

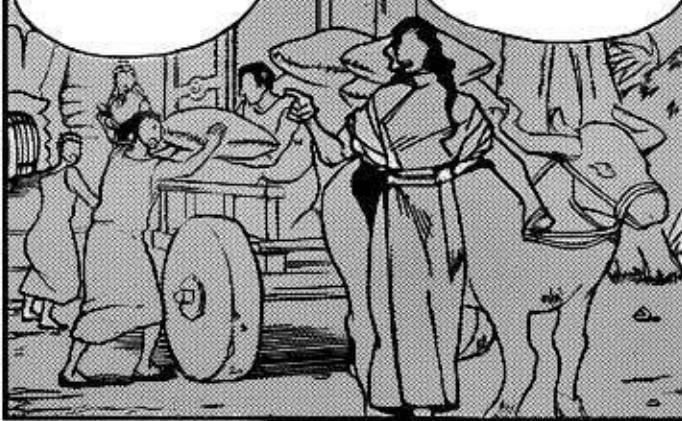


RIGHT NOW,  
HE HAS FOUR  
SERVANTS  
UNDER HIM.

SA'ID  
WAS A PACK  
OX DRIVER, BUT  
FROM ALL THE  
TAX HE PAID THE  
GOVERNMENT,  
HE IMPROVED  
HIS SOCIAL PO-  
SITION.

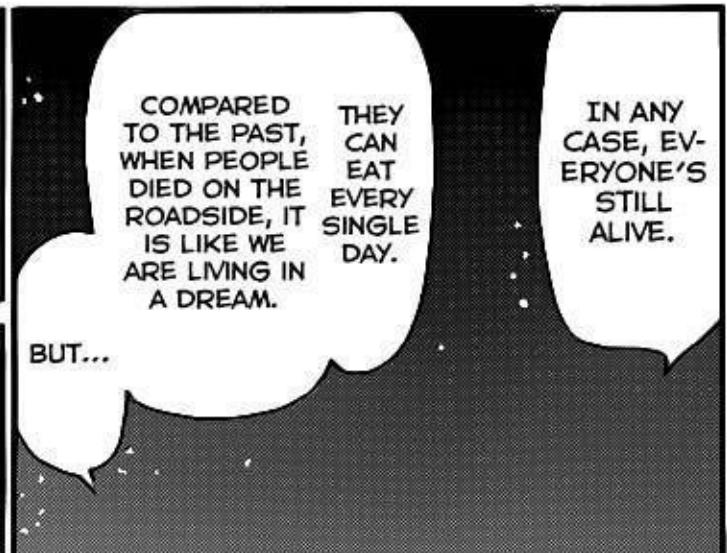
HE WORKS  
EVERY DAY AT  
THE DOCKS,  
SWEATING  
BUCKETS.

TARIQ IS  
A PORTER,  
JUST LIKE  
ME.

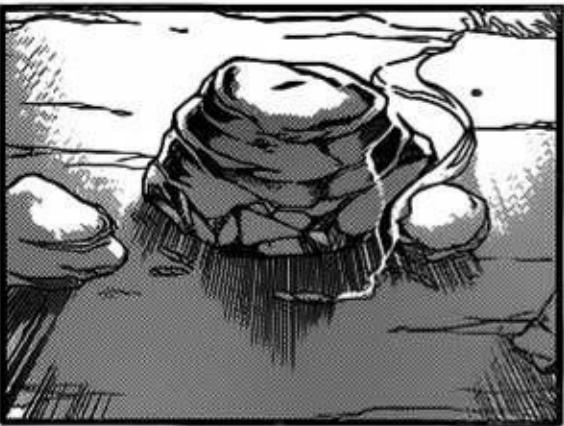


I SEE.  
SO YOU  
DON'T  
KNOW  
ABOUT  
THEM.  
WELL...

THOSE  
GUYS IN  
BROWN  
CLOTHES.  
SER-  
VANTS?



YOU  
CAN'T BE  
VOCAL ABOUT  
IT, BUT...



BECAUSE  
THERE WEREN'T  
GOOD LEADERS  
AMONG THEM...  
LIKE YOU AND  
CASSIM...

THERE  
WERE TIMES  
WHEN PEOPLE  
OPPOSED  
THEM. BUT  
THEY WERE  
IMMEDIATELY  
IMPRISONED  
AND EXECUT-  
ED.



...



I...

AND  
EVERY DAY,  
SOMETHING  
WOULD  
HAPPEN, BUT...

WE WERE  
ALWAYS  
HUNGRY,

YOU  
WERE THERE,  
AND CASSIM  
WOULD GIVE  
US DIRE-  
CTIONS.



BUT NOW...

WE WOULD TALK ABOUT  
WHAT WE WOULD DO  
FOR THIS COUNTRY, OR  
WHAT TO DO IN ORDER  
TO IMPROVE OUR LIFE  
IN THE FUTURE. WE HAD  
THE FIGHTING SPIRIT  
TO WIELD A SWORD IN  
ORDER TO OBTAIN  
WHAT WE WANTED.

AT THAT  
TIME, WE  
WERE FULL  
OF FIGHTING  
SPIRIT.

4



AND WHAT I  
SHOULD DO  
SO I DON'T  
DISPLEASE  
THOSE OF  
THE KOU  
EMPIRE.

THE ONLY THING I  
CAN THINK OF IS  
THAT TOMORROW,  
I HAVE TO GO TO  
WORK...



DON'T YOU  
UNDERSTAND,  
ALIBABA?

I  
DON'T LIKE  
THIS. I  
WANT TO  
RETURN  
TO THE  
PAST!!!

CAN YOU  
UNDERSTAND  
THIS FEELING  
OF SHAME!!!?



THEY DON'T  
EXIST TO  
MOVE JUST  
AS THOSE  
BASTARDS  
OF THE KOU  
EMPIRE  
SAY!!!



AND  
THEY  
EXIST IN  
ORDER  
TO PRO-  
TECT  
BAL-  
BADD!!!



I  
STILL  
HAVE MY  
ARMS  
AND  
LEGS,

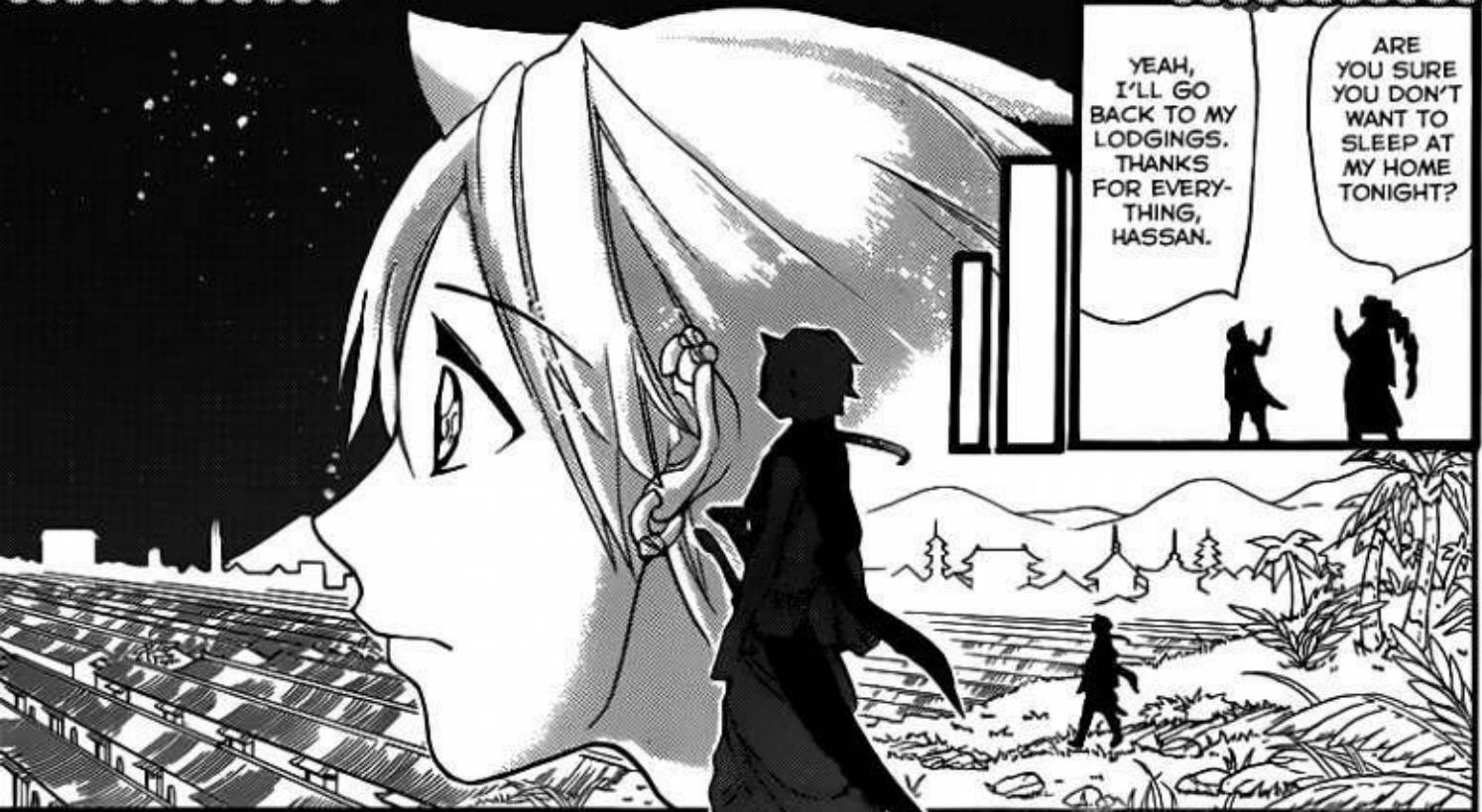
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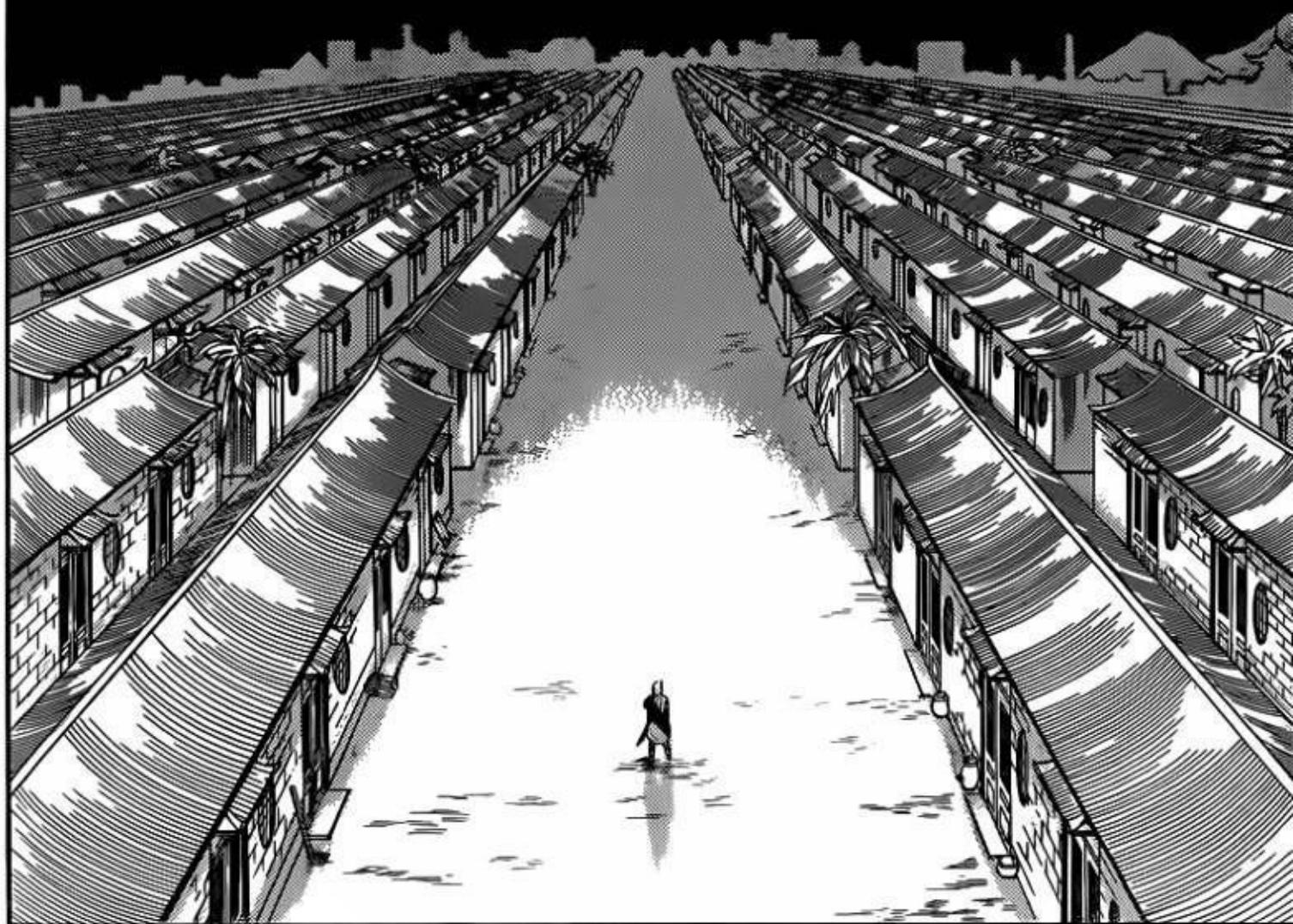


