



# VAISHNO DEVI

GODDESS OF THE HILLS

Vol 829



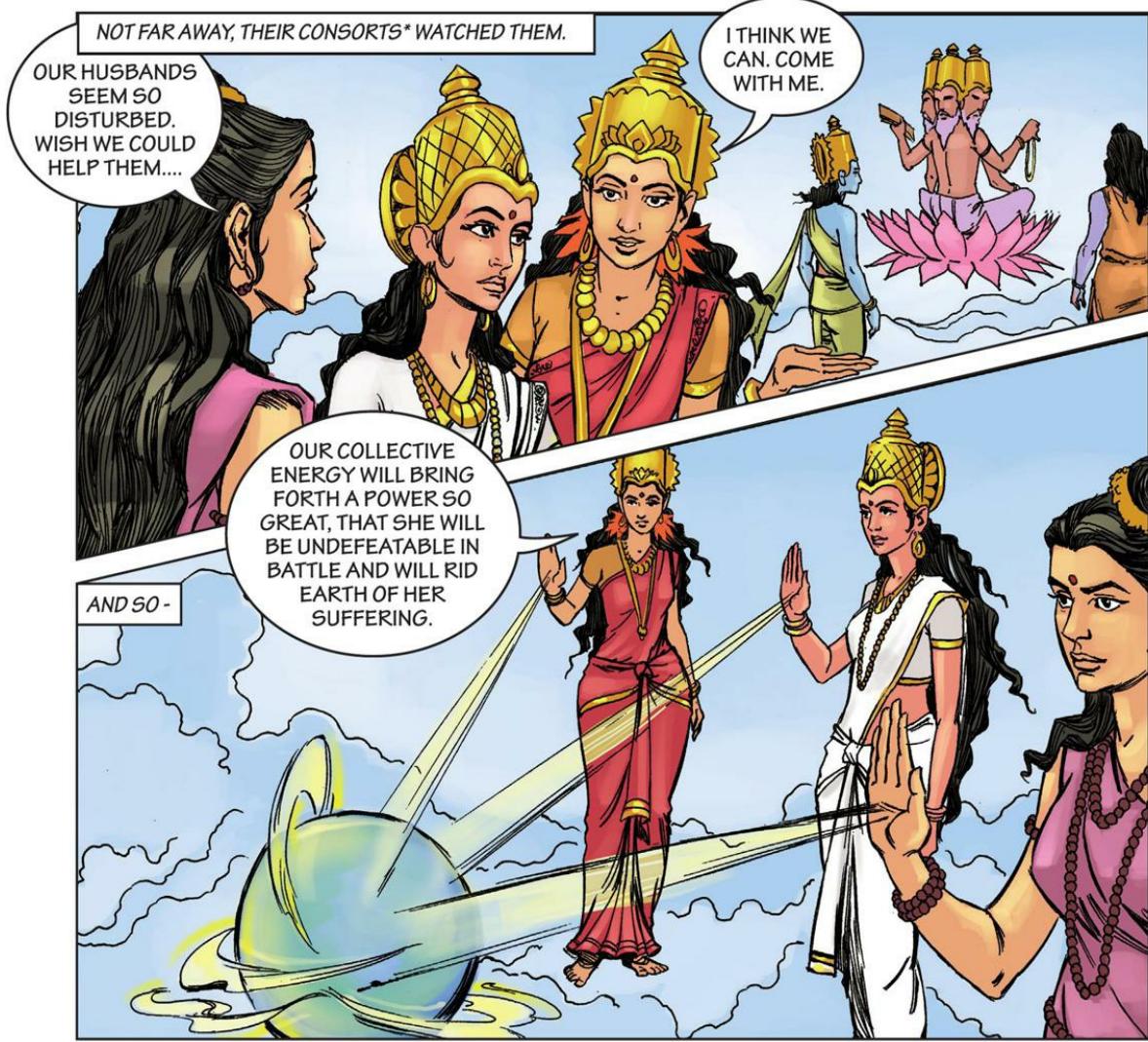
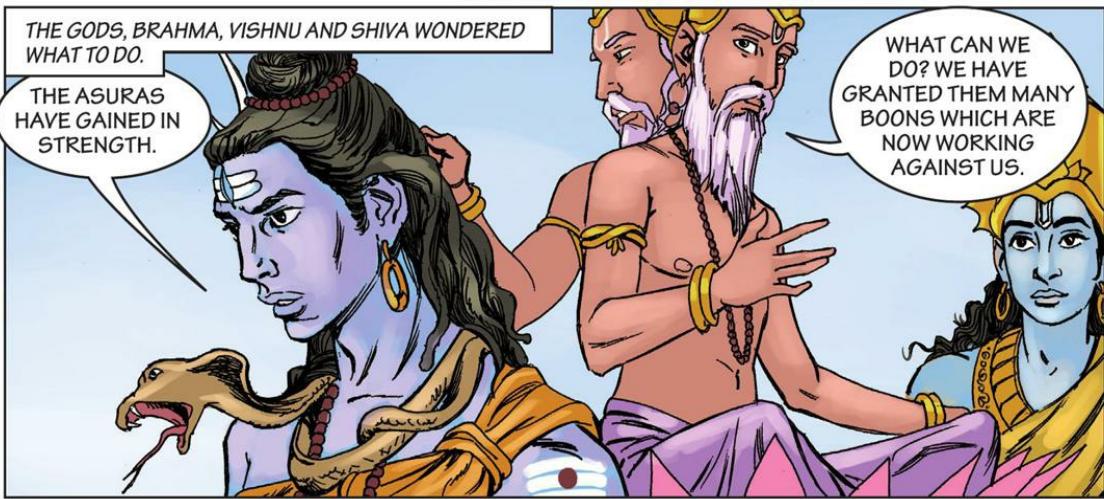
# VAISHNO DEVI

IT WAS THE TRETA YUGA\*. THE EVIL UNLEASHED BY THE ASURAS<sup>^</sup> HAD GAINED MOMENTUM AND BHOODEVI'S\*\* PLAINTIVE CRIES RANG ACROSS THE HEAVENS.

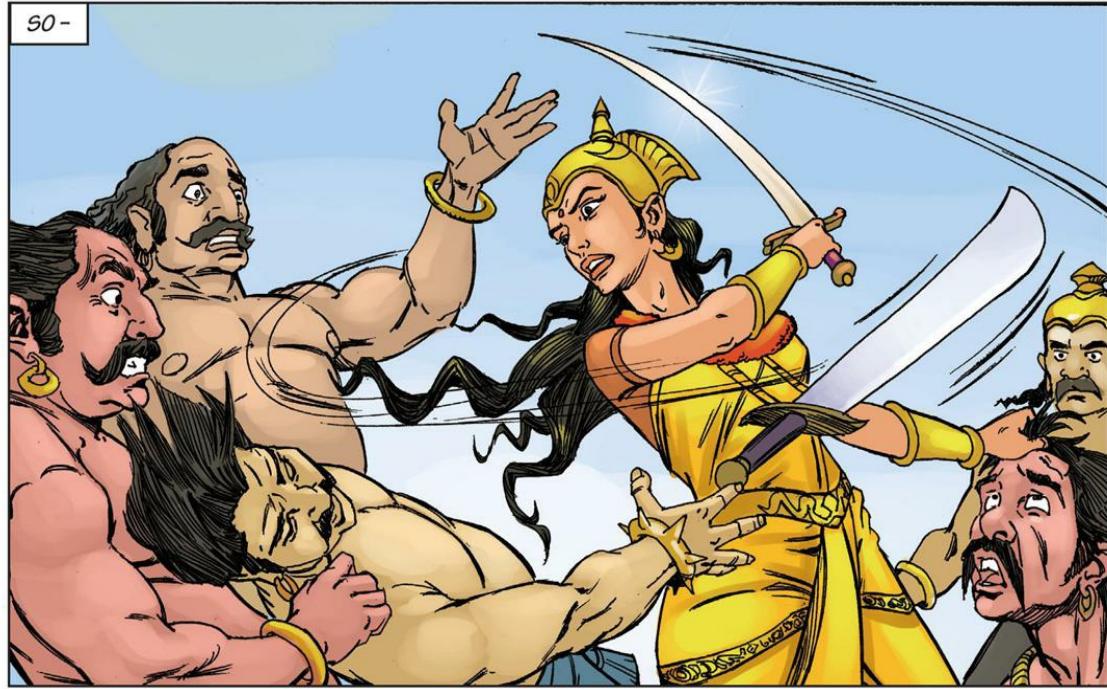


\* THE SECOND YUGA OR AGE. IT FOLLOWS SATYA YUGA.  
^ DEMONS.

