



Vol.1

THE RAMAYANA BALA KAND





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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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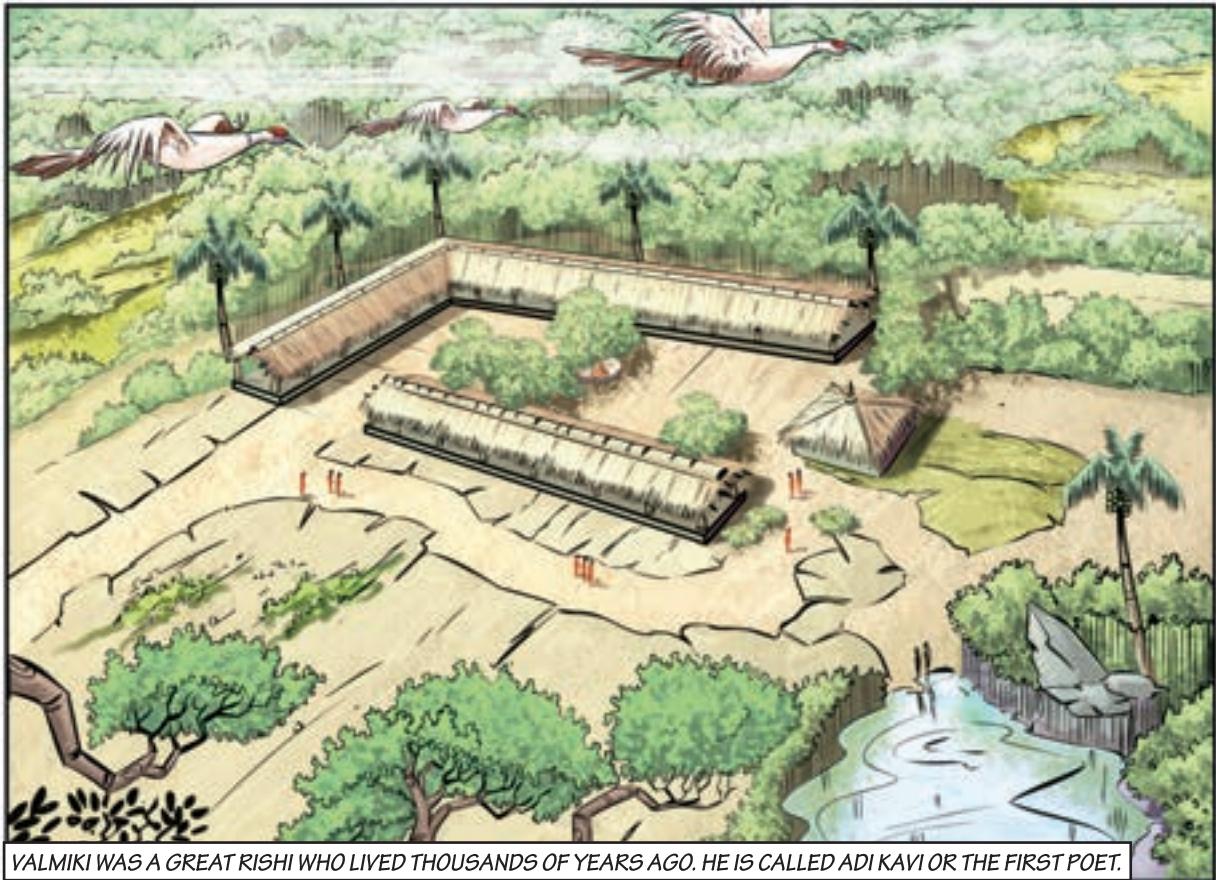
Acknowledgment

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

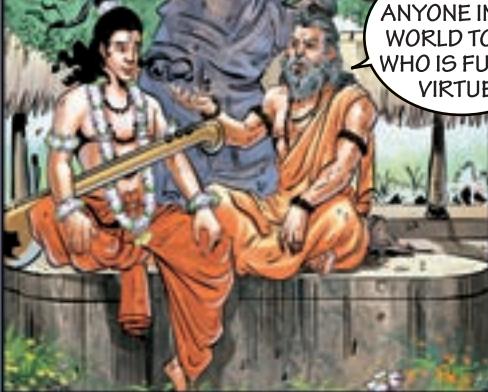


VALMIKI WAS A GREAT RISHI WHO LIVED THOUSANDS OF YEARS AGO. HE IS CALLED ADI KAVI OR THE FIRST POET.

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.

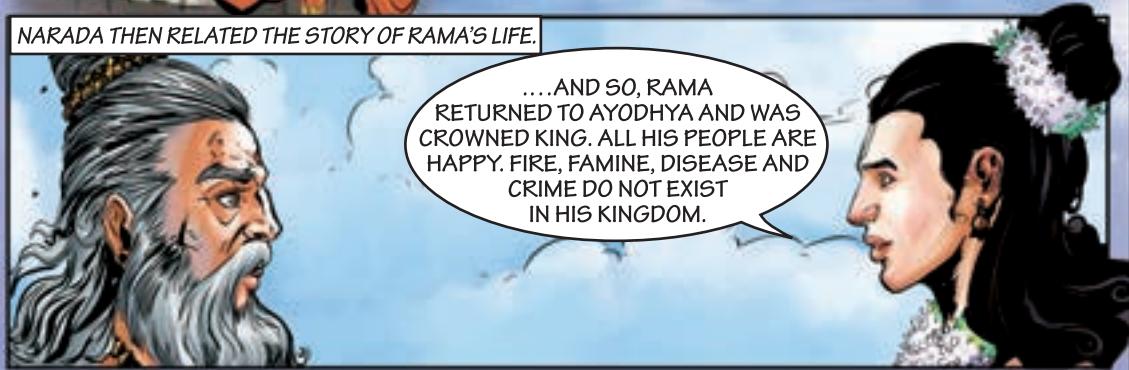


RAMA IS AS PROFOUND AS THE OCEAN, PATIENT AS MOTHER EARTH AND TRUTHFUL AS DHARMA. HE IS AS VALIANT AS VISHNU, AND HIS ANGER IS LIKE THE FIRE THAT DESTROYS THE UNIVERSE.



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), BHOOXI (EARTH) AND PATALA (UNDERWORLD)

[^]VISHNU

THE BEGINNING

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.

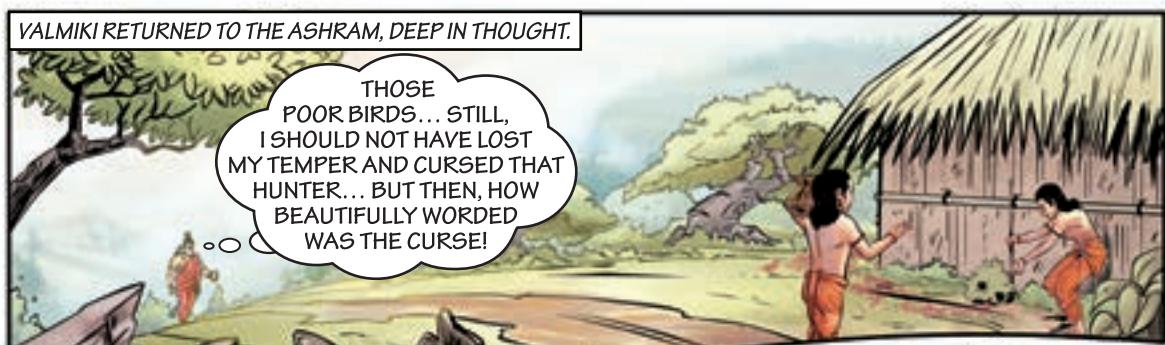
WHAT AN AMAZING DISCOVERY! OUT OF SHOKA** HAS COME SHLOKA^^!

*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

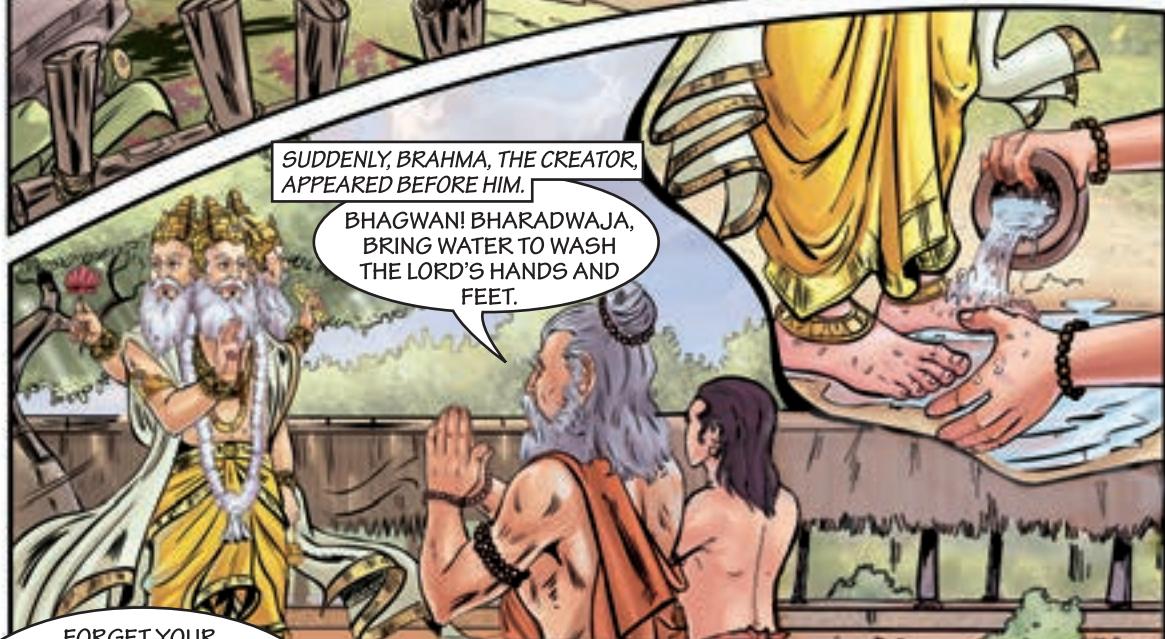
VALMIKI RETURNED TO THE ASHRAM, DEEP IN THOUGHT.

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

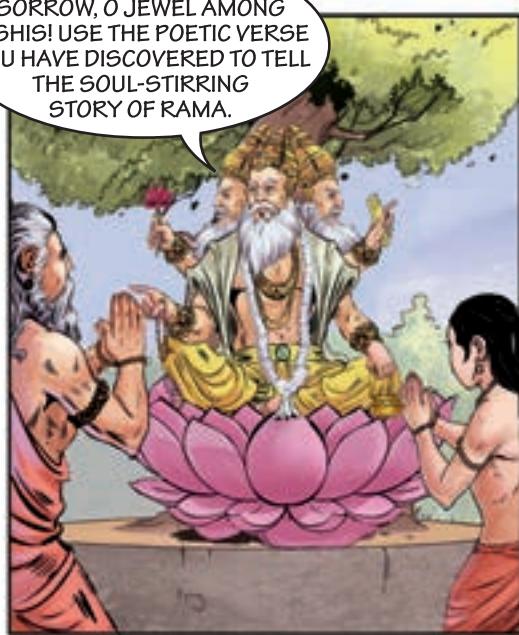


SUDDENLY, BRAHMA, THE CREATOR,
APPEARED BEFORE HIM.

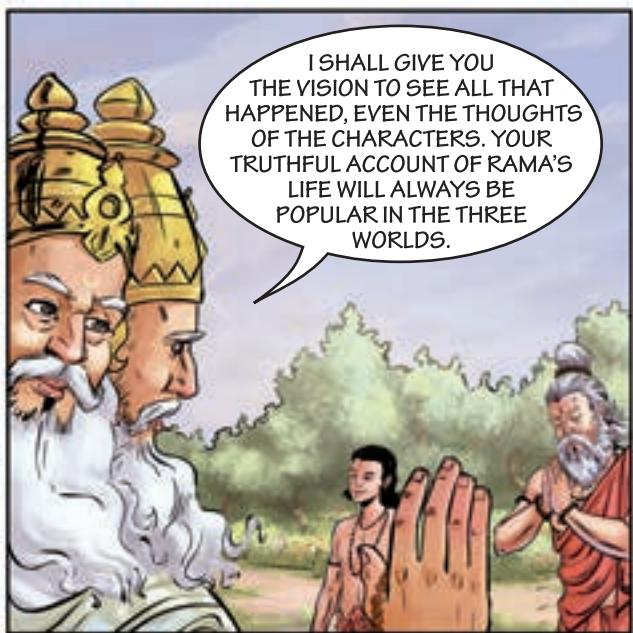
BHAGWAN! BHARADWAJA,
BRING WATER TO WASH
THE LORD'S HANDS AND
FEET.



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.

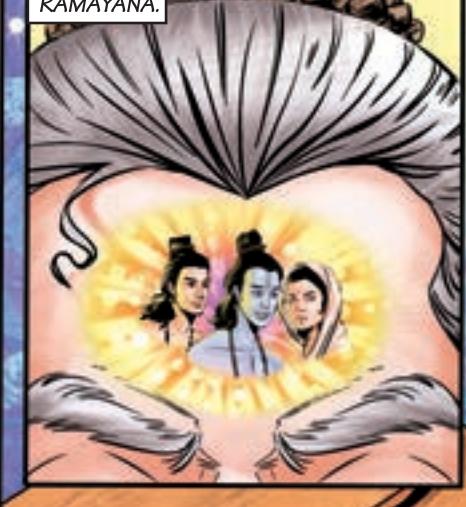


THE BEGINNING

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.



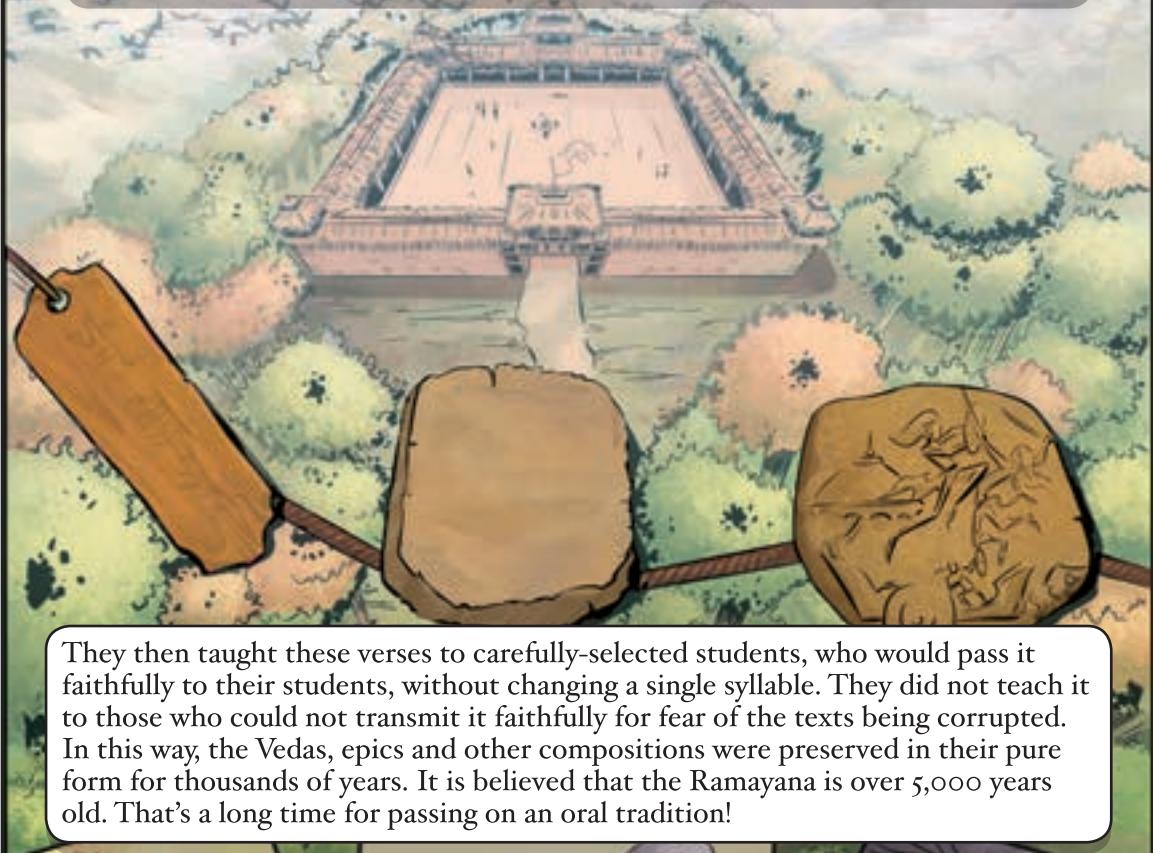
AT LAST, THE RAMAYANA WAS COMPLETE. NOW VALMIKI HAD TO TEACH IT TO ONE OF HIS STUDENTS - SOMEONE WHO HAD A GOOD MEMORY AND COULD RECITE IT TO A LARGE AUDIENCE.

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

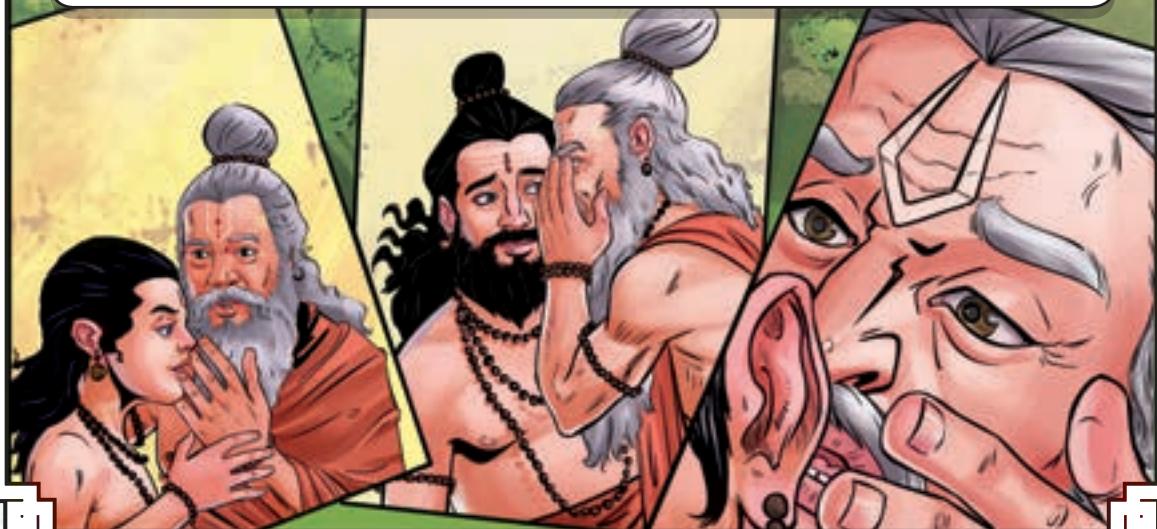


THE ORAL TRADITION

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!

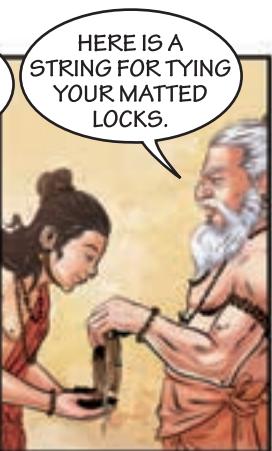
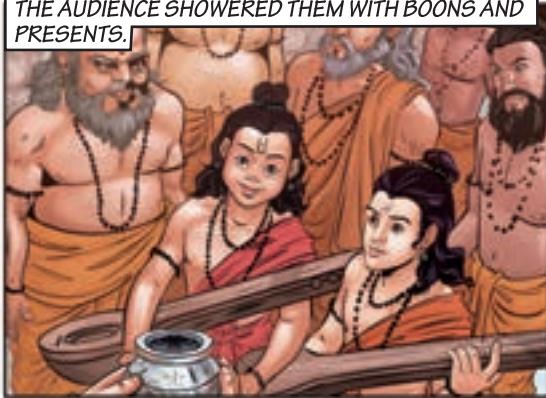




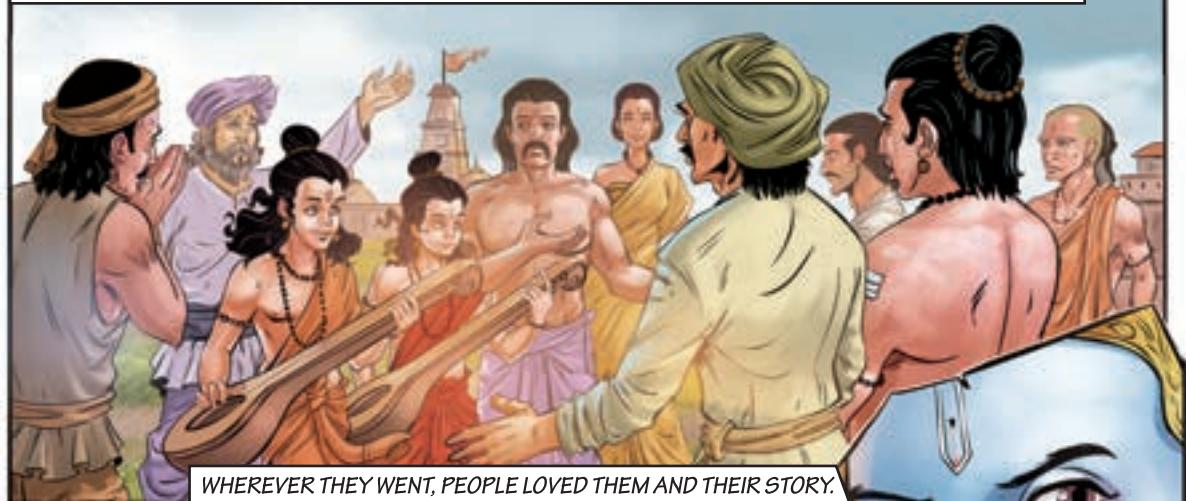
*ANOTHER NAME FOR RAVANA, A DESCENDANT OF PULASTYA

[^]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.

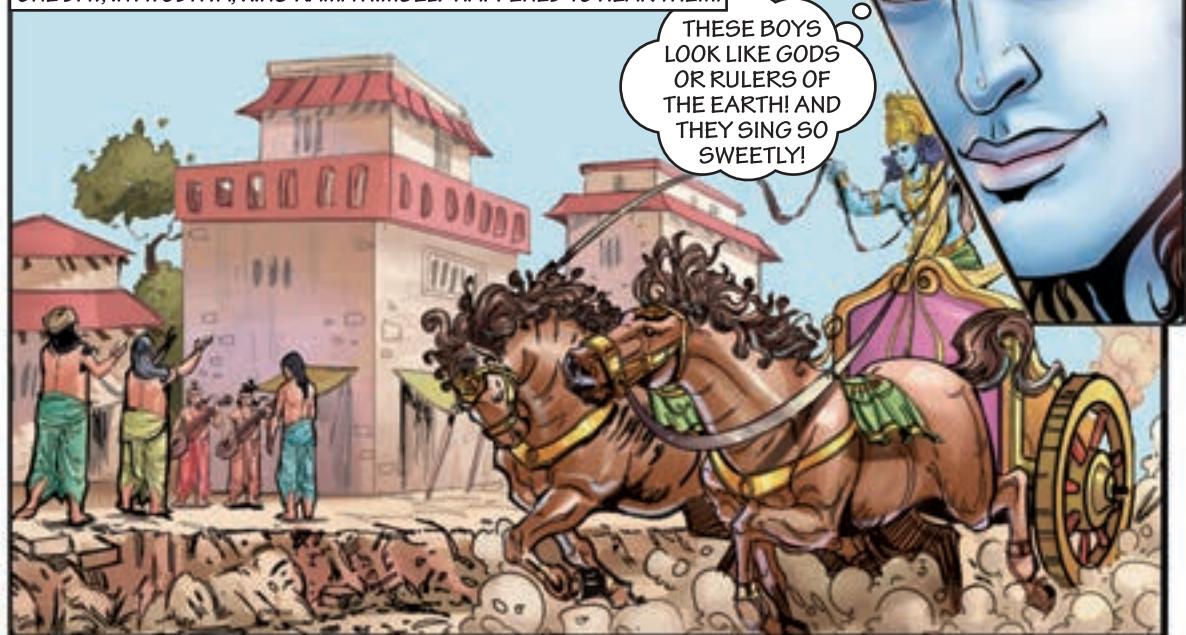


LUVA AND KUSHA WANDERED ALL OVER THE COUNTRY, SINGING THE RAMAYANA IN VILLAGES AND TOWNS.



WHEREVER THEY WENT, PEOPLE LOVED THEM AND THEIR STORY.

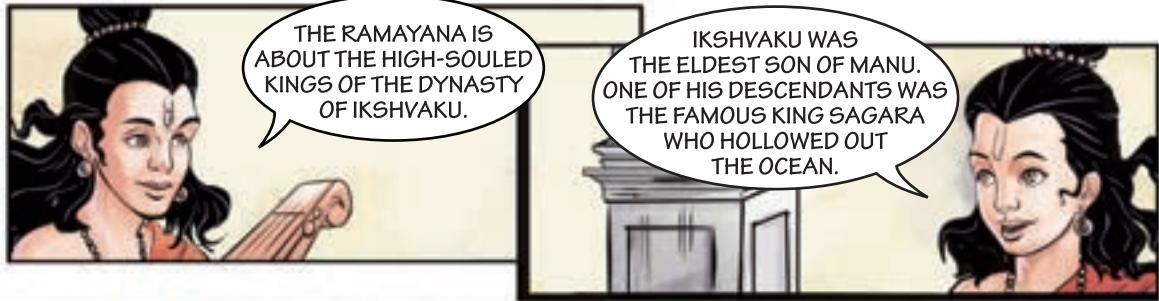
ONE DAY, IN AYODHYA, KING RAMA HIMSELF HAPPENED TO HEAR THEM.



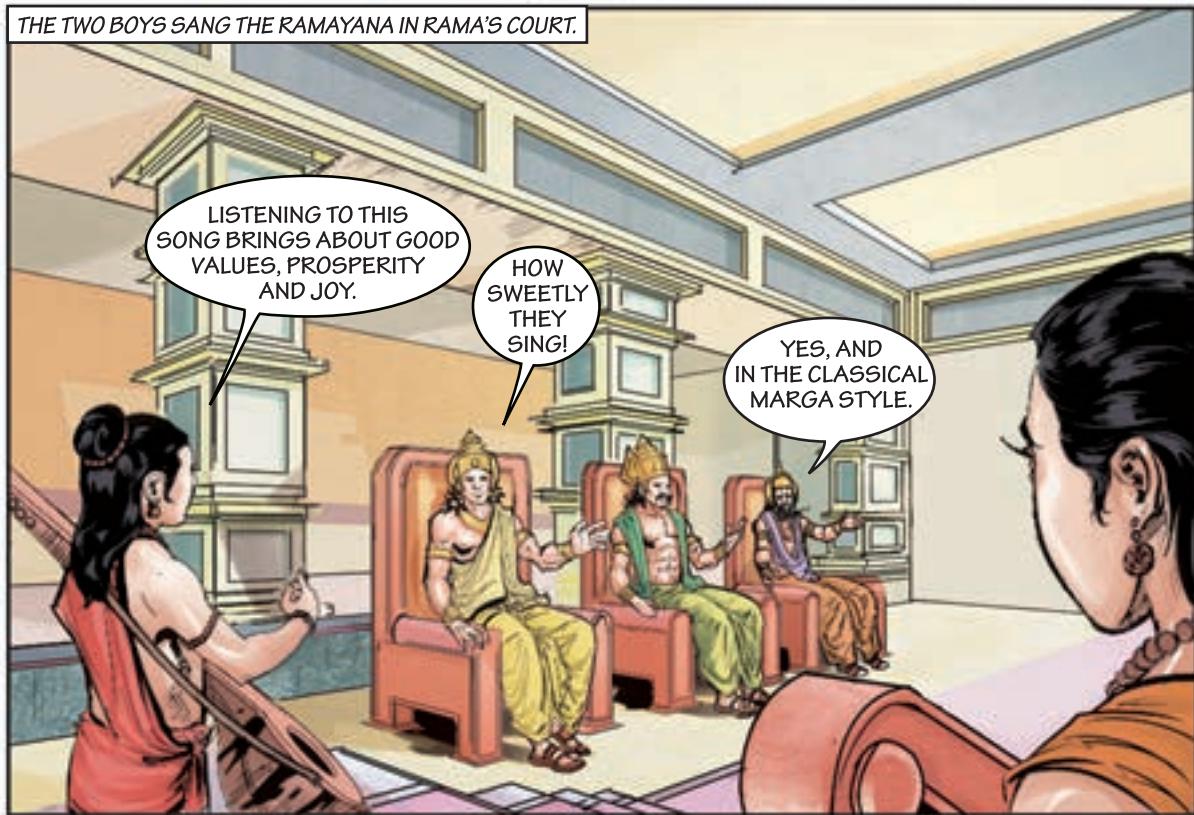
*MEDITATION AND CONTROL OF THE SENSES

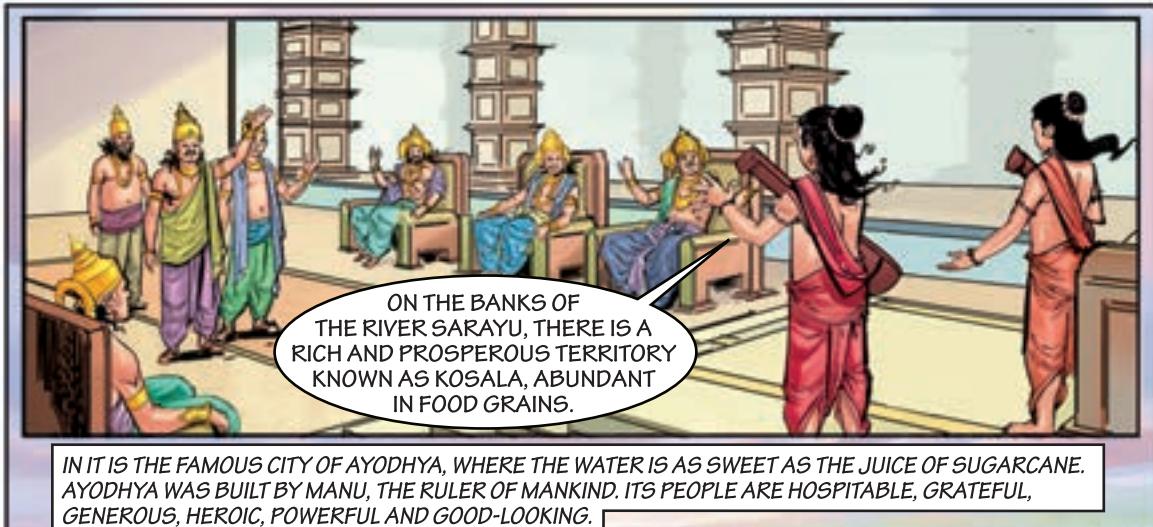
THE BEGINNING

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



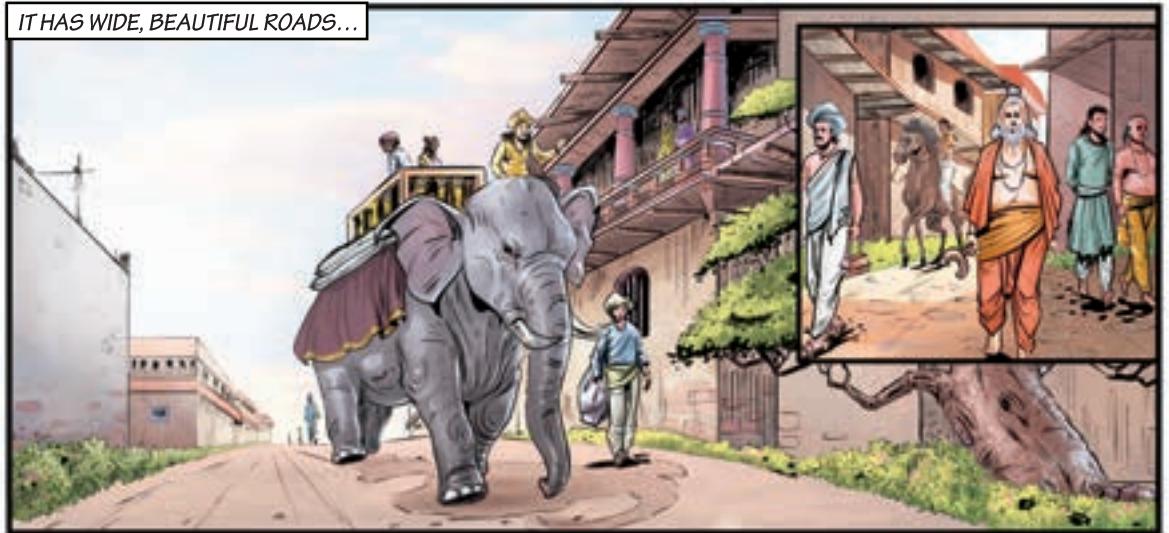
THE TWO BOYS SANG THE RAMAYANA IN RAMA'S COURT.





THE BEGINNING

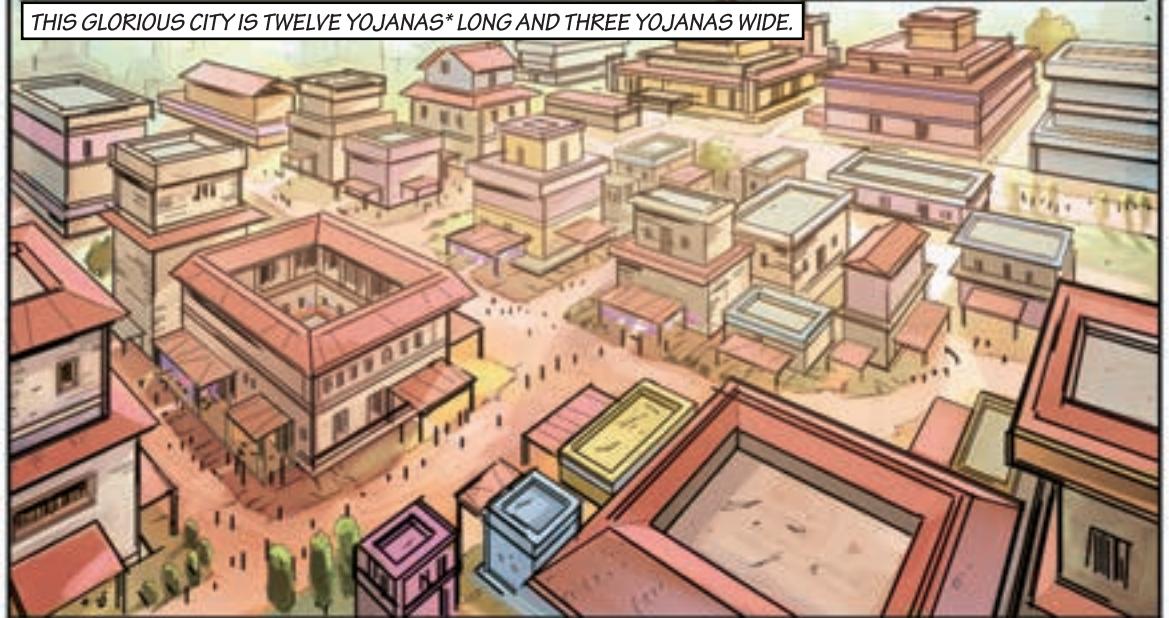
IT HAS WIDE, BEAUTIFUL ROADS...



...AND ITS STREETS ARE THRONGED 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
TRAVELED IN A BULLOCK CART IN ONE DAY,
OR ABOUT 10 KILOMETRES.

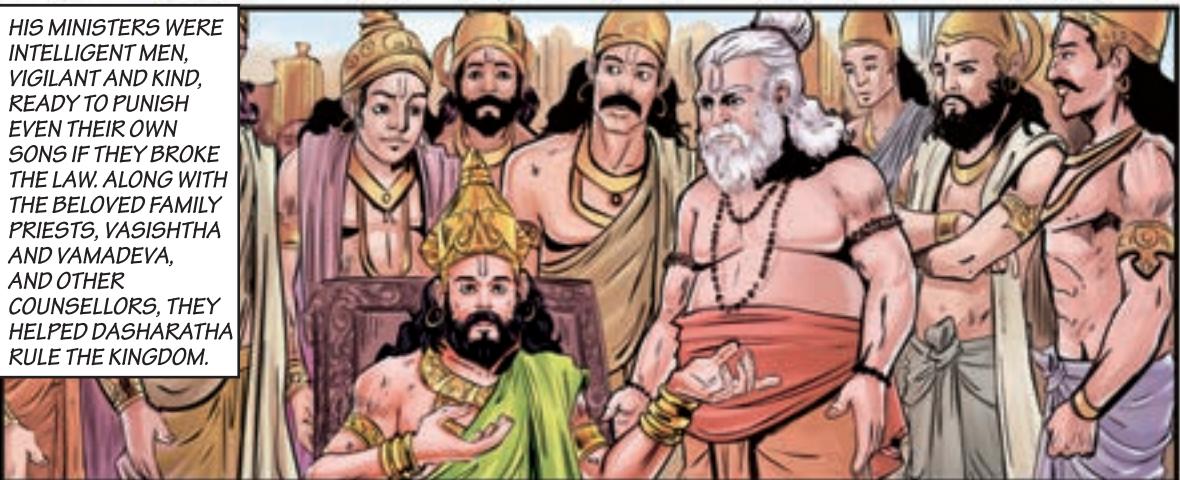
THE LEARNED KING DASHARATHA RULED OVER AYODHYA. HE WAS A HEROIC WARRIOR, GENEROUS AND JUST TO ALL.

WE BOW TO OUR EMPEROR!

A TIGER AMONG MEN!

THE GREATEST!

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.

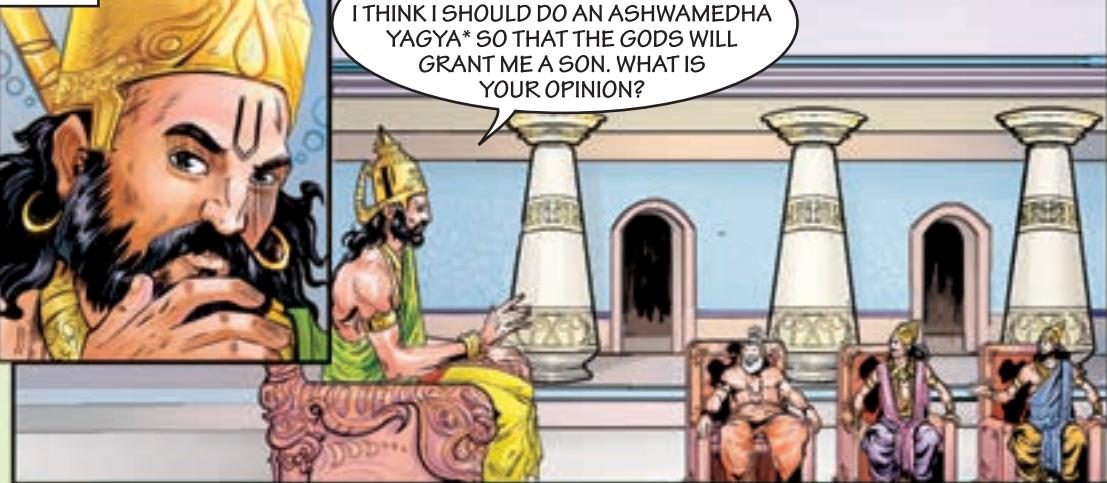
I AM INDEED BLESSED IN EVERY WAY. BUT I WISH I HAD A SON!*



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

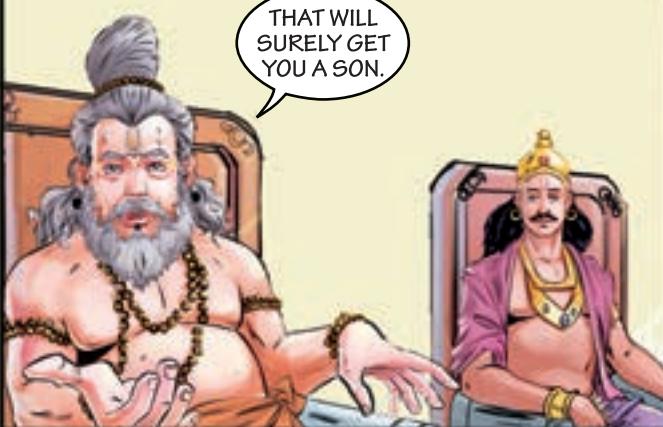
ONE DAY, DASHARATHA HAD AN IDEA.

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!



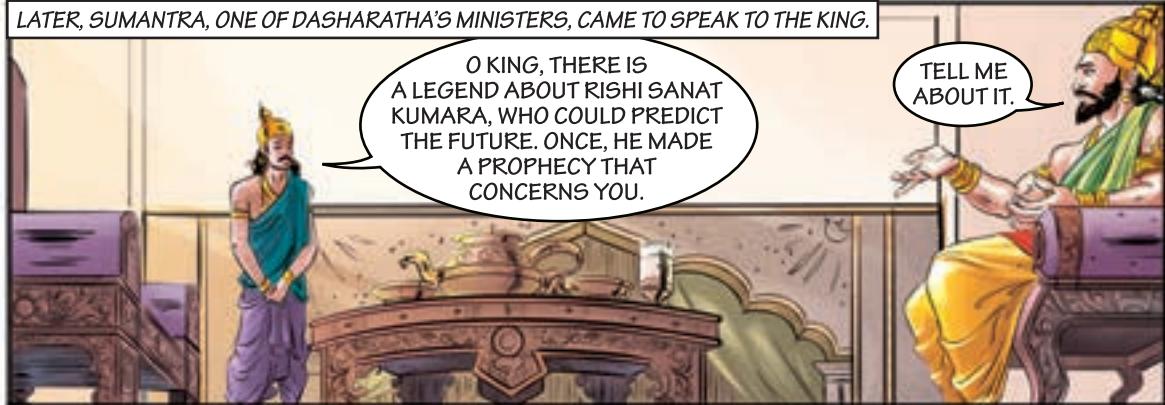
DASHARATHA WENT TO THE QUEENS' APARTMENTS AND TOLD THEM ABOUT THE SACRIFICE HE HAD UNDERTAKEN.

