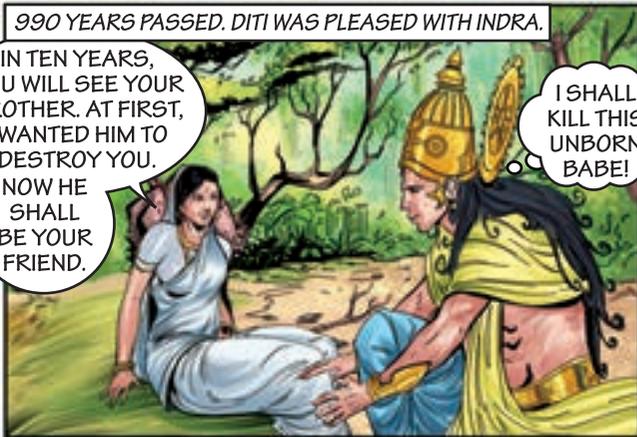
THE SURAS HAVE DESTROYED MY SONS. PLEASE GRANT ME A POWERFUL SON WHO WILL BE ABLE TO KILL INDRA.



SO BE IT! PRACTISE TAPAS, AND AT THE END OF A THOUSAND YEARS, YOU WILL GIVE BIRTH TO A SON CAPABLE OF KILLING INDRA.



DITI PRACTISED SEVERE AUSTERITIES. INDRA, WHO CAME TO KNOW OF HER INTENTION, APPEARED AND BEGAN TO HELP HER.



990 YEARS PASSED. DITI WAS PLEASED WITH INDRA.

IN TEN YEARS, YOU WILL SEE YOUR BROTHER. AT FIRST, I WANTED HIM TO DESTROY YOU. NOW HE SHALL BE YOUR FRIEND.

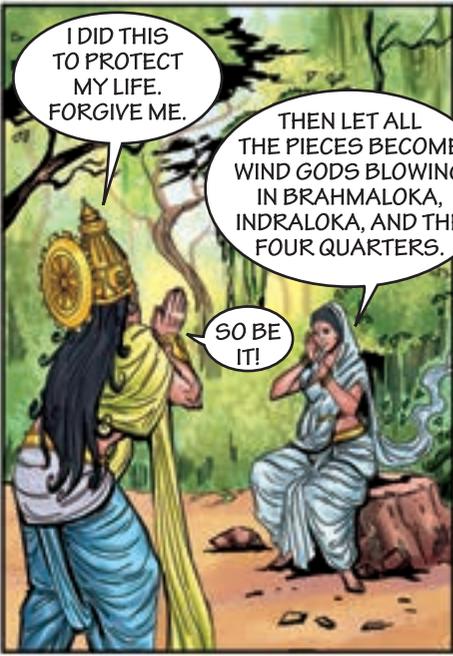
I SHALL KILL THIS UNBORN BABE!



WHEN DITI FELL ASLEEP, INDRA CUT THE BABY INTO PIECES WITH HIS THUNDERBOLT. THE BABY BEGAN TO CRY.

WAA-AAA!
MA RUT*!

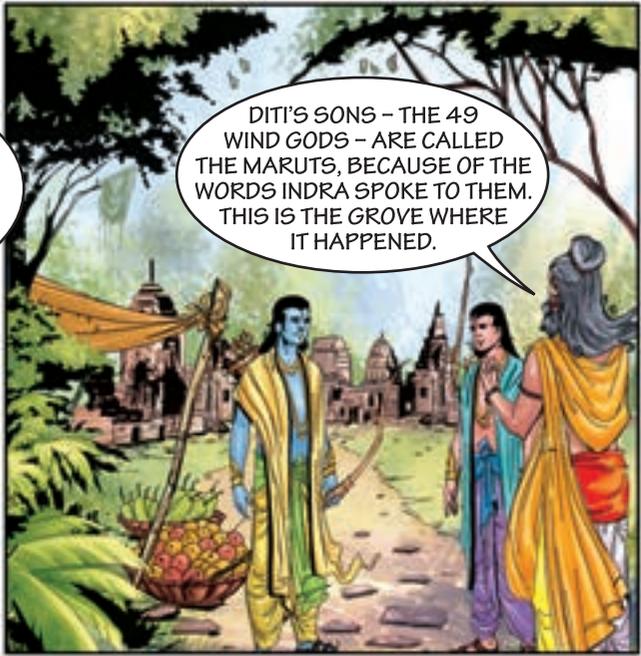
OH! PLEASE DO NOT KILL MY SON!



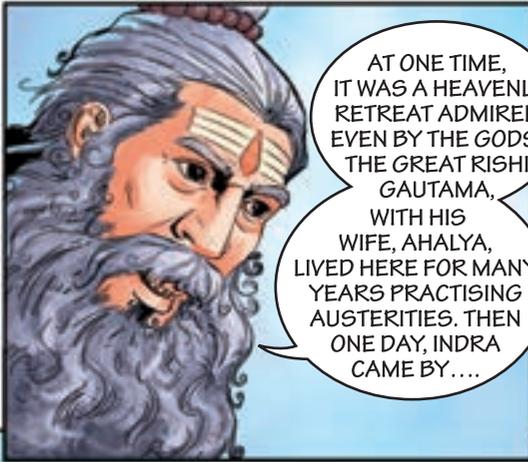
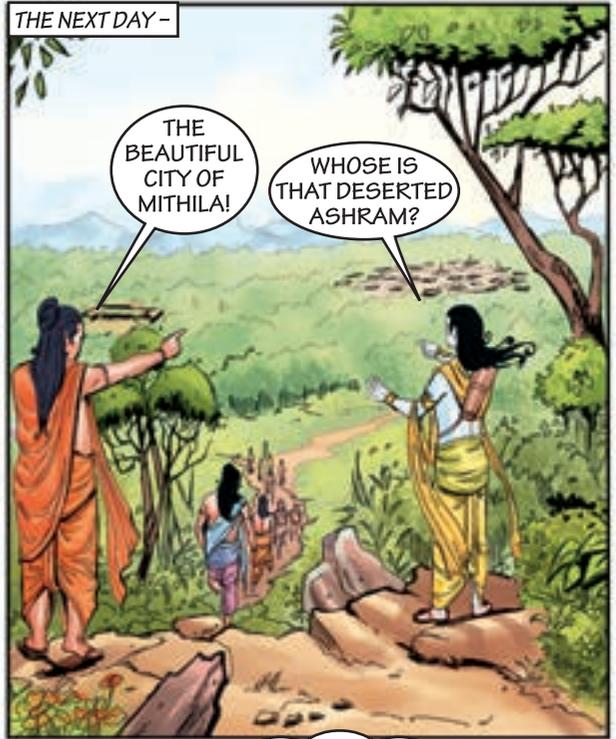
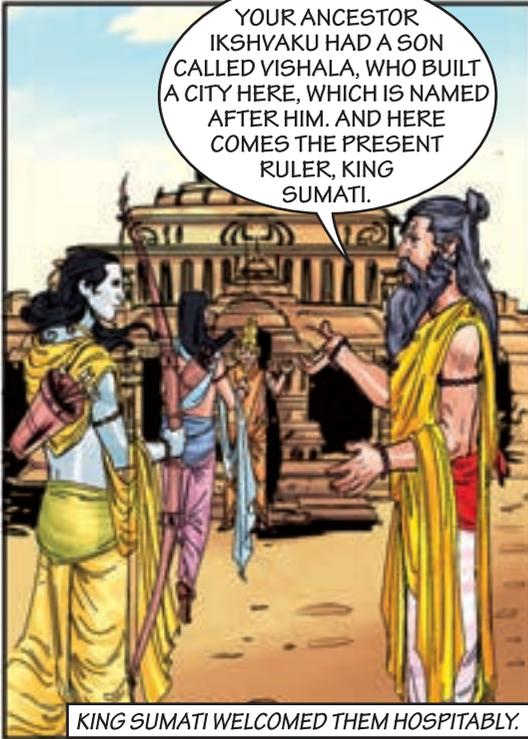
I DID THIS TO PROTECT MY LIFE. FORGIVE ME.

THEN LET ALL THE PIECES BECOME WIND GODS BLOWING IN BRAHMALOKA, INDRALOKA, AND THE FOUR QUARTERS.

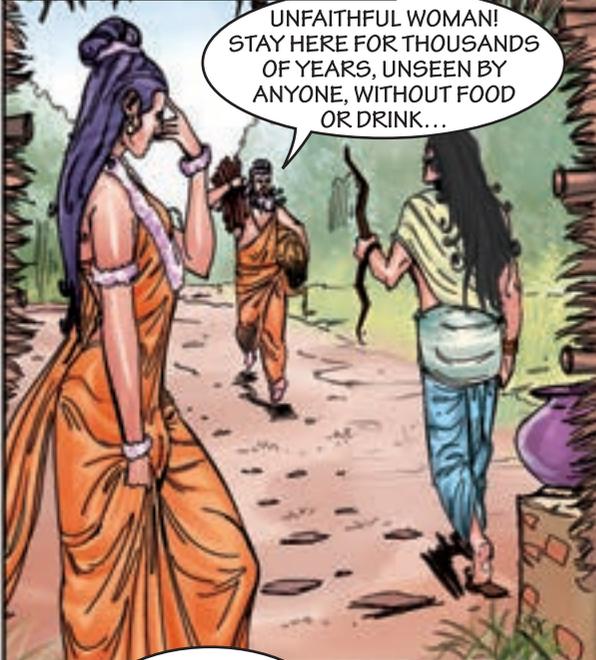
SO BE IT!



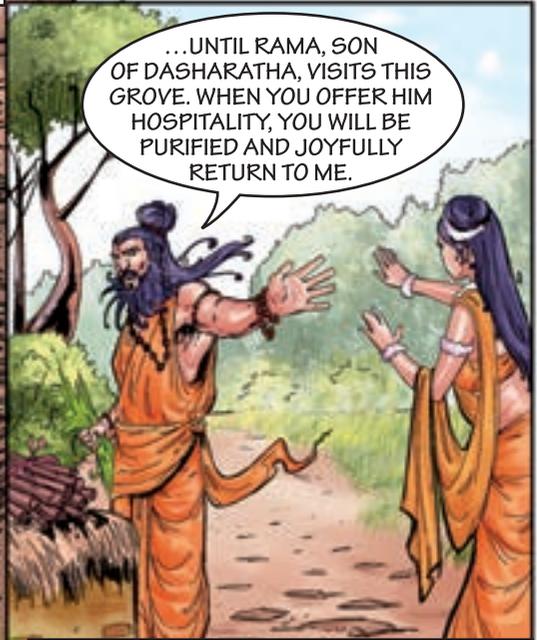
DITI'S SONS - THE 49 WIND GODS - ARE CALLED THE MARUTS, BECAUSE OF THE WORDS INDRA SPOKE TO THEM. THIS IS THE GROVE WHERE IT HAPPENED.



GAUTAMA RETURNED AND SAW INDRA. HE FIRST CURSED INDRA AND THEN TURNED TO AHALYA.

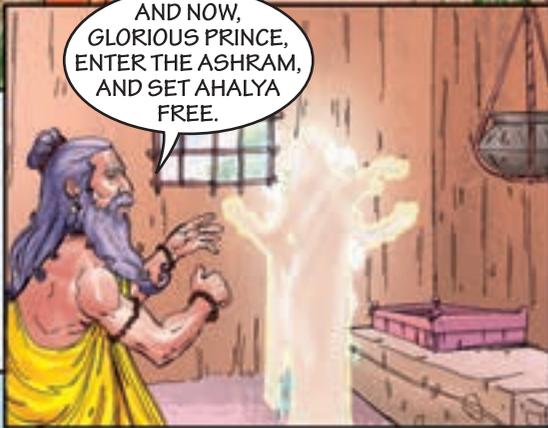


UNFAITHFUL WOMAN! STAY HERE FOR THOUSANDS OF YEARS, UNSEEN BY ANYONE, WITHOUT FOOD OR DRINK...



...UNTIL RAMA, SON OF DASHARATHA, VISITS THIS GROVE. WHEN YOU OFFER HIM HOSPITALITY, YOU WILL BE PURIFIED AND JOYFULLY RETURN TO ME.

GAUTAMA THEN WENT AWAY TO THE HIMALAYAS.



AND NOW, GLORIOUS PRINCE, ENTER THE ASHRAM, AND SET AHALYA FREE.

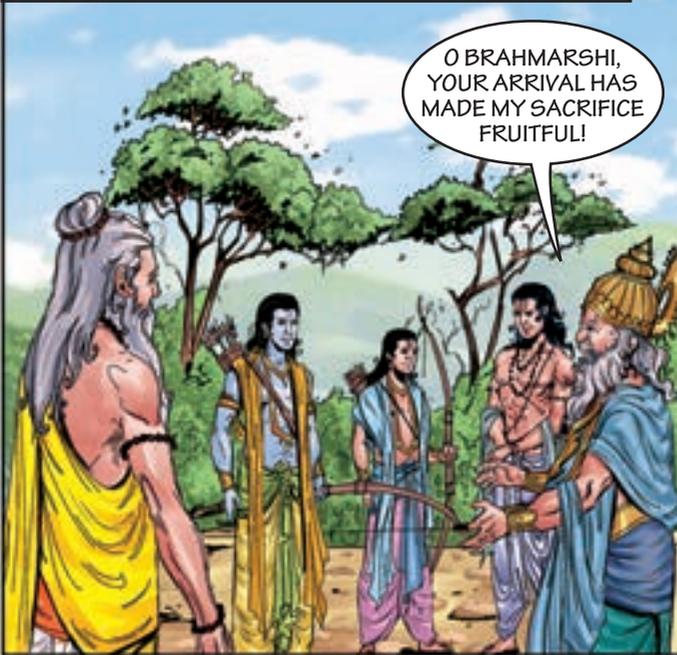


WELCOME, O NOBLE PRINCE!

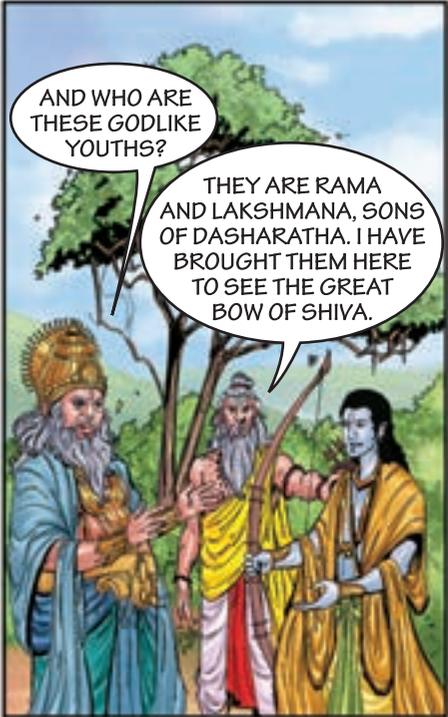
FORESEEING RAMA'S VISIT, GAUTAMA TOO ARRIVED.



AT THE SACRIFICIAL GROUND IN MITHILA, KING JANAKA CAME TO MEET THEM, ALONG WITH HIS FAMILY PRIEST, SATANANDA.



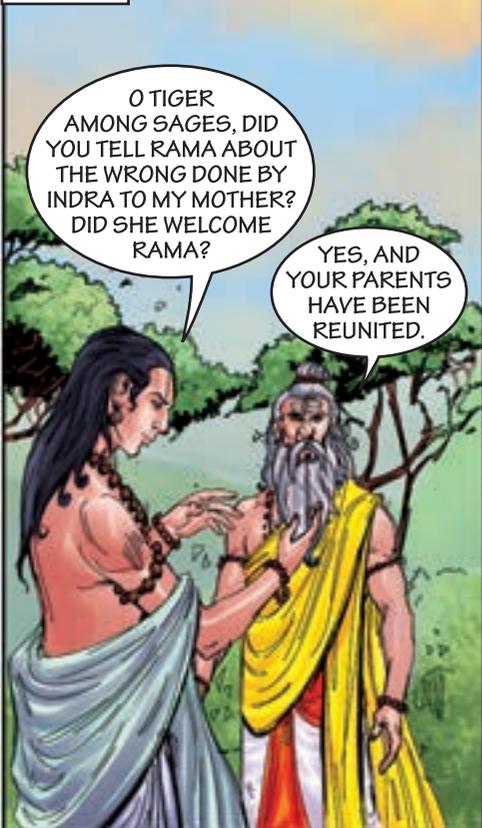
O BRAHMARSHI, YOUR ARRIVAL HAS MADE MY SACRIFICE FRUITFUL!



AND WHO ARE THESE GODLIKE YOUTHS?

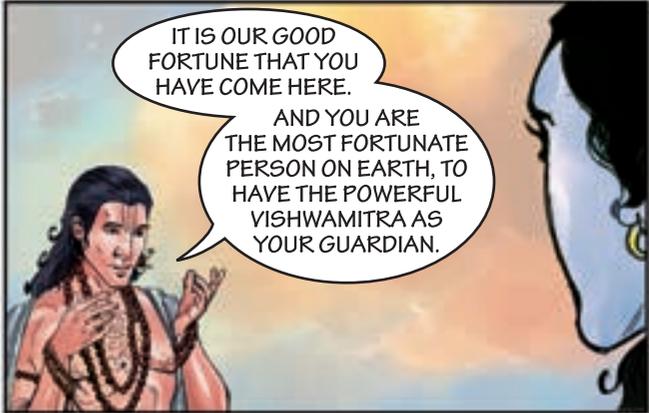
THEY ARE RAMA AND LAKSHMANA, SONS OF DASHARATHA. I HAVE BROUGHT THEM HERE TO SEE THE GREAT BOW OF SHIVA.

SATANANDA WAS THE SON OF AHALYA AND GAUTAMA.



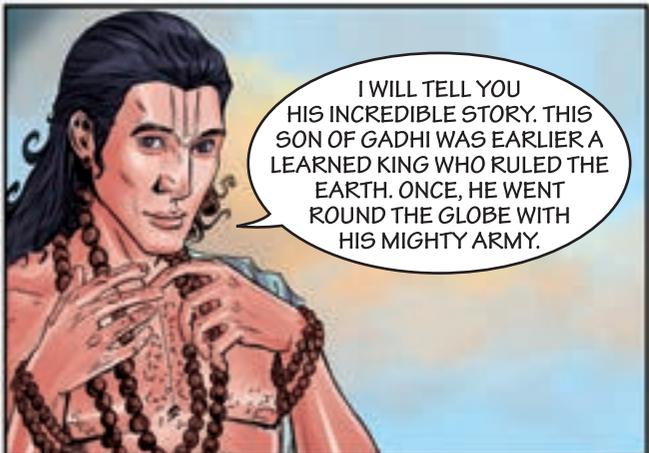
O TIGER AMONG SAGES, DID YOU TELL RAMA ABOUT THE WRONG DONE BY INDRA TO MY MOTHER? DID SHE WELCOME RAMA?

YES, AND YOUR PARENTS HAVE BEEN REUNITED.



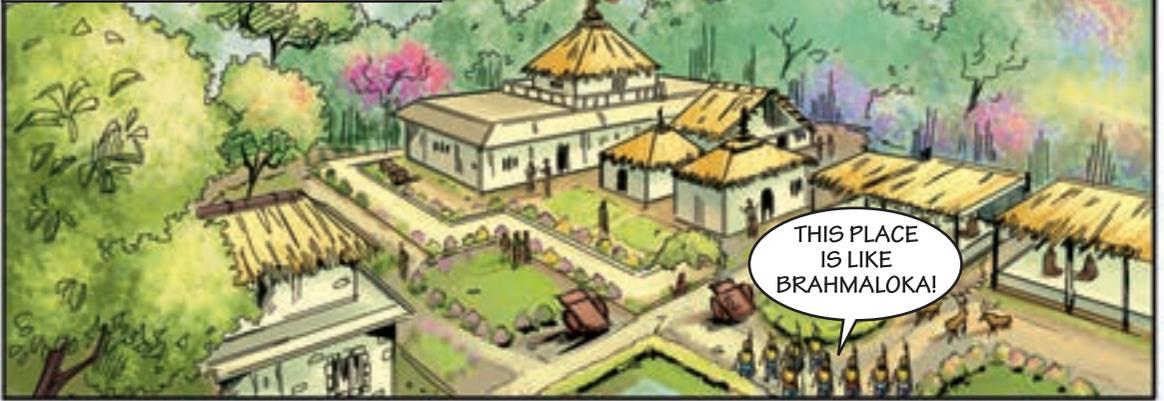
IT IS OUR GOOD FORTUNE THAT YOU HAVE COME HERE.

AND YOU ARE THE MOST FORTUNATE PERSON ON EARTH, TO HAVE THE POWERFUL VISHWAMITRA AS YOUR GUARDIAN.



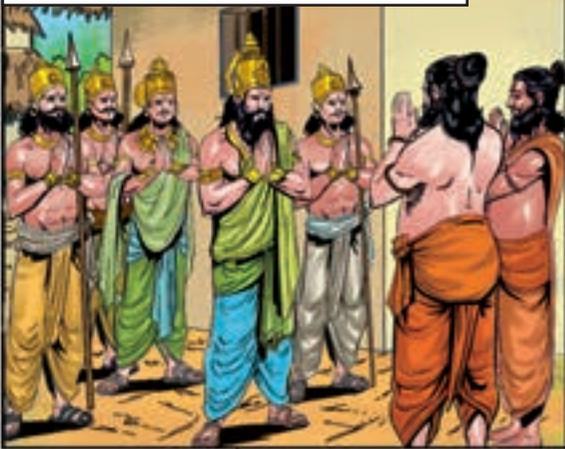
I WILL TELL YOU HIS INCREDIBLE STORY. THIS SON OF GADHI WAS EARLIER A LEARNED KING WHO RULED THE EARTH. ONCE, HE WENT ROUND THE GLOBE WITH HIS MIGHTY ARMY.

MARCHING ACROSS CITIES AND STATES, RIVERS, MOUNTAINS AND HERMITAGES, THE KING AT LAST CAME TO THE ASHRAM OF THE GREAT RISHI VASISHTHA.



THIS PLACE IS LIKE BRAHMALOKA!

VASISHTHA WELCOMED THE KING HOSPITABLY, AND URGED HIM TO HAVE LUNCH AT THE ASHRAM.



THEN VASISHTHA SENT FOR HIS DIVINE COW, SHABALA*.

QUICKLY GET US ALL KINDS OF DRINKS AND DELICIOUS DISHES IN EACH OF THE SIX TASTES^. PROVIDE ENOUGH FOR THIS KING AND HIS ARMY TO EAT THEIR FILL.



SHABALA YIELDED EVERY DELICACY THAT ANYONE COULD WISH FOR. KING VISHWAMITRA AND HIS PARTY ATE TO THEIR HEART'S CONTENT.

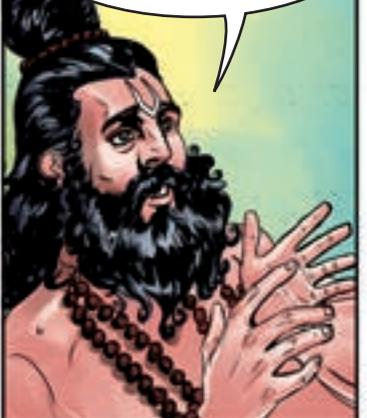


AFTERWARDS -

SHABALA SHOULD RIGHTFULLY BELONG TO A KING, O HOLY ONE. PLEASE HAND HER OVER TO ME IN EXCHANGE FOR A HUNDRED THOUSAND COWS.



SHABALA AND I CAN NEVER BE SEPARATED. SHE IS THE SOURCE OF MY HAPPINESS AND ALL MY SACRIFICES DEPEND ON HER. I WOULD NOT PART WITH HER EVEN FOR TEN THOUSAND LAKH COWS.

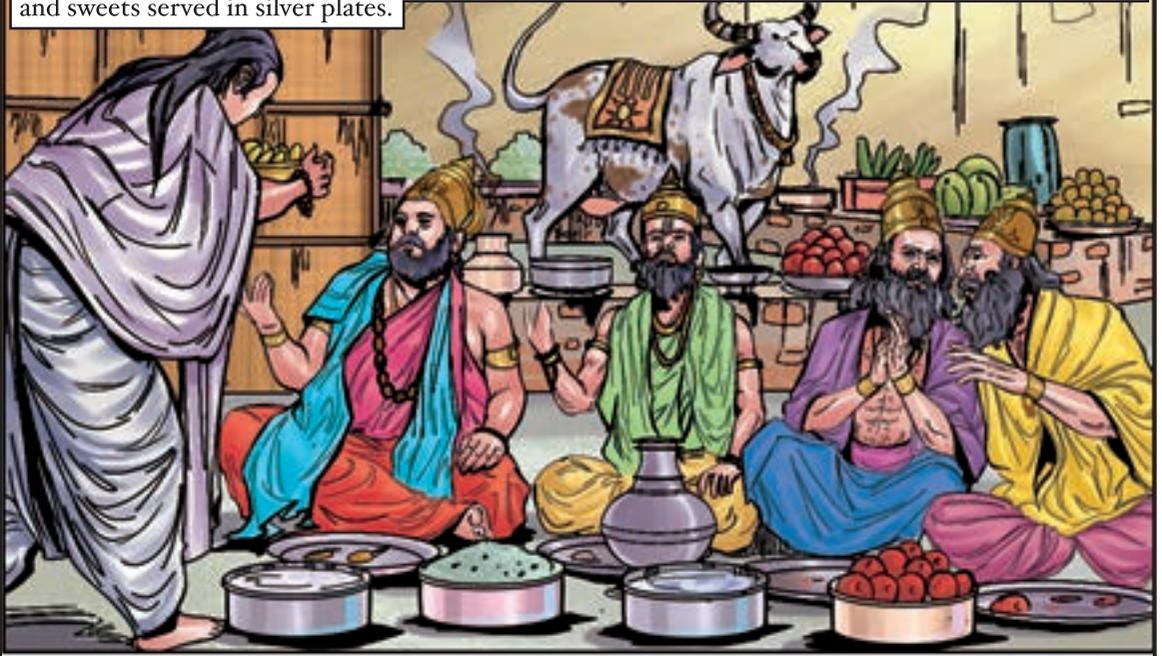


*ALSO KNOWN AS KAMADHENU

^SEE PAGE 85 FOR DETAILS

WHAT DID PEOPLE IN ACIENT INDIA EAT?