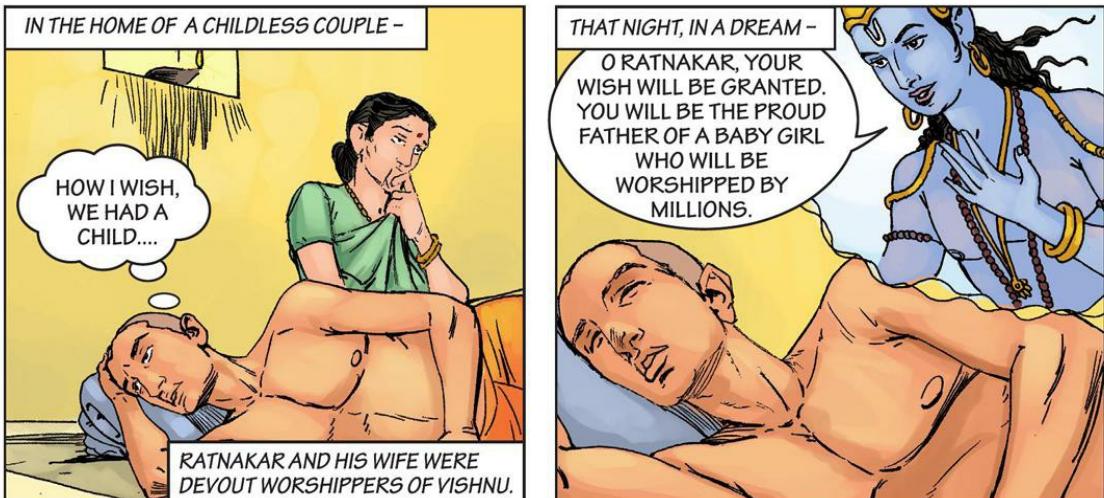
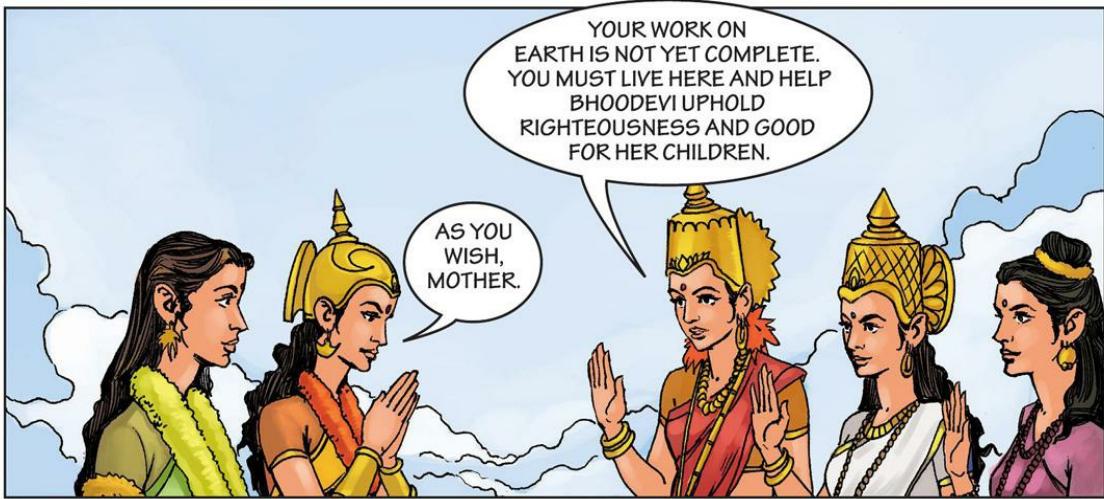
\*\* THE EARTH



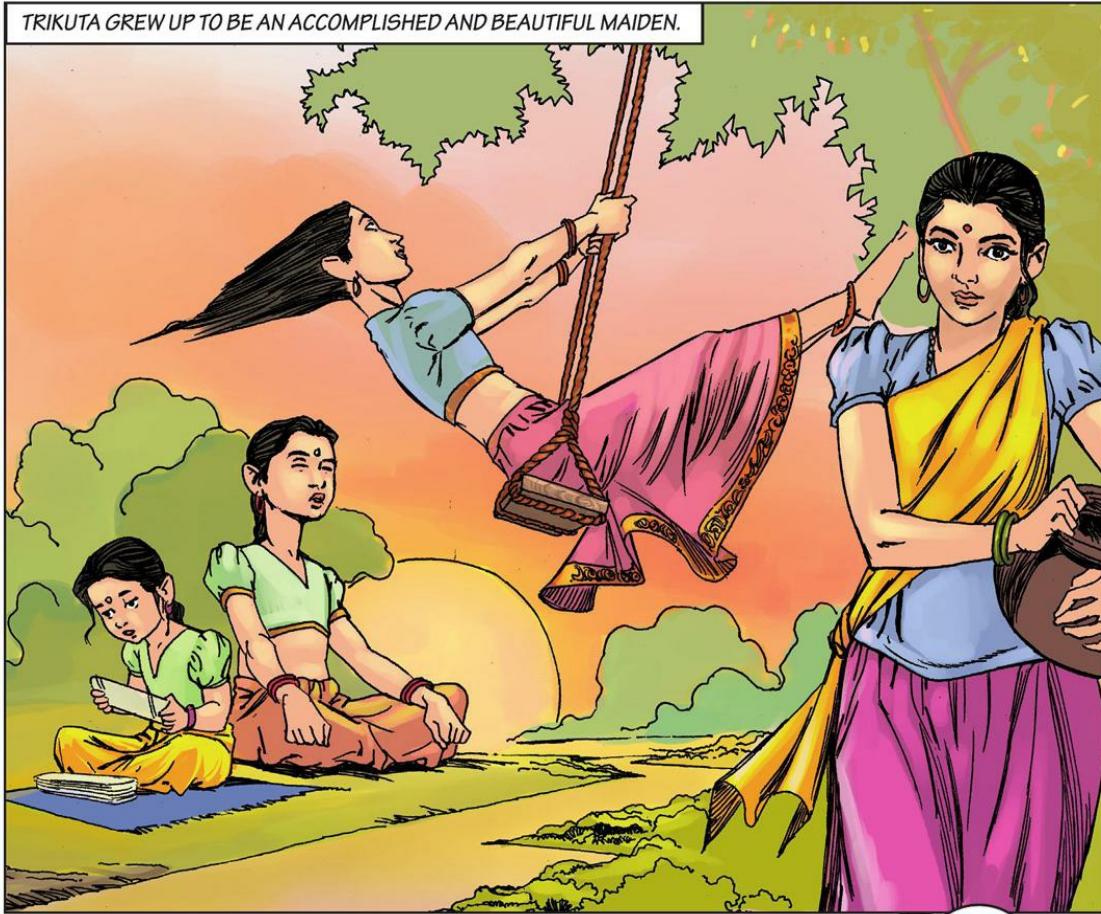
\* SARASWATI, LAKSHMI AND PARVATI







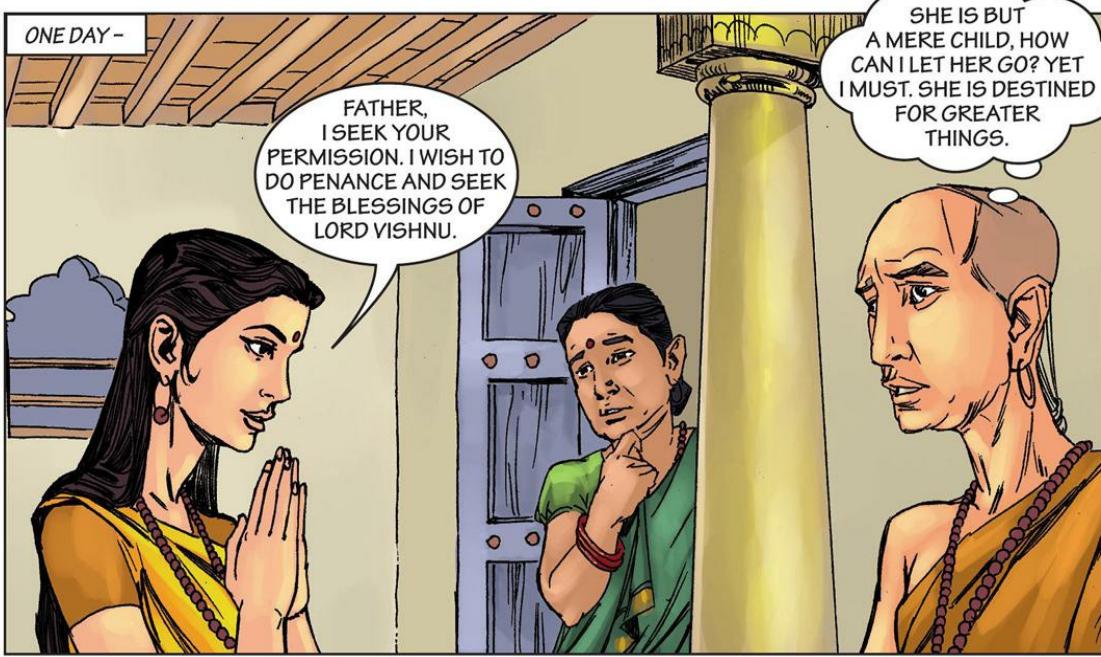
TRIKUTA GREW UP TO BE AN ACCOMPLISHED AND BEAUTIFUL MAIDEN.