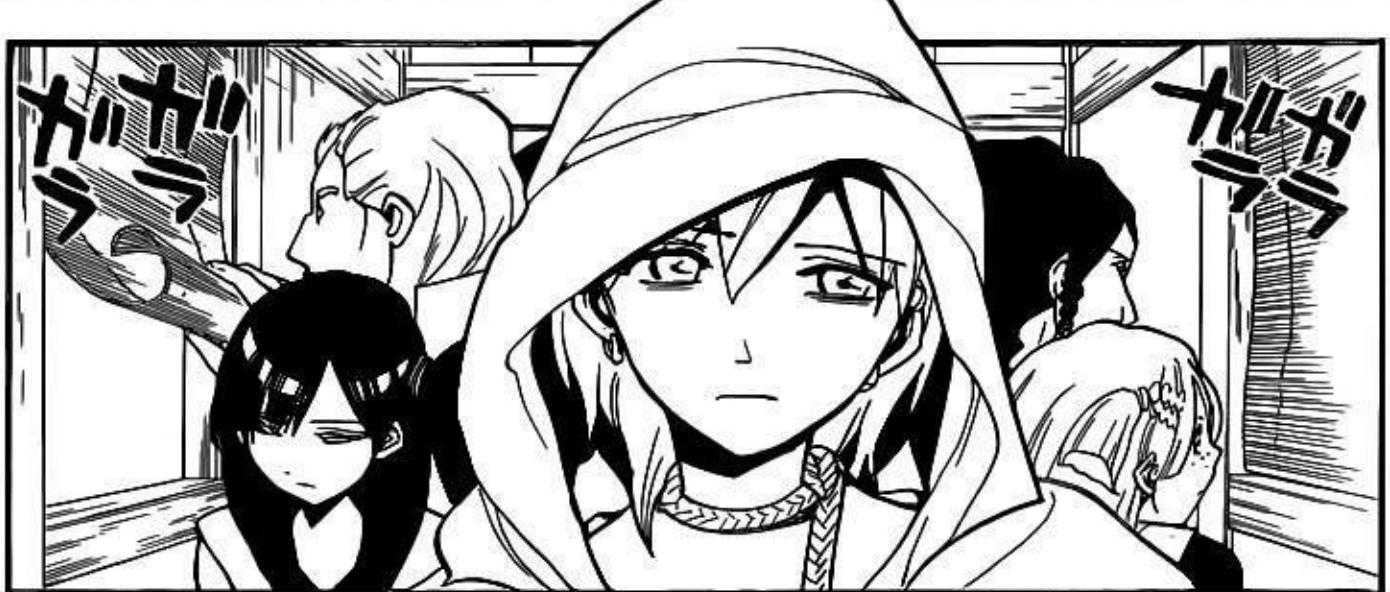
T-THEN...  
DO YOU WANT  
TO START  
ANOTHER RE-  
BELLION!?  
AGAINST THE  
KOU EMPIRE  
THIS TIME....?

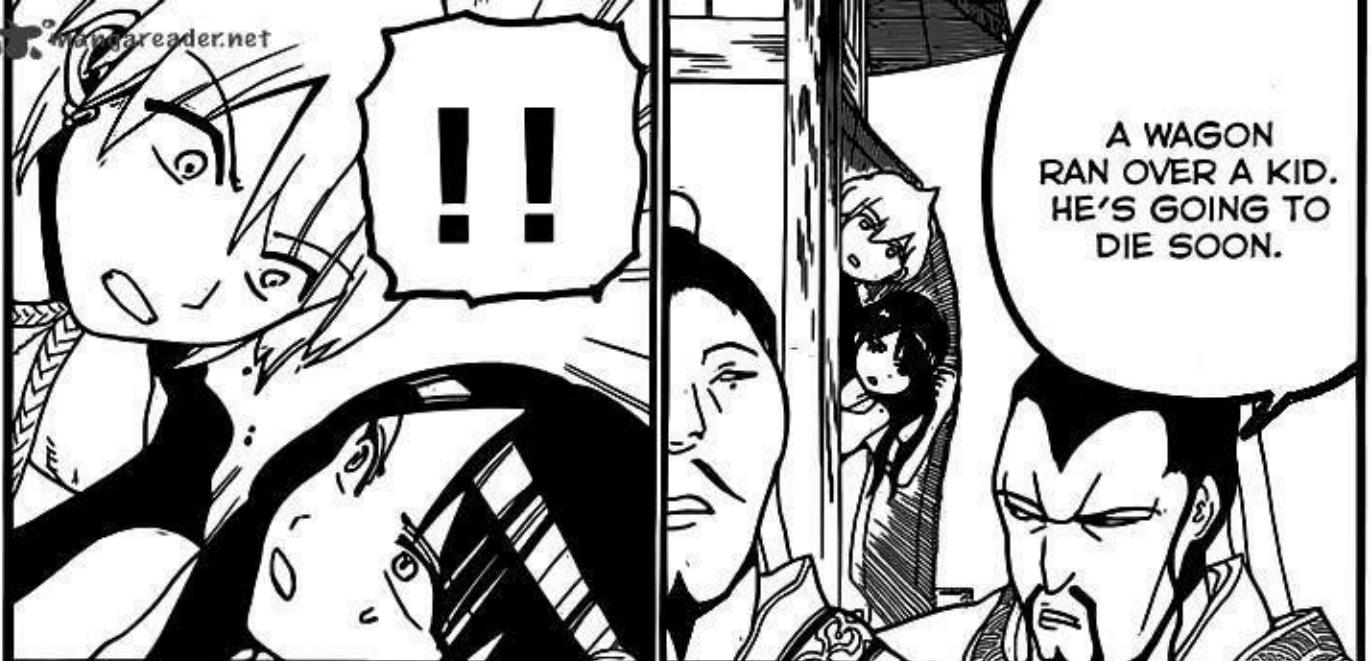












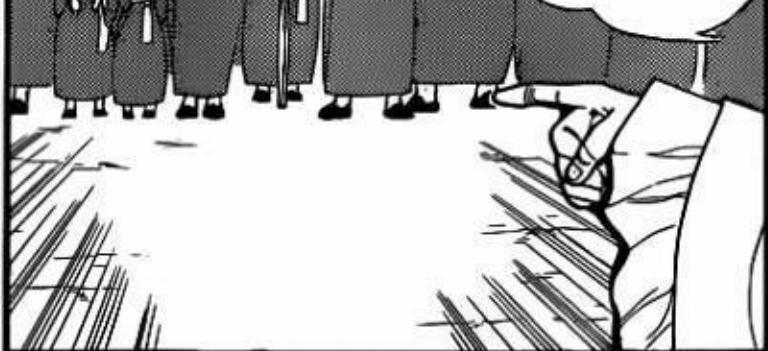
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11





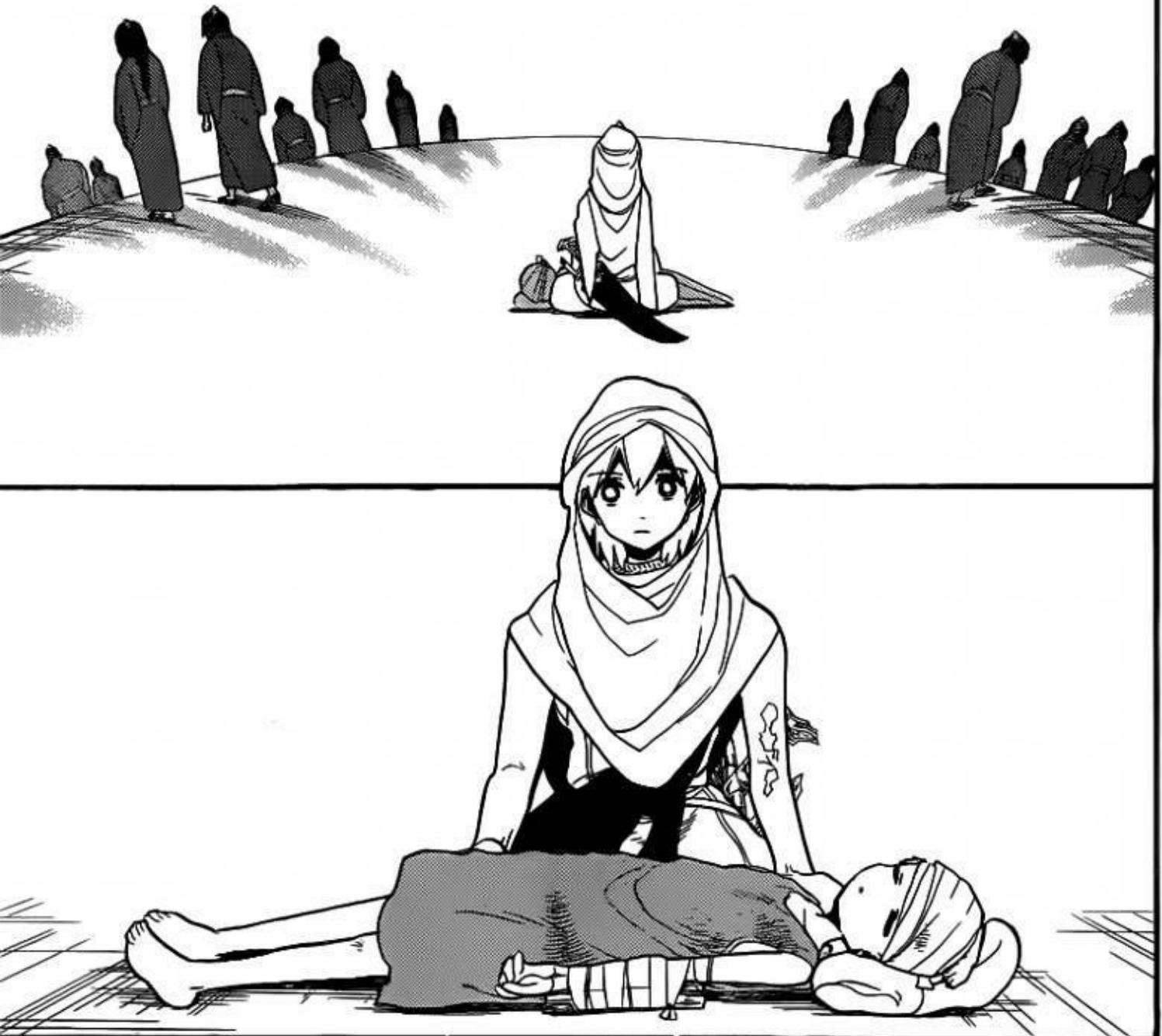
THAT'S THE REASON WHY NO ONE IS COMING TO HELP THIS CHILD.