....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.



*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.

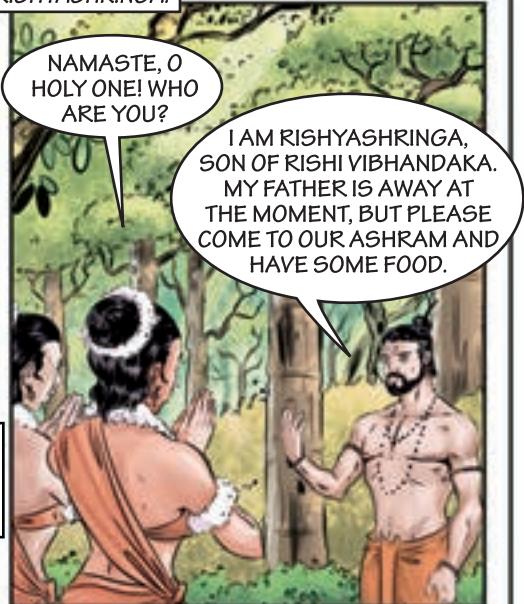
VIBHANDAKA, THE SON OF KASHYAPA,
WAS A VERY POWERFUL RISHI.
EVERYONE WAS SCARED
OF BEING CURSED BY HIM.

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

FINALLY THEY CAME UP WITH A PLAN.

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

THEY TRANSFORMED THEMSELVES AND APPEARED BEFORE RISHYASHRINGA.

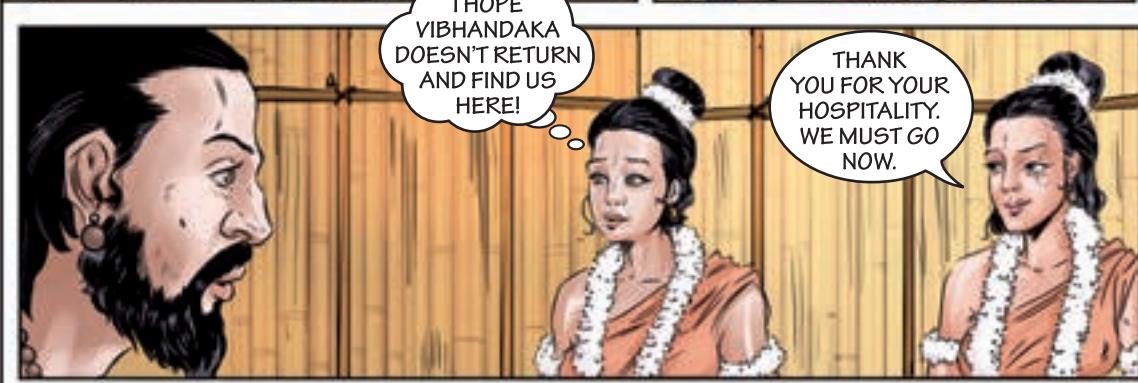
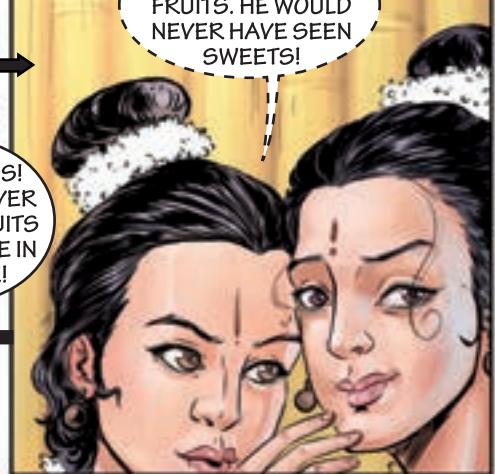
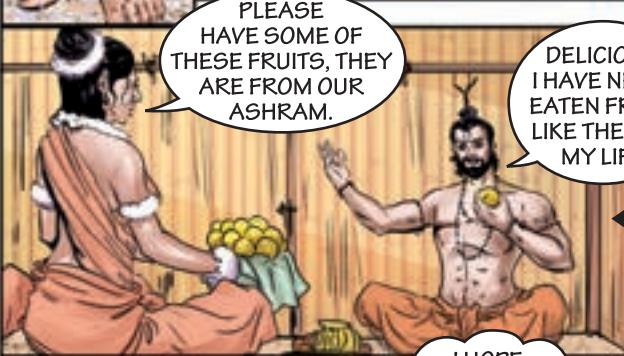


RISHYASHRINGA TREATED THEM LIKE HONoured GUESTS. HE GAVE THEM WATER TO WASH THEIR HANDS AND FEET, AND THEN OFFERED THEM FRUITS AND ROOTS TO EAT.



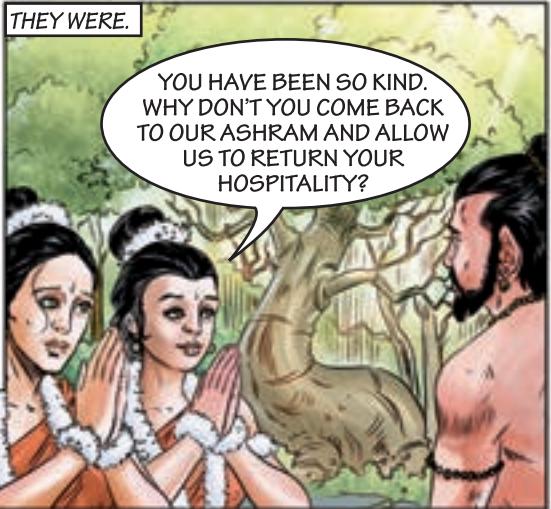
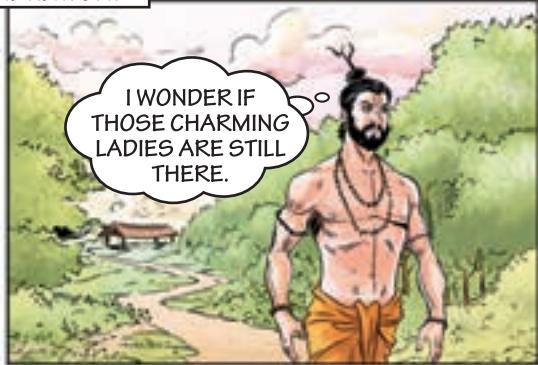
THEY, IN TURN, GAVE HIM RICH SWEETS THEY HAD BROUGHT WITH THEM.

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



THE BEGINNING

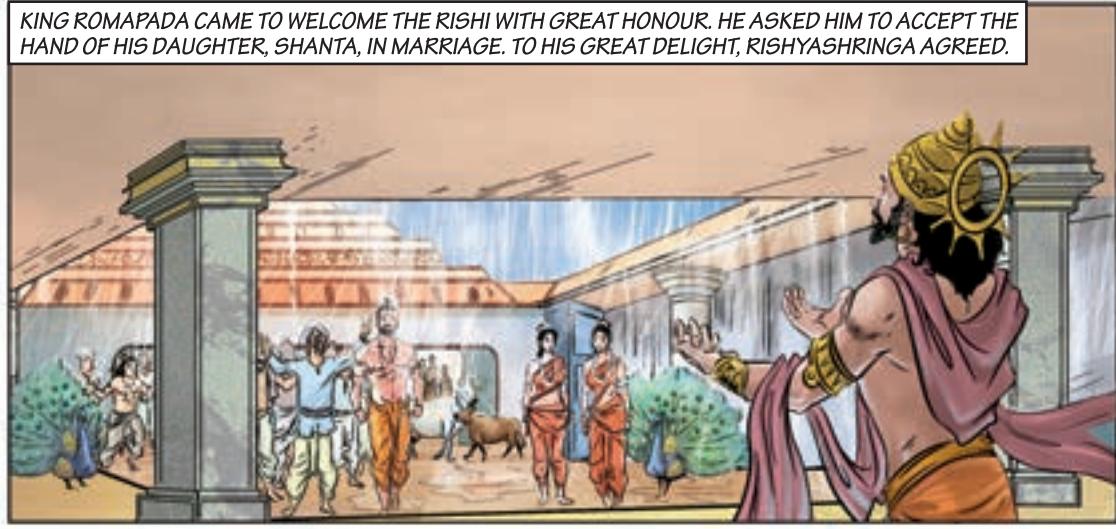
THE NEXT DAY -



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

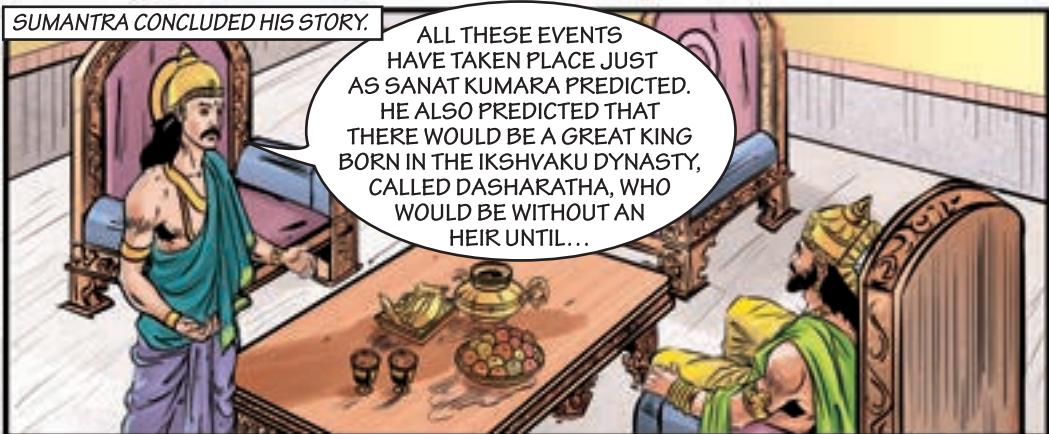


KING ROMAPADA CAME TO WELCOME THE RISHI WITH GREAT HONOUR. HE ASKED HIM TO ACCEPT THE HAND OF HIS DAUGHTER, SHANTA, IN MARRIAGE. TO HIS GREAT DELIGHT, RISHYASHRINGA AGREED.



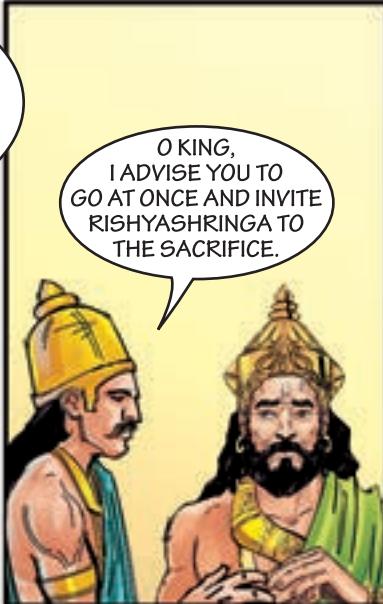
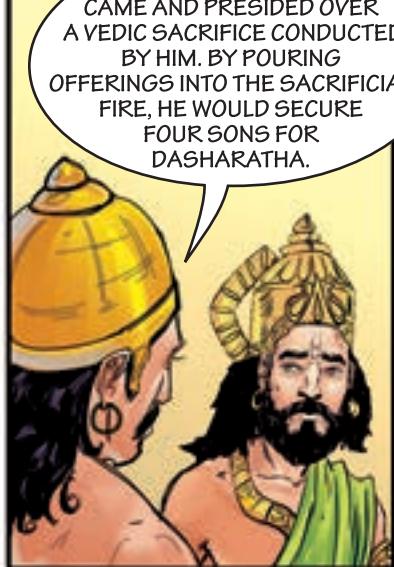


SUMANTRA CONCLUDED HIS STORY.



...RISHYASHRINGA CAME AND PRESIDED OVER A VEDIC SACRIFICE CONDUCTED BY HIM. BY POURING OFFERINGS INTO THE SACRIFICIAL FIRE, HE WOULD SECURE FOUR SONS FOR DASHARATHA.

O KING,
I ADVISE YOU TO GO AT ONCE AND INVITE RISHYASHRINGA TO THE SACRIFICE.

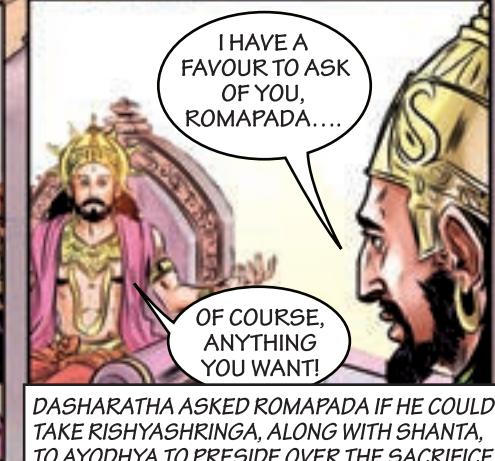
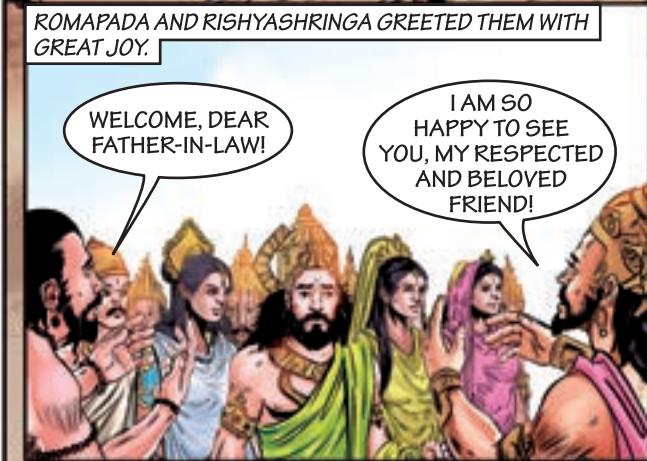


THE BEGINNING

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

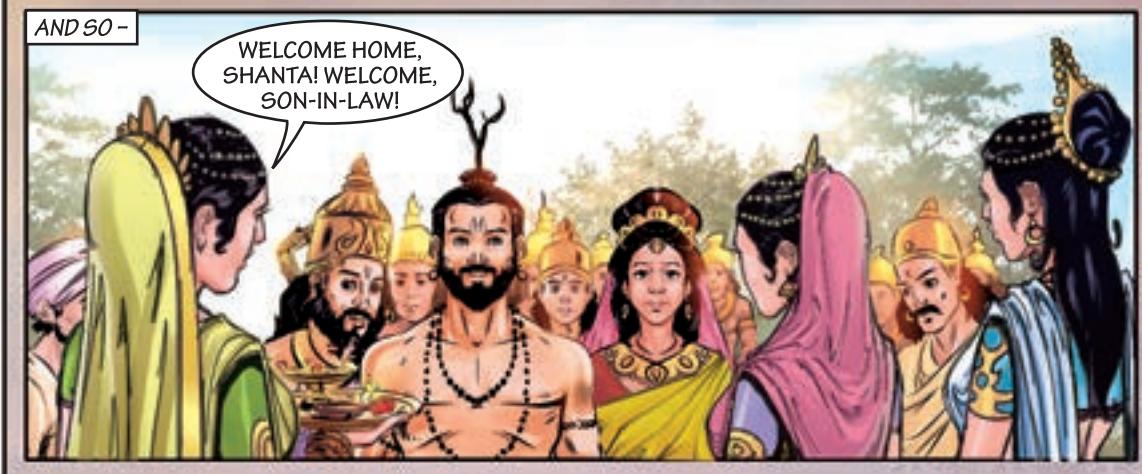


ROMAPADA AND RISHYASHRINGA GREETED THEM WITH GREAT JOY.

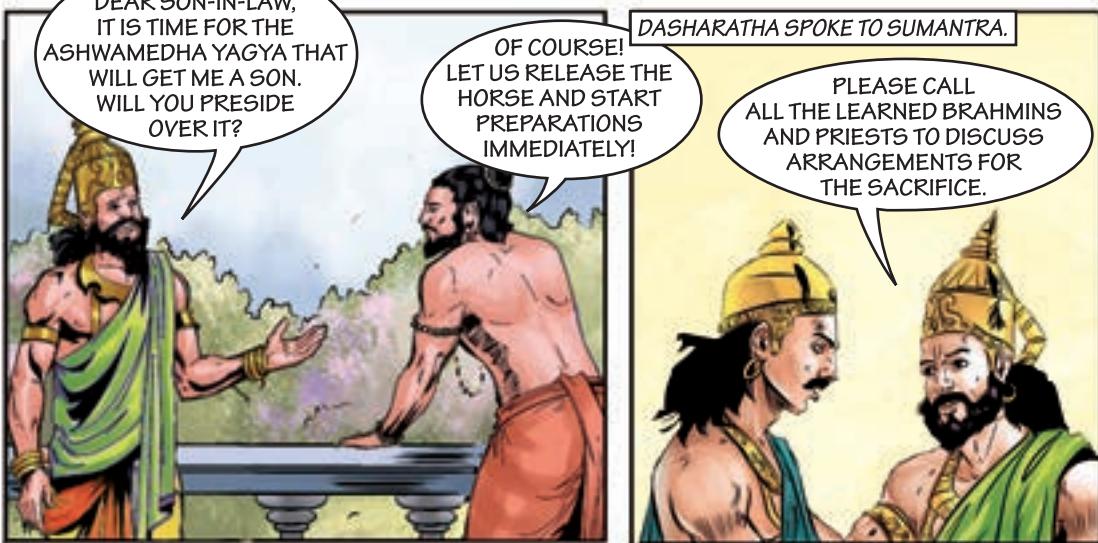


DASHARATHA ASKED ROMAPADA IF HE COULD TAKE RISHYASHRINGA, ALONG WITH SHANTA, TO AYODHYA TO PRESIDE OVER THE SACRIFICE.

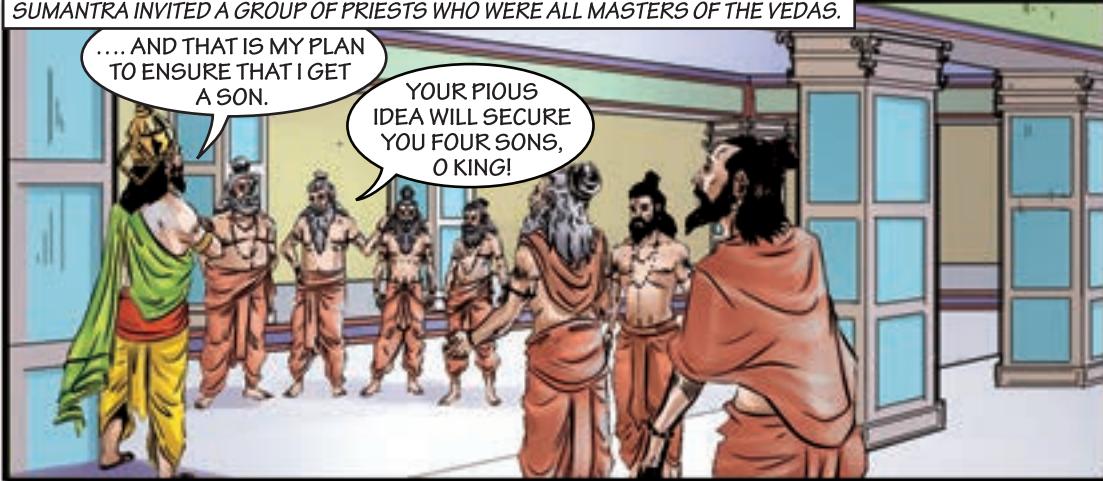
AND SO -



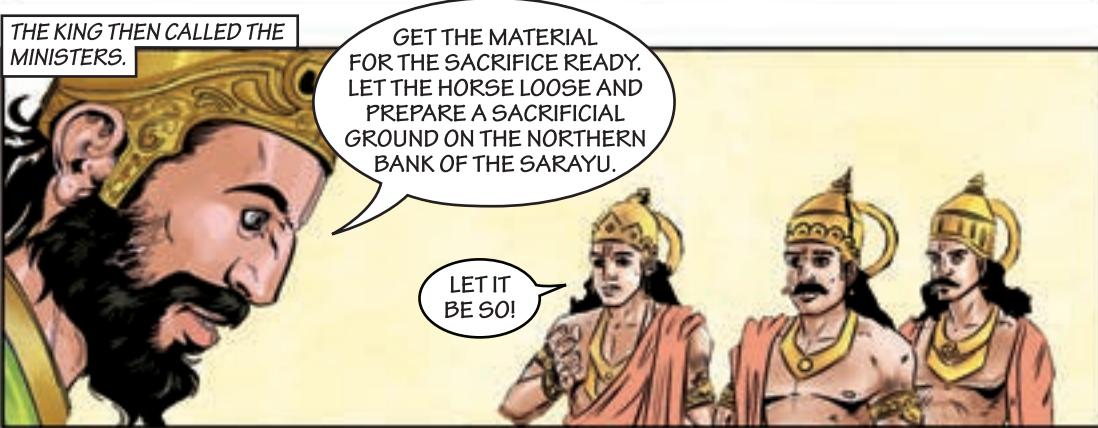
TIME PASSED AND A BEAUTIFUL SPRING SET IN.



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

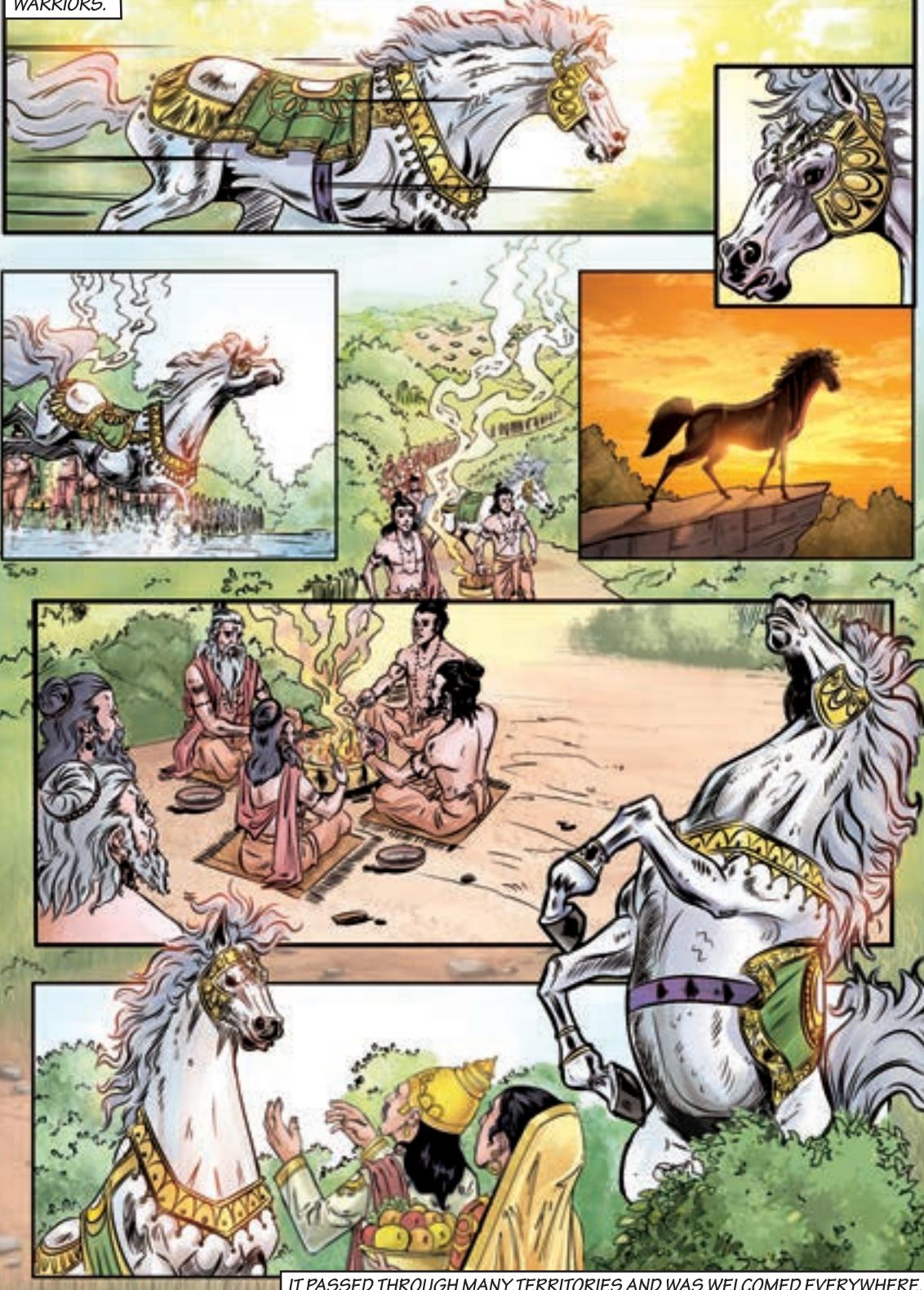


THE KING THEN CALLED THE
MINISTERS.



THE BEGINNING

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



IT PASSED THROUGH MANY TERRITORIES AND WAS WELCOMED EVERYWHERE.

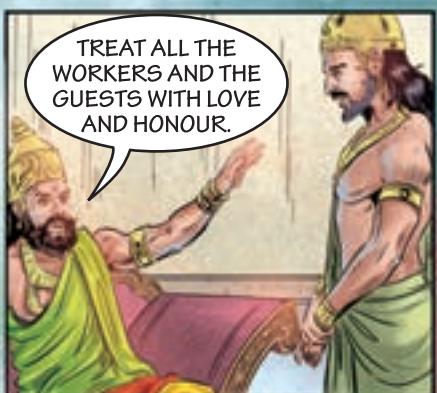
ONE YEAR PASSED AND SPRING HAD COME AGAIN. IT WAS TIME FOR THE HORSE TO RETURN. AYODHYA WAS BUSTLING!



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.

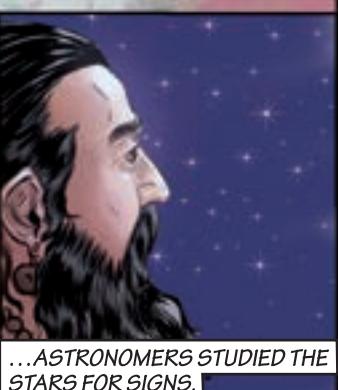


AYODHYA BUSTLED WITH THE PREPARATIONS FOR THE FINAL RITUALS.

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

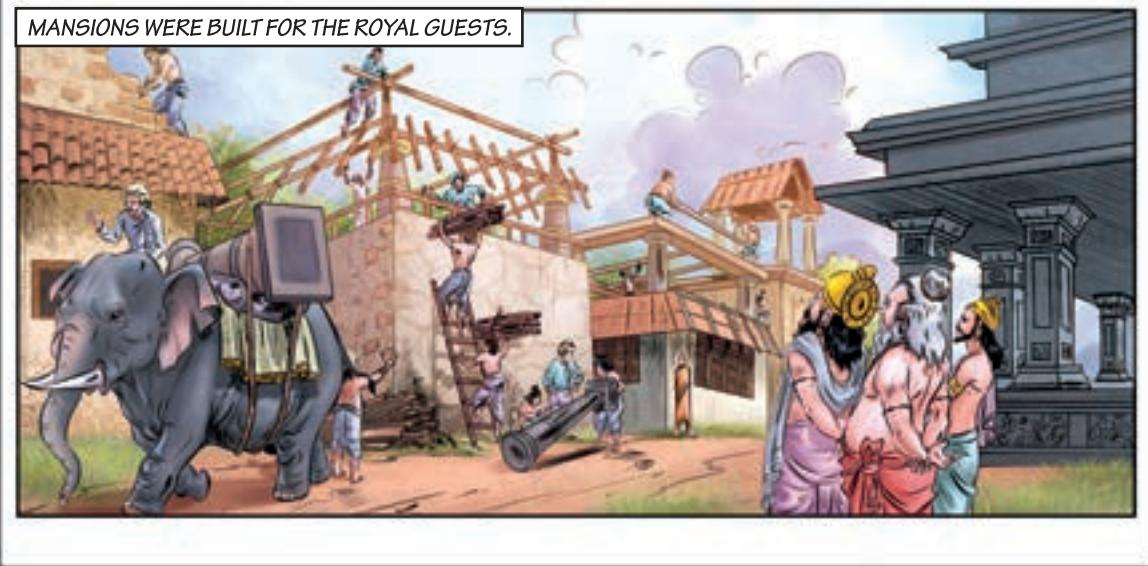
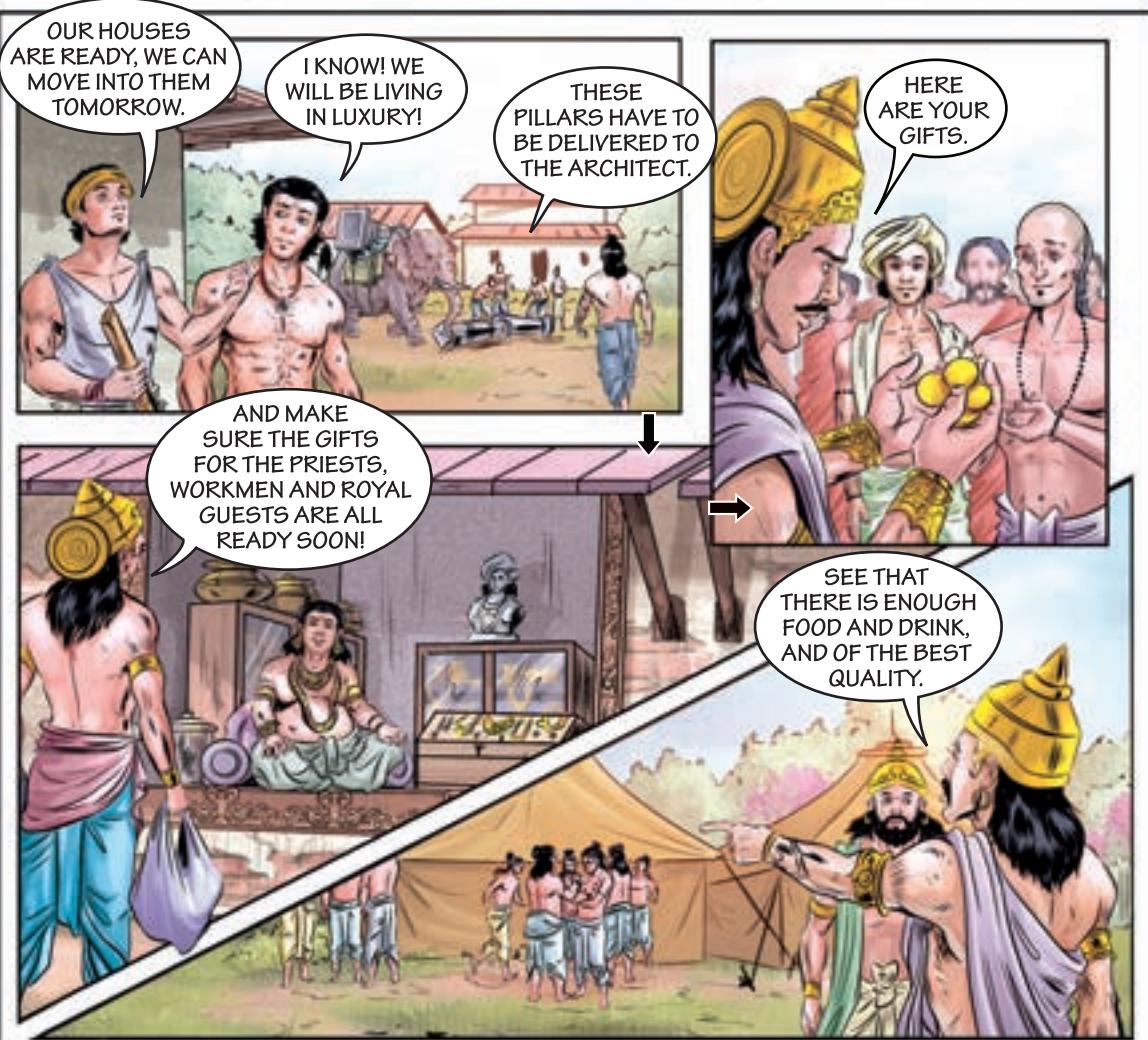


DANCERS PRACTISED THEIR STEPS...



...ASTRONOMERS STUDIED THE STARS FOR SIGNS.

THE BEGINNING



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

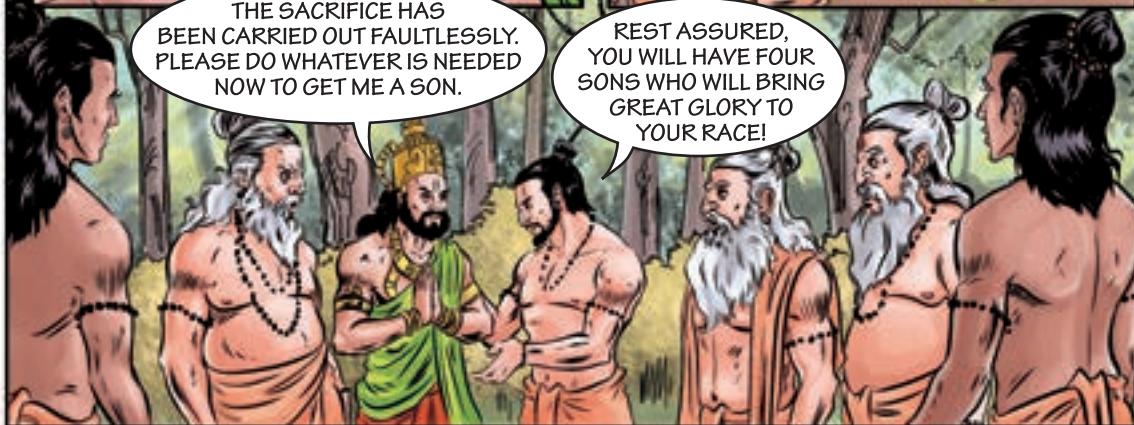
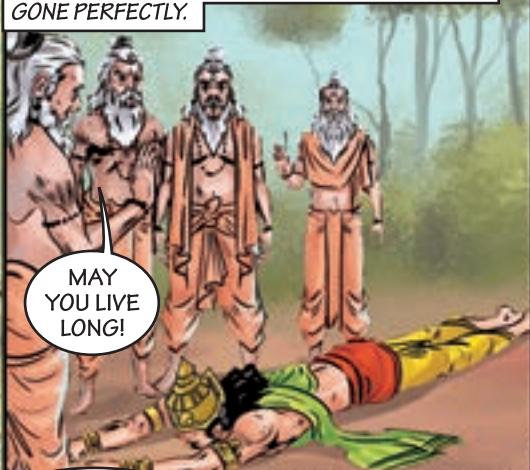
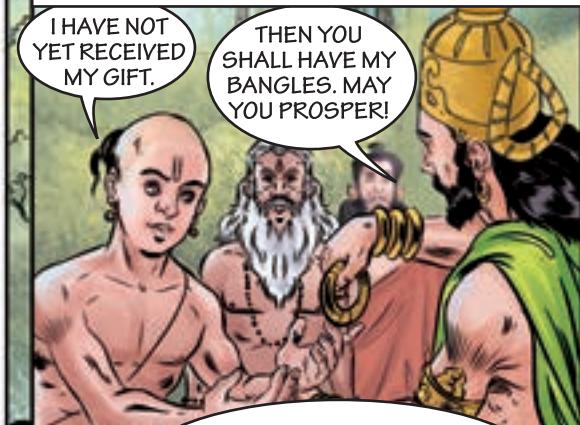
[^]THE FOUR MAIN PRIESTS CONDUCTING A SACRIFICE ARE CALLED BRAHMA, HOTA, ADHWARYU AND UDGATA.

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

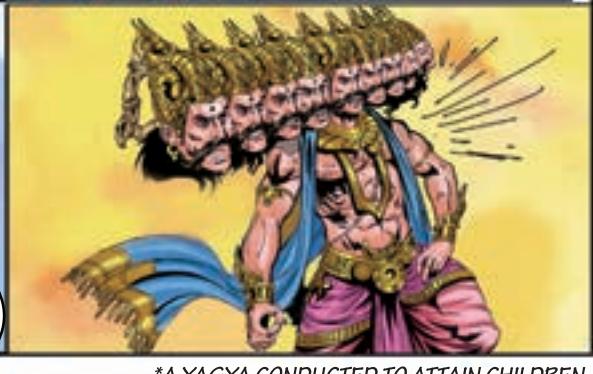
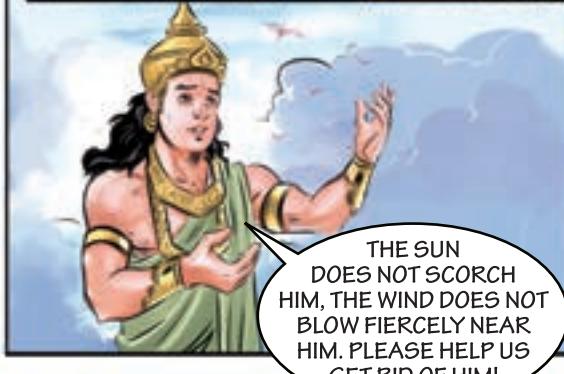
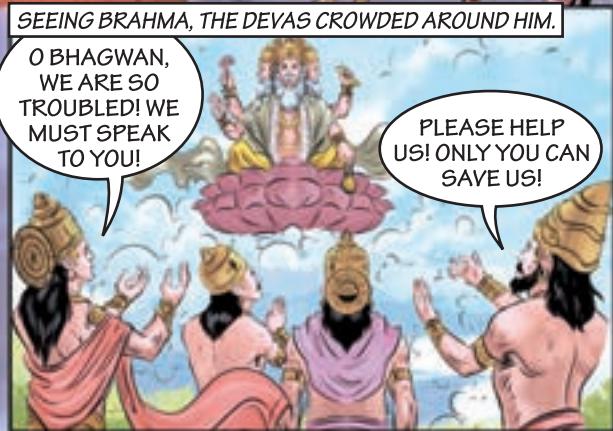


THEN DASHARATHA GAVE AWAY A HUNDRED LAKH GOLD COINS TO THE BRAHMINS WHO HAD COME FROM OUTSIDE. WHEN ALL THE MONEY WAS EXHAUSTED -

THE KING WAS HAPPY THAT THE SACRIFICE HAD GONE PERFECTLY.

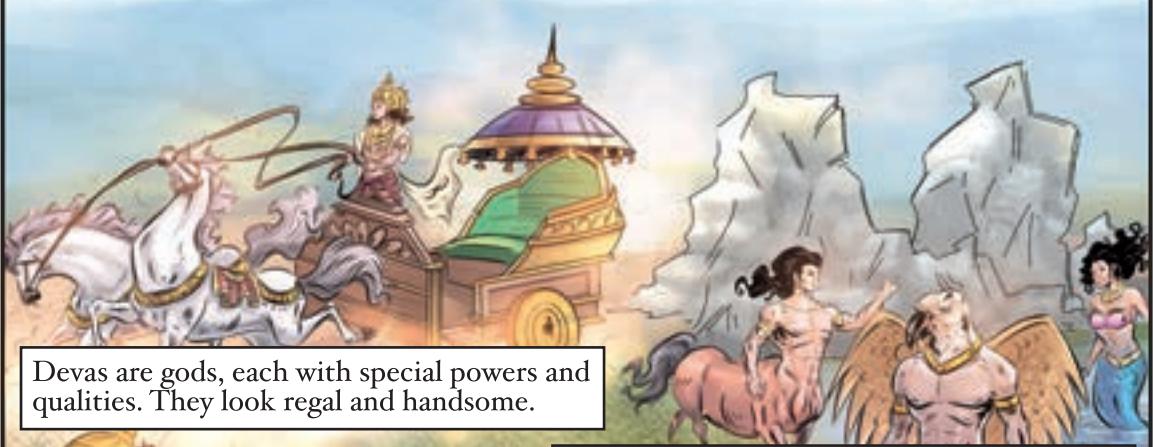


RISHYASHRINGA DECIDED TO CONCLUDE WITH A PUTRIYESHTI SACRIFICE*. SUDDENLY, A HOST OF DEVAS AND OTHER HEAVENLY BEINGS APPEARED.

