



PAREEKSHIT

SON OF ABHIMANYU

Vol 762

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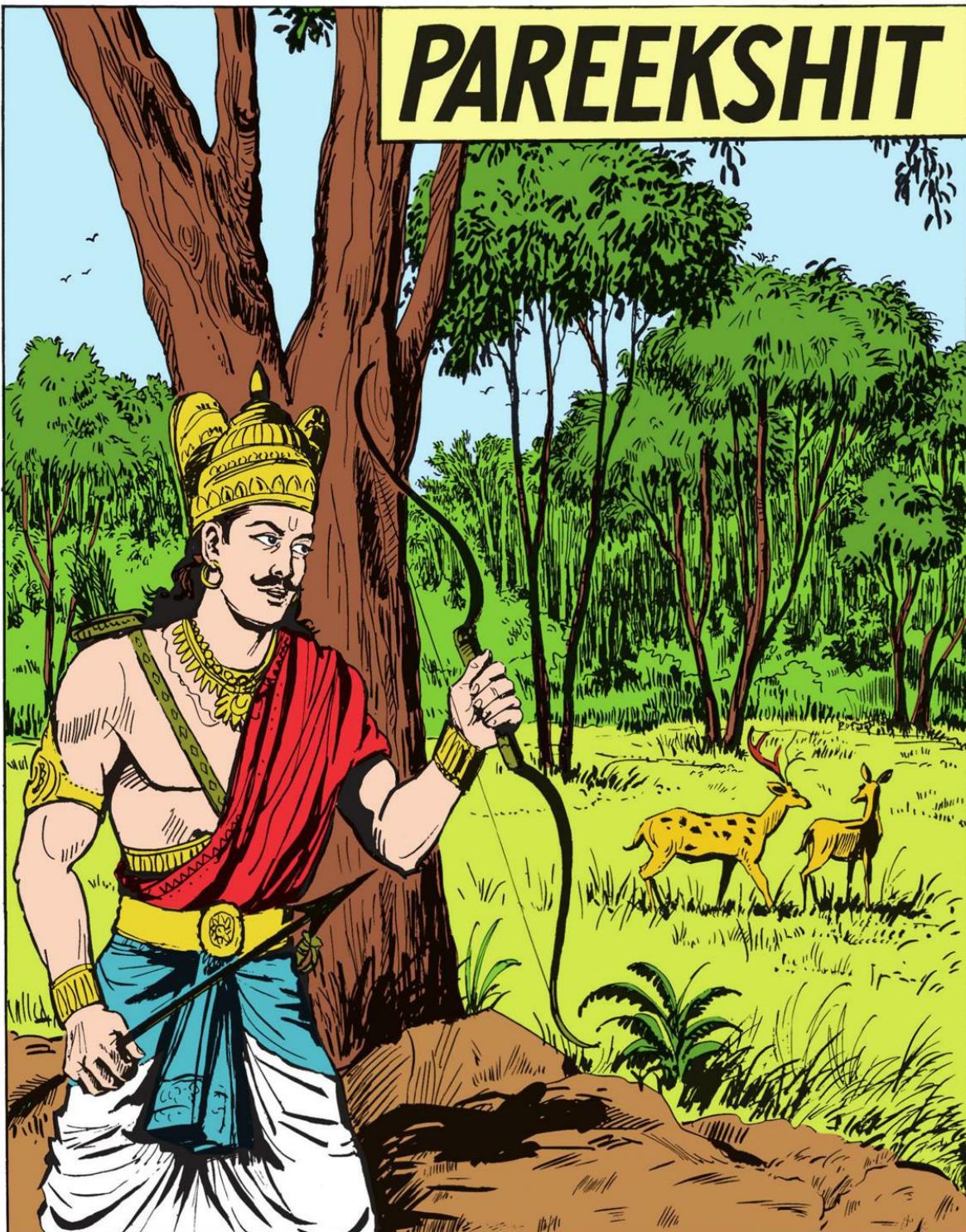
Anant Pai

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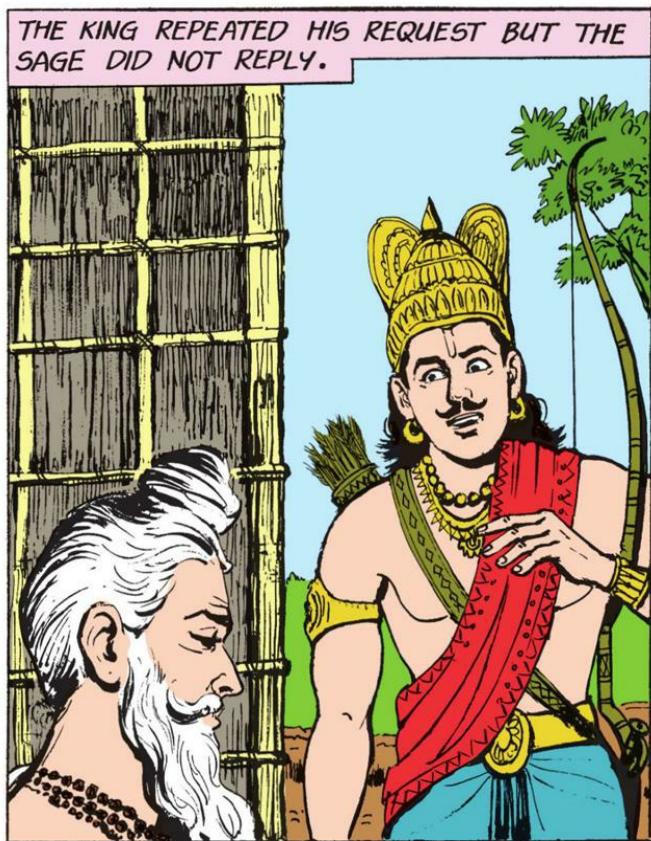
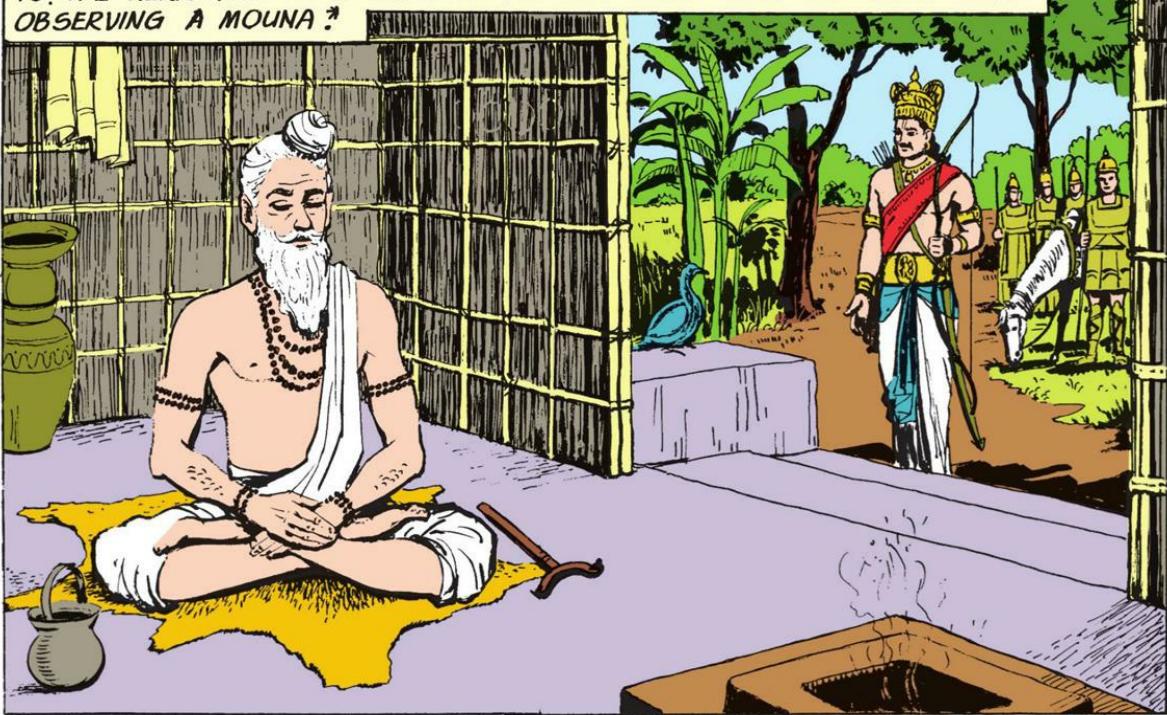
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PAREEKSHIT



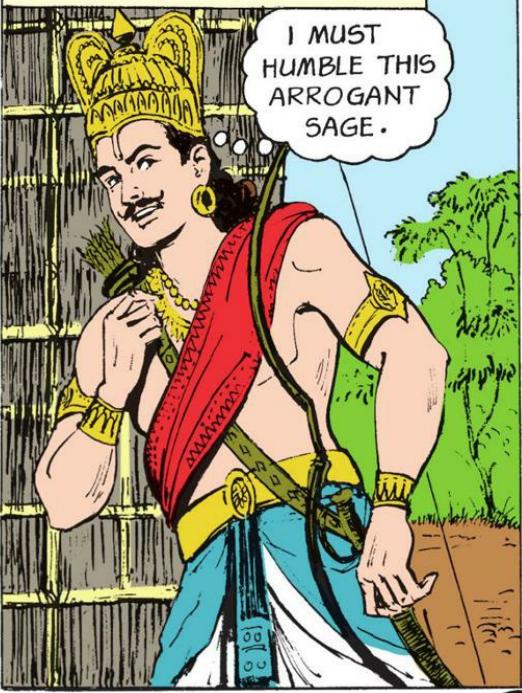
TWO GENERATIONS AFTER THE GREAT MAHABHARATA WAR, HASTINAPURA WAS RULED BY KING PAREEKSHIT, SON OF THE VALIANT ABHIMANYU AND GRANDSON OF THE PANDAVA PRINCE, ARJUNA. HE WAS FOND OF HUNTING.

ONCE, WHILE ON A DEER HUNT IN A FOREST, THE TIRED AND THIRSTY KING CAME TO THE HERMITAGE OF A SAGE. HE DID NOT KNOW THAT THE SAGE WAS OBSERVING A MOUNA*.

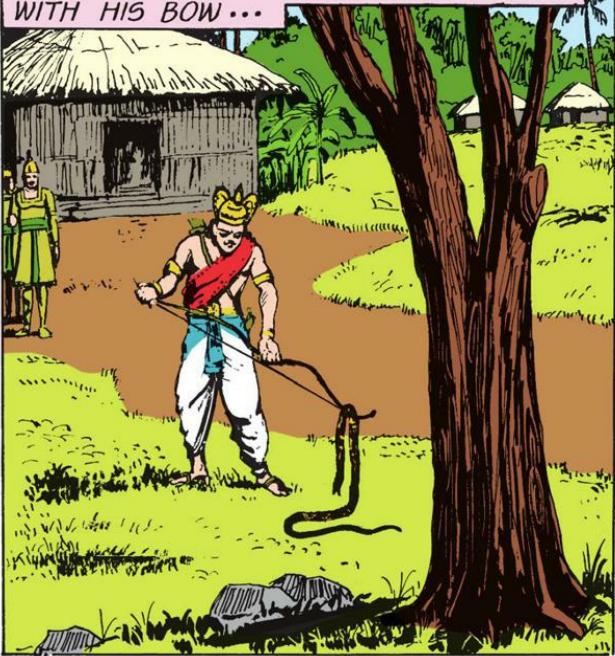


* THE VOW OF SILENCE.

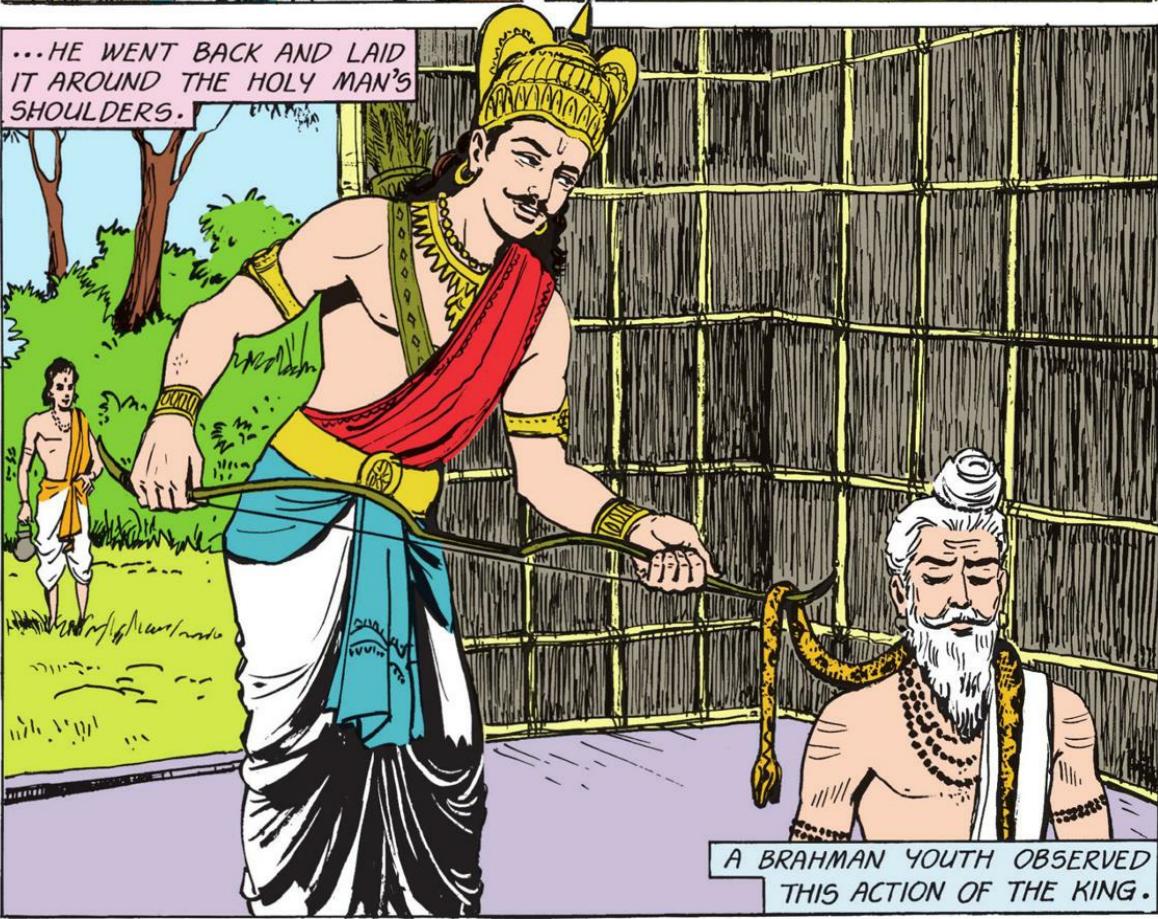
THE KING FELT SLIGHTED.

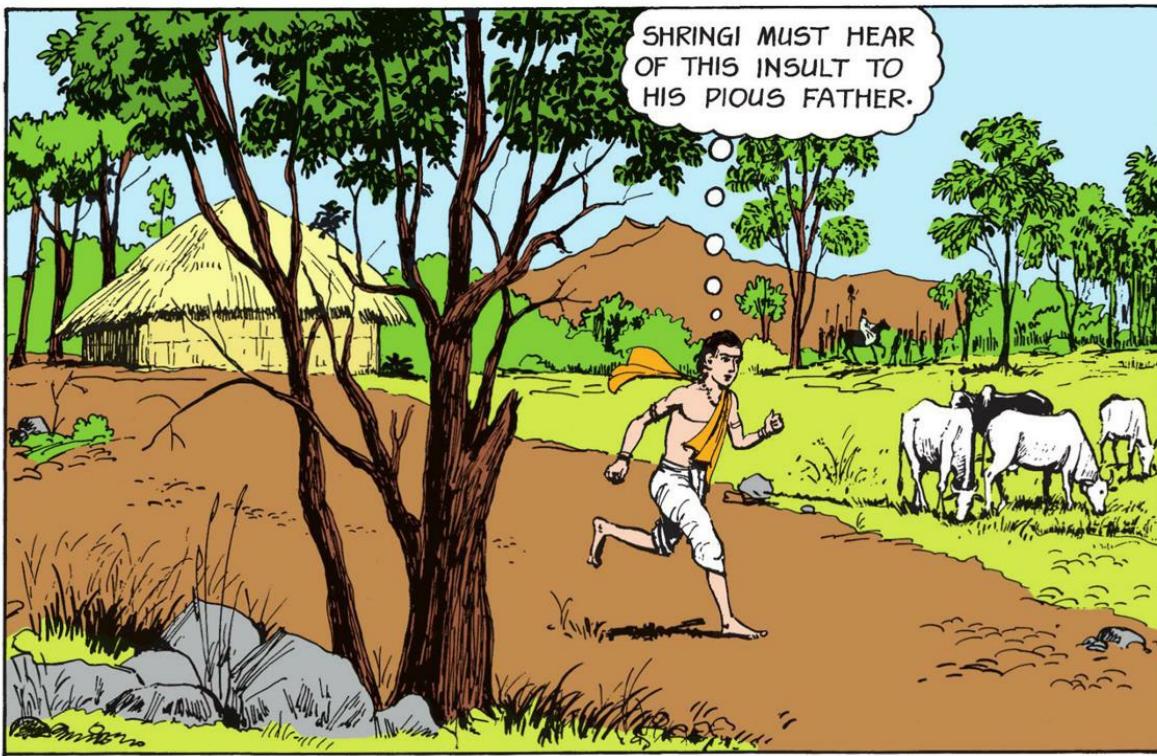


AS HE WALKED OUT OF THE HERMITAGE,
HE SAW A DEAD SERPENT. LIFTING IT
WITH HIS BOW...