THIS IS ALSO A WAY TO EDUCATE CHILDREN.

THE SLAVES SENT TO BALBADD COME FROM A DIFFERENT RACE THAT NORMALLY LIVES FAR IN THE NORTH, AS WELL. THAT'S WHY THERE IS NO NEED TO WORRY ABOUT THEM, EVEN IF THEY ARE TREATED LIKE SLAVES.



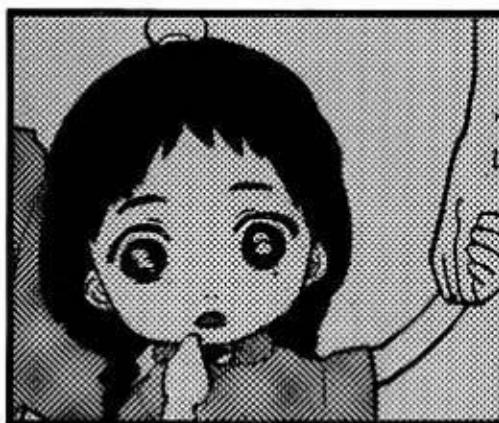
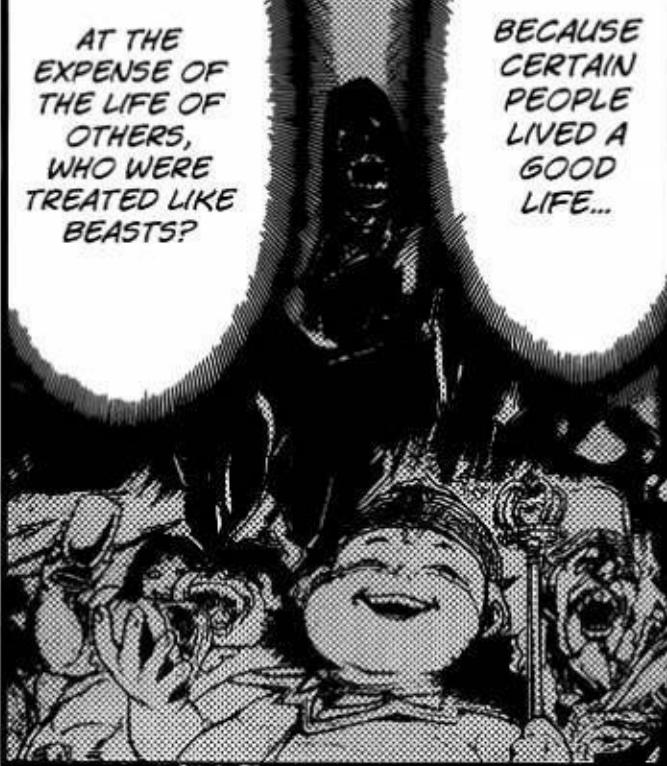


HASSAN...  
ZAYNAB...

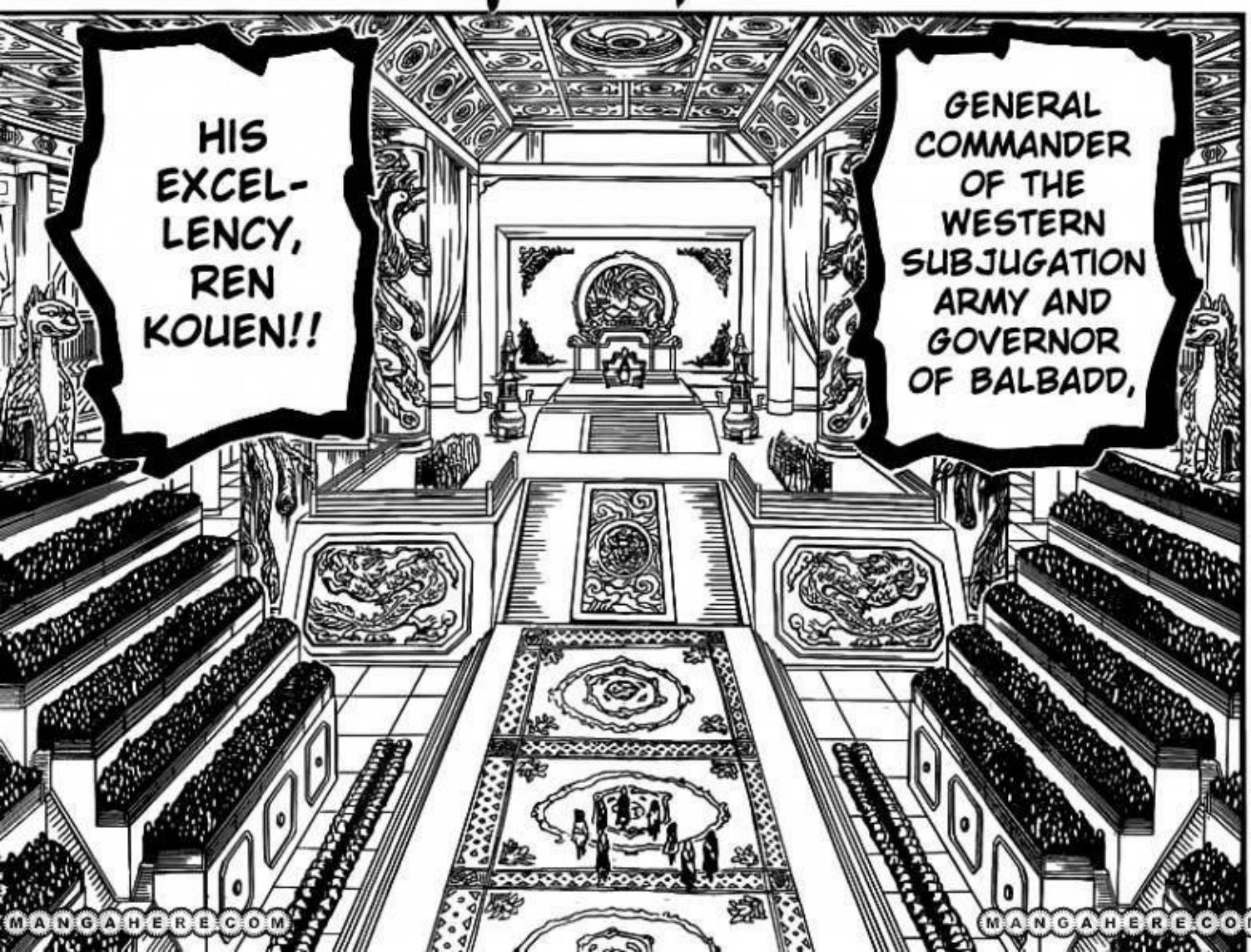
.....

I WILL  
COMPLY,  
IF SUCH  
IS YOUR  
WISH.

TAKE THIS  
KID TO A  
DOCTOR,  
PLEASE...



THESE PEOPLE CHANGED...



HIS  
EXCEL-  
LENCY,  
REN  
KOUEN!!

GENERAL  
COMMANDER OF  
THE WESTERN  
SUBJUGATION  
ARMY AND  
GOVERNOR OF  
BALBADD,

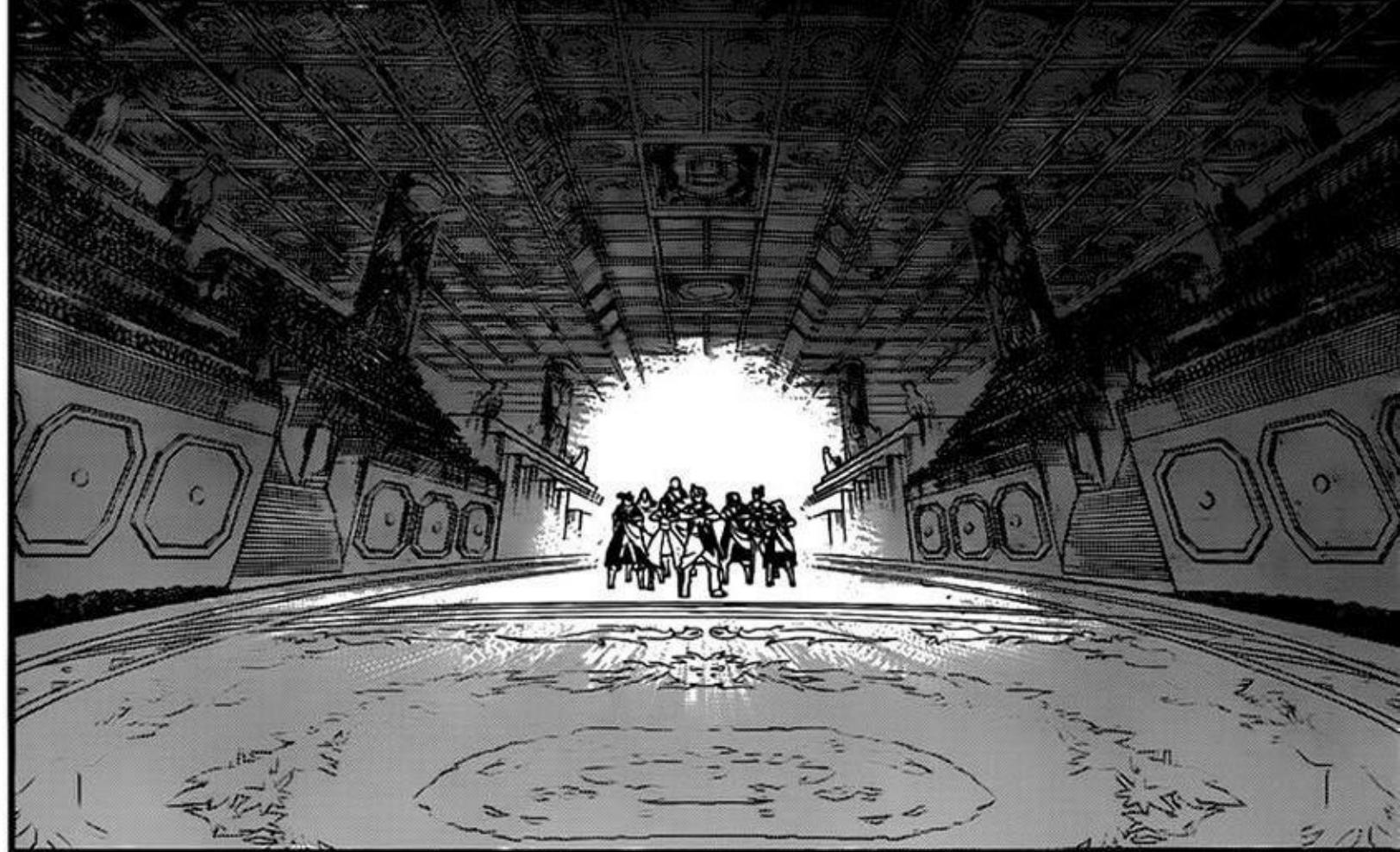
ALIBABA  
AND  
KOUEN,  
REUNITED  
AT LAST!!

MAGI

おお たか しのぶ  
**大高忍**

208TH NIGHT: THE MAN CALLED REN KOUEN

The  
labyrinth of  
magic



YOUR NOBLE HERITAGE IS A THING OF THE PAST.  
JUST IMITATE THE BEHAVIOUR OF YOUR PREVIOUS RETAINERS, AND PROSTRATE YOURSELF IN FRONT OF HIS EXCELLENCY!!!