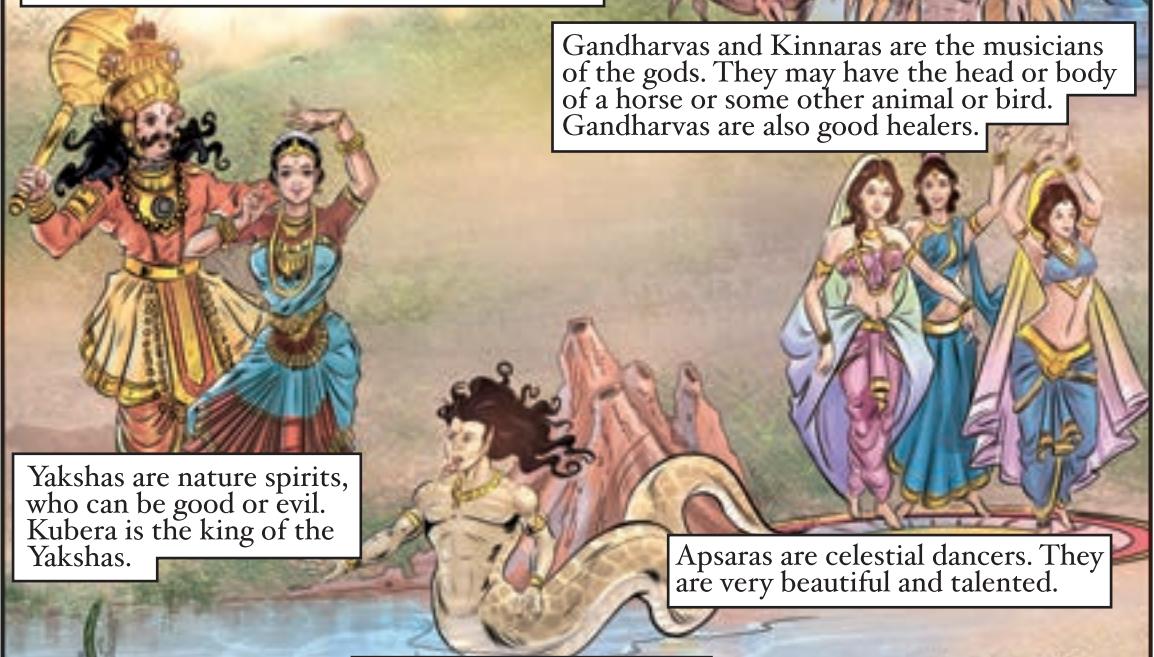


*A YAGYA CONDUCTED TO ATTAIN CHILDREN

SUPERNATURAL BEINGS IN HINDU MYTHOLOGY



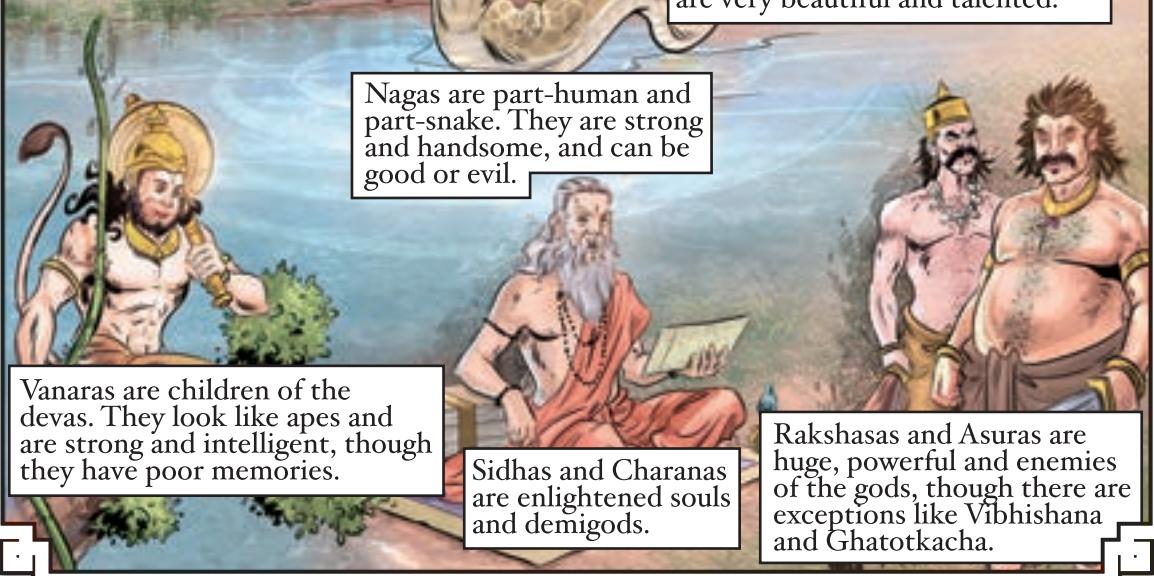
Devas are gods, each with special powers and qualities. They look regal and handsome.



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

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.

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



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



THE BEGINNING

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

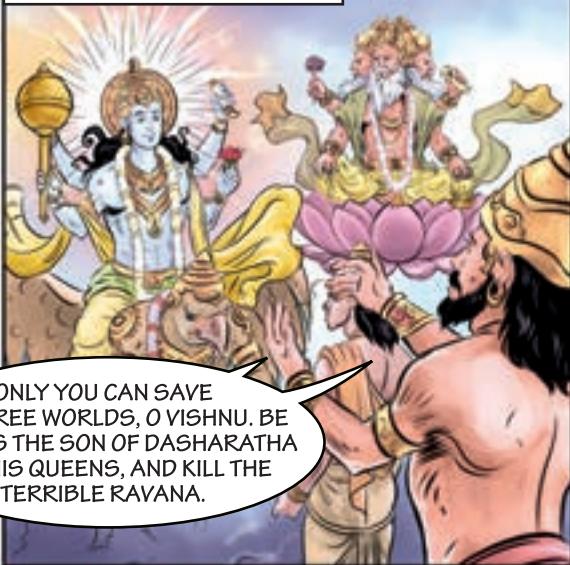
HMM... THERE IS ONE WAY. THE BOON I GRANTED RAVANA WAS THAT NO DEVA, GANDHARVA, YAKSHA OR RAKSHASA COULD HARM HIM. HE DID NOT ASK FOR PROTECTION AGAINST HUMANS, BELIEVING THEY COULD NOT HURT HIM.



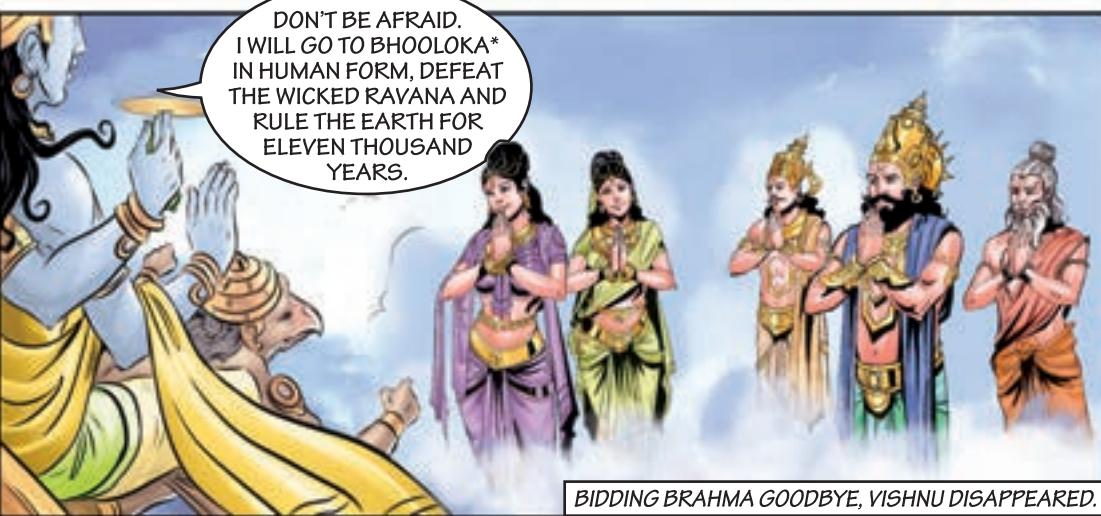
JUST THEN, VISHNU ARRIVED.



ALL THE GODS ADDRESSED HIM.



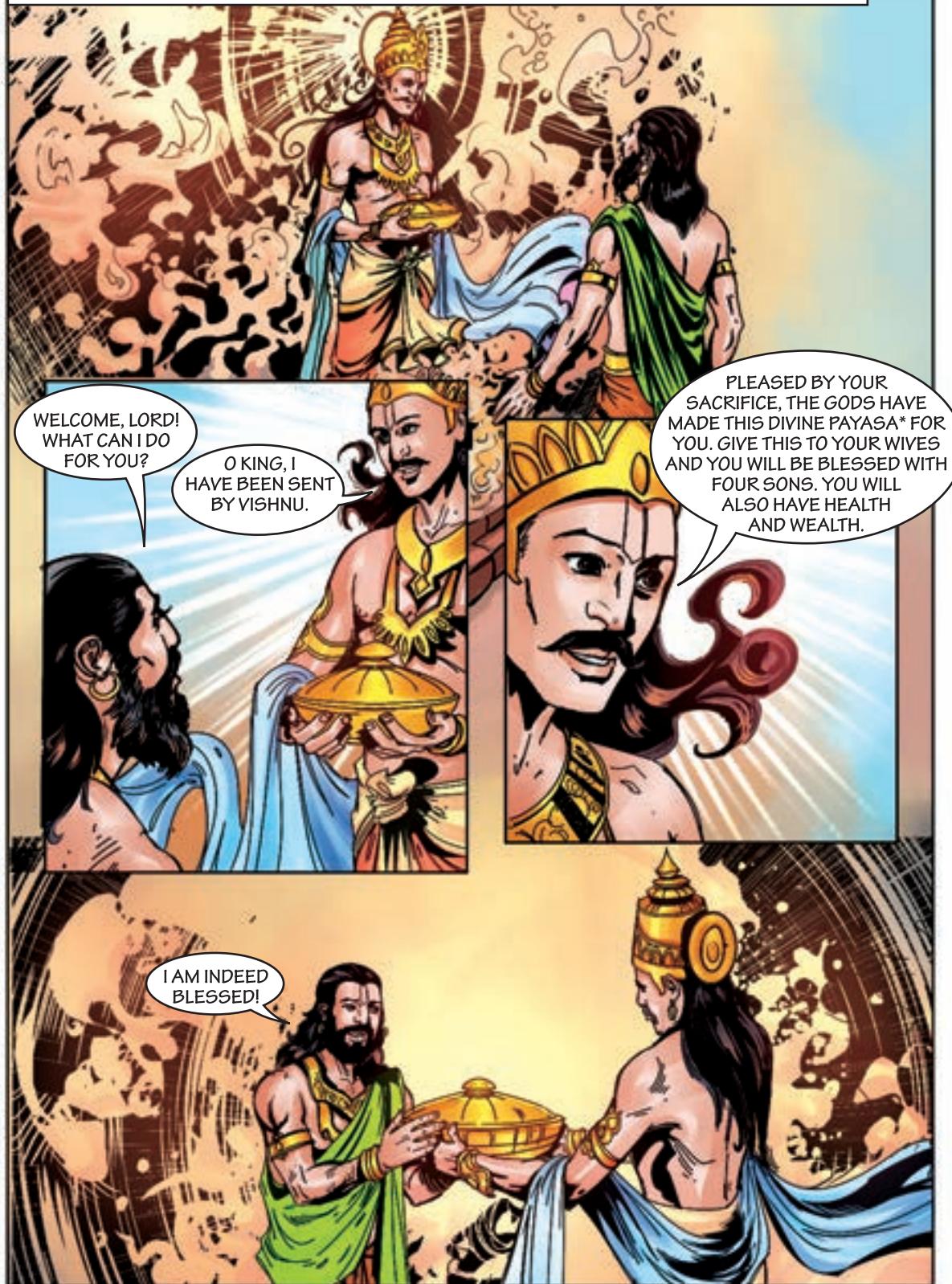
ONLY YOU CAN SAVE THE THREE WORLDS, O VISHNU. BE BORN AS THE SON OF DASHARATHA AND HIS QUEENS, AND KILL THE TERRIBLE RAVANA.



BIDDING BRAHMA GOODBYE, VISHNU DISAPPEARED.

*EARTH, THE MORTAL WORLD

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



*MILK PUDDING

YOUNG PRINCE RAMA



DASHARATHA RECEIVED THE PAYASA WITH GREAT JOY AND GRATITUDE.

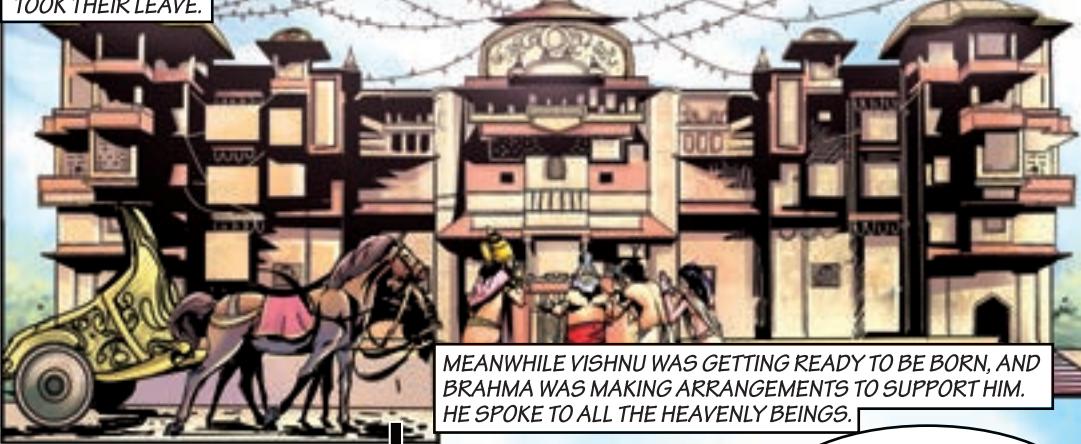


THE MESSENGER THEN VANISHED AND DASHARATHA TOOK THE PAYASA TO HIS QUEENS.

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.

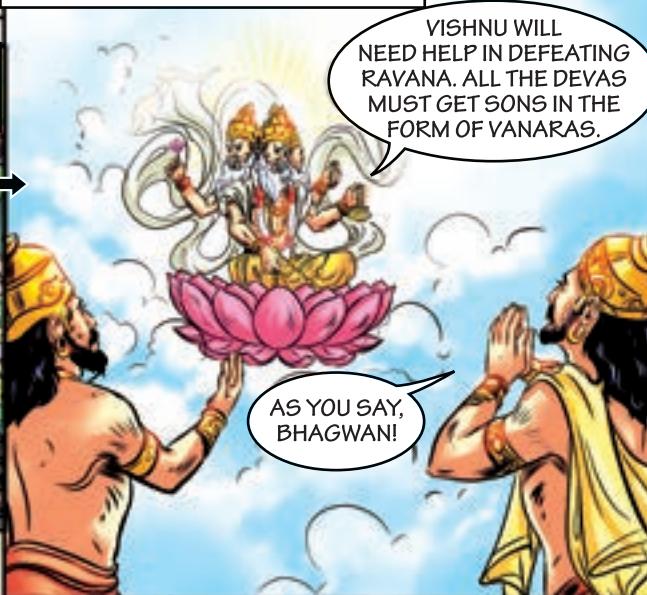
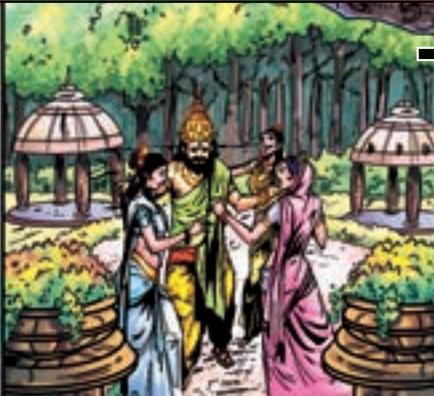


AFTER THE SACRIFICE, THE GODS RECEIVED THEIR SHARE OF THE OFFERINGS AND LEFT. THE GUESTS ALSO TOOK THEIR LEAVE.



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.



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.



YOUNG PRINCE RAMA

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



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.



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

EVEN AS THEY GREW UP -

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



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 Brahma, 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.



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.

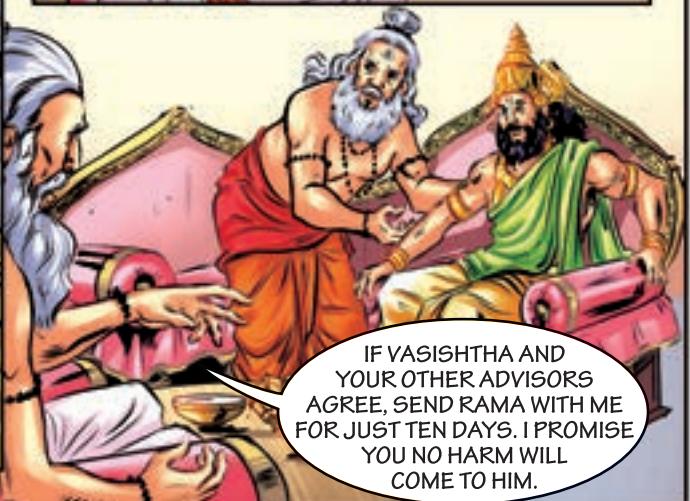
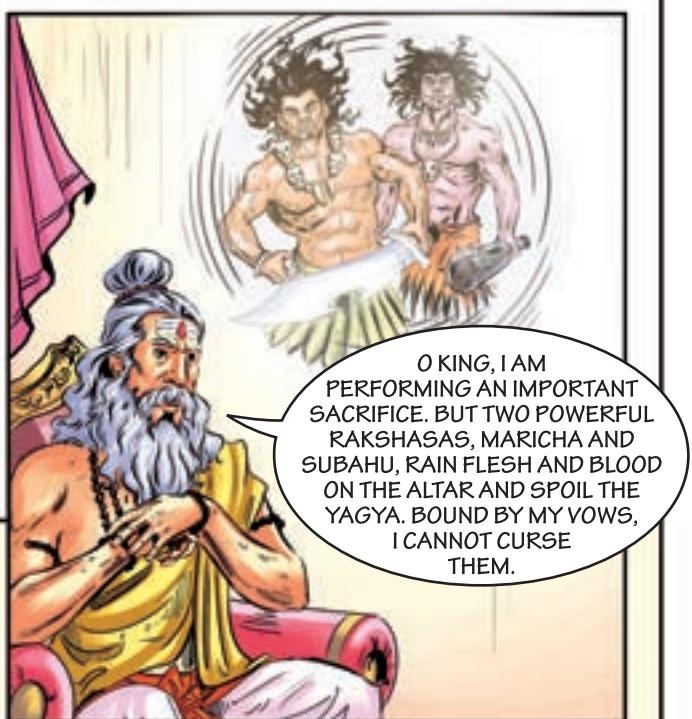
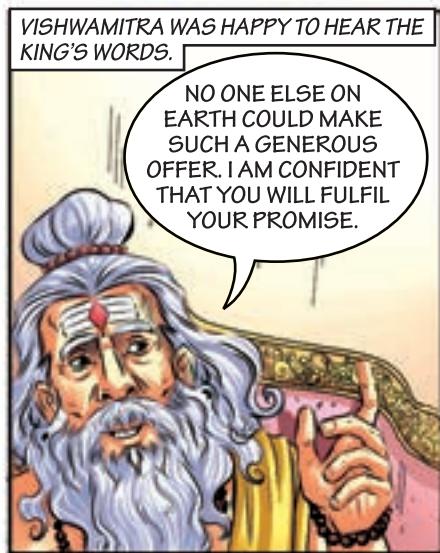
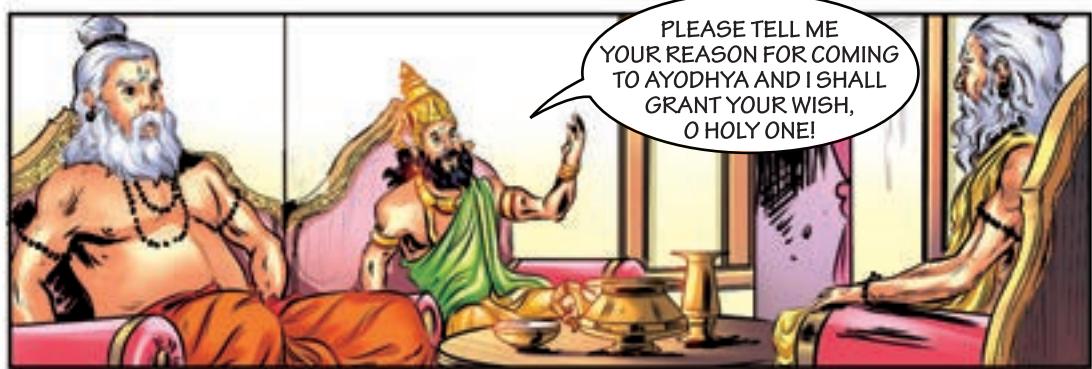
ARE YOUR YASSALS* OBEDIENT AND YOUR ENEMIES SUBDUED? HAVE YOU DISCHARGED YOUR DUTIES TO THE GODS AND TO HUMANITY? ARE THE MINISTERS ALL DOING WELL, AND VASISHTHA AND YAMADEV?

ALL IS WELL, GREAT RISHI!!

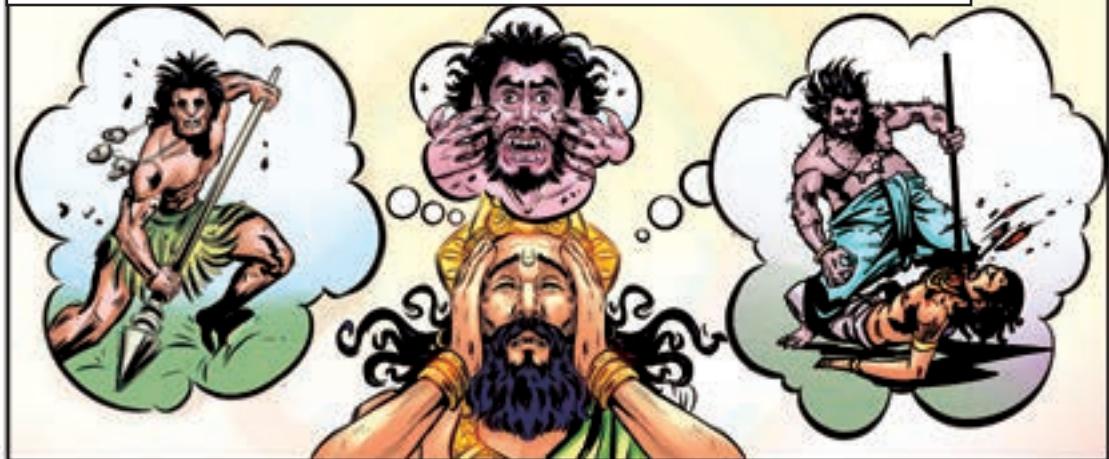
O FOREMOST AMONG RISHIS, YOUR PRESENCE HERE IS LIKE RAINFALL IN A DRY LAND!



*LANDLORDS WHO PAY TRIBUTE TO THE KING



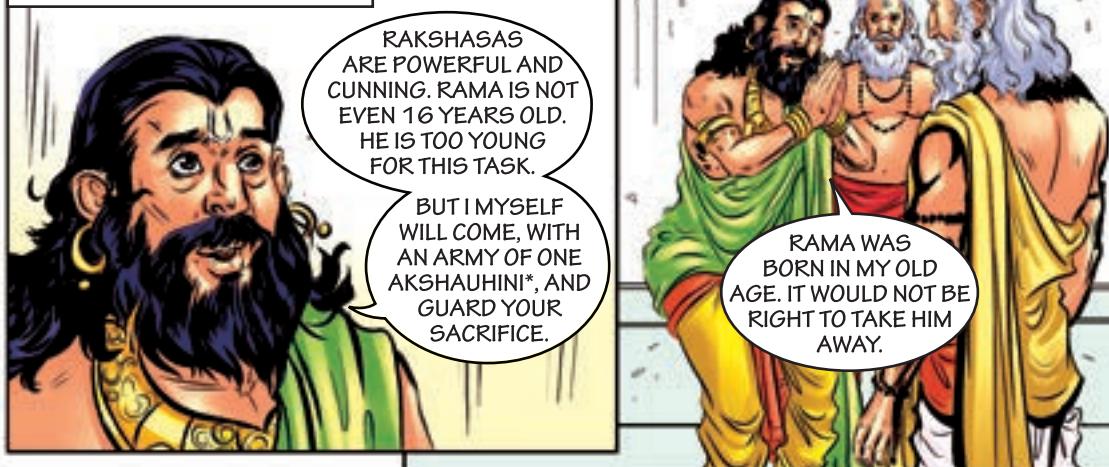
HEARING VISHWAMITRA'S WORDS, DASHARATHA WAS OVERCOME WITH FEAR. HE TREMBLED...



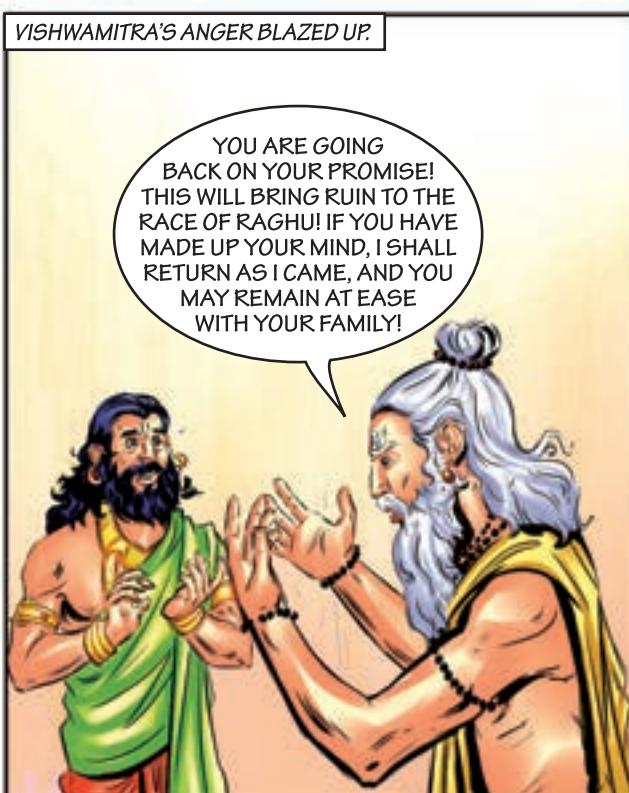
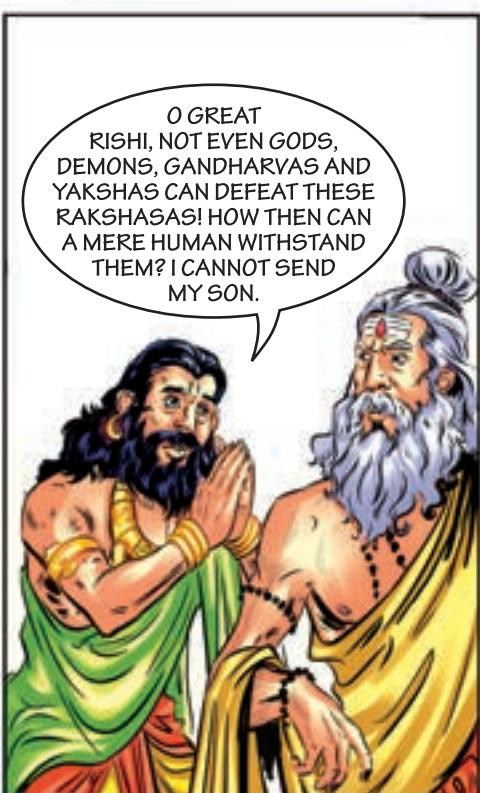
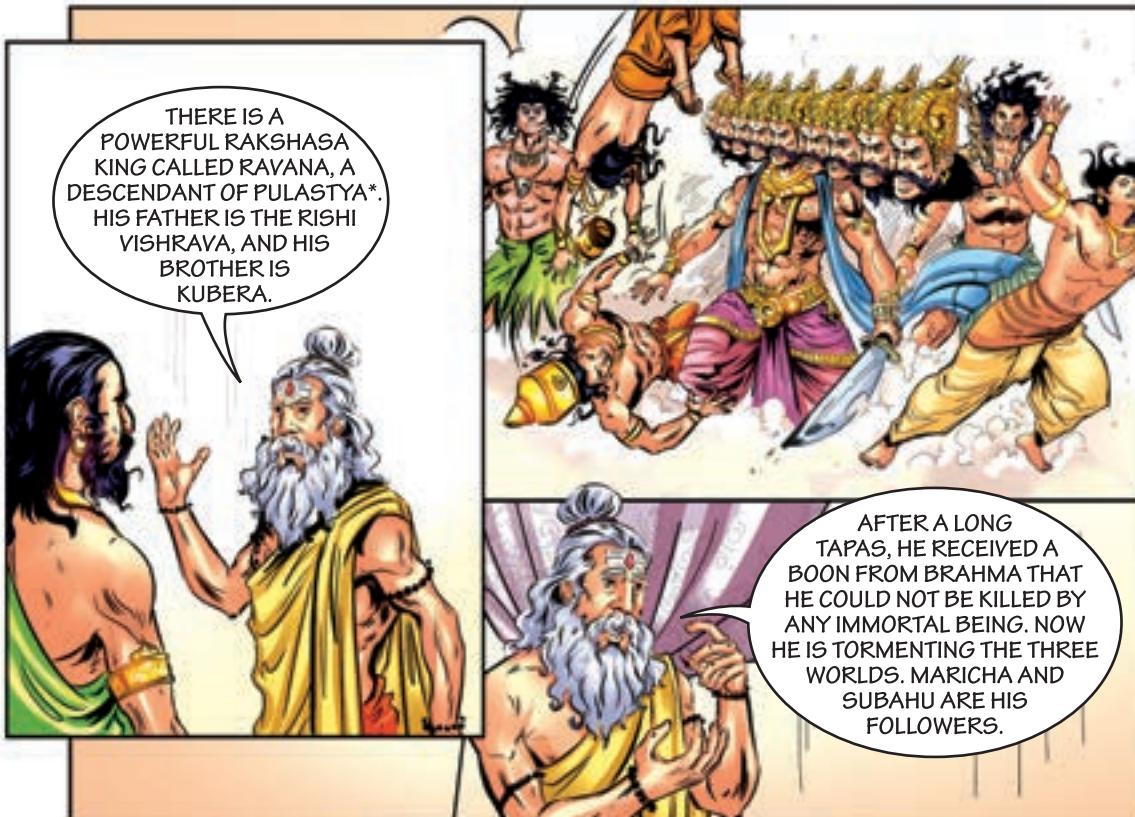
...AND THEN FAINTED.



WHEN DASHARATHA RECOVERED -



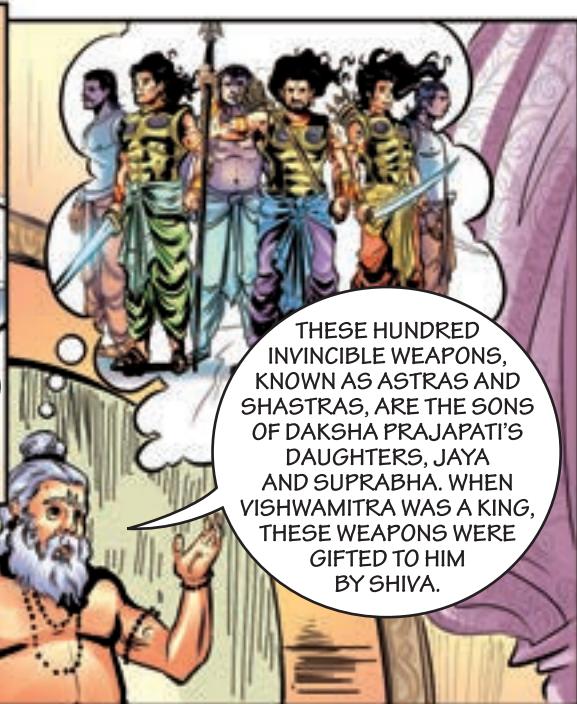
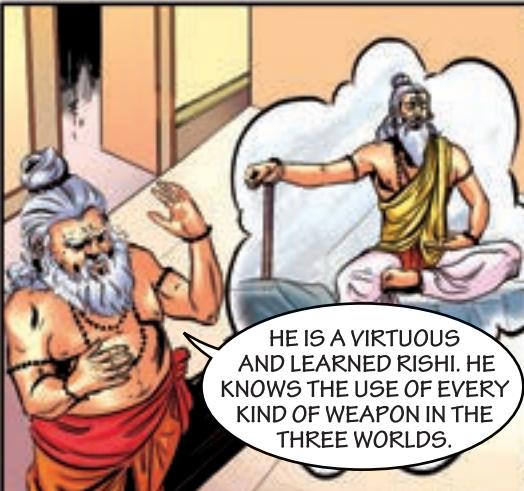
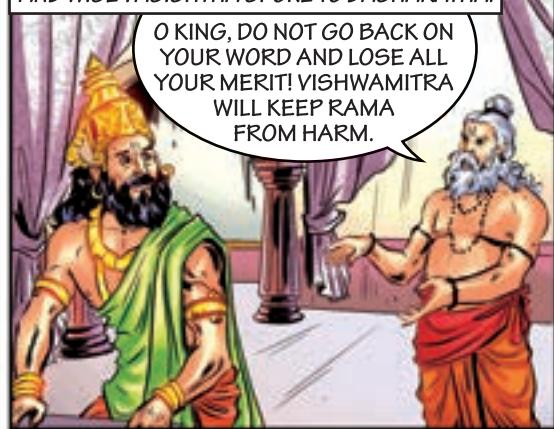
*ANCIENT BATTLE FORMATION OF 21,870 CHARIOTS, 21,870 ELEPHANTS, 65,610 HORSE-MOUNTED WARRIORS AND 1,09,350 FOOT SOLDIERS



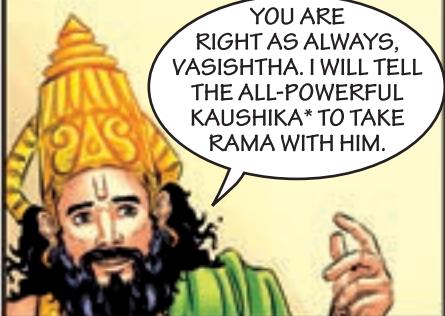
VISHWAMITRA'S ANGER SHOOK THE WHOLE EARTH, AND EVEN THE GODS WERE AFRAID.



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



HEARING VASISHTHA'S WORDS,
DASHARATHA BECAME CALM.



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.



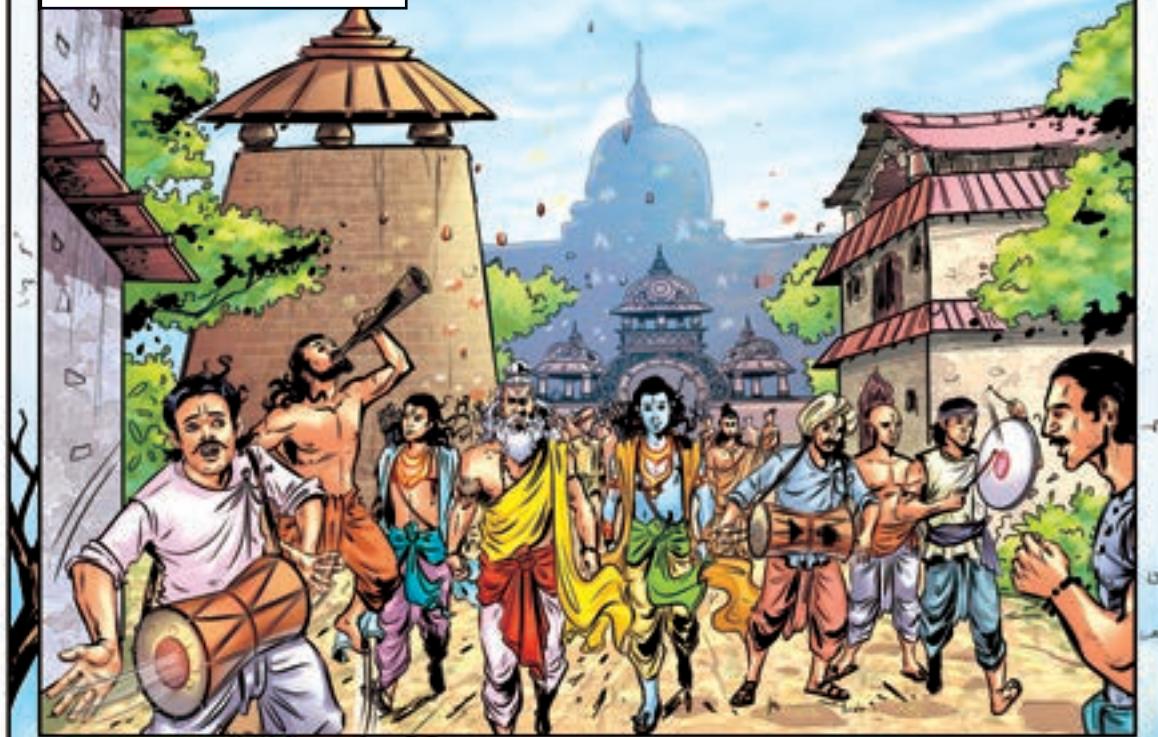
DASHARATHA'S HEART WAS PEACEFUL AS HE BID HIS SONS GOODBYE.

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.

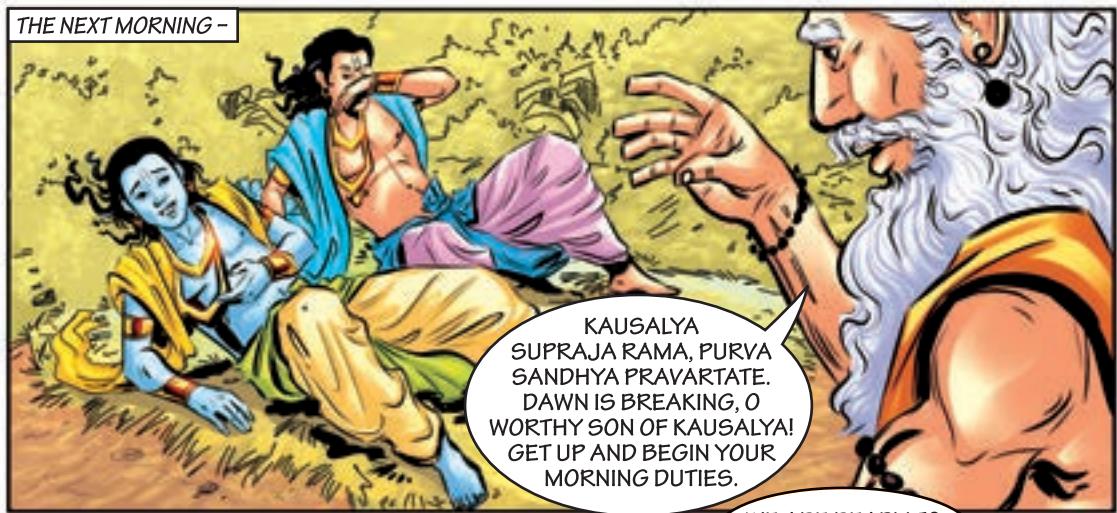
IF YOU RECITE THESE MANTRAS, YOU WILL NOT FEEL HUNGER, THIRST, FATIGUE, FEVER AND AGEING. RAKSHASAS CANNOT TROUBLE YOU EVEN IF YOU ARE ASLEEP OR INATTENTIVE, AND YOU WILL GET UNEQUALLED FAME.

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 -



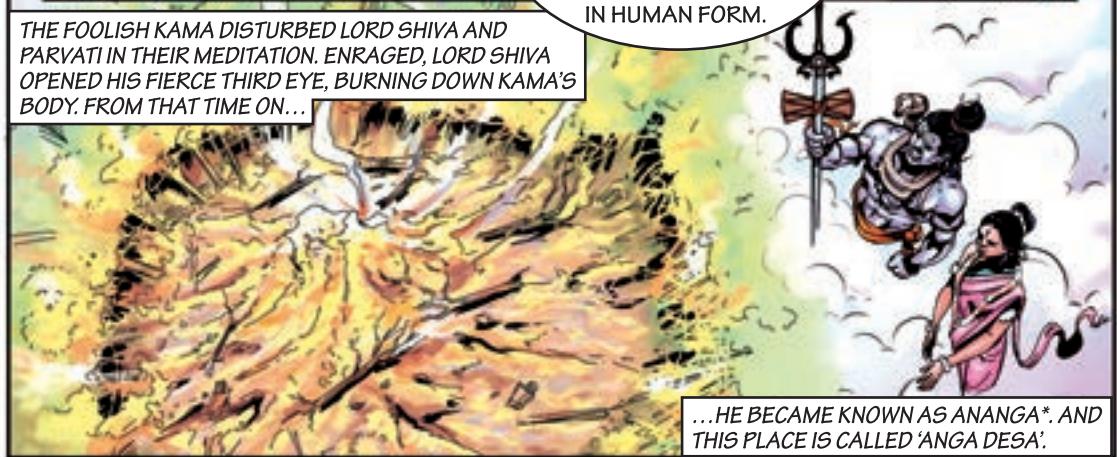
WE ARE READY TO
PROCEED, O GURU!



THAT EVENING -



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...

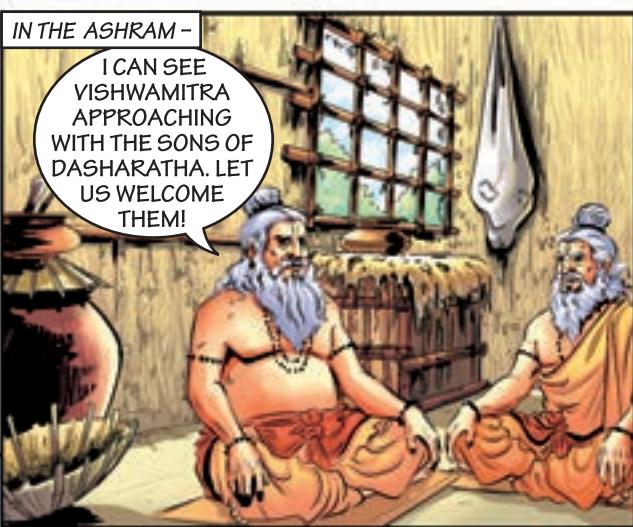
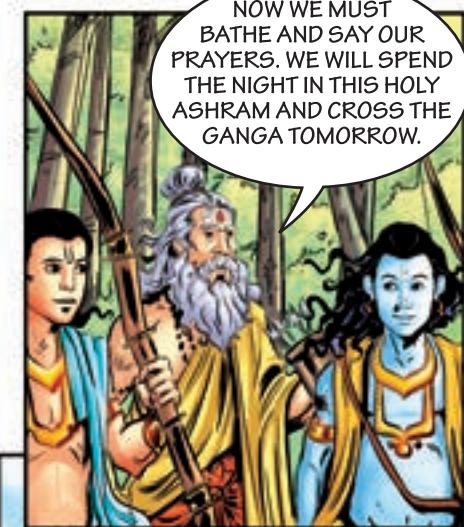


*WITHOUT A BODY

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 -

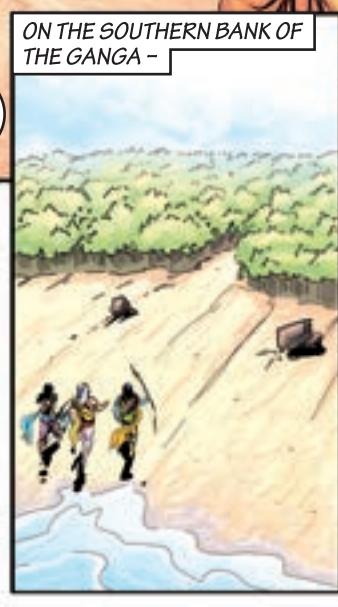
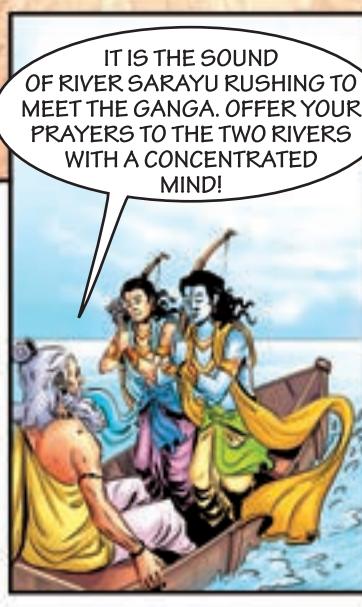
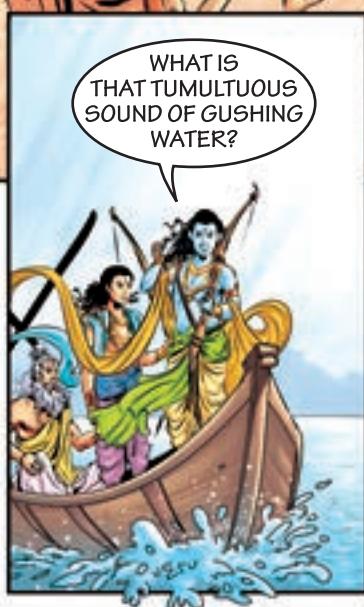
A BOAT AWAITS YOU AND THE MOMENT IS AUSPICIOUS. MAY YOUR JOURNEY PROSPER!