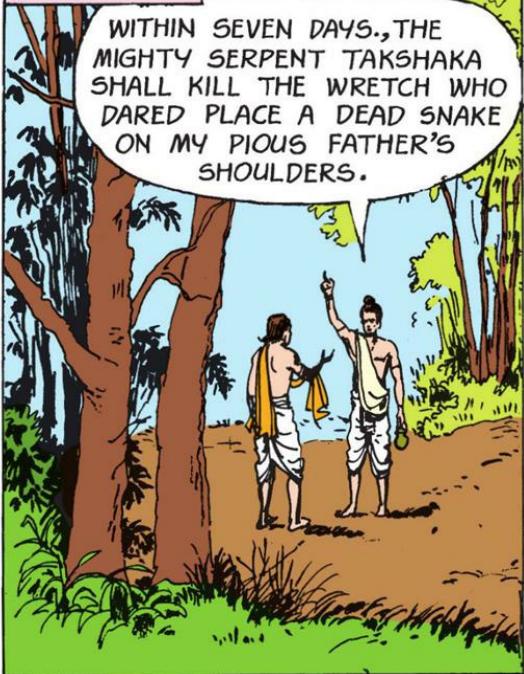


...HE WENT BACK AND LAID
IT AROUND THE HOLY MAN'S
SHOULDERS.

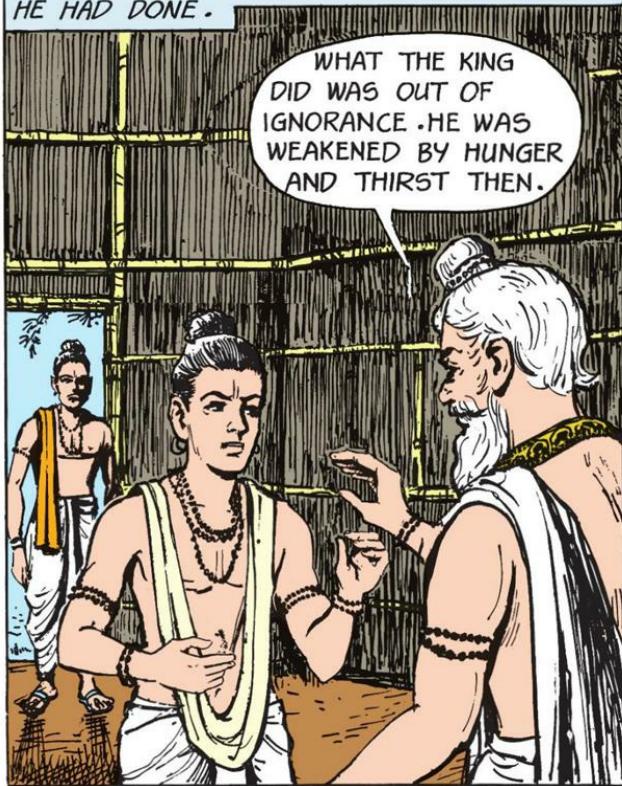


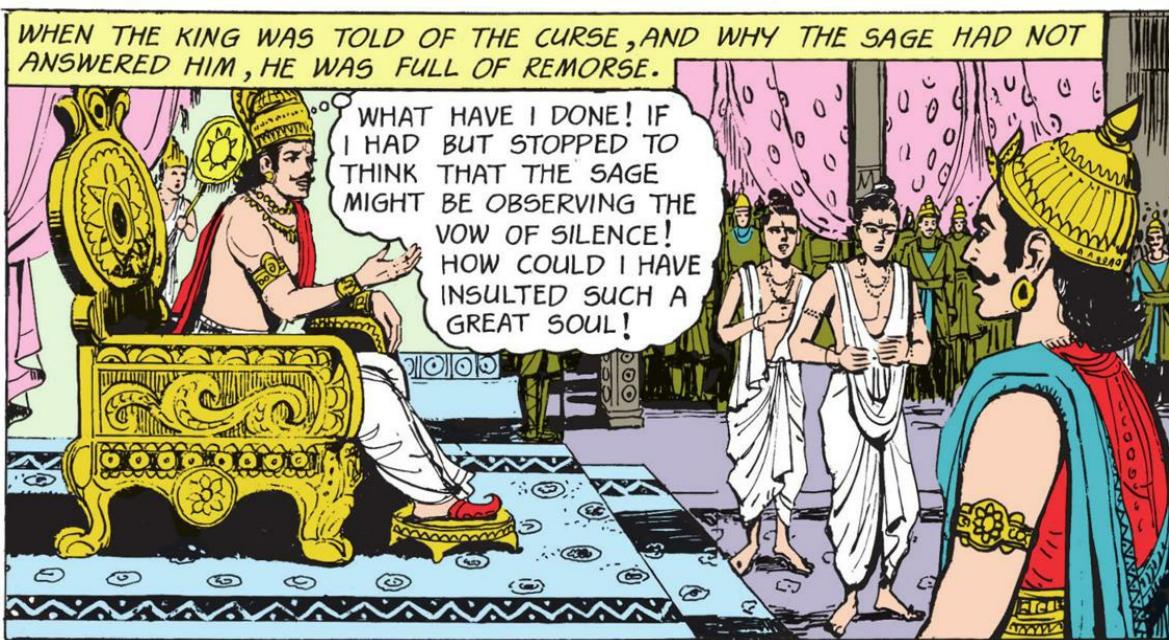
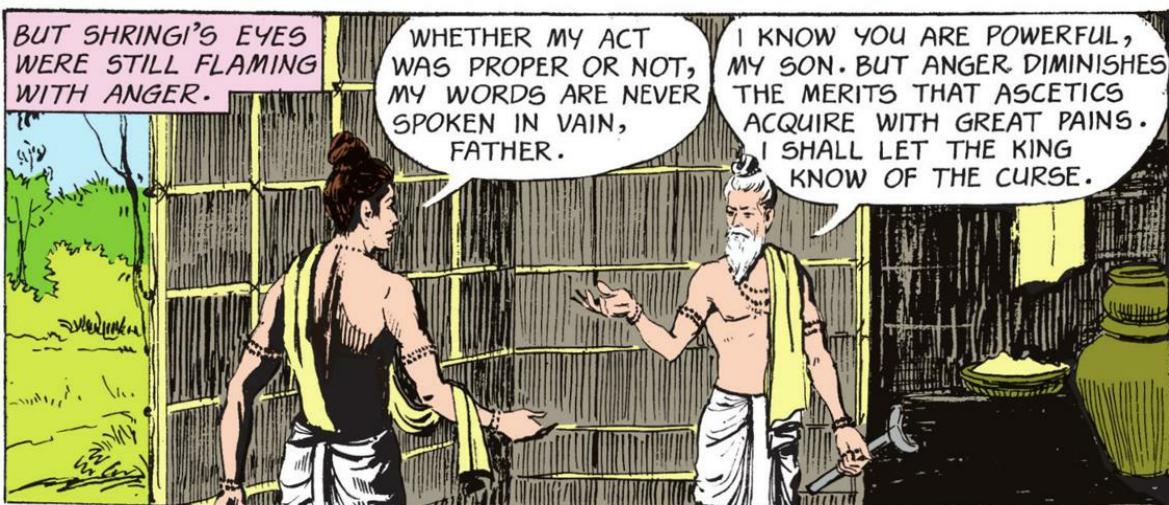
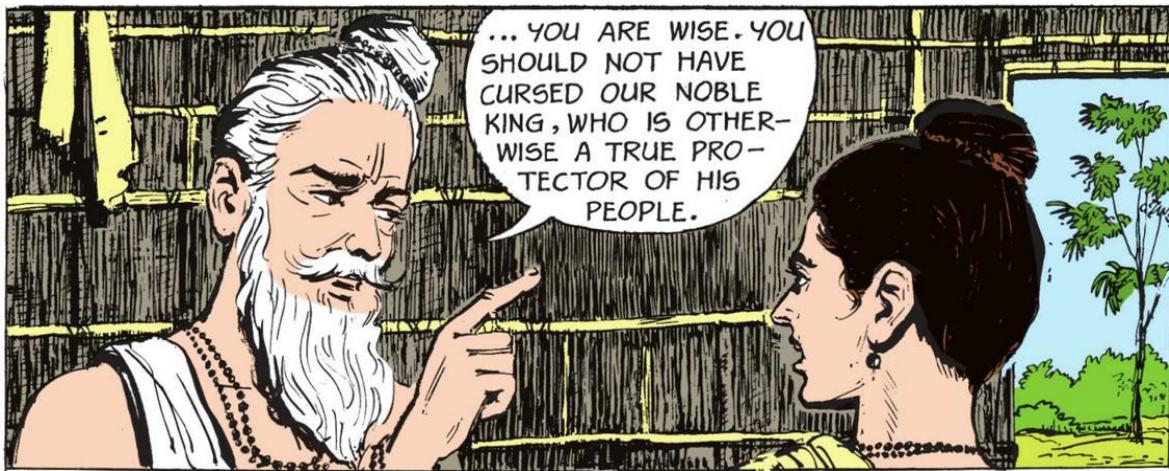


THOUGH A MERE LAD, SHRINGI HAD ACQUIRED GREAT POWER BY HIS PENANCES. BUT HE HAD NOT CONTROLLED HIS GREATEST ENEMY-ANGER. AND IN A RAGE, HE CURSED PAREEKSHIT.



LATER, WHEN THE SAGE HAD BROKEN HIS VOW OF SILENCE, SHRINGI TOLD HIM WHAT HE HAD DONE.





THE KING CALLED A MEETING OF HIS COUNCILLORS AND TOLD THEM THE WHOLE STORY.



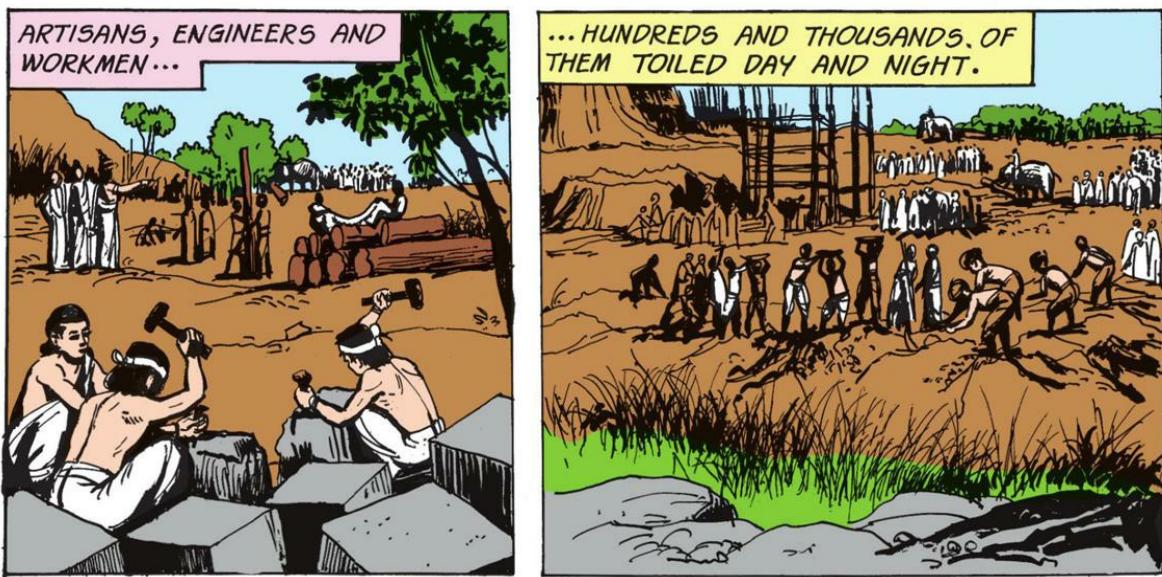
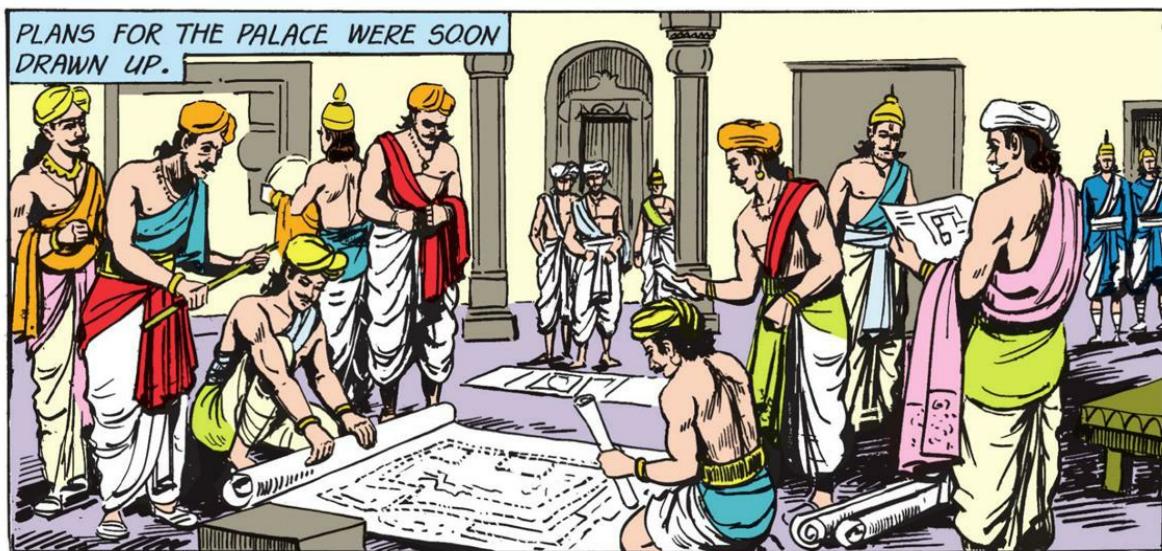
I'VE A PLAN,
YOUR
MAJESTY.

SPEAK
OUT!

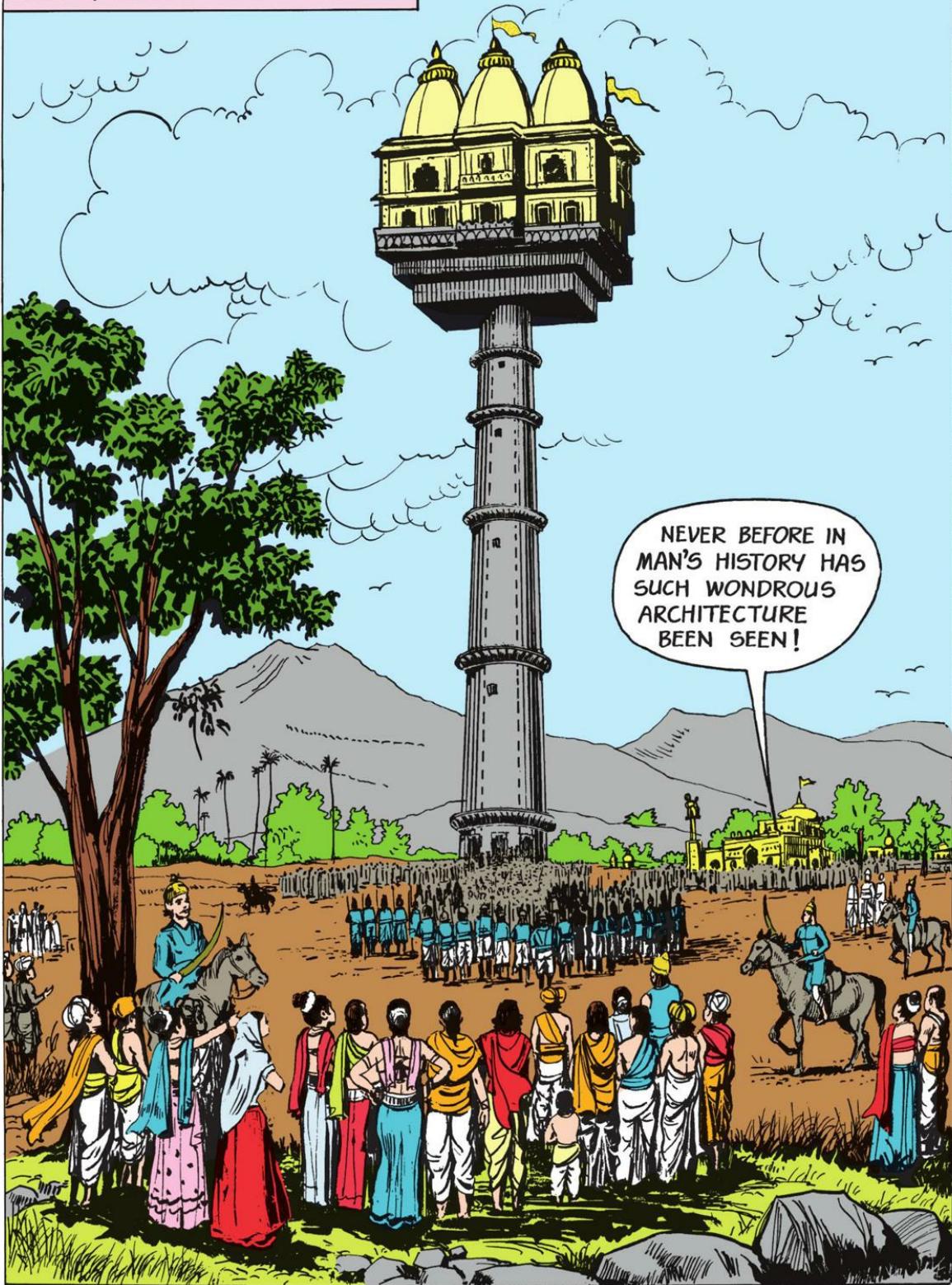
ONE OF THE COUNCILLORS STEPPED FORWARD.