HIS EXCELLENCY IS A PROMINENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE KOU EMPIRE AND THE SUCCEEDING PRINCE OF THE REN HOUSEHOLD WHICH HAS RULED ON THE COMMONERS FOR CENTURIES. TO RAISE YOUR HEAD IN FRONT OF HIS EXCELLENCY IS AN ACT OF UNHEARD DISRESPECT!!



THEY  
WANT ALIBABA,  
A PRINCE OF  
BALBADD,  
TO  
PROSTRATE  
HIMSELF IN THIS  
PLACE, EH?

LIKE  
HELL HE WOULD  
ENDURE SUCH  
HUMILIATION!  
IT WOULD ONLY  
SHOW THAT HE  
HAS TOTALLY  
SUBMITTED TO  
THE KOU  
EMPIRE...



WHAT WILL  
YOU DO,  
ALIBABA  
...!?

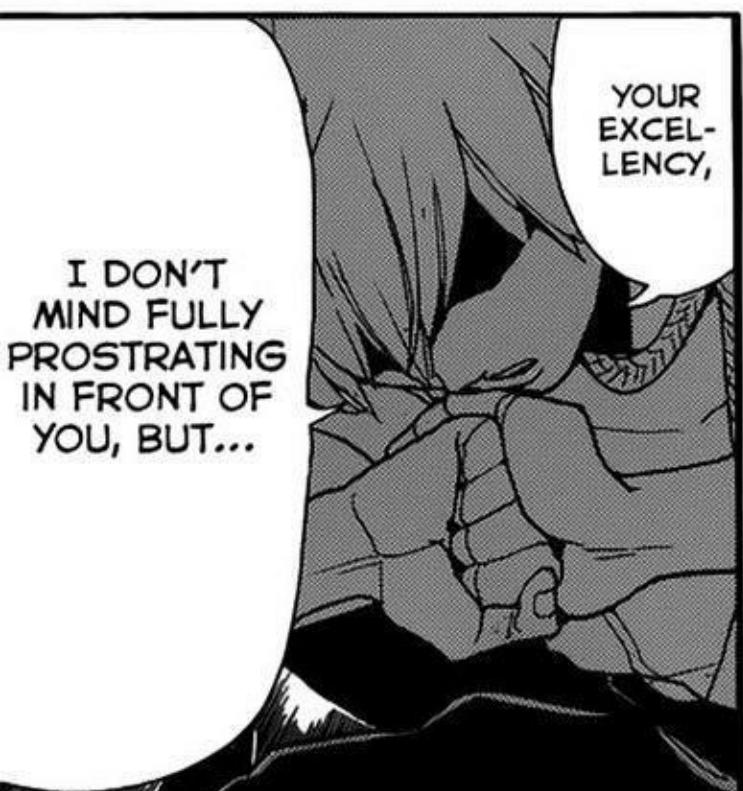
BUT... IF HE  
DOESN'T BOW,  
IT'S THE SAME  
AS DECLARING  
THAT HE'S NO  
LONGER RELAT-  
ED TO BALBADD,  
RIGHT...!?

PRINCE  
...

IF YOU  
CONTINUE TO  
STAND, YOU  
WILL BECOME  
A COMPLETE  
STRANGER TO  
BALBADD FROM  
TODAY ON-  
WARDS!!

SO  
WHAT WILL  
YOU DO?  
PROSTRATE  
YOURSELF  
OR NOT?



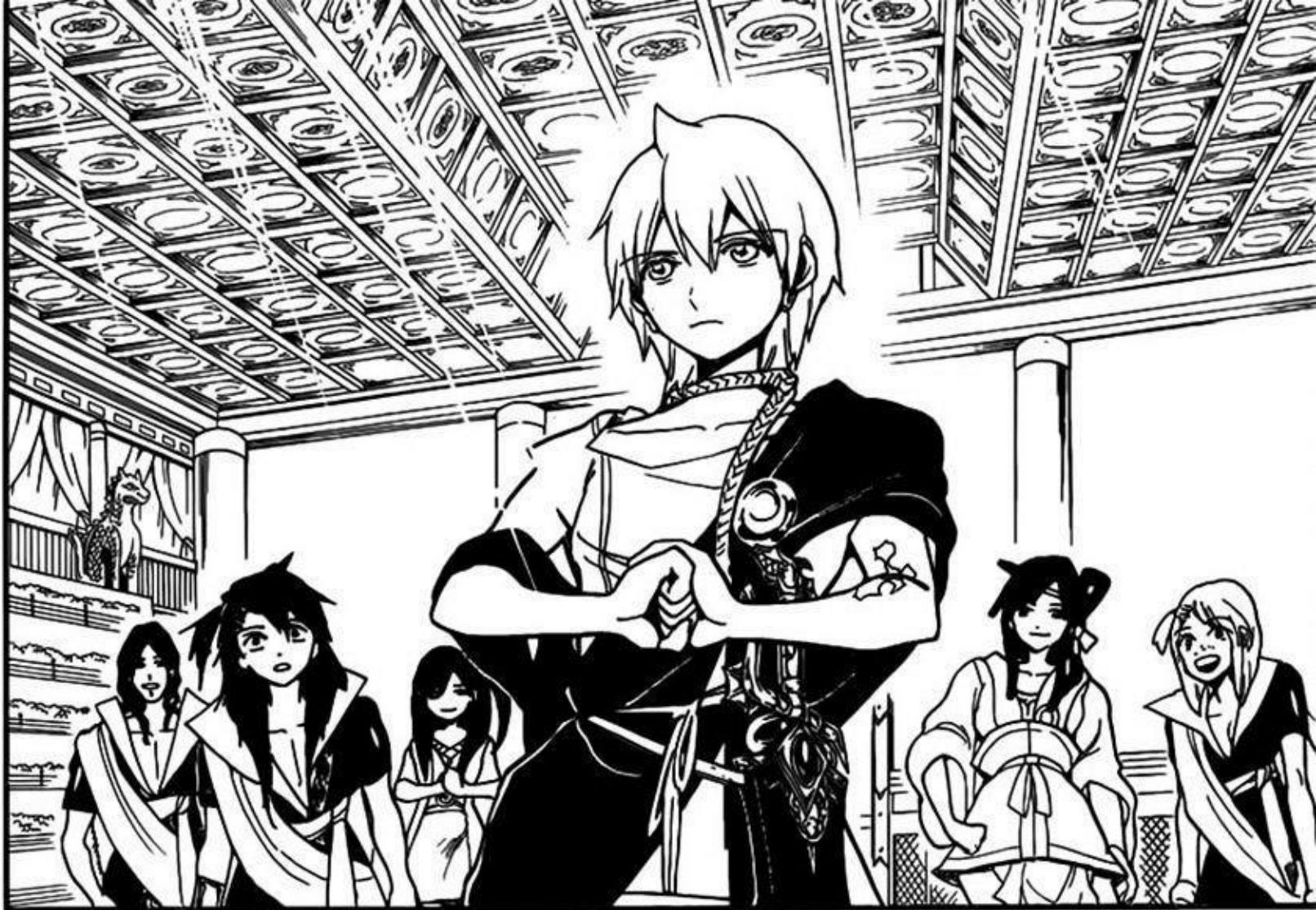




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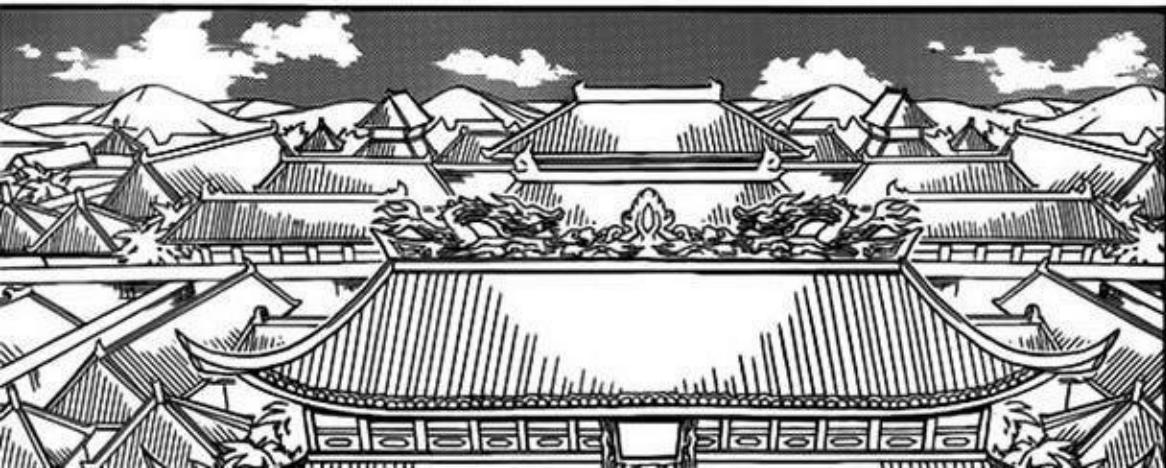






8







AND THEN,  
THE EMPEROR  
DIED, HIS TWO  
LEGITIMATE SUC-  
CESSORS DIED,  
AND FINALLY MY  
FATHER DIED. I  
FOUND MYSELF IN  
THIS POSITION BY  
MERE CHANCE.

YES.  
TEN YEARS  
AGO, I WAS IN  
A POSITION  
REALLY FAR  
FROM THAT OF  
THE SUCCEED-  
ING PRINCE.

DON'T  
EXIST IN  
THIS  
WORLD.