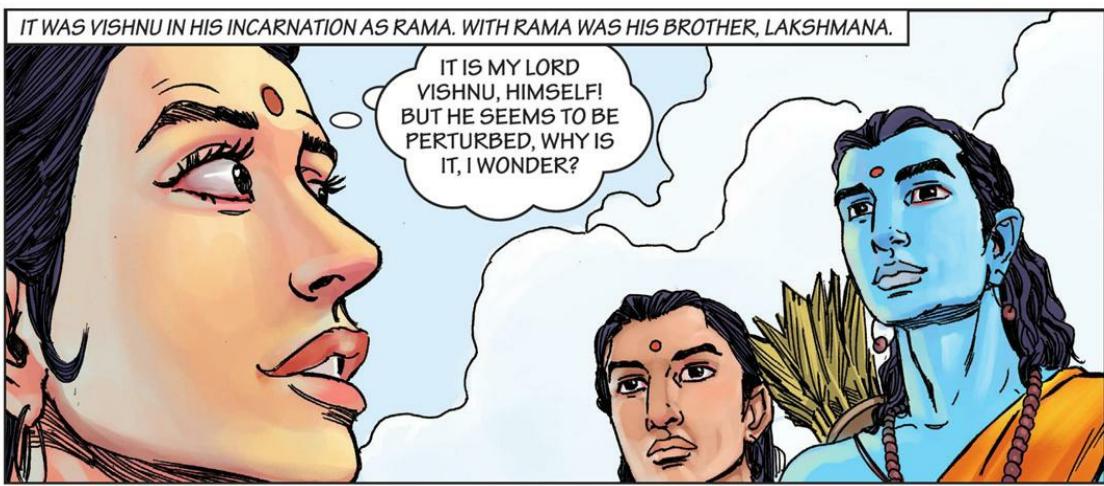


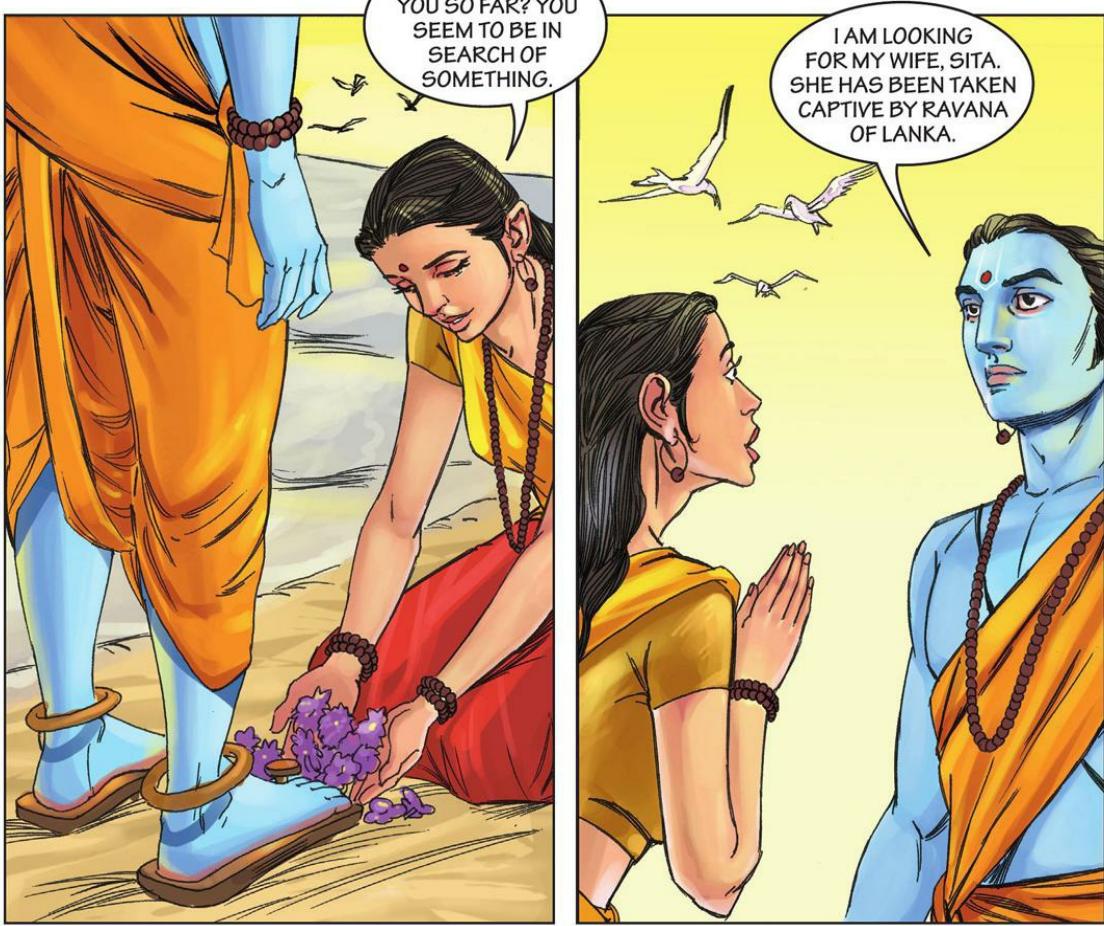
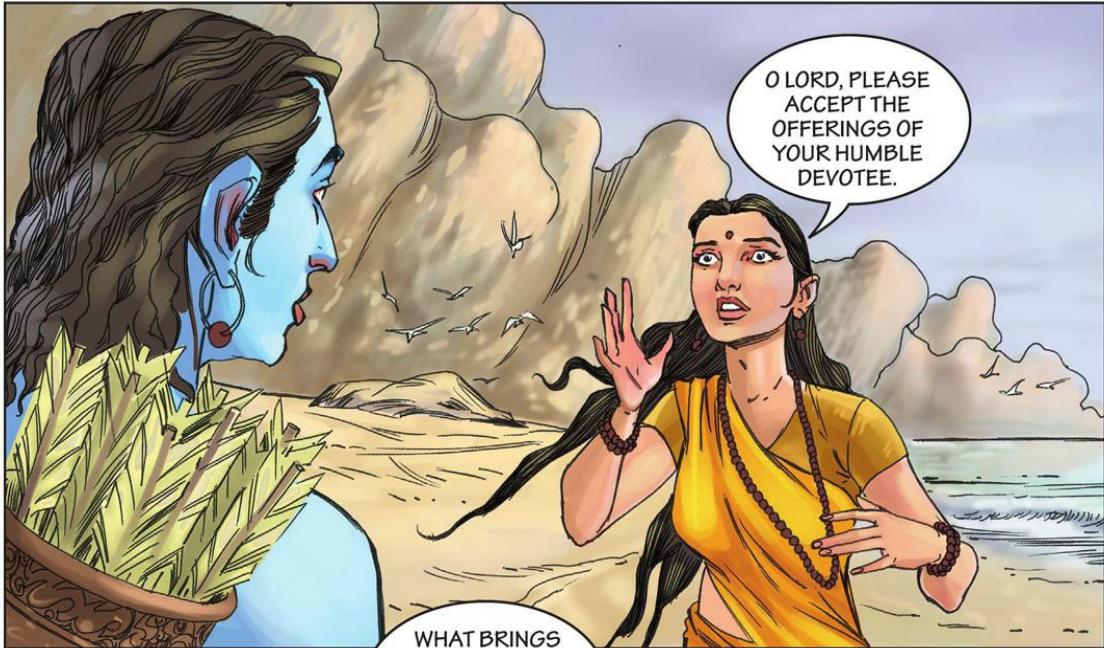
ONE DAY -

FATHER,  
I SEEK YOUR  
PERMISSION. I WISH TO  
DO PENANCE AND SEEK  
THE BLESSINGS OF  
LORD VISHNU.

SHE IS BUT  
A MERE CHILD, HOW  
CAN I LET HER GO? YET  
I MUST. SHE IS DESTINED  
FOR GREATER  
THINGS.