LET US CONSTRUCT
A PALACE ON TOP
OF A PILLAR.

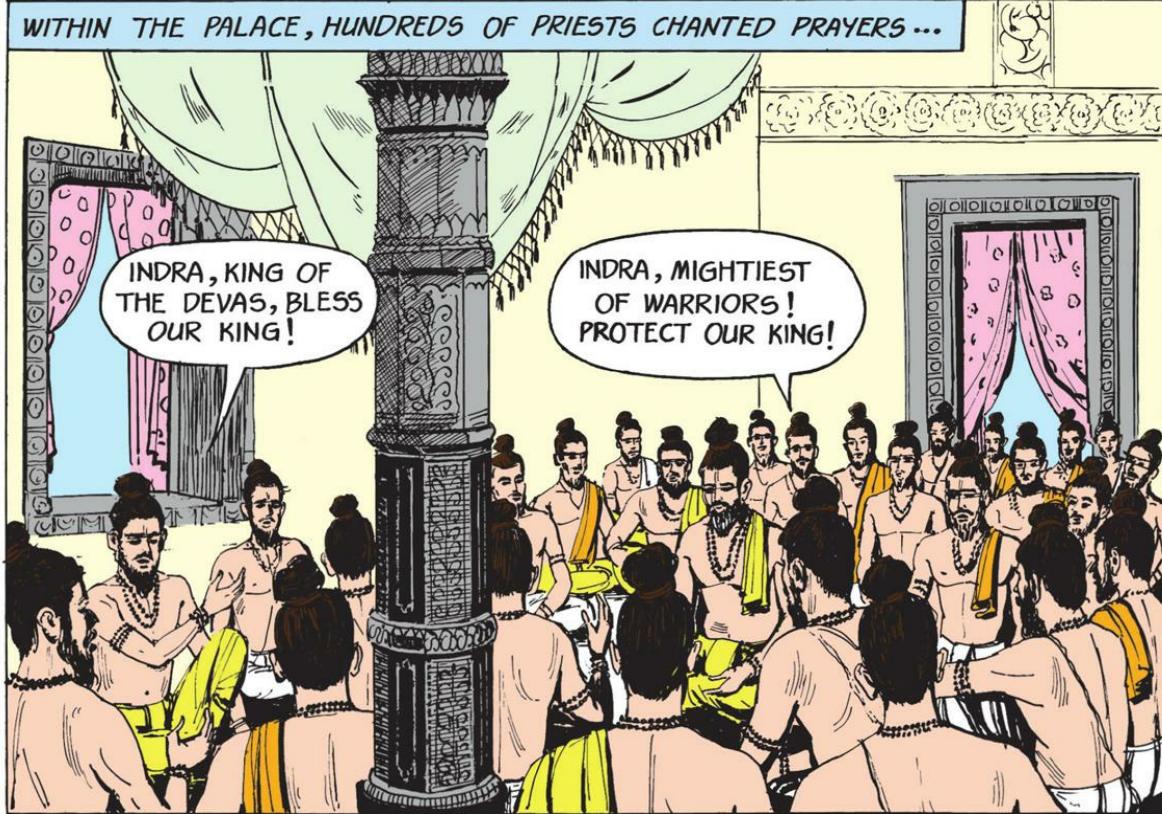
EVERYONE SEEMED IMPRESSED BY HIS PLAN.



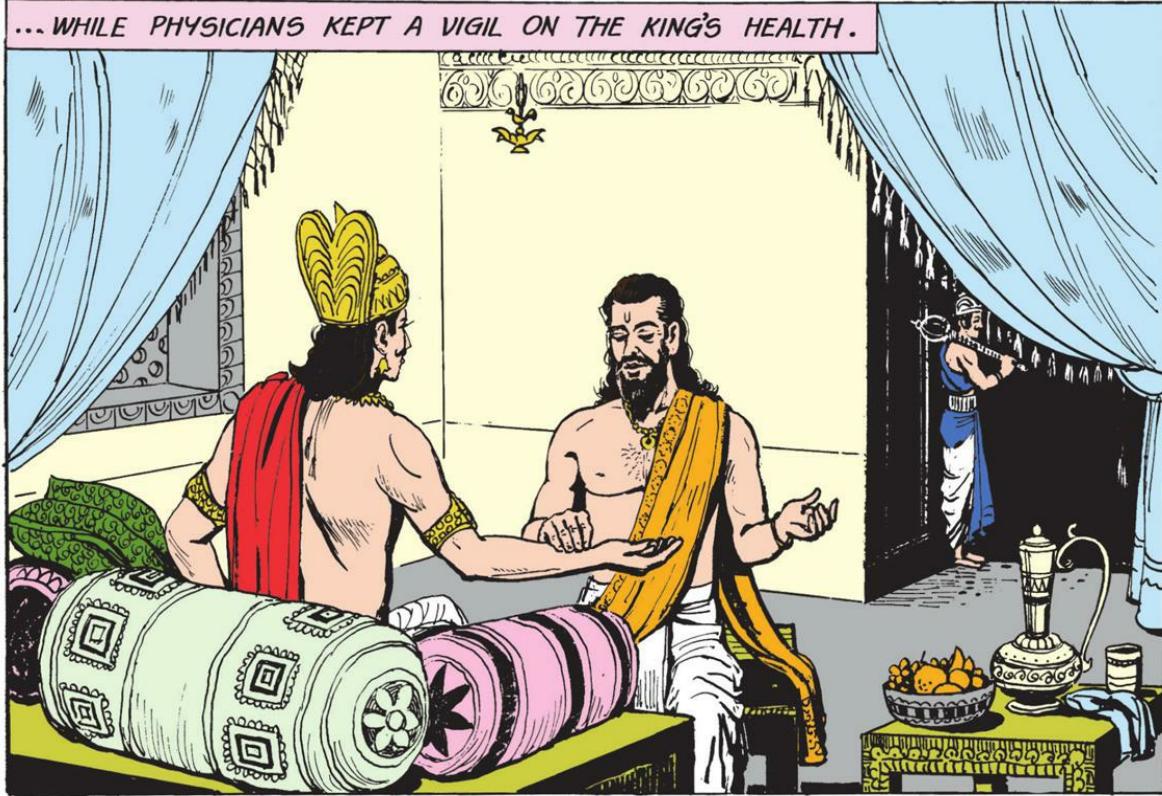
SOON A TALL, IMPOSING PILLAR OF MARBLE, TOPPED BY A MAGNIFICENT PALACE, ROSE INTO THE SKIES.



WITHIN THE PALACE, HUNDREDS OF PRIESTS CHANTED PRAYERS ...



... WHILE PHYSICIANS KEPT A VIGIL ON THE KING'S HEALTH.



EVERY ARTICLE OF FOOD WAS FIRST TASTED BY EXPERTS ...



... BEFORE IT WAS SERVED TO THE KING.

WHY DO YOU HESITATE, MY LORD?
PLEASE EAT IN PEACE.



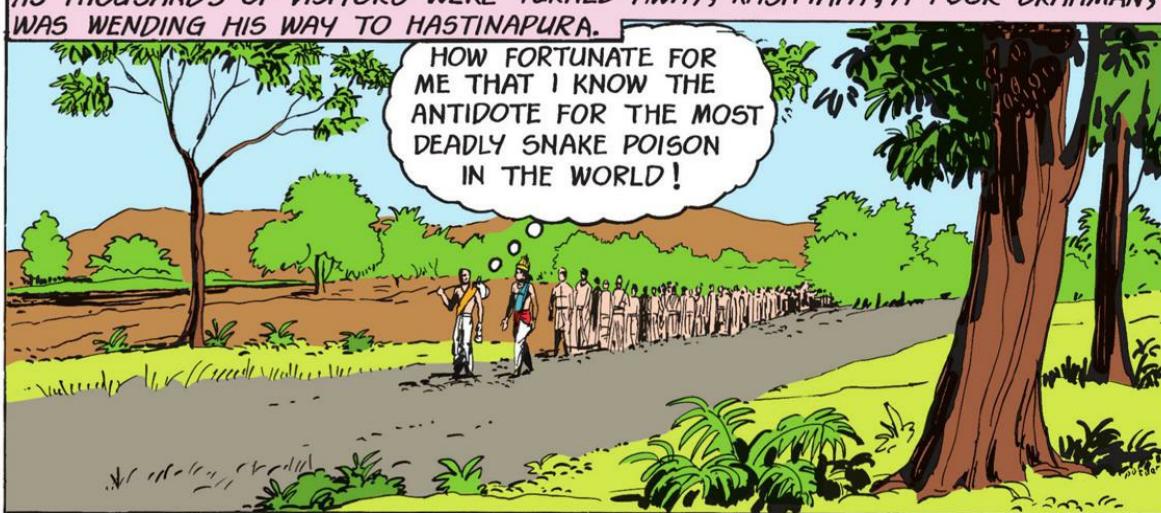
STRICT SECURITY WAS MAINTAINED ROUND THE TOWER.

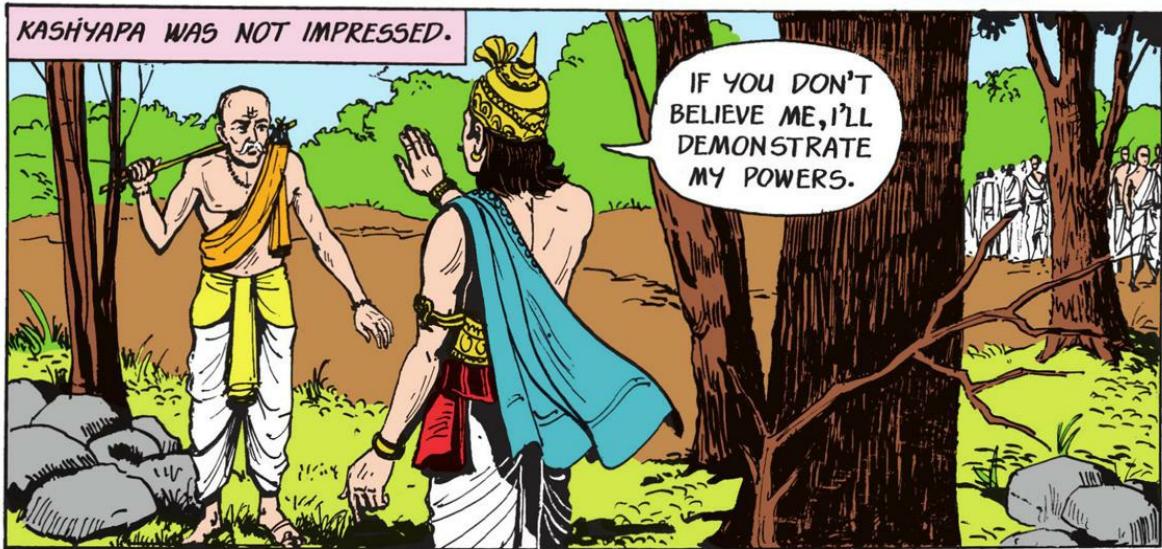
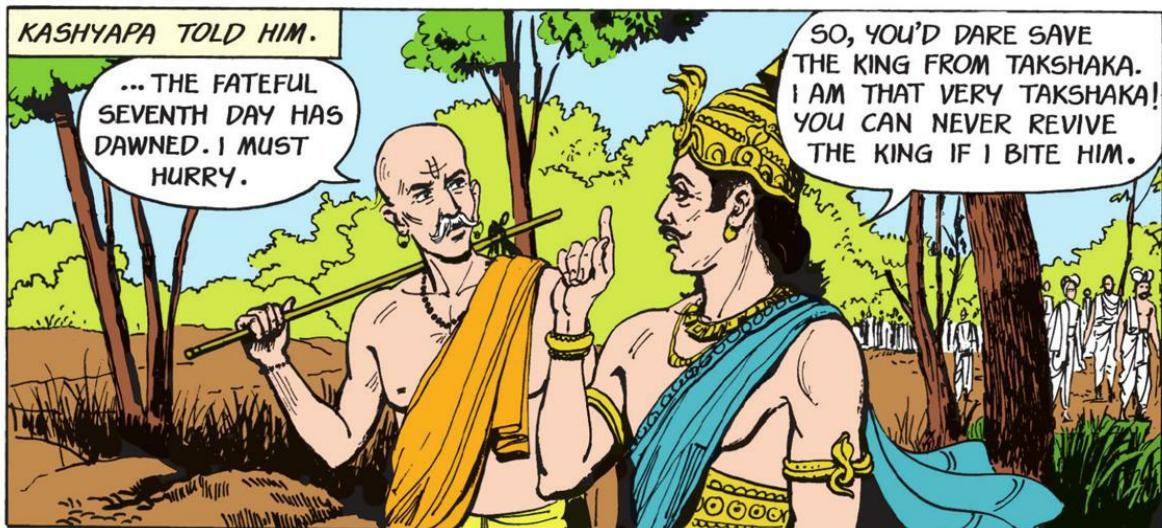
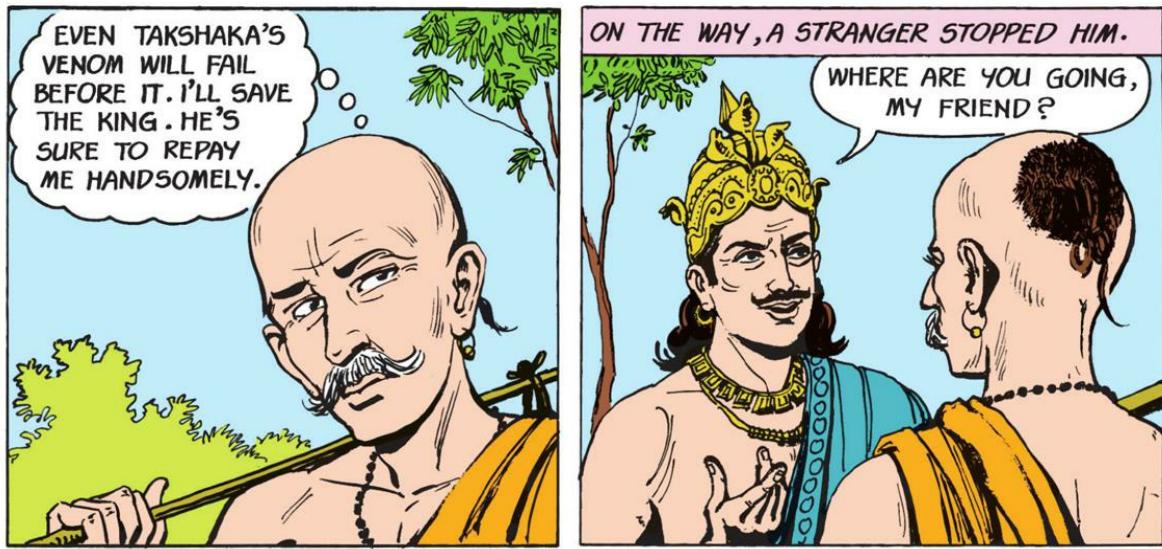
I'M SORRY. YOU CAN'T SEE THE KING. YOUR GRIEVANCE WILL BE RECORDED HERE BY A MINISTER.