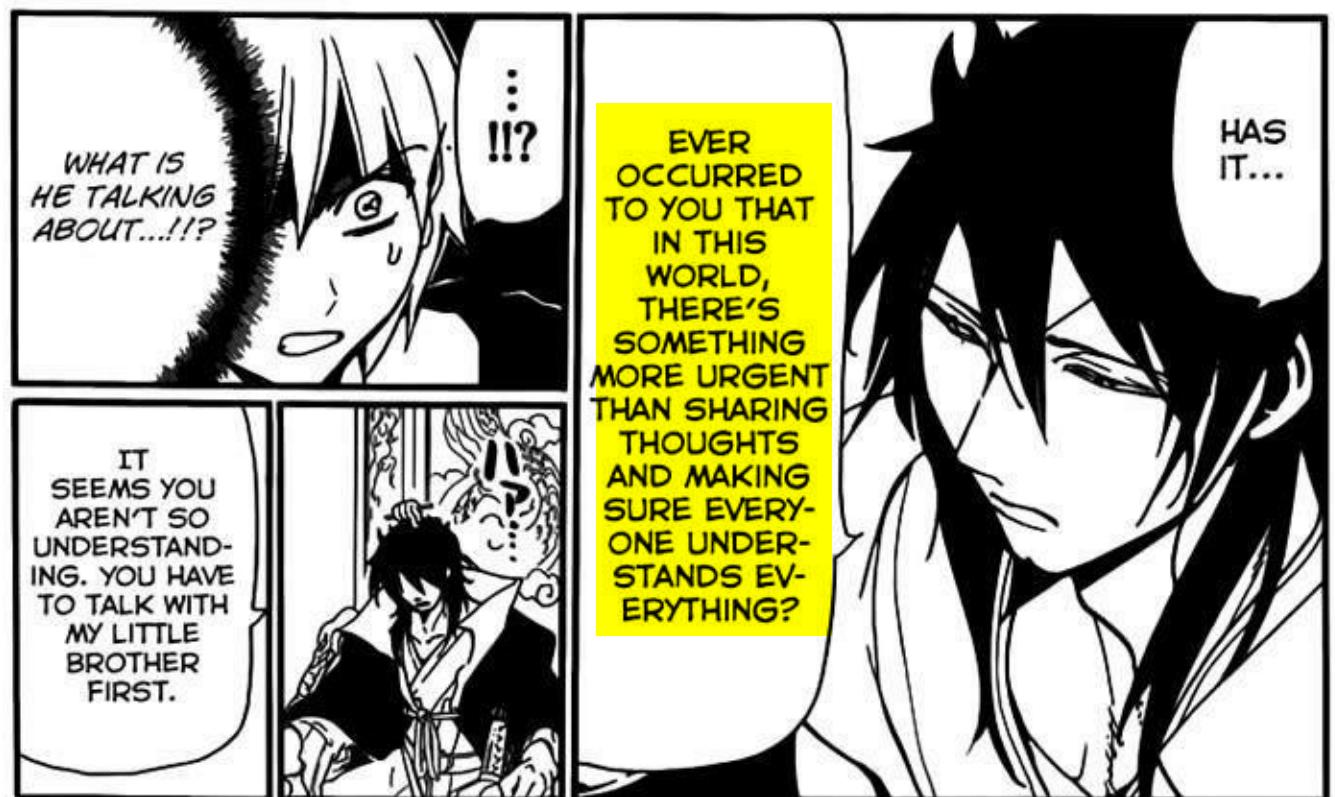
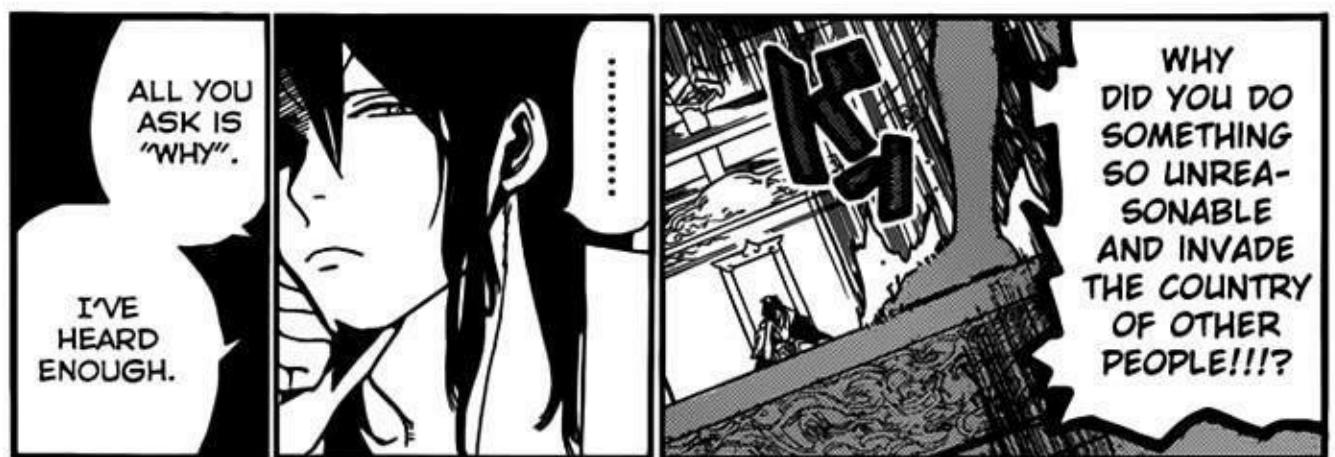
IN THE END,  
THINGS LIKE DIF-  
FERENCES DUE  
TO LINEAGE

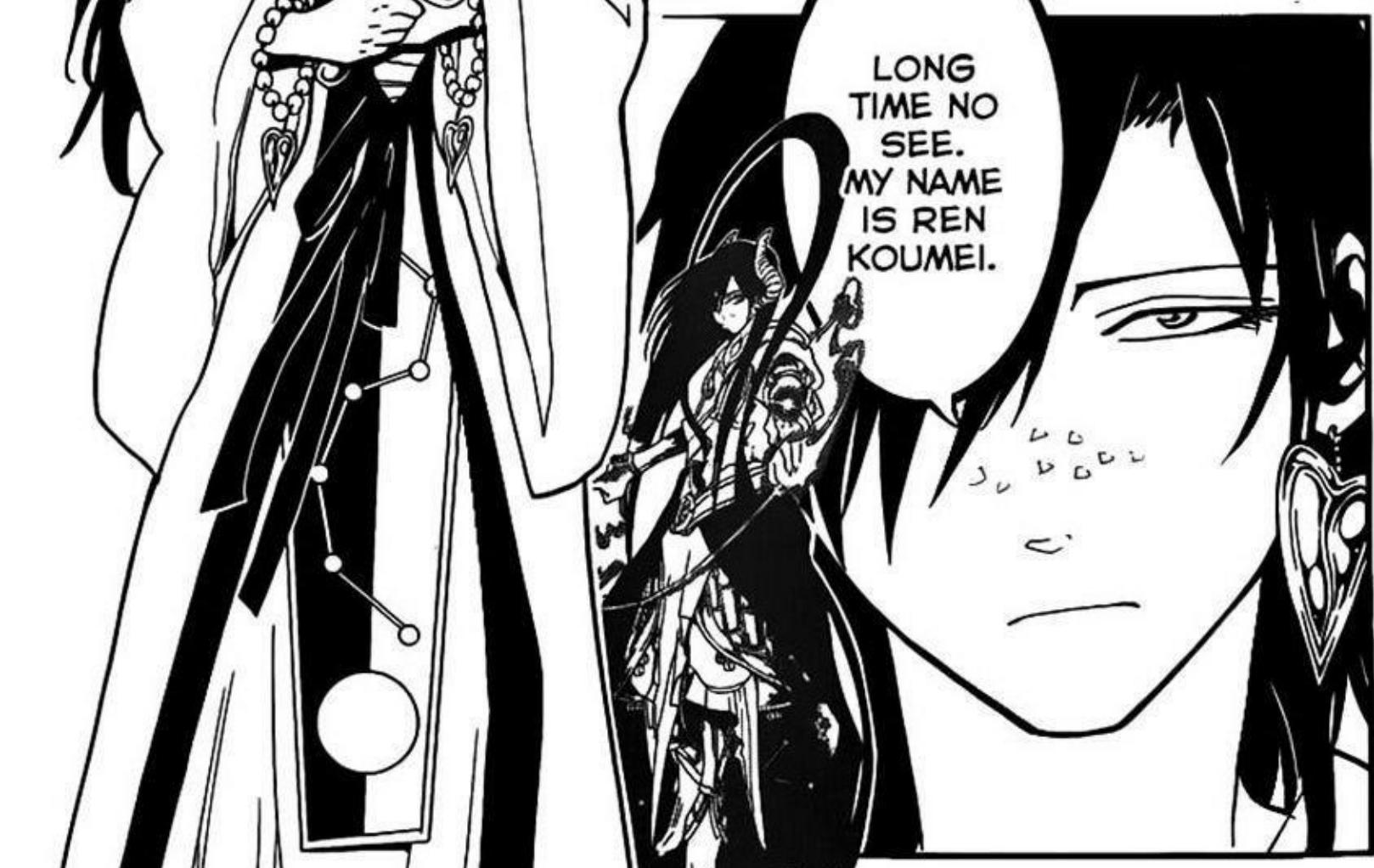
ALL OF  
THE PEOPLE  
HERE ARE  
CONFUSED  
BECAUSE YOU  
IMPOSED  
CUSTOMS OF  
OBSCURE  
MEANING ON  
THEM.

ARE YOU...  
REALLY  
IN THE  
POSITION  
TO SAY  
THAT?

AND ALSO  
...  
ALSO  
...

THEN WHY  
DID YOU MAKE  
THE PEOPLE  
OF BALBADD  
SHOW RE-  
SPECT TO-  
WARDS THE  
EMPEROR OF  
THE KOU  
EMPIRE?







14



HE DOESN'T  
PUT ANY AIR OF  
IMPORTANCE.  
RATHER, HE  
DOESN'T LOOK  
SELF IMPORT-  
ANT AT ALL.

SO THIS  
PERSON IS  
THE SECOND  
PRINCE,  
HUH?

WHAT  
MEANING IS  
THERE IN  
TALKING  
WITH THIS  
PERSON?

I'M NOT  
INTERESTED  
IN THIS GUY...  
I CAME  
HERE TO  
TALK WITH  
REN KOUEN,  
AND YET...

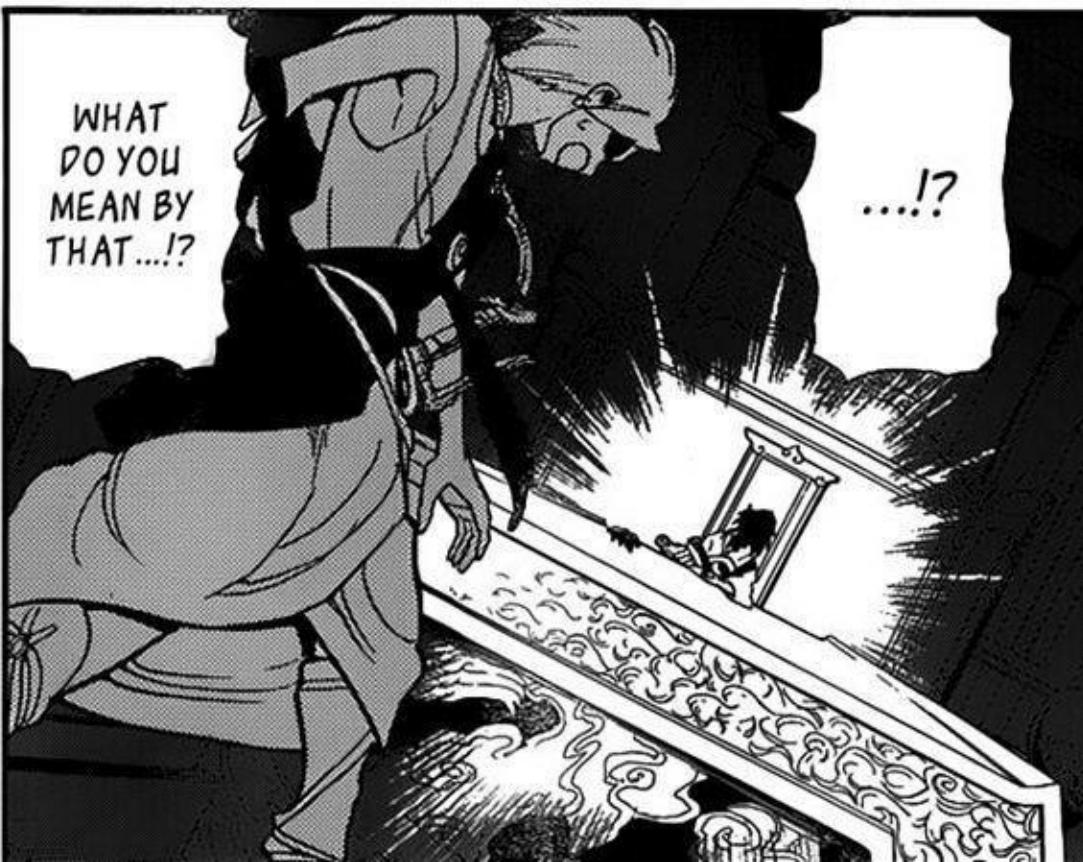
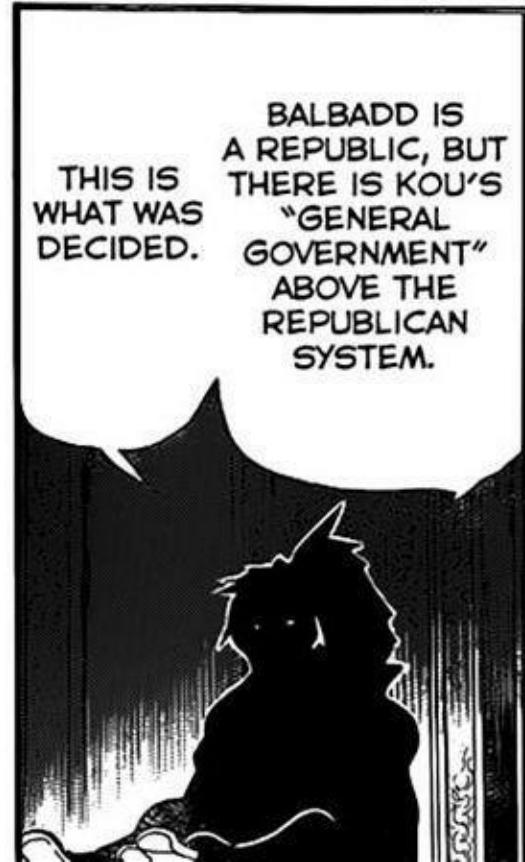
THE ONE  
WHO TOOK  
THE AUTONOMY  
RIGHT FROM  
BALBADD  
WAS...