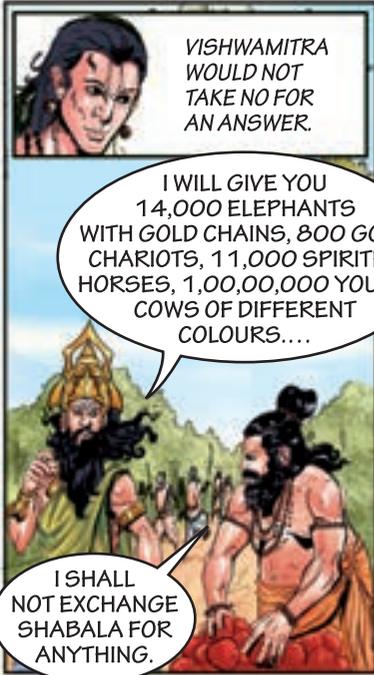
The Vedic people had a very tasty, nutritious and varied diet. The food was always freshly gathered and cooked. Vishwamitra's army loved the delicious items on Shabala's menu. Some of them were: sugarcane, honey, crunchy fried snacks, fruit juices and wines made from sugarcane juice and jaggery, mountains of fragrant rice, vegetables, spicy dals and savoury soups, curds, and payasa and sweets served in silver plates.



In Vedic times, a complete meal had to contain all the six tastes: pungent, acid, sweet, salty, bitter and alkaline. It also contained five types of food: bhakshya (crunchy/chewy), bhojya (semi-solids), choshya (suckable, like mangoes), lehya (lickable, like honey) and peya (drinkable).

Ancient Indians divided all food into three categories based on their effect on the taste buds, the body and the mind. Saatvik foods include whole grains, honey, sprouts, nuts, pulses, milk, fresh fruits and vegetables. They are nutritious, simple and juicy, and make the brain calm and clear. Rajasik foods include very hot, sour, dry, salty and spicy foods, eggs, fish, meat, etc. They heat the body, stimulate the senses and make the mind restless. Tamasik foods include red meat, alcohol, onions, garlic, overripe fruits and fermented foods.





VISHWAMITRA WOULD NOT TAKE NO FOR AN ANSWER.

I WILL GIVE YOU 14,000 ELEPHANTS WITH GOLD CHAINS, 800 GOLD CHARIOTS, 11,000 SPIRITED HORSES, 1,00,00,000 YOUNG COWS OF DIFFERENT COLOURS....

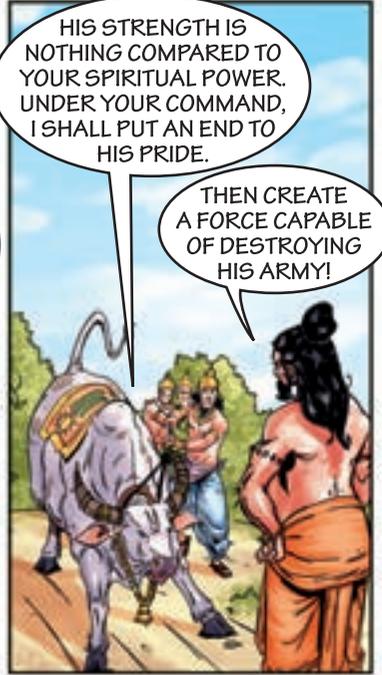
I SHALL NOT EXCHANGE SHABALA FOR ANYTHING.



ENRAGED, VISHWAMITRA ORDERED HIS SOLDIERS TO TAKE SHABALA BY FORCE.

WHY HAVE YOU FORSAKEN ME, HOLY ONE?

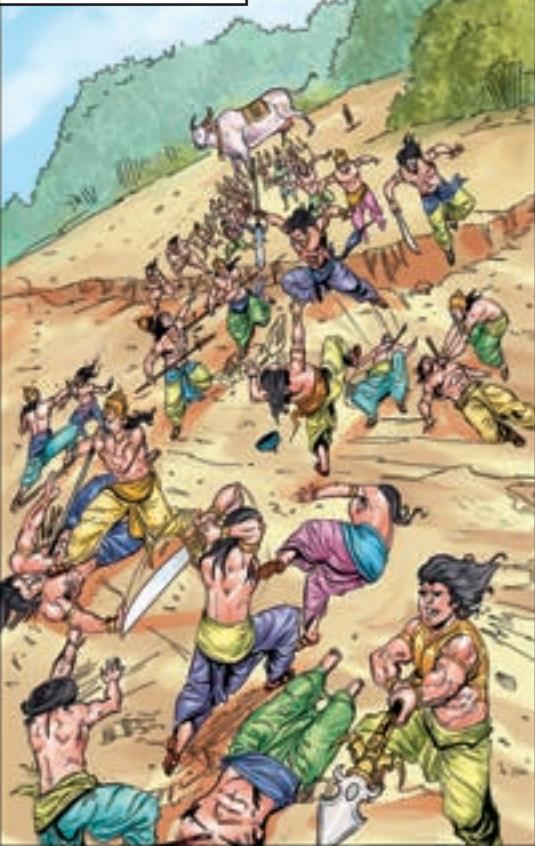
I HAVE NOT FORSAKEN YOU, SHABALA. THIS KING, INTOXICATED WITH POWER, IS TOO STRONG FOR ME.



HIS STRENGTH IS NOTHING COMPARED TO YOUR SPIRITUAL POWER. UNDER YOUR COMMAND, I SHALL PUT AN END TO HIS PRIDE.

THEN CREATE A FORCE CAPABLE OF DESTROYING HIS ARMY!

SHABALA PRODUCED THOUSANDS OF FIERCE WARRIORS. THEY COMPLETELY WIPED OUT VISHWAMITRA'S ARMY.



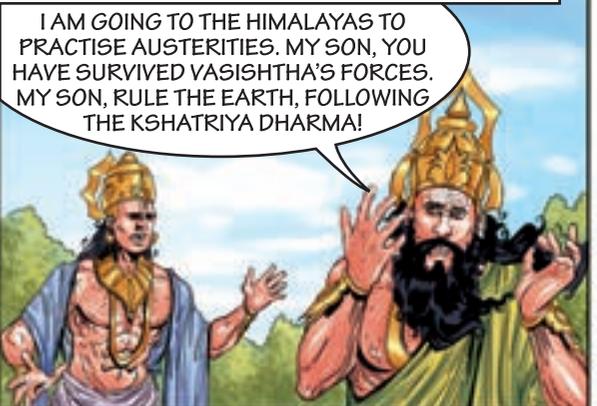
VISHWAMITRA'S SONS RUSHED ANGRILY TOWARDS VASISHTHA. THE NEXT MOMENT -



HOOOON!

THE ROAR OF VASISHTHA'S SPIRITUAL ENERGY REDUCED THEM TO A HEAP OF ASHES. ONLY ONE SON WAS SPARED.

VISHWAMITRA WAS FILLED WITH SHAME AND SORROW.



I AM GOING TO THE HIMALAYAS TO PRACTISE AUSTERITIES. MY SON, YOU HAVE SURVIVED VASISHTHA'S FORCES. MY SON, RULE THE EARTH, FOLLOWING THE KSHATRIYA DHARMA!

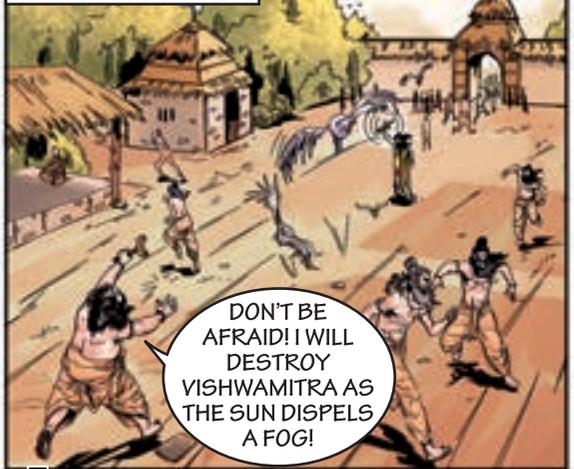
AFTER MANY YEARS OF TAPAS, LORD SHIVA APPEARED BEFORE VISHWAMITRA.



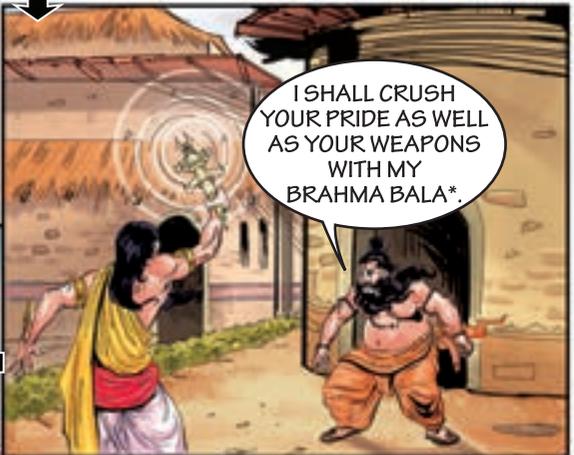
O DEVA, I WISH TO POSSESS ALL THE WEAPONS THAT ARE KNOWN.

SO BE IT!

HAVING RECEIVED THESE WEAPONS, VISHWAMITRA SWELLED WITH ARROGANCE. HE WENT STRAIGHT TO VASISHTHA'S ASHRAM.



DON'T BE AFRAID! I WILL DESTROY VISHWAMITRA AS THE SUN DISPELS A FOG!

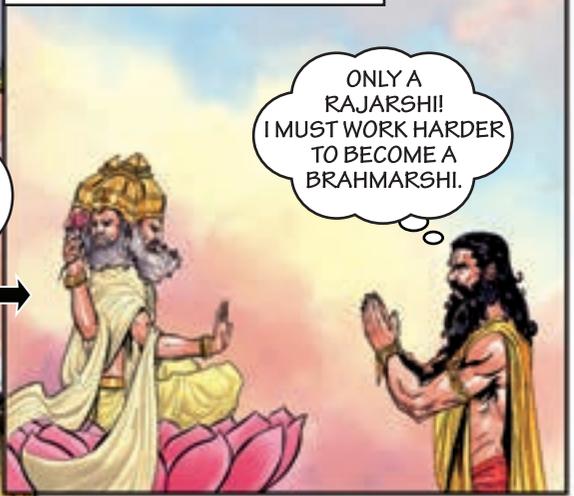


I SHALL CRUSH YOUR PRIDE AS WELL AS YOUR WEAPONS WITH MY BRAHMA BALA*.

WITH HIS BRAHMADANDA, VASISHTHA NEUTRALISED EVERY WEAPON THAT VISHWAMITRA USED - INCLUDING THE MISSILES OF AGNI, VARUNA, RUDRA AND INDRA. EVEN THE DREADED BRAHMASTRA WAS NO MATCH FOR HIM.



VISHWAMITRA PRACTISED SEVERE AUSTERITIES FOR A THOUSAND YEARS. AT LAST, BRAHMA APPEARED AND PRONOUNCED HIM A RAJARSHI.



ONLY A RAJARSHI! I MUST WORK HARDER TO BECOME A BRAHMARSHI.

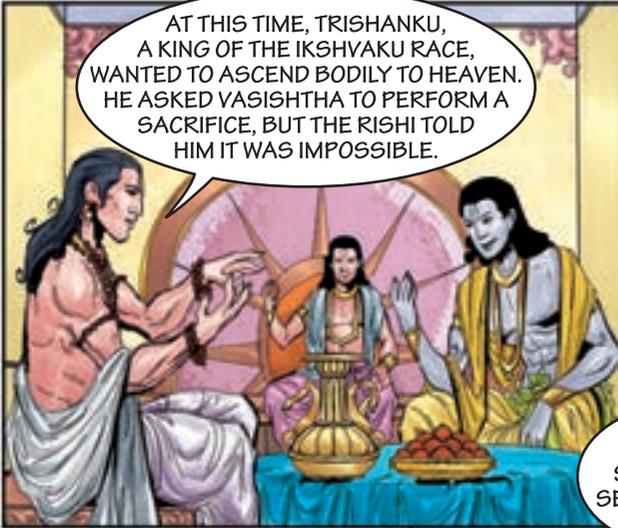
O HOLY ONE! PLEASE QUENCH THE FIRE WITH YOUR OWN ENERGY, AND SAVE THE WORLD!

VERY WELL.

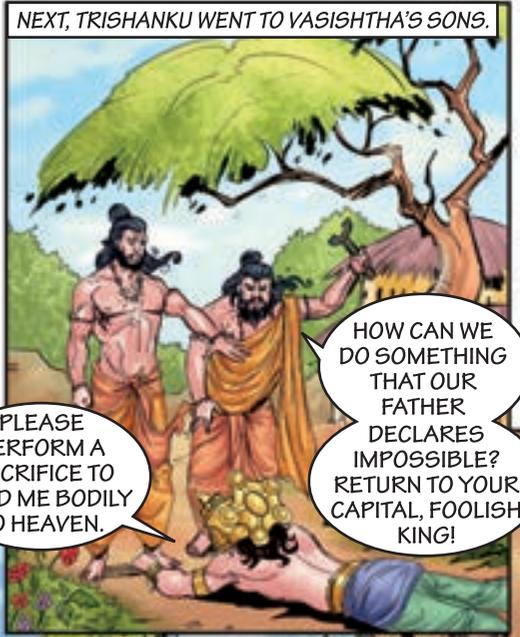
THE MIGHT OF A KSHATRIYA IS NOTHING COMPARED TO THE GLORY OF SPIRITUAL POWER! I SHALL PURIFY MY MIND AND SENSES UNTIL I BECOME A BRAHMARSHI.



*POWER OF BRAHMA, OR SPIRITUAL ENERGY



AT THIS TIME, TRISHANKU, A KING OF THE IKSHVAKU RACE, WANTED TO ASCEND BODILY TO HEAVEN. HE ASKED VASISHTHA TO PERFORM A SACRIFICE, BUT THE RISHI TOLD HIM IT WAS IMPOSSIBLE.



NEXT, TRISHANKU WENT TO VASISHTHA'S SONS.

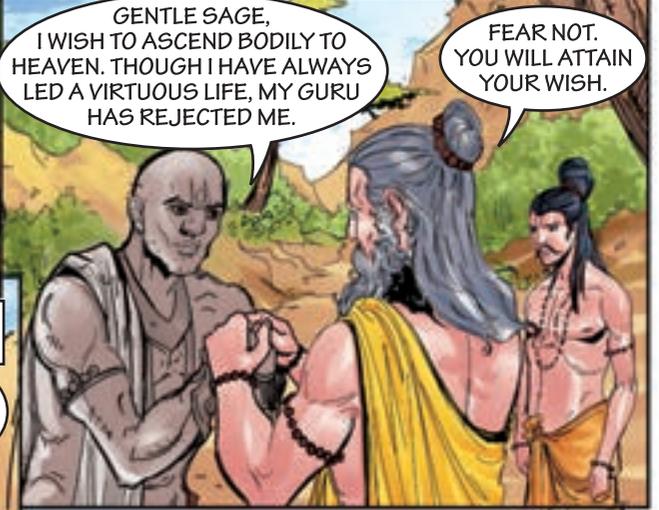
PLEASE PERFORM A SACRIFICE TO SEND ME BODILY TO HEAVEN.

HOW CAN WE DO SOMETHING THAT OUR FATHER DECLARES IMPOSSIBLE? RETURN TO YOUR CAPITAL, FOOLISH KING!

TRISHANKU DECIDED TO SEEK HELP ELSEWHERE. INFURIATED, VASISHTHA'S SONS CURSED HIM. THE NEXT MORNING, TRISHANKU WOKE UP TO FIND HIMSELF TRANSFORMED AND COVERED WITH ASH.



DESERTED BY HIS FRIENDS, TRISHANKU WENT TO VISHWAMITRA.



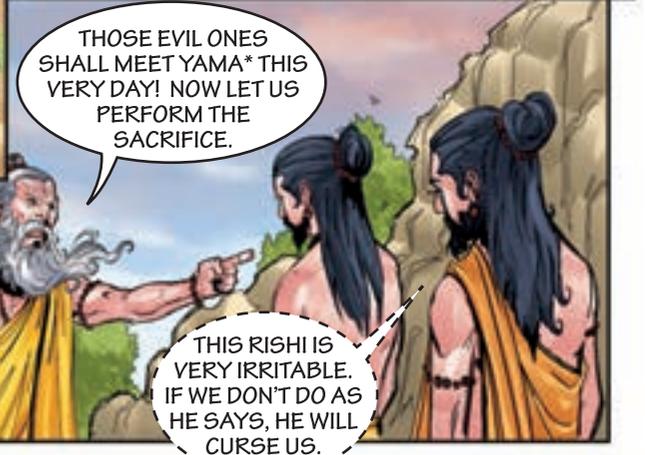
GENTLE SAGE, I WISH TO ASCEND BODILY TO HEAVEN. THOUGH I HAVE ALWAYS LED A VIRTUOUS LIFE, MY GURU HAS REJECTED ME.

FEAR NOT. YOU WILL ATTAIN YOUR WISH.

VISHWAMITRA SENT HIS DISCIPLES TO INVITE ALL THE RISHIS AND LEARNED MEN TO THE SACRIFICE. SOON -



EVERYONE IS COMING, EXCEPT VASISHTHA'S SONS.

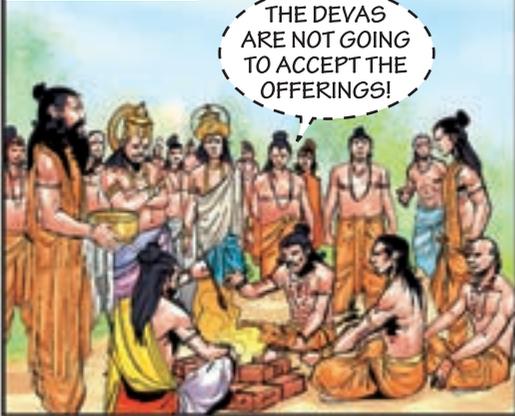


THOSE EVIL ONES SHALL MEET YAMA* THIS VERY DAY! NOW LET US PERFORM THE SACRIFICE.

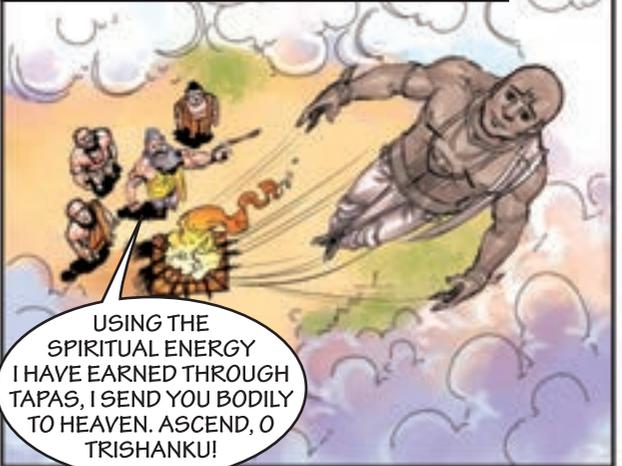
THIS RISHI IS VERY IRRITABLE. IF WE DON'T DO AS HE SAYS, HE WILL CURSE US.

*GOD OF DEATH

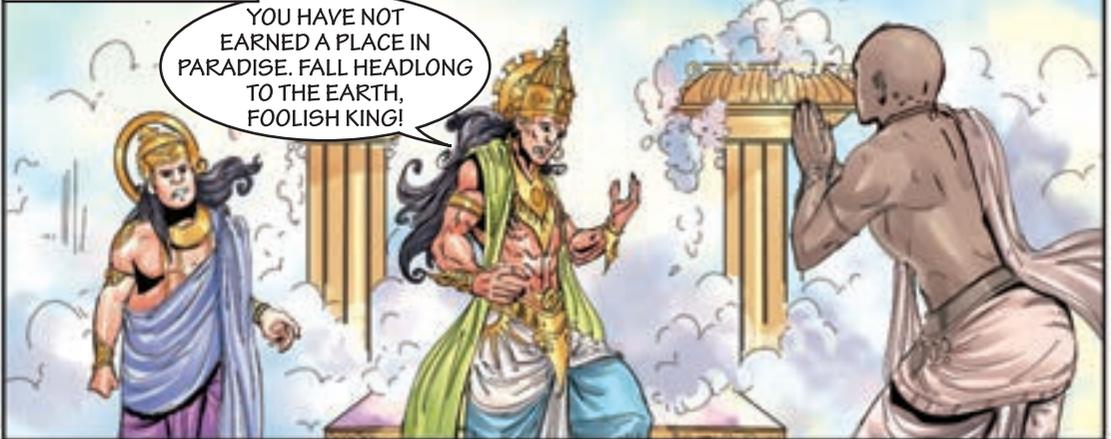
AT THE END OF THE SACRIFICE, VISHWAMITRA CALLED ON THE DEVAS TO RECEIVE THE OFFERINGS BUT -



VISHWAMITRA WAS OVERWHELMED WITH ANGER.



WHEN INDRA SAW HIM -



FURIOUS, VISHWAMITRA TOOK A PLEDGE.

I SHALL CREATE ANOTHER HEAVEN, ANOTHER INDRA... OR LET MY HEAVEN HAVE NO INDRA!

THE GODS CAME DOWN TO PLEAD WITH VISHWAMITRA.

THIS KING DOES NOT DESERVE TO ASCEND BODILY TO HEAVEN.

I HAVE GIVEN MY WORD. PLEASE LET TRISHANKU, IN HIS PHYSICAL BODY, ENJOY ETERNAL BLISS IN THE HEAVEN I HAVE CREATED.

LET IT BE SO! LET TRISHANKU REMAIN UPSIDE DOWN, SHINING AMIDST THE STARS.

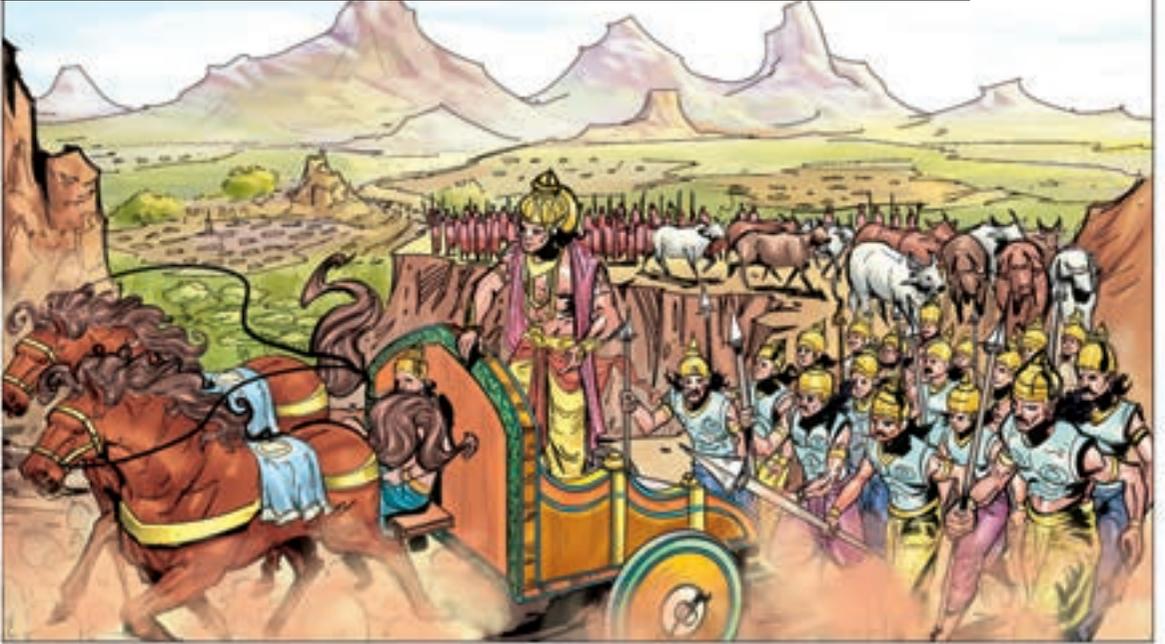
SO BE IT!

SOME YEARS LATER IN AYODHYA, KING AMBARISHA WAS PERFORMING AN ASHWAMEDHA YAGYA.