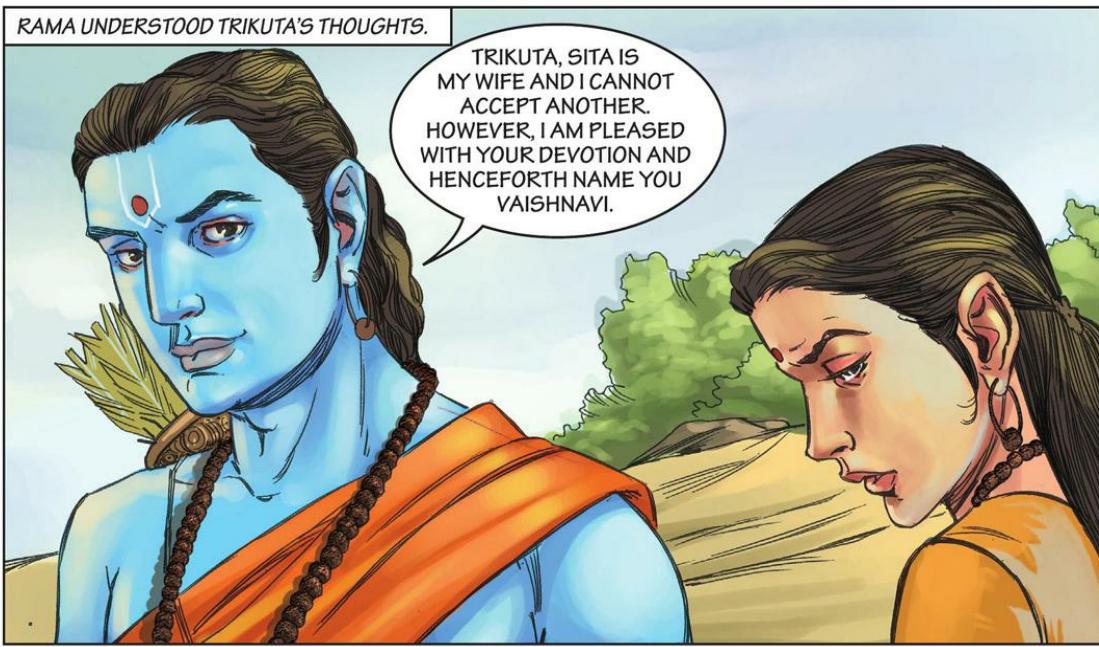


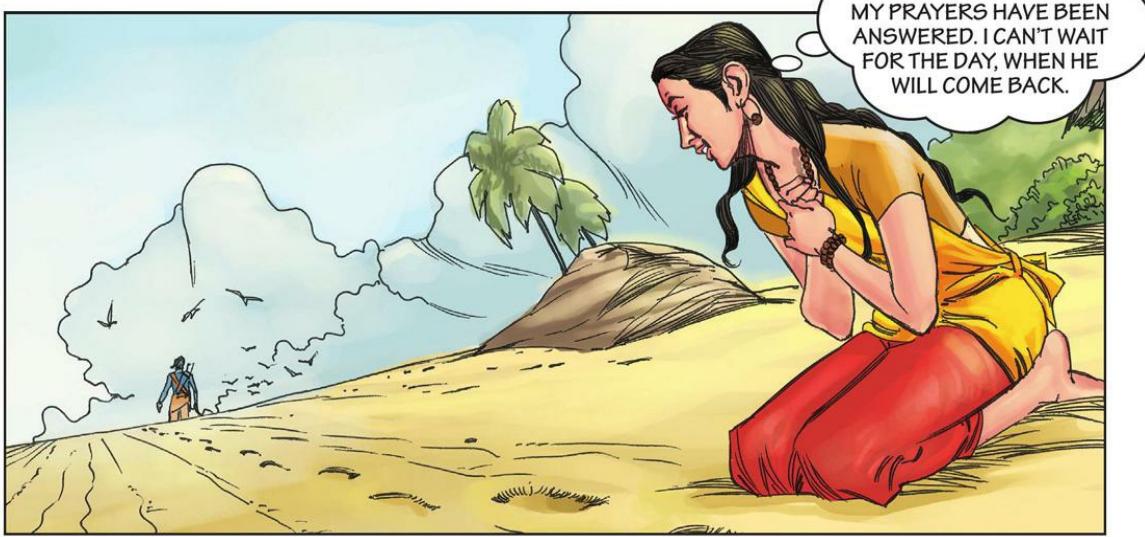
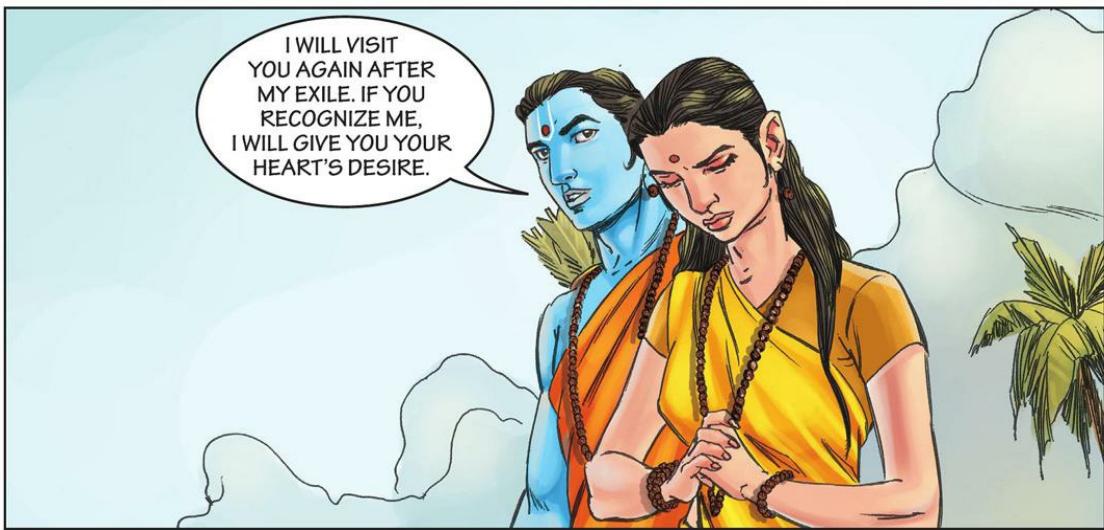
UPON HEARING THIS, TRIKUTA'S FACE FELL.



RAMA UNDERSTOOD TRIKUTA'S THOUGHTS.

TRIKUTA, SITA IS MY WIFE AND I CANNOT ACCEPT ANOTHER. HOWEVER, I AM PLEASED WITH YOUR DEVOTION AND HENCEFORTH NAME YOU VAISHNAVI.









<sup>^</sup> IN MODERN DAY JAMMU.

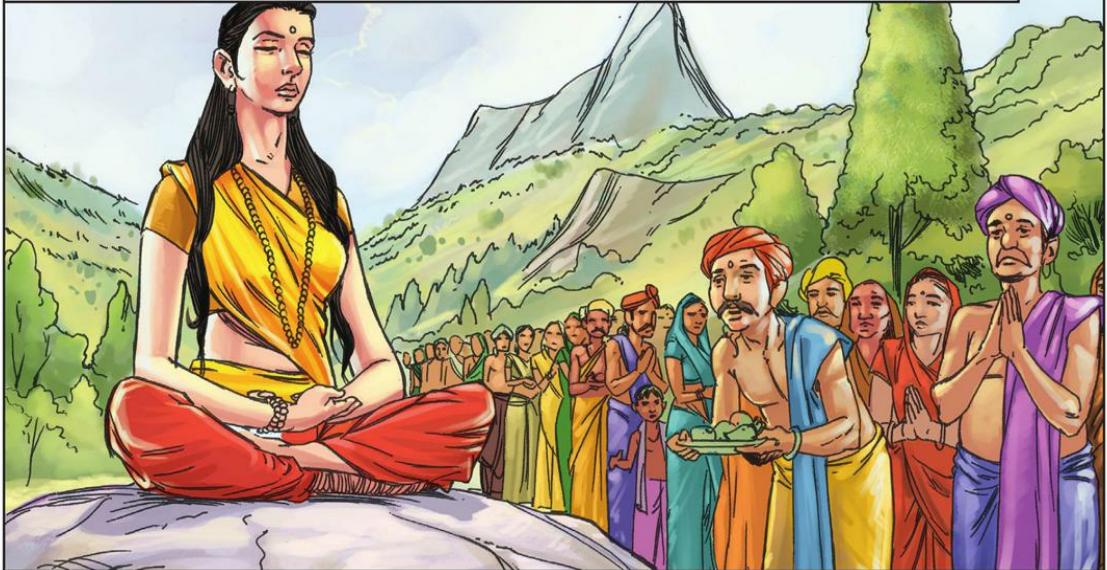
\* LAST OF THE FOUR YUGAS - THE AGE OF DESTRUCTION.

...WHEN WE  
SHALL BE UNITED  
AGAIN. TILL THEN, YOUR  
FAME WILL SPREAD FAR  
AND WIDE AND THOSE  
WHO COME TO YOU WILL  
BE FREED FROM  
SUFFERING.

HEEDING THE ADVICE OF RAMA, VAISHNAVI  
HEADED FOR THE TRIKUTA HILLS.

DURING HER JOURNEY SHE FACED MANY HARDSHIPS  
BEFORE SHE FINALLY REACHED TRIKUTA.

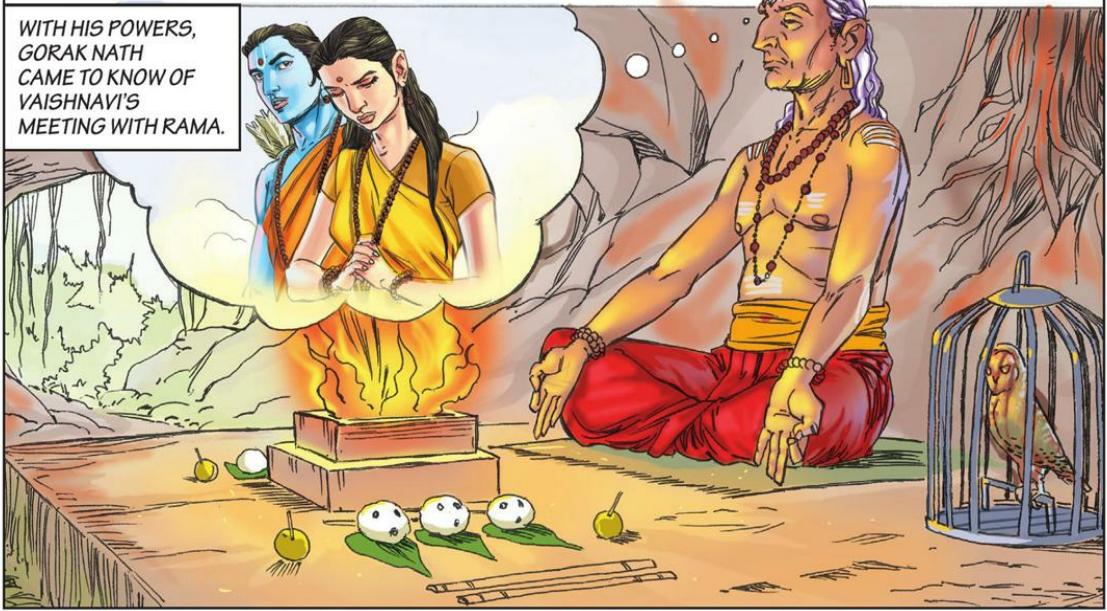
AS PREDICTED BY RAMA, VAISHNAVI'S FAME SPREAD FAR AND WIDE AND DEVOTEES FLOCKED TO HER.



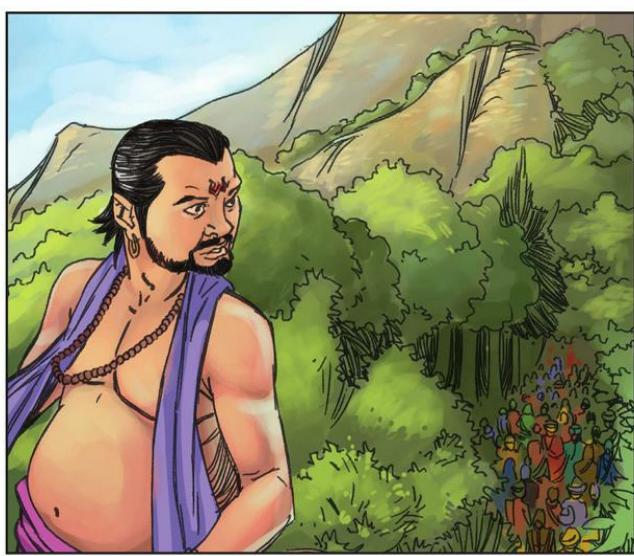
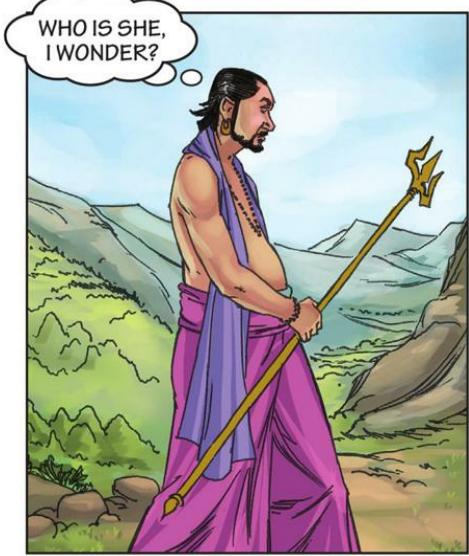
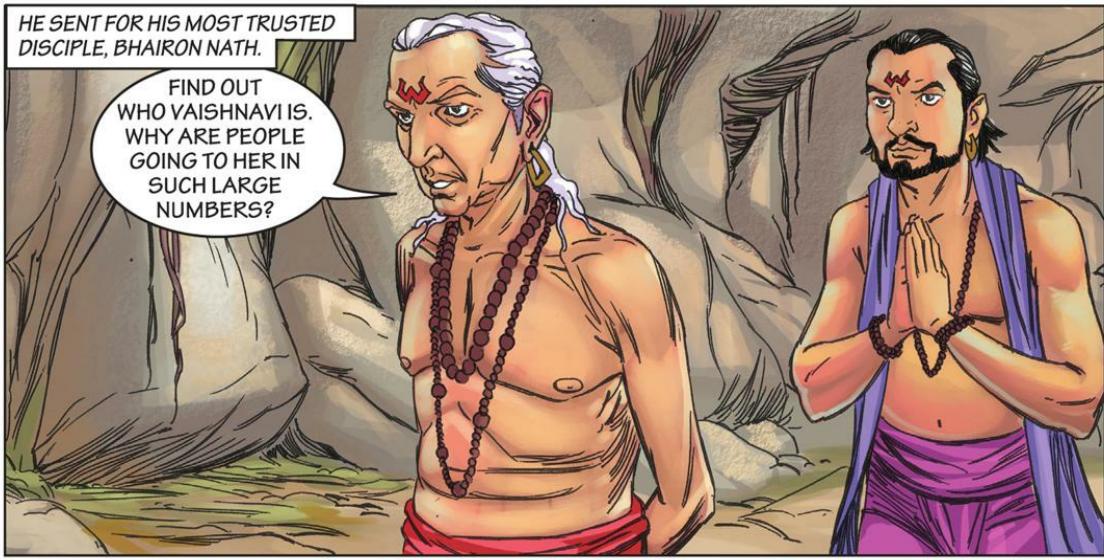
AS TIME PASSED, STORIES ABOUT VAISHNAVI REACHED THE EARS OF A TANTRIK\* CALLED GORAK NATH.