AH,  
YES?

BY  
THE WAY,  
SIR ALI-  
BAB...



ME.





THE PEOPLE,  
THE THINGS,  
AND THE  
MONEY ALL  
UNDER THE  
CONTROL OF  
THE KOU  
EMPIRE...

ALL OF THE  
COUNTRIES  
UNDER THE  
WESTERN  
SUBJUGATION  
ARMY MUST  
HAVE THE  
RULING  
MECHANISMS,



THESE  
LAWS WHICH  
CRIPPLED THESE  
COUNTRIES'  
GOVERNMENTS  
WERE CREATED  
BY ME.

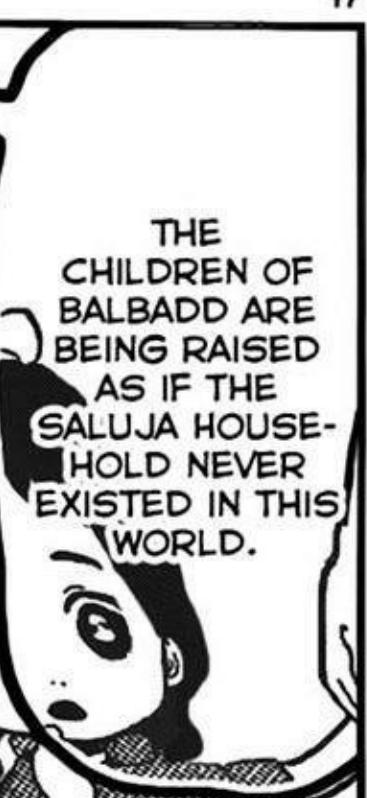
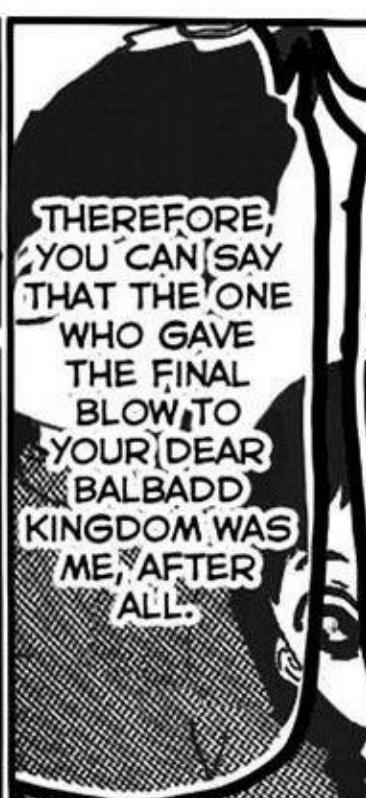
AND  
THE INDUSTRY  
NECESSARY TO  
SUSTAIN SUCH  
A SYSTEM ARE  
ALL ENTRUSTED  
TO THE  
GOVERNOR  
GENERAL.

FOR ALL  
ETERNITY,  
BALBADD'S  
PUBLIC  
ORDER AS  
WELL AS ITS  
NATIONAL  
DEFENSE

17



NO  
ONE WILL  
BELIEVE  
THAT LIE!



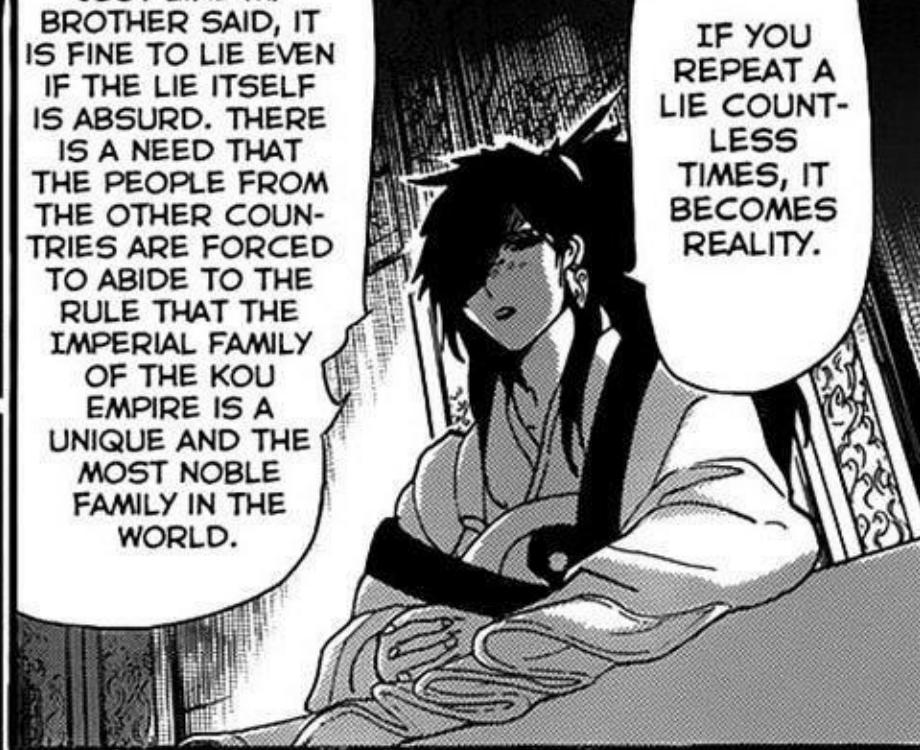
THEREFORE,  
YOU CAN SAY  
THAT THE ONE  
WHO GAVE  
THE FINAL  
BLOW TO  
YOUR DEAR  
BALBADD  
KINGDOM WAS  
ME, AFTER  
ALL.

THE  
CHILDREN OF  
BALBADD ARE  
BEING RAISED  
AS IF THE  
SALUJA HOUSE-  
HOLD NEVER  
EXISTED IN THIS  
WORLD.

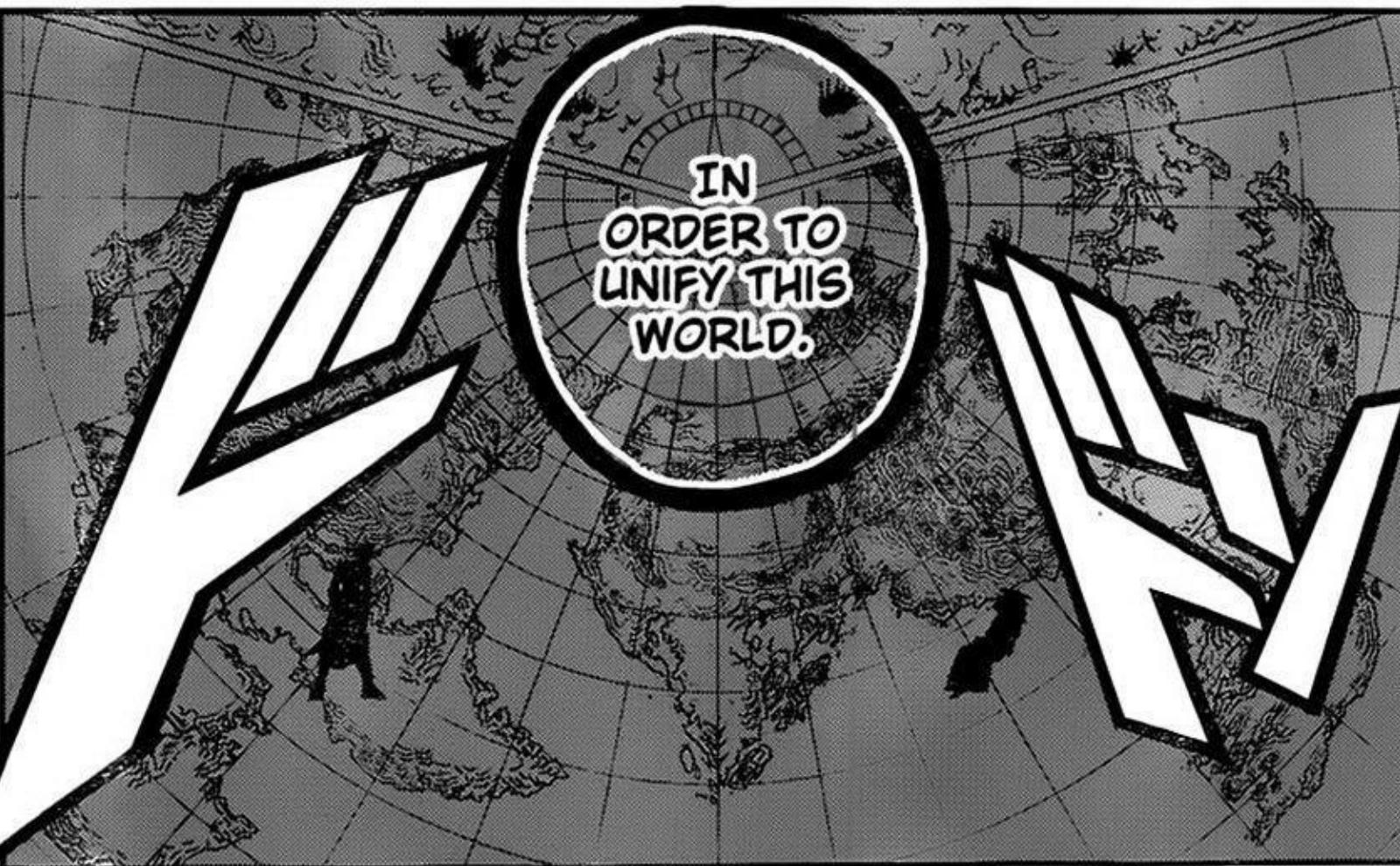
AND FOR  
WHAT  
REASON?

JUST LIKE MY BROTHER SAID, IT IS FINE TO LIE EVEN IF THE LIE ITSELF IS ABSURD. THERE IS A NEED THAT THE PEOPLE FROM THE OTHER COUNTRIES ARE FORCED TO ABIDE TO THE RULE THAT THE IMPERIAL FAMILY OF THE KOU EMPIRE IS A UNIQUE AND THE MOST NOBLE FAMILY IN THE WORLD.

IF YOU REPEAT A LIE COUNTLESS TIMES, IT BECOMES REALITY.



IN  
ORDER TO  
UNIFY THIS  
WORLD.



18

WE BELIEVE  
THAT YOU ARE  
WALKING ON  
THE SAME  
PATH AS US,  
SIR ALIBABA  
SALUJA.

WE INVITED  
YOU HERE  
BECAUSE

WHAT IS THE REAL INTENTION OF THE KOU BROTHERS!?



YOU  
HAVE TO  
COMPLETELY  
CHANGE THE  
COUNTRIES  
CONQUERED  
BY THE KOU  
EMPIRE IN  
ORDER TO  
UNIFY THIS  
WORLD?