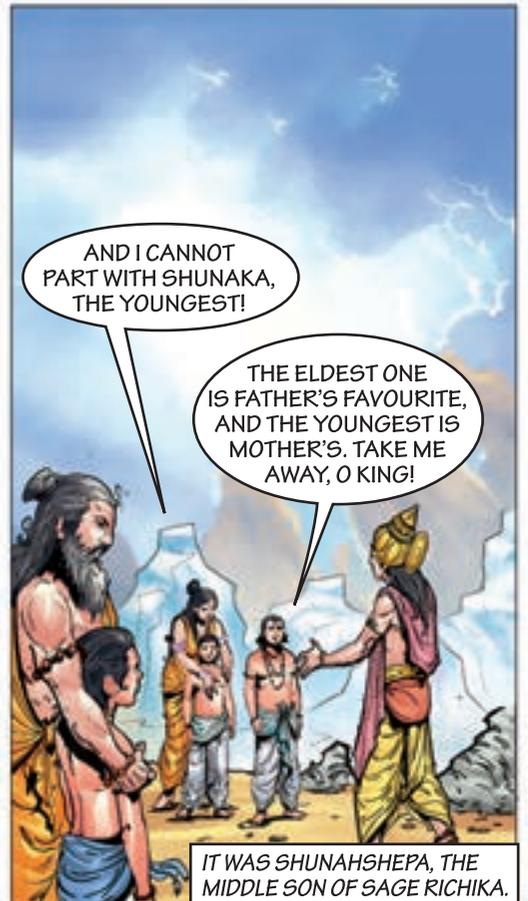
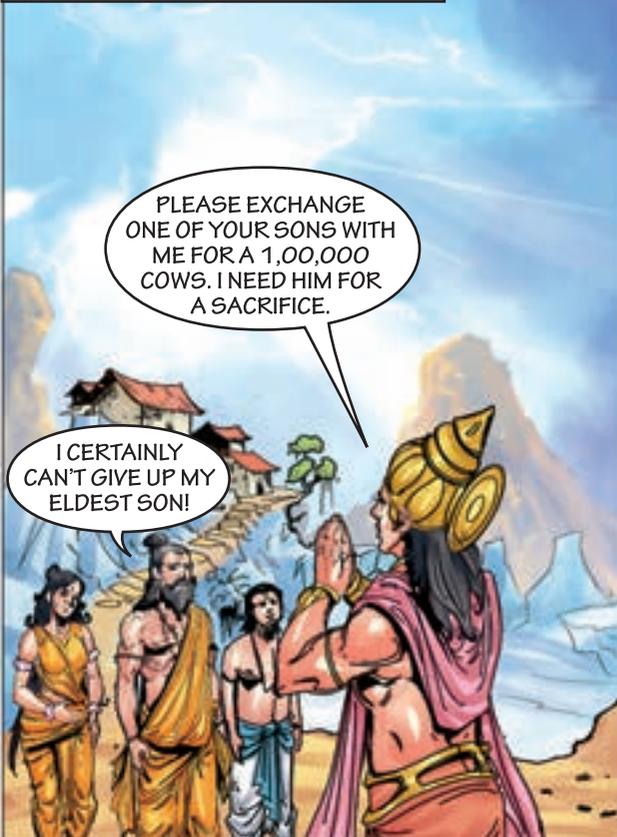
THE GODS DEPARTED. VISHWAMITRA MOVED TO A FOREST BESIDE THE PUSHKARA LAKES IN THE WESTERN QUARTER, WHERE HE COULD PURSUE HIS AUSTERITIES UNDISTURBED.

THE HORSE HAS BEEN STOLEN! A KING WHO FAILS TO GUARD HIS SACRIFICE WILL BE DESTROYED. IF YOU CANNOT FIND THE HORSE, GET A HUMAN SACRIFICE TO COMPLETE THE RITUAL.

AMBARISHA SET OFF, TAKING HIS ARMY AND SEVERAL THOUSAND COWS. THEY TRAVELLED THROUGH MANY COUNTRIES, CITIES, VILLAGES, FORESTS AND ASHRAMS, BUT THEY COULD NOT FIND THE HORSE.



AT LAST, THE KING CAME TO THE HOUSE OF SAGE RICHIKA ON MOUNT BHRIGUTUNGA.





TAKING SHUNAHSHEPA IN EXCHANGE FOR LAKHS OF SILVER AND GOLD COINS.

HEAPS OF PRECIOUS STONES AND A LAKH OF COWS, KING AMBARISHA DEPARTED, HIGHLY PLEASED.



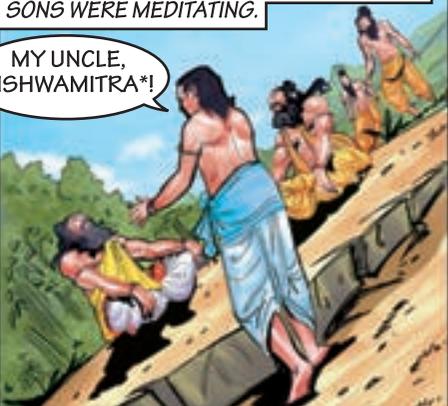
AFTER SOME TIME, AMBARISHA STOPPED TO REST WHERE VISHWAMITRA AND HIS SONS WERE MEDITATING.

...AND TOLD HIS STORY.

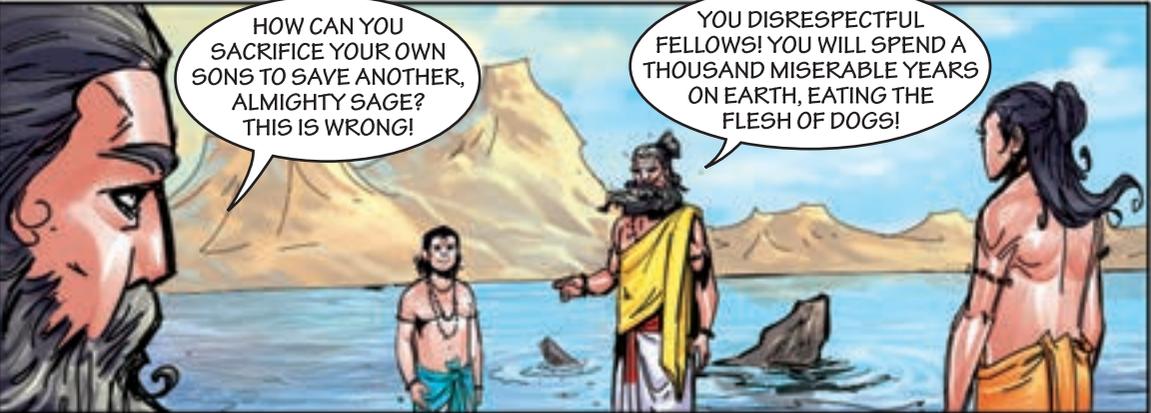
I HAVE NO FATHER AND MOTHER. YOU ARE THE REFUGE OF ALL! PLEASE SAVE ME!

HAVE NO FEAR, CHILD. MY SONS, I ASK YOU TO OFFER YOURSELVES IN PLACE OF THIS CHILD.

MY UNCLE, VISHWAMITRA*!



TIRED AND FULL OF SORROW, SHUNAHSHEPA RAN TO VISHWAMITRA...



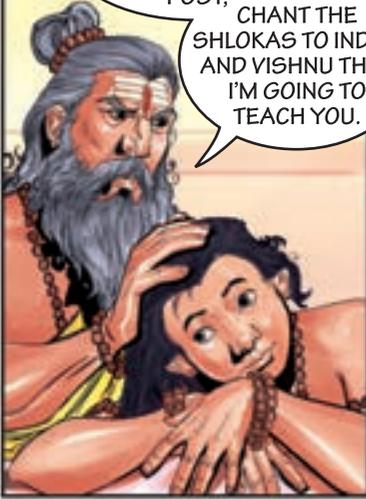
HOW CAN YOU SACRIFICE YOUR OWN SONS TO SAVE ANOTHER, ALMIGHTY SAGE? THIS IS WRONG!

YOU DISRESPECTFUL FELLOWS! YOU WILL SPEND A THOUSAND MISERABLE YEARS ON EARTH, EATING THE FLESH OF DOGS!

*SHUNAHSHEPA'S MOTHER WAS VISHWAMITRA'S SISTER, SATYAVATI.

VISHWAMITRA REASSURED THE FRIGHTENED SHUNAHSHEPA.

DON'T BE AFRAID. WHEN YOU ARE TIED TO THE SACRIFICIAL POST, CHANT THE SHLOKAS TO INDRA AND VISHNU THAT I'M GOING TO TEACH YOU.

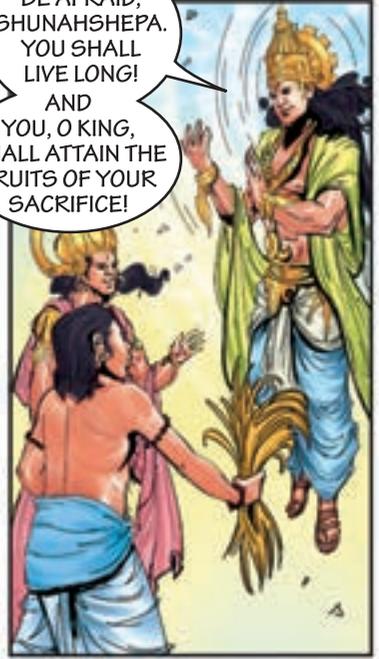


MEMORISING THE SHLOKAS, THE BOY RETURNED TO AMBARISHA. IN AYODHYA -

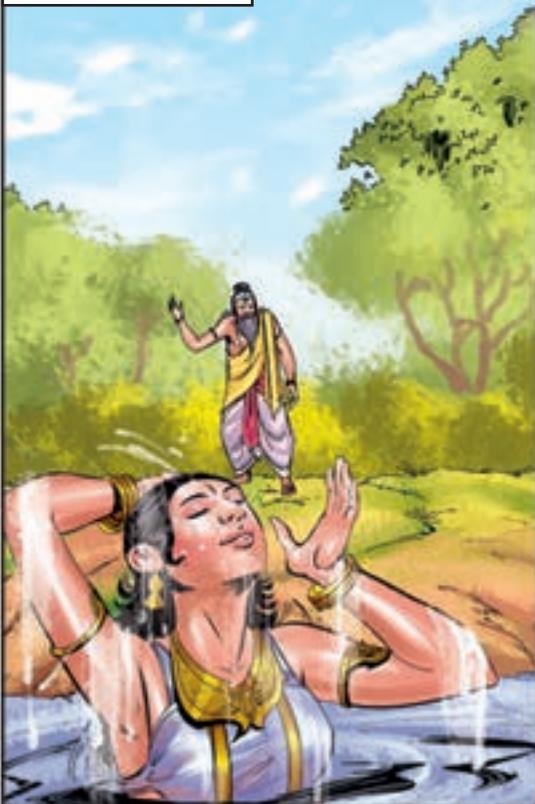


OM NAMO INDRAAYAI!
OM NAMO INDRAANUJAAYAI*!

DON'T BE AFRAID, SHUNAHSHEPA. YOU SHALL LIVE LONG! AND YOU, O KING, SHALL ATTAIN THE FRUITS OF YOUR SACRIFICE!

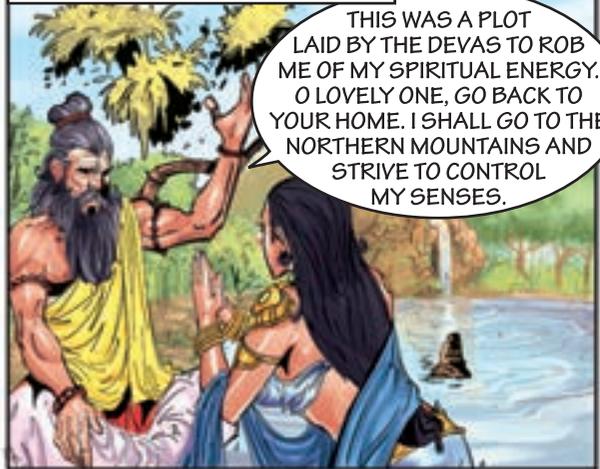


VISHWAMITRA RETURNED TO HIS AUSTERITIES. AFTER A THOUSAND YEARS, A BEAUTIFUL APSARA CALLED MENAKA CAME TO BATHE IN THE LAKE. VISHWAMITRA FELL IN LOVE WITH HER AND BEGGED HER TO STAY WITH HIM.



TEN YEARS WENT BY HAPPILY. THEN -

THIS WAS A PLOT LAID BY THE DEVAS TO ROB ME OF MY SPIRITUAL ENERGY. O LOVELY ONE, GO BACK TO YOUR HOME. I SHALL GO TO THE NORTHERN MOUNTAINS AND STRIVE TO CONTROL MY SENSES.



FOR THOUSANDS OF YEARS, VISHWAMITRA UNDERTOOK TERRIBLE AUSTERITIES. BRAHMA CONFERRED ON HIM THE TITLE OF MAHARSHI. VISHWAMITRA STROVE HARDER.

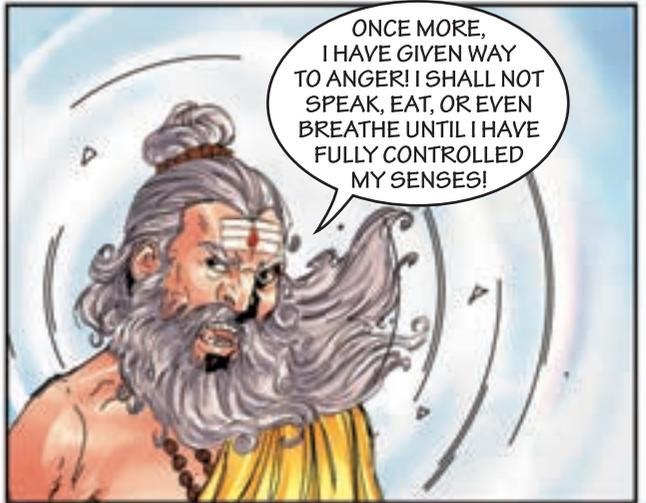


*YOUNGER BROTHER OF INDRA, I.E. VISHNU

WORRIED ABOUT HIS GROWING POWER, INDRA SENT RAMBHA, AN APSARA, TO DISTRACT HIM. KANDARPA, THE GOD OF LOVE, AND INDRA, IN THE FORM OF A CUCKOO, ACCOMPANIED HER.



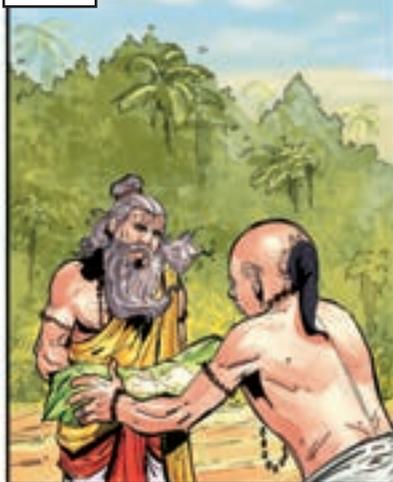
BUT VISHWAMITRA REALISED IT WAS A TRICK.



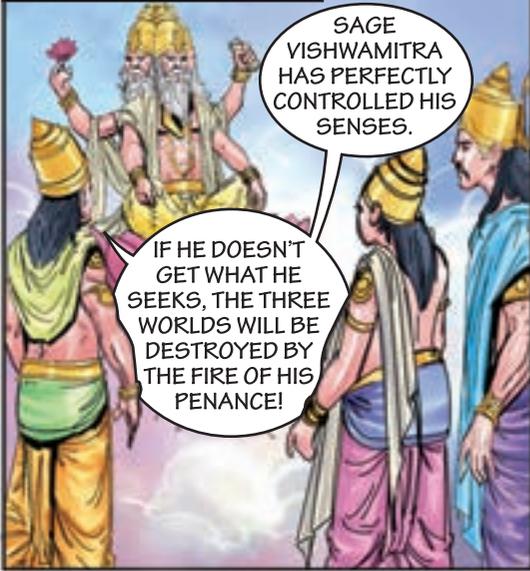
VISHWAMITRA MOVED TO THE EASTERN QUARTER TO FULFIL HIS VOW. AFTER A THOUSAND YEARS, HE RELAXED AND SAT DOWN TO EAT. JUST THEN -



THE BRAHMIN WAS INDRA IN DISGUISE. HE WENT AWAY, REALISING THAT VISHWAMITRA HAD CONQUERED HIS ANGER.

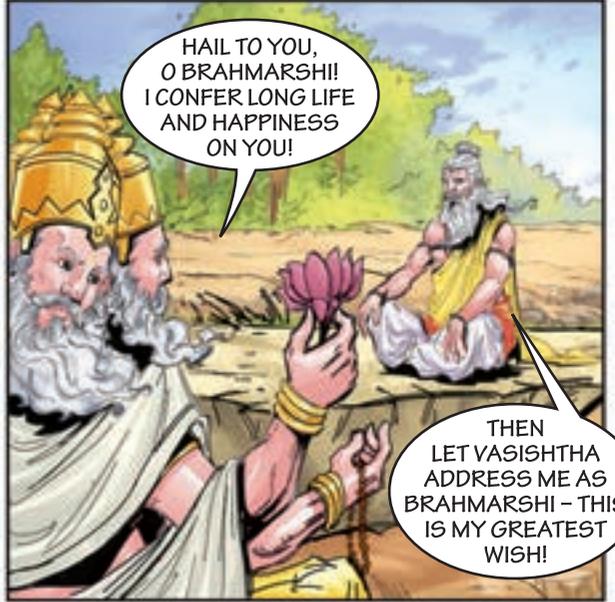


THE DEVAS WENT TO BRAHMA.



SAGE VISHWAMITRA HAS PERFECTLY CONTROLLED HIS SENSES.

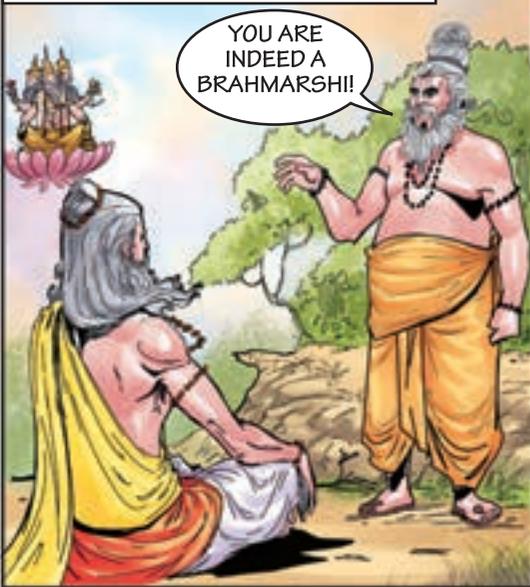
IF HE DOESN'T GET WHAT HE SEEKS, THE THREE WORLDS WILL BE DESTROYED BY THE FIRE OF HIS PENANCE!



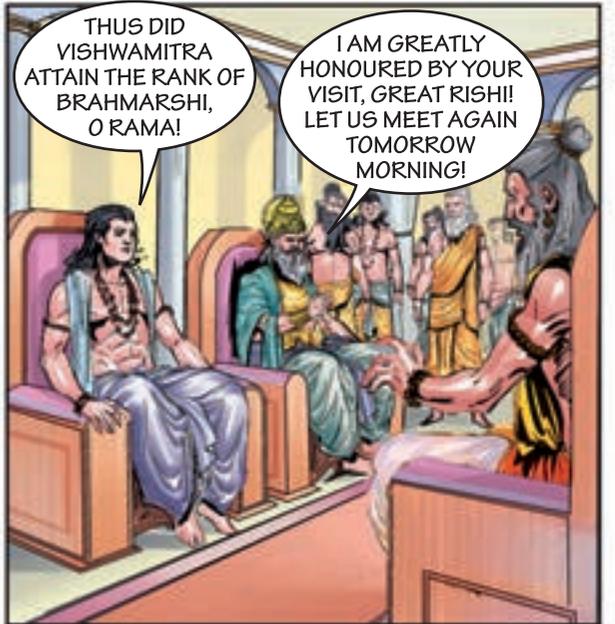
HAIL TO YOU, O BRAHMARSHI!! I CONFER LONG LIFE AND HAPPINESS ON YOU!

THEN LET VASISHTHA ADDRESS ME AS BRAHMARSHI - THIS IS MY GREATEST WISH!

AND SO, VASISHTHA HIMSELF APPEARED.



YOU ARE INDEED A BRAHMARSHI!!



THUS DID VISHWAMITRA ATTAIN THE RANK OF BRAHMARSHI, O RAMA!

I AM GREATLY HONOURED BY YOUR VISIT, GREAT RISHI!! LET US MEET AGAIN TOMORROW MORNING!

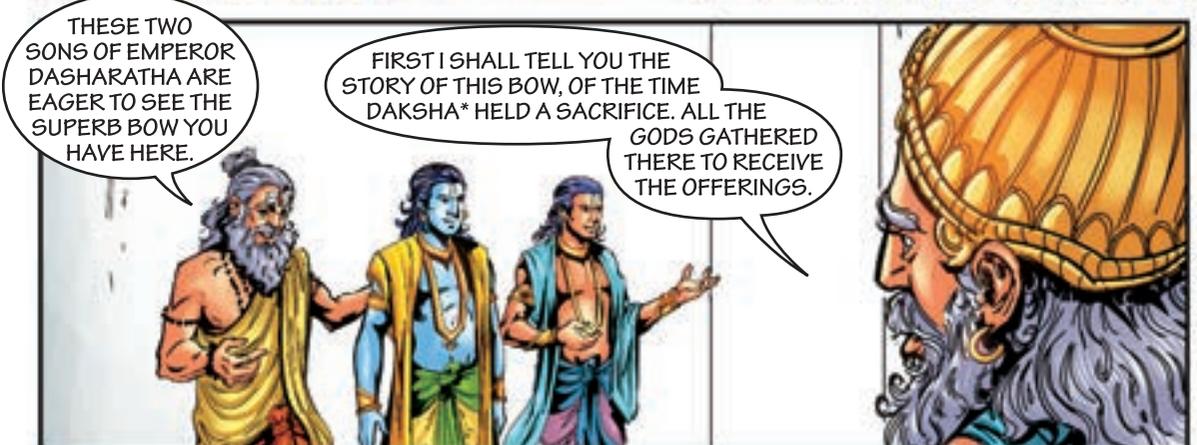
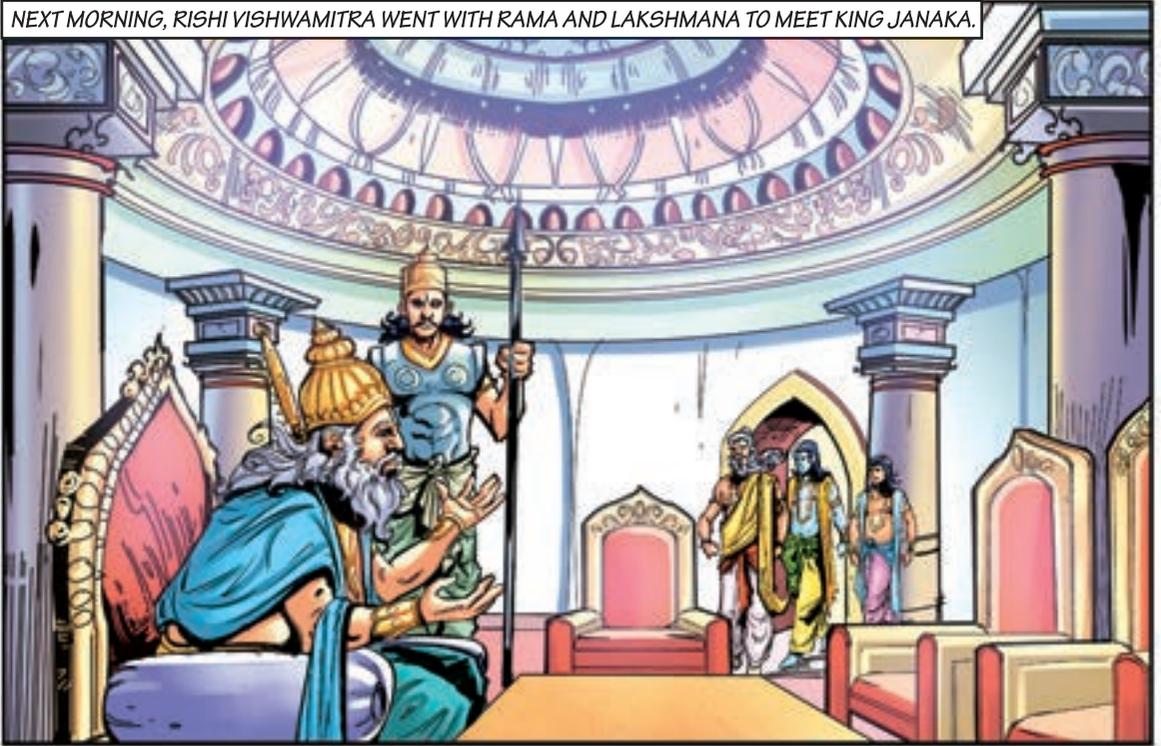


THEN TOMORROW WE SHALL SEE THE GREAT BOW OF SHIVA!

THE GREAT BOW OF SHIVA



NEXT MORNING, RISHI VISHWAMITRA WENT WITH RAMA AND LAKSHMANA TO MEET KING JANAKA.



*DAKSHA PRAJAPATI WAS A SON OF BRAHMA AND ONE OF THE ANCESTORS OF HUMANKIND.