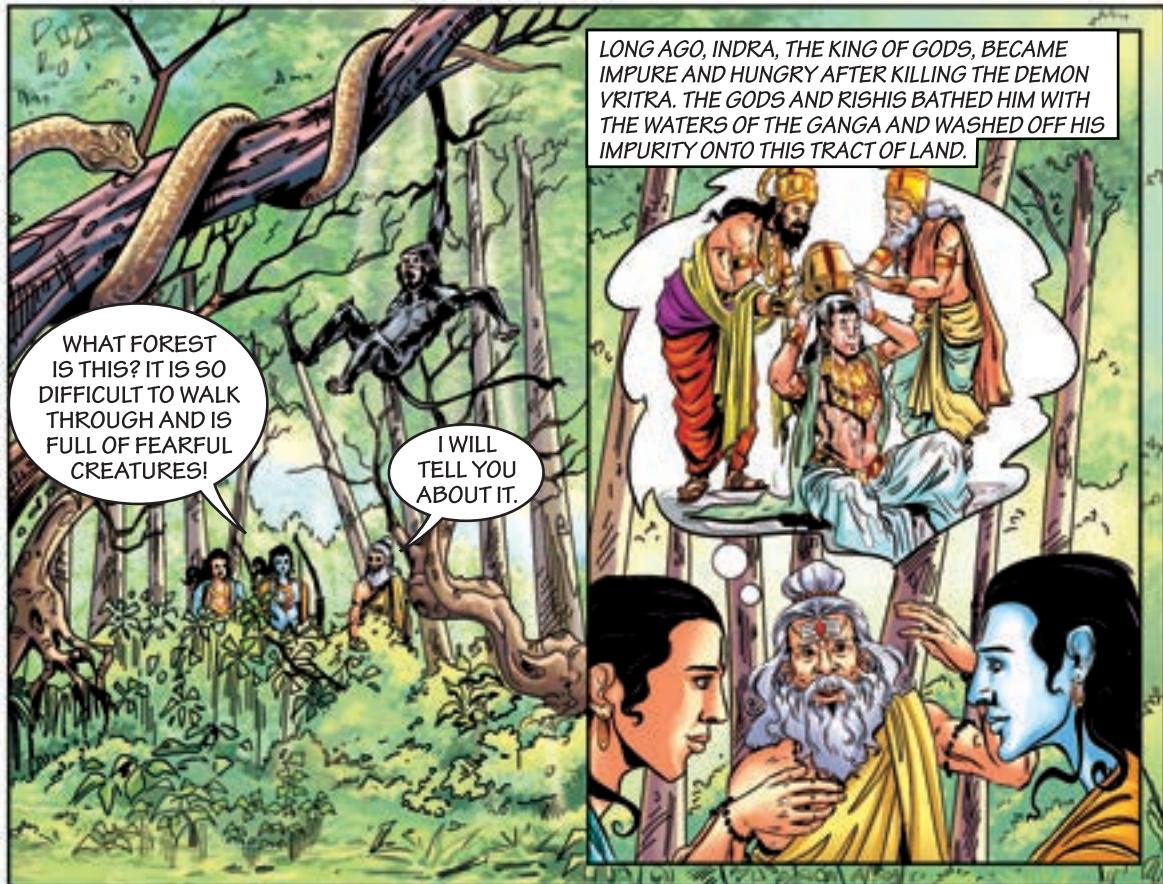


WHAT IS THAT TUMULTUOUS SOUND OF GUSHING WATER?

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 -



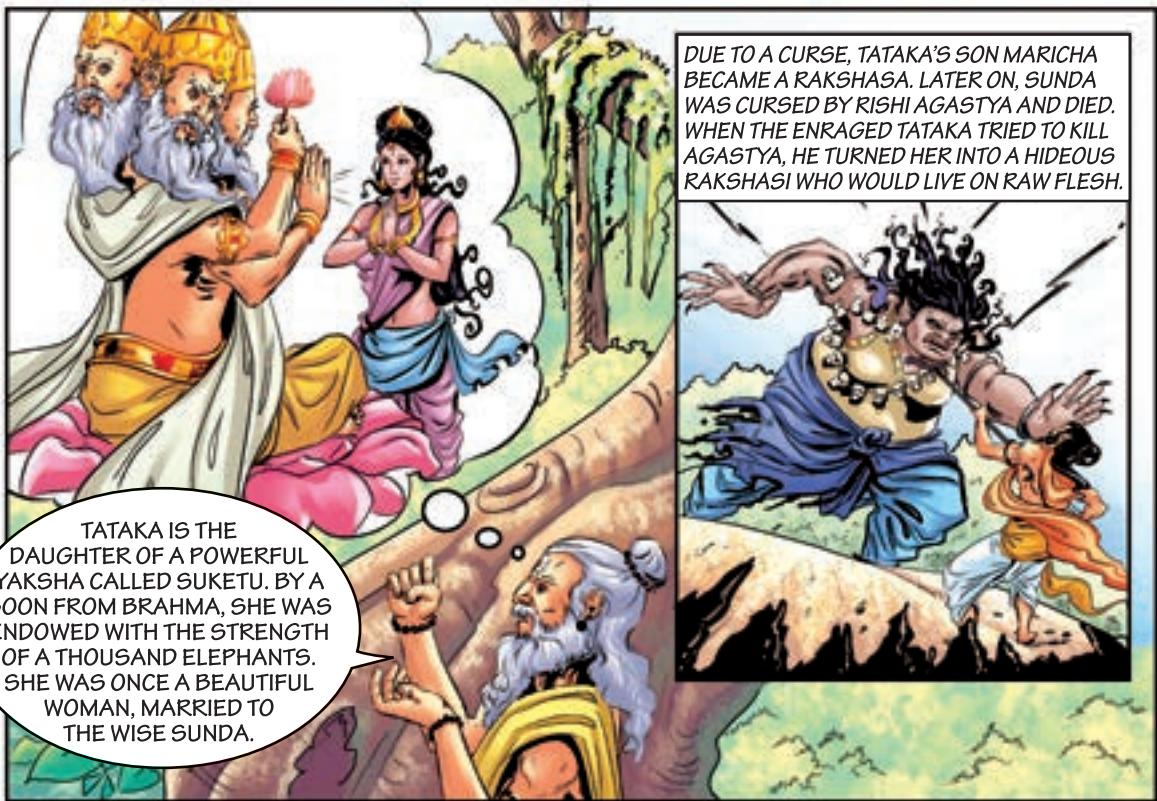
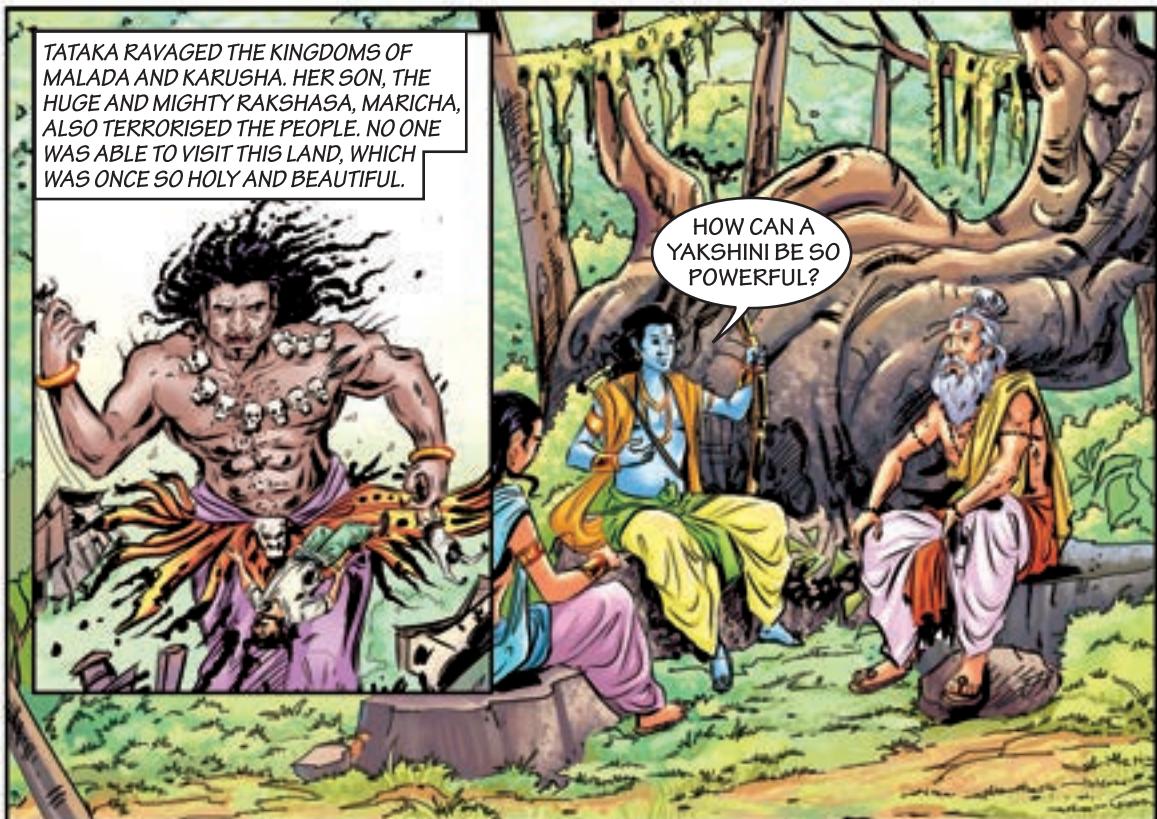


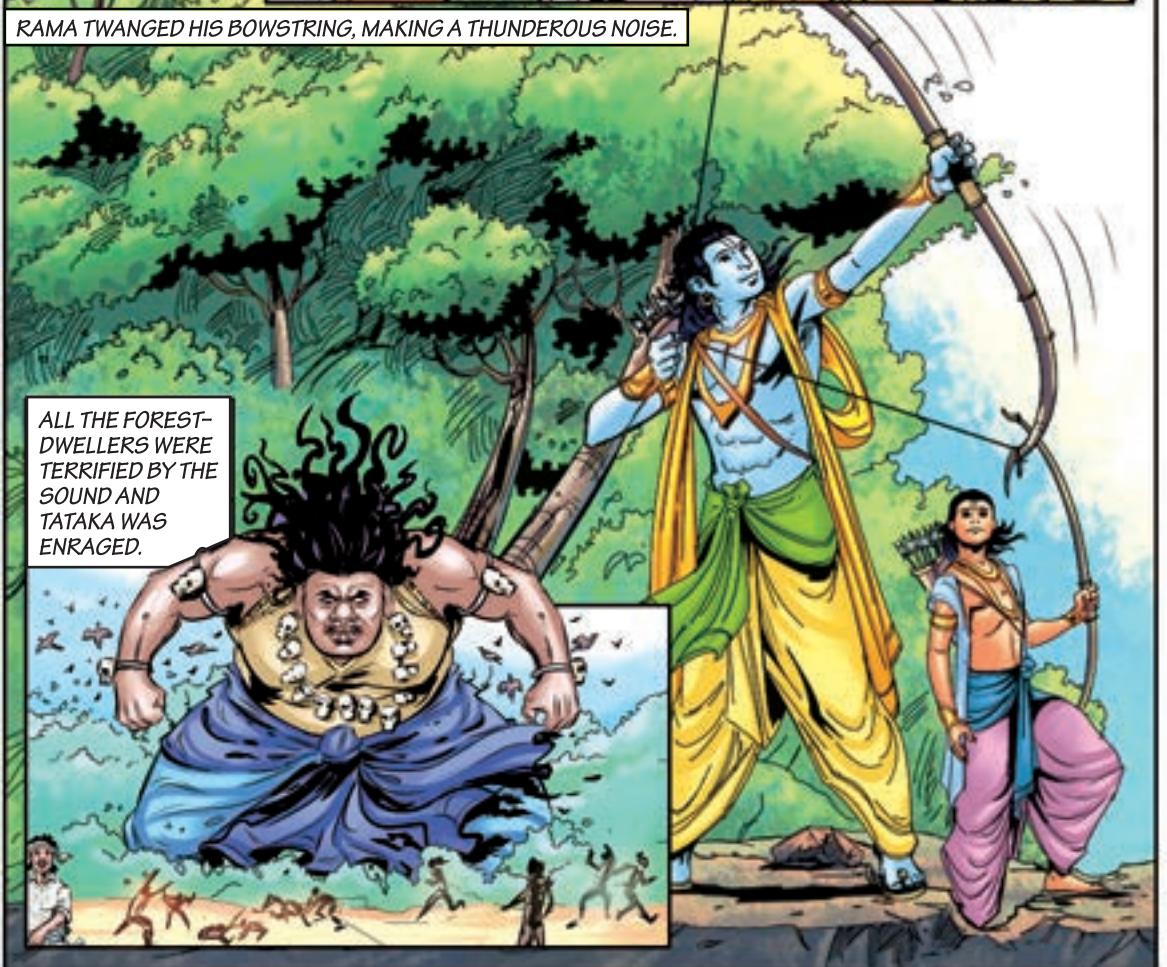
INDRA WAS HAPPY AND BLESSED THE LAND. IN TIME, TWO PROSPEROUS KINGDOMS CALLED MALADA AND KARUSA GREW AND FLOURISHED HERE AS HE HAD FORETOLD.



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





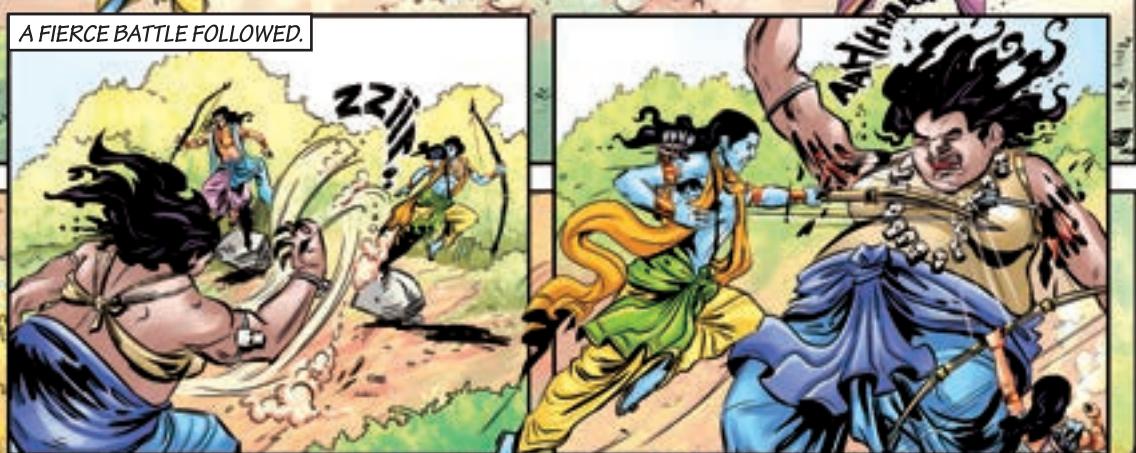




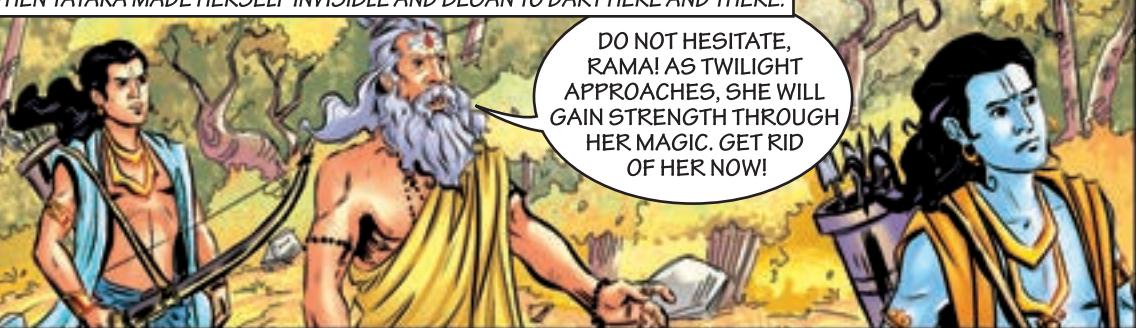
TATAKA RAISED A HUGE CLOUD OF DUST AND THEN SHOWERED THE TWO PRINCES WITH ROCKS.

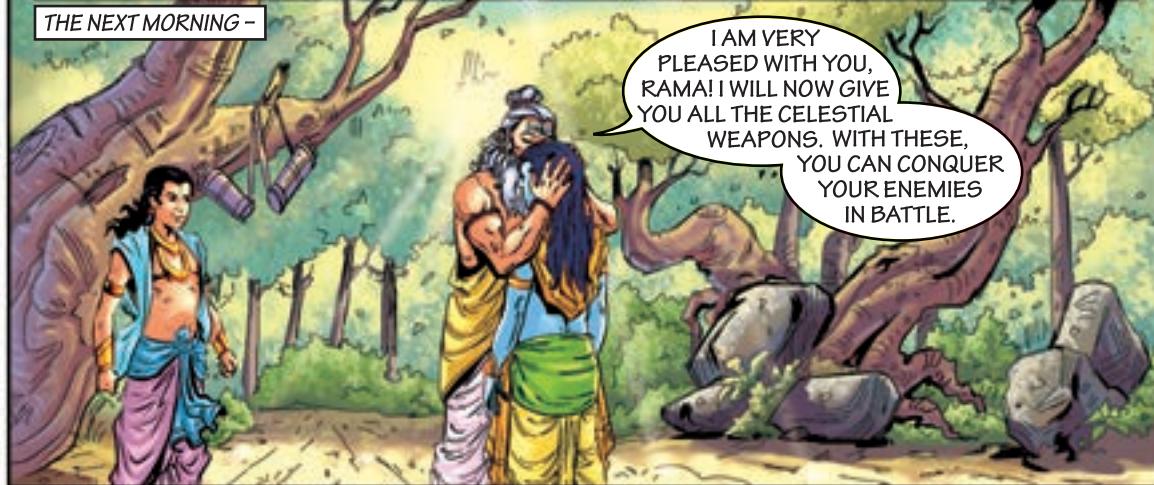
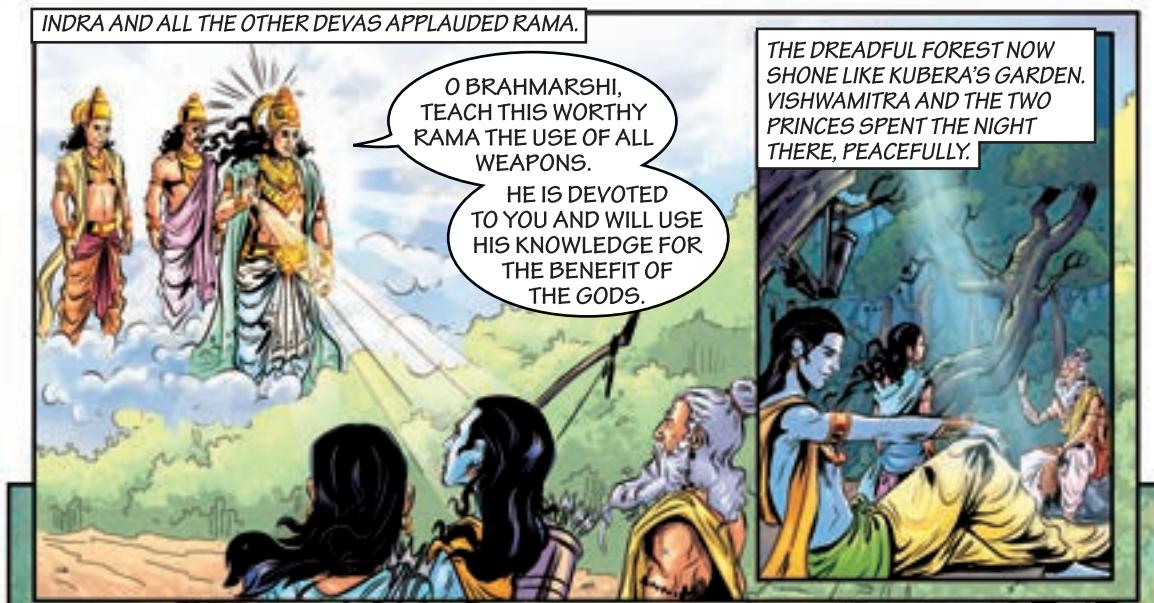
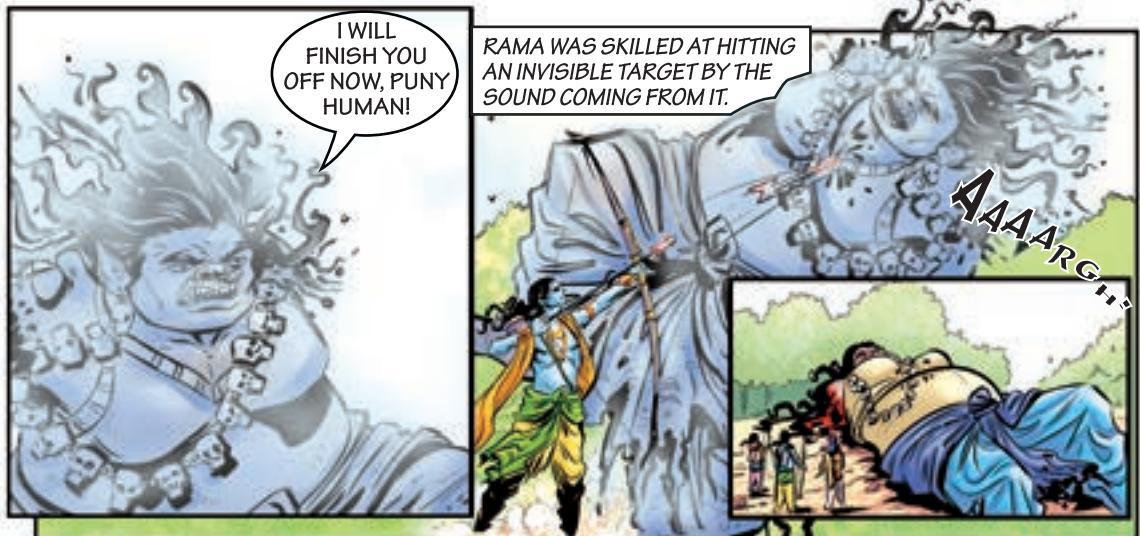


A FIERCE BATTLE FOLLOWED.



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





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



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

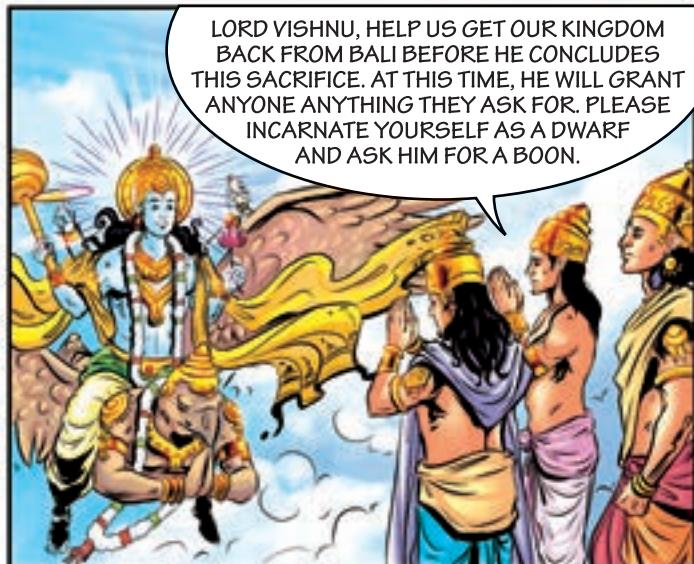


THIS HOLY GROVE,
KNOWN AS SIDDHASHRAMA, IS
WHERE LORD VISHNU PRACTISED
YOGA FOR THOUSANDS
OF YEARS.

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.



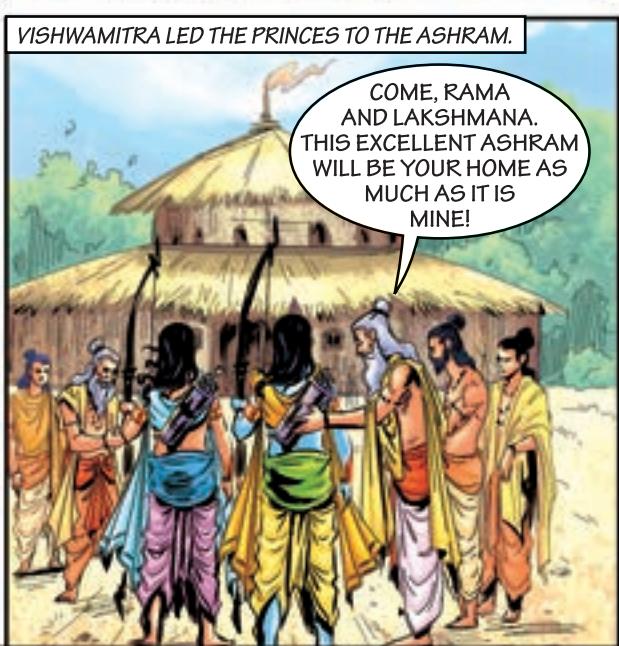
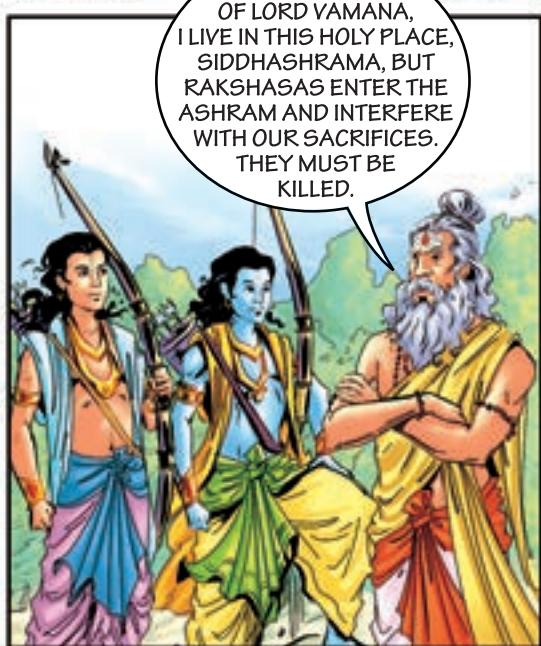
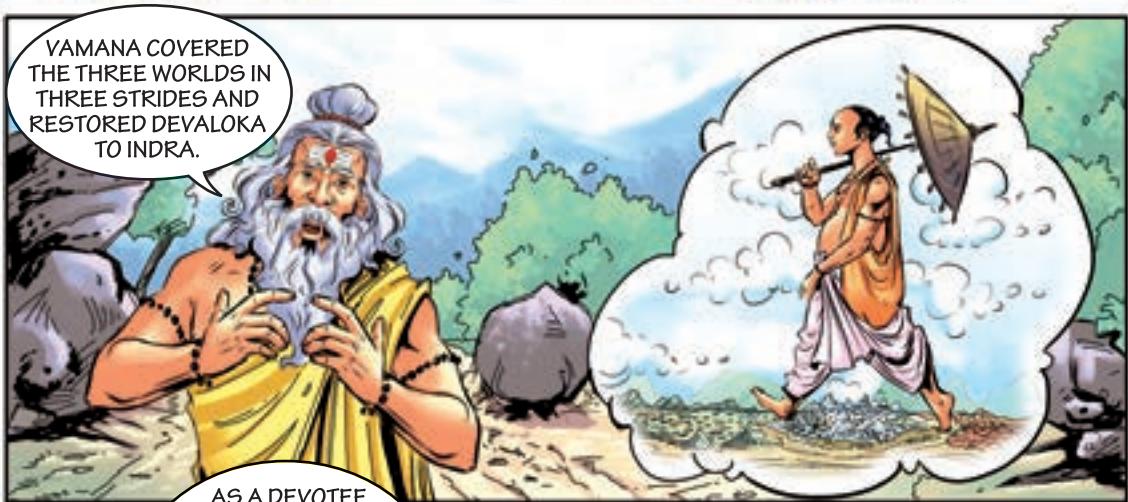
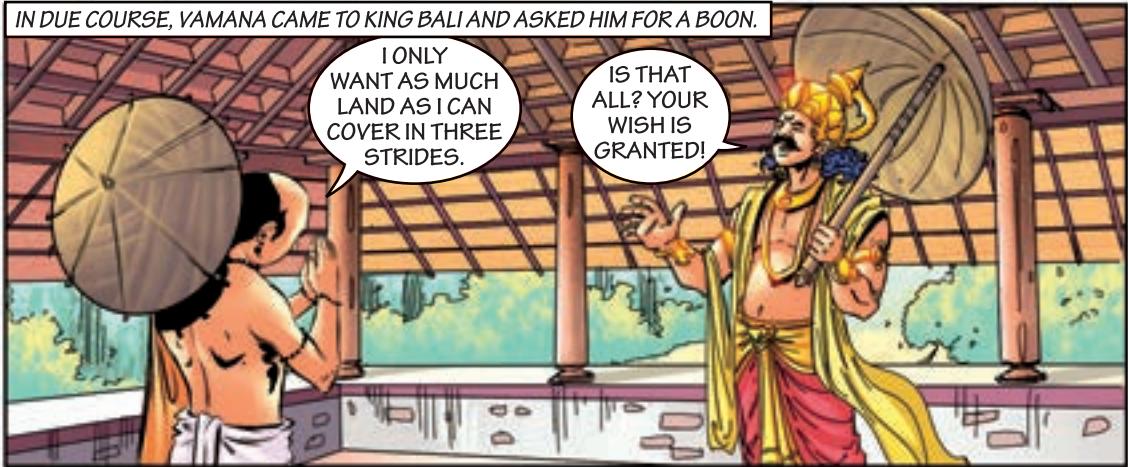
LORD VISHNU, HELP US GET OUR KINGDOM BACK FROM BALI BEFORE HE CONCLUDES THIS SACRIFICE. AT THIS TIME, HE WILL GRANT ANYONE ANYTHING THEY ASK FOR. PLEASE INCARNATE YOURSELF AS A DWARF AND ASK HIM FOR A BOON.



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.



THE NEXT MORNING -



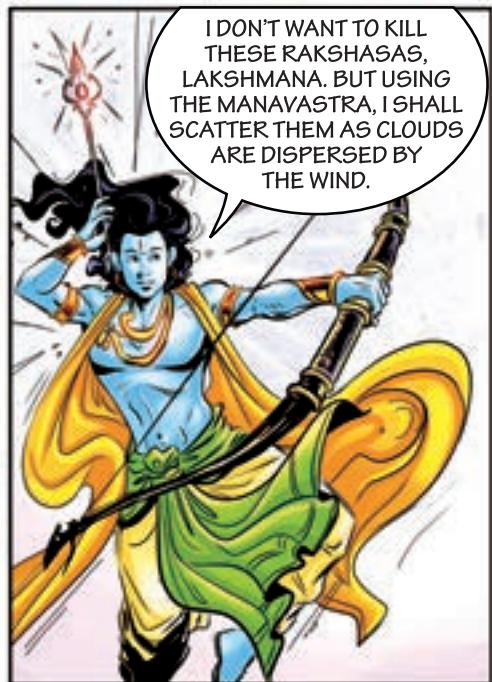
ARMED WITH THEIR BOWS, THE TWO PRINCES GUARDED THE SACRED GROVE AND VISHWAMITRA FOR FIVE DAYS AND NIGHTS WITHOUT SLEEP.



ON THE SIXTH DAY, THE FIRE BLAZED FORTH.



JUST THEN -



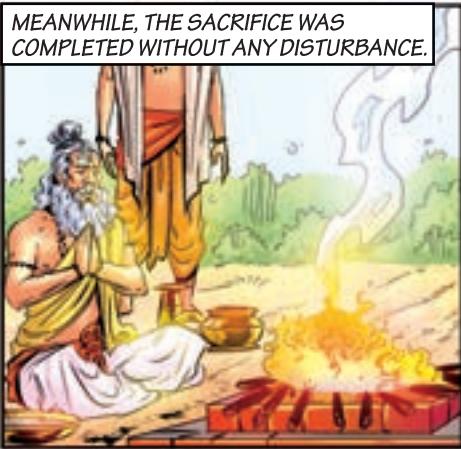
THE MISSILE OF MANU STRUCK MARICHA IN THE CHEST AND FLUNG HIM A DISTANCE OF ONE HUNDRED YOJANAS.



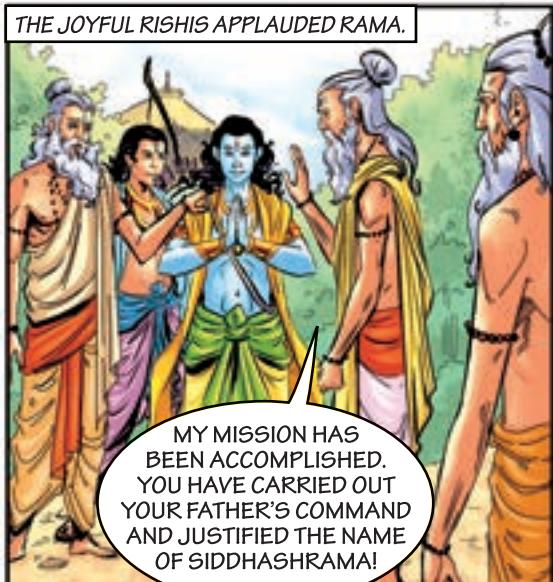
NEXT, SUBAHU WAS KILLED BY THE AGNEYASTRAM* AND THE OTHER RAKSHASAS WERE SCATTERED BY THE VAYAVYA[^].



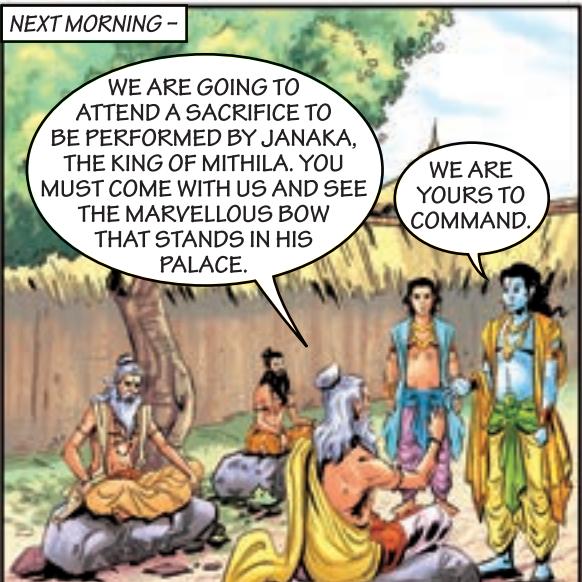
MEANWHILE, THE SACRIFICE WAS COMPLETED WITHOUT ANY DISTURBANCE.



THE JOYFUL RISHIS APPLAUDED RAMA.



NEXT MORNING -



*MISSILE OF THE FIRE GOD, AGNI

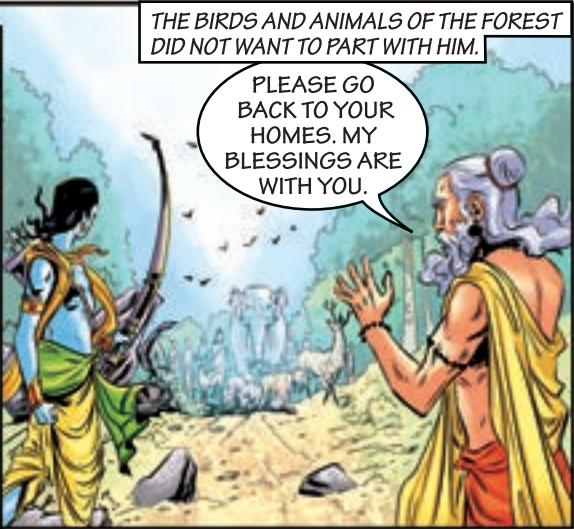
[^]MISSILE OF THE WIND GOD, VAYU

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 GHRTACHI 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, YISHWAMITRA! 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!

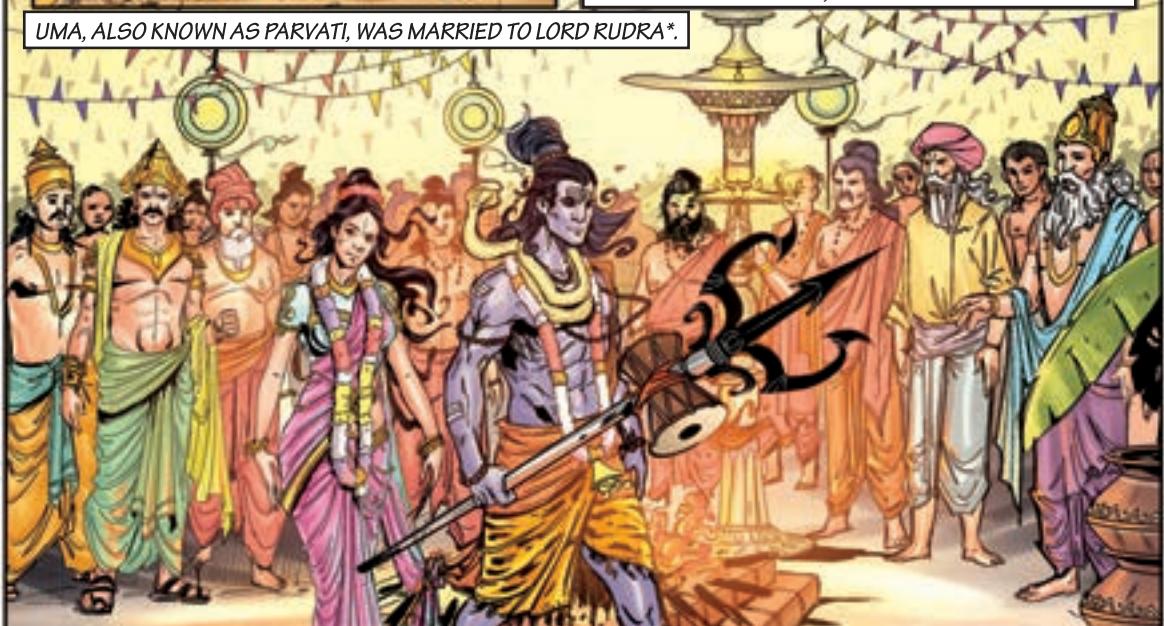
HIMAVAN,
KING
OF THE HIMALAYAS,
AND HIS WIFE MENA
HAD TWO DAUGHTERS
OF MATCHLESS
BEAUTY - GANGA
AND UMA.

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



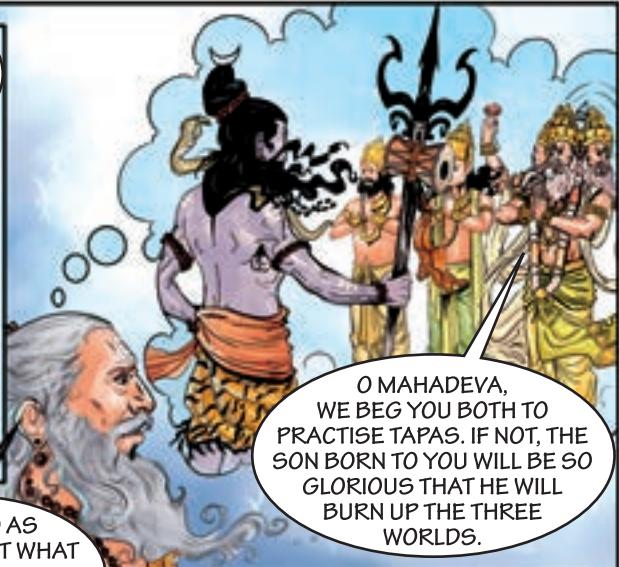
SO SHE FLOWED THROUGH THE HEAVENS, THE SKY,
AND LATER THE EARTH, MAKING EVERYTHING PURE.

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



*ANOTHER NAME FOR SHIVA

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



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...