HOW WILL  
ALIBABA DEAL  
WITH THE RE-  
SOURCEFUL  
KOUUMEI?

ARE YOU  
TELLING ME

MAGI

The  
labyrinth of  
magic

たか  
心の高  
大

209TH NIGHT: UNIFIED IDEOLOGY

WHAT?

!?

OR DO YOU  
THINK IT IS  
MORE NATURAL  
THAT THEY  
UNDERSTAND  
EACH OTHER  
AND COEXIST?

DO  
YOU THINK  
PEOPLE ARE  
NATURALLY  
INCLINED TO  
CONFLICT  
WITH EACH  
OTHER...

... I  
THINK THERE  
ARE A LOT  
OF PEOPLE  
WHO DESIRE  
THAT, BUT...

JUST  
CALM DOWN  
AND LISTEN  
TO ME, AL-  
RIGHT?

!?

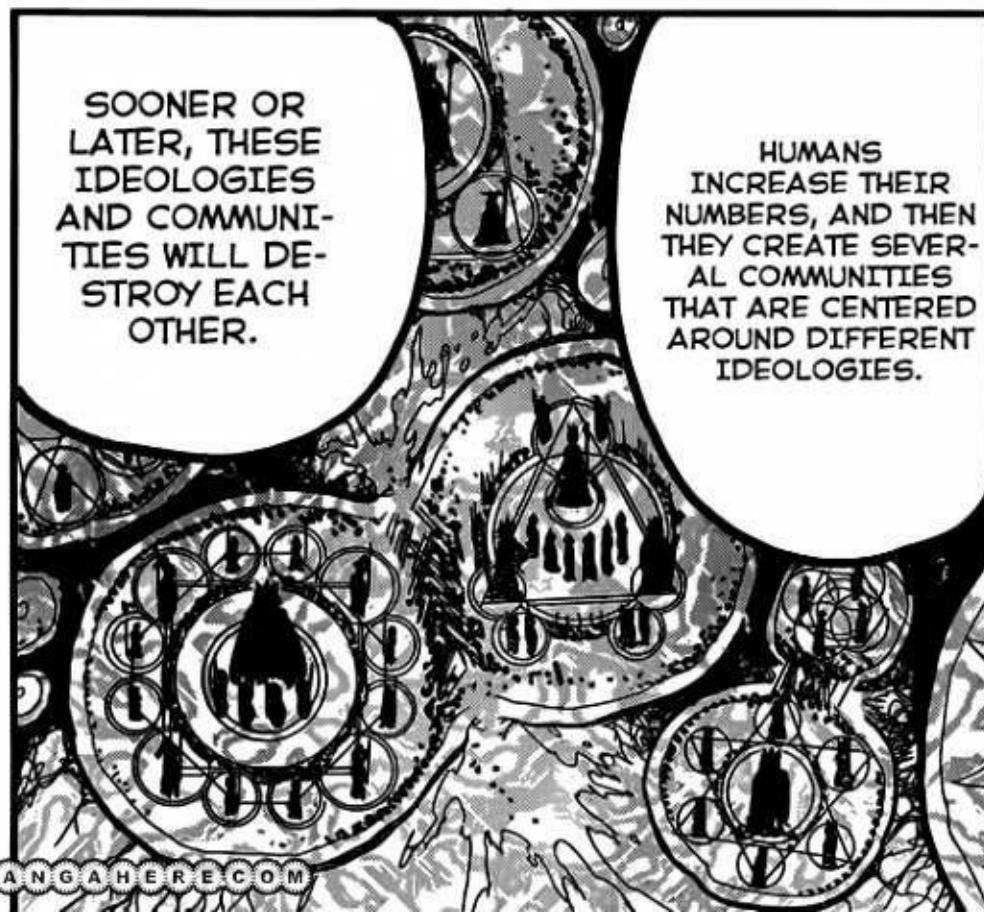
THERE-  
FORE  
...

WE THINK  
HUMANS  
ARE LIVING  
BEINGS  
INCLINED  
TOWARD  
CONFLICT,  
AND EVERY  
SINGLE ONE  
OF THEM IS  
DIFFERENT  
FROM AN-  
OTHER.

WE  
HAVE  
THESE  
THEO-  
RIES.



2



IT IS IMPOSSIBLE TO FIND A "GREAT DYNASTY THAT EXISTED IN THIS WORLD AND THAT NOW IS EXTINCT" THAT WASN'T ANNIHILATED BECAUSE OF CONFLICT.

THIS THEORY HAS BEEN PROVEN IN SEVERAL INSTANCES IN HISTORY. FOR EXAMPLE, THE GREAT KOURA EMPIRE OR THE PARTHEVIA EMPIRE THAT COMPLETELY DECLINED...



THE SAME THING HAPPENED EVEN IN OUR HISTORY.



"HATRED" ...?

ALL OF THOSE CONFLICTS CAUSED "HATRED" TO THE PEOPLE WHO SUPPORT THE DIFFERENT IDEOLOGIES.

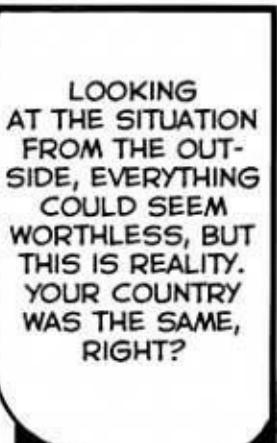


"GAI" WAS A COUNTRY WITH A LONG TRADITION, BUT TWO KINGS FOUGHT EACH OTHER IN ORDER TO GAIN THE REGENCY, THEIR FOLLOWERS HATED EACH OTHER, AND EVERY SINGLE FACTION COULD ONLY THINK ABOUT OPPOSING THE OTHER IN ORDER TO GAIN THE SUPREMACY.

SEVERAL NATIONS AND IDEOLOGIES WERE PUT NEAR ONE ANOTHER IN THE MIDDLE PLAINS. FOR EXAMPLE, A CERTAIN COUNTRY CALLED "GO" HELD HATRED FOR ANOTHER COUNTRY CALLED "GAI" THAT TRAMPLED "GO" UNDER ITS FEET IN THE PAST. THE ONLY THING THEY COULD THINK OF WAS TO STEAL "GAI'S" SUPREMACY.



THE PEOPLE WITH DIFFERENT INTERESTS AND POSITIONS FOUGHT IN ORDER TO STEAL EACH OTHER'S WEALTH AND GOODS...



LOOKING AT THE SITUATION FROM THE OUTSIDE, EVERYTHING COULD SEEM WORTHLESS, BUT THIS IS REALITY. YOUR COUNTRY WAS THE SAME, RIGHT?

THEY FOUGHT UNDER ANY POSSIBLE EXCUSE, AND CONTINUED TO CONFLICT IN ORDER TO STEAL EACH OTHER'S RESOURCES IN THE MIDDLE PLAINS.



MATAL  
MOGAMETT  
ONCE SAID,  
"THE MAGICIANS  
AND THE GOI  
CAN NEVER  
UNDERSTAND  
EACH OTHER",  
RIGHT?

WE ALSO  
LOST A LOT  
OF PEOPLE  
DEAR TO  
US...

AND THE  
PEOPLE OF THE  
MIDDLE PLAINS  
WERE REDUCED  
TO A TENTH OF  
THE NUMBER  
THEY WERE  
DURING THEIR  
GOLDEN AGE.



4



IN  
OTHER  
WORDS  
...



AND ERASE  
FROM HISTORY  
THE FACT  
THAT...

THERE WERE  
ORIGINALLY  
DIFFERENT  
IDEOLOGIES  
AND COUN-  
TRIES IN THIS  
WORLD.

WE WANT  
TO UNIFY THE  
DIFFERENT  
IDEOLOGIES  
AND LAWS  
THAT CUR-  
RENTLY EXIST,



5

WILL  
RULE THE  
WORLD!!

AND THEN  
ONE SOLE  
KING...

ALL THE  
WORTHLESS  
SYSTEMS  
THAT BIND  
THE PEOPLE,

THE  
CONTRADICTION  
THAT BRINGS  
US TO REPEAT  
WARS IN ORDER  
TO STOP THEM,

AND THE  
IRRATIONAL  
SLAVERY  
SYSTEM...

"HISTORY"  
IS NOTHING  
MORE THAN A  
REPRESENTA-  
TION OF THE  
HUMAN SOCI-  
ETY.

IT SHOULD  
BE POSSIBLE  
TO DISTORT  
IT AS WELL.

FOR THE  
PEACE THAT  
WILL AWAITS  
US IN THE  
FUTURE...

YOU WANT...  
TO ERASE THE  
TRUTH FROM  
HISTORY...!?

EXACTLY.

THIS CAN  
BE ACHIEVED  
THROUGH THE  
PASSAGE OF TIME  
AND STEALING  
THE MEMORIES  
AND HISTORICAL  
RECORDS OF THE  
PEOPLE.

YOU'RE RIGHT,  
BUT YOU DON'T  
HAVE TO WORRY.  
THE SLAVERY  
SYSTEM IN KOU  
IS HUMANE. NOT  
ONLY WILL THEY  
BE FREED AFTER  
5 YEARS OF  
SERVICE, BUT  
MISTREATMENT  
IS ALSO PROHIB-  
ITED BY LAW.



AND  
YOU KNOW,  
ISN'T THIS A  
GOOD WAY TO  
MAINTAIN BAL-  
BADD'S PUBLIC  
ORDER?

WHAT  
DID YOU  
SAY....!?

!?

YOU'RE  
THE ONES  
WHO IN-  
TRODUCED  
SLAVERY  
TO BAL-  
BADD...

THESE  
ARE  
NEEDED  
IN THE  
PRESENT.

ACTUALLY, IN THE COUNTRIES UNDER THE RULE OF THE KOU EMPIRE, THERE HAVEN'T BEEN ANY REBELLIONS BECAUSE OF THIS PRACTICE.

WHEN THE PEOPLE SEE THAT THERE EXISTS ANOTHER CLASS THAT IS OVERWHELMINGLY "BENEATH" THEM, THEY DON'T RISK THEIR LIVES IN A REVOLUTION.



YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND. WE ARE JUST TRYING TO DO SOMETHING THAT NO ONE EVER ACCOMPLISHED...

LIKE HELL THINGS WILL GO SO SMOOTHLY!

ONCE WAR DISAPPEARS, IT WILL BE IMPOSSIBLE TO GET PRISONERS OF WAR WHO WILL BECOME SLAVES, AND HUMANITY WILL OBTAIN A WORLD WHERE THEY CAN LIVE PEACEFULLY.

EVEN IF YOU HAVE TO SADLY CAST SOMETHING SO BEAUTIFUL AWAY!!!?

ANYONE CAN GRIEVE FOR THE MANY IRRATIONAL THINGS IN THIS WORLD. HOWEVER, DID YOU EVER THINK ABOUT CHANGING THE WORLD AT ITS FOUNDATIONS?

YOUR THOUGHTS ? BY THE WAY, HAVE YOU CHANGED...



BUT  
TO LOOK  
AT A MORE  
LONG-TERM  
HAPPINESS  
FOR THE  
ENTIRE  
WORLD!!?

NOT JUST  
FOR THE  
TEMPORARY  
HAPPINESS  
OF A SINGLE  
COUNTRY LIKE  
BALBADD,

GIVE  
ME YOUR  
ANSWER,  
ALIBABA  
SALUJA.

!?



AREN'T  
THE KOU  
EMPIRE  
AND AL  
THAMEN...

IS IT  
REALLY AL-  
RIGHT TO DO  
ANYTHING IN  
THE PRE-  
SENT FOR A  
BETTER  
FUTURE?

CAN'T CAST  
AWAY SO  
MANY SMALL  
MEMORIES  
FOR THAT  
GREATER  
GOOD.

BUT  
I...