DAKSHA HAD A DAUGHTER CALLED SHAKTI. SHE HAD MARRIED THE VALIANT RUDRA AGAINST HER FATHER'S WISHES.



DISPLEASED WITH HIS DAUGHTER AND SON-IN-LAW, DAKSHA DID NOT INVITE THEM TO THE SACRIFICE. FURIOUS AT THE INSULT, LORD RUDRA APPEARED THERE, DETERMINED TO WRECK THE SACRIFICE.

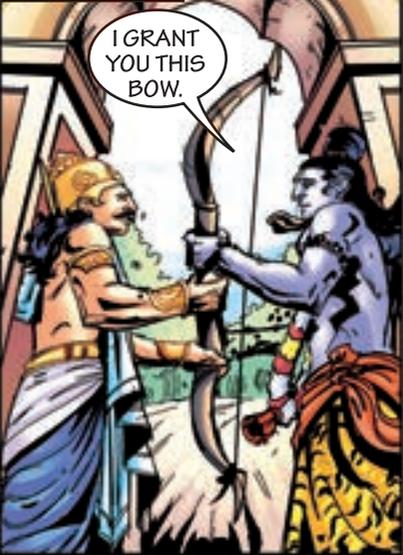


SINCE YOU HAVE NOT SET APART A SHARE FOR ME, O DEVAS, I SHALL SEVER YOUR NOBLE HEADS WITH THIS BOW.



FORGIVE US! SPARE US, LORD!

APPEASED BY THEIR WORDS, SHIVA FORGAVE THEM.



I GRANT YOU THIS BOW.

THAT BOW WAS ENTRUSTED BY THE GODS TO KING DEVARAATA, AN ANCESTOR OF MINE.



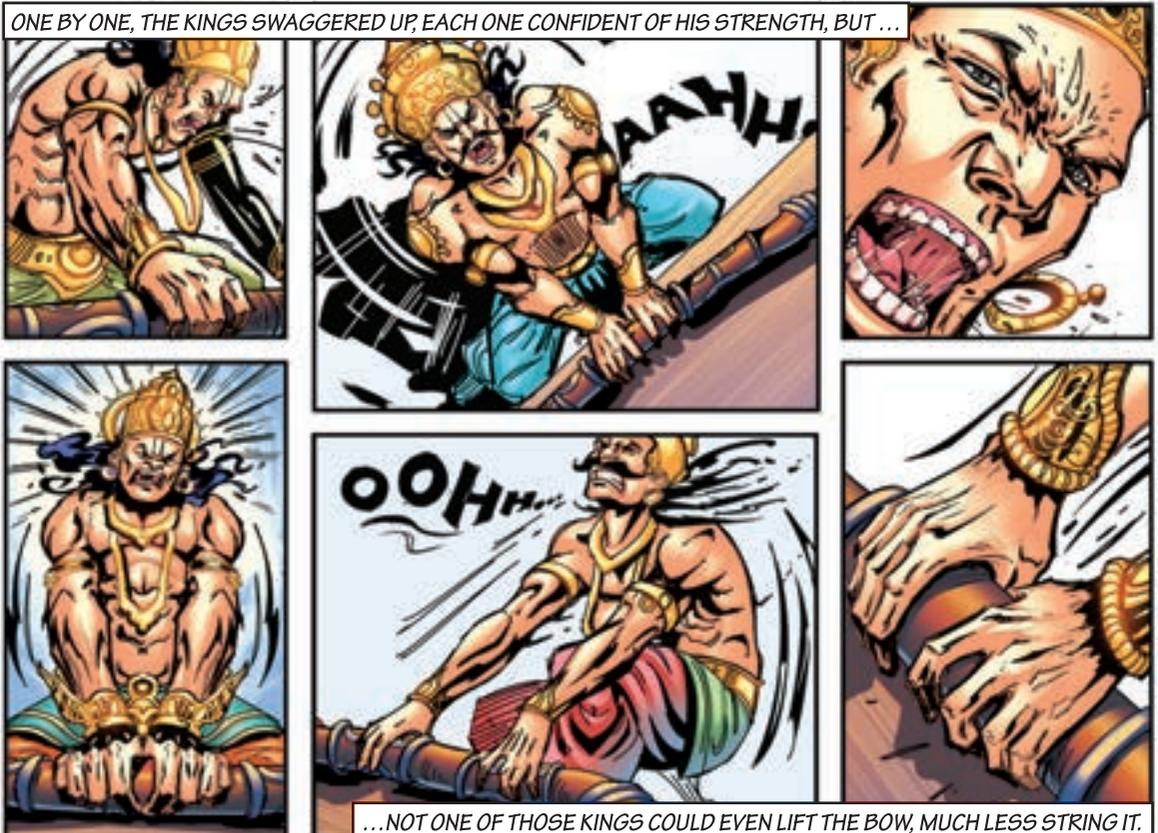
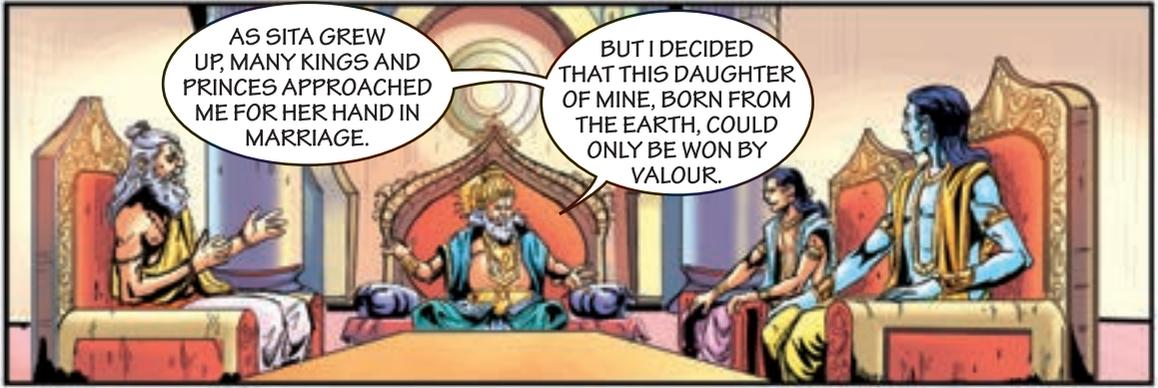
ONCE WHEN I WAS PLOUGHING A FIELD FOR A SACRIFICE -



OH! A SWEET LITTLE BABY GIRL!

I ADOPTED THE BABY AND NAMED HER SITA*.

*FURROW MADE BY A PLOUGH



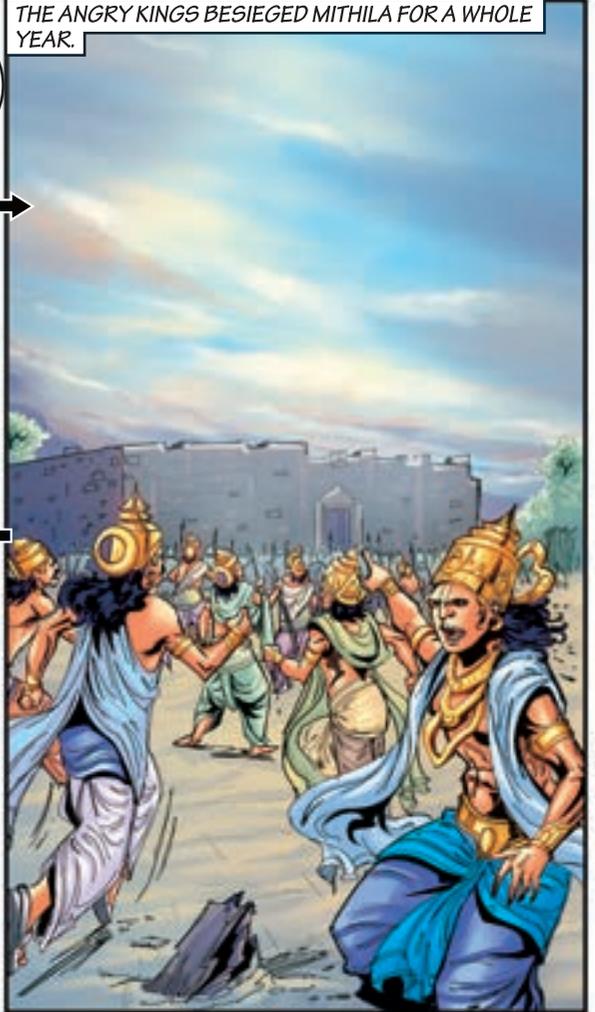
IN THE END, THE UNSUCCESSFUL SUITORS GOT VERY ANGRY WITH ME.

WE MUST AVENGE THE INSULT TO OUR VALOUR!

WE WILL WIPE OUT JANAKA'S CAPITAL!



THE ANGRY KINGS BESIEGED MITHILA FOR A WHOLE YEAR.



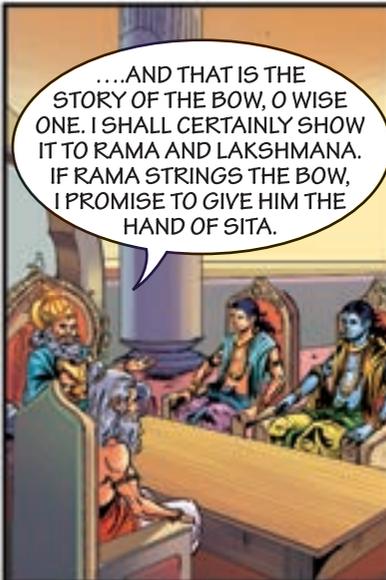
I UNDERTOOK SEVERE TAPAS UNTIL THE GODS GRANTED MY WISH FOR A WHOLE NEW ARMY.



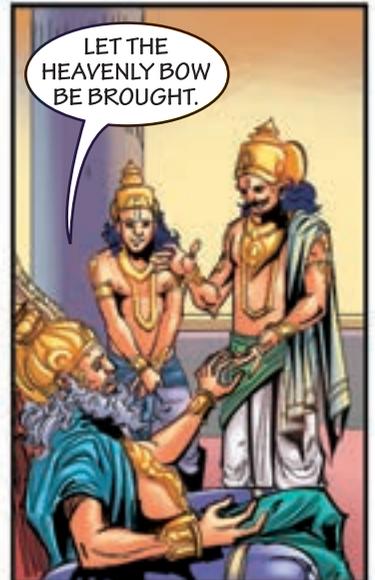
WITH THE ARMY BESTOWED BY THE GODS, I COMPLETELY ROUTED MY ENEMIES.



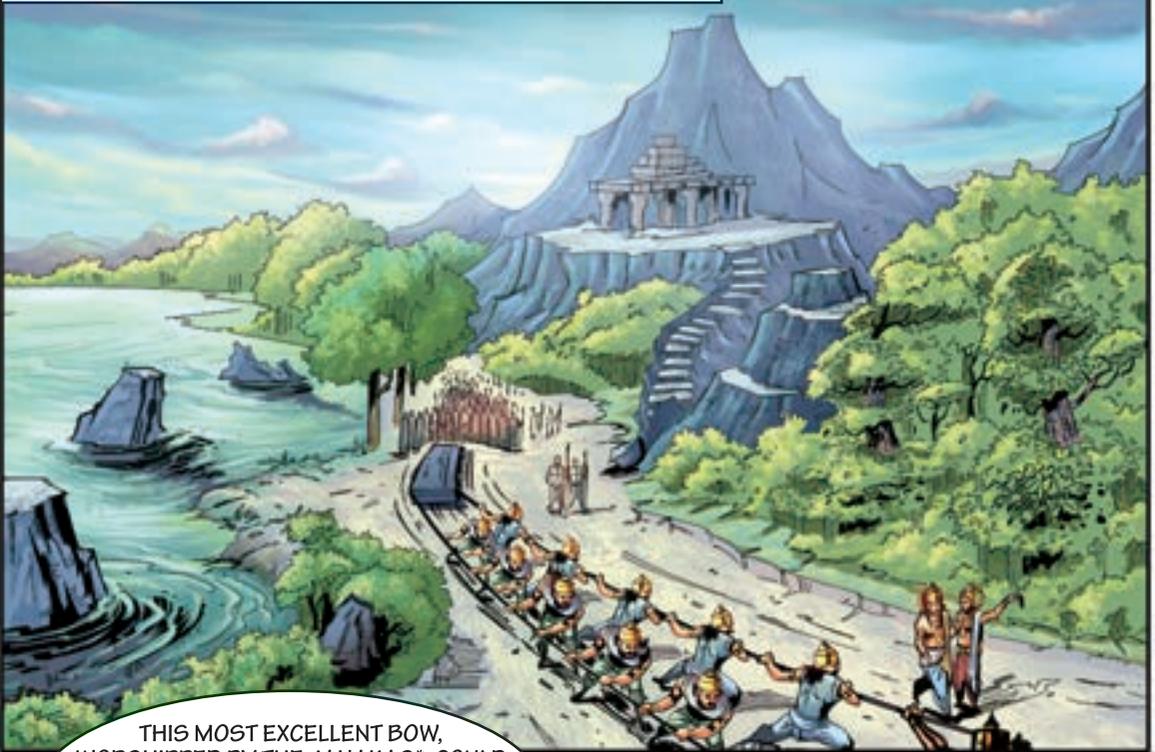
....AND THAT IS THE STORY OF THE BOW, O WISE ONE. I SHALL CERTAINLY SHOW IT TO RAMA AND LAKSHMANA. IF RAMA STRINGS THE BOW, I PROMISE TO GIVE HIM THE HAND OF SITA.



LET THE HEAVENLY BOW BE BROUGHT.



FIVE THOUSAND MEN PULLED THE IRON CHEST WITH SHIVA'S BOW IN IT.



THIS MOST EXCELLENT BOW, WORSHIPPED BY THE JANAKAS*, COULD NOT BE BENT BY POWERFUL KINGS, GODS, DEMONS, YAKSHAS, KINNARAS OR NAGAS. HOW CAN ANY HUMAN BEING BEND THIS BOW AND STRING IT?



CHILD RAMA, OPEN THE CHEST!



I WILL TRY TO LIFT THIS HEAVENLY BOW AND BEND IT.



SO BE IT!

SO BE IT!

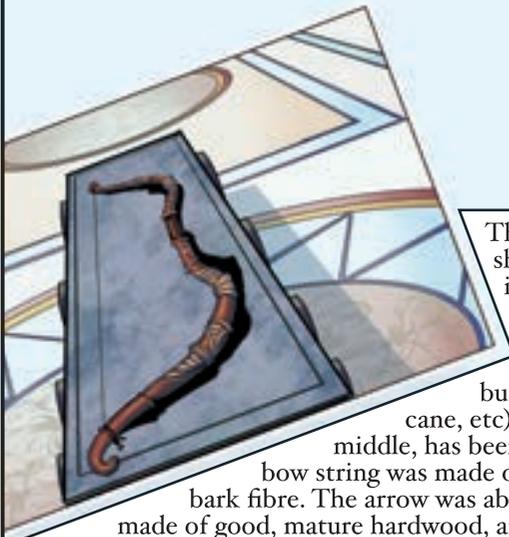
*JANAKA WAS ALSO A TITLE GIVEN TO THE KINGS OF MITHILA.

WEAPONS OF ANCIENT INDIA



Ancient Indians studied warfare and weaponry in great detail, classifying weapons into three types – mukta, amukta and mantramukta. Mukta (free) weapons like dhanush-baan (bow and arrows) and shakti (spear) were thrown from a distance. Amukta weapons like parashu (battle axe), khadga (sword), trishul (trident) and gada (mace) were held in the hand in face-to-face combat. Mantramukta weapons like the Agneyastra or Brahmastra were directed to the target by reciting a mantra.

Gods and heroes in Hindu mythology are each associated with a special weapon: Vishnu with the chakra (discus), Shiva with the trishul, Indra with the vajra (thunderbolt), Yama and Varuna with the noose, Arjuna with the dhanush and Bhima with the gada.



The Dhanur Veda (an Upaveda or subset of the Yajurveda) shows that military science was studied systematically in Vedic times, and that the dhanush was the most important weapon. The crafting of a bow was very complex. It had to be almost six feet in height, and was made with three materials: iron, horn (preferably buffalo or rohisha deer horn) and wood (sal, chandan, cane, etc). The shape of the bow, with a grip for the hand in the middle, has been compared to the eyebrows of a beautiful damsel. The bow string was made of the best silk, or with gut, bamboo fibre, leather or bark fibre. The arrow was about three feet long and as thick as a man's little finger, made of good, mature hardwood, and the end was fletched with four feathers from birds like the crane, kingfisher, swan or vulture. The arrow head was made of hardened iron (sometimes tipped with brass). The archer wore leather guards to protect the fingers, hand and arm. The Dhanur Veda also contains advice to archers on courage and chivalry. For example, it says that an enemy who is wounded, unarmed or asking for refuge should not be harmed.

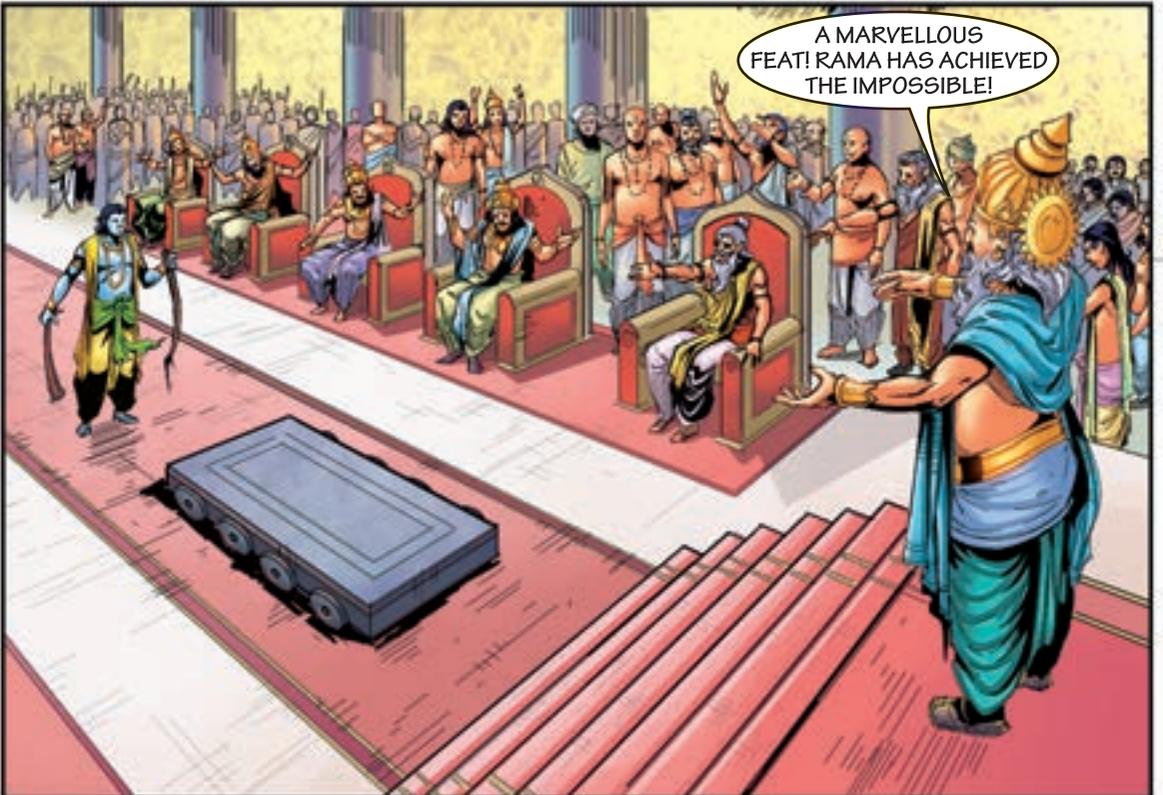
RAMA PICKED UP THE BOW AND STRUNG IT.



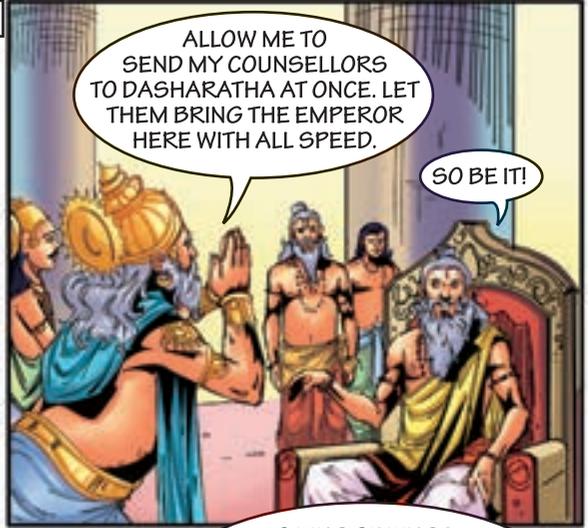
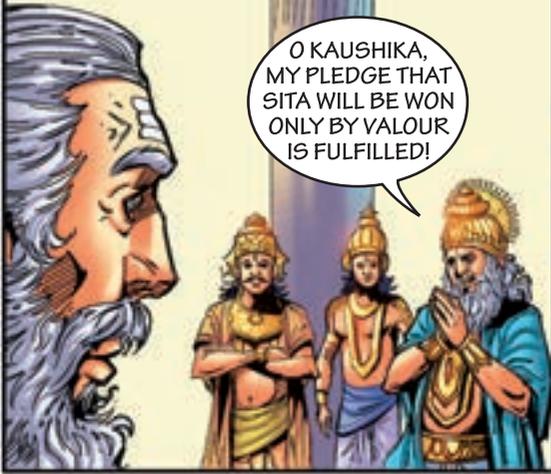
HE THEN BENT THE BOW AND IT BROKE WITH A THUNDEROUS NOISE.



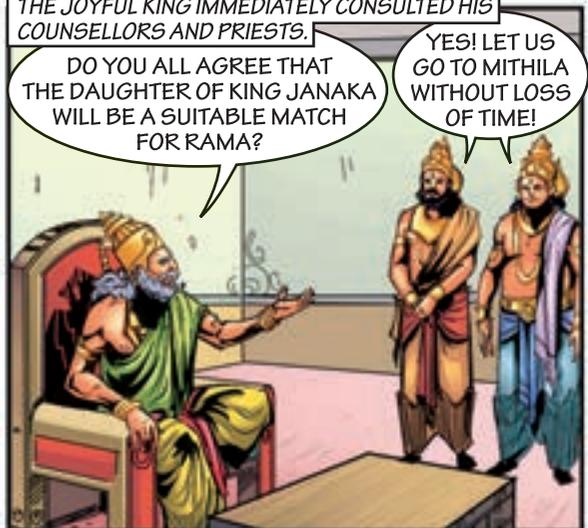
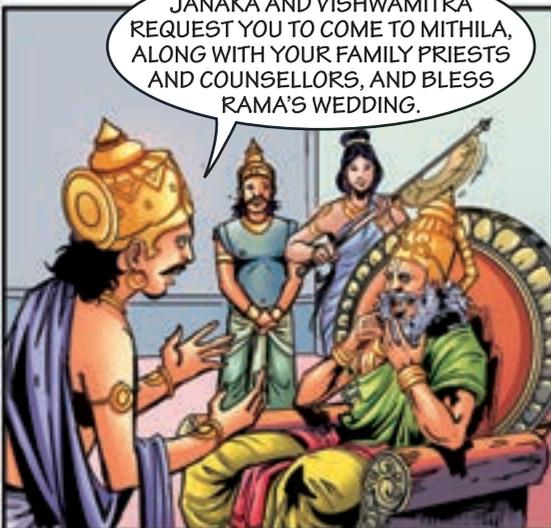
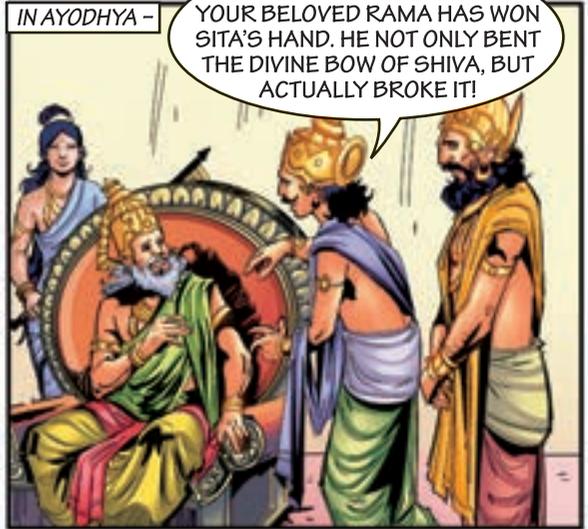
A MARVELLOUS FEAT! RAMA HAS ACHIEVED THE IMPOSSIBLE!