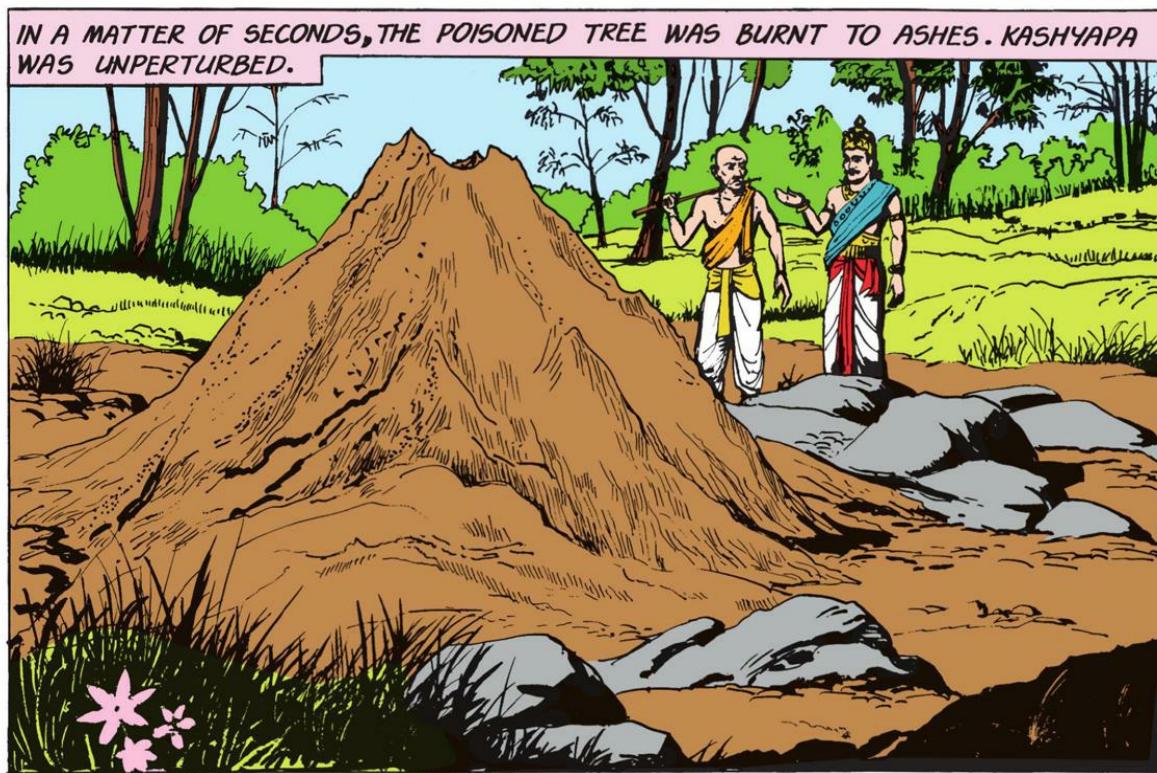
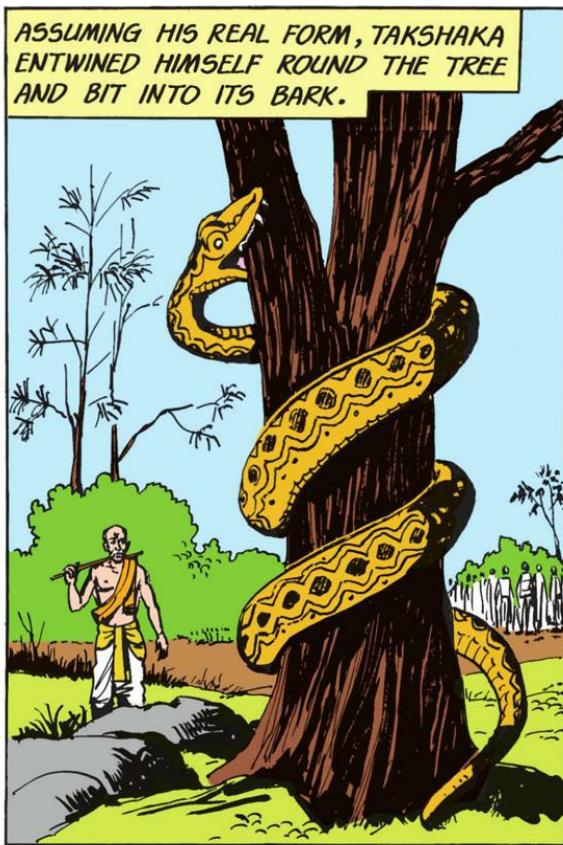
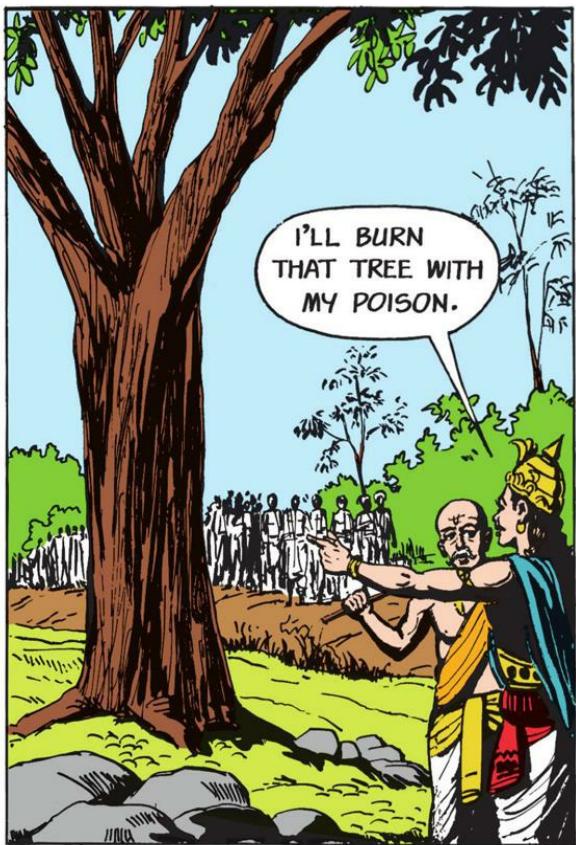


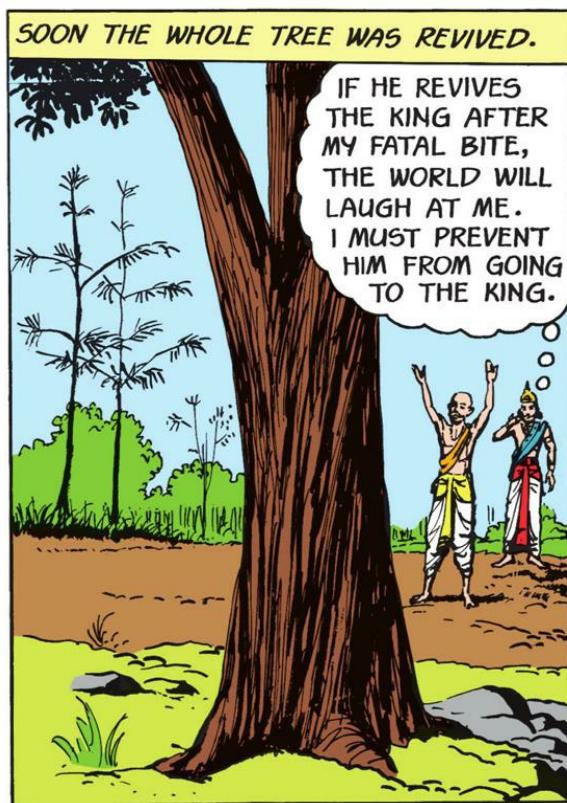
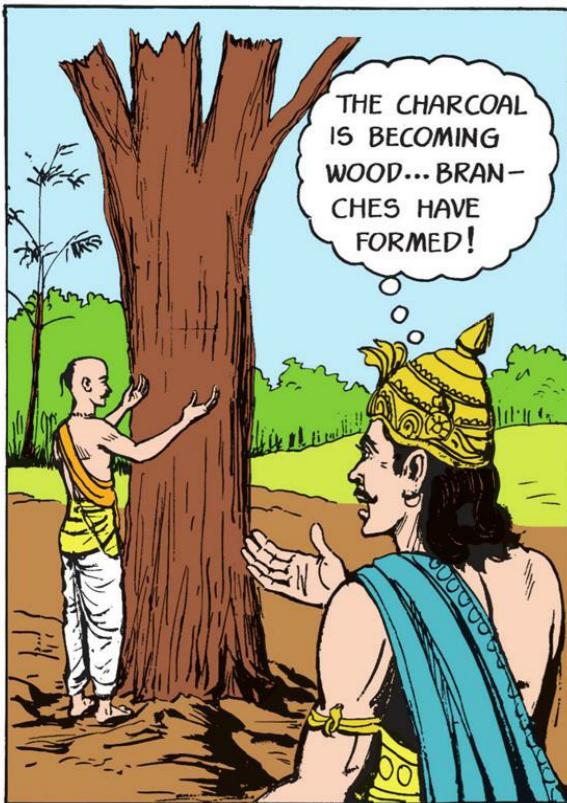
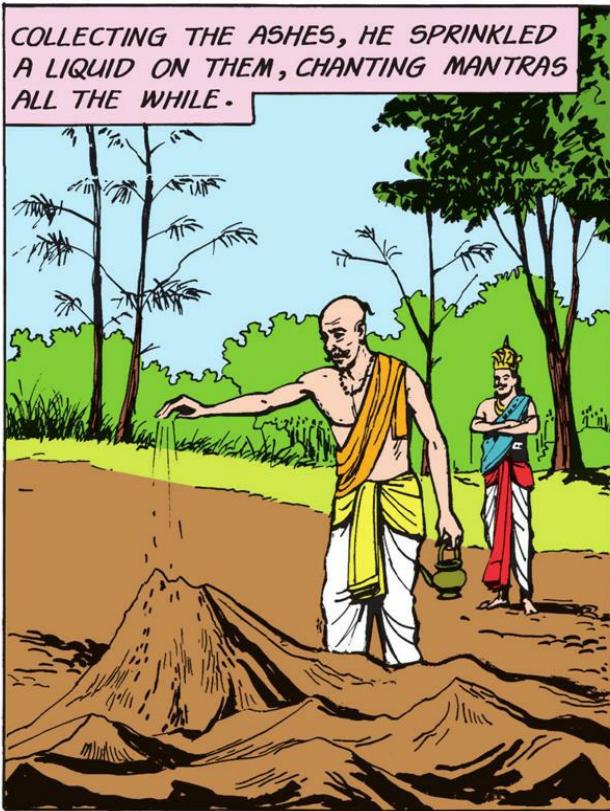
AS THOUSANDS OF VISITORS WERE TURNED AWAY, KASHYAPA, A POOR BRAHMAN, WAS WENDING HIS WAY TO HASTINAPURA.

HOW FORTUNATE FOR ME THAT I KNOW THE ANTIDOTE FOR THE MOST DEADLY SNAKE POISON IN THE WORLD!



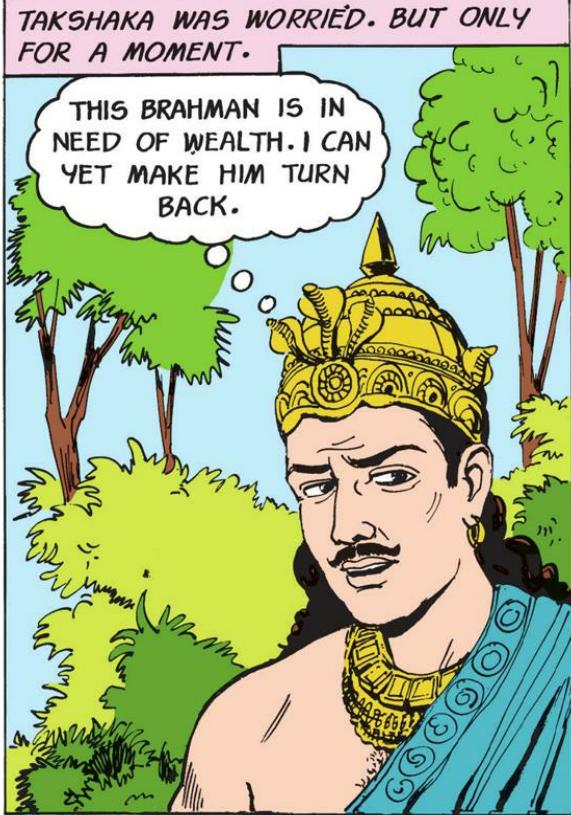






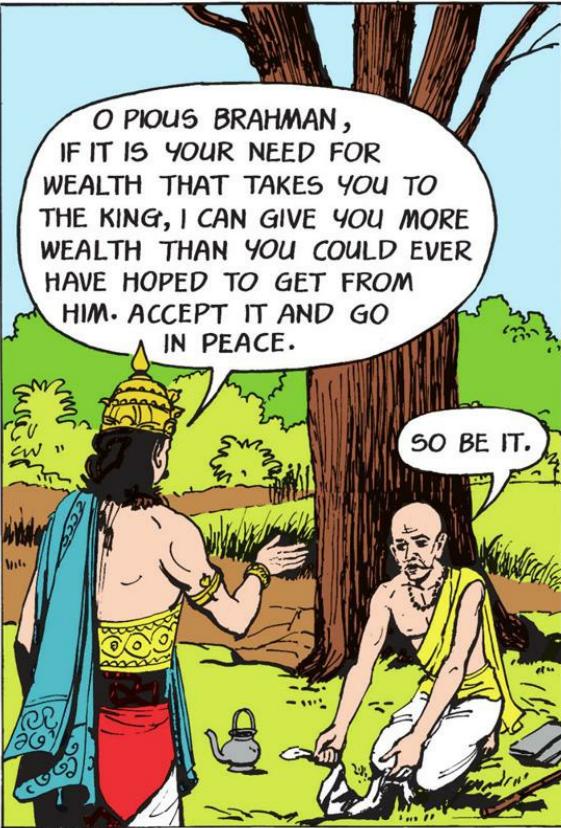
TAKSHAKA WAS WORRIED. BUT ONLY FOR A MOMENT.

THIS BRAHMAN IS IN NEED OF WEALTH. I CAN YET MAKE HIM TURN BACK.



O PIous BRAHMAN,
IF IT IS YOUR NEED FOR
WEALTH THAT TAKES YOU TO
THE KING, I CAN GIVE YOU MORE
WEALTH THAN YOU COULD EVER
HAVE HOPED TO GET FROM
HIM. ACCEPT IT AND GO
IN PEACE.

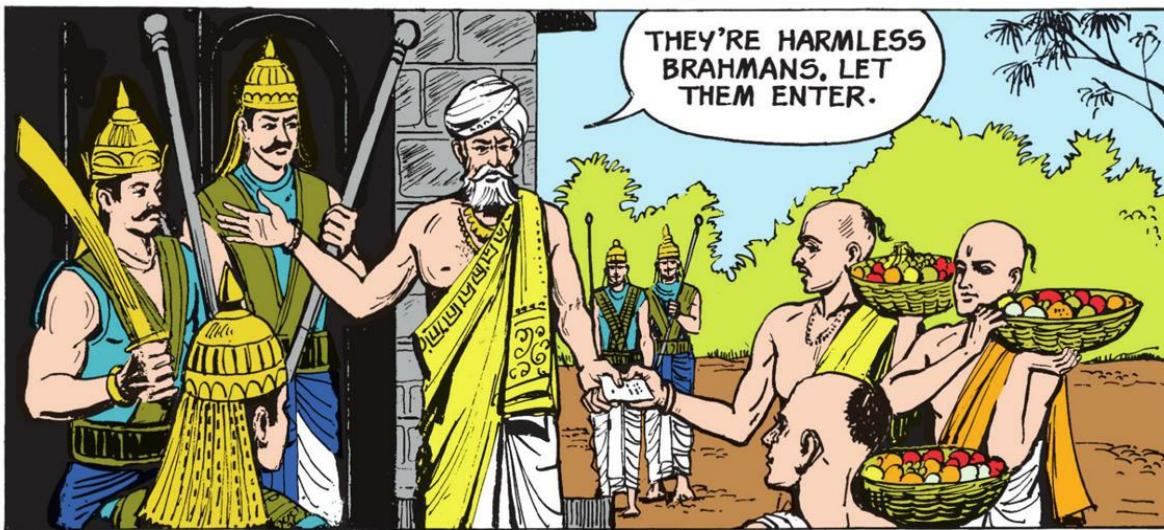
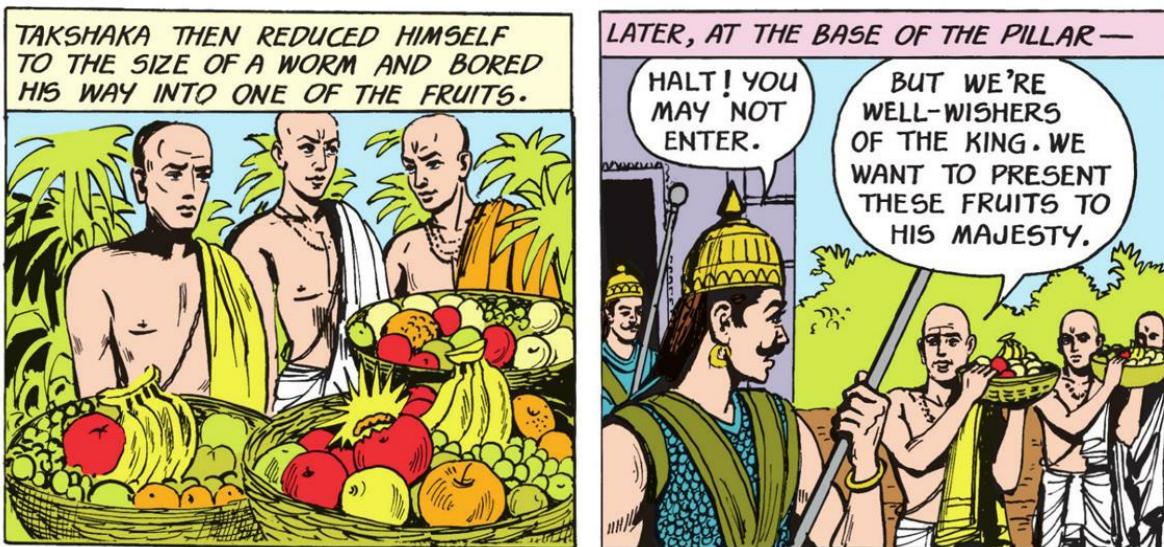
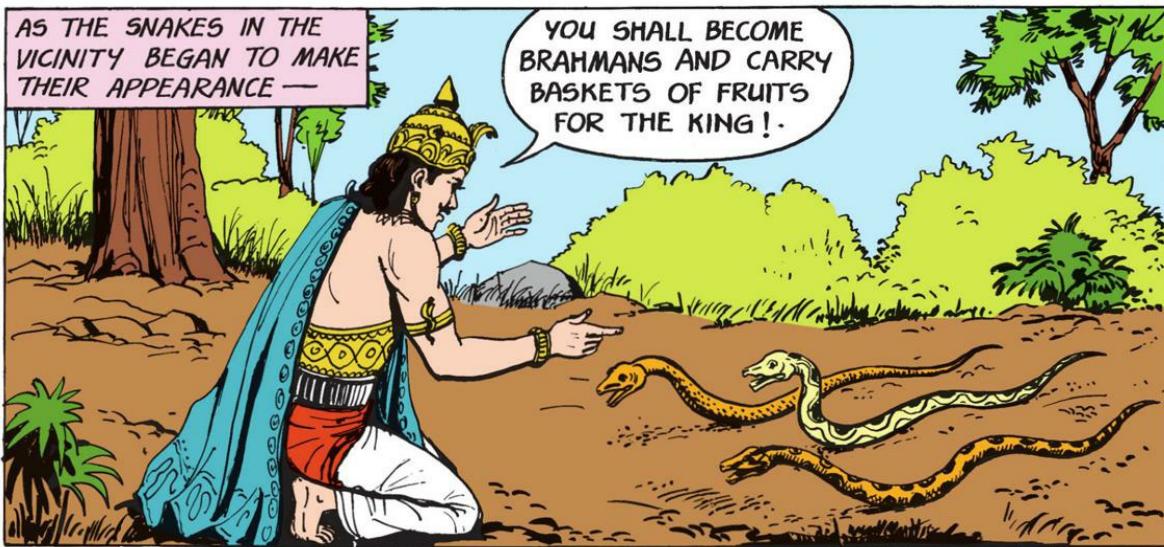
SO BE IT.