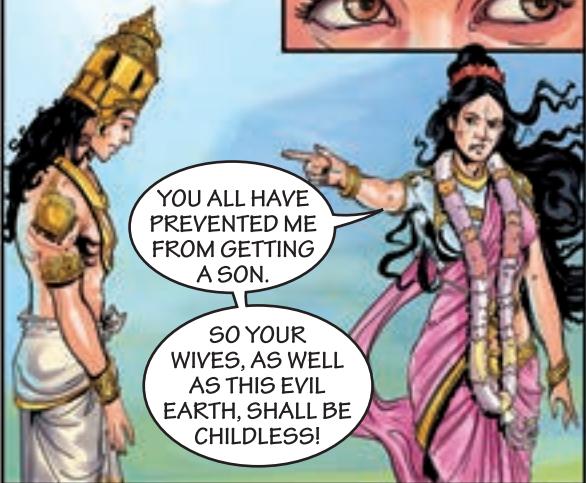


...BUT PARVATI
WAS FURIOUS.

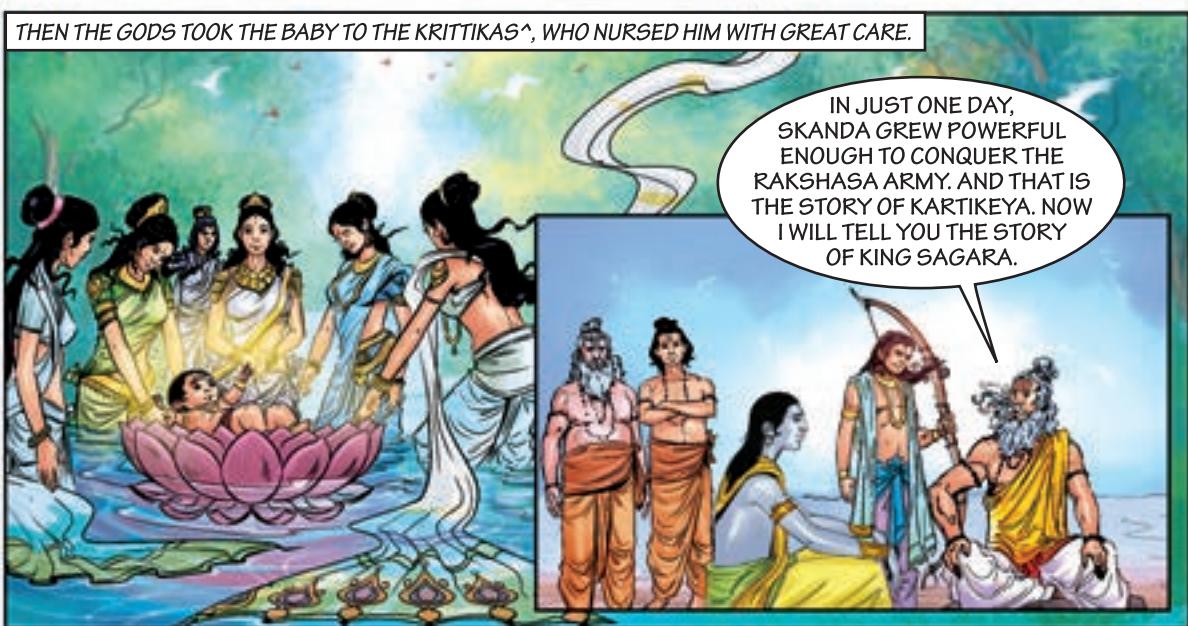
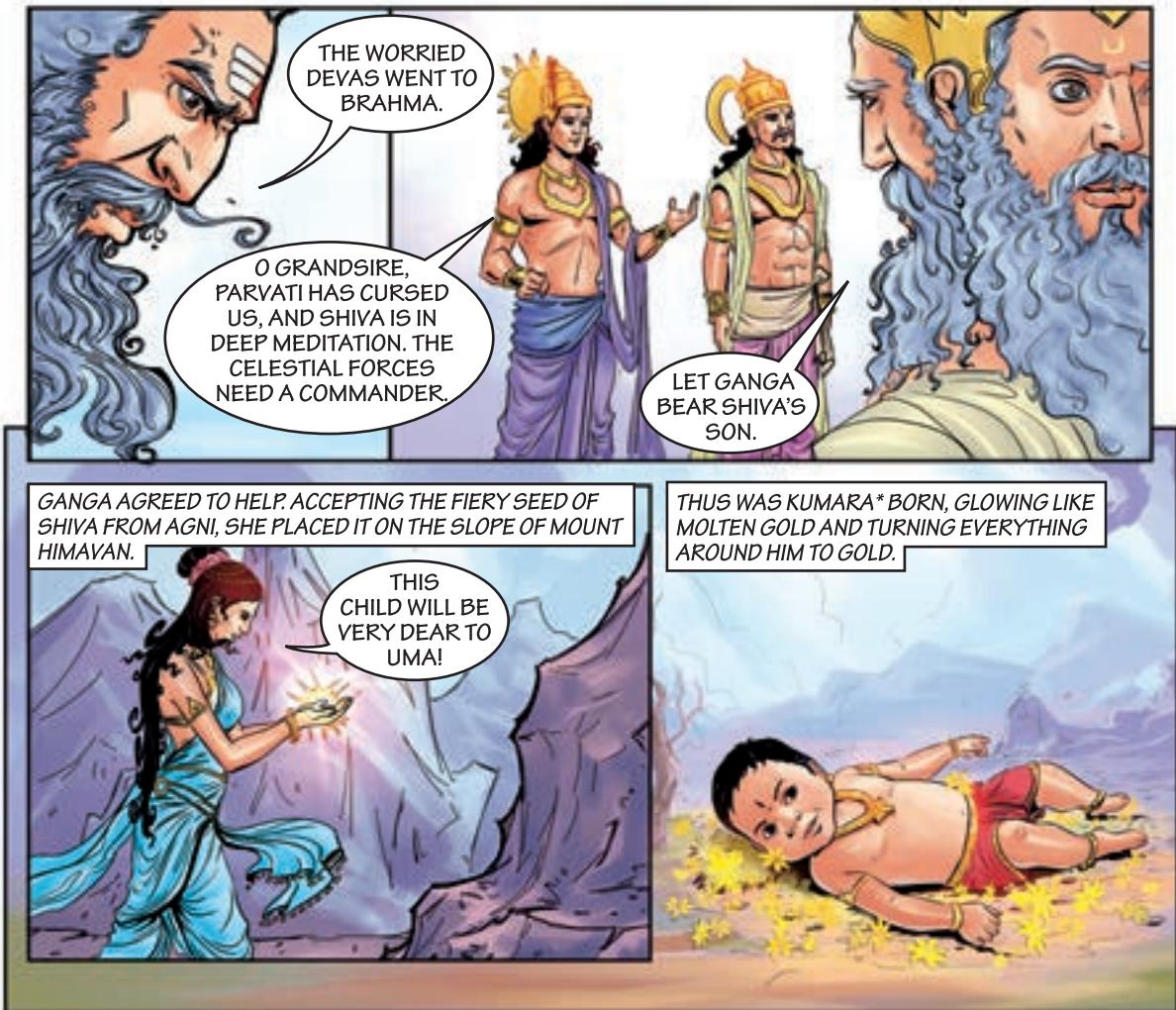


YOU ALL HAVE
PREVENTED ME
FROM GETTING
A SON.

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



*36,000 HUMAN YEARS



*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

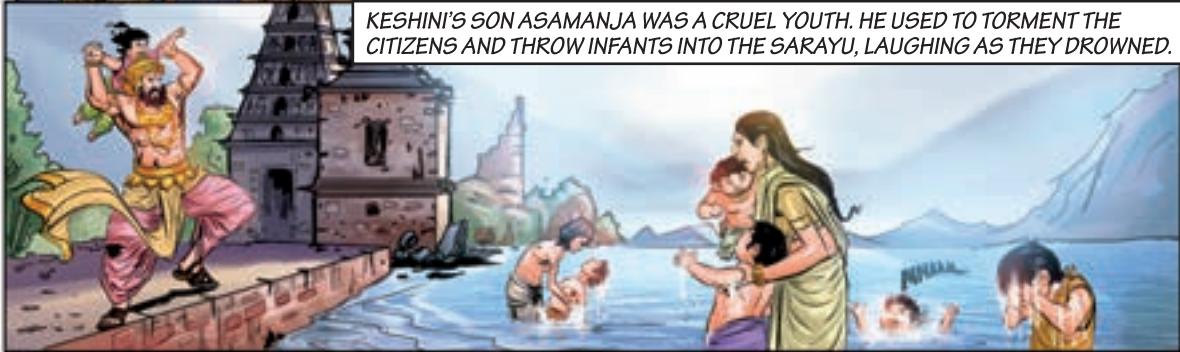
KING SAGARA OF AYODHYA AND HIS WIVES, KESHINI AND SUMATI, DID TAPAS FOR A HUNDRED YEARS. RISHI BHHRIGU GRANTED THEM A BOON.

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

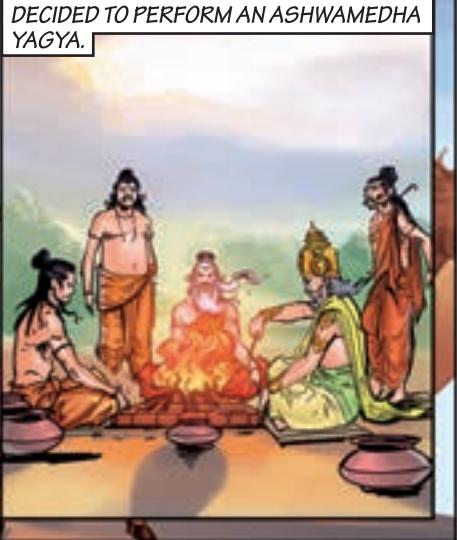
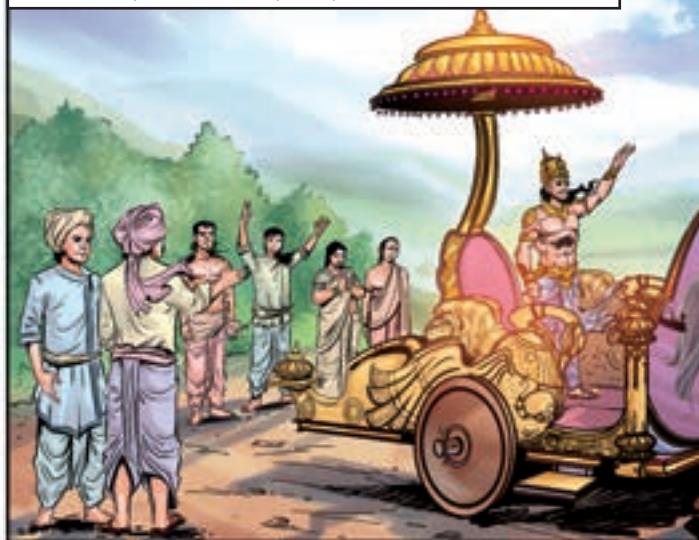


KESHINI'S SON ASAMANJA WAS A CRUEL YOUTH. HE USED TO TORMENT THE CITIZENS AND THROW INFANTS INTO THE SARAYU, LAUGHING AS THEY DROWNED.

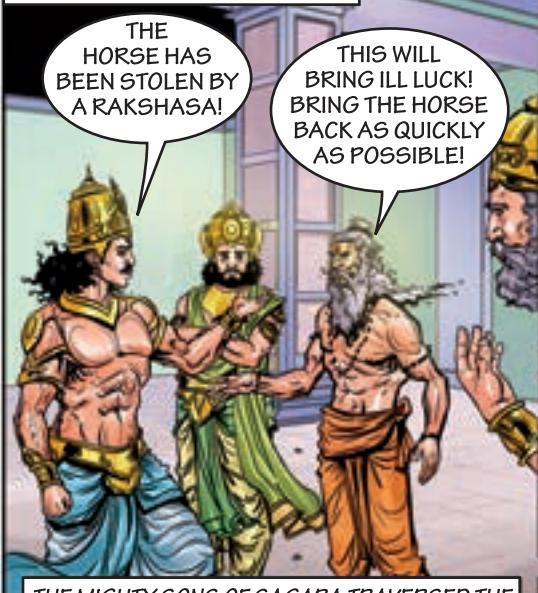


ASAMANJA WAS EXILED FROM THE KINGDOM. BUT HIS SON, ANSHUMAN, WAS VALIANT, KIND, AND BELOVED BY ALL.

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 -

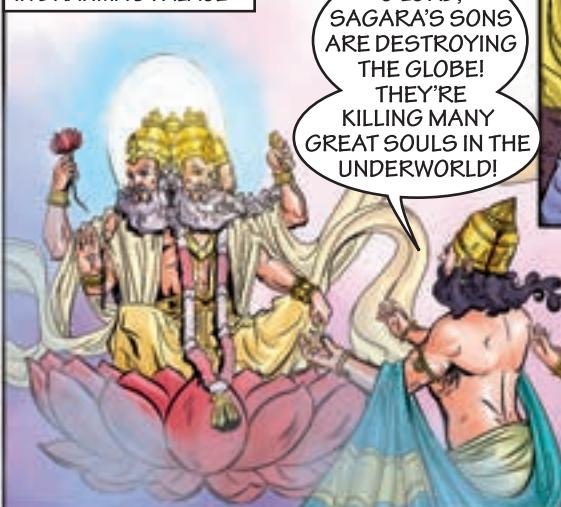


THE MIGHTY SONS OF SAGARA TRAVESED THE EARTH BUT COULD NOT FIND THE HORSE. THEY EXCAVATED THE WHOLE OF JAMBUDVIPA*.

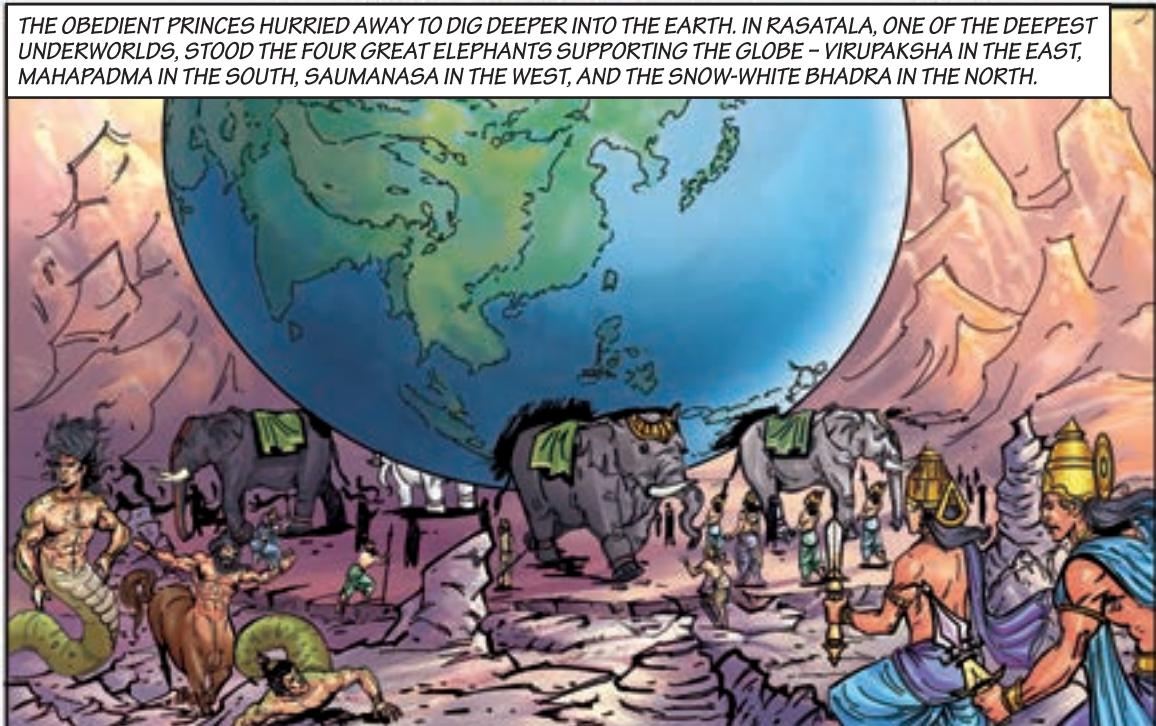
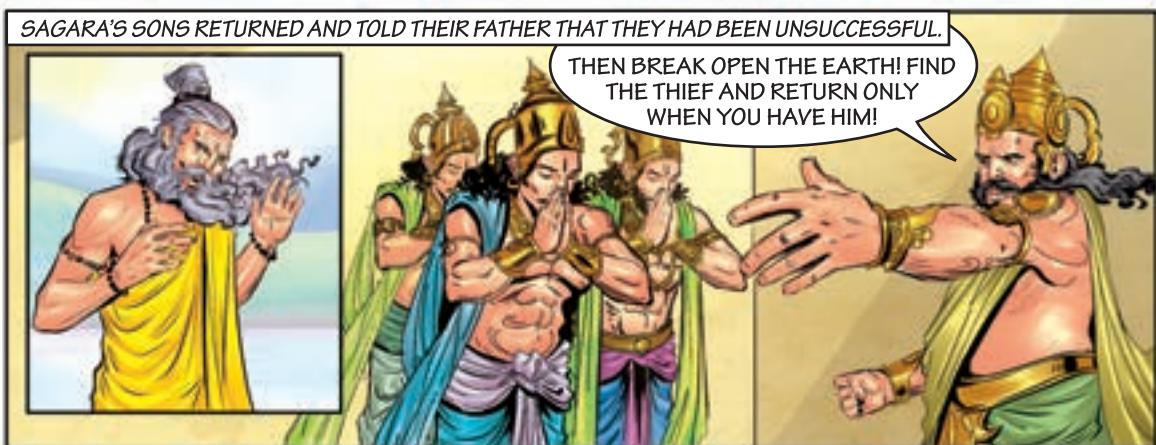
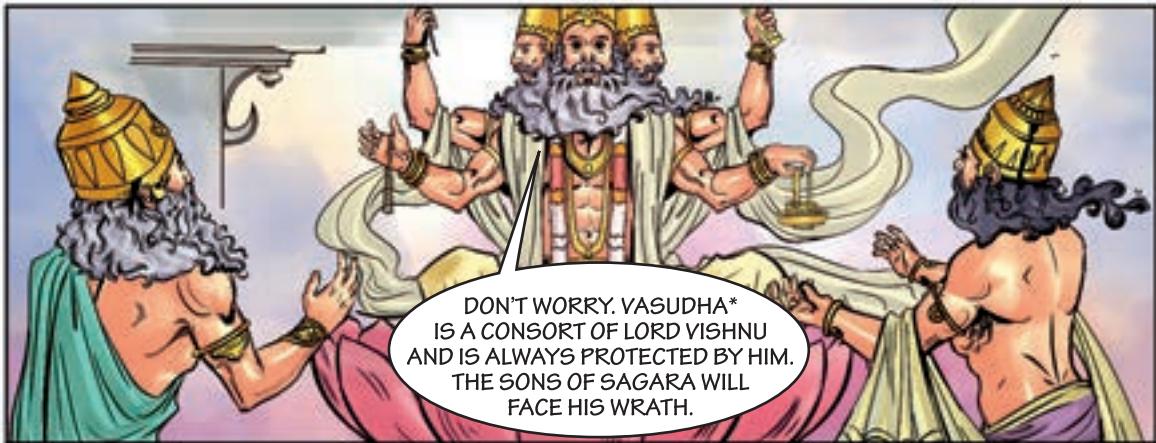
THEIR BLOWS WERE LIKE THUNDERBOLTS. THE EARTH GROANED. NAGAS AND OTHER UNDERWORLD BEINGS ROARED WITH PAIN. SAGARA'S SONS KILLED WHOEVER CAME IN THEIR WAY.



IN BRAHMA'S PALACE -

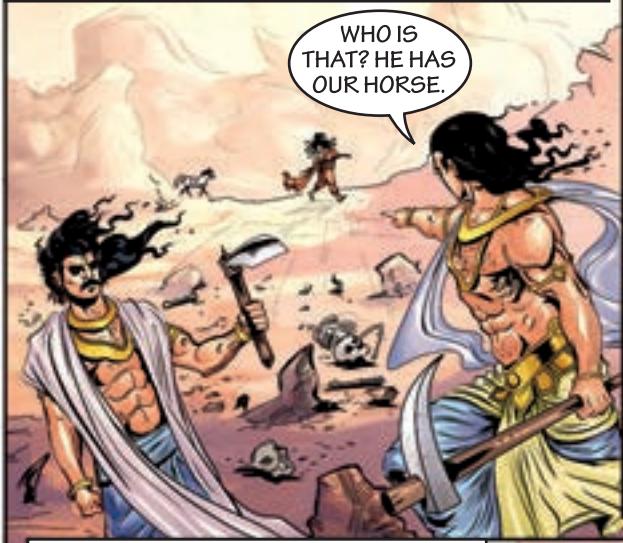


*THE ISLAND AT THE CENTRE OF THE UNIVERSE, ACCORDING TO HINDU MYTHOLOGY, ON WHICH THE JAMBU TREE GROWS



*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 -



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

HOOOOOOON

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.

ANSHUMAN WENT ON, FOLLOWING THE PATH OF HIS UNCLES.

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

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

OH, HOW DID THIS HAPPEN TO MY UNCLES?

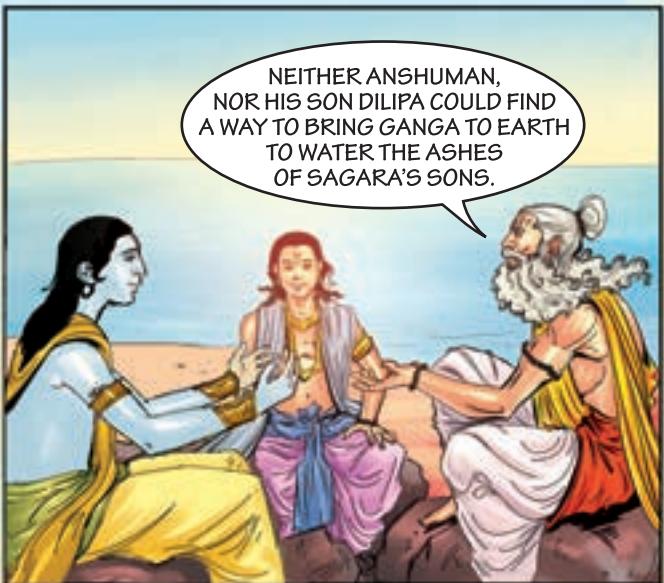
VALIANT PRINCE, THEY WILL GO TO HEAVEN ONLY IF YOU IMMERSE THEIR ASHES IN THE DIVINE WATER OF GANGA.



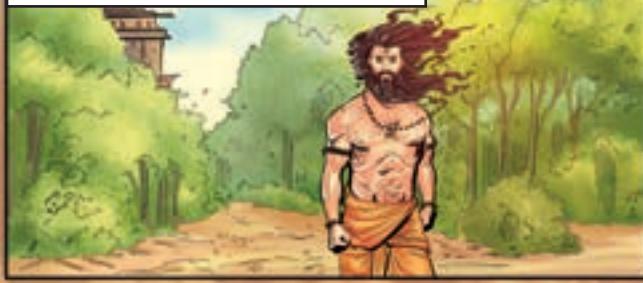
ANSHUMAN RETURNED WITH THE HORSE, AND THE SACRIFICE WAS COMPLETED. AFTER RULING FOR 30,000 YEARS, SAGARA ASCENDED TO HEAVEN, LEAVING THE THRONE TO ANSHUMAN.



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.

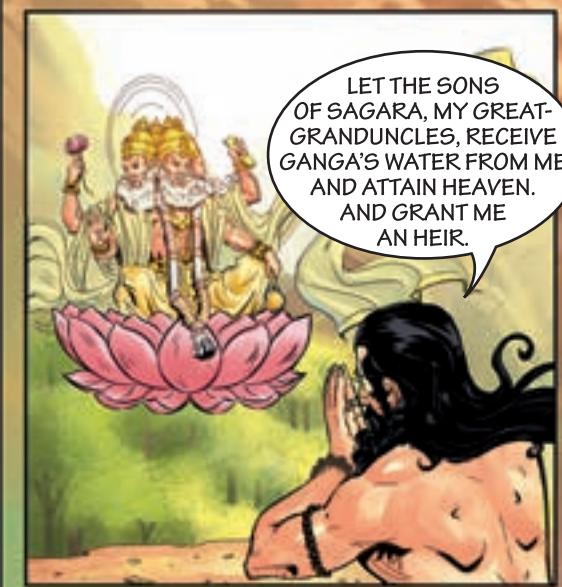


BHAGIRATHA SPENT A THOUSAND YEARS ON MOUNT GOKARNA EATING ONLY ONCE A MONTH. AT LAST -

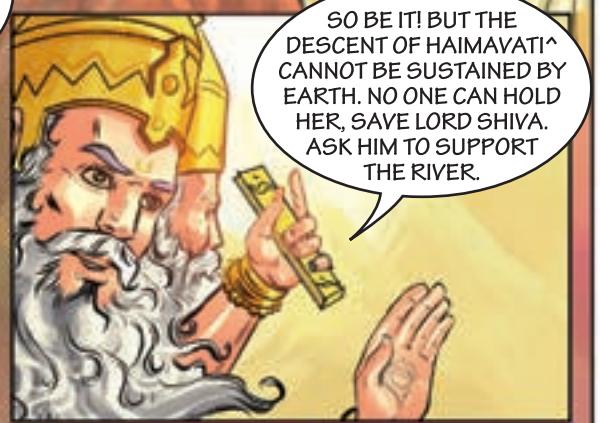
I AM PLEASED WITH YOU, RAJARSHI*. WHAT CAN I DO FOR YOU?



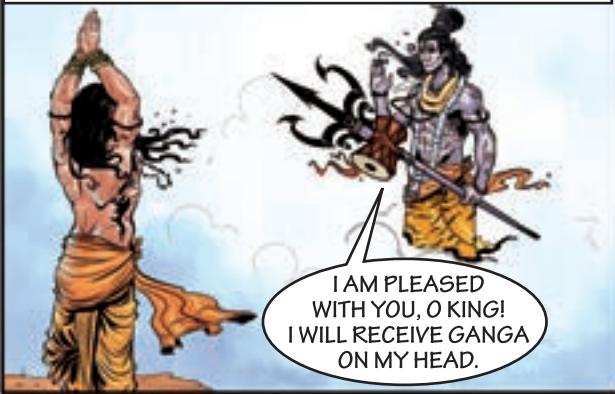
LET THE SONS OF SAGARA, MY GREAT-GRANDUNCLES, RECEIVE GANGA'S WATER FROM ME AND ATTAIN HEAVEN. AND GRANT ME AN HEIR.



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 -



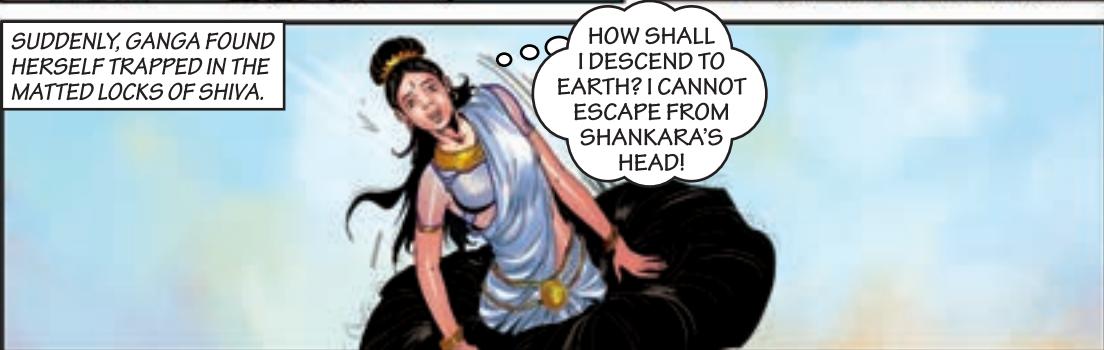
BUT THE GANGA IS A MOST IRREPRESSIBLE RIVER!



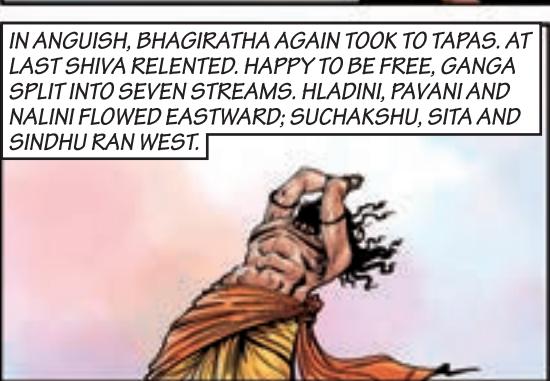
AND SO -



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



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



*ANOTHER NAME FOR SHIVA

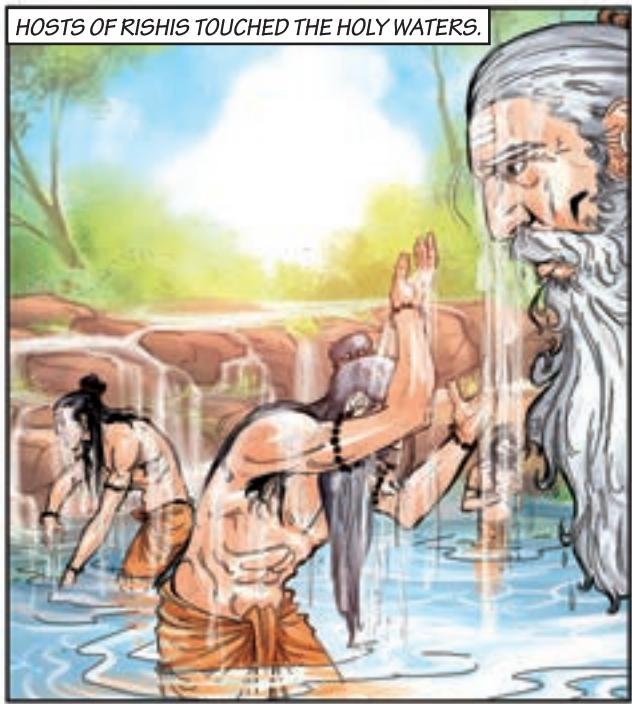


BHAGIRATHA RODE AHEAD IN HIS SPLENDID CHARIOT WITH GANGA FOLLOWING. BEHIND HER, CAME THE DELIGHTED GODS, RISHIS, DAITYAS, DANAVAS, RAKSHASAS, GANDHARVAS, YAKSHAS, KINNARAS, NAGAS, APSARAS, AND ALL THE AQUATIC CREATURES.

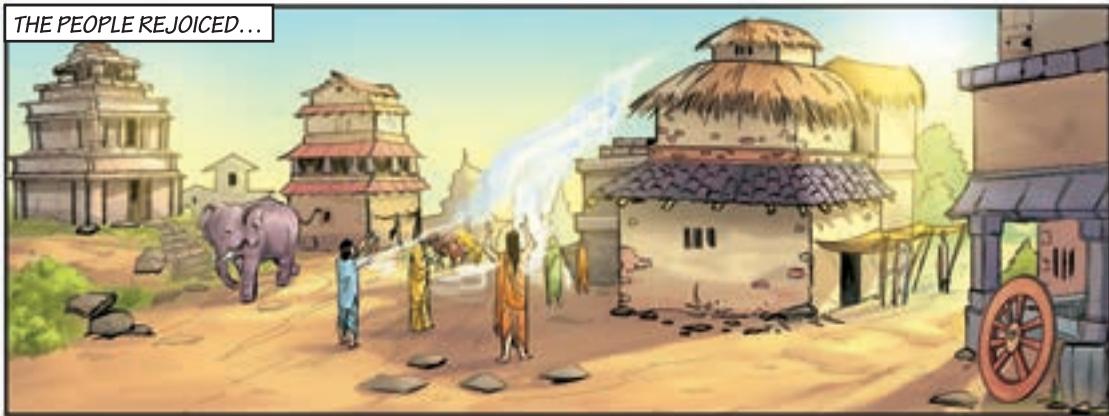
THE RIVER MOVED, MAKING A LOUD NOISE.



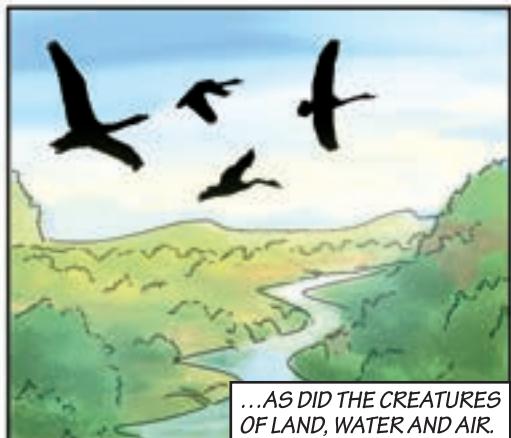
HOSTS OF RISHIS TOUCHED THE HOLY WATERS.



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.

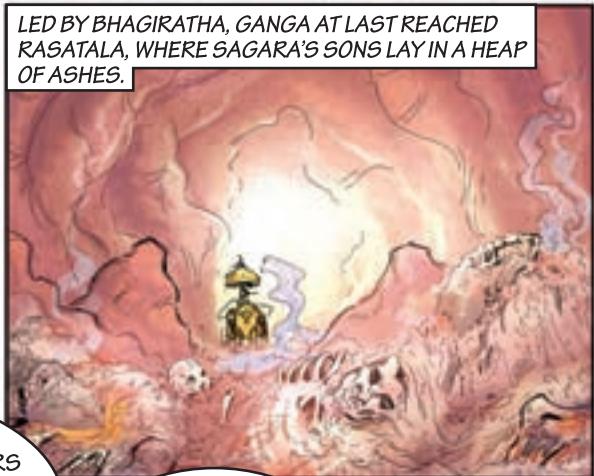
O GREAT SOUL!
PLEASE TREAT GANGA AS YOUR DAUGHTER AND FORGIVE HER!



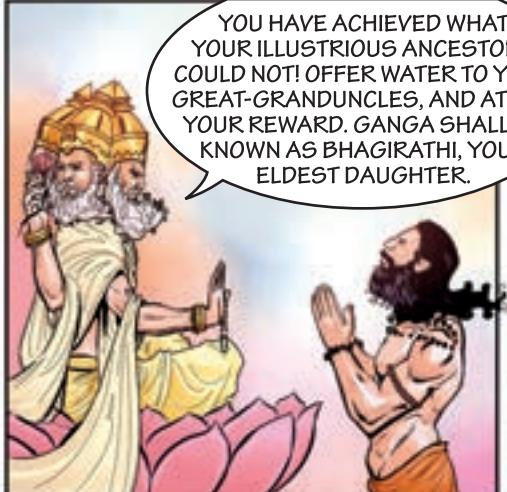
JAHNU AGREED TO THEIR REQUESTS. SINCE HE RELEASED GANGA THROUGH HIS EAR, SHE IS KNOWN AS JAHNAVI, DAUGHTER OF JAHNU.



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

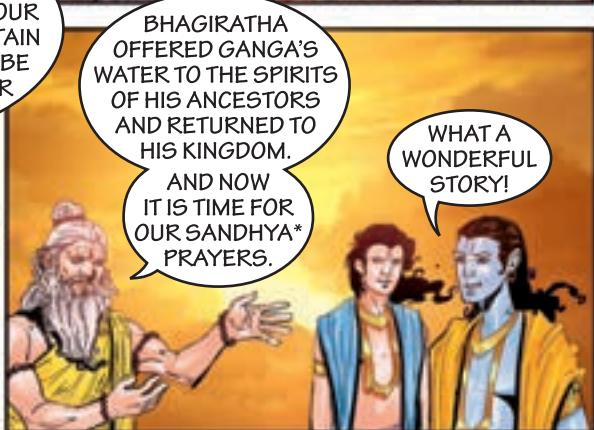


YOU HAVE ACHIEVED WHAT YOUR ILLUSTRIOS ANCESTORS COULD NOT! OFFER WATER TO YOUR GREAT-GRANDUNCLES, AND ATTAIN YOUR REWARD. GANGA SHALL BE KNOWN AS BHAGIRATHI, YOUR ELDEST DAUGHTER.



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!



TRAVELLING WITH VISHWAMITRA

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
KASYAPA.

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 VASUKI[^] 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!

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

PLEASE
ACCEPT THE
POISON AS
A TRIBUTE.

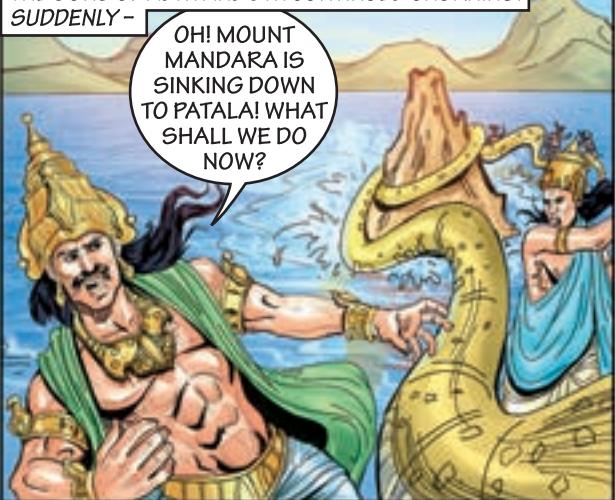
*THE FIRST OF THE FOUR YUGAS THAT FORM THE LIFE CYCLE OF THE UNIVERSE. THE UNIVERSE IS DESTROYED AT THE END OF THE FOURTH YUGA, AND CREATED ANEW.

[^]KING OF SERPENTS

SHIVA AGREED TO THE REQUEST.



THE SONS OF ADITI AND DITI CONTINUED CHURNING. SUDDENLY -



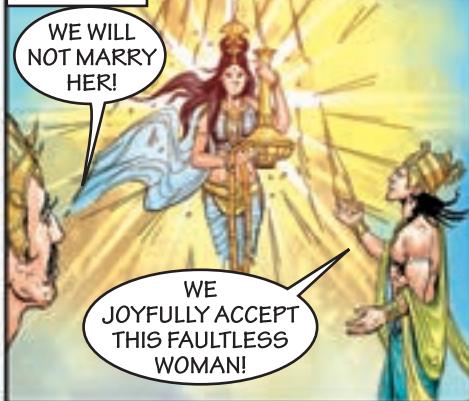
THE DEVAS PRAYED TO LORD VISHNU. HE TOOK THE FORM OF A TORTOISE AND SUPPORTED MANDARA ON HIS BACK.



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.



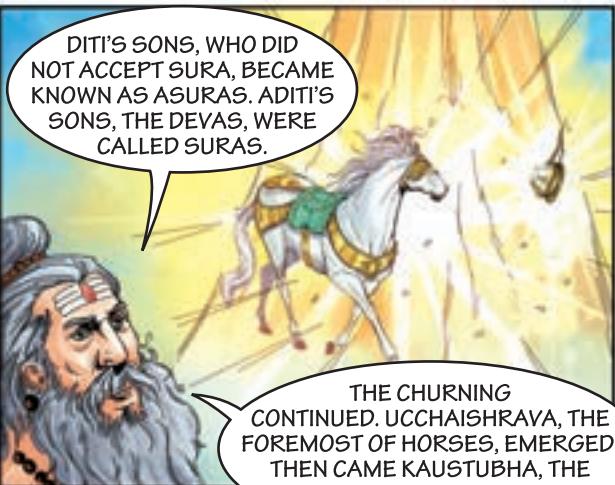
NEXT CAME VARUNI*, THE DAUGHTER OF VARUNA. SHE WAS LOOKING FOR A HUSBAND.



WE WILL NOT MARRY HER!

WE JOYFULLY ACCEPT THIS FAULTLESS WOMAN!

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



THE CHURNING CONTINUED. UCCHAISHRAVA, THE FOREMOST OF HORSES, EMERGED. THEN CAME KAUSTUBHA, THE MOST VALUABLE OF GEMS.

*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.

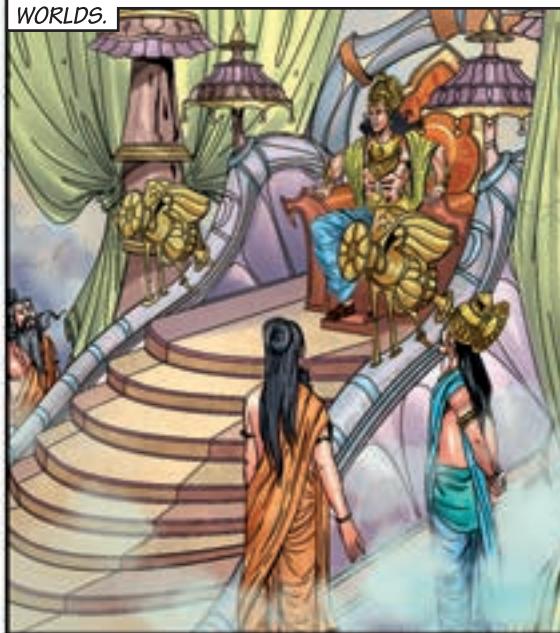
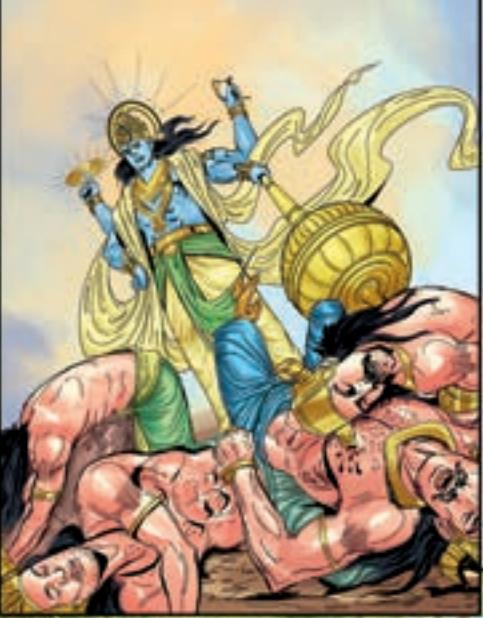


THE THREE WORLDS WERE BEWILDERED BY THAT TERRIBLE BATTLE. THEN VISHNU, IN THE FORM OF MOHINI, STOLE THE AMRITA AWAY...