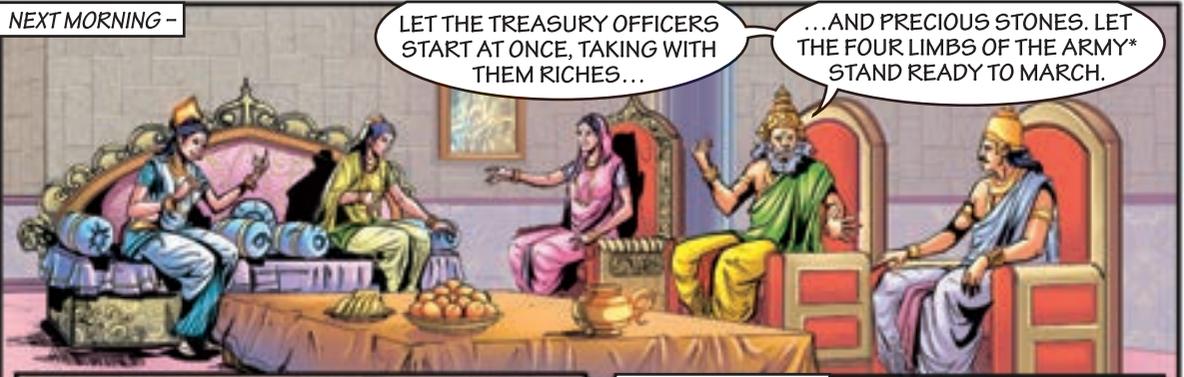
AFTER EVERYONE HAD RECOVERED FROM THE SHOCK -



THE ENVOYS SET OFF FOR AYODHYA. THE JOURNEY WOULD TAKE THREE DAYS BY THE FASTEST HORSES.



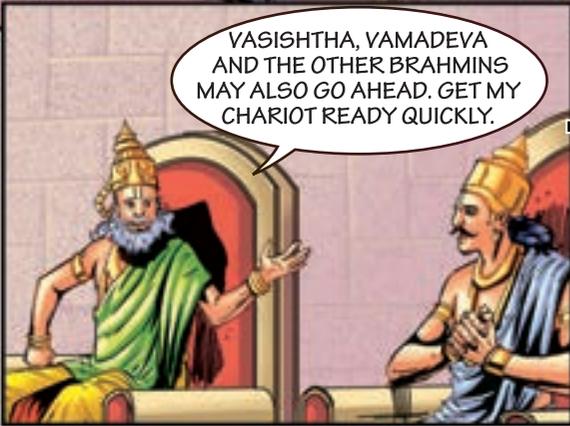
NEXT MORNING -



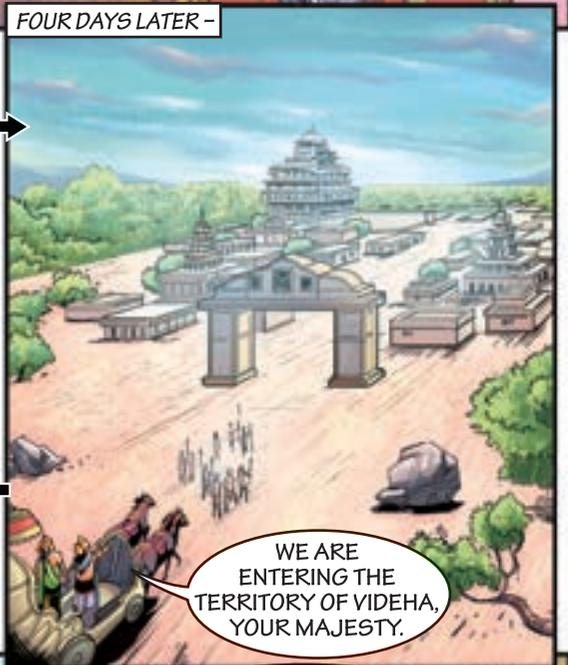
LET THE TREASURY OFFICERS START AT ONCE, TAKING WITH THEM RICHES...

...AND PRECIOUS STONES. LET THE FOUR LIMBS OF THE ARMY* STAND READY TO MARCH.

VASISHTHA, VAMADEVA AND THE OTHER BRAHMINS MAY ALSO GO AHEAD. GET MY CHARIOT READY QUICKLY.



FOUR DAYS LATER -

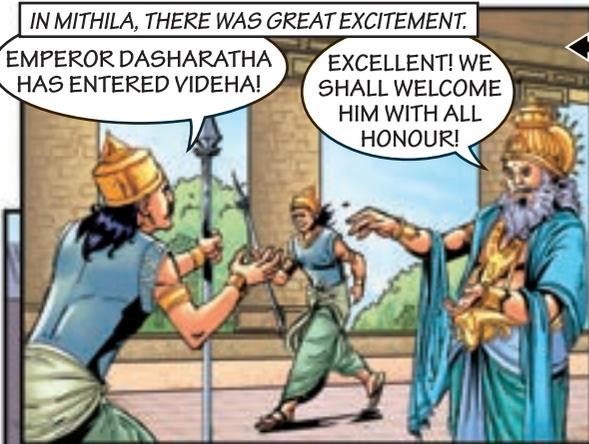


WE ARE ENTERING THE TERRITORY OF VIDEHA, YOUR MAJESTY.

IN MITHILA, THERE WAS GREAT EXCITEMENT.

EMPEROR DASHARATHA HAS ENTERED VIDEHA!

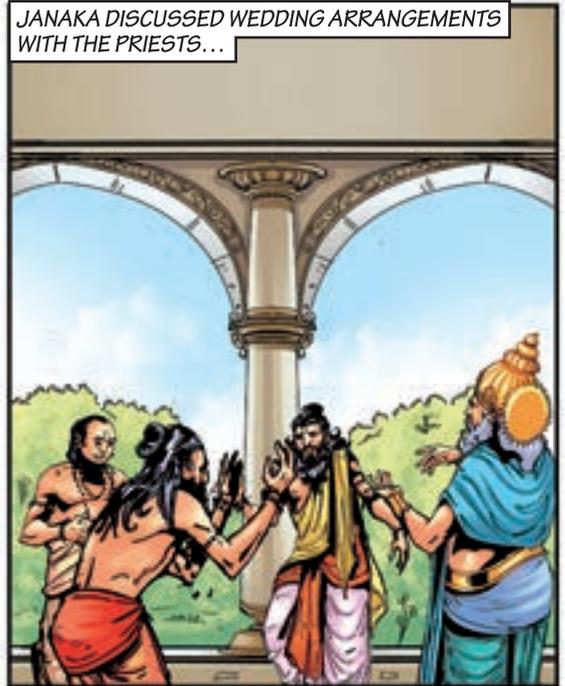
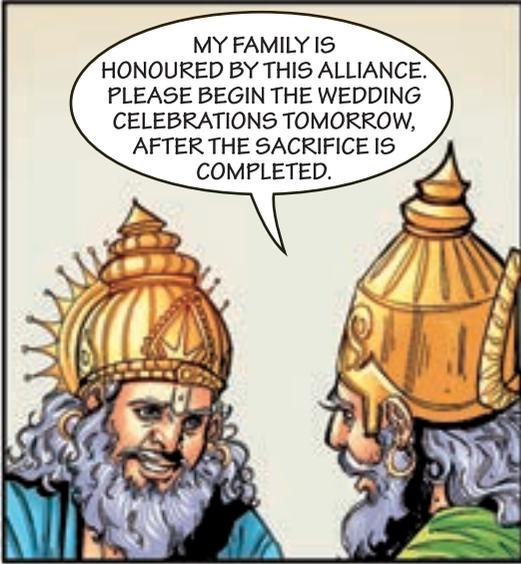
EXCELLENT! WE SHALL WELCOME HIM WITH ALL HONOUR!



WELCOME, O RAGHAVA, BEST AMONG KINGS! WE ARE BLESSED BY THE ARRIVAL OF THE SAGE VASISHTHA TOO.



*ELEPHANTS, HORSES, CHARIOTS AND INFANTRY

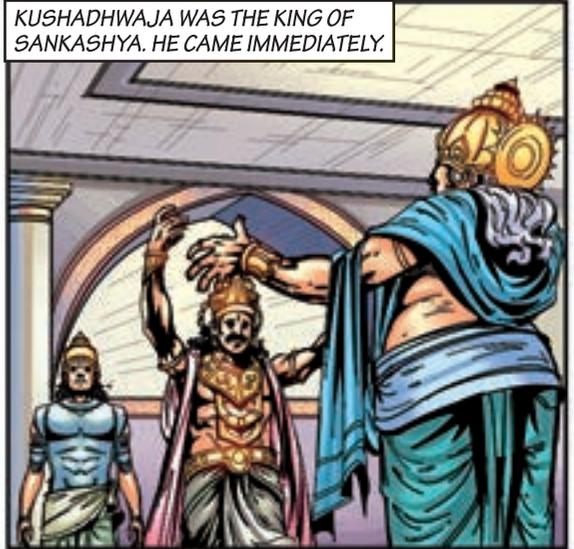


THE NEXT MORNING -

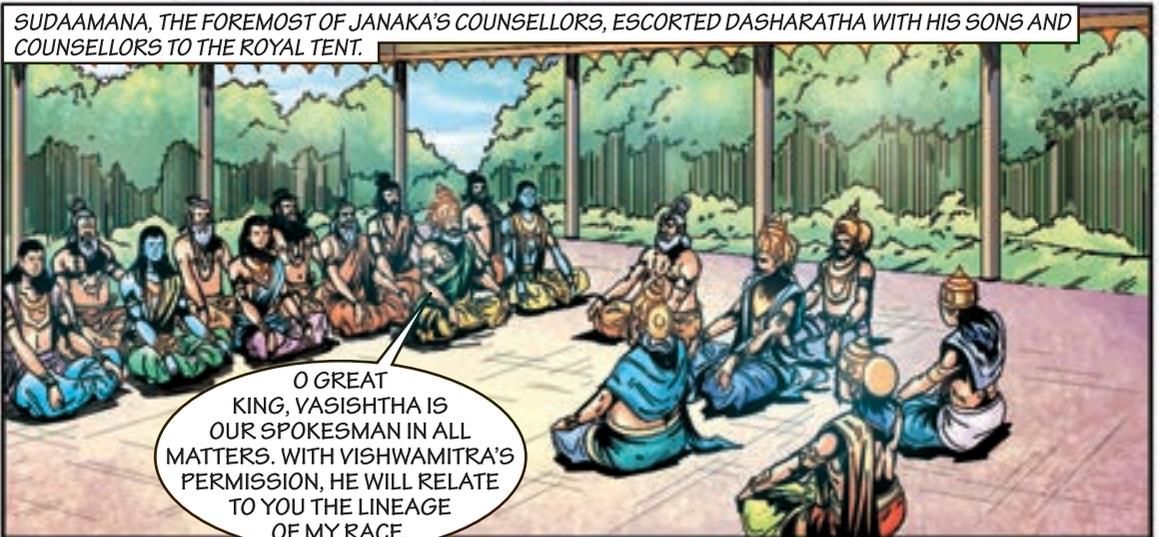


SATANANDA,
MY YOUNGER BROTHER
KUSHADHWAJA WILL SHARE
MY JOY. LET US SEND
FOR HIM.

KUSHADHWAJA WAS THE KING OF
SANKASHYA. HE CAME IMMEDIATELY.

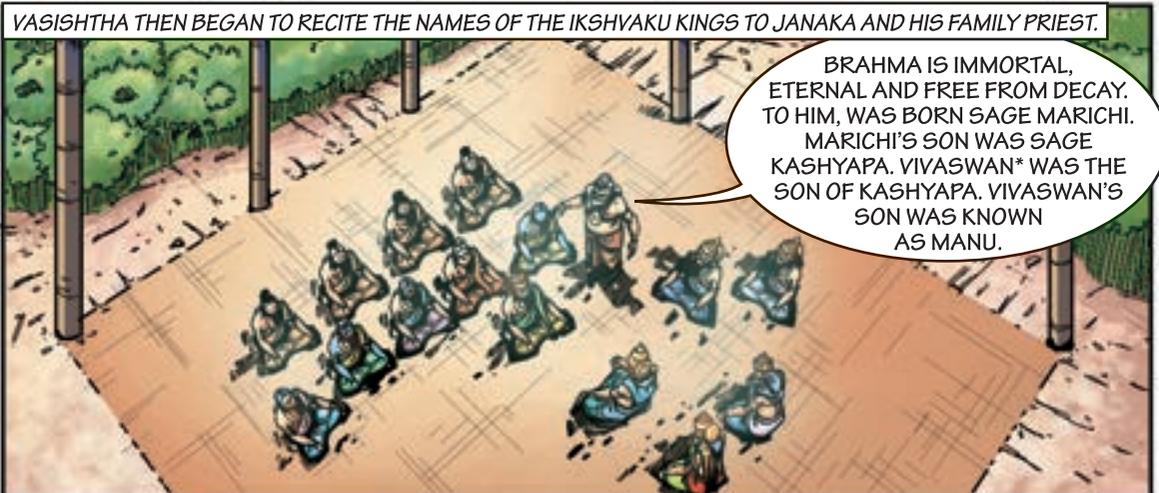


SUDAAMANA, THE FOREMOST OF JANAKA'S COUNSELLORS, ESCORTED DASHARATHA WITH HIS SONS AND COUNSELLORS TO THE ROYAL TENT.



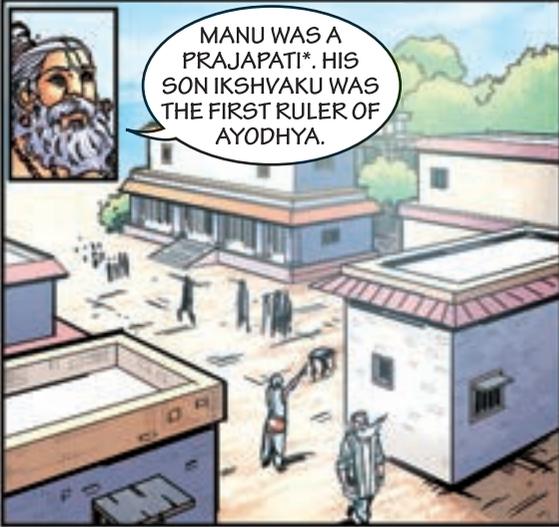
O GREAT
KING, VASISHTHA IS
OUR SPOKESMAN IN ALL
MATTERS. WITH VISHWAMITRA'S
PERMISSION, HE WILL RELATE
TO YOU THE LINEAGE
OF MY RACE.

VASISHTHA THEN BEGAN TO RECITE THE NAMES OF THE IKSHVAKU KINGS TO JANAKA AND HIS FAMILY PRIEST.



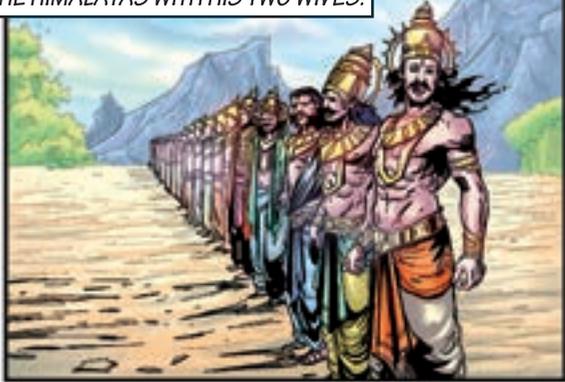
BRAHMA IS IMMORTAL,
ETERNAL AND FREE FROM DECAY.
TO HIM, WAS BORN SAGE MARICHI.
MARICHI'S SON WAS SAGE
KASHYAPA. VIVASWAN* WAS THE
SON OF KASHYAPA. VIVASWAN'S
SON WAS KNOWN
AS MANU.

*THE SUN GOD



MANU WAS A PRAJAPATI*. HIS SON IKSHVAKU WAS THE FIRST RULER OF AYODHYA.

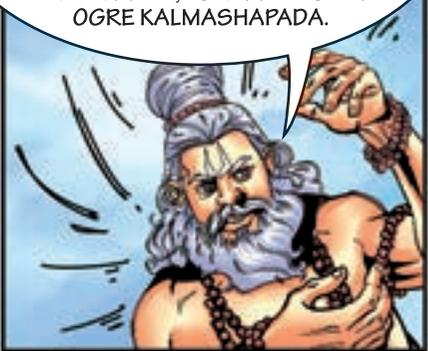
IKSHVAKU'S DESCENDANTS WERE ILLUSTRIOUS KINGS - KUKSI, VIKUSHI, BANA, ANARANYA, PRITHU, TRISHANKU, DHUNDHUMARA, YUVANASHYA, MANDHATA, SUSANDHI, DHRUVASANDHI AND THE FAMOUS BHARATA. BHARATA'S SON, ASITA, WAS DEFEATED IN BATTLE AND RETIRED TO THE HIMALAYAS WITH HIS TWO WIVES.



ASITA DIED SOON AFTER, LEAVING HIS TWO WIVES WHO WERE BOTH EXPECTING CHILDREN. THE SECOND WIFE, OUT OF JEALOUSY, POISONED THE FIRST WIFE TO GET RID OF HER BABY. BUT, BY THE BLESSINGS OF RISHI CHYAVANA, THE FIRST WIFE SURVIVED AND SO DID HER SON, WHO WAS NAMED SAGARA.



SAGARA'S SON ASAMANJA WAS BANISHED FOR CRUELTY. HIS SON WAS THE VIRTUOUS ANSHUMAN. ANSHUMAN'S DESCENDANTS WERE THE ILLUSTRIOUS KINGS DILIPA, BHAGIRATHA, KAKUTSTHA AND RAGHU. RAGHU'S SON, THE GLORIOUS PRAVRIDDHA, TURNED INTO THE OGRE KALMASHAPADA.

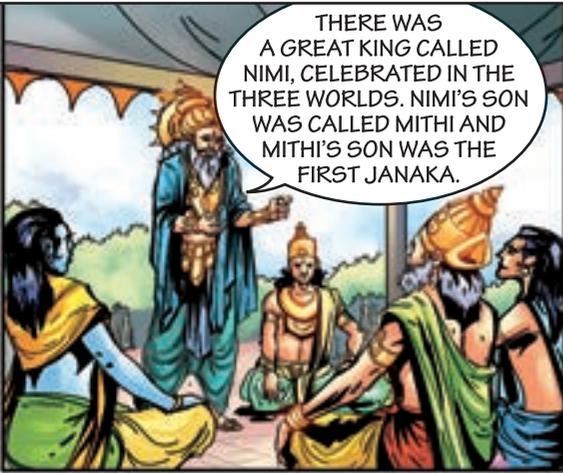


PRAVRIDDHA'S DESCENDANTS WERE SHANKHAN, SUDARSHANA, AGNIVARNA, SHIGHRAGA, MARU, PRAGUSHRUKA, AMBARISHA, NAHUSHA, YAYATI, NABHAGA AND AJA. KING DASHARATHA IS THE SON OF AJA, AND SRI RAMA AND LAKSHMANA ARE HIS SONS.

*A LORD OF CREATED BEINGS

KING JANAKA THEN TOLD THEM ABOUT HIS ANCESTORS.

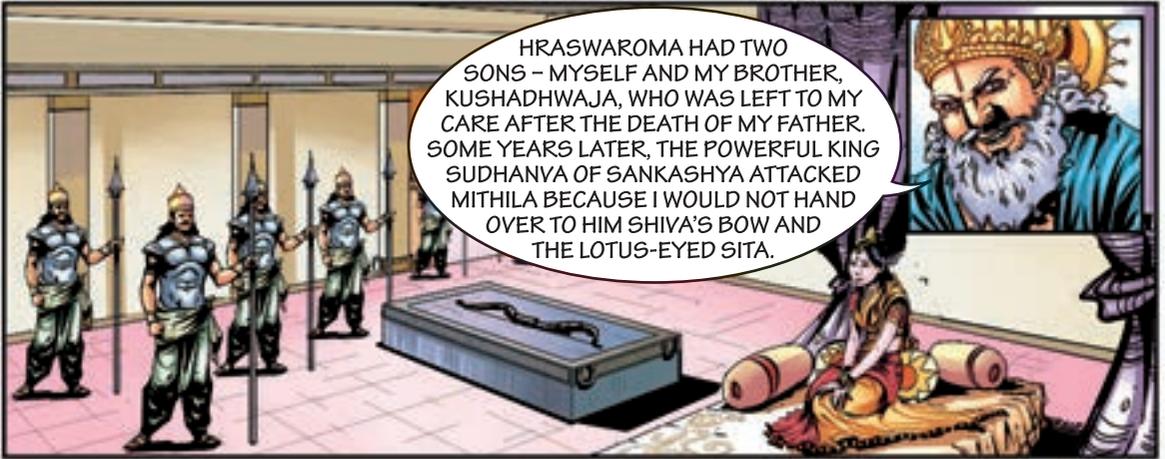
THERE WAS A GREAT KING CALLED NIMI, CELEBRATED IN THE THREE WORLDS. NIMI'S SON WAS CALLED MITHI AND MITHI'S SON WAS THE FIRST JANAKA.



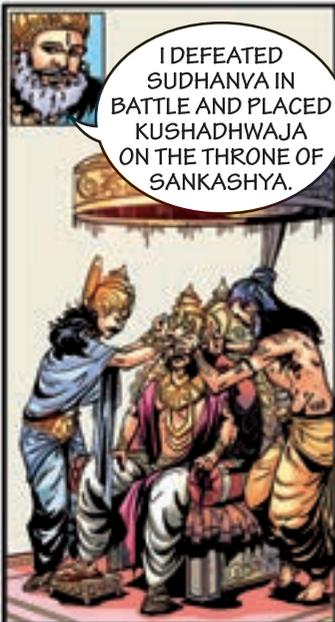
JANAKA'S DESCENDANTS WERE THE NOBLE AND VIRTUOUS KINGS UDAVASU, NANDIVARDHANA, SUKETU, DEVARAATA, BRIHADRATHA, MAHAVIRA, SUDHRITI, DHRISTAKETU, HARYASHWA, MARU, PRATINDHAKA, KIRTIRATHA, DEVAMIDHA, VIBUDHA, MAHIDHRAKA, KIRTIRAATA, MAHAROMA, SWARNAROMA AND HRASWAROMA.



HRASWAROMA HAD TWO SONS - MYSELF AND MY BROTHER, KUSHADHWAJA, WHO WAS LEFT TO MY CARE AFTER THE DEATH OF MY FATHER. SOME YEARS LATER, THE POWERFUL KING SUDHANVA OF SANKASHYA ATTACKED MITHILA BECAUSE I WOULD NOT HAND OVER TO HIM SHIVA'S BOW AND THE LOTUS-EYED SITA.



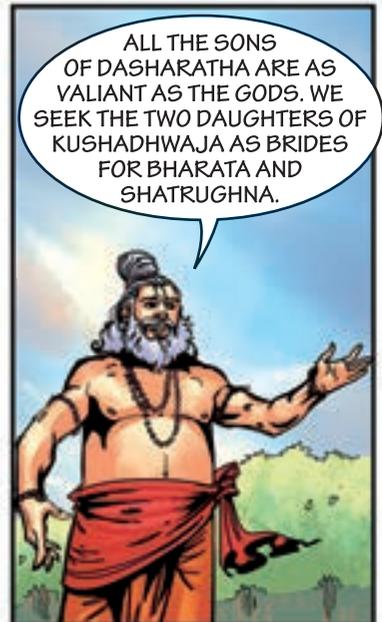
I DEFEATED SUDHANVA IN BATTLE AND PLACED KUSHADHWAJA ON THE THRONE OF SANKASHYA.

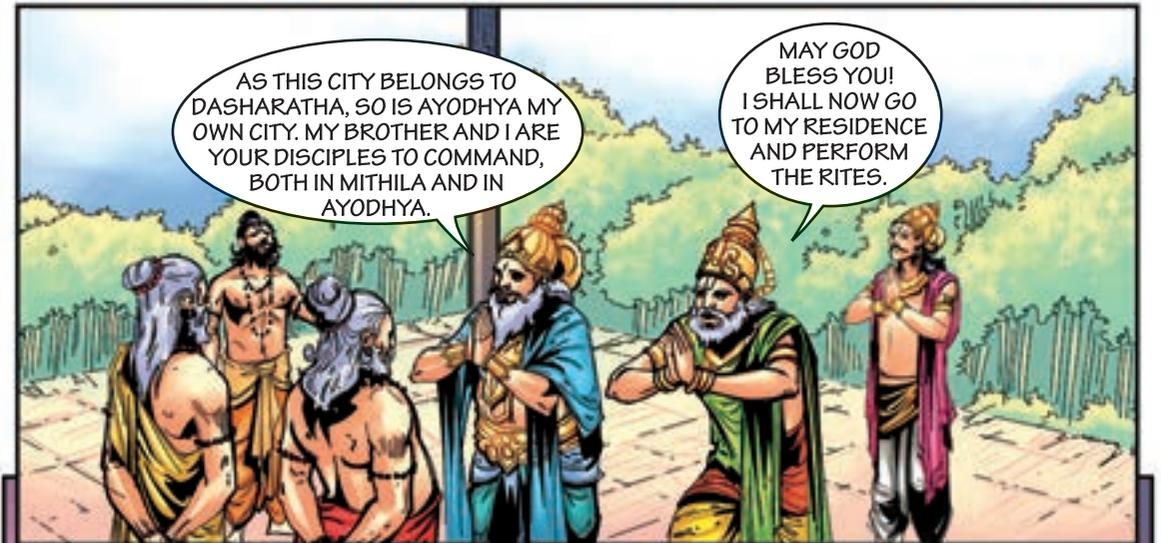
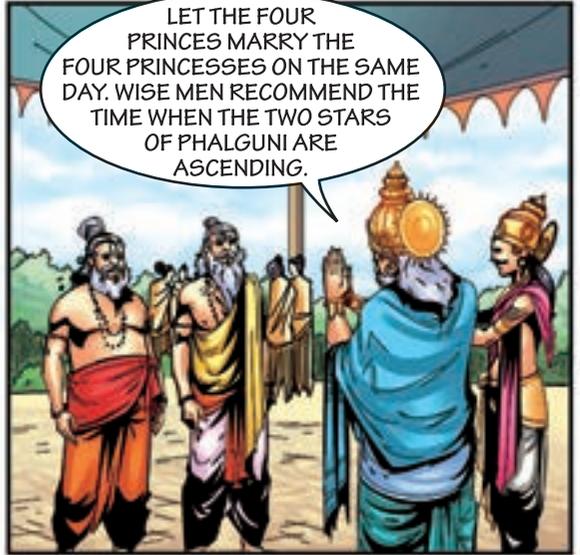


WITH GREAT DELIGHT, I OFFER MY TWO DAUGHTERS - SITA, WHO IS LIKE A DAUGHTER OF THE GODS, TO SRI RAMA; AND SIMILARLY, URMILA TO LAKSHMANA.