WITH HIS POWERS,  
GORAK NATH  
CAME TO KNOW OF  
VAISHNAVI'S  
MEETING WITH RAMA.



\* ONE WHO PRACTICES TANTRA - A SPIRITUAL STUDY

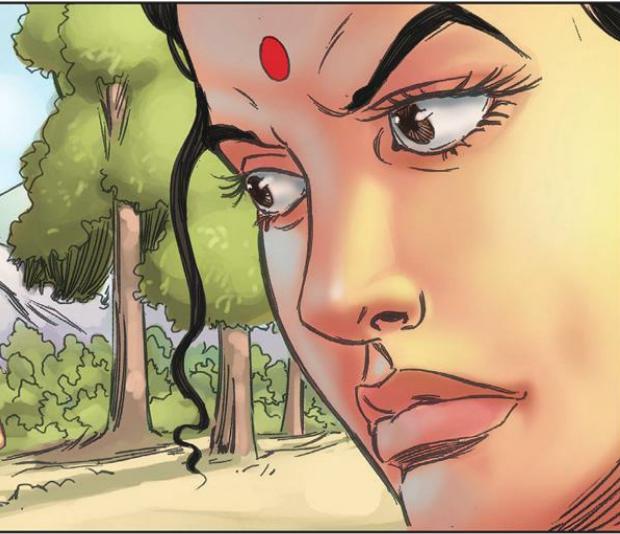


HOWEVER, WHEN HE SET EYES ON VAISHNAVI -



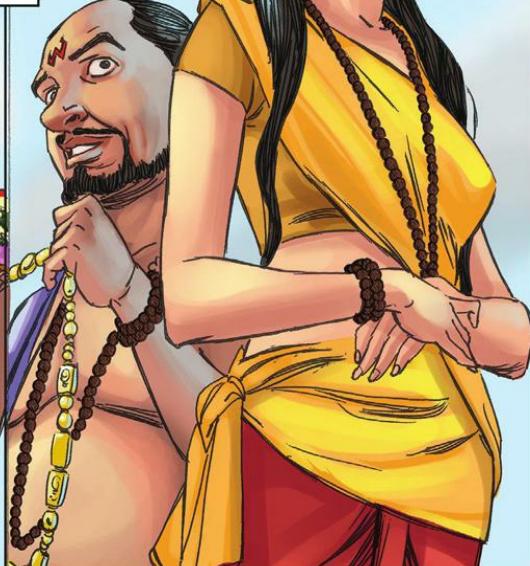
WHEN EVERYONE HAD LEFT -

VAISHNAVI,  
I AM STRUCK BY  
YOUR BEAUTY AND  
VIRTUE. BE MY WIFE  
WILLINGLY OR  
I WILL CARRY YOU  
AWAY BY FORCE.

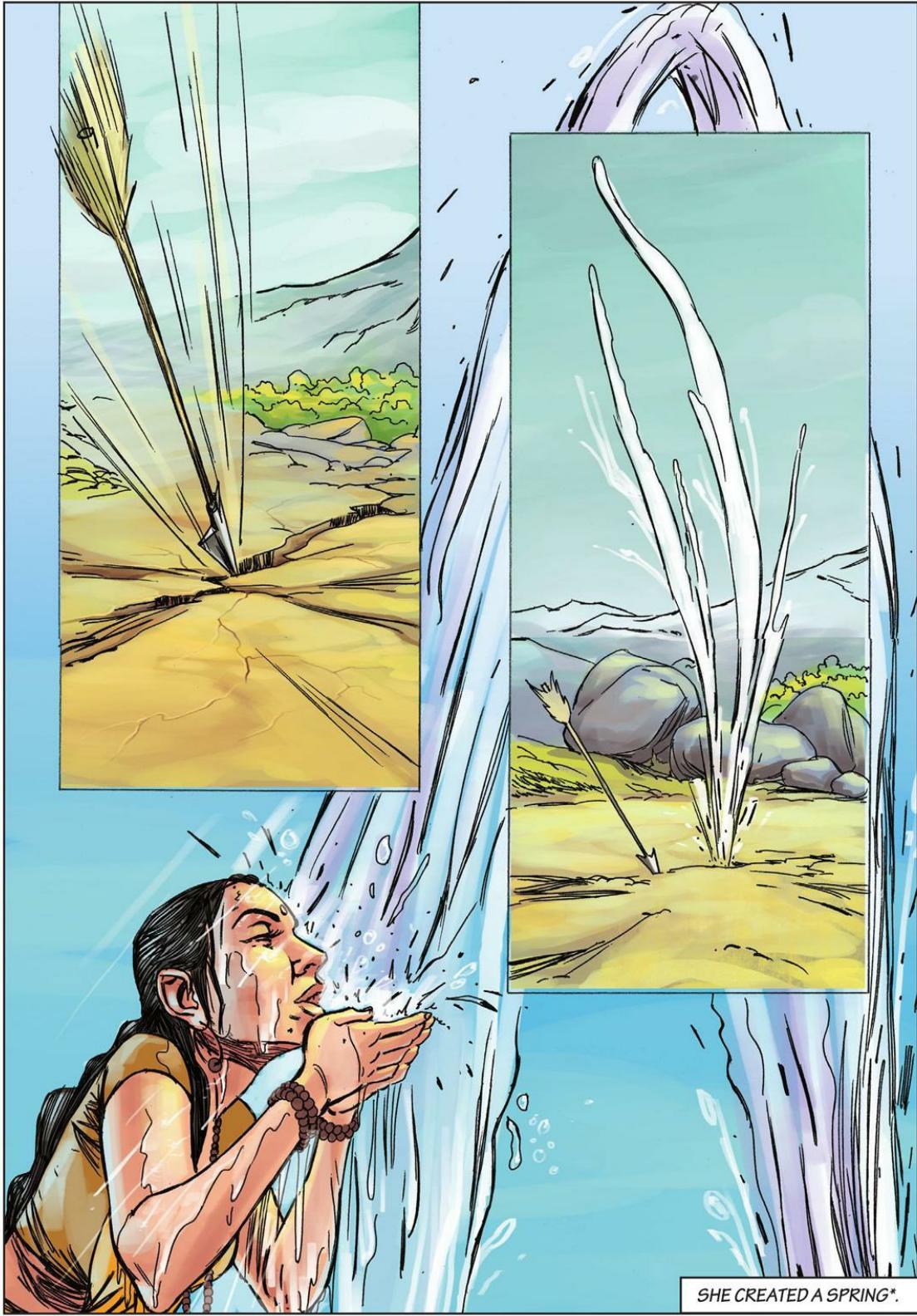


HOW DARE YOU  
SPEAK TO ME LIKE  
THAT! MY HEART IS  
SET ON VISHNU AND  
ONLY HE WILL BE MY  
HUSBAND.

UNDETERRED, BHAIRON RELENTLESSLY PURSUED VAISHNAVI.