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



IN THE END, THE SONS OF ADITI COMPLETELY DESTROYED THE SONS OF DITI. INDRA BECAME THE RULER OF THE THREE WORLDS.



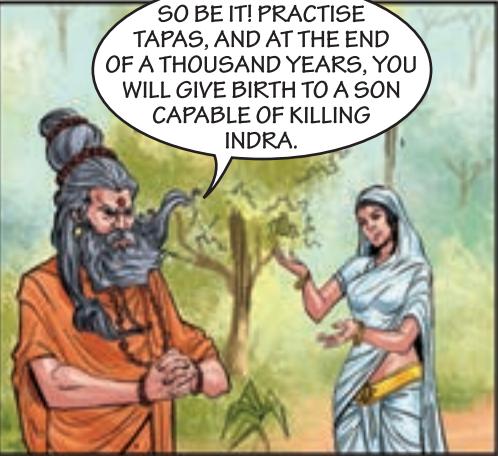
DITI WAS HEARTBROKEN. SHE WENT TO HER HUSBAND, KASHYAPA.



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.

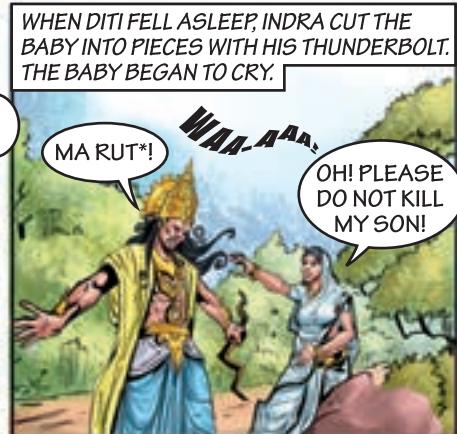
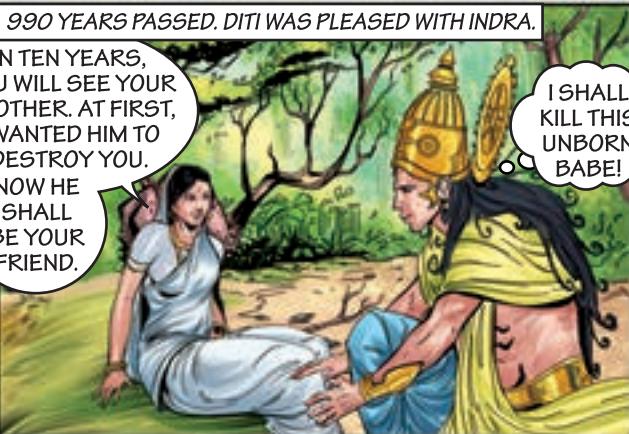
DITI PRACTISED SEVERE AUSTERITIES. INDRA, WHO CAME TO KNOW OF HER INTENTION, APPEARED AND BEGAN TO HELP HER.



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.

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

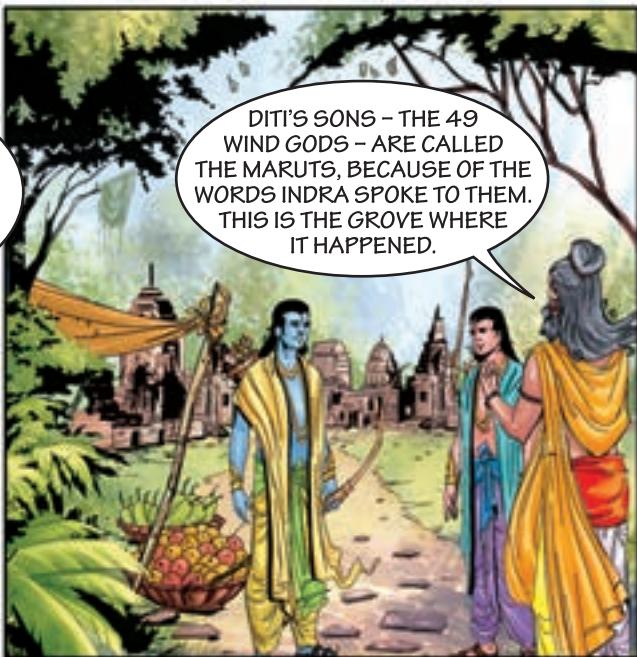
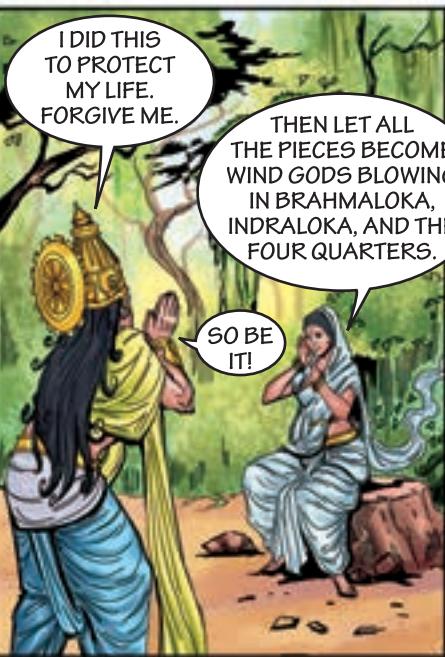


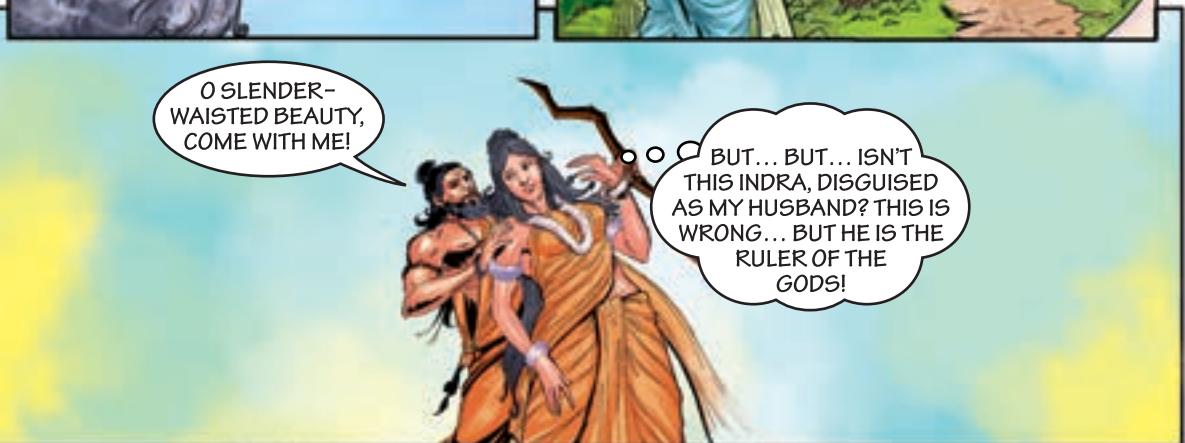
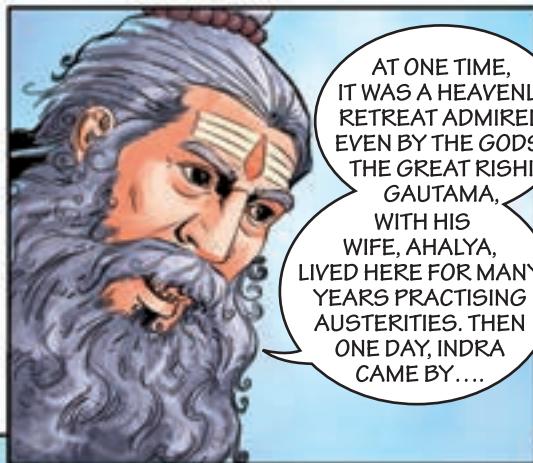
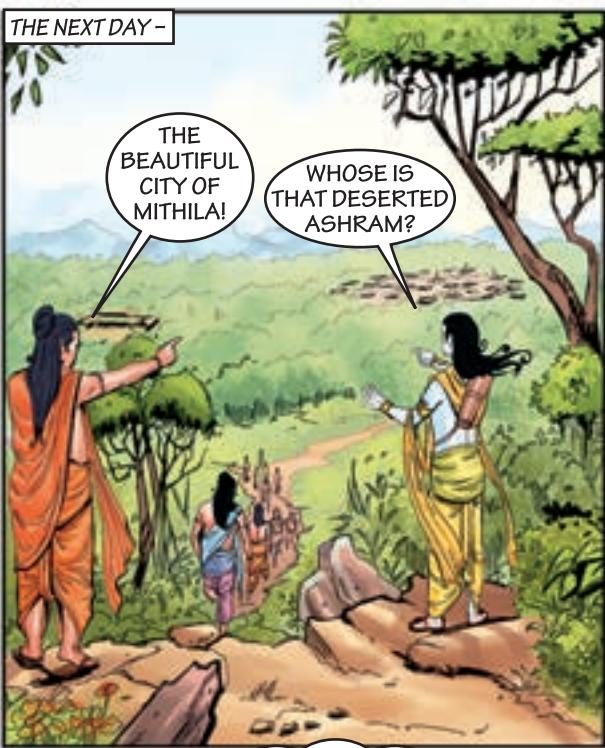
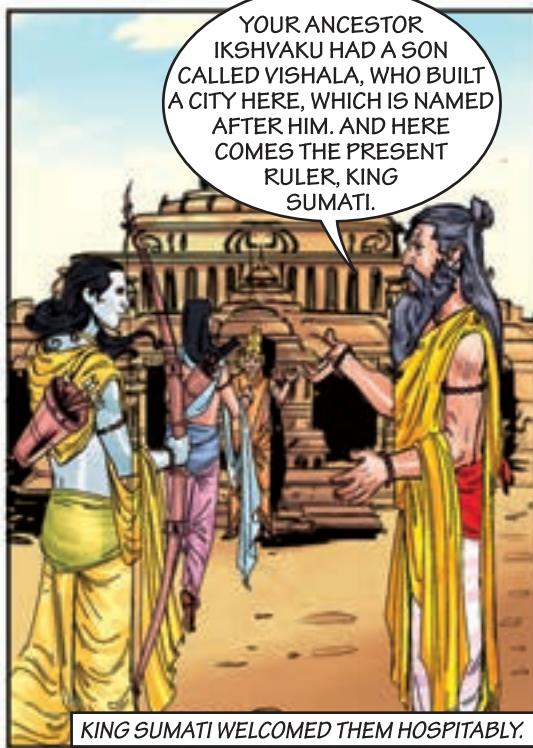
I DID THIS TO PROTECT MY LIFE. FORGIVE ME.

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.

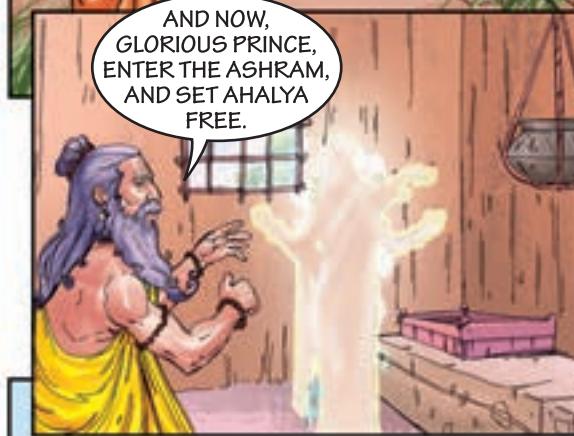




GAUTAMA RETURNED AND SAW INDRA. HE FIRST CURSED
INDRA AND THEN TURNED TO AHALYA.



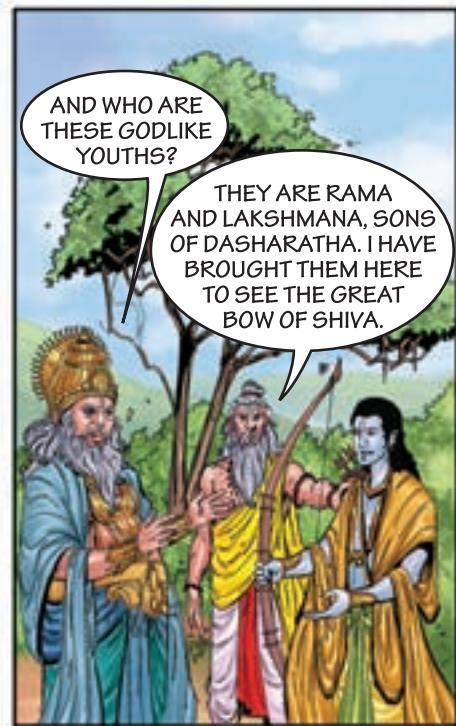
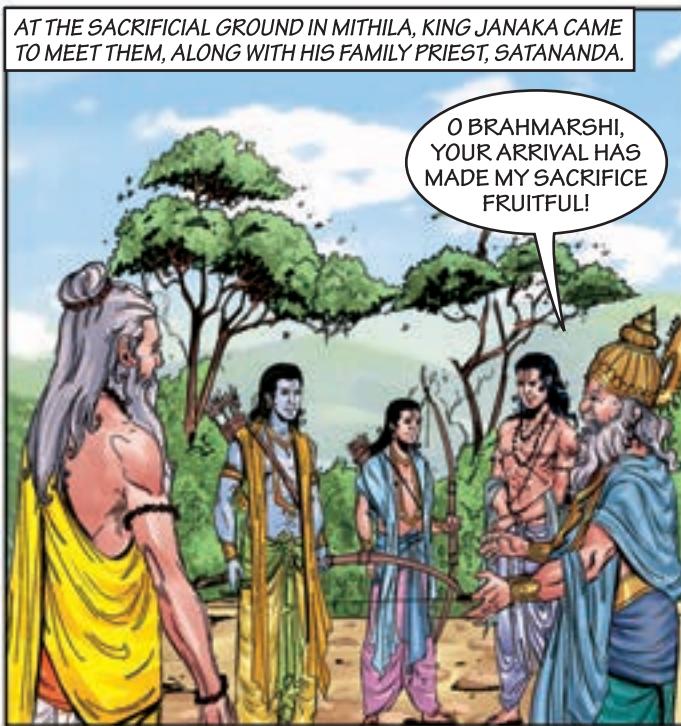
GAUTAMA THEN WENT AWAY TO THE HIMALAYAS.



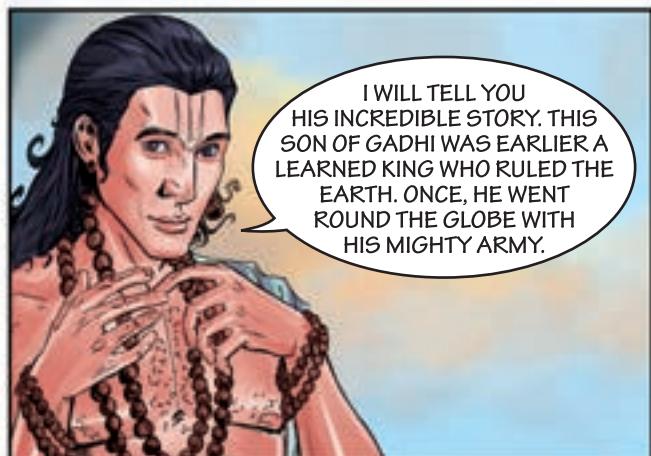
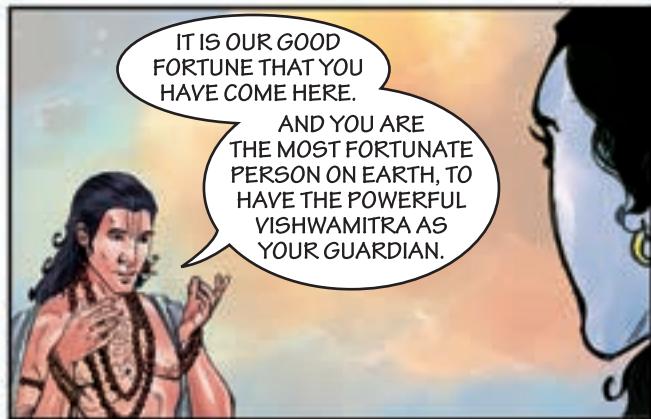
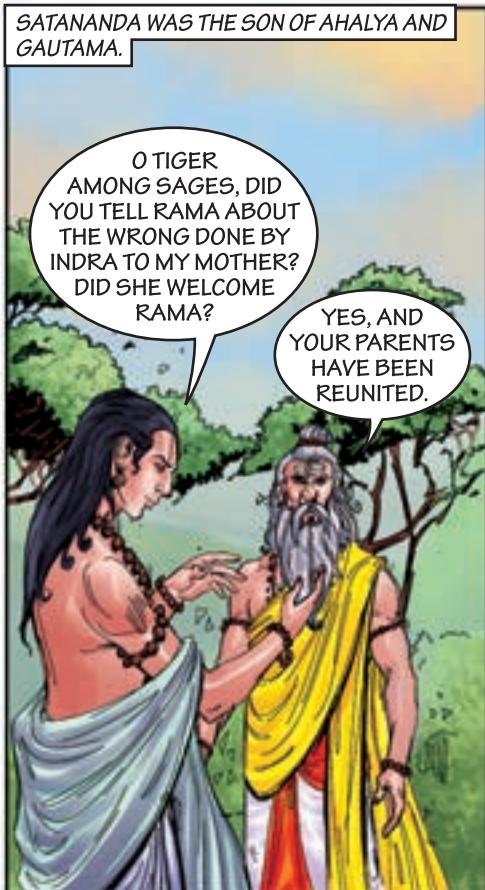
FORESEEING RAMA'S VISIT, GAUTAMA TOO ARRIVED.



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



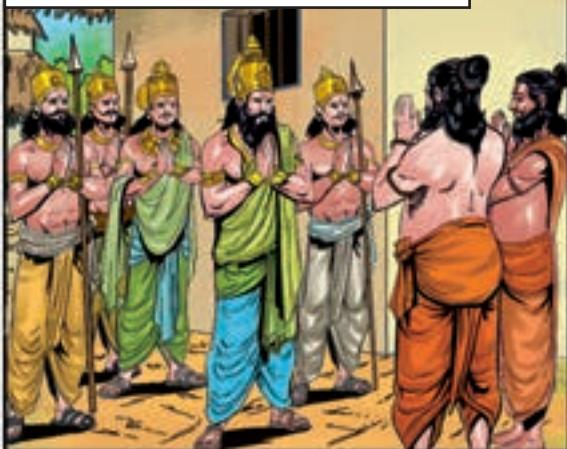
SATANANDA WAS THE SON OF AHALYA AND GAUTAMA.



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



VASISHTHA WELCOMED THE KING HOSPITALLY, 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.

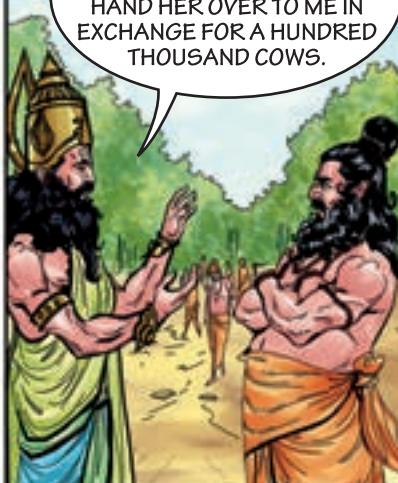


SHABALA YIELDED EVERY DELICACY THAT ANYONE COULD WISH FOR. KING VISHWAMITRA AND HIS PARTY ATE TO THEIR HEART'S CONTENT.



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.

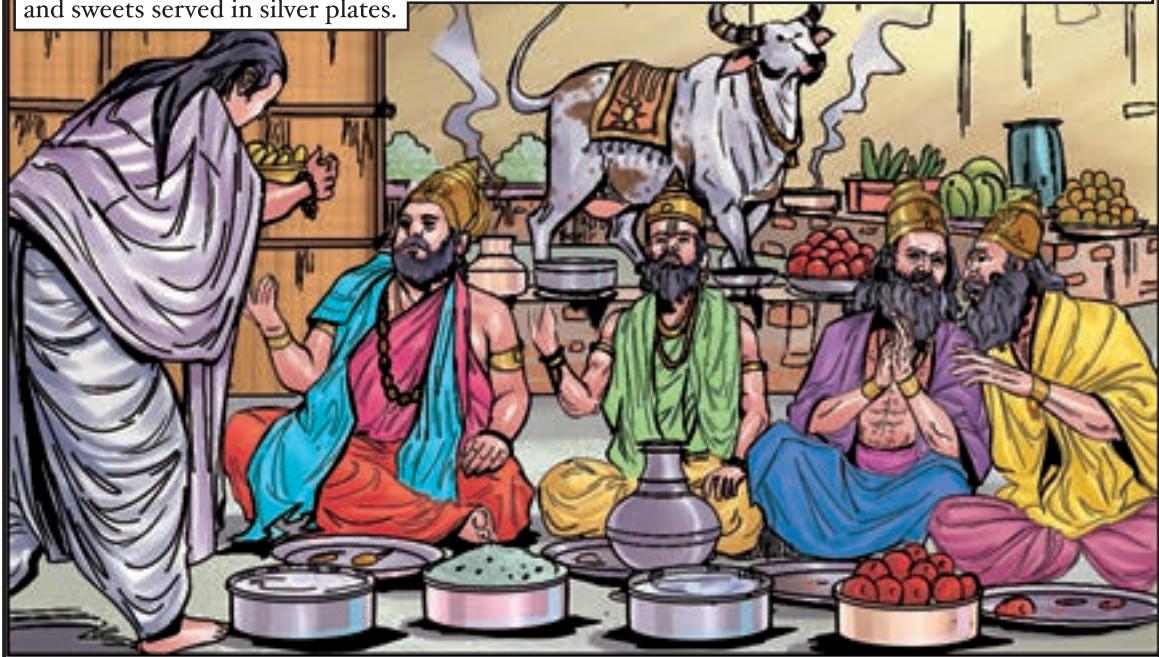


*ALSO KNOWN AS KAMADHENU

^SEE PAGE 85 FOR DETAILS

WHAT DID PEOPLE IN ANCIENT INDIA EAT?

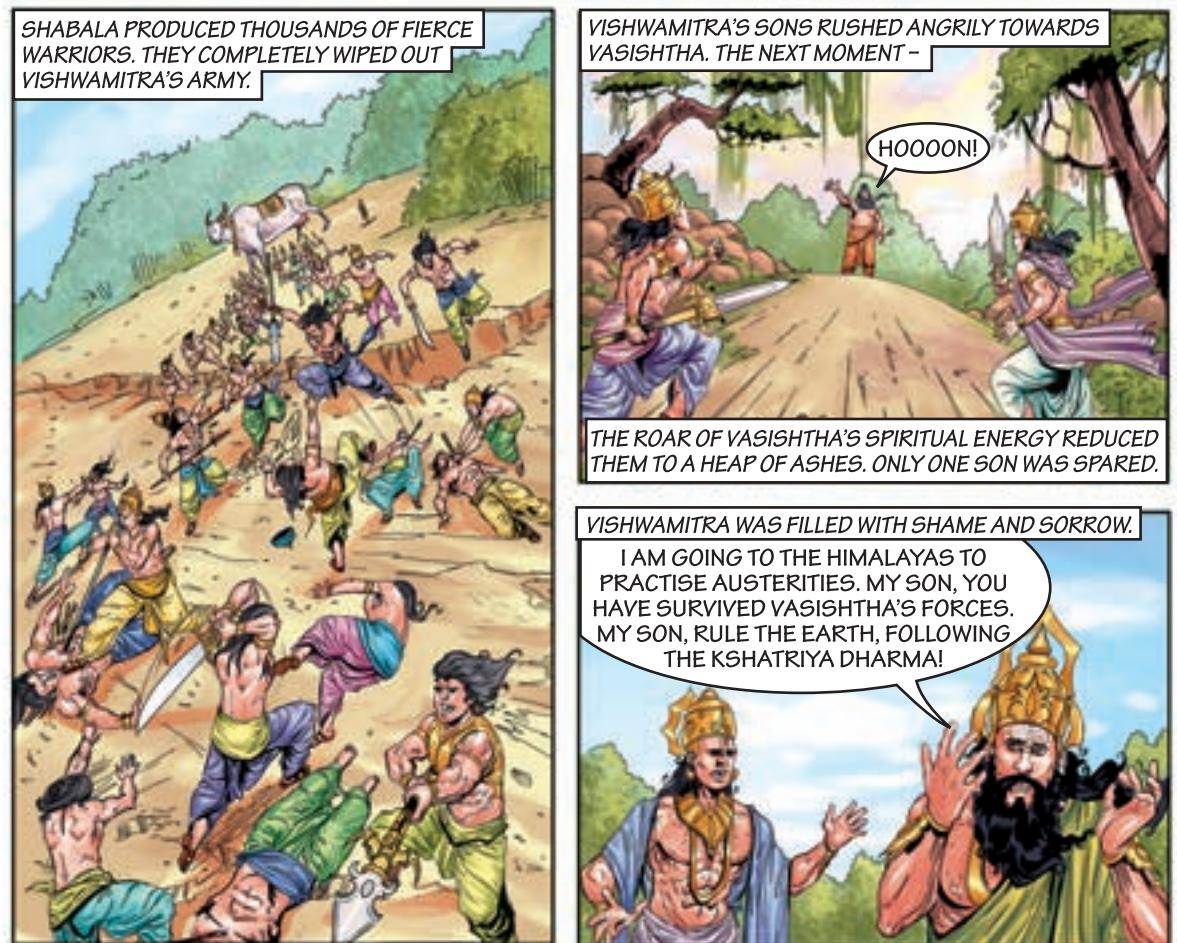
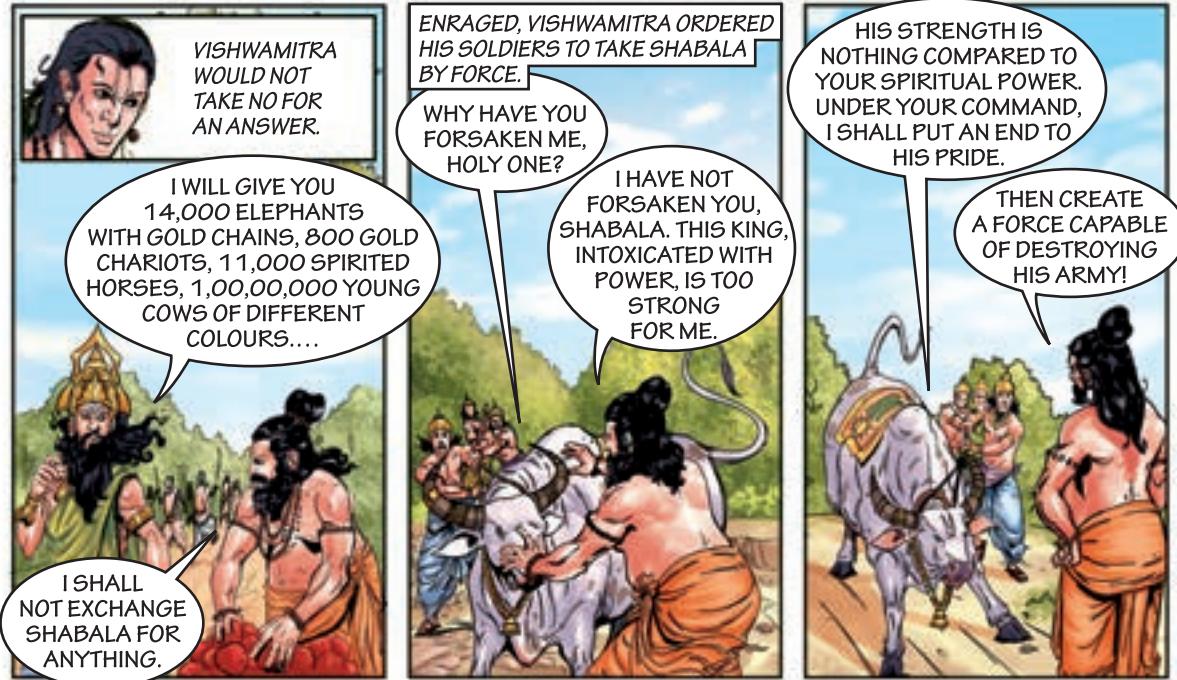
The Vedic people had a very tasty, nutritious and varied diet. The food was always freshly gathered and cooked. Vishwamitra's army loved the delicious items on Shabala's menu. Some of them were: sugarcane, honey, crunchy fried snacks, fruit juices and wines made from sugarcane juice and jaggery, mountains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



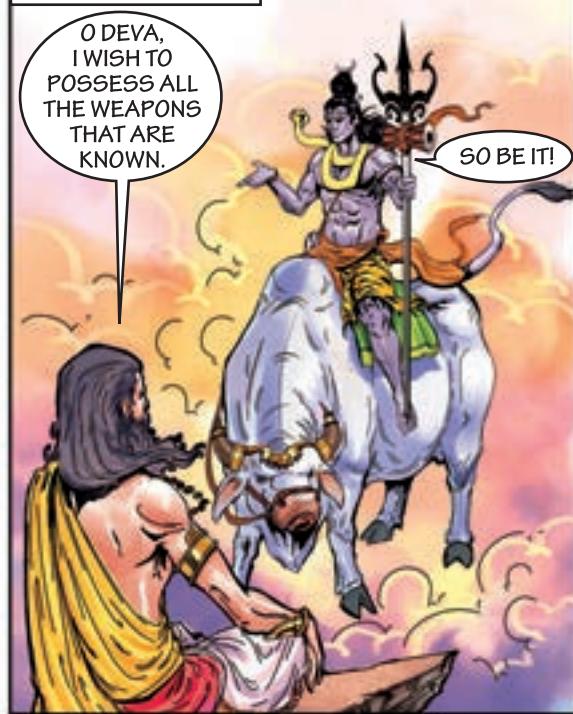
In Vedic times, a complete meal had to contain all the six tastes: pungent, acid, sweet, salty, bitter and alkaline. It also contained five types of food: bhakshya (crunchy/chewy), bhojya (semi-solids), choshya (suckable, like mangoes), lehya (lickable, like honey) and peya (drinkable).

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.

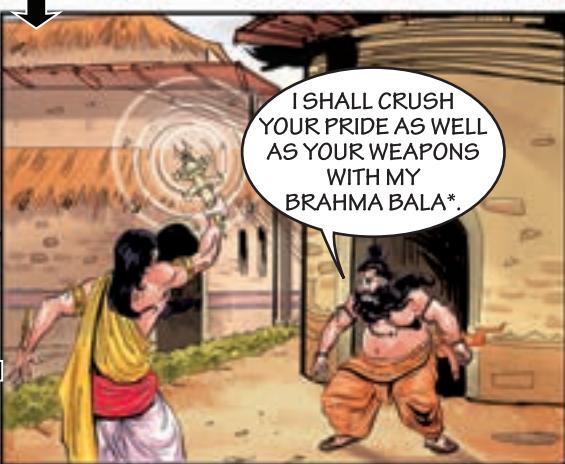
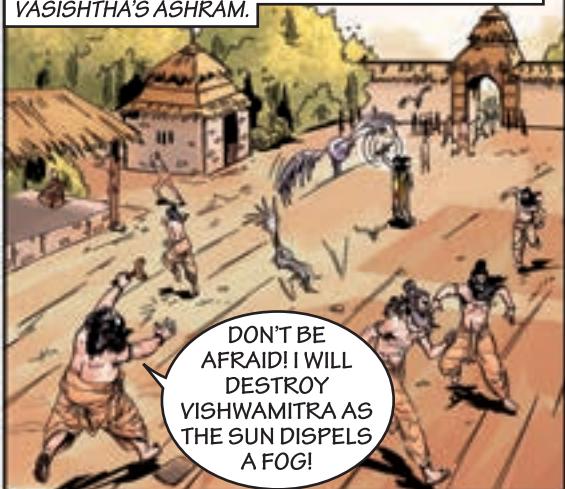




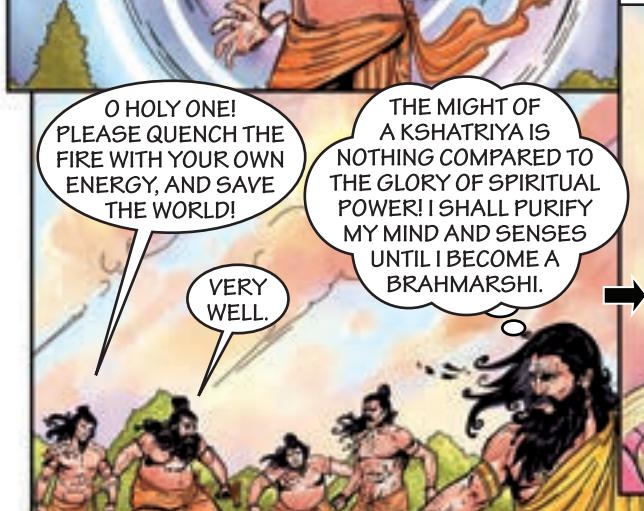
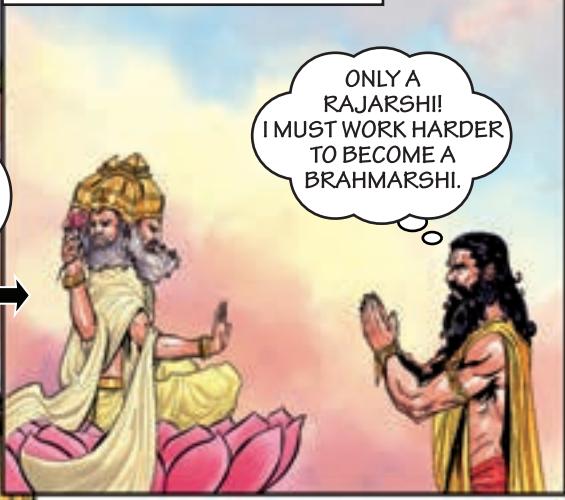
AFTER MANY YEARS OF TAPAS, LORD SHIVA APPEARED BEFORE VISHWAMITRA.

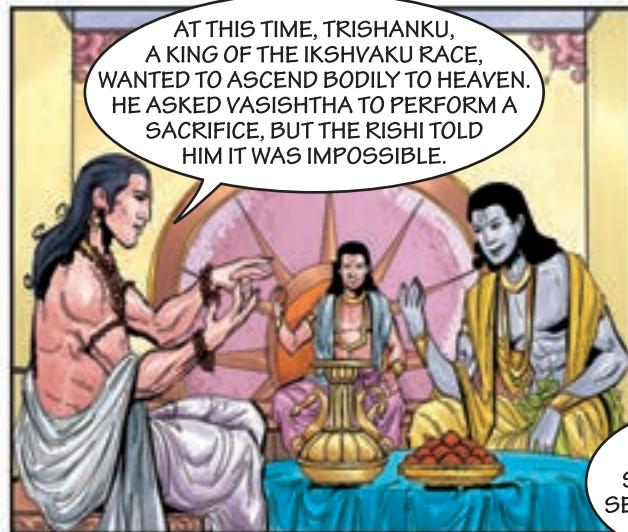


HAVING RECEIVED THESE WEAPONS, VISHWAMITRA SWELLED WITH ARROGANCE. HE WENT STRAIGHT TO VASISHTHA'S ASHRAM.



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





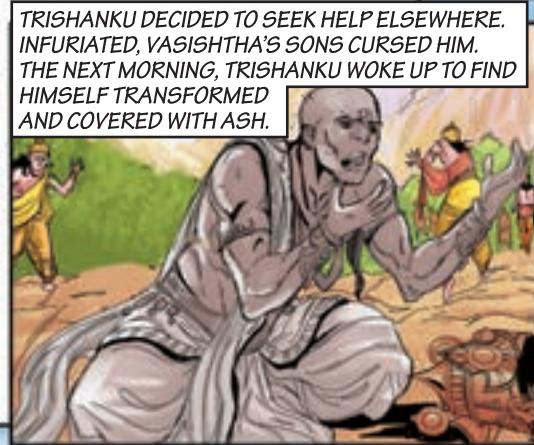
NEXT, TRISHANKU WENT TO VASISHTHA'S SONS.



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.

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!



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

TRAVELLING WITH VISHWAMITRA

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

THE DEVAS ARE NOT GOING TO ACCEPT THE OFFERINGS!

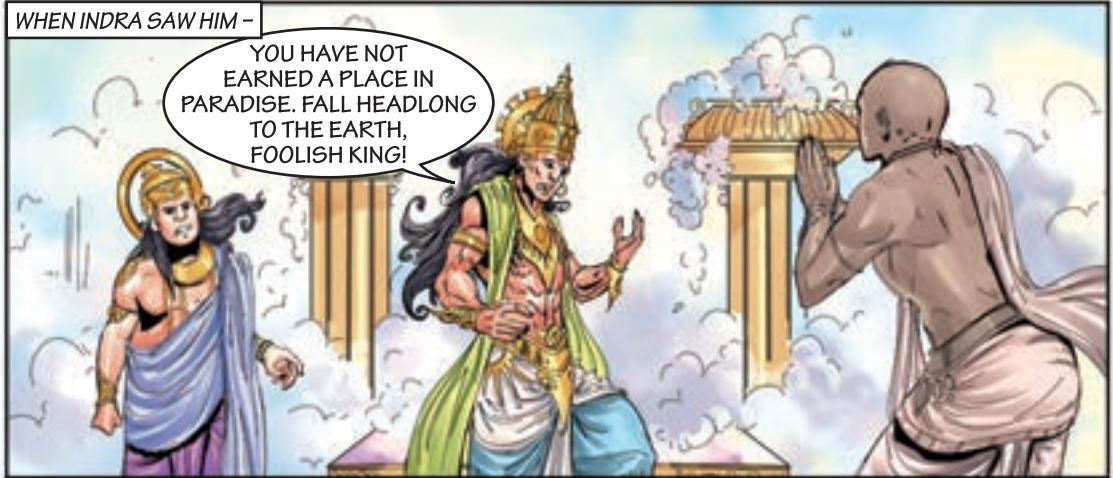


VISHWAMITRA WAS OVERWHELMED WITH ANGER.



WHEN INDRA SAW HIM -

YOU HAVE NOT EARNED A PLACE IN PARADISE. FALL HEADLONG TO THE EARTH, FOOLISH KING!



SAVE ME, O HOLY ONE!

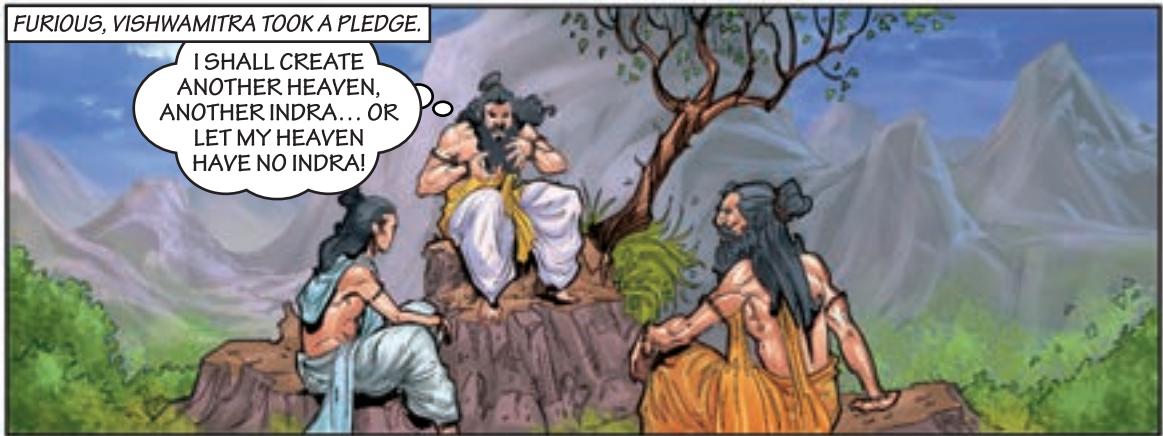


STOP, STOP!



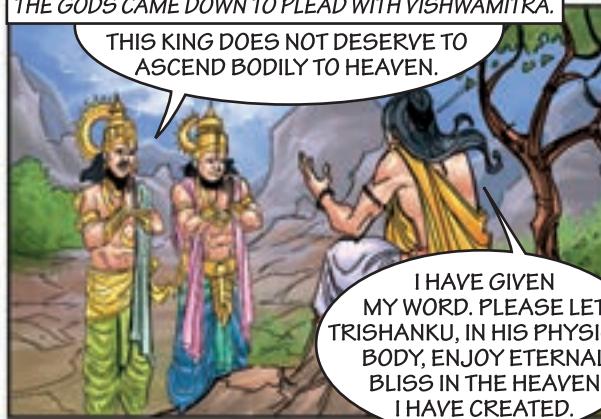
FURIOUS, VISHWAMITRA TOOK A PLEDGE.

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

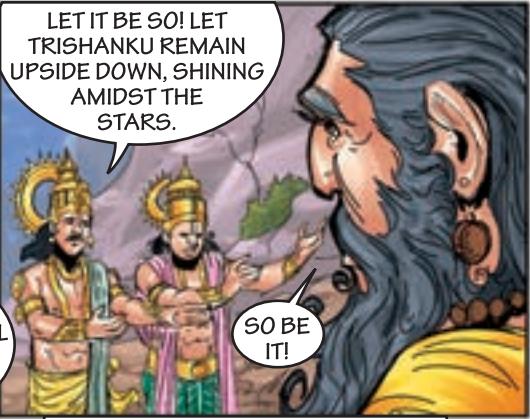


THE GODS CAME DOWN TO PLEAD WITH VISHWAMITRA.

THIS KING DOES NOT DESERVE TO
ASCEND BODILY TO HEAVEN.