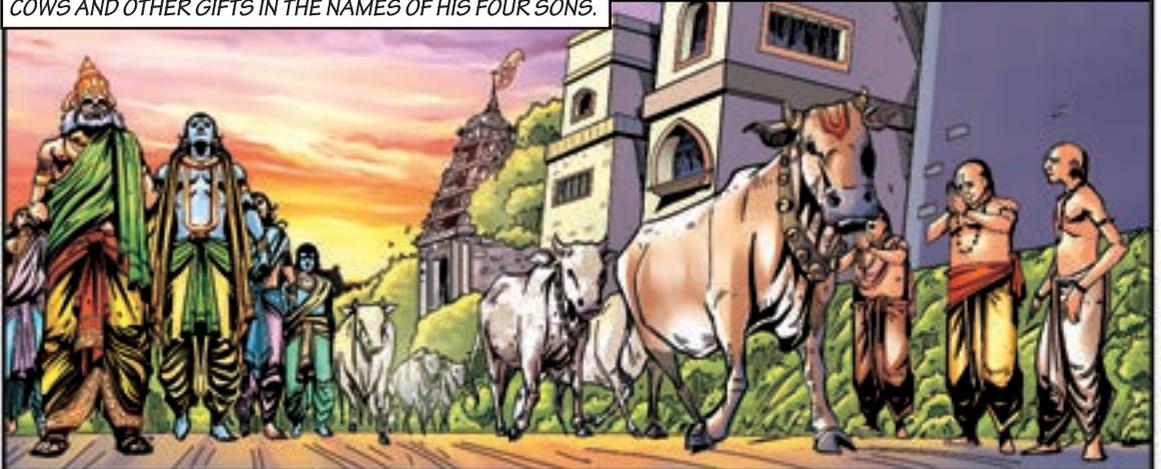


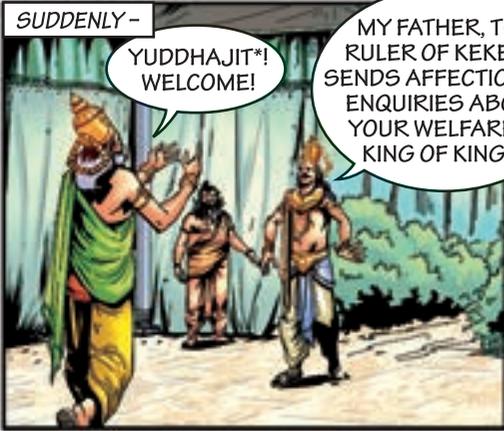
ALL THE SONS OF DASHARATHA ARE AS VALIANT AS THE GODS. WE SEEK THE TWO DAUGHTERS OF KUSHADHWAJA AS BRIDES FOR BHARATA AND SHATRUGHNA.





RISING AT DAWN, DASHARATHA PERFORMED THE CEREMONIES. AS A LOVING FATHER, HE GAVE AWAY FOUR LAKH COWS AND OTHER GIFTS IN THE NAMES OF HIS FOUR SONS.

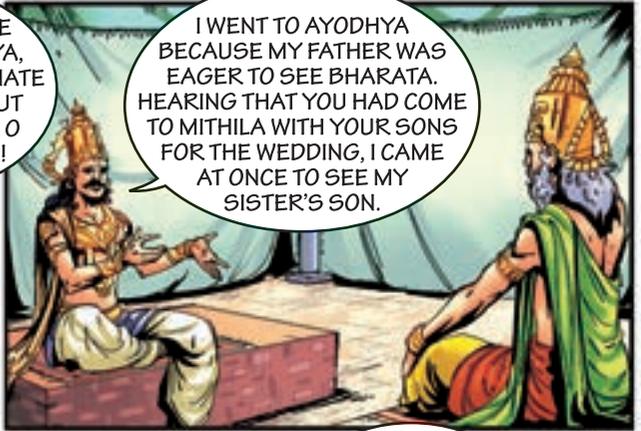




SUDDENLY -

YUDDHAJIT*!
WELCOME!

MY FATHER, THE
RULER OF KEKEYA,
SENDS AFFECTIONATE
ENQUIRIES ABOUT
YOUR WELFARE, O
KING OF KINGS!

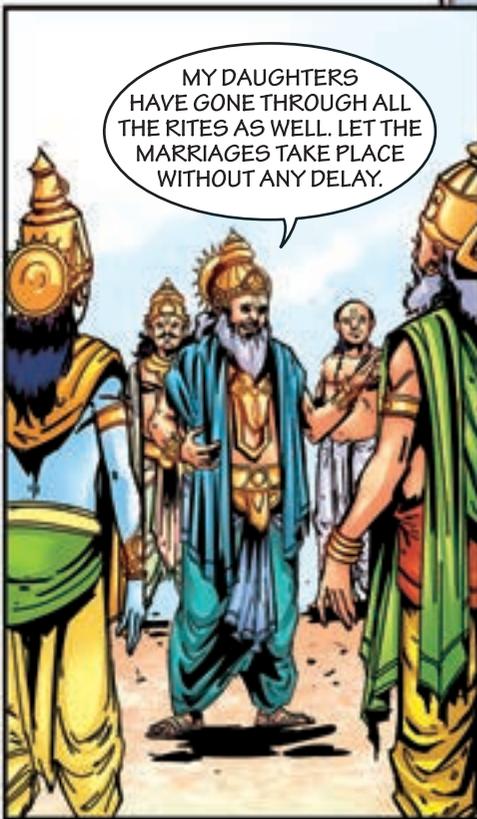


I WENT TO AYODHYA
BECAUSE MY FATHER WAS
EAGER TO SEE BHARATA.
HEARING THAT YOU HAD COME
TO MITHILA WITH YOUR SONS
FOR THE WEDDING, I CAME
AT ONCE TO SEE MY
SISTER'S SON.

IN THE MORNING, AT THE AUSPICIOUS HOUR OF VIJAYA -



EMPEROR
DASHARATHA AND
HIS SONS HAVE
PERFORMED ALL THE
AUSPICIOUS
RITES.



MY DAUGHTERS
HAVE GONE THROUGH ALL
THE RITES AS WELL. LET THE
MARRIAGES TAKE PLACE
WITHOUT ANY DELAY.

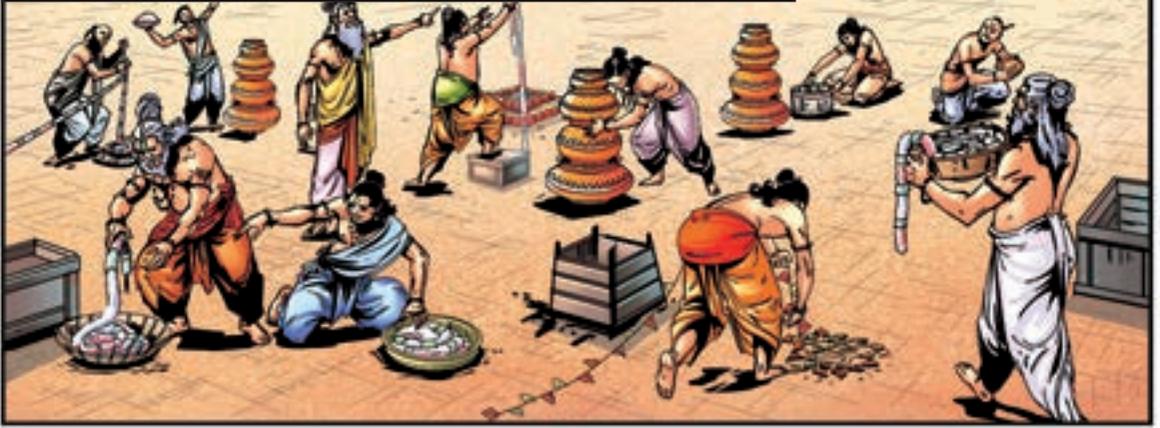


O HOLY
ONE, CONDUCT
THE WEDDING OF
SRI RAMA!

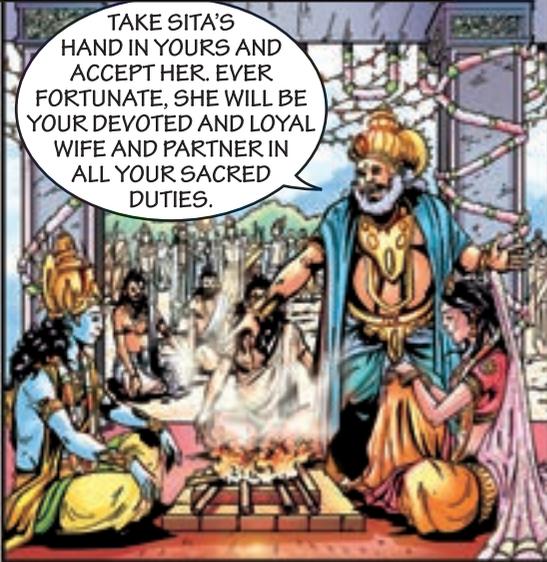
SO BE
IT!

*KAIKEYI'S BROTHER

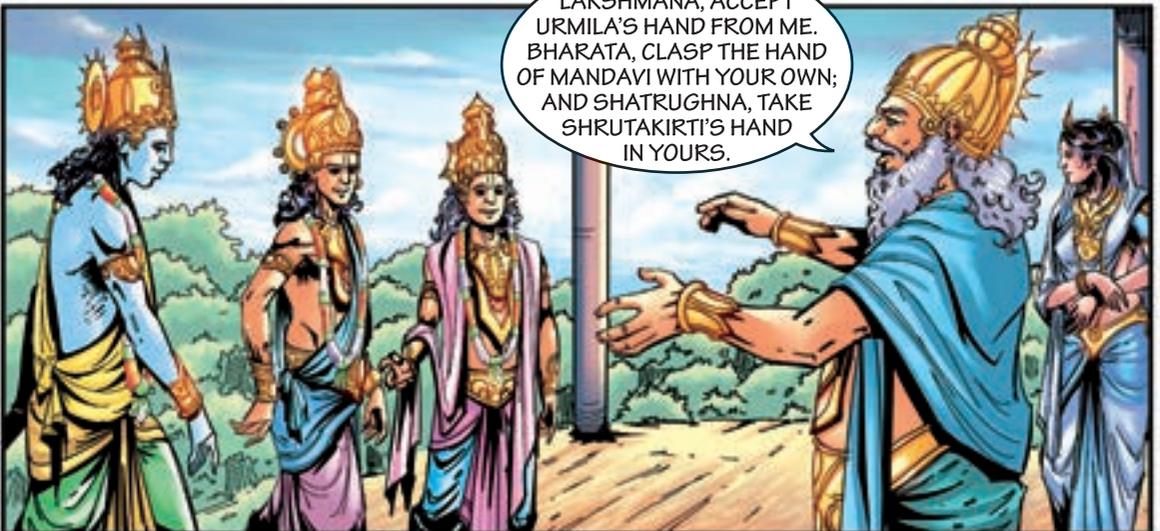
VISHWAMITRA, SATANANDA AND VASISHTHA PREPARED THE WEDDING ALTAR.



THEN JANAKA BROUGHT SITA TO THE ALTAR.



JANAKA Poured water into Rama's hands, symbolically giving Sita to Rama.



ALL THE WORLD REJOICED AS THE FOUR PRINCES WERE MARRIED TO THE FOUR PRINCESSES.



AFTER THE WEDDING, THEY WENT BACK TO THEIR TENTS.



THE NEXT MORNING, VISHWAMITRA BID THEM GOODBYE.



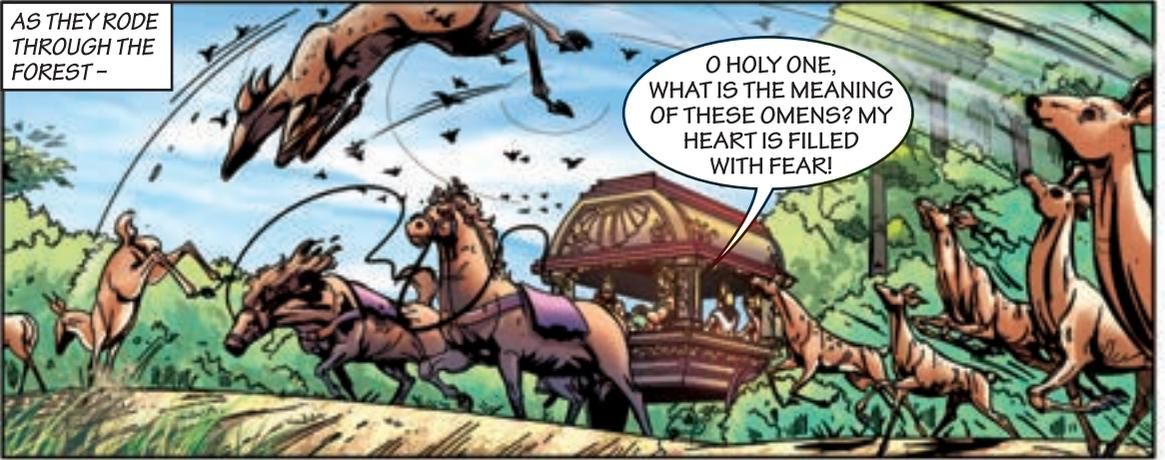
AS DASHARATHA AND HIS RETINUE PREPARED TO LEAVE, JANAKA AND KUSHADHWAJA SHOWERED THEIR DAUGHTERS WITH GIFTS.



KING DASHARATHA AND HIS FAMILY SET OFF FOR AYODHYA.

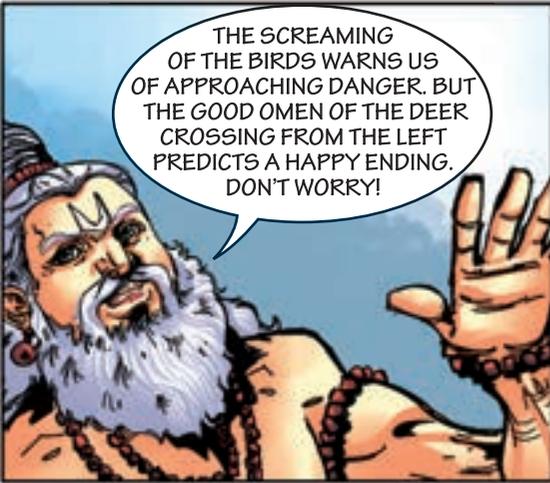


AS THEY RODE THROUGH THE FOREST -



O HOLY ONE, WHAT IS THE MEANING OF THESE OMENS? MY HEART IS FILLED WITH FEAR!

THE SCREAMING OF THE BIRDS WARNS US OF APPROACHING DANGER. BUT THE GOOD OMEN OF THE DEER CROSSING FROM THE LEFT PREDICTS A HAPPY ENDING. DON'T WORRY!



SUDDENLY, A FIERCE STORM SPRANG UP.



DASHARATHA'S ARMY FELL UNCONSCIOUS.

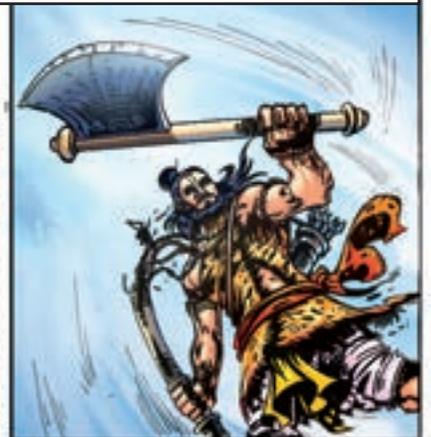


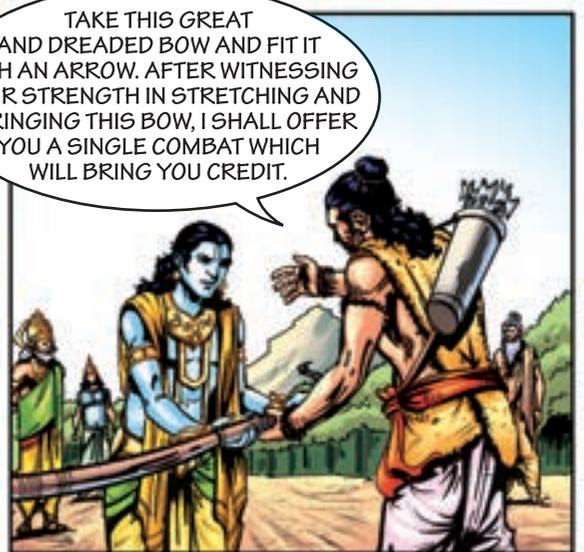
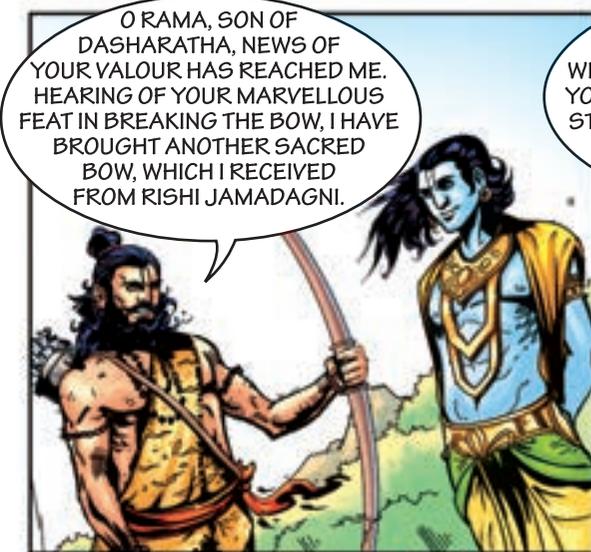
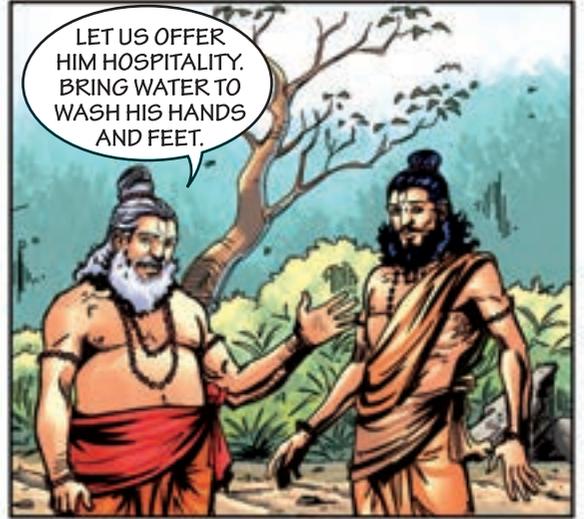
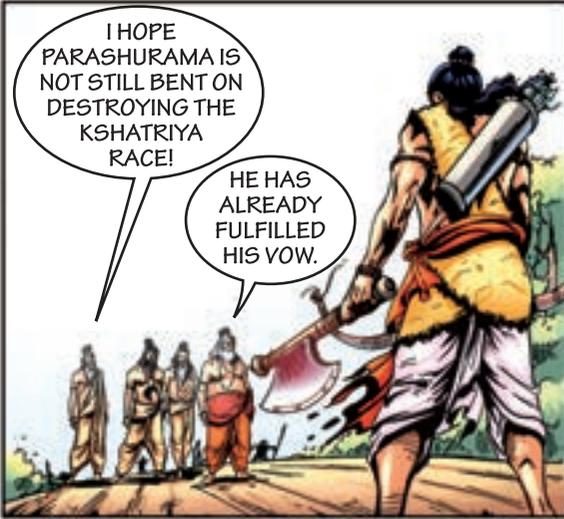
JUST THEN -



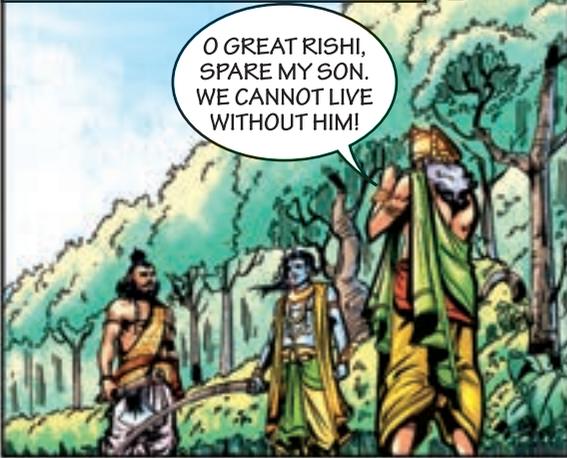
PARASHURAMA!

THE SON OF RISHI JAMADAGNI, PARASHURAMA WAS AN INCARNATION OF LORD VISHNU. AFTER HIS FATHER WAS KILLED BY KING KARTAVIRYA ARJUNA OF MAHISHAMATI, PARASHURAMA VOWED TO EXTERMINATE THE KSHATRIYA RACE. HE WENT AROUND THE GLOBE 21 TIMES ON THIS MISSION.

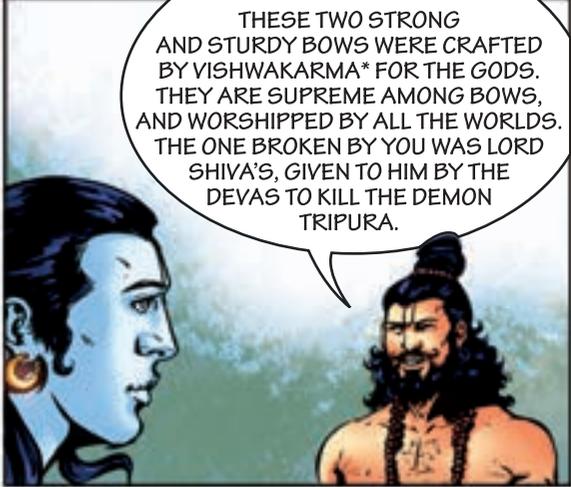




KING DASHARATHA WAS VERY UNHAPPY.



O GREAT RISHI,
SPARE MY SON.
WE CANNOT LIVE
WITHOUT HIM!



THESE TWO STRONG
AND STURDY BOWS WERE CRAFTED
BY VISHWAKARMA* FOR THE GODS.
THEY ARE SUPREME AMONG BOWS,
AND WORSHIPPED BY ALL THE WORLDS.
THE ONE BROKEN BY YOU WAS LORD
SHIVA'S, GIVEN TO HIM BY THE
DEVAS TO KILL THE DEMON
TRIPURA.

THIS SECOND INVINCIBLE BOW WAS
GIVEN BY THE DEVAS TO LORD VISHNU.
AT THAT TIME, THE DEVAS ASKED
PITAMAHA ^ BRAHMA TO FIND OUT WHO
WAS THE STRONGER - SHIVA OR VISHNU.



BRAHMA CREATED A QUARREL BETWEEN THE
GREAT LORDS SHIVA AND VISHNU. A TERRIBLE
BATTLE TOOK PLACE BETWEEN THE TWO. THE
THREE-EYED LORD MAHADEVA AND HIS BOW
WERE PARALYSED.



HOOOON!



O MIGHTY ONES, PLEASE
END THIS TERRIBLE
BATTLE!

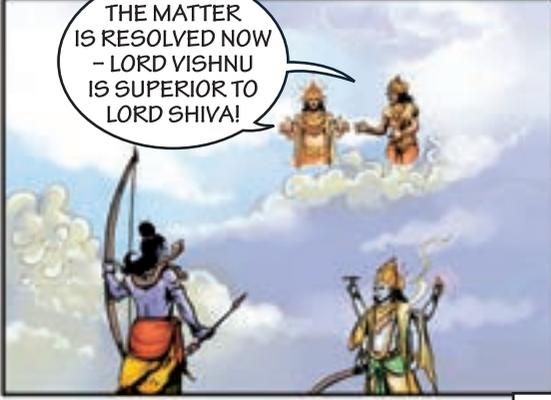
VERY WELL!

AND SO THEY DID.



*THE DIVINE ARCHITECT
^GRANDFATHER

THE MATTER IS RESOLVED NOW - LORD VISHNU IS SUPERIOR TO LORD SHIVA!



RUDRA WAS ENRAGED...