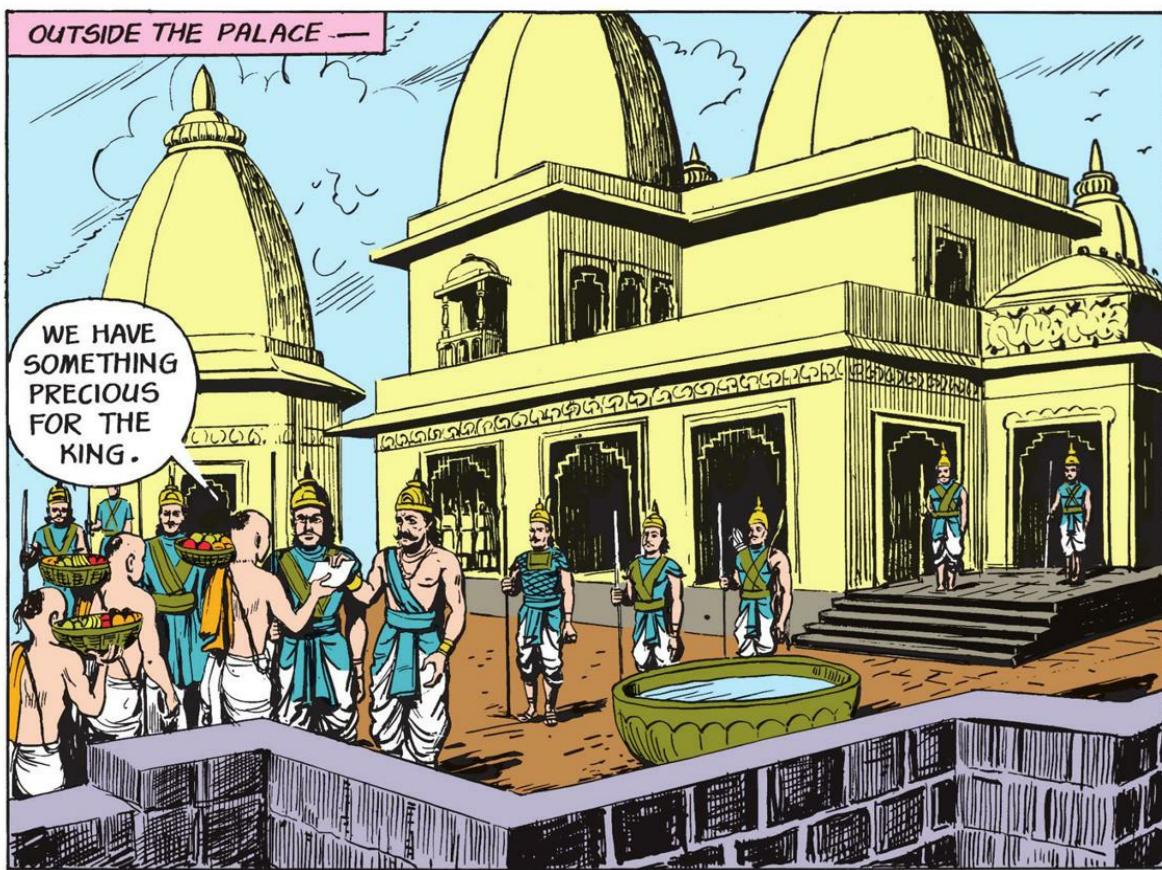
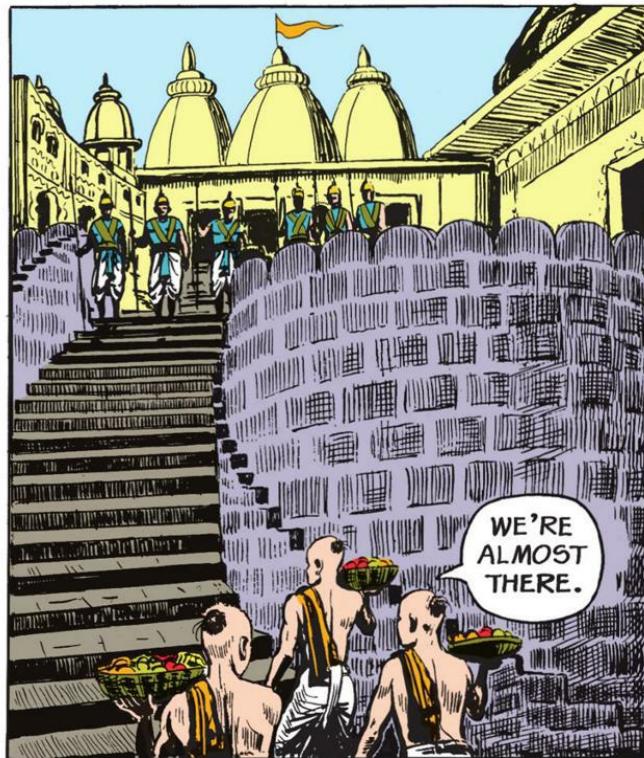
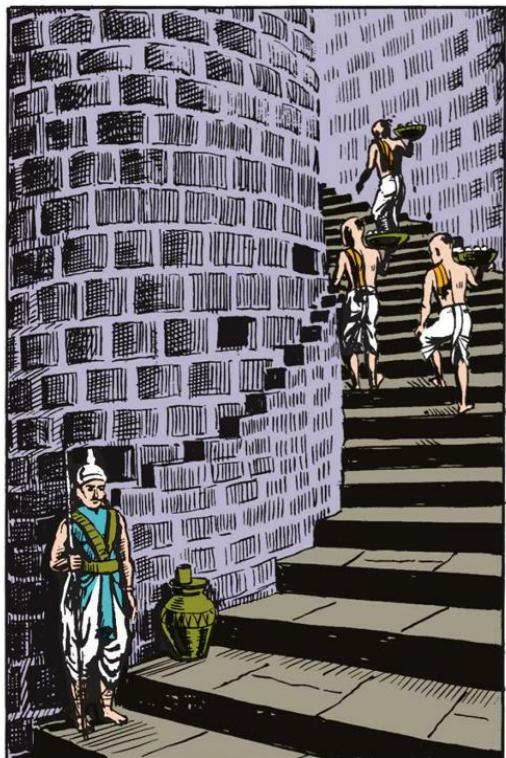


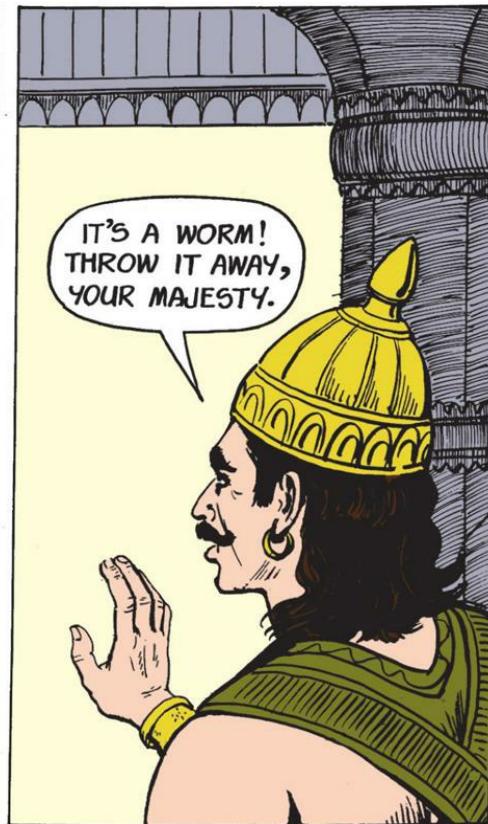
THE BARGAIN WAS MADE. AS SOON AS THE POOR BRAHMAN HAD LEFT —

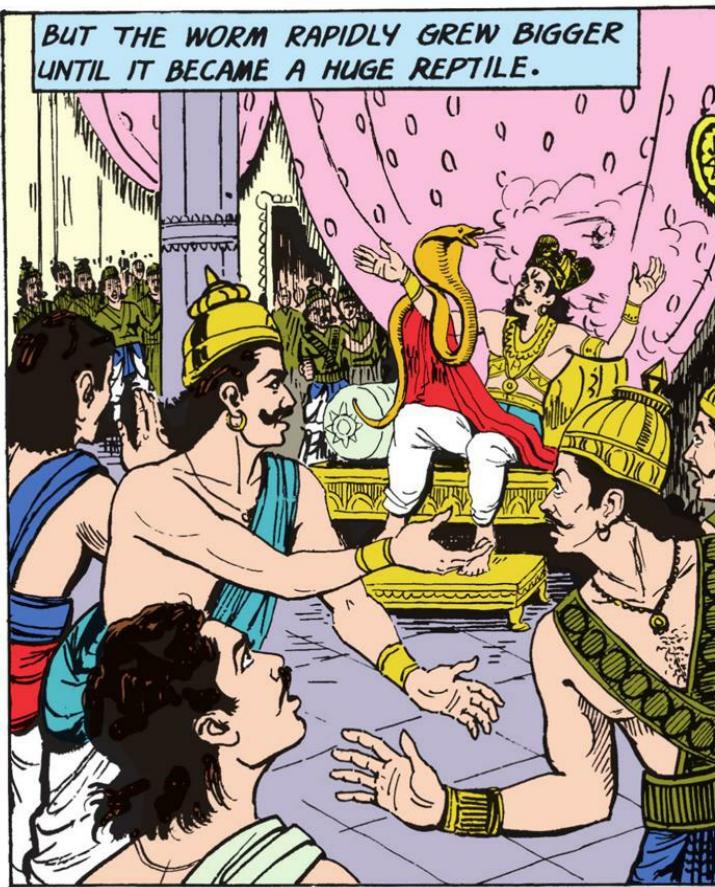
O LOYAL SUBJECTS AND BRETHREN, I COMMAND
YOU TO APPEAR BEFORE ME!

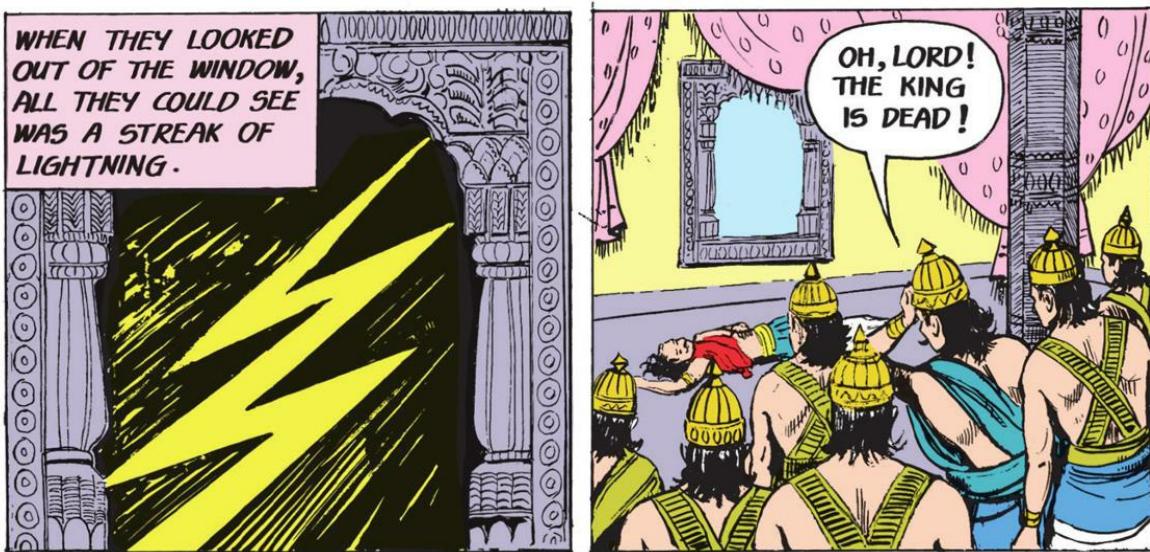
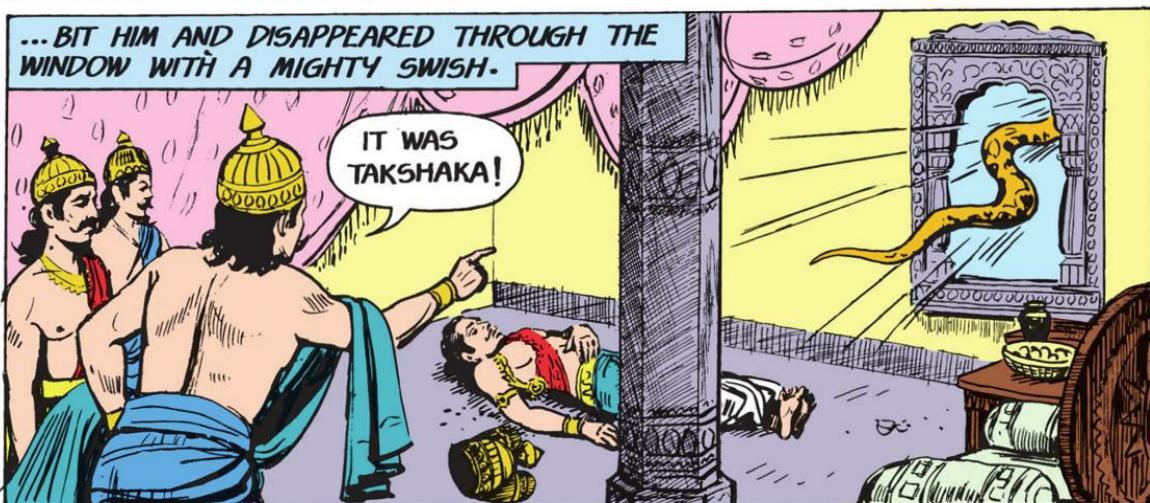




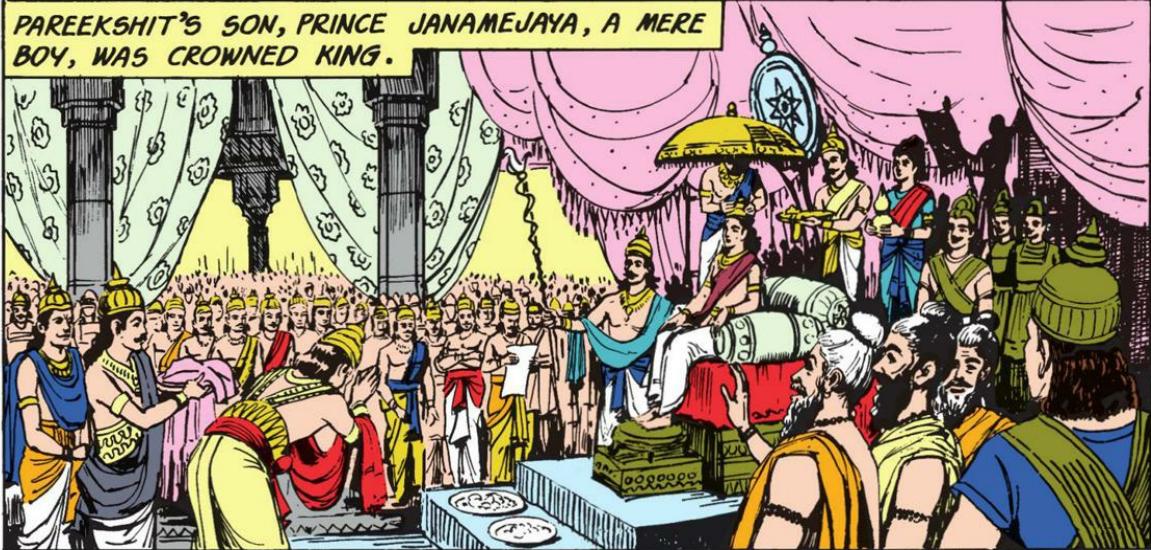




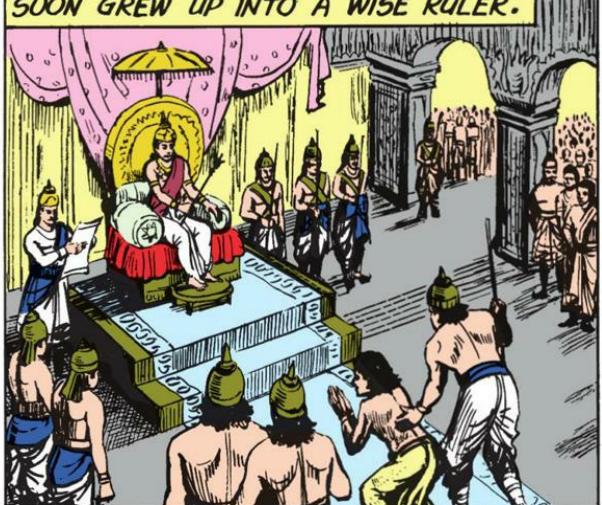




PAREEKSHIT'S SON, PRINCE JANAMEJAYA, A MERE BOY, WAS CROWNED KING.