SCATTER-  
ING THE  
SEEDS OF  
"HATRED"  
THAT WILL  
ONE DAY  
EXPLODE?



11





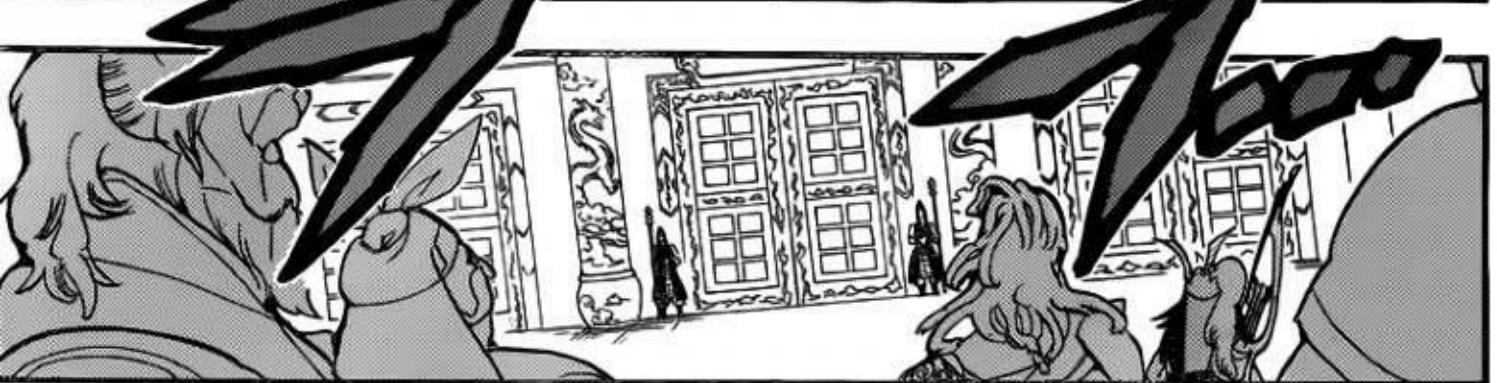
EVEN IF  
YOU HAVE  
THOUGHT  
SO MUCH  
ABOUT  
THESE  
THINGS,



WHY DON'T  
YOU CONVEY  
YOUR REAL  
FEELINGS TO  
THE PEOPLE  
OF YOUR  
COUNTRY



WHO  
ARE LIVING  
RIGHT NOW,  
INSTEAD OF  
WAITING  
FOR THE  
FUTURE...!?



13



NOTHING  
WILL CHANGE  
IN THIS  
COUNTRY NO  
MATTER HOW  
MUCH YOU  
BARK...

YOU ARE  
JUST A  
PRISON-  
ER.

RIGHT  
NOW,  
YOU  
AREN'T A  
PRINCE  
OR ANY-  
THING  
ELSE.

GOOD  
JOB.

YOU  
GAVE  
YOUR  
PIECE  
SHAME-  
LESS-  
LY...

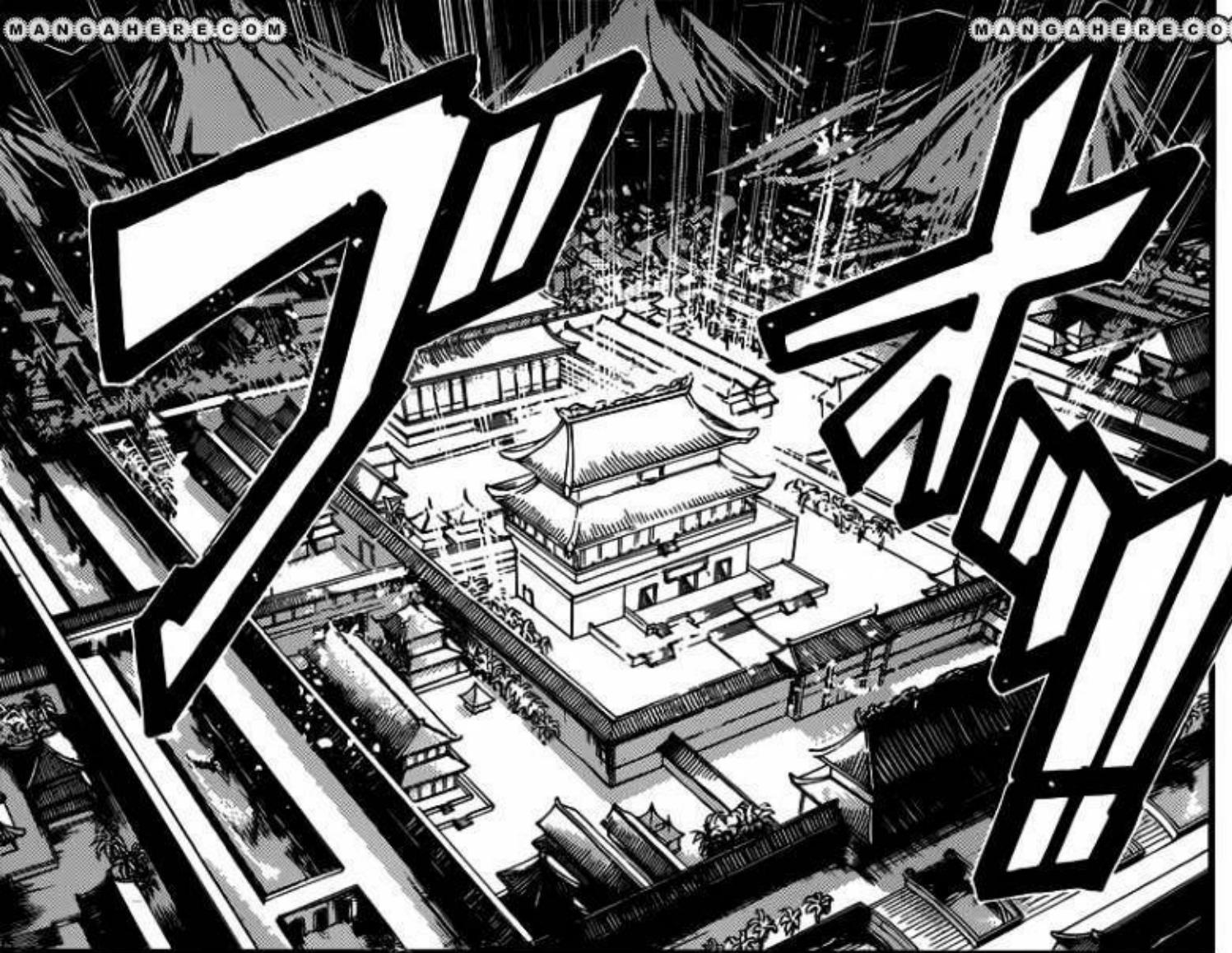
ON  
THE CON-  
TRARY...



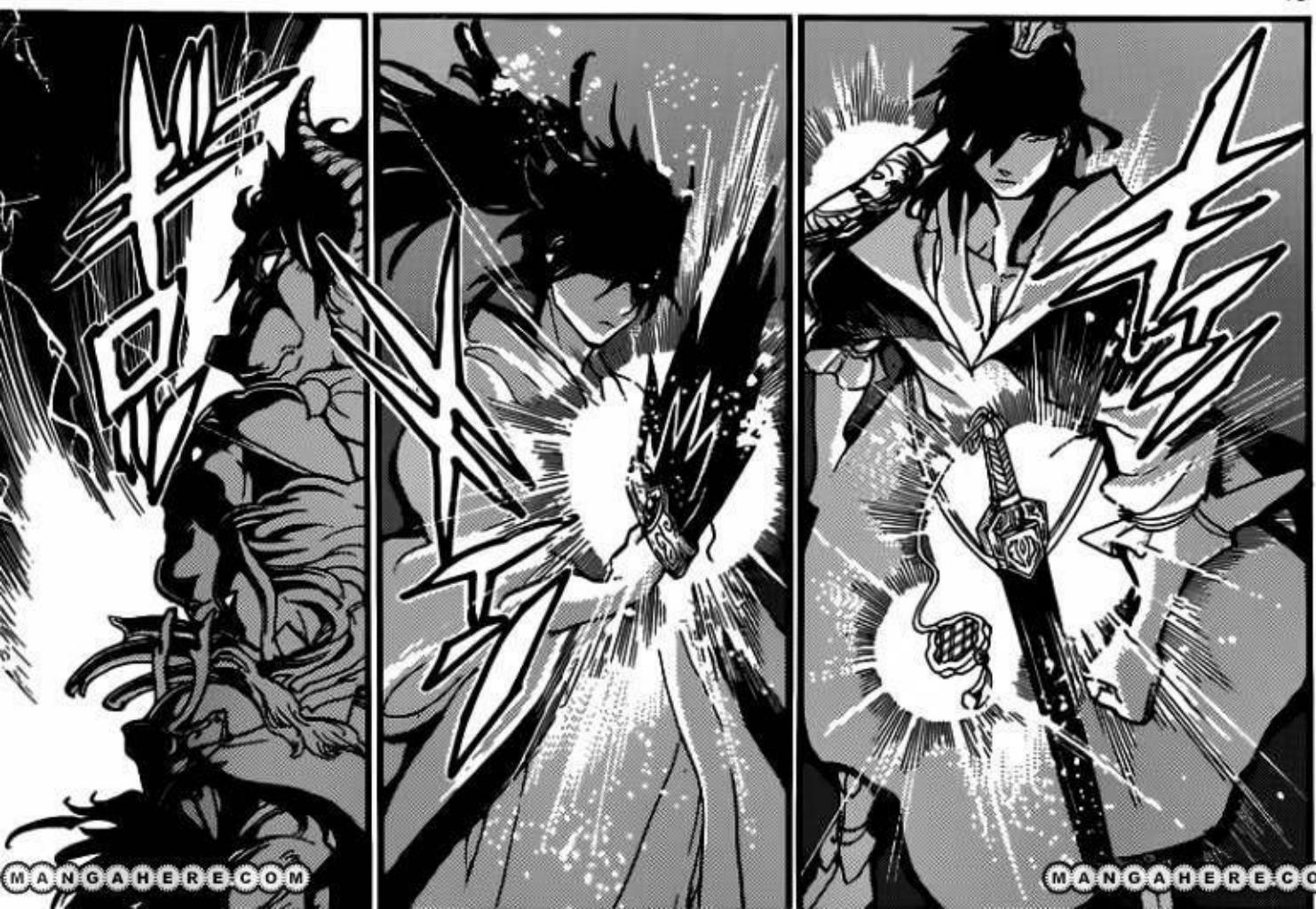
DID YOU  
EVEN STOP  
TO CONSIDER  
THAT YOU  
ARE ALONE  
IN THE  
MIDDLE OF  
THE ENEMY'S  
BASE?

IT WOULD  
BE EASY  
FOR ME TO  
MAKE YOU  
DISAPPEAR  
RIGHT  
NOW...





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DAMMIT... TO  
THINK THAT I  
WOULD MEET  
MY END IN  
THIS PLACE...!!

SHIT

...



DON'T GET  
COCKY...  
YOU FOOL!

DEPENDING  
ON YOUR DE-  
CISION, THE  
SALUJA  
ROYAL  
FAMILY  
COULD BE  
REVIVED!!!

BUT  
!!!



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WHAT  
DO YOU  
MEAN...!!?

⋮  
!!?





IF YOU DO THIS, I WILL GIVE YOU FULL AUTHORITY IN BALBADD IN THE FUTURE...

PUT ALL YOUR EFFORTS TOGETHER WITH THOSE OF KOU-MEI'S IN ORDER TO IMPROVE BALBADD. CUT ALL OF YOUR CONNECTIONS TO SINDRIA AND SWEAR FEALTY TO ME.

WHAT  
DO YOU  
SAY?

SO...

KOUEN'S TRUE GOAL IS FINALLY REVEALED!!