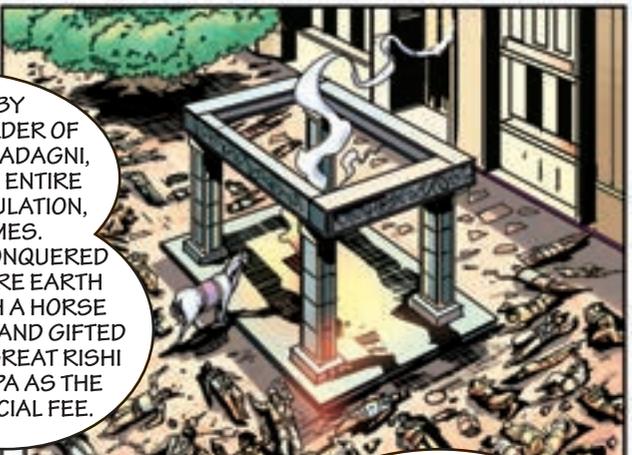


...AND IN HIS ANGER, GAVE AWAY HIS BOW AND ARROWS TO RAJARSHI DEVARAATA, KING OF VIDEHA. LORD VISHNU ENTRUSTED HIS SUPERB BOW TO RICHIKA, A DESCENDANT OF SAGE BHRIGU.

RICHIKA, IN TURN, BESTOWED THE HEAVENLY GIFT ON HIS SON, JAMADAGNI. ALTHOUGH JAMADAGNI WAS A MAHATMA WHO HAD GIVEN UP THE USE OF WEAPONS, HE WAS KILLED BY KING KARTAVIRYA ARJUNA.

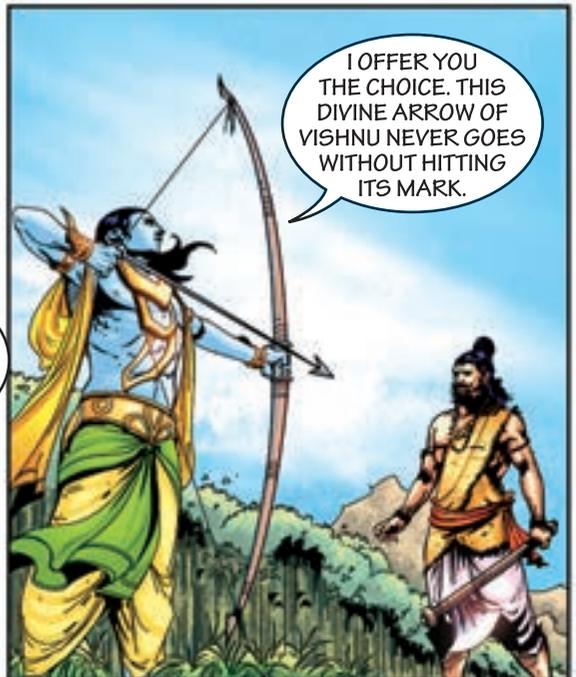
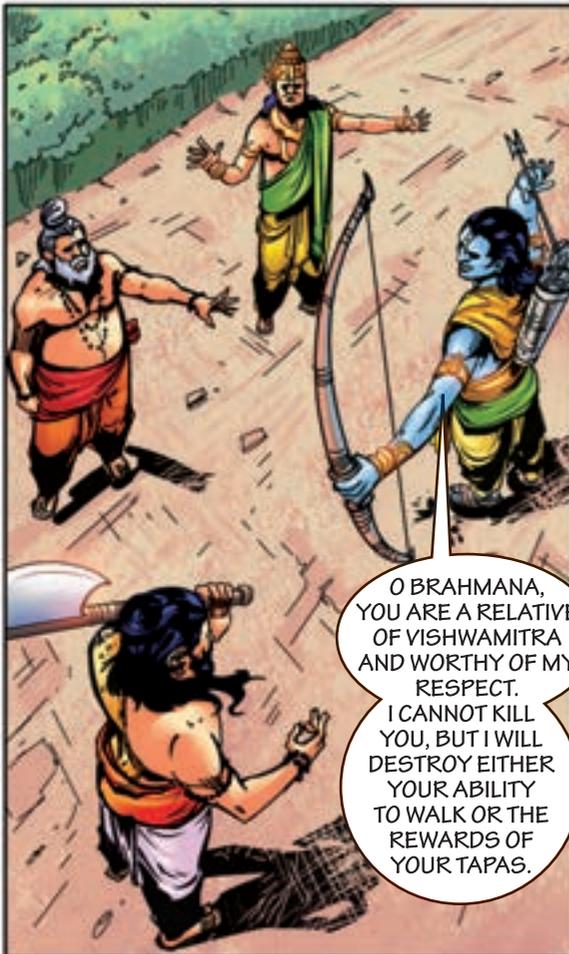
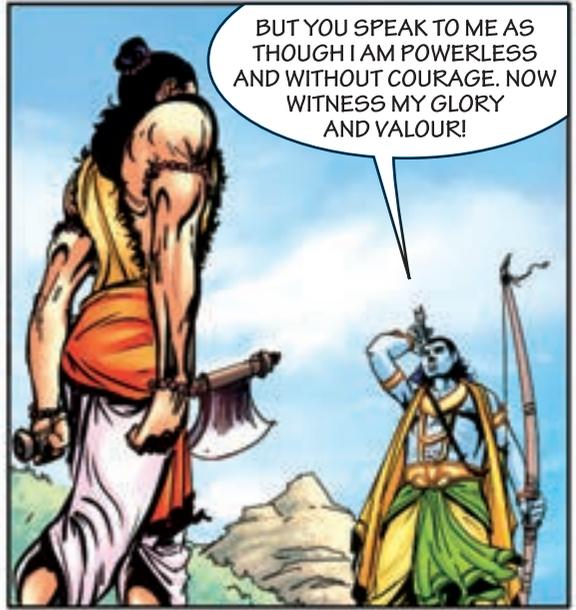
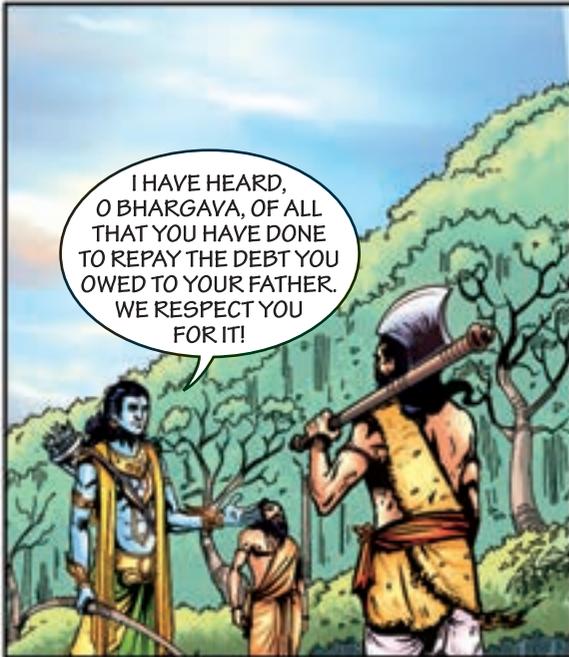


ENRAGED BY THE CRUEL MURDER OF MY FATHER, JAMADAGNI, I WIPED OUT THE ENTIRE KSHATRIYA POPULATION, SEVERAL TIMES. I THEN CONQUERED THE ENTIRE EARTH THROUGH A HORSE SACRIFICE AND GIFTED IT TO THE GREAT RISHI KASHYAPA AS THE SACRIFICIAL FEE.



SINCE THEN I HAVE BEEN ON MOUNT MAHENDRA, ACCUMULATING SPIRITUAL ENERGY. WHEN I HEARD OF YOUR BREAKING THAT BOW, I CAME AT ONCE. O RAMA, PLACING ABOVE ALL THE DUTY OF A KSHATRIYA, TAKE THIS BOW OF LORD VISHNU. IF YOU ARE CAPABLE OF FITTING AN ARROW TO IT, I SHALL OFFER YOU A DUEL.

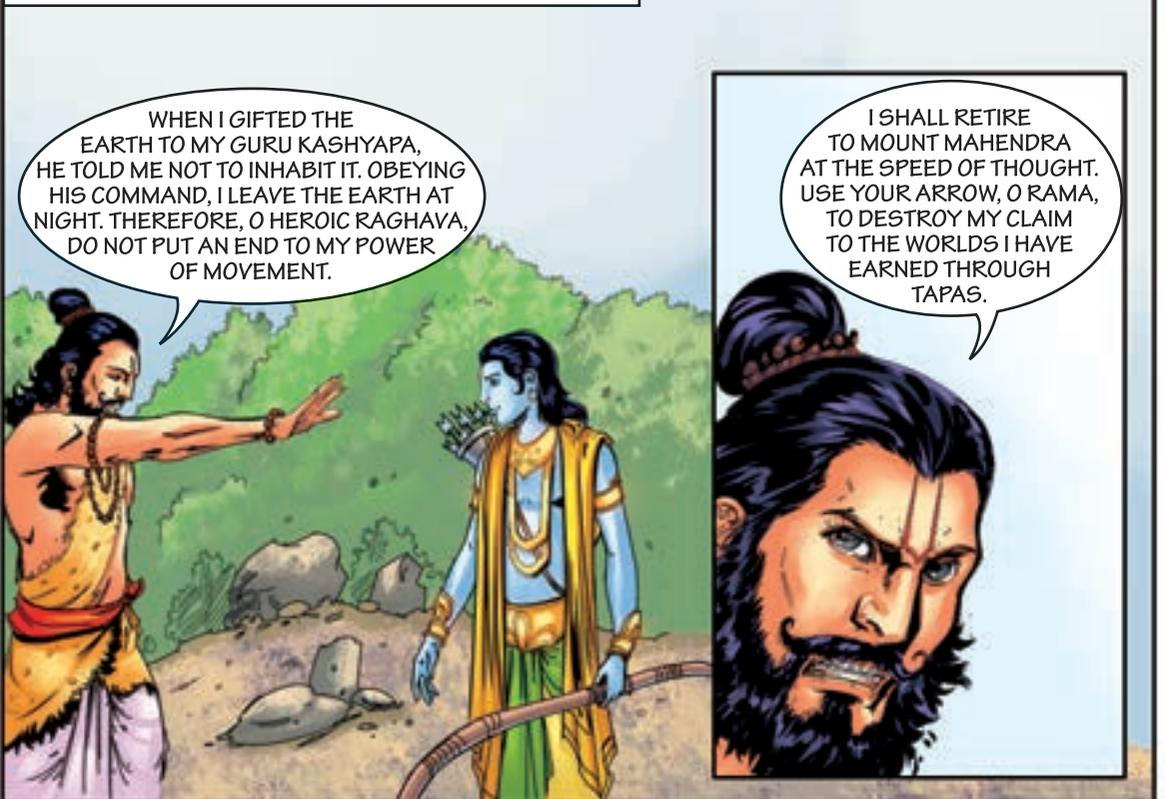




GODS AND MORTALS GATHERED TO SEE THE BRILLIANCE SURROUNDING RAMA AS HE WIELDED THE BOW.



PARASHURAMA WAS DAZZLED BY THE SPLENDOUR OF RAMA.

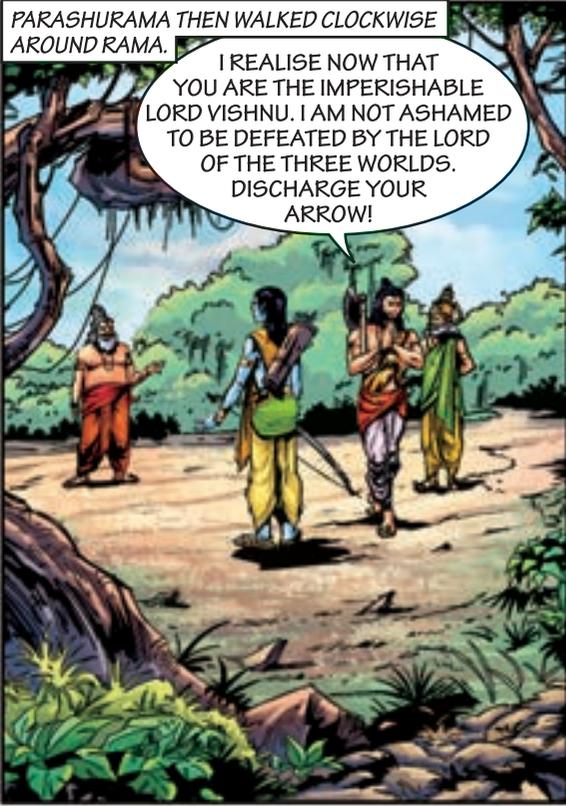


WHEN I GIFTED THE EARTH TO MY GURU KASHYAPA, HE TOLD ME NOT TO INHABIT IT. OBEYING HIS COMMAND, I LEAVE THE EARTH AT NIGHT. THEREFORE, O HEROIC RAGHAVA, DO NOT PUT AN END TO MY POWER OF MOVEMENT.

I SHALL RETIRE TO MOUNT MAHENDRA AT THE SPEED OF THOUGHT. USE YOUR ARROW, O RAMA, TO DESTROY MY CLAIM TO THE WORLDS I HAVE EARNED THROUGH TAPAS.

PARASHURAMA THEN WALKED CLOCKWISE AROUND RAMA.

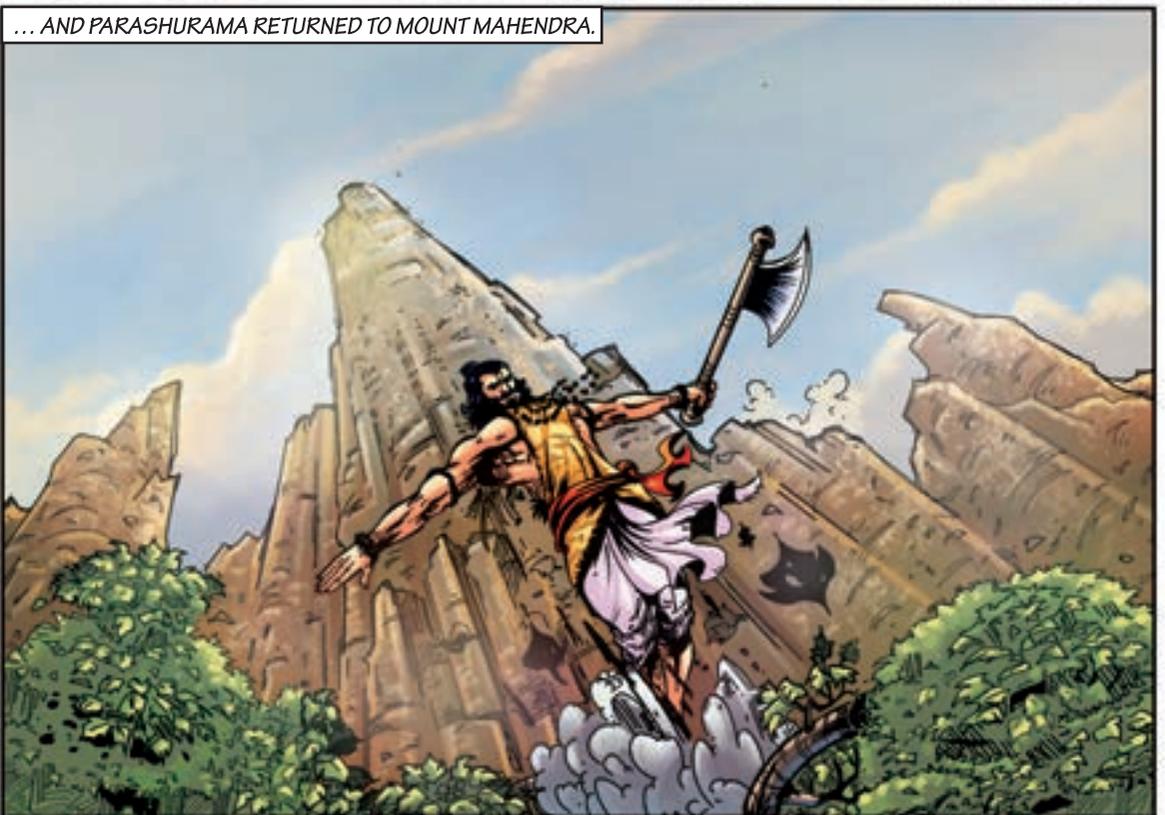
I REALISE NOW THAT YOU ARE THE IMPERISHABLE LORD VISHNU. I AM NOT ASHAMED TO BE DEFEATED BY THE LORD OF THE THREE WORLDS. DISCHARGE YOUR ARROW!



RAMA SHOT HIS ARROW...



... AND PARASHURAMA RETURNED TO MOUNT MAHENDRA.



WITH PARASHURAMA'S DEPARTURE, THE DARKNESS LIFTED AND THE WORLD REJOICED.

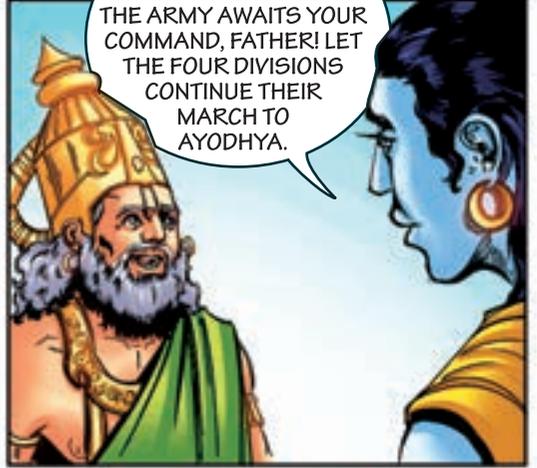


THE DEVAS AND RISHIS GATHERED TO GLORIFY RAMA.

O VARUNA OF IMMEASURABLE STRENGTH, I HAND OVER THIS BOW TO YOU!



THE ARMY AWAITS YOUR COMMAND, FATHER! LET THE FOUR DIVISIONS CONTINUE THEIR MARCH TO AYODHYA.

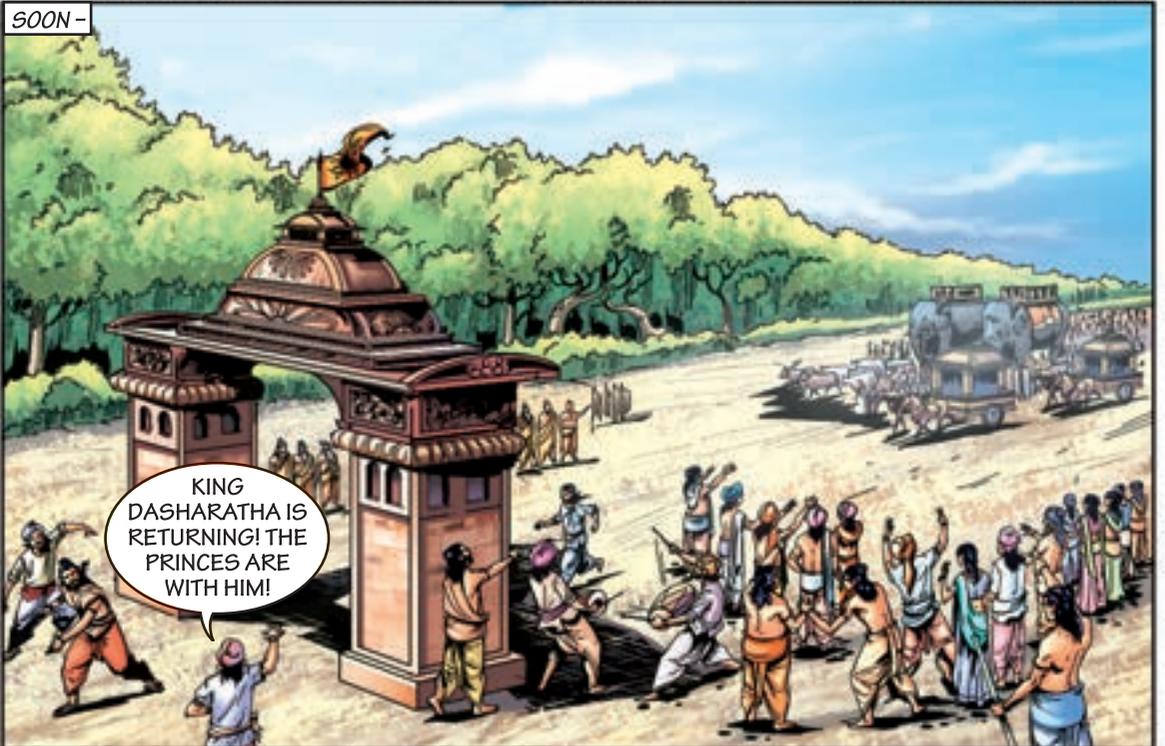


THANK GOD! I FEEL AS IF WE WERE BOTH REBORN!

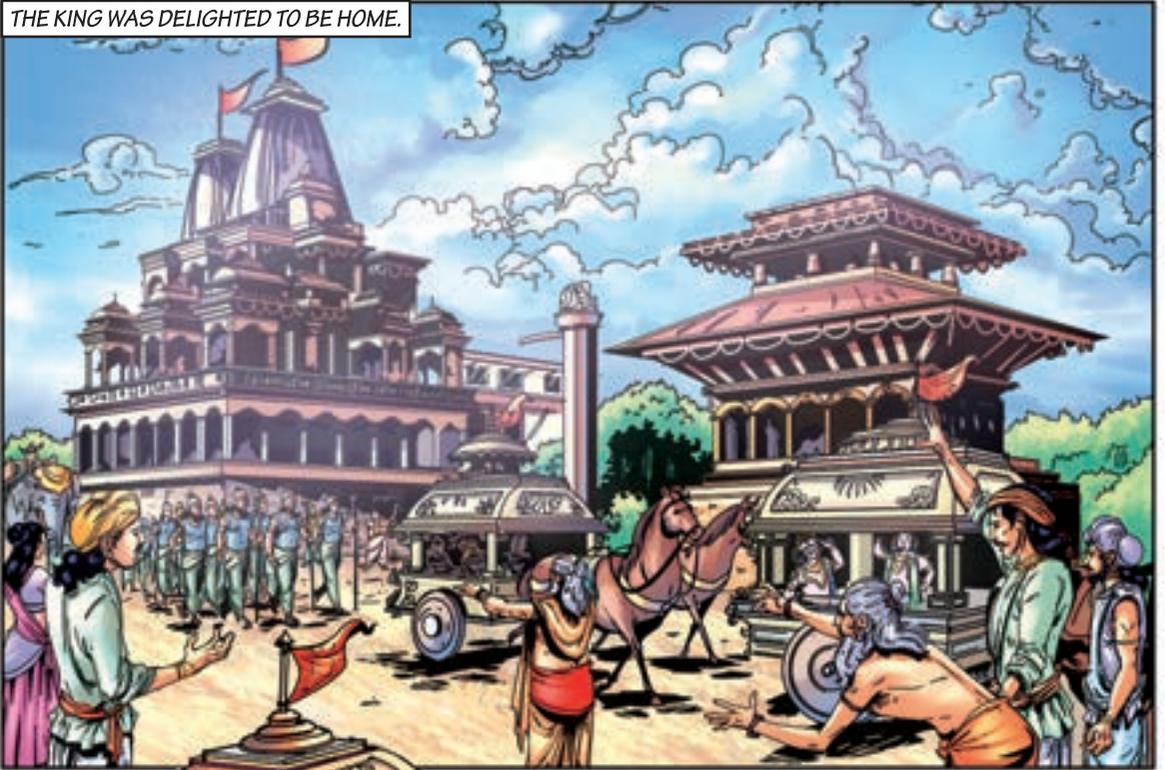


SOON -

KING DASHARATHA IS RETURNING! THE PRINCES ARE WITH HIM!



THE KING WAS DELIGHTED TO BE HOME.



KAUSALYA, SUMITRA AND KAIKEYI WERE FILLED WITH JOY AS THEY WELCOMED THEIR SONS WITH THEIR BRIDES.



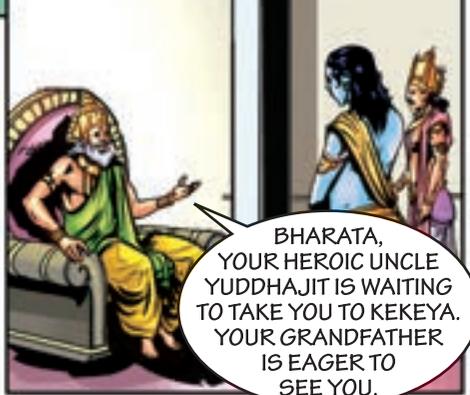
SITA, URMILA, MANDAVI AND SHRUTAKIRTI VISITED THE TEMPLES, WORSHIPPED THE FAMILY GODS AND GREETED ALL THE ELDERS.



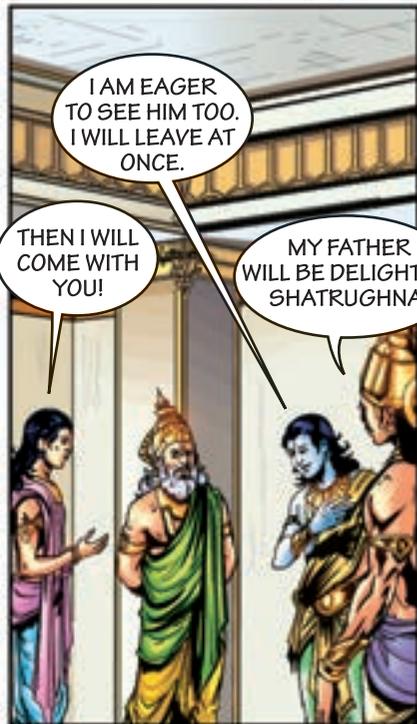
AFTERWARDS, THE BRIDES AND GROOMS WENT TO THE PALACE AND LIVED IN COMFORT AND HAPPINESS WITH THEIR FRIENDS AND RELATIVES.