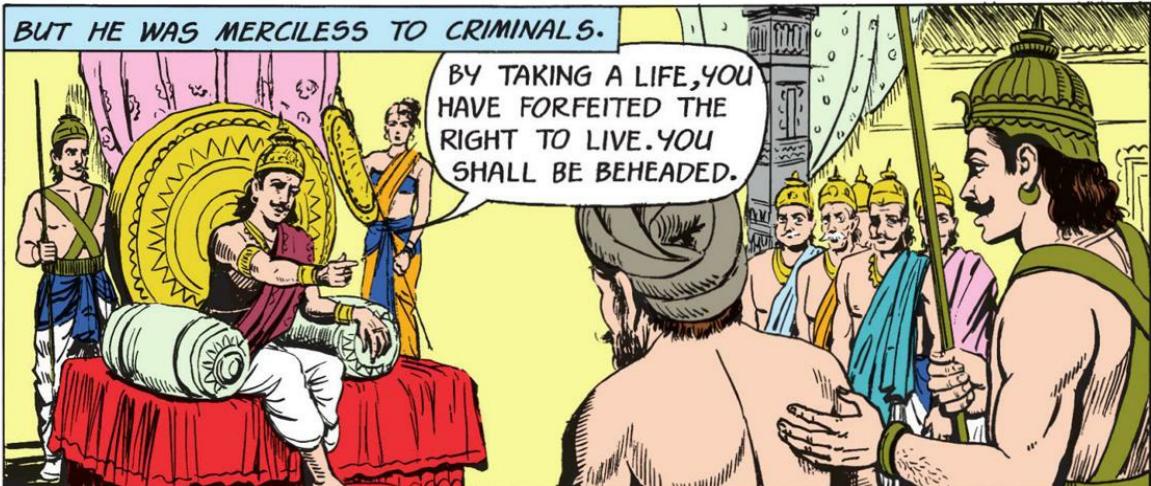
THE INTELLIGENT LAD, JANAMEJAYA SOON GREW UP INTO A WISE RULER.



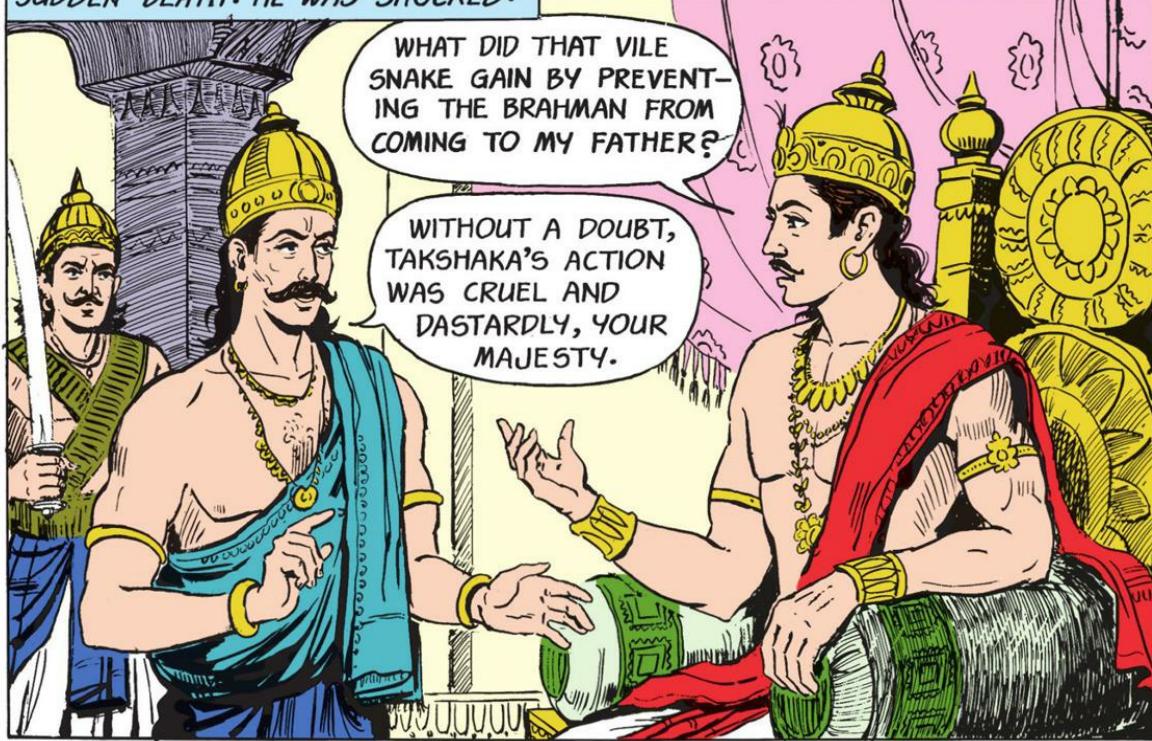
HE WAS GOOD TO ALL HIS SUBJECTS AND DEALT KINDLY WITH PETTY FAULTS.



BUT HE WAS MERCILESS TO CRIMINALS.

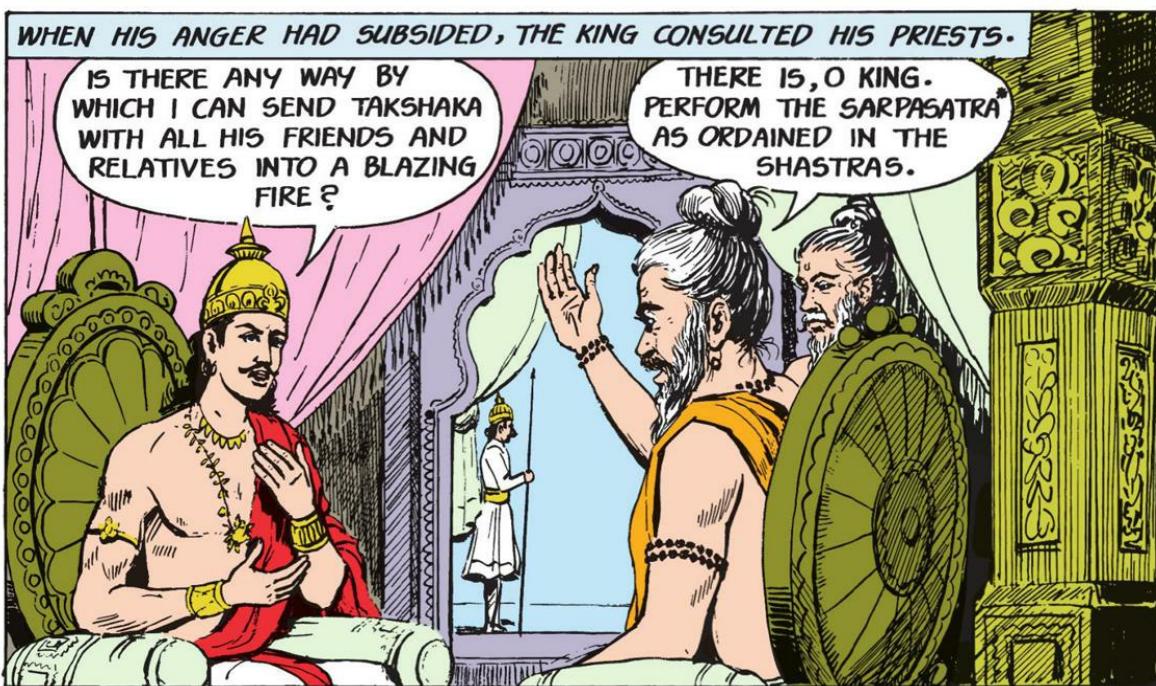


ONE DAY, HE HEARD FROM HIS MINISTERS THE WHOLE STORY OF HIS FATHER'S SUDDEN DEATH. HE WAS SHOCKED.

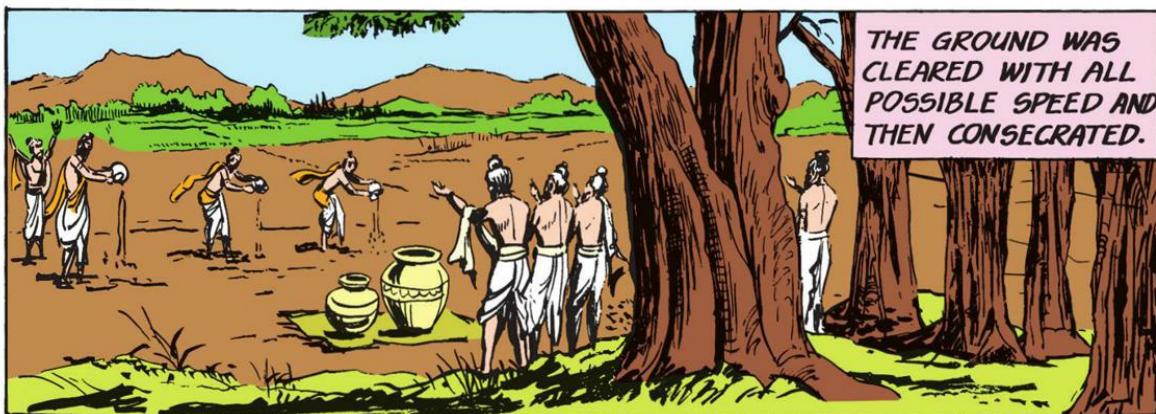
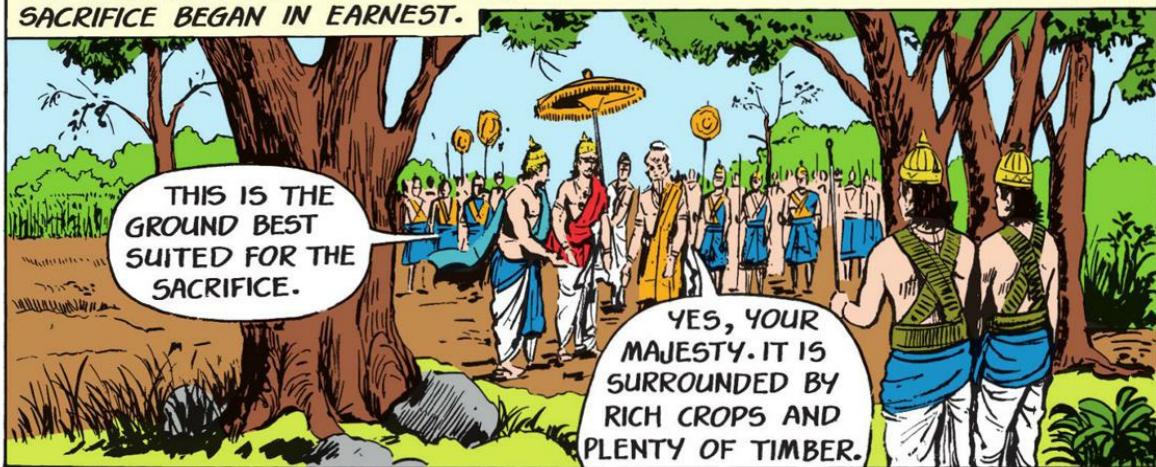


* SERPENT.

WHEN HIS ANGER HAD SUBSIDED, THE KING CONSULTED HIS PRIESTS.

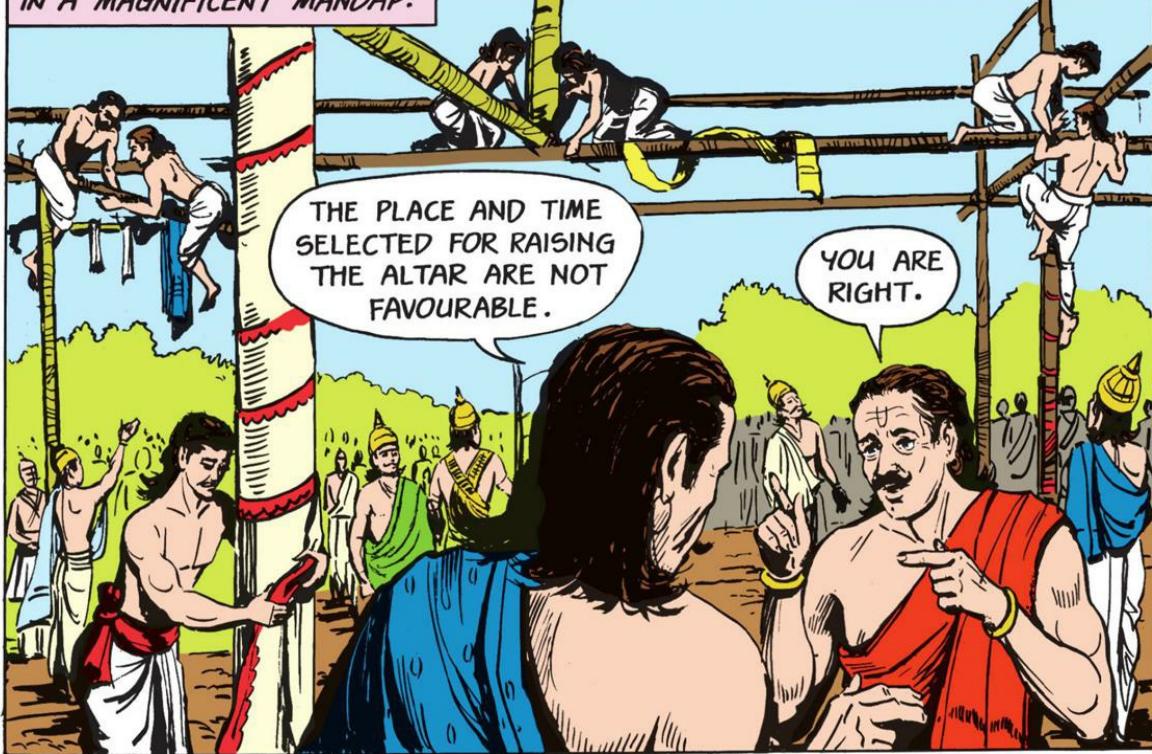


THE KING APPROVED OF THE IDEA, AND PREPARATIONS FOR THE GREAT SNAKE SACRIFICE BEGAN IN EARNEST.