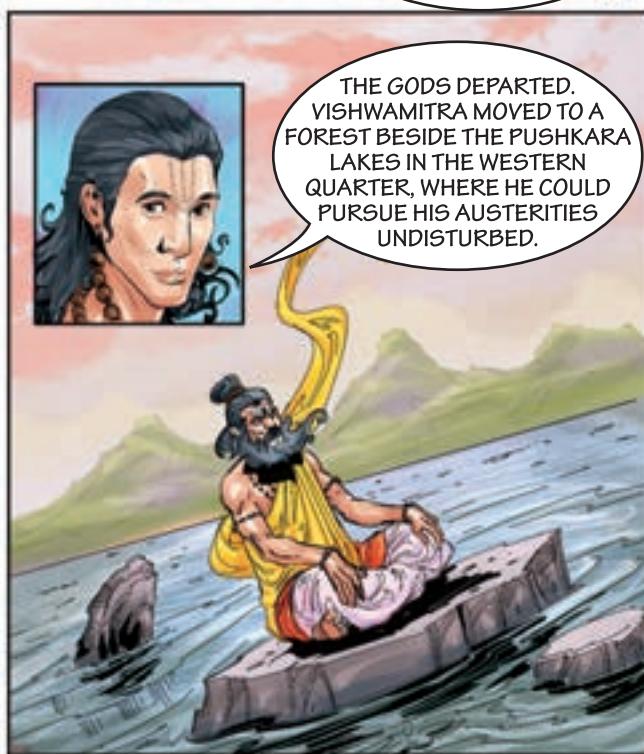
LET IT BE SO! LET
TRISHANKU REMAIN
UPSIDE DOWN, SHINING
AMIDST THE
STARS.



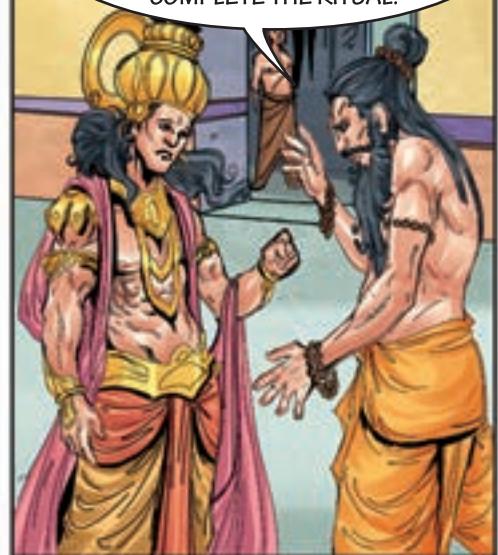
SO BE
IT!

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

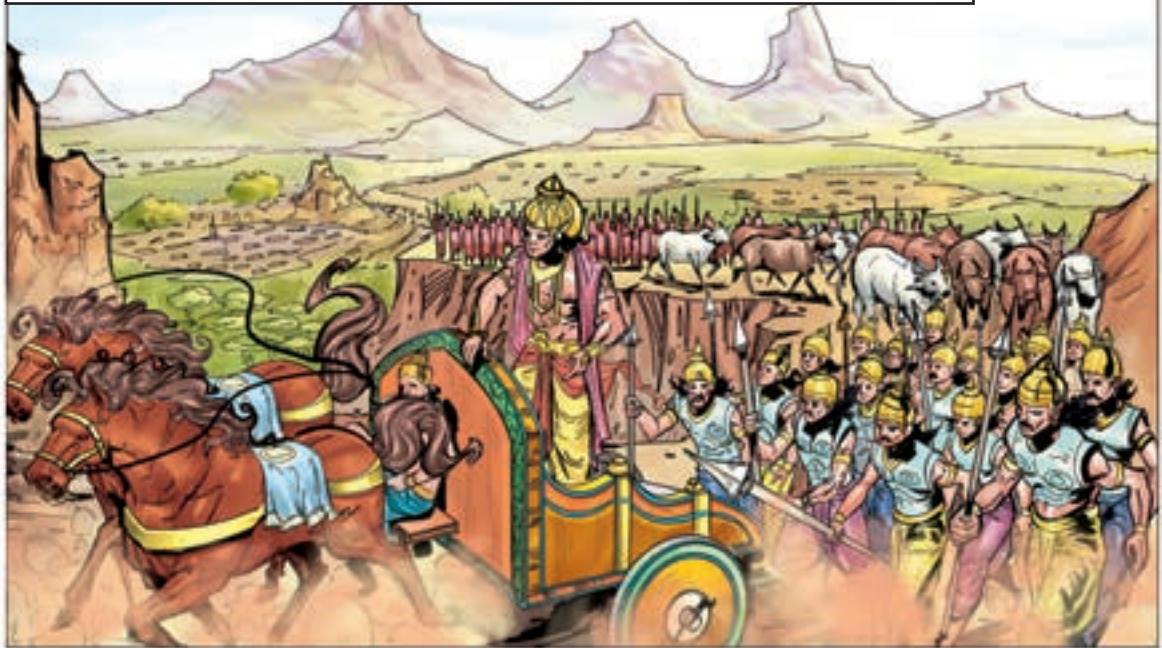
THE GODS DEPARTED.
VISHWAMITRA MOVED TO A
FOREST BESIDE THE PUSHKARA
LAKES IN THE WESTERN
QUARTER, WHERE HE COULD
PURSUE HIS AUSTERITIES
UNDISTURBED.



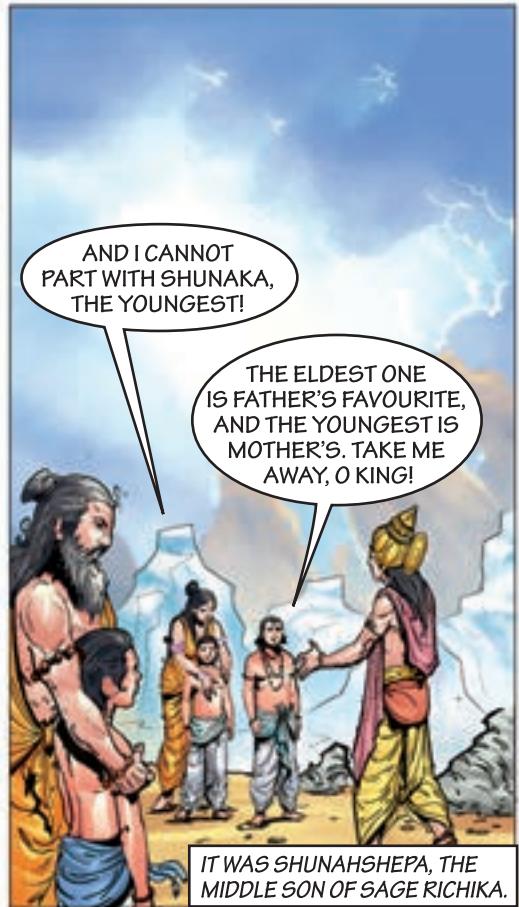
THE HORSE HAS BEEN STOLEN! A KING
WHO FAILS TO GUARD HIS SACRIFICE WILL
BE DESTROYED. IF YOU CANNOT FIND THE
HORSE, GET A HUMAN SACRIFICE TO
COMPLETE THE RITUAL.



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



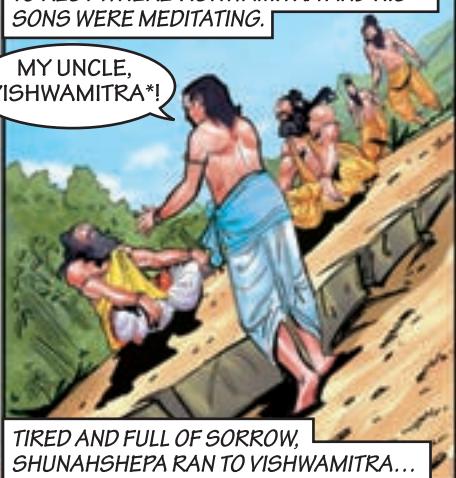
AT LAST, THE KING CAME TO THE HOUSE OF SAGE RICHika ON MOUNT BHrigutunga.





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

MY UNCLE, VISHWAMITRA!*



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

...AND TOLD HIS STORY.

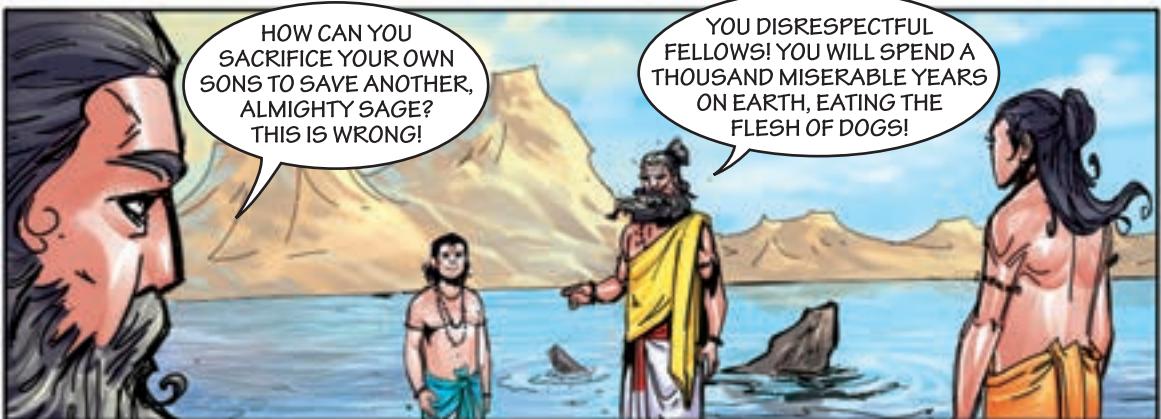
I HAVE NO FATHER AND MOTHER. YOU ARE THE REFUGE OF ALL! PLEASE SAVE ME!

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



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!



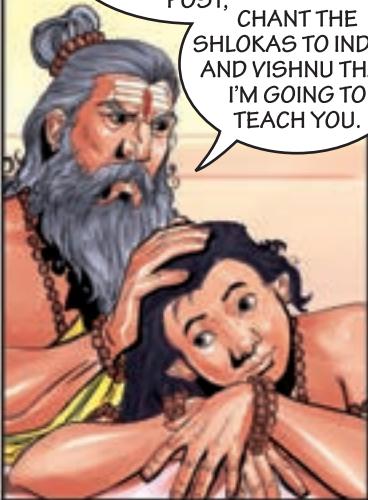
*SHUNAHSHEPA'S MOTHER WAS VISHWAMITRA'S SISTER, SATYAVATI.

TRAVELLING WITH VISHWAMITRA

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.

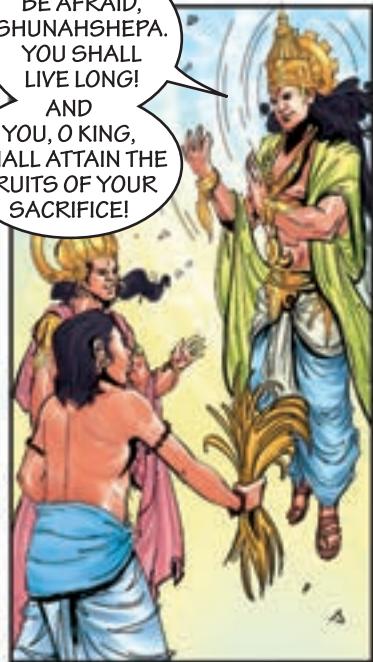


MEMORISING THE SHLOKAS, THE BOY RETURNED TO AMBARISHA. IN AYODHYA -

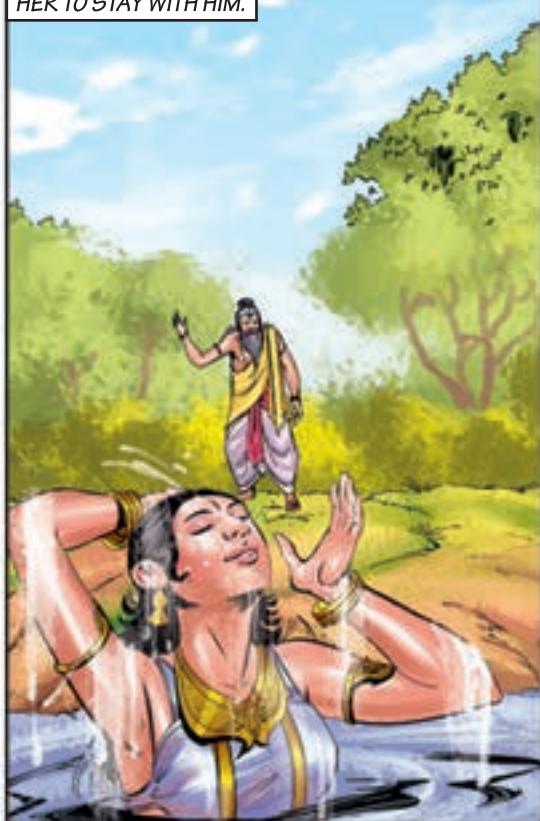


DON'T BE AFRAID, SHUNAHSHEPA. YOU SHALL LIVE LONG!

AND YOU, O KING, SHALL ATTAIN THE FRUITS OF YOUR SACRIFICE!

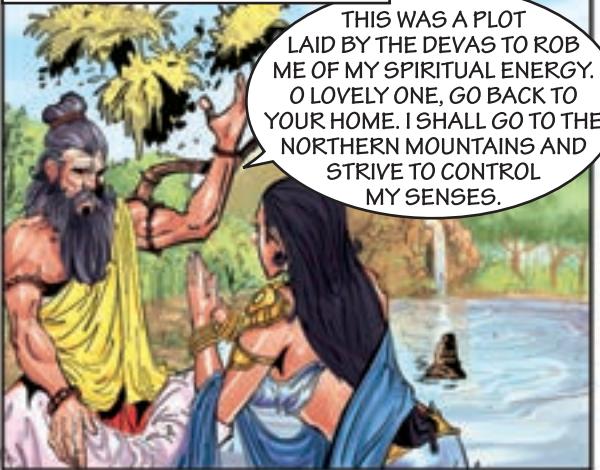


VISHWAMITRA RETURNED TO HIS AUSTERITIES. AFTER A THOUSAND YEARS, A BEAUTIFUL APSARA CALLED MENAKA CAME TO BATHE IN THE LAKE. VISHWAMITRA FELL IN LOVE WITH HER AND BEGGED HER TO STAY WITH HIM.



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.

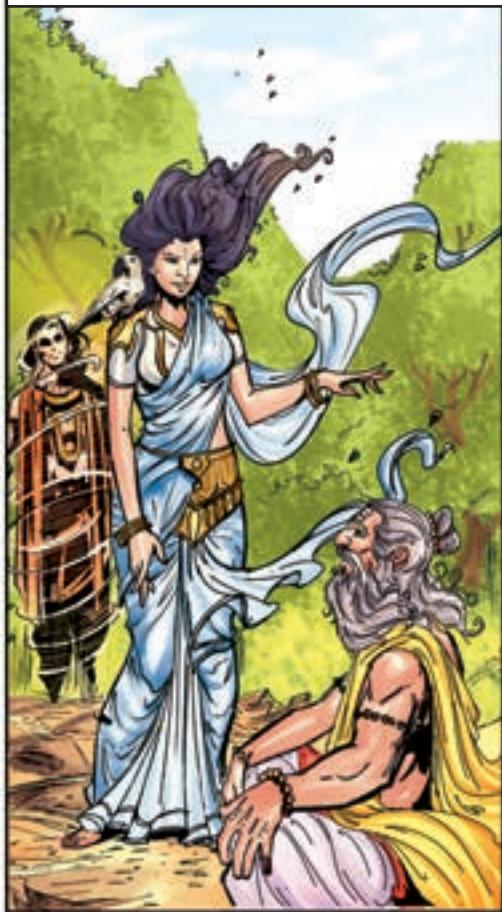


FOR THOUSANDS OF YEARS, VISHWAMITRA UNDERTOOK TERRIBLE AUSTERITIES. BRAHMA CONFERRED ON HIM THE TITLE OF MAHARSHI. VISHWAMITRA STROVE HARDER.

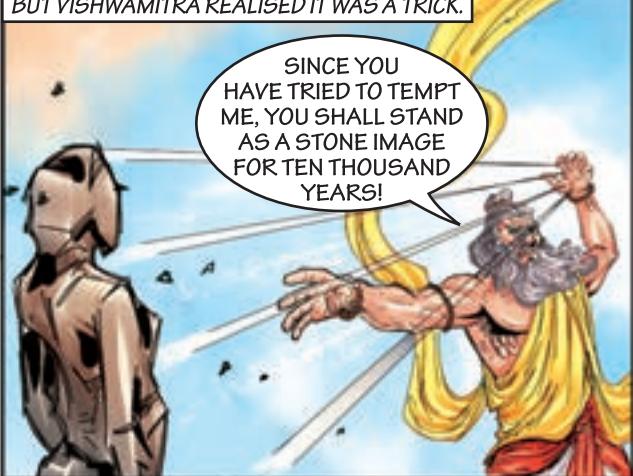


*YOUNGER BROTHER OF INDRA, I.E. VISHNU

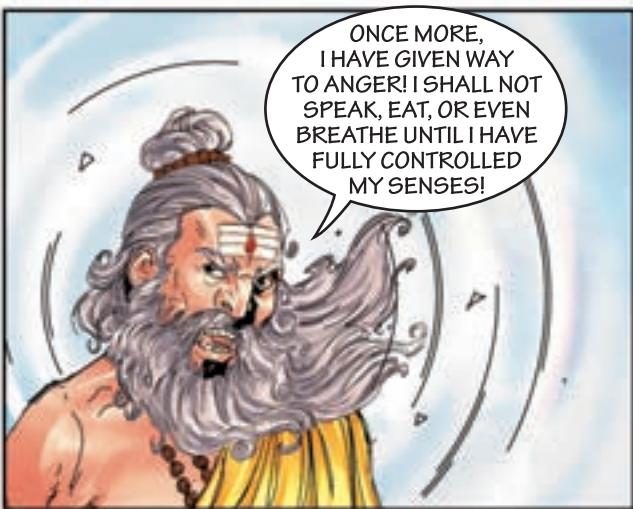
WORRIED ABOUT HIS GROWING POWER, INDRA SENT RAMBHA, AN APSARA, TO DISTRACT HIM. KANDARPA, THE GOD OF LOVE, AND INDRA, IN THE FORM OF A CUCKOO, ACCOMPANIED HER.



BUT VISHWAMITRA REALISED IT WAS A TRICK.



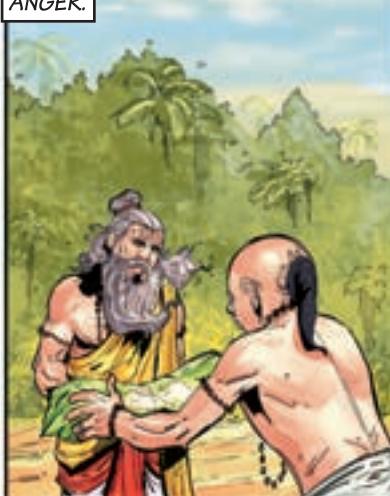
ONCE MORE, I HAVE GIVEN WAY TO ANGER! I SHALL NOT SPEAK, EAT, OR EVEN BREATHE UNTIL I HAVE FULLY CONTROLLED MY SENSES!



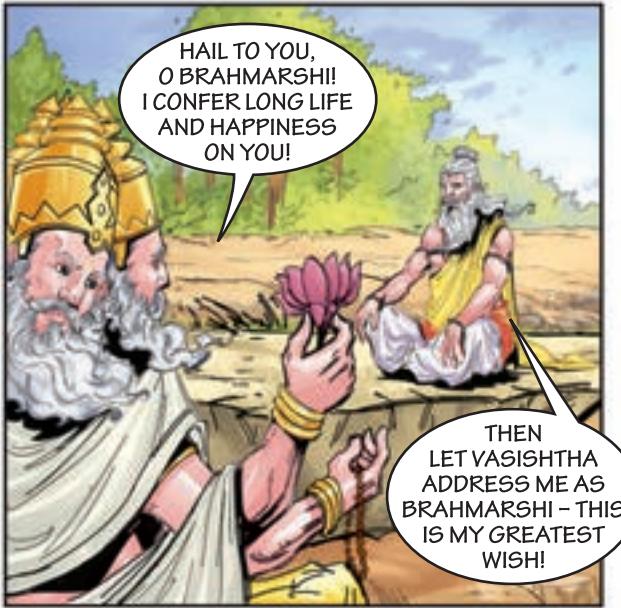
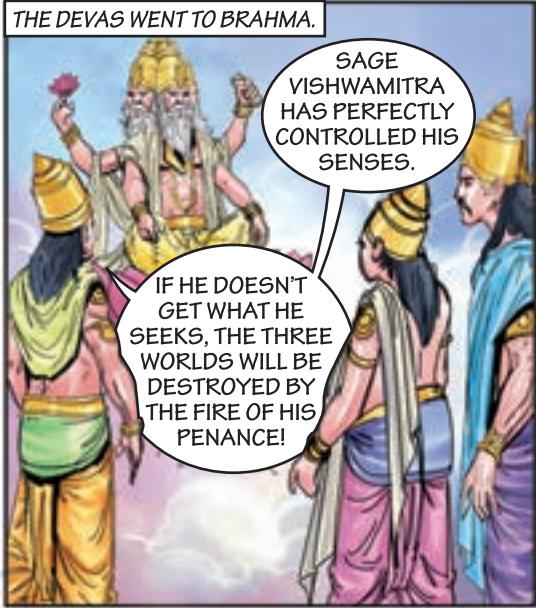
VISHWAMITRA MOVED TO THE EASTERN QUARTER TO FULFIL HIS VOW. AFTER A THOUSAND YEARS, HE RELAXED AND SAT DOWN TO EAT. JUST THEN -



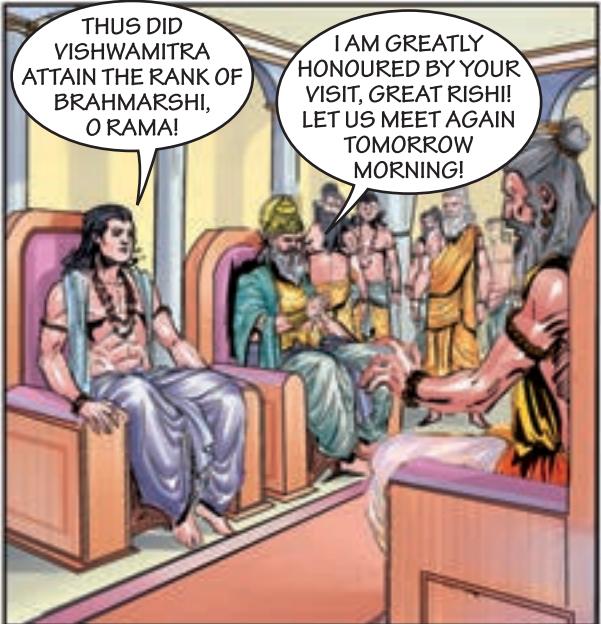
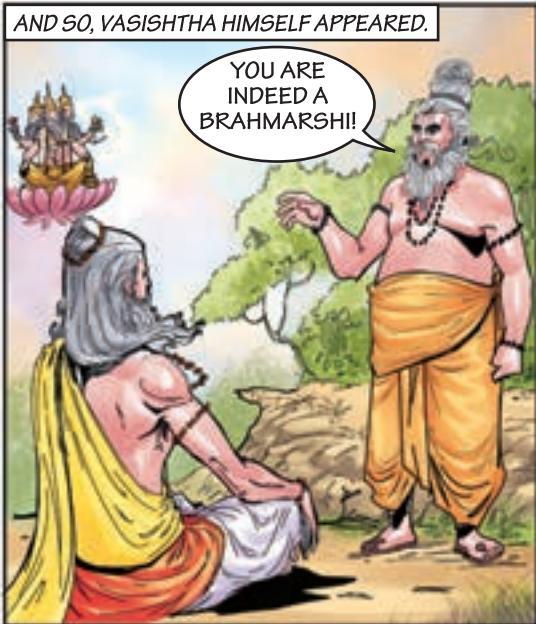
THE BRAHMIN WAS INDRA IN DISGUISE. HE WENT AWAY, REALISING THAT VISHWAMITRA HAD CONQUERED HIS ANGER.



THE DEVAS WENT TO BRAHMA.



AND SO, VASISHTHA HIMSELF APPEARED.



THEN TOMORROW WE SHALL SEE THE GREAT BOW OF SHIVA!

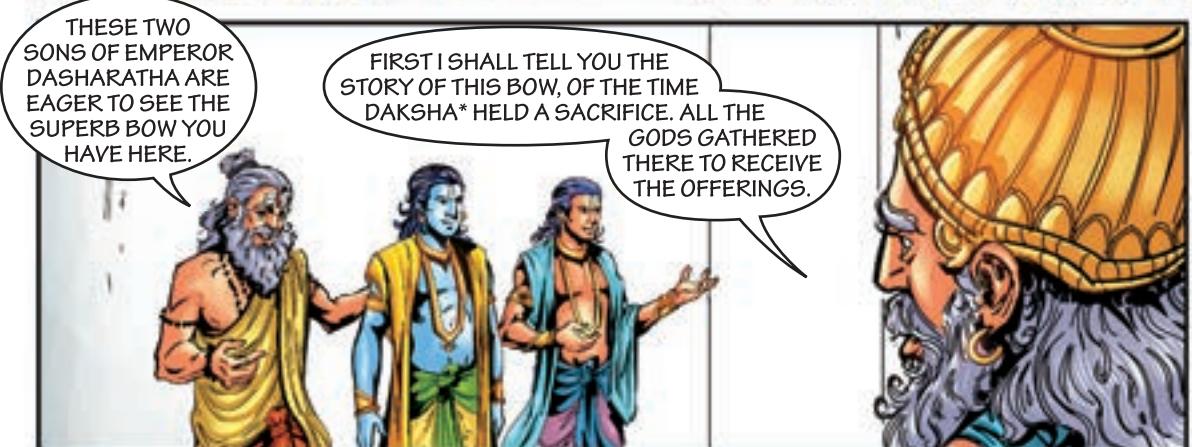
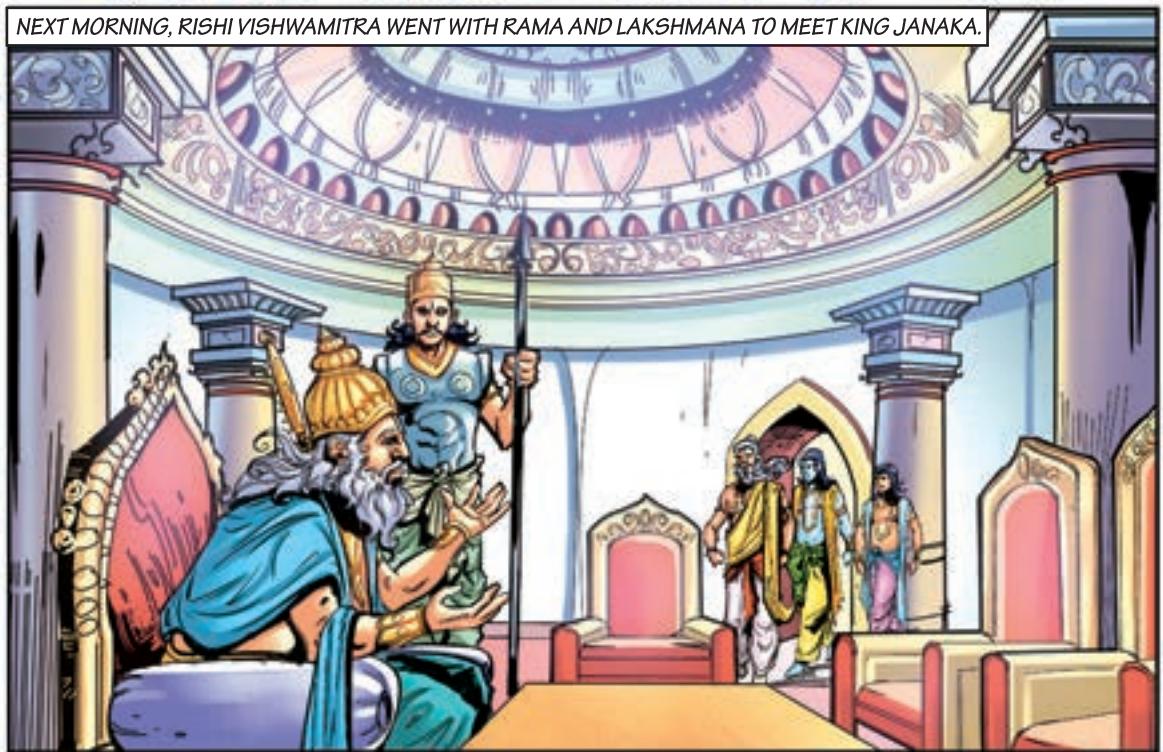


THE GREAT BOW OF SHIVA



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.

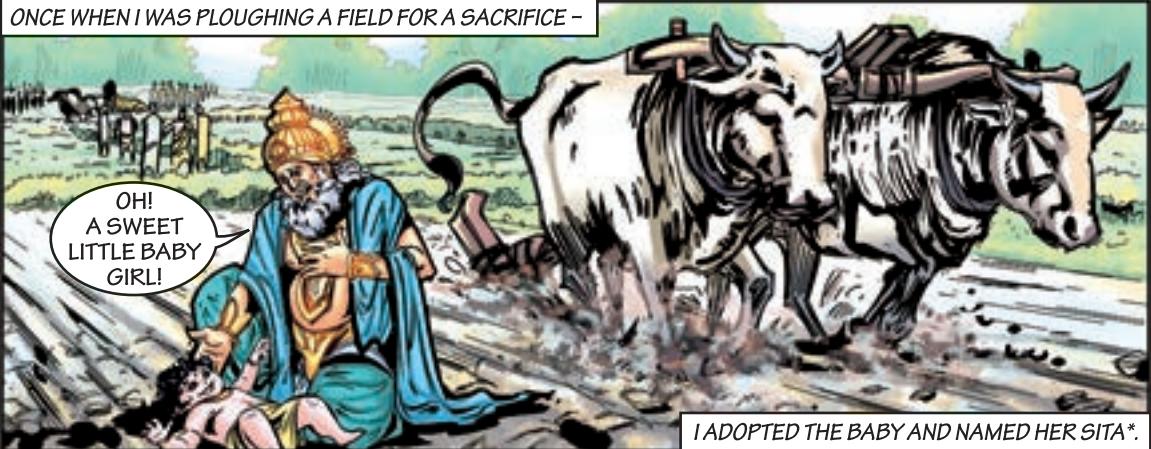
I GRANT YOU THIS BOW.



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



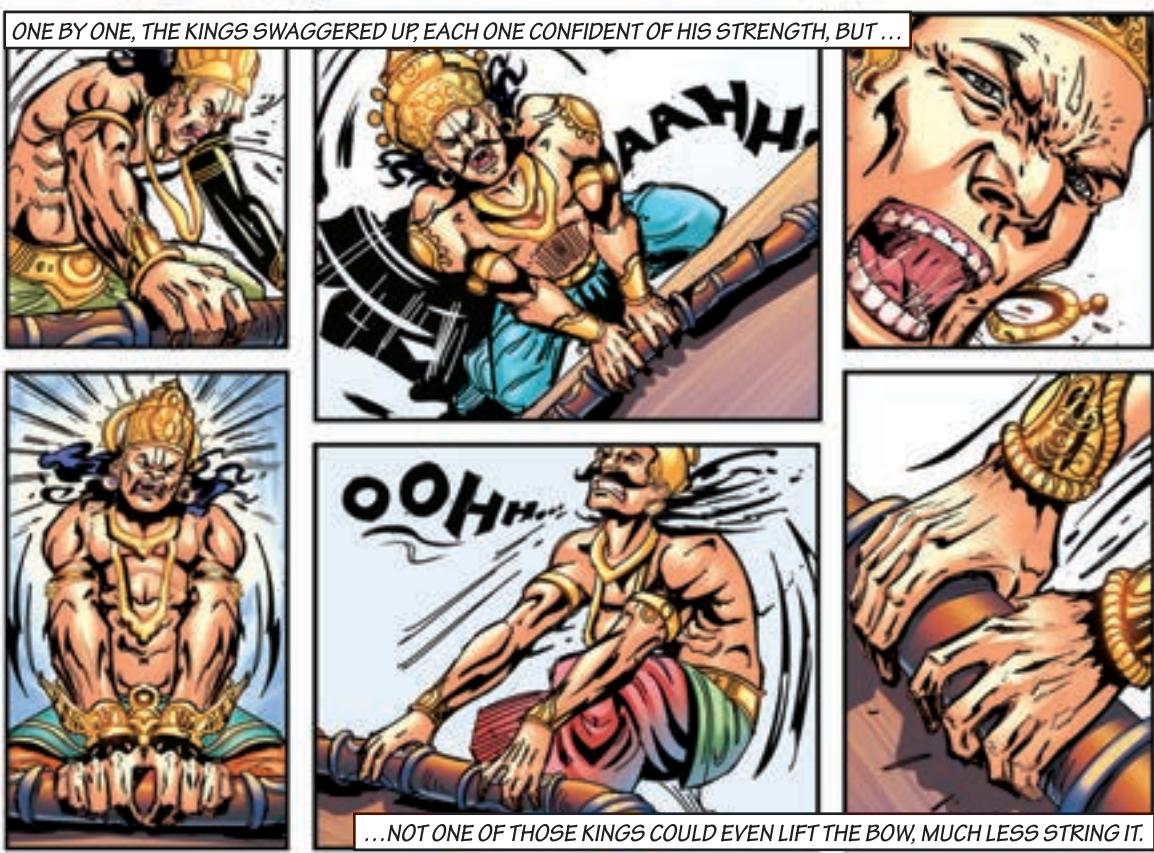
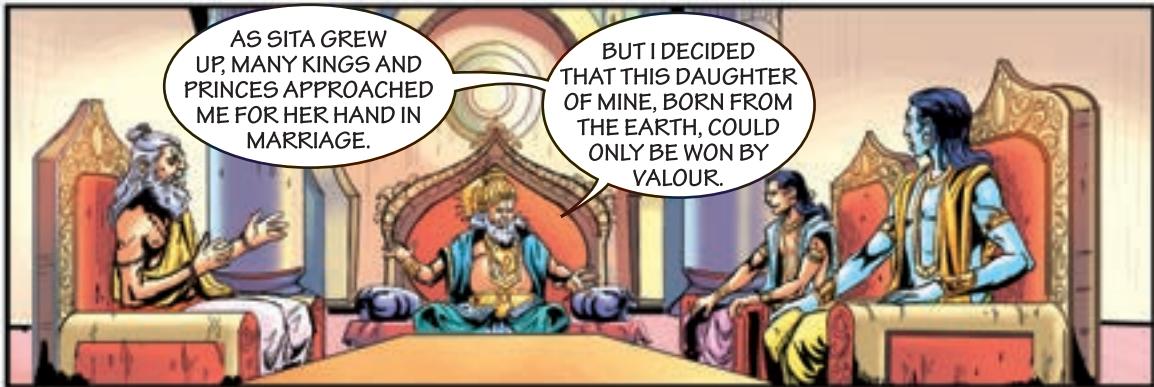
ONCE WHEN I WAS PLOUGHING A FIELD FOR A SACRIFICE -



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.

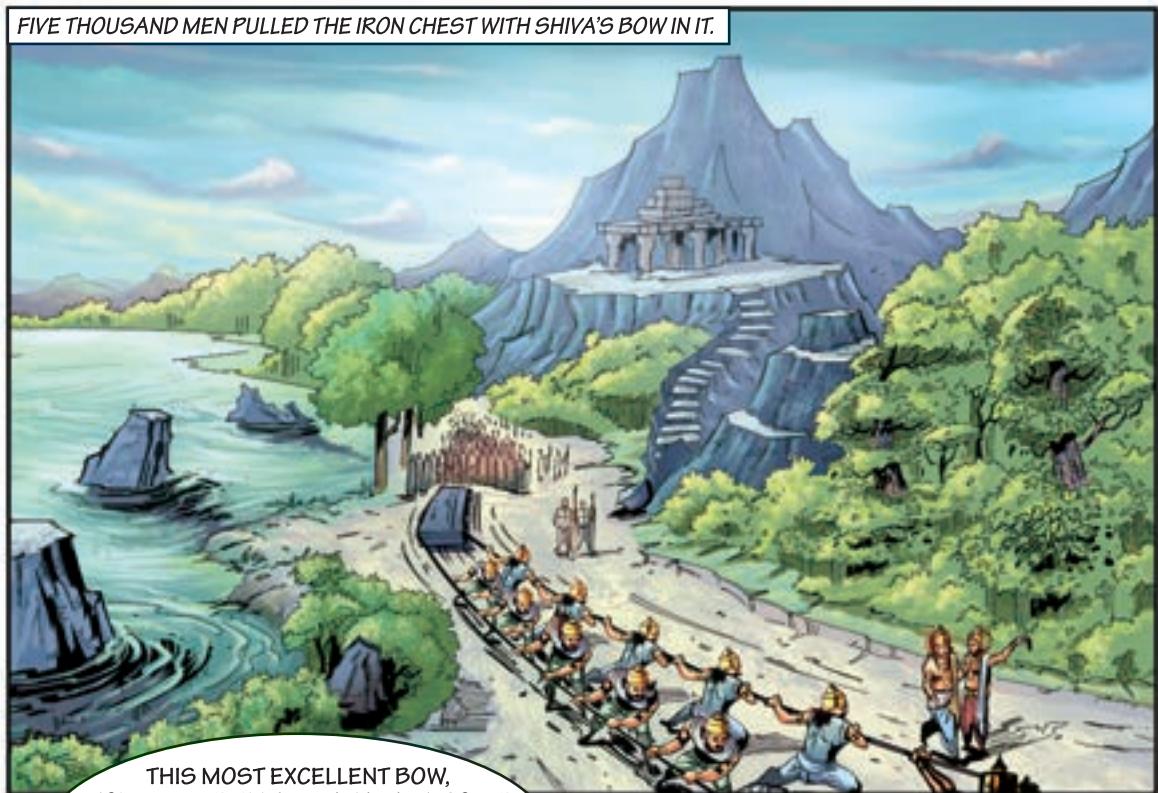
WITH THE ARMY BESTOWED BY THE GODS, I COMPLETELY ROUTED MY ENEMIES.

....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.

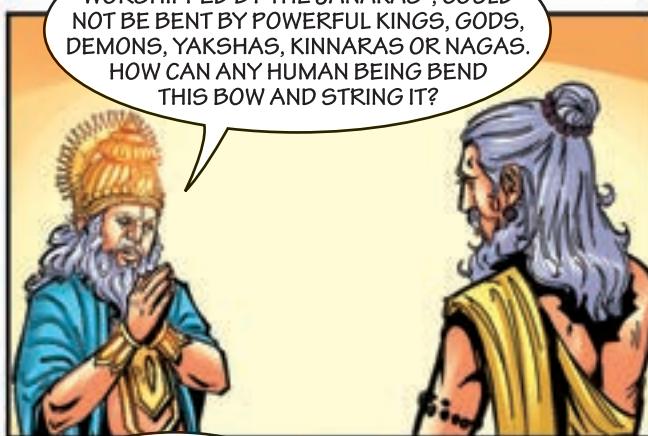
LET THE HEAVENLY BOW BE BROUGHT.

THE GREAT BOW OF SHIVA

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!

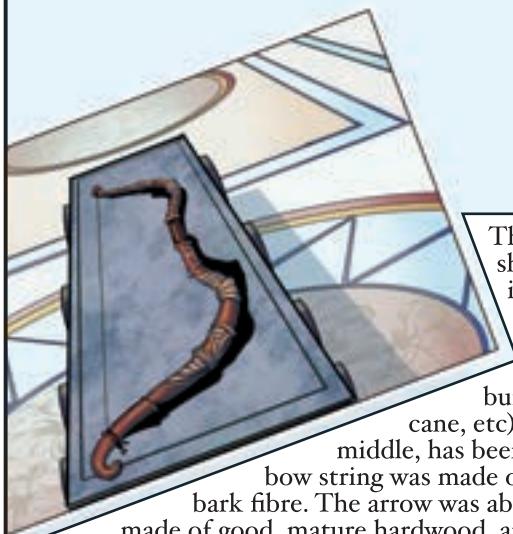
*JANAKA WAS ALSO A TITLE GIVEN
TO THE KINGS OF MITHILA.

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.

THE GREAT BOW OF SHIVA

RAMA PICKED UP THE BOW AND STRUNG IT.



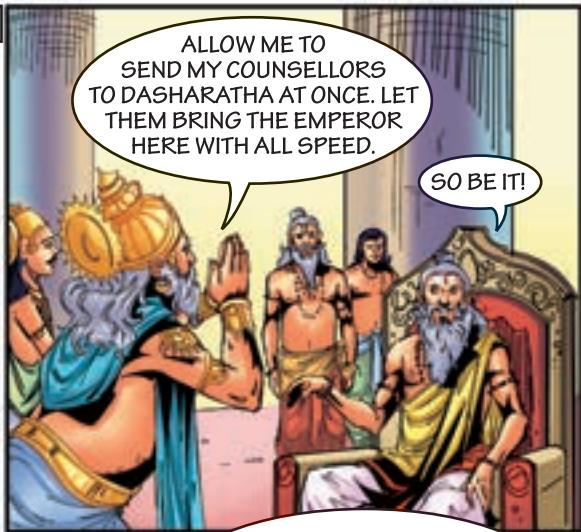
HE THEN BENT THE BOW AND IT BROKE WITH A THUNDEROUS NOISE.