ONE DAY -



BHARATA, YOUR HEROIC UNCLE YUDDHAJIT IS WAITING TO TAKE YOU TO KEKEYA. YOUR GRANDFATHER IS EAGER TO SEE YOU.

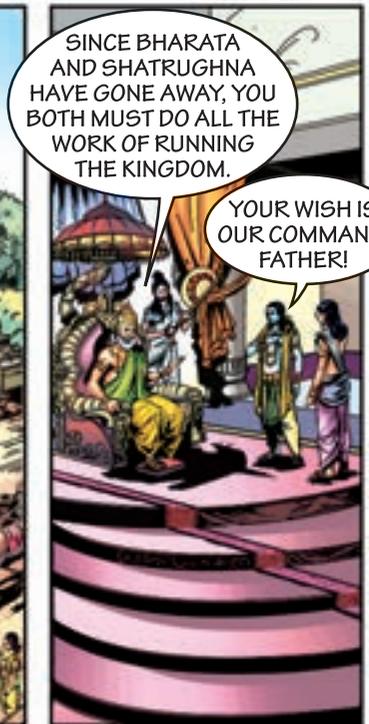
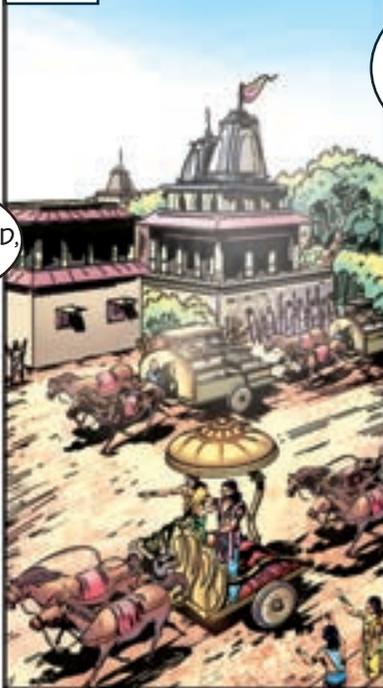


I AM EAGER TO SEE HIM TOO. I WILL LEAVE AT ONCE.

THEN I WILL COME WITH YOU!

MY FATHER WILL BE DELIGHTED, SHATRUGHNA!

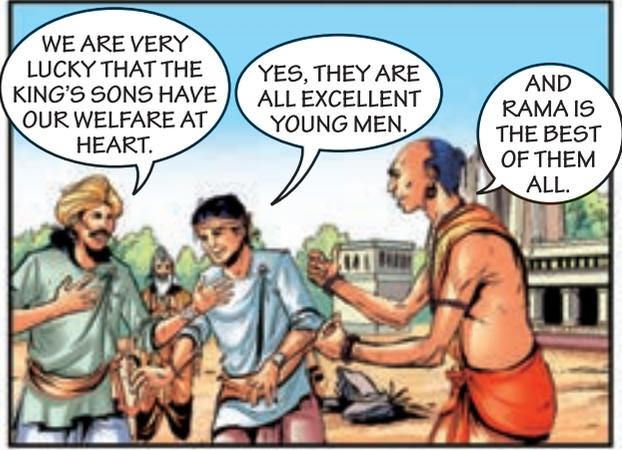
SOON -



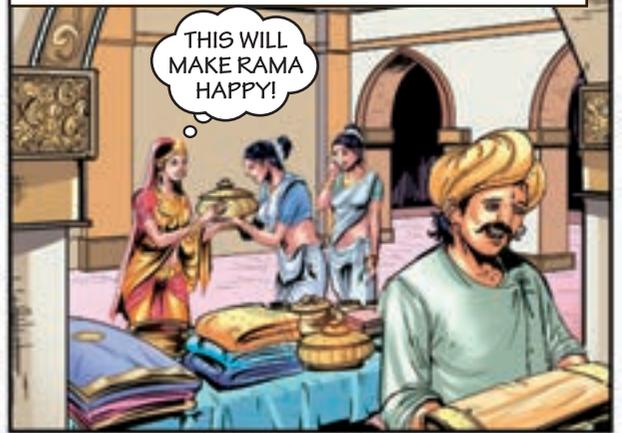
SINCE BHARATA AND SHATRUGHNA HAVE GONE AWAY, YOU BOTH MUST DO ALL THE WORK OF RUNNING THE KINGDOM.

YOUR WISH IS OUR COMMAND, FATHER!

RAMA FOLLOWED ALL HIS FATHER'S INSTRUCTIONS AND TOOK GREAT CARE OF THE WELFARE OF THE CITIZENS. HE ALSO DID EVERYTHING TO PLEASE HIS MOTHERS AND HIS SPIRITUAL GURUS.



RAMA WAS DEVOTED TO THE BEAUTIFUL AND VIRTUOUS WIFE CHOSEN FOR HIM. SITA TOO LOVED HIM VERY MUCH, AND THEY UNDERSTOOD EACH OTHER'S THOUGHTS AND WISHES WITHOUT ANY NEED FOR WORDS.



RAMA AND SITA LIVED HAPPILY TOGETHER, RADIATING PROSPERITY AND HARMONY LIKE VISHNU AND LAKSHMI.



GLOSSARY

ASOORTARAJASA असूर्ताराजस A son of KUSHA (2)

ADHWARYU अध्वर्यु The four main priests conducting a sacrifice are called BRAHMA, HOTA, Adhwaryu and UDGATA.

ADITI अदिति Mother of the devas

AGASTYA अगस्त्य One of the seven celestial sages

AGNEYASTRAM अग्नेयास्त्रम् Missile of AGNI

AGNI अग्नि God of fire

AGNIVARNA अग्निवर्ण Ancestor of RAMA

AHALYA अहल्या Wife of sage GAUTAMA

AJA अज Ancestor of RAMA

AKSHAUHINI अक्षौहिणी Ancient battle formation of 21,870 chariots, 21,870 elephants, 65,610 horse-mounted warriors and 1,09,350 foot soldiers

AMBARISHA अम्बरिष Ancestor of RAMA

AMUKTA अमुक्त A class of hand-held weapons used in face-to-face combat

ANANGA अनंग Another name for KAMADEVA

ANARANYA अनरण्य Ancestor of RAMA

ANGA PRADESHA अंग प्रदेश Kingdom of ROMAPADA

ANSHUMAN अंशुमन Ancestor of RAMA

APSARA अप्सरा Celestial dancer

ASAMANJA असमंजसः Ancestor of RAMA

ASHWAMEDHA YAGYA अश्वमेध यज्ञ Horse sacrifice

ASHWINI KUMARAS अश्विनि कुमार Twin gods of medicine

ASITA असित An ancestor of RAMA

ASTRA SHASTRA अस्त्रशास्त्र Arrows and missiles; sons of JAYA and SUPRABHA

ASURA असुर A celestial race; chil-

dren of KASHYAPA and DITI who did not accept SURA.

ATIBALA अतिबला A powerful mantra

AYODHYA अयोध्या Capital of KOSALA

BALA बला A powerful mantra

BALI बलि An ASURA king; son of VIROCHANA

BANA बाणः Ancestor of RAMA

BHADRA भद्र One of the four elephants holding up the earth

BHAGIRATHA भागीरथ Ancestor of RAMA, known for bringing the GANGA to earth

BHAGWAN भगवान् A title of reverence in Sanskrit, used to address gods

BHARADWAJA भरद्वाज A sage; VALMIKI's disciple

BHARATA भरत 1. RAMA's brother. 2. Ancestor of RAMA

BHOOLOKA भूलोक The earth

BHRIGU भृगु One of the seven great sages; a mind-born son of BRAHMA (1)

BILVA बिल्व Bael tree, also called wood apple. Sacred to SHIVA.

BRAHMA ब्रह्मा 1. The Hindu god of creation 2. See ADHWARYU

BRAHMASTRA ब्रह्मास्त्र Missile presided over by BRAHMA (1)

BRAHMADANDA ब्रह्मादण्ड Staff carried by a rishi

BRAHMADATTA ब्रह्मदत्त King of KAMPILA

BRAHMARSHI ब्रह्मर्षि A sage who attained the highest form of divine knowledge

BRIHADRATHA बृहद्रथ King of MITHILA. Ancestor of JANAKA.

BRUHASPATI बृहस्पति Guru of the devas

CHAITRA चैत्र The first month in the Hindu calendar, associated with spring

CHARANAS चरन Celestial bards

CHYAVANA च्यवन A powerful rishi

DAKSHA दक्ष A son of BRAHMA (1) and an ancestor of humankind

DANDA CHAKRA दण्डचक्र A celestial missile

DASHARATHA दशरथ King of AYODHYA. Father of RAMA

DEVALOKA देवलोक Abode of the gods

DEVAMIDHA देवमीढ King of MITHILA. Ancestor of JANAKA.

DEVARAATA देवरात King of MITHILA. Ancestor of JANAKA.

DHANVANTARI धन्वंतरी Physician of the gods

DHARMA धर्म 1. Another name of YAMA 2. Duty, according to the universal law

DHARMA CHAKRA धर्मचक्र A celestial missile

DHARMARANYA धर्मारण्य A city built by ASOORTARAJASA

DHRISTAKETU धृष्टकेतु King of MITHILA. Ancestor of JANAKA.

DHRUVASANDHI ध्रुवासंधि Ancestor of RAMA

DHUNDHUMARA धुन्धुमार Ancestor of RAMA

DILIPA दिलीप Ancestor of RAMA. Father of BHAGIRATHA.

DITI दिति Wife of KASHYAPA. Mother of the ASURAS and the MARUTS.

GADHI गाधि VISHWAMITRA's father

GANDHARVA गंधर्व Celestial musician

GANGA गंगा A sacred river that rises in the Himalayas and flows into the Bay of Bengal

GARUDA गरुड़ The vehicle of VISHNU

GAUTAMA गौतम A sage. Married to AHALYA.

GHATOTKACHA घटोत्कच Son of Bhima and Hidimba, a rakshasi, in the Mahabharata

GHRITACHI घृतचि An APSARA, KUSHANABHA's wife

GIRIVRAJA गिरिव्रज A city built by VASU. Modern RAJGIR.

GOKARNA गोकर्ण The mountain on which BHAGIRATHA spent a thousand years meditating

HALAHALA हलाहल Poison that came out of the churning of the ocean

HAIMAVATI हैमावती Another name of GANGA

HANUMAN हनुमान् A VANARA. Son of VAYU. Minister to SUGRIVA.

HARYASHWA हर्यश्व King of MITHILA. Ancestor of JANAKA.

HIMAVAN हिमवान् The mountain king, father of PARVATI and GANGA

HLADINI ह्लादिनी One of the seven streams that GANGA split into

HOTA होतः See ADHWARYU

HRASWAROMA ह्रस्वरोम Father of JANAKA

IKSHVAKU इक्ष्वाकु Son of MANU. The earliest ancestor of the Suryavansha kings, the dynasty to which RAMA belonged, and after whom it is named.

INDRA इंद्र King of gods

INDRA CHAKRA इंद्र चक्र A celestial missile

JAHNAVI जाह्नवी Daughter of JAHNU. Another name for GANGA.

JAHNU जाह्नू A great sage

JAMADAGNI जमदग्नि A sage; father of PARASHURAMA

JAMBAVAN जम्बवान् The king of bears

JAMBUDVIPA जम्बुद्वीप The island at the centre of the universe, according to Hindu mythology, on which grows the jambu tree. Supposed to represent India.

JANAKA जनक King of MITHILA,

father of SITA

JATAKARMA जातकर्म A ceremony in which a newborn is given a mixture of honey and ghee

JAYA जया DAKSHA's daughter

KAIKEYI कैकेयी DASHARATHA's youngest wife. BHARATA's mother.

KAKUTSTHA ककुत्स्था Ancestor of RAMA

KALMASHAPADA कल्माषपाद The ogre PRAVRIDDHA turned into

KAMADEVA कामदेव God of love

KAMADHENU कामधेनु VASISHTHA's wish-fulfilling cow

KAMPILA काम्पिल्य BRAHMADATTA's kingdom

KANAUJ कन्नौज A city earlier known as MAHODAYA, built by KUSHANABHA

KANDARPA कन्दर्प Another name for KAMADEVA

KARTAVIRYA ARJUNA कार्तवीर्य अर्जुन King of Mahishamati, who killed Rishi JAMADAGNI

KARTIKEYA कार्तिकेय Son of SHIVA, and commander of the divine armies

KARUSHA करुष A kingdom blessed by INDRA

KASHYAPA कश्यप Father of the devas and the ASURAS, and the husband of ADITI and DITI

KAUSALYA कौसल्या DASHARATHA's chief queen. Mother of RAMA.

KAUSAMBI कौशाम्बी A city founded by KUSHAMBA

KAUSHIKA कौशिक Before VISHWAMITRA became a rishi, he was a king called Kaushika.

KAUSHIKI कौशिकी A river. Modern Kosi

KAUSTUBHA कौस्तुभ A valuable gem that emerged from the ocean of milk

KEKEYA कैकेय 1. KAIKEYI's father 2. The kingdom which he ruled

KESHINI केशिनी Wife of SAGARA

KHADIRA AND PALASA खादिर, पलाश Types of wood

KINNARAS किन्नर Musicians of the gods

KIRTIRAATA कीर्तिरात King of MITHILA. Ancestor of JANAKA.

KIRTIRATHA कीर्तिरथ King of MITHILA. Ancestor of JANAKA.

KOSALA कोसल A rich and prosperous territory, the capital of which was AYODHYA

KRAUNCHA क्रौञ्च The world's tallest flying bird, known for its loyalty to its mate

KRITAYUGA कृतयुग The first yuga. Also called the Satya Yuga.

KRITTIKAS कृत्तिका Six goddesses of the constellation Kritika, after whom KARTIKEYA was named

KSHATRIYA क्षत्रिय Class of people, traditionally engaged in the military arts

KUBERA कुबेर God of wealth

KUKSI कुक्षि Ancestor of RAMA

KUMARA कुमार Another name for KARTIKEYA

KUSHA कुश 1. Son of SITA and RAMA. LUVU's twin. 2. A sage

KUSHADHWAJA कुशध्वज Brother of JANAKA, king of SANKASHYA

KUSHAMBA कुशाम्ब Son of KUSHA (2)

KUSHANABHA कुशनाभ Son of the rishi KUSHA (2)

KUSHAPLAVA कुशप्लव A sacred place where DITI practised austerities

LAKSHMANA लक्ष्मण Brother of RAMA, son of SUMITRA

LUVA लव Son of RAMA; KUSHA's twin

MAGADHA मगध A kingdom allied with AYODHYA

MAGADHI मगधी Another name for the river SONA

MAHADEVA महादेव Another name for SHIVA

MAHAPADMA महापद्म One of the four elephants holding up the earth

MAHAROMA महारौम King of MITHILA. Ancestor of JANAKA.

MAHAVIRA महावीर King of MITHILA. Ancestor of JANAKA.

MAHENDRA महेन्द्र Mountain where PARASHURAMA stays and meditates

MAHIDHRAKA महीध्रक King of MITHILA. Ancestor of JANAKA.

MAHODAYA महोदय Modern KANAUJ, founded by KUSHANABHA

MALADA मलद A kingdom blessed by INDRA

MANAVASTRA मानवास्त्र Missile of MANU

NALA नल A VANARA, son of VISHWAKARMA

NALINI नलिनी A stream flowing eastward, split off from GANGA

NANDIVARDHANA नन्दिवर्धन King of MITHILA. Ancestor of JANAKA.

MANDARA मंदर A mountain used as a churning rod during the churning of the ocean

MANDAVI माण्डवी Cousin of SITA

and wife of BHARATA

MANDHATA मांधता Ancestor of RAMA

MANTRAMUKTA मंत्रमुक्त A type of weapon directed to the target by reciting a mantra

MANU मनु Progenitor of mankind; son of SURYA

MARICHA मारीच Mighty rakshasa; son of TATAKA

MARICHI मरीचि A sage born to BRAHMA (1)

MARU मरु 1. Ancestor of RAMA 2. King of MITHILA. Ancestor of JANAKA.

MARUTS मरुत The 49 wind gods. Sons of DITI.

MENA मेना Wife of HIMAVAN. Mother of UMA and GANGA.

MITHILA मिथिला Kingdom of JANAKA

MITRA मित्र A Vedic god who guards the world, often associated with VARUNA

MOHINI मोहिनी A form of VISHNU

MUKTA मुक्त Long range weapons

NABHAGA नाभाग A descendant of PRAVRIDDHA

NAGA नाग A mythical being who is part-human and part-snake

NAHUSHA नहूषा Ancestor of RAMA

NARADA नारद Son of BRAHMA (1)

NARAYANA नारायण Another name for VISHNU

NILA नील A VANARA, son of AGNI

NIMI निमि A king of MITHILA. Ancestor of JANAKA.

PARASHURAMA परशुराम Son of Rishi JAMADAGNI, and an

incarnation of VISHNU

PARVATI पार्वती A goddess. Wife of SHIVA and daughter of HIMAVAN.

PATALA पाताल Underworld

PAULASTYA VADHA पौलस्त्यवध The death of Paulastya who is also known as RAVANA

PAVANI पावनी One of the seven streams that GANGA split into

PAYASA पायसं Milk pudding

PHALGUNI फाल्गुनी A constellation

PRAHLADA प्रह्लाद Grandfather of King BALI

PARJANYA पर्जन्य The Vedic god of rain

PRAJAPATI प्रजापति Lord of created beings

PRASUHSRUKA प्रशुश्रुक Ancestor of RAMA

PRAPTIJA प्राप्तिज्ञ King of MAGADHA

PRATINDHAKA प्रतीन्धक King of MITHILA. Ancestor of JANAKA.

PRAVRIDDHA प्रवृद्ध Ancestor of RAMA

PRITHU पृथु Ancestor of RAMA

PUNARVASU पुनर्वसु Two of the brightest stars in the Gemini constellation

PUSHKARA पुष्कर A lake

PUTRIYESHTI पुत्र्येष्ठी A yagya conducted to attain children

RAGHU रघु Ancestor of RAMA

RAGHUNANDANA रघुनन्दन Another name for RAMA, meaning descendant of RAGHU

RAJARSHI राजर्षि Royal sage

RAJGIR राजगीर Another name for the city GIRIVRAJA, founded by VASU

RAKSHASAS राक्षस A race of mythological beings

RAMA राम Prince of AYODHYA. Son of DASHARATHA and KAUSALYA.

RASATALA रसातल One of the underworlds

RAVANA रावण The powerful and evil king of RAKSHASAS, who ruled from his capital, Lanka

RICHIKA ऋचीक Father of JAMADAGNI

RISHYASHRINGA ऋष्यशृङ्गा A sage born with the horns of a deer

ROMAPADA रोमपाद King of ANGA

RUDRA रुद्र Another name for SHIVA

SAGARA सगर Descendant of IKSHVAKU. He hollowed out the ocean.

SANAT KUMARA सनत्कुमार A legendary sage who could predict the future

SANKASHYA सांकाश्या Kingdom of KUSHADHWAJA

SARAYU सरयू The kingdom of AYODHYA is situated on the banks of this river

SARGA सर्ग Chapter

SATANANDA शतानन्द Family priest of JANAKA

SATYAVATI सत्यवती VISHWAMI-TRA's elder sister

SAUMANASA सौमनस One of the four elephants holding up the earth

SHABALA शबला Another name for KAMADHENU

SHAKTI शक्ति Daughter of DAKSHA

SHANKARA शंकर Another name for SHIVA

SHANKHAN शङ्खण Ancestor of RAMA

SHANTA शान्ता Daughter of DASHARATHA. Adopted by ROMAPADA.

SHATRUGHNA शत्रुघ्न Son of SUMITRA. Twin of LAKSHMANA.

SHIGHRAGA शीघ्रग Ancestor of RAMA

SHIVA शिव The Destroyer; third of the divine triumvirate

SHLOKA श्लोक Poetry

SHOKA शोक Sorrow

SHRUTAKIRTI श्रुतकीर्ति Cousin of SITA, wife of SHATRUGHNA

SHUNAKA शुनक Youngest son of RICHIKA

SHUNASHEPA शुनशेष Nephew of VISHWAMITRA

SIDDHASHRAMA सिद्धाश्रम A sacred grove in which VISHNU practised yoga for thousands of years

SIDHAS सिद्ध Enlightened souls

SINDHU सिन्धु One of the seven streams that GANGA split into

SITA सीता 1. Princess of MITHILA and RAMA's wife. Also considered to be an avatar of Lakshmi. 2. One of the seven streams that GANGA split into

SITAYAHA CHARITAM MAHAT सीतायाश्चरितं महत The sublime legend of SITA

SKANDA स्कन्द Another name for KARTIKEYA

SLESHMATAKA श्लेषातक A tree whose wood is considered sacred

SONA शोण A river, also known as MAGADHI

SUBAHU सुबाहु A powerful RAKSHASA

SUCHAKSHU सुचक्षु One of the seven streams that GANGA split into

SUDAAMANA सुदामन The foremost of JANAKA's counsellors

SUDARSHANA सुदर्शन 1. VISHNU's chakra. 2. Ancestor of RAMA

SUDHANVA सुधन्वा King of SANKASHYA before KUSHADHWAJA. He was defeated by JANAKA.

SUDHRITI सुधृति King of MITHILA. Ancestor of JANAKA.

SUGRIVA सुग्रीव Brother of VALI

SUKETU सुकेतु 1. Father of TATAKA 2. King of MITHILA. Ancestor of JANAKA.

SUMANTRA सुमन्त्र DASHARATHA's minister and charioteer

SUMATI सुमति 1. Wife of SAGARA 2. Ruler of VISHALA

SUMITRA सुमित्रा DASHARATHA's second queen. Mother of the twins LAKSHMANA and SHATRUGHNA.

SUNDA सुन्द Husband of TATAKA

SUPRABHA सुप्रभा Daughter of DAKSHA Prajapati

SURA सुरा Goddess of wine. Another name for VARUNI.

SURYA सूर्य Sun god

SUSANDHI सुसंधि Ancestor of RAMA

SWARNAROMA स्वर्णरोम King of MITHILA. Ancestor of JANAKA.

TAPAS तप: The practice of deep meditation and austerities to achieve spiritual power

TARA तारा A VANARA, daughter of BRUHASPATI. Also wife of VALI.

TATAKA ताटका A YAKSHINI who was cursed to be a rakshasi

TRISHANKU त्रिशङ्कु A king of the IKSHVAKU race who wanted to ascend into heaven bodily

TRISHUL त्रिशूल Trident, SHIVA's weapon

UCCHAISHRAVA उच्चैश्रवास् Foremost of horses

UDAVASU उदावसु King of MITHILA. Ancestor of JANAKA.

UDGATA उदगाता One of the four main priests conducting a sacrifice

UMA उमा Another name for PARVATI

UPANAYANA उपनयनम् A sacred thread ceremony to mark to beginning of a boy's formal education

URMILA उर्मिला JANAKA's second daughter and LAKSHMANA's wife

UTTARA KANDA उत्तरकाण्ड Last section of the Ramayana

VAJRA वज्र The thunderbolt, INDRA's weapon

VALI बाली A VANARA. Brother of SUGRIVA.

VALMIKI वाल्मीकि Author of the Ramayana

VAMADEVA वामदेव One of the family priests at DASHARATHA's court

VAMANA वामन The fifth avatar of VISHNU

VANARA वानर The strong, ape-like children of the devas

VARUNA वरुण Lord of all waters

VARUNI वारुणी Goddess of wine

VASISHTHA वसिष्ठ Family priest at the court of DASHARATHA

VASU वसु A son of KUSHA (2)

VASUDHA वसुधा The earth

VASUKI वासुकि The king of serpents who was used as the rope during the churning of the ocean

VAYAVYA वायव्य Missile of the wind god

VAYU वायु God of wind

VIBHANDAKA विमाण्डक Father of RISHYASHRINGA

VIBHISHANA विभीषण RAVANA's brother

VIBUDHA विबुध King of MITHILA. Ancestor of JANAKA.

VIDEHA विदेहा A country of which MITHILA was the capital

VIJAYA विजय Hour of the morning considered auspicious

VIKUSHI विकुक्षि Ancestor of RAMA

VIROCHANA विरोचन Father of King BALI

VIRUPAKSHA विरुपाक्ष One of the four elephants holding up the earth

VISHALA विशाल 1. The son of king IKSHVAKU and queen Alambusa
2. A city built by Vishala

VISHNU विष्णु The preserver of the universe

VISHNU CHAKRA विष्णुचक्र A celestial missile

VISHRAVA विश्रवस A rishi; the father of RAVANA and KUBERA

VISHWAKARMA विश्वकर्मा The architect of the gods

VISHWAMITRA विश्वामित्र A revered sage. He was born a king; see KAUSHIKA

VIVASWAN विवस्वान् Another name for SURYA

VRITRA वृत्र An asura who was killed by INDRA

VYASA व्यास Author of the Mahabharata

YAKSHA यक्ष Male nature spirits

YAKSHINI यक्षिणी Female nature spirits

YAMA यम God of death and justice

YAYATI ययाति Ancestor of RAMA and son of NAHUSHA

YOJANA योजन A measure of distance, approximately 10 kilometres

YUDDHAJIT युधजित Brother of KAIKEYI

YUVANASHVA युवनाश्व Ancestor of RAMA

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