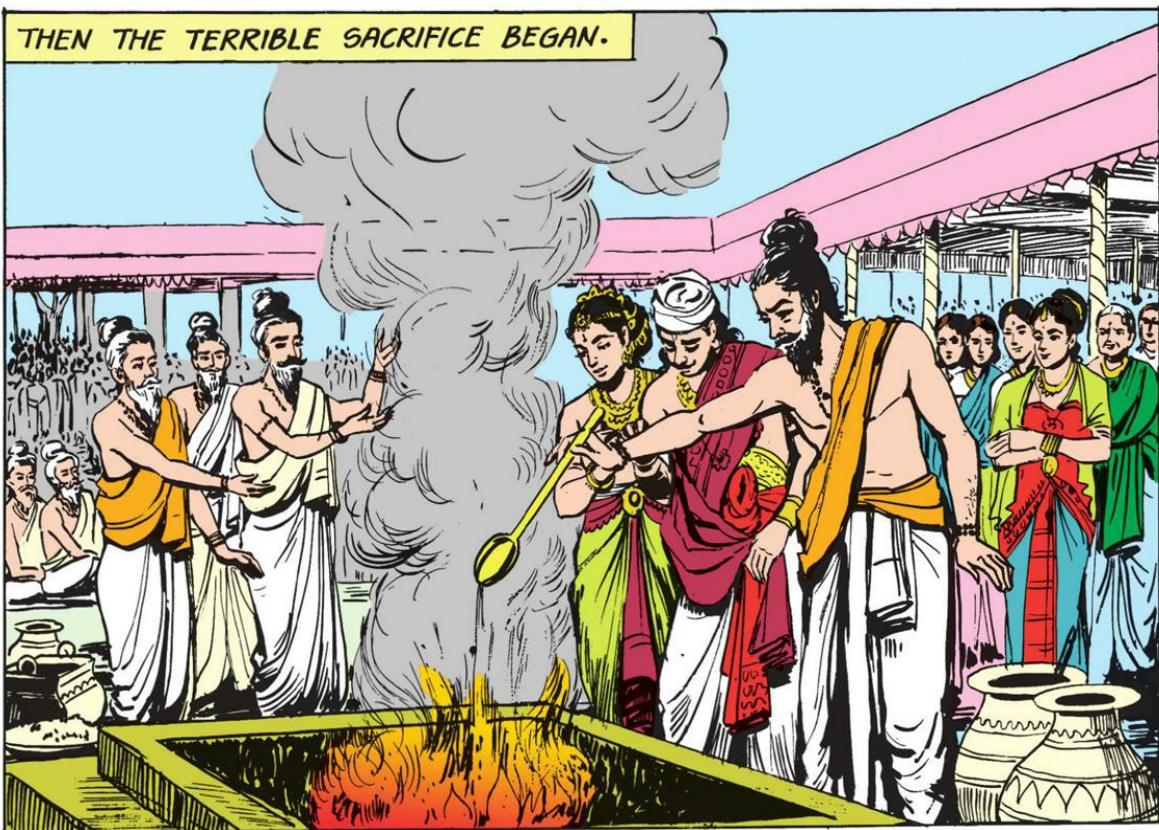


* THE SNAKE SACRIFICE .

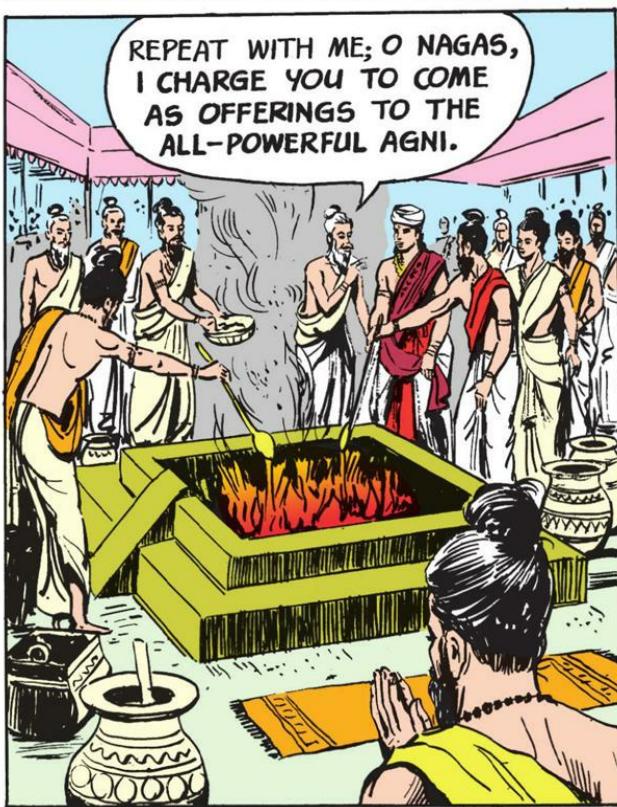
MASONS AND CARPENTERS STARTED BUILDING THE HOLY ALTAR, HOUSED IN A MAGNIFICENT MANDAP.



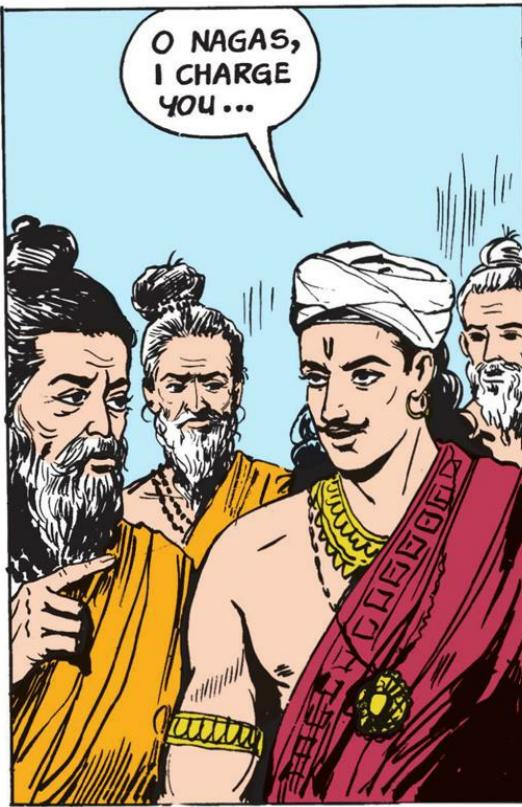
THEN THE TERRIBLE SACRIFICE BEGAN.



REPEAT WITH ME; O NAGAS,
I CHARGE YOU TO COME
AS OFFERINGS TO THE
ALL-POWERFUL AGNI.



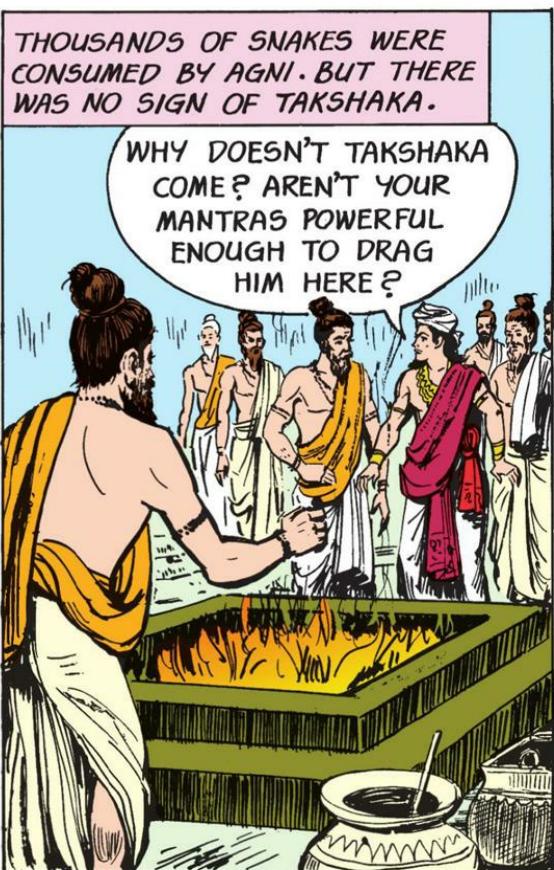
O NAGAS,
I CHARGE
YOU ...



AS THE NAME OF EACH NAGA WAS UTTERED, HE WAS DRAGGED BY THE POWER OF THE MANTRAS INTO THE SACRIFICIAL FIRE.

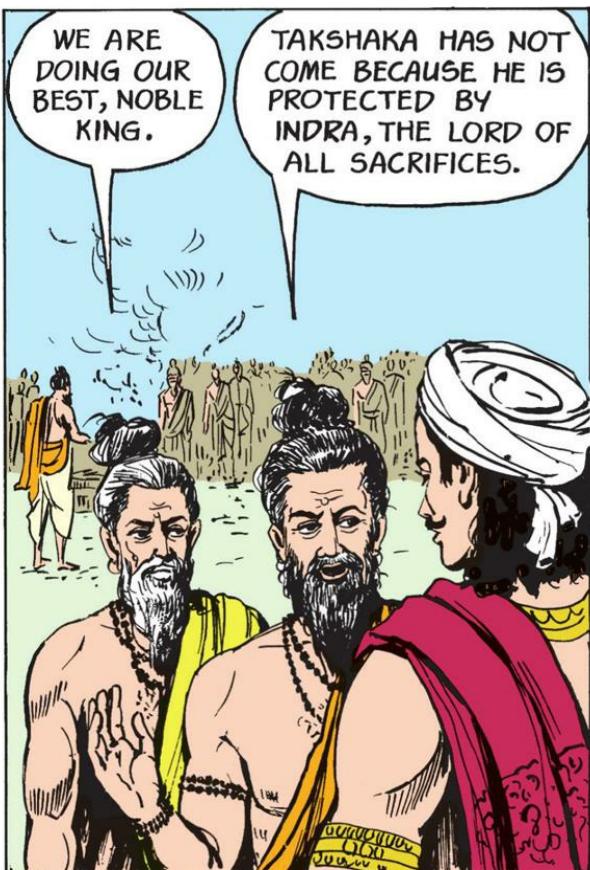


THOUSANDS OF SNAKES WERE CONSUMED BY AGNI. BUT THERE WAS NO SIGN OF TAKSHAKA.

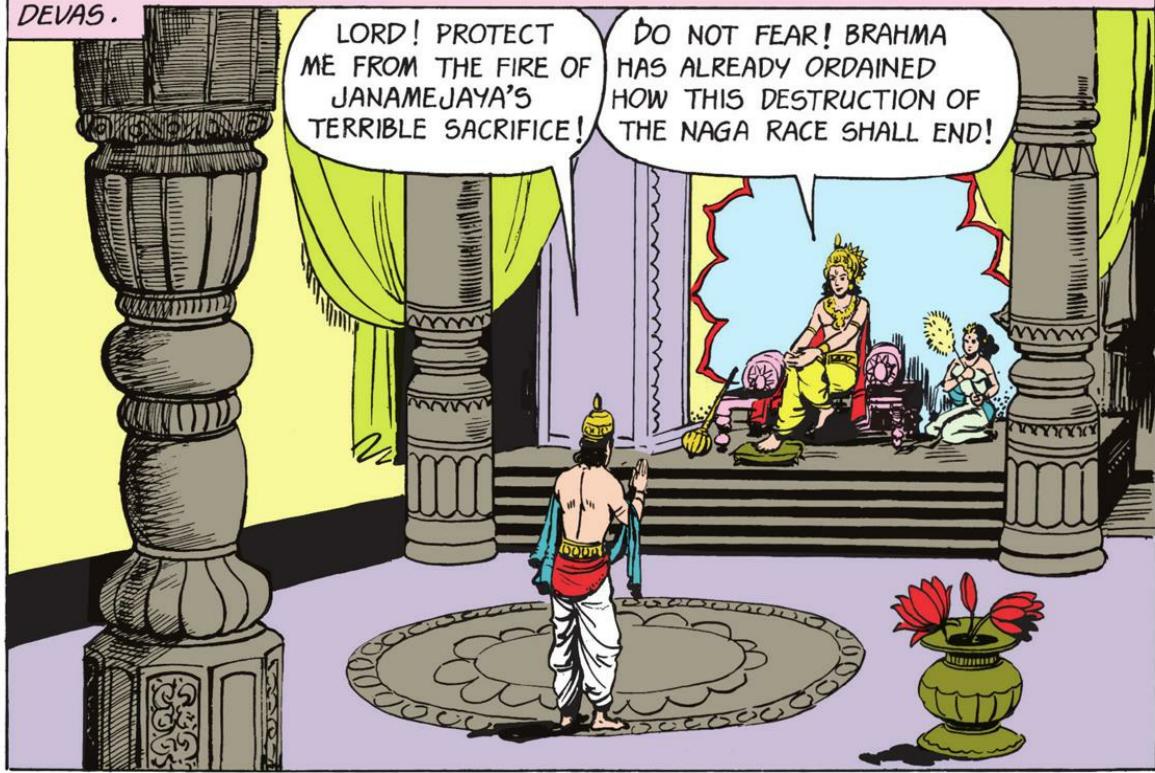


WE ARE DOING OUR BEST, NOBLE KING.

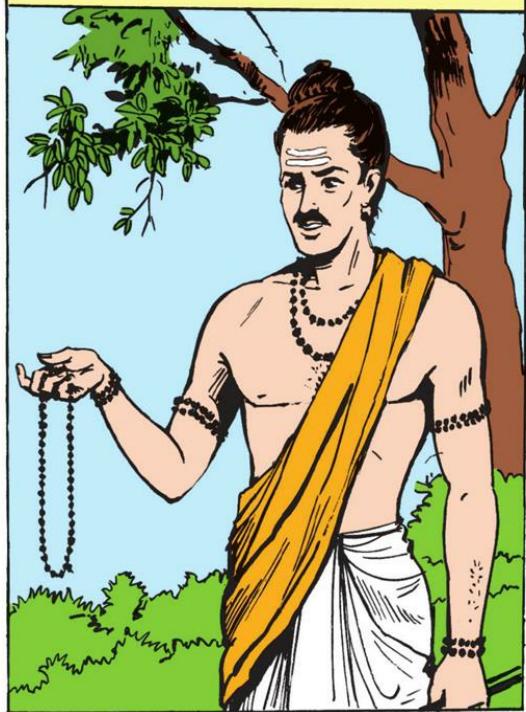
TAKSHAKA HAS NOT COME BECAUSE HE IS PROTECTED BY INDRA, THE LORD OF ALL SACRIFICES.



SHAKING WITH FEAR, TAKSHAKA HAD INDEED FLED TO INDRA, KING OF THE DEVAS.

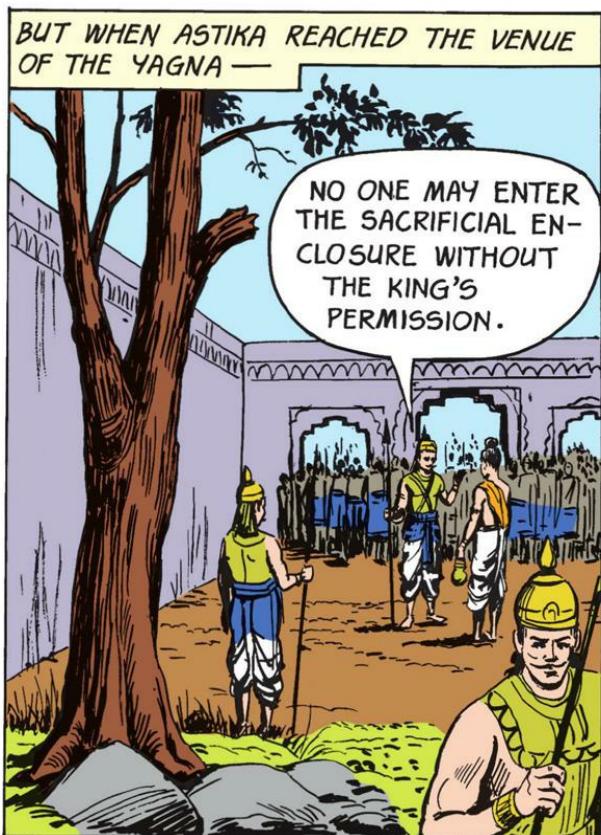
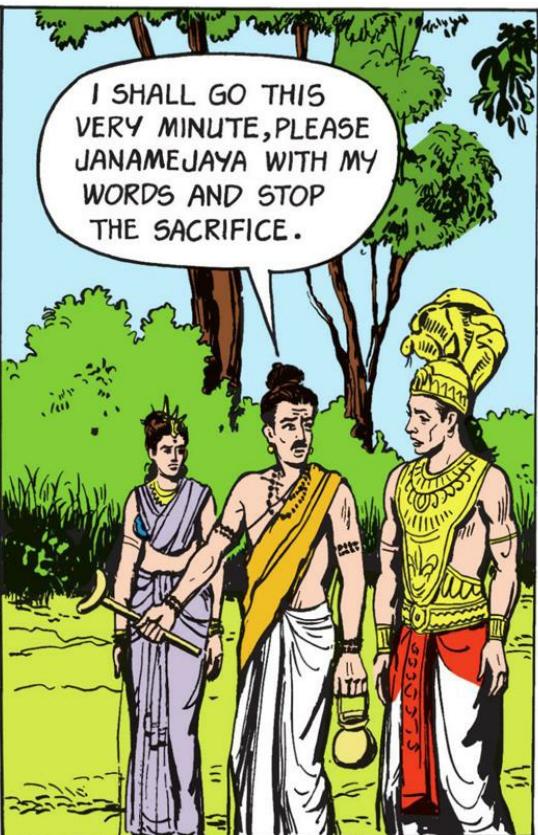
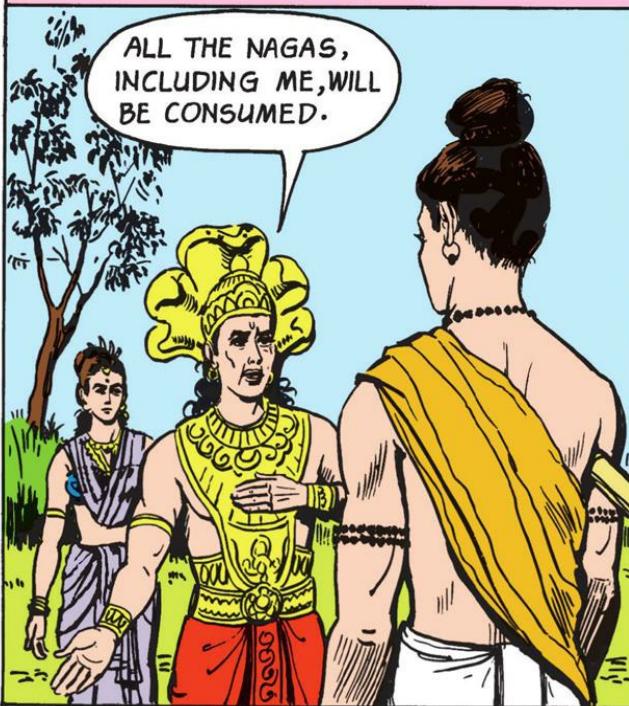


ASTIKA WAS THE SON OF JARATKARU,
A BRAHMAN, AND HIS NAGA WIFE.*



* VASUKI'S SISTER.