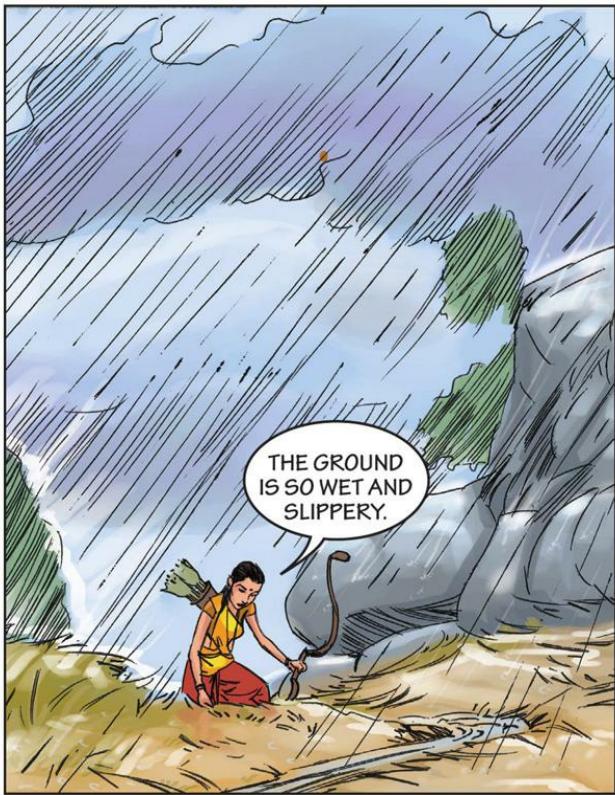




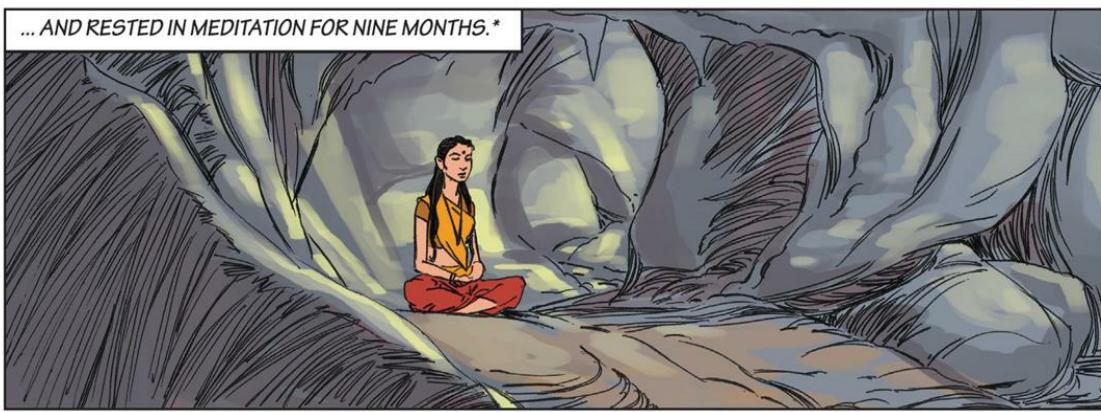
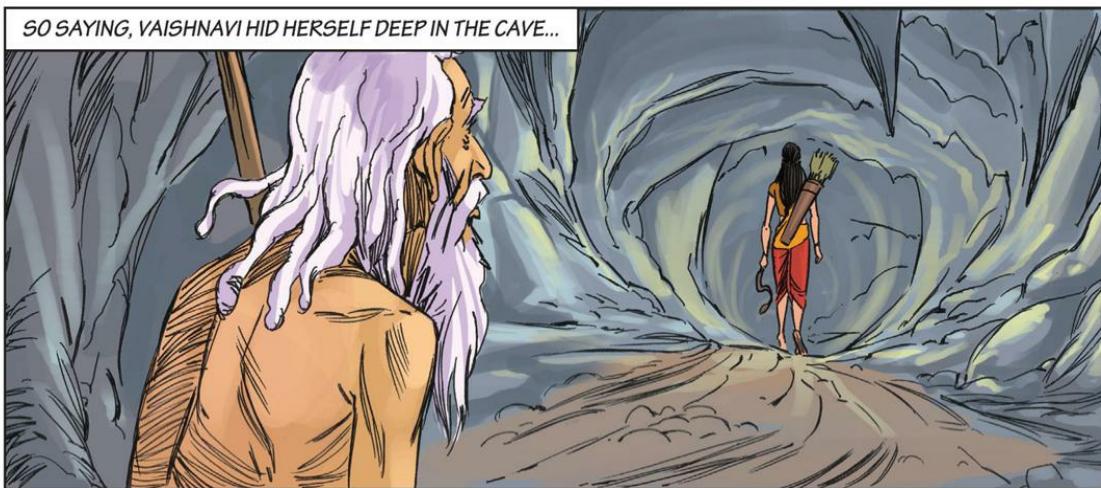


SHE CREATED A SPRING\*.

\* NOW CALLED BAN GANGA. BAN MEANS ARROW AND GANGA IS SYNONYMOUS WITH 'SACRED RIVER'.



\* THIS PLACE IS TODAY KNOWN AS CHARAN PADUKA  
OR FOOTPRINT.



\* THIS PLACE IS KNOWN AS ADH KUNWARI. THE CAVE IS A  
VAISHNAVI RESTED AS A BABY RESTS IN THE WOMB OF

CALLED GARBH JOON SIGNIFYING THE NINE MONTHS  
10THER.



VAISHNAVI ALSO SENSED HIS PRESENCE.

SHE USED HER TRIDENT TO BLAST A HOLE IN THE WALL OF THE CAVE...

BHAIRON NATH HAS FOUND MY REFUGE. I MUST LEAVE THIS PLACE.

BOOOOMM!

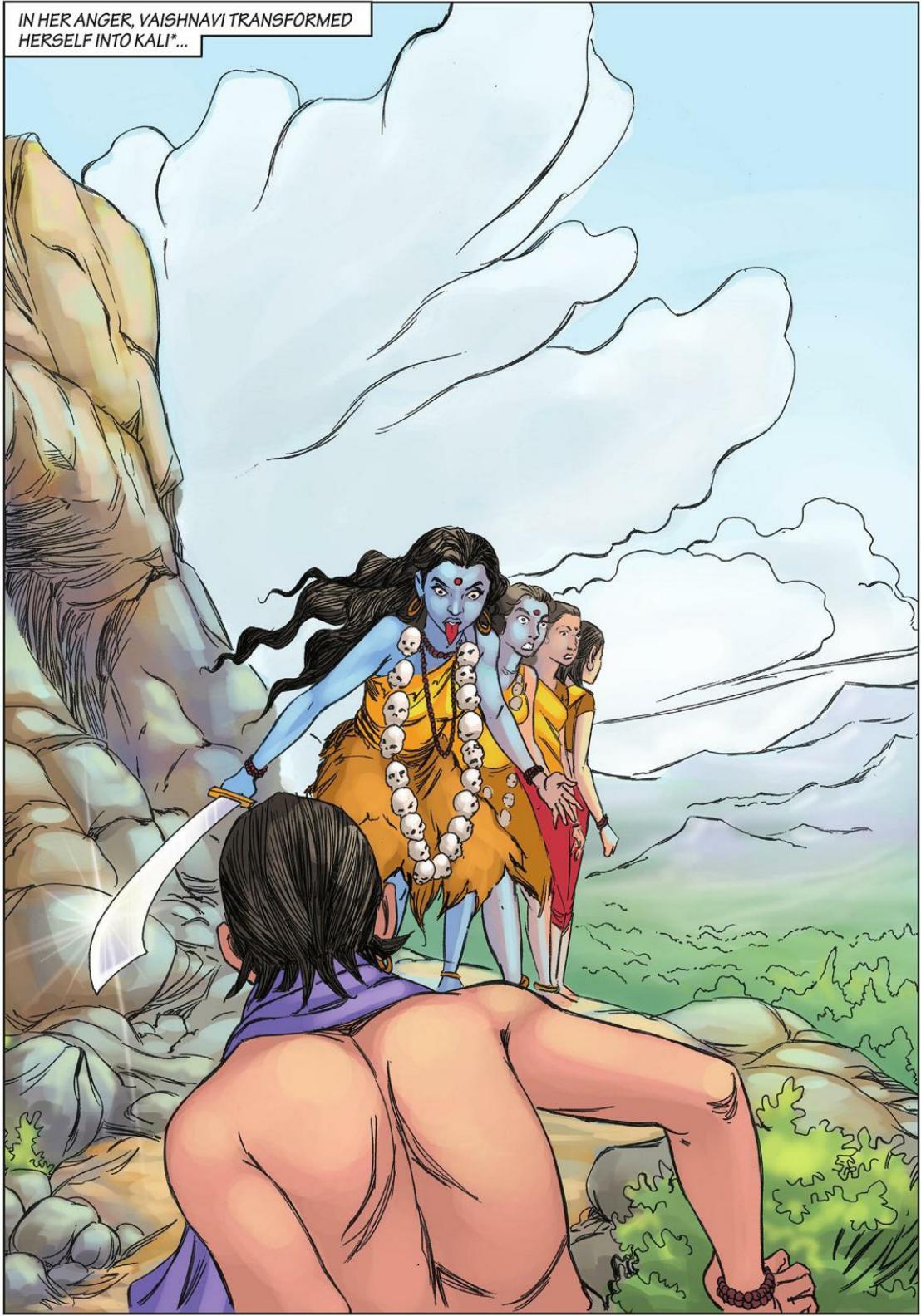
... AND ESCAPED.

WITH BHAIRON NATH IN PURSUIT, VAISHNAVI KEPT GOING DEEPER INTO THE MOUNTAINS, TILL SHE REACHED ANOTHER CAVE IN THE HILLS.