VASUKI WAS THE KING OF THE NAGAS. HE RAN TO ASTIKA WITH HIS TALE OF WOE.



INSIDE, THE PRIESTS WERE CHANTING THEIR MANTRAS WITH MOUNTING VEHEMENCE.



TAKSHAKA AND HIS MIGHTY PROTECTOR WERE DRAGGED TOWARDS THE SACRIFICIAL FIRE.



INDRA LOOKED DOWN ANXIOLUS WHILE TAKSHAKA CLUNG DESPERATELY TO HIS SHAWL.

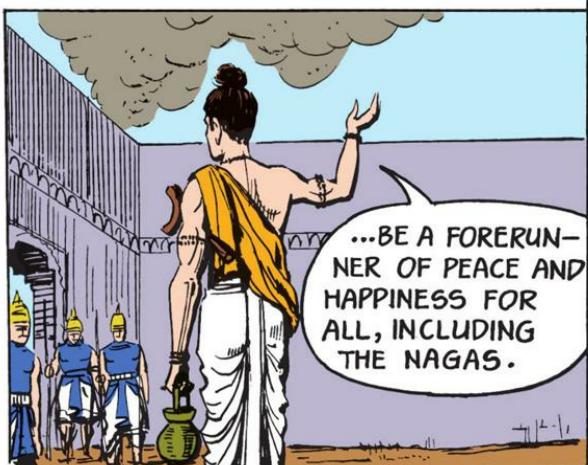
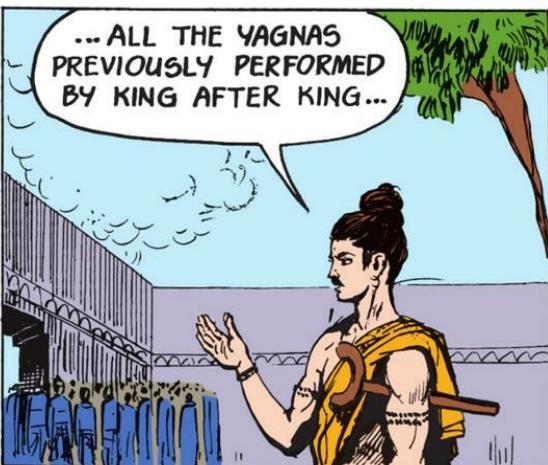
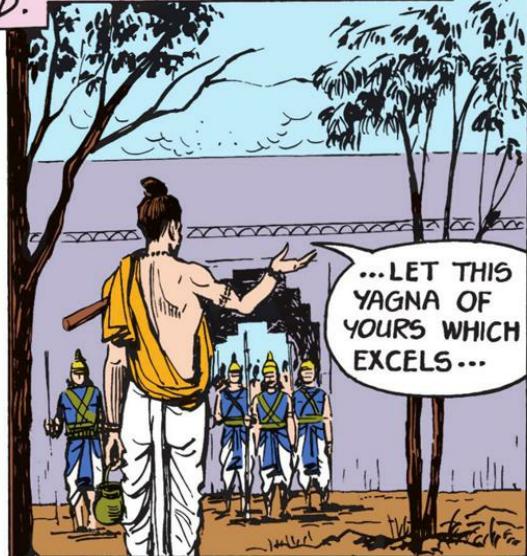
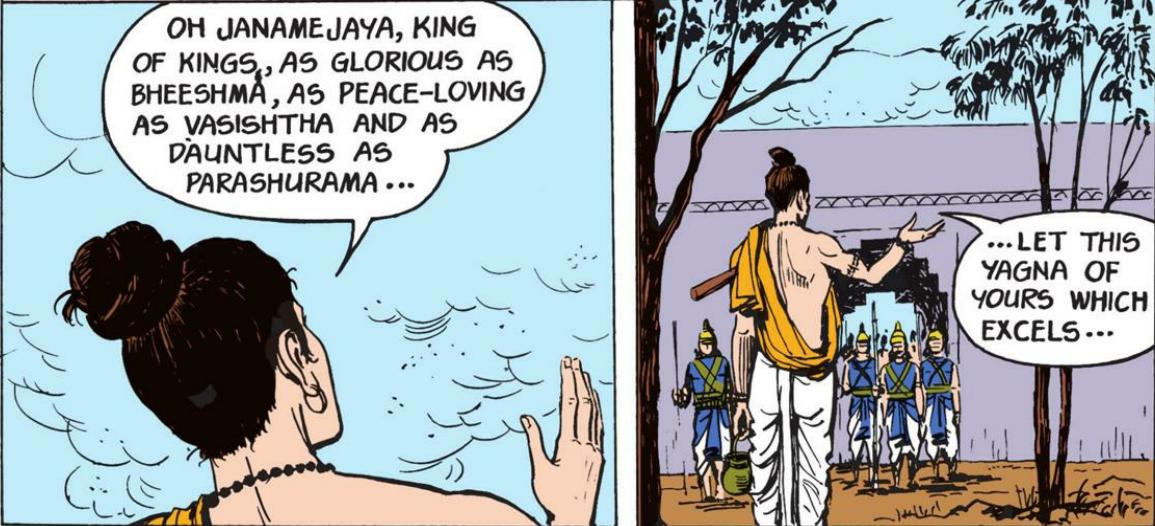


TAKSHAKA BEGAN FALLING.

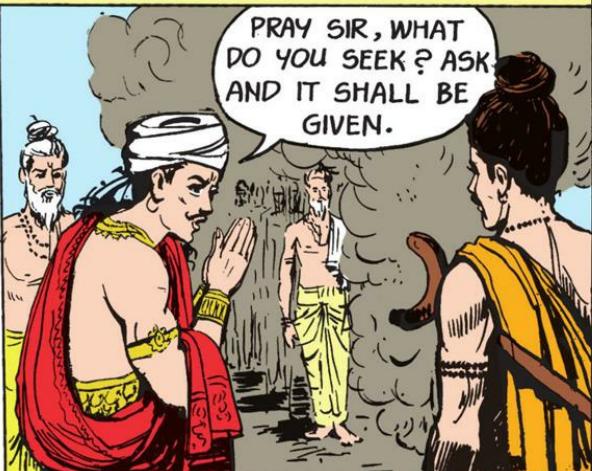
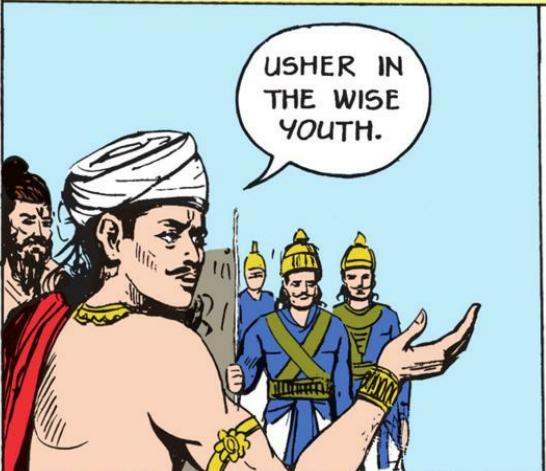


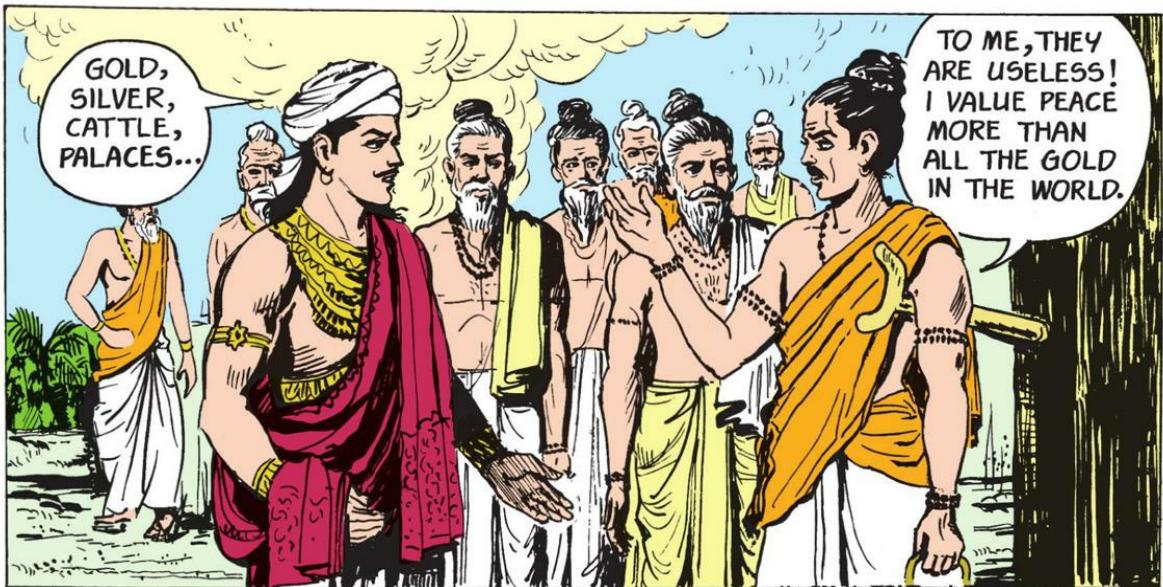
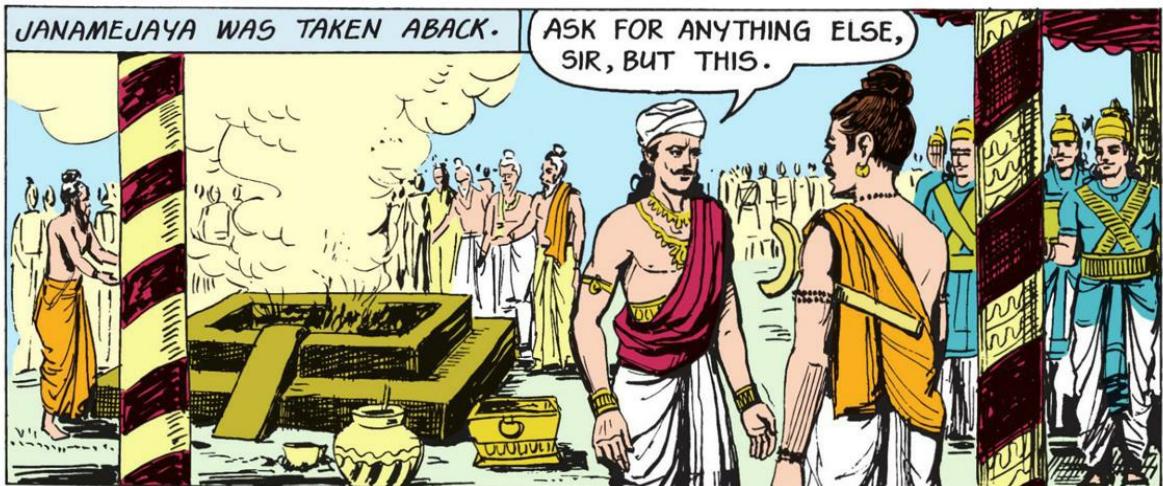
* STAY! STAY!

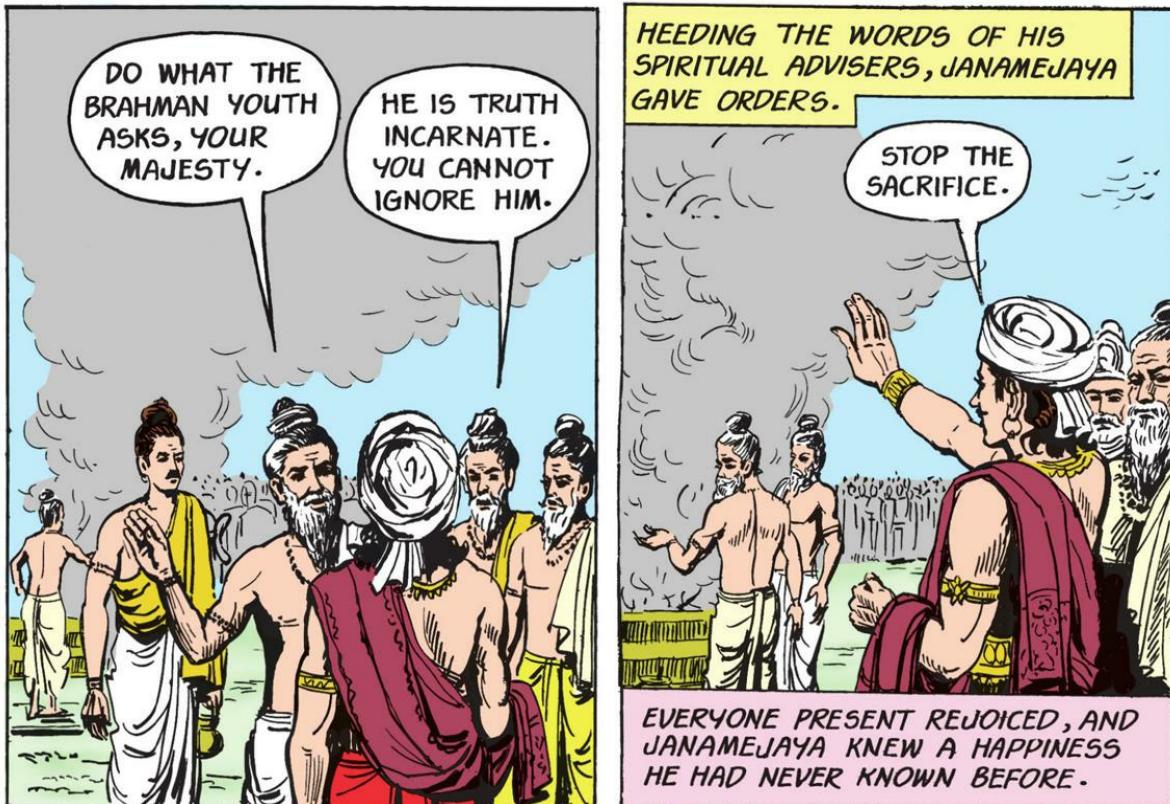
THEN ASTIKA STOOD ON THE SPOT AND BLESSED THE KING. HIS WORDS WERE SWEET MUSIC TO ALL WHO LISTENED.



THESE WORDS REACHED THE EARS OF JANAMEJAYA. HE TURNED TO HIS GUARDS.







WHICH OF THE ACKS HAVE YOU STILL NOT READ?

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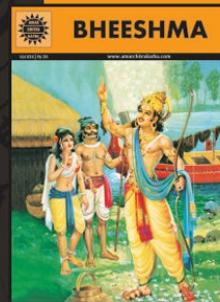
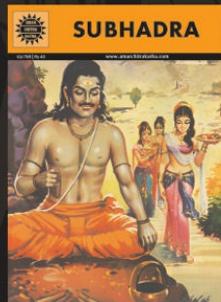
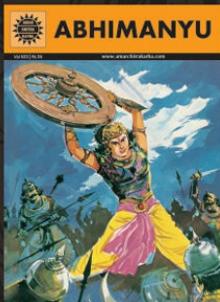
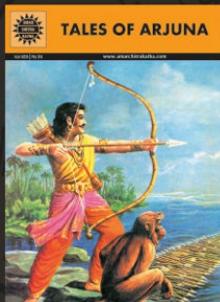
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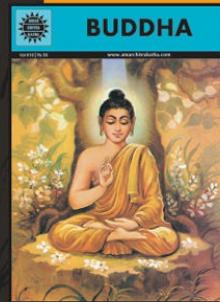
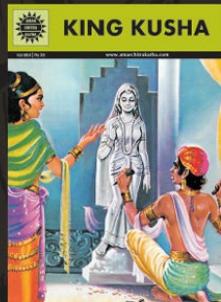
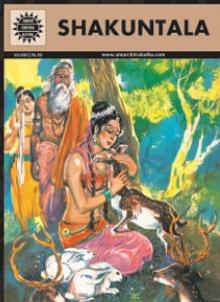
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