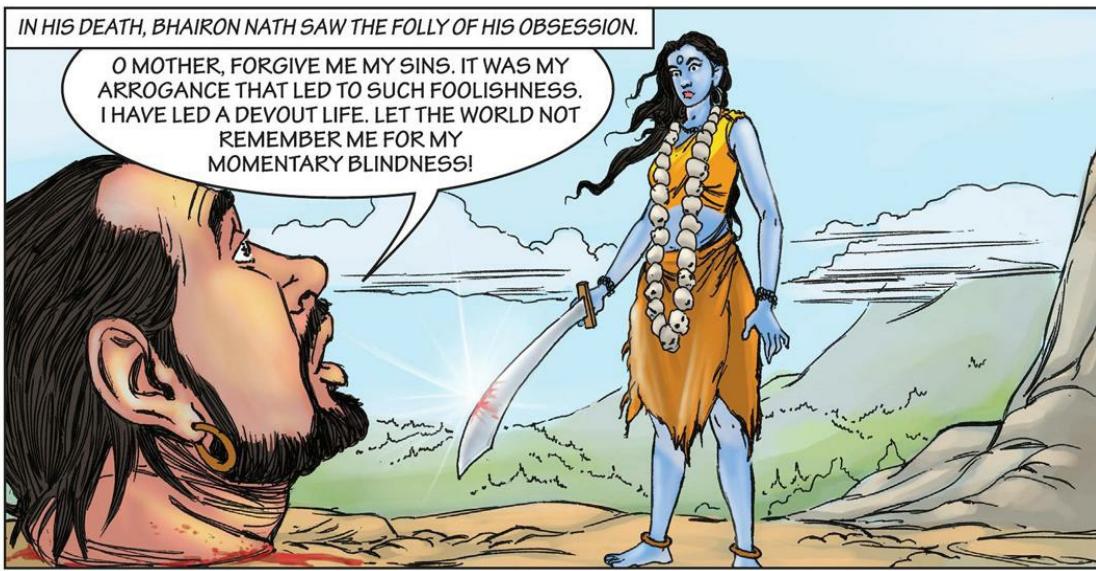
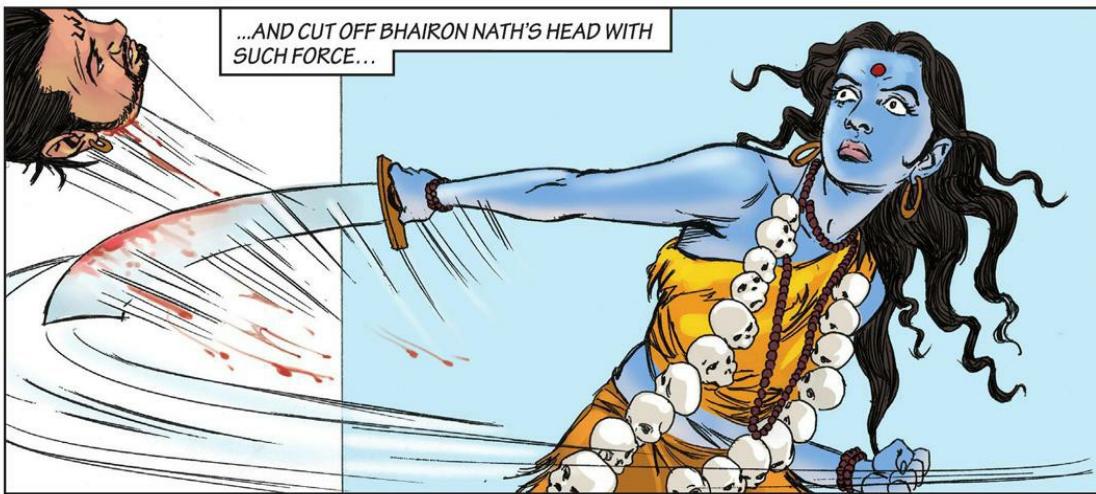
HAI! HAI! YOU CANNOT ESCAPE ME.

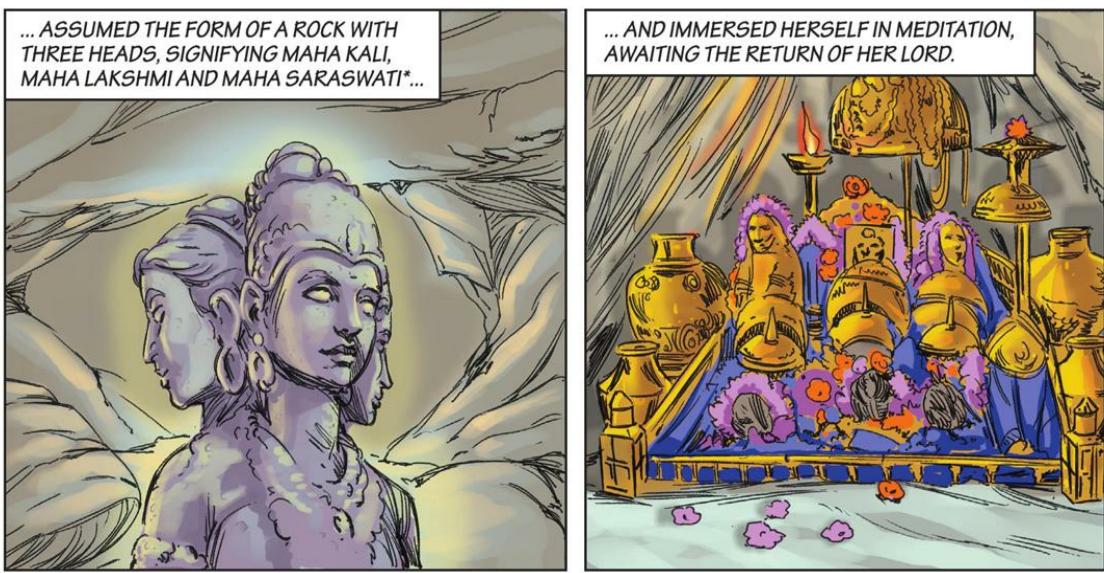
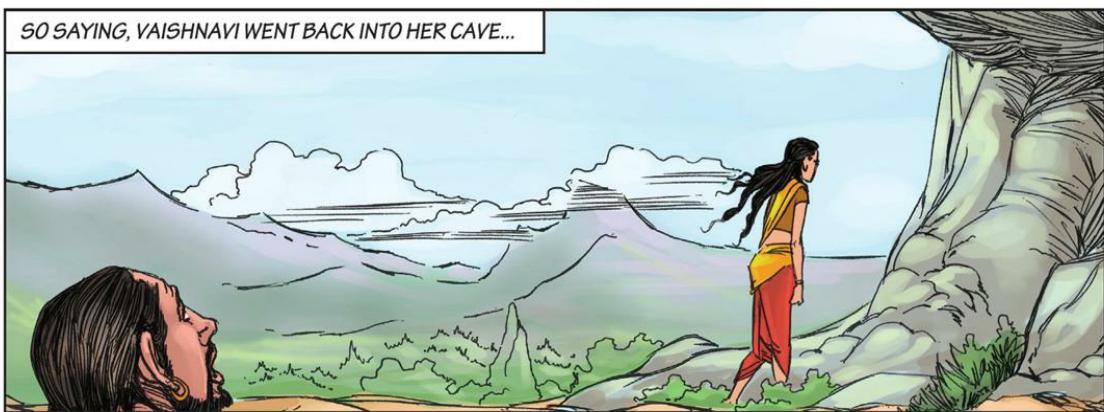
BHAIRON NATH HAS SUMMONED HIS OWN DEATH.

IN HER ANGER, VAISHNAVI TRANSFORMED  
HERSELF INTO KALI\*...



\* GODDESS OF CHANGE AND DESTRUCTION





\* THE GREATER FORMS OF THE THREE GODDESSES

THE PLACE VAISHNAVI CHOSE TO MEDITATE IN, IS CALLED VAISHNO DEVI. IT IS IN THE STATE OF JAMMU. EVERY YEAR, MILLIONS OF PILGRIMS VISIT THE SHRINE, TO PAY THEIR RESPECTS TO HER. SOME OF THE PLACES THEY STOP AT, ON THE WAY UP, ARE:

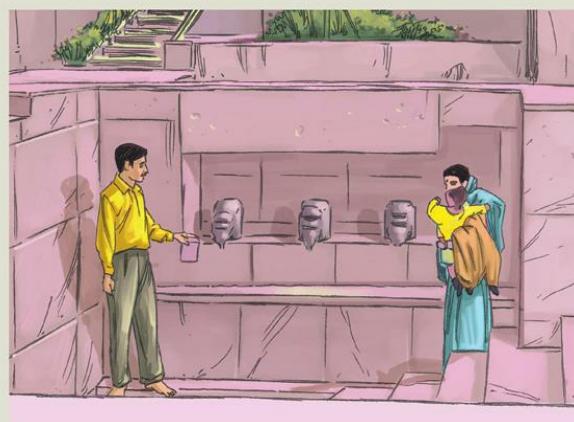


### DARSHANI DARWAAZA

THIS IS WHERE THE CLIMB TO THE HOLY SHRIE BEGINS. FROM THIS POINT, ONE CAN GET AN ENTIRE VIEW OF THE TRIKUTA MOUNTAINS. 'DARSHAN' MEANS 'TO VIEW' AND 'DARWAAZA' MEANS 'DOOR'.

### SANJHI CHATT

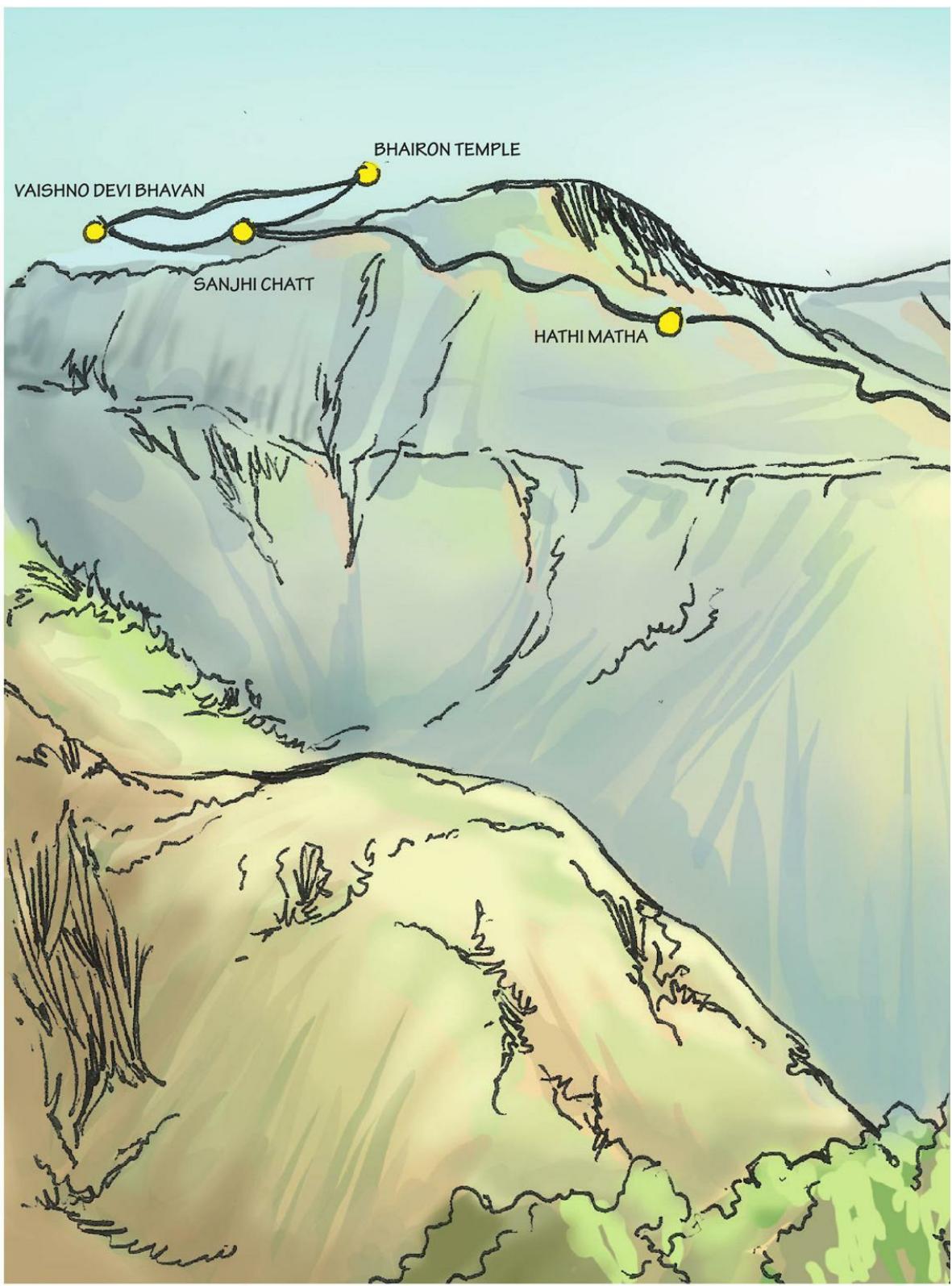
IT IS A SMALL PLATEAU ON THE WAY TO THE HOLY SHRINE AND IS FAMOUS FOR ITS BEAUTIFUL VIEW OF THE VALLEY. SITUATED AT AN ALTITUDE OF 6200 FT, SANJHI CHATT IS THE HIGHEST POINT IN THE ENTIRE JOURNEY. AT THIS SPOT, THE UPHILL TREK STOPS AND THE DOWNHILL TREK TO VAISHNO DEVI BHAWAN BEGINS.



### AMRIT KUND

THIS PLACE STORES THE SACRED WATER CALLED 'CHARANAMRIT' WHICH FLOWS FROM THE FEET OF THE THREE PINDIES\*. DEVOTEES TAKE THIS HOLY WATER BACK WITH THEM AS IT IS BELIEVED TO PURIFY THEIR HEARTS AND HOMES.

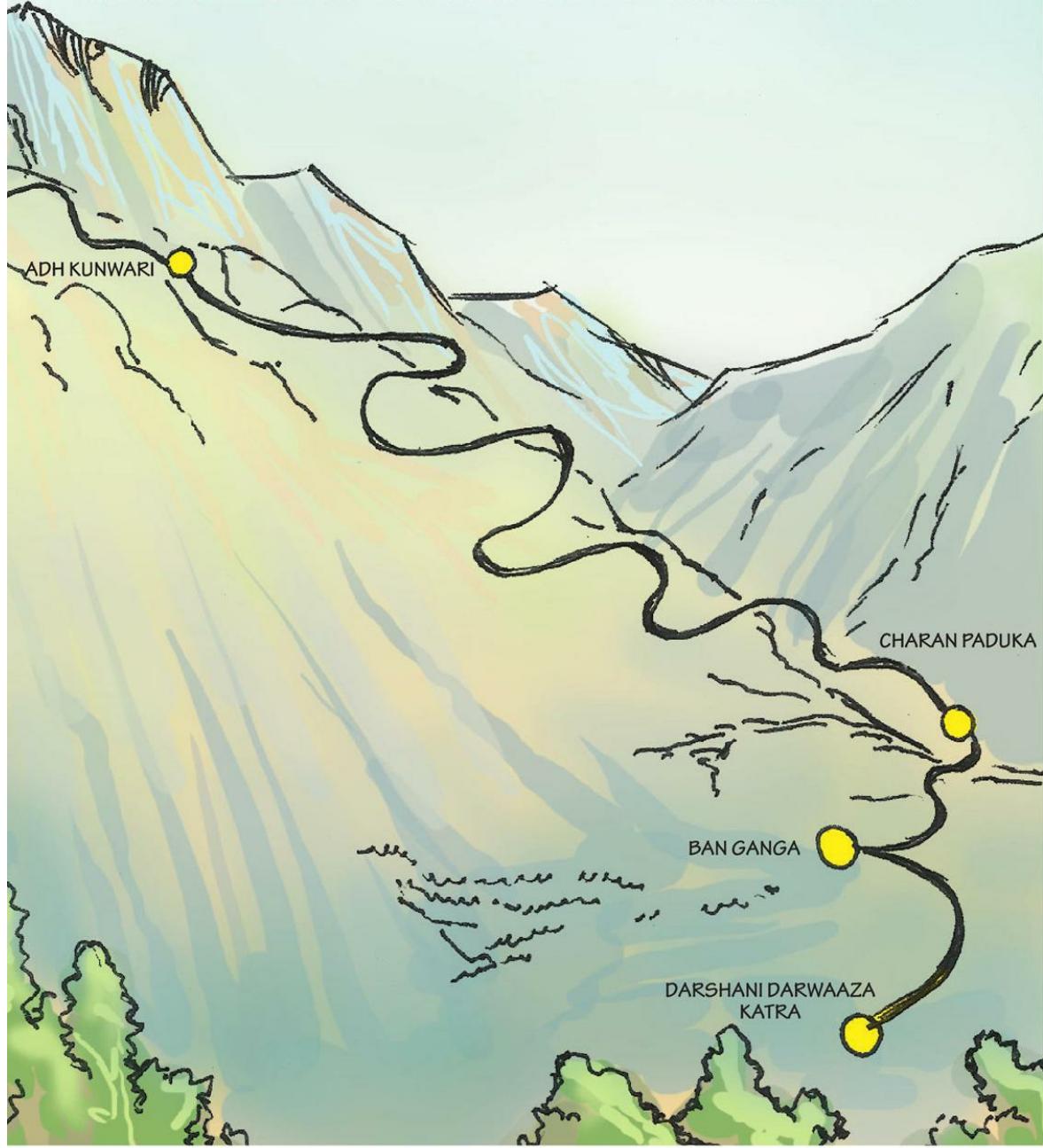
\* THE ROCK FORM OF THE GODDESS



THE TOTAL DISTANCE TO THE SHRINE AT VAISHNO DEVI, STARTING FROM KATRA, IS 13 KMS. PILGRIMS PREFER WALKING THE ENTIRE DISTANCE, THOUGH THERE ARE OTHER OPTIONS AVAILABLE. ONE CAN CHOOSE TO UNDERTAKE THE JOURNEY ON A PONY, IN A PALANQUIN AND ALSO BY HELICOPTER.

ALL PILGRIMS GET A SPECIALLY MINTED COIN CALLED KHAZANA. THE COINS HAVE THE IMAGE OF THE THREE PINDIES ON IT. THE COIN IS SAID TO BRING PROSPERITY TO THE OWNER.

WALNUTS ARE AN ESSENTIAL PART OF THE 'PRASADA' OR SACRED GIFT THAT IS GIVEN TO THE PEOPLE WHO VISIT THE SHRINE. THIS IS TAKEN HOME AND DISTRIBUTED AMONG FAMILY AND FRIENDS.



EPICS &  
MYTHOLOGY

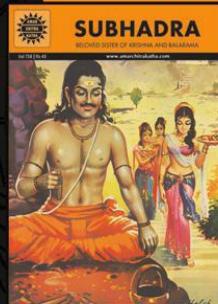
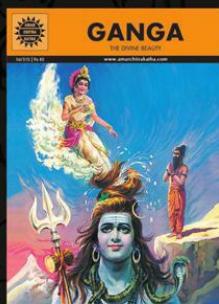
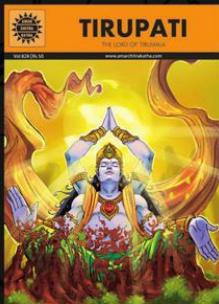
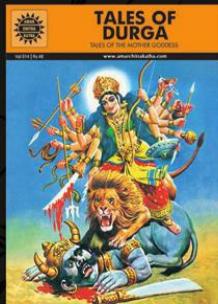
## VAISHNO DEVI

Bhoo devi, the earth, was being ravaged by evil asuras. She turned to the gods for aid but even the powerful trinity of Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva, were helpless.

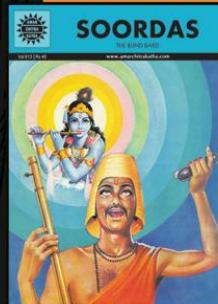
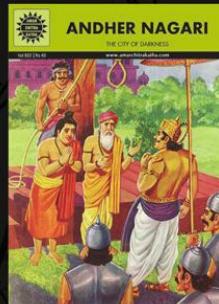
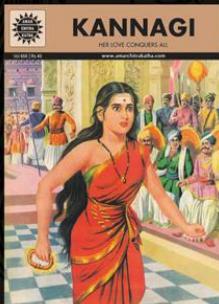
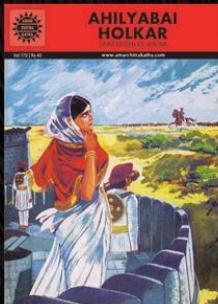
Concerned by the events, their consorts, Saraswati, Lakshmi and Parvati combined their powers and created Vaishnavi, a woman of unsurpassed strength. Vaishnavi fought and destroyed the asuras but the goddesses asked her to stay on and not return to heaven. Though Vaishnavi did not realise it, her story was only just beginning.

Amar Chitra Katha tells the story of Vaishnavi's transformation into the meditating goddess, Vaishno Devi, whose abode in the Himalayas is visited by millions of pilgrims every year.

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