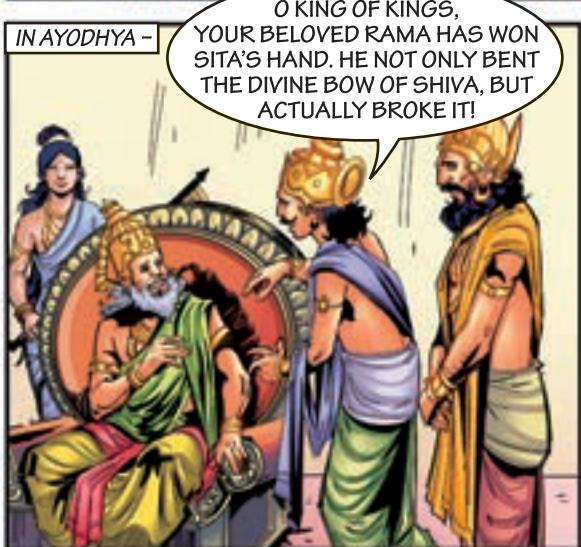
A MARVELLOUS FEAT! RAMA HAS ACHIEVED THE IMPOSSIBLE!



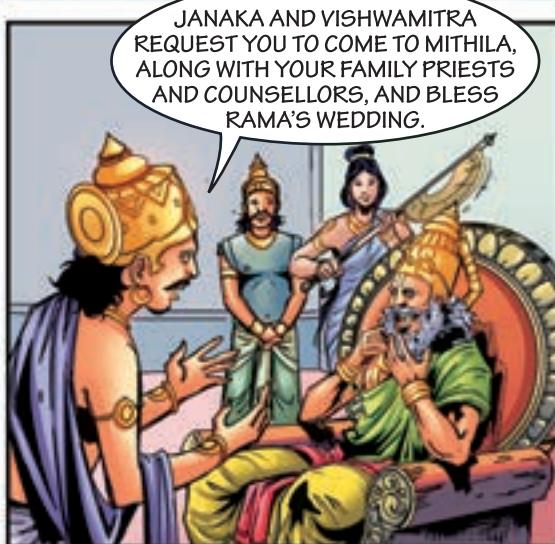
AFTER EVERYONE HAD RECOVERED FROM THE SHOCK -



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



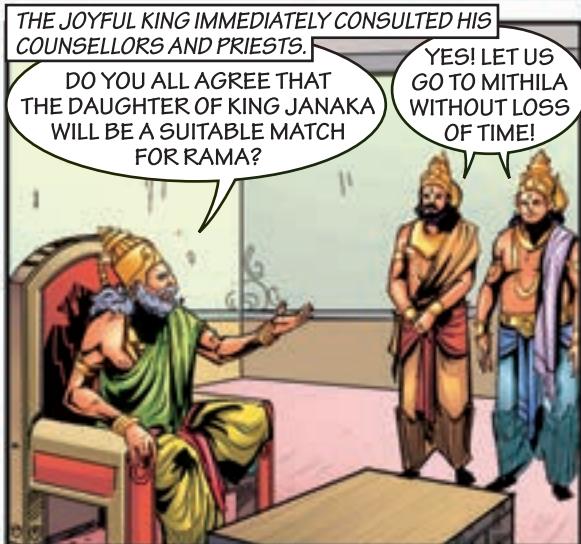
JANAKA AND VISHWAMITRA
REQUEST YOU TO COME TO MITHILA,
ALONG WITH YOUR FAMILY PRIESTS
AND COUNSELLORS, AND BLESS
RAMA'S WEDDING.



THE JOYFUL KING IMMEDIATELY CONSULTED HIS
COUNSELLORS AND PRIESTS.

DO YOU ALL AGREE THAT
THE DAUGHTER OF KING JANAKA
WILL BE A SUITABLE MATCH
FOR RAMA?

YES! LET US
GO TO MITHILA
WITHOUT LOSS
OF TIME!



THE GREAT BOW OF SHIVA

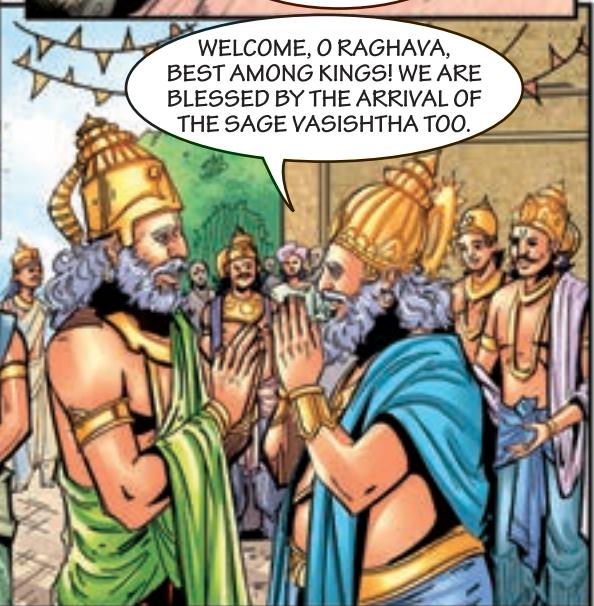
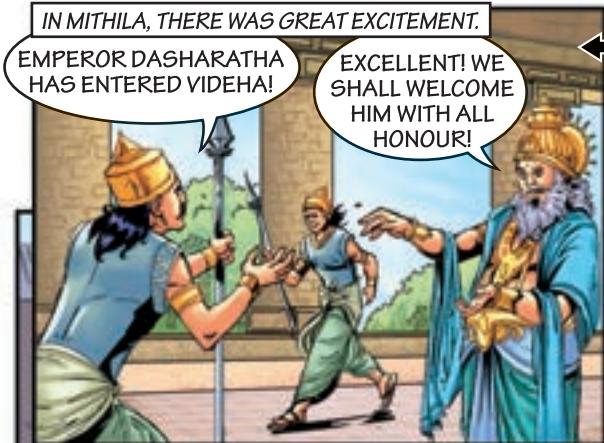
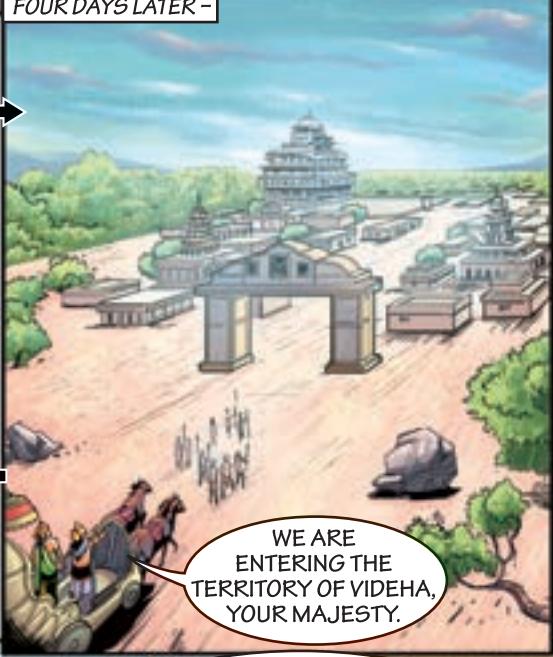
NEXT MORNING -

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

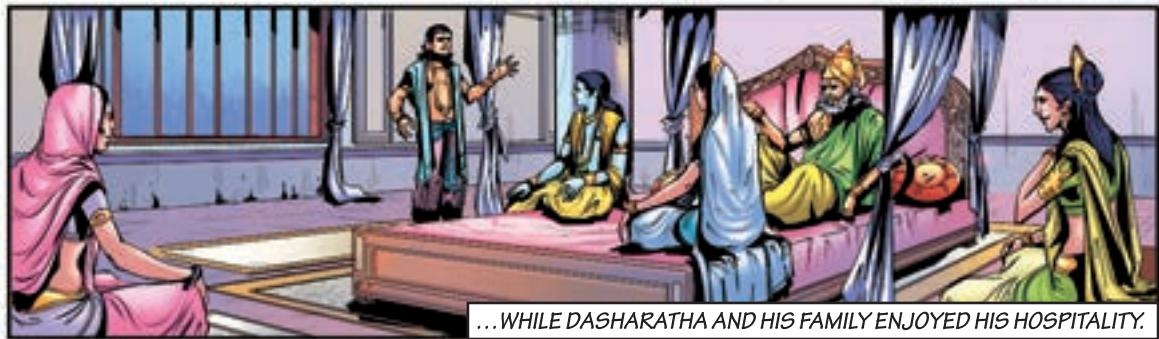
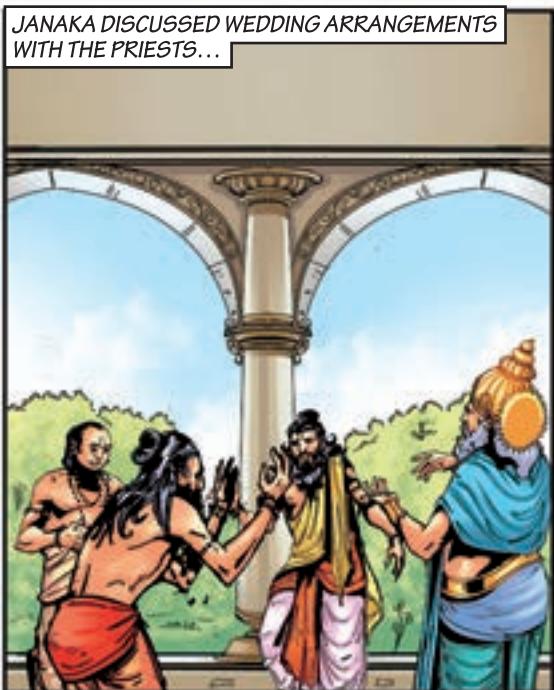
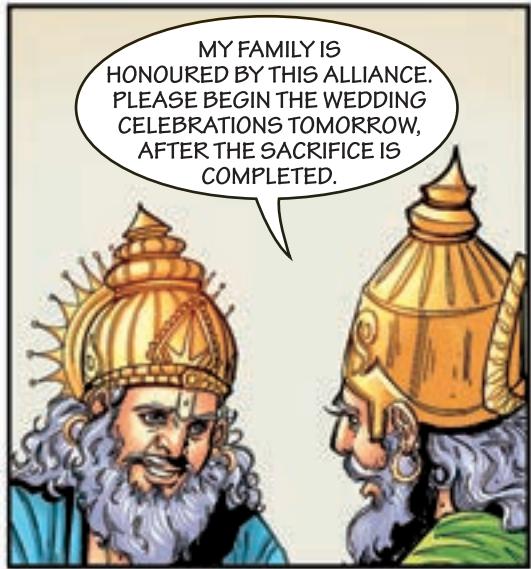
...AND PRECIOUS STONES. LET
THE FOUR LIMBS OF THE ARMY*
STAND READY TO MARCH.



FOUR DAYS LATER -



*ELEPHANTS, HORSES, CHARIOTS AND INFANTRY

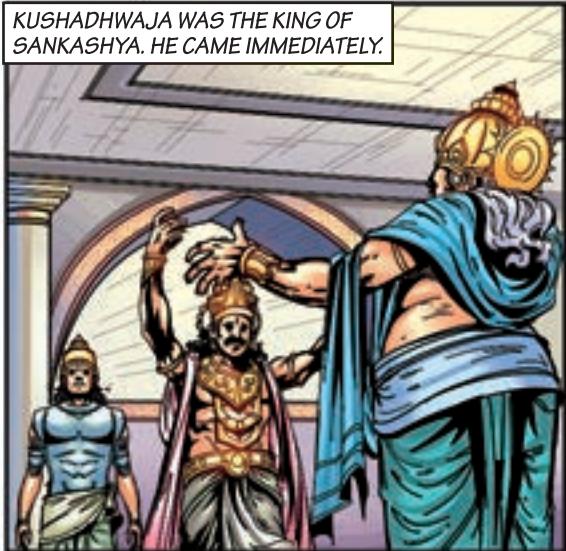


THE GREAT BOW OF SHIVA

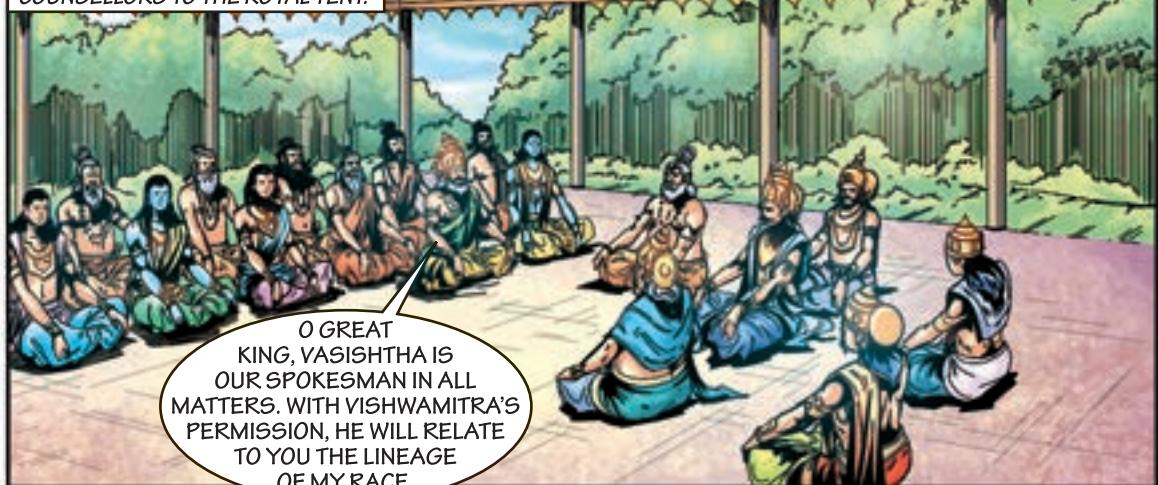
THE NEXT MORNING -



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.



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.



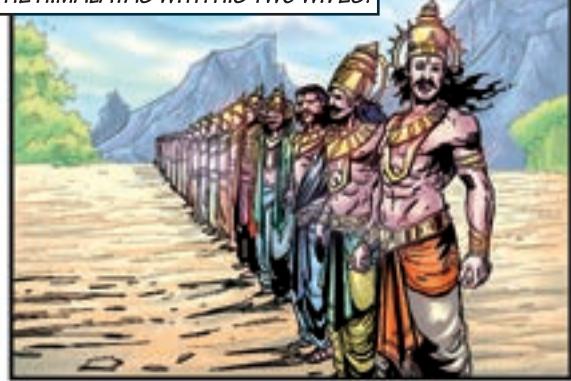
*THE SUN GOD



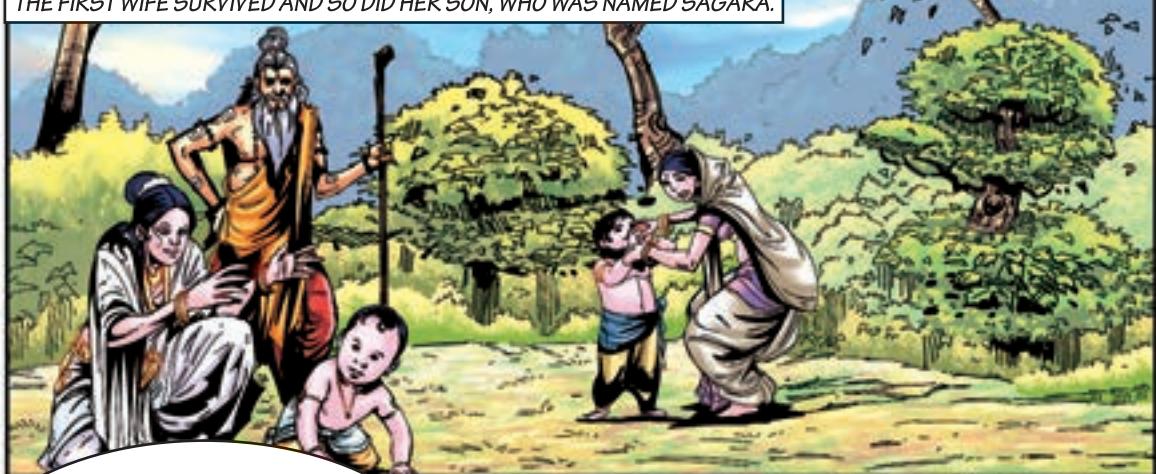
MANU WAS A PRAJAPATI*. HIS SON IKSHVAKU WAS THE FIRST RULER OF AYODHYA.



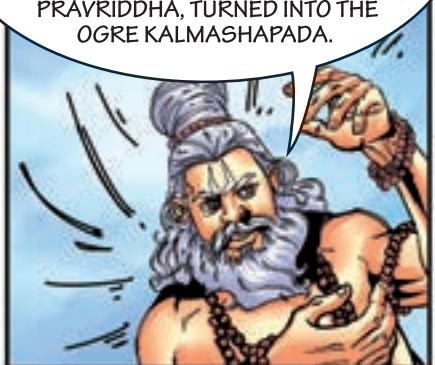
IKSHVAKU'S DESCENDANTS WERE ILLUSTRIOS KINGS - KUKSI, YIKUSHI, BANA, ANARANYA, PRITHU, TRISHANKU, DHUNDHUMARA, YUVANASHVA, MANDHATA, SUSANDHI, DHRUVASANDHI AND THE FAMOUS BHARATA. BHARATA'S SON, ASITA, WAS DEFEATED IN BATTLE AND RETIRED TO THE HIMALAYAS WITH HIS TWO WIVES.



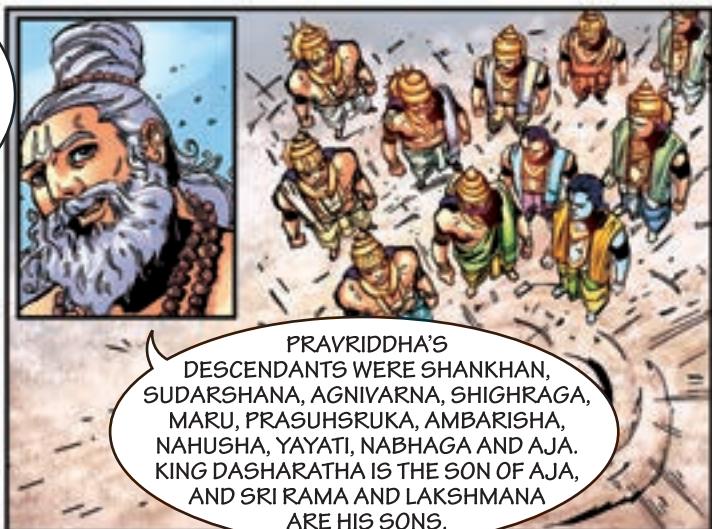
ASITA DIED SOON AFTER, LEAVING HIS TWO WIVES WHO WERE BOTH EXPECTING CHILDREN. THE SECOND WIFE, OUT OF JEALOUSY, POISONED THE FIRST WIFE TO GET RID OF HER BABY. BUT, BY THE BLESSINGS OF RISHI CHYAVANA, THE FIRST WIFE SURVIVED AND SO DID HER SON, WHO WAS NAMED SAGARA.



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



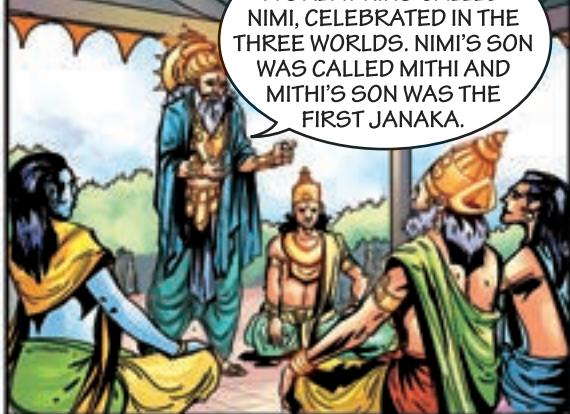
PRAVRIDDHA'S DESCENDANTS WERE SHANKHAN, SUDARSHANA, AGNIVARNA, SHIGHRAGA, MARU, PRASUHSRUKA, AMBARISHA, NAHUSHA, YAYATI, NABHAGA AND AJA. KING DASHARATHA IS THE SON OF AJA, AND SRI RAMA AND LAKSHMANA ARE HIS SONS.



THE GREAT BOW OF SHIVA

KING JANAKA THEN TOLD THEM ABOUT HIS ANCESTORS.

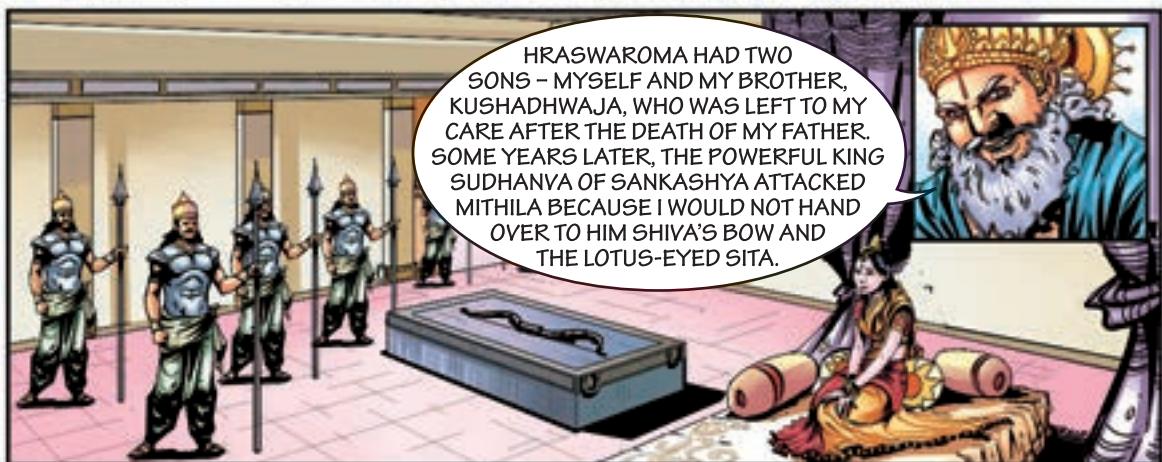
THERE WAS A GREAT KING CALLED NIMI, CELEBRATED IN THE THREE WORLDS. NIMI'S SON WAS CALLED MITHI AND MITHI'S SON WAS THE FIRST JANAKA.



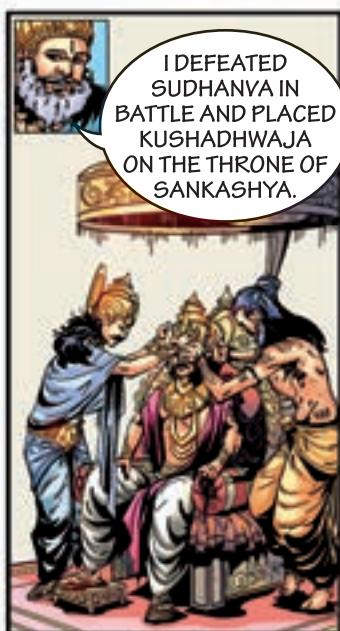
JANAKA'S DESCENDANTS WERE THE NOBLE AND VIRTUOUS KINGS UDAVASU, NANDIVARDHANA, SUKETU, DEVARAATA, BRIHADRATHA, MAHAVIRA, SUDHRITI, DHRISTAKETU, HARYASHWA, MARU, PRATINDHAKA, KIRTIRATHA, DEVAMIDHA, VIBUDHA, MAHIDHRAKA, KIRTIRAATA, MAHAROMA, SWARNAROMA AND HRASWAROMA.



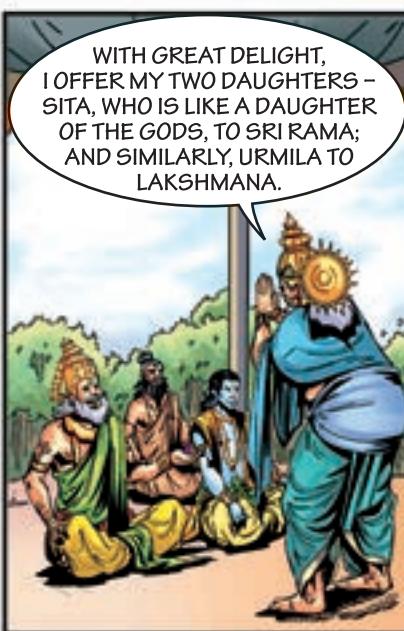
HRASWAROMA HAD TWO SONS - MYSELF AND MY BROTHER, KUSHADHWAJA, WHO WAS LEFT TO MY CARE AFTER THE DEATH OF MY FATHER. SOME YEARS LATER, THE POWERFUL KING SUDHANVA OF SANKASHYA ATTACKED MITHILA BECAUSE I WOULD NOT HAND OVER TO HIM SHIVA'S BOW AND THE LOTUS-EYED SITA.



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

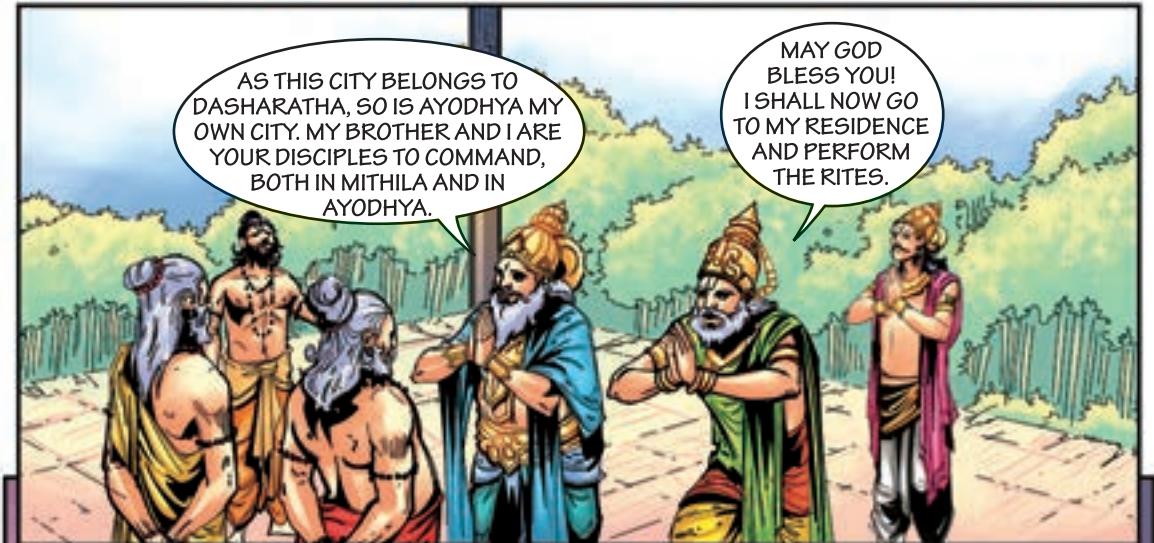
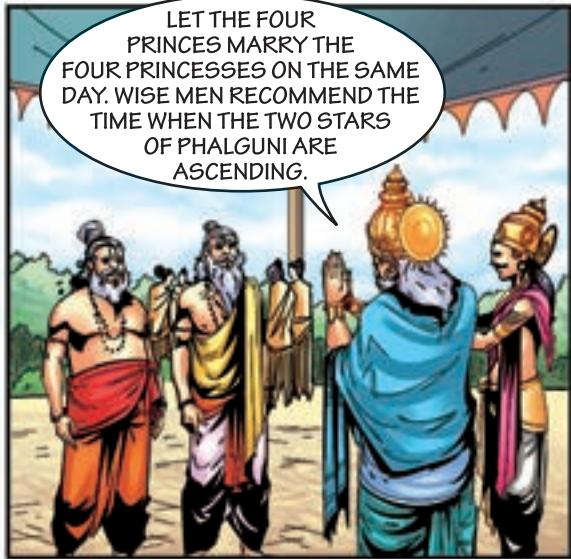


WITH GREAT DELIGHT, I OFFER MY TWO DAUGHTERS - SITA, WHO IS LIKE A DAUGHTER OF THE GODS, TO SRI RAMA; AND SIMILARLY, URMILA TO LAKSHMANA.

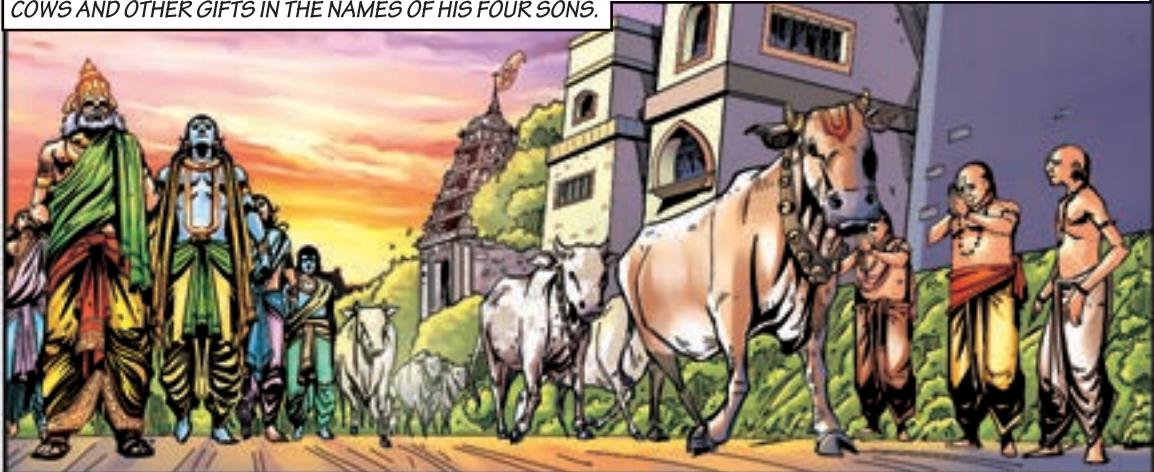


ALL THE SONS OF DASHARATHA ARE AS VALIANT AS THE GODS. WE SEEK THE TWO DAUGHTERS OF KUSHADHWAJA AS BRIDES FOR BHARATA AND SHATRUGHNA.

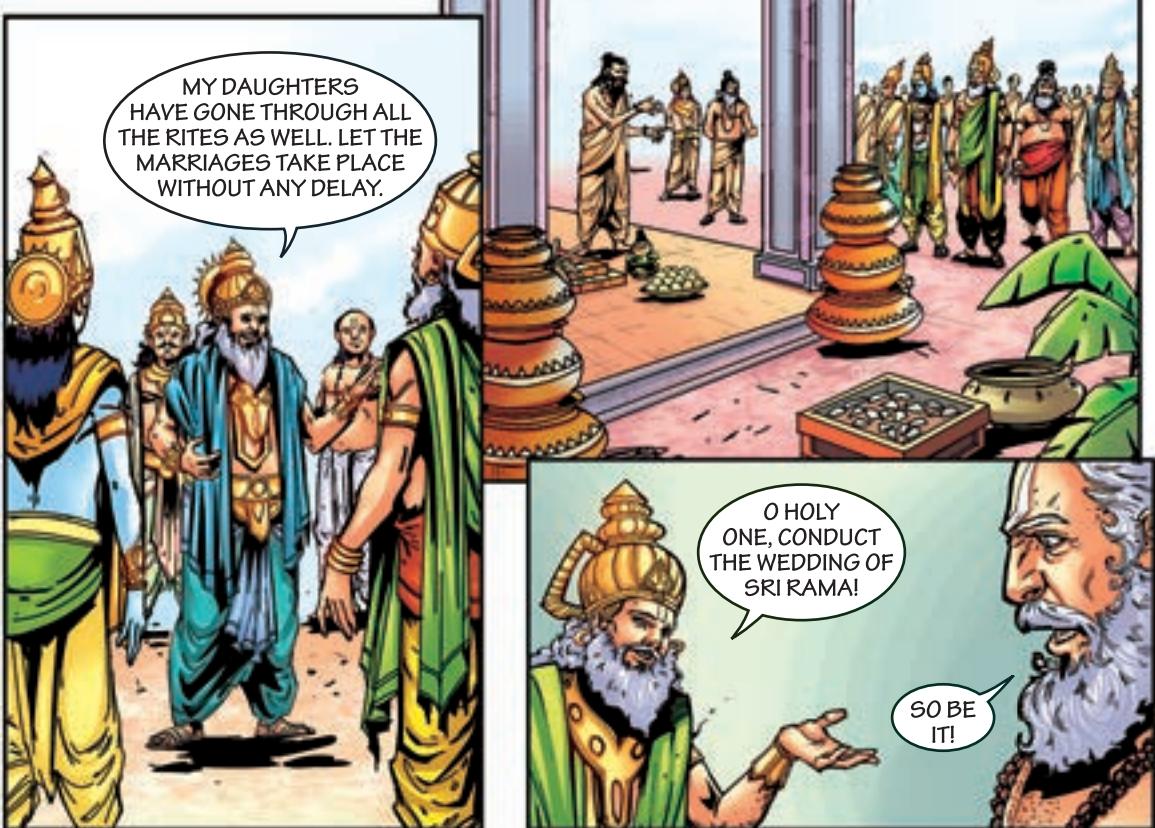
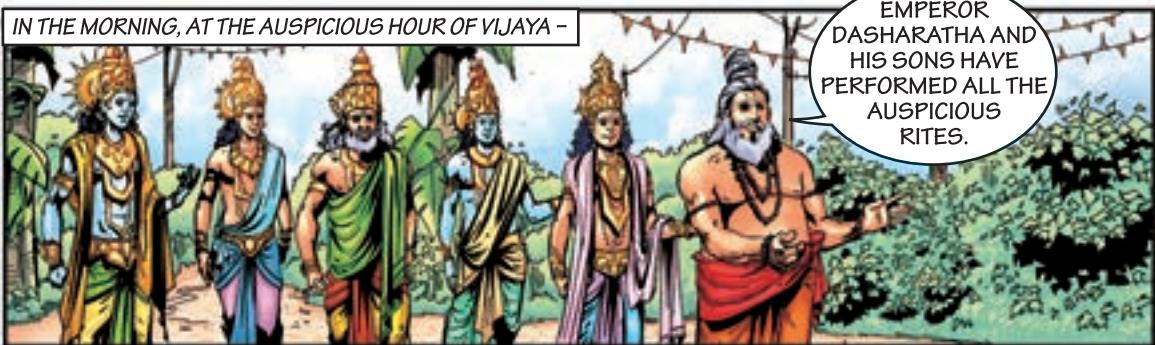
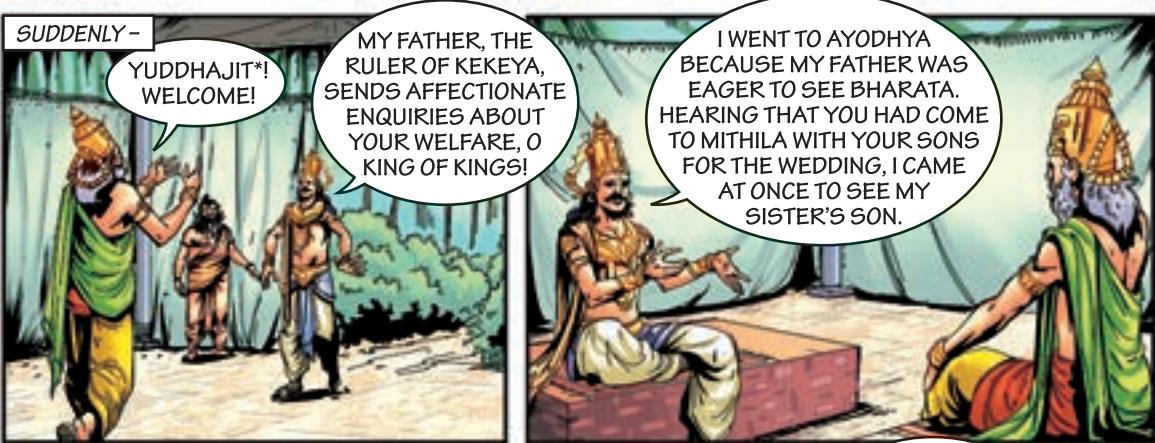




RISING AT DAWN, DASHARATHA PERFORMED THE CEREMONIES. AS A LOVING FATHER, HE GAVE AWAY FOUR LAKH COWS AND OTHER GIFTS IN THE NAMES OF HIS FOUR SONS.



THE GREAT BOW OF SHIVA

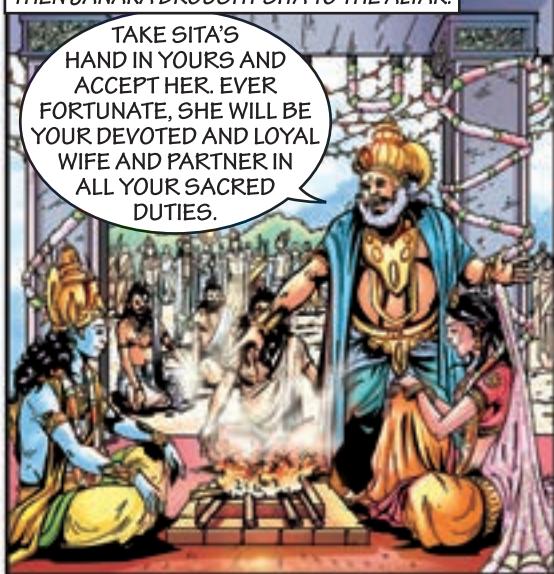


*KAIKEYI'S BROTHER

VISHWAMITRA, SATANANDA AND VASISHTHA PREPARED THE WEDDING ALTAR.



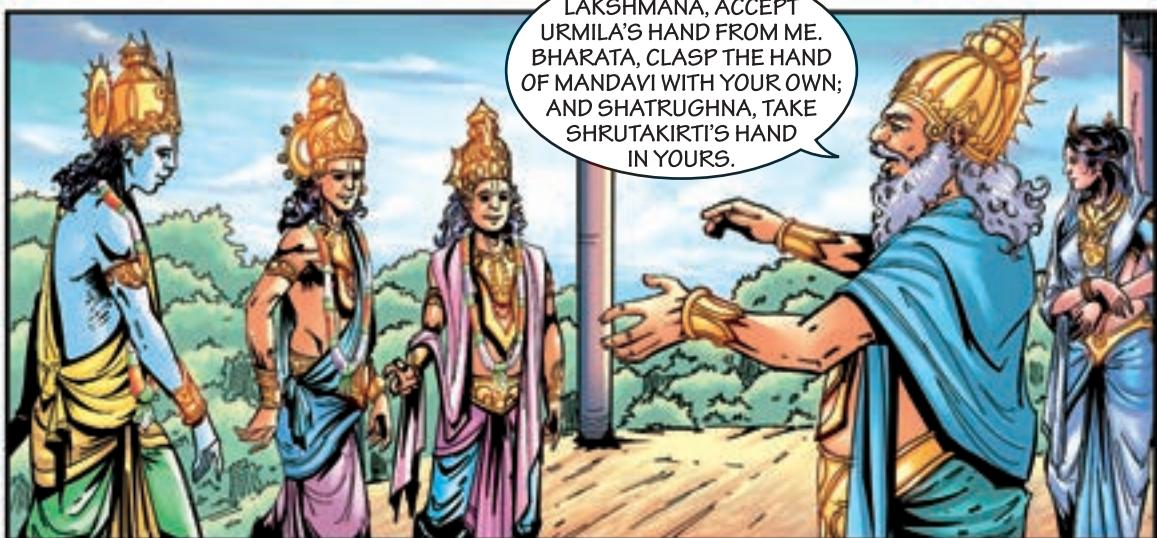
THEN JANAKA BROUGHT SITA TO THE ALTAR.



JANAKA POURED WATER INTO RAMA'S HANDS,
SYMBOLICALLY GIVING SITA TO RAMA.



LAKSHMANA, ACCEPT URMILA'S HAND FROM ME.
BHARATA, CLASP THE HAND OF MANDAVI WITH YOUR OWN;
AND SHATRUGHNA, TAKE SHRUTAKIRTI'S HAND
IN YOURS.



THE GREAT BOW OF SHIVA

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



AFTER THE WEDDING, THEY
WENT BACK TO THEIR TENTS.



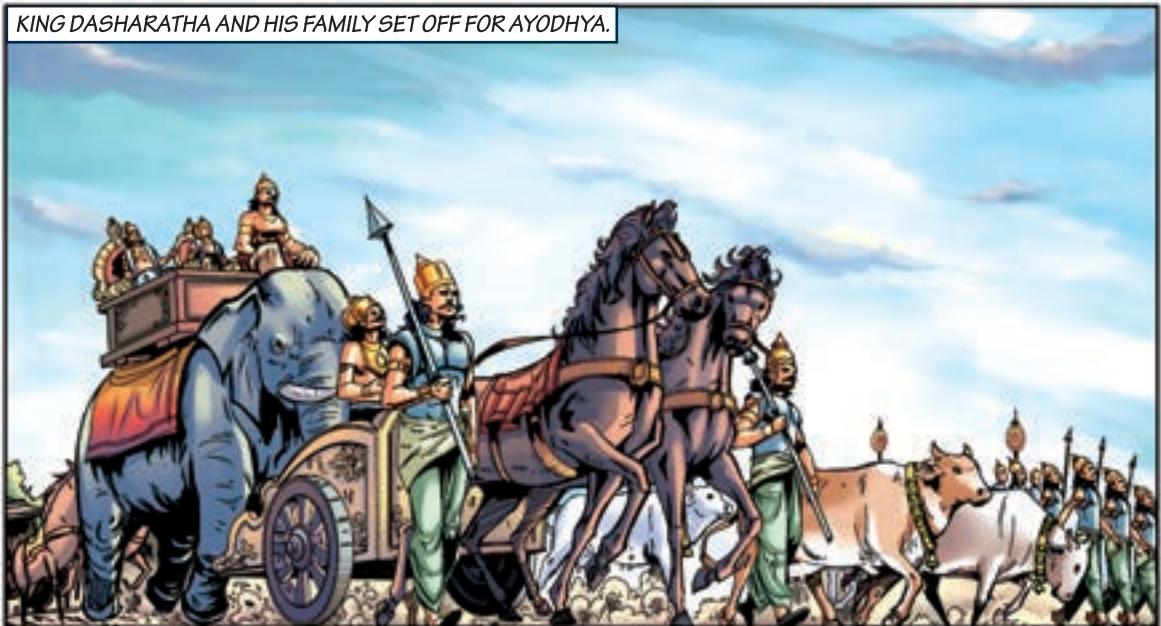
THE NEXT MORNING, VISHWAMITRA BID THEM GOODBYE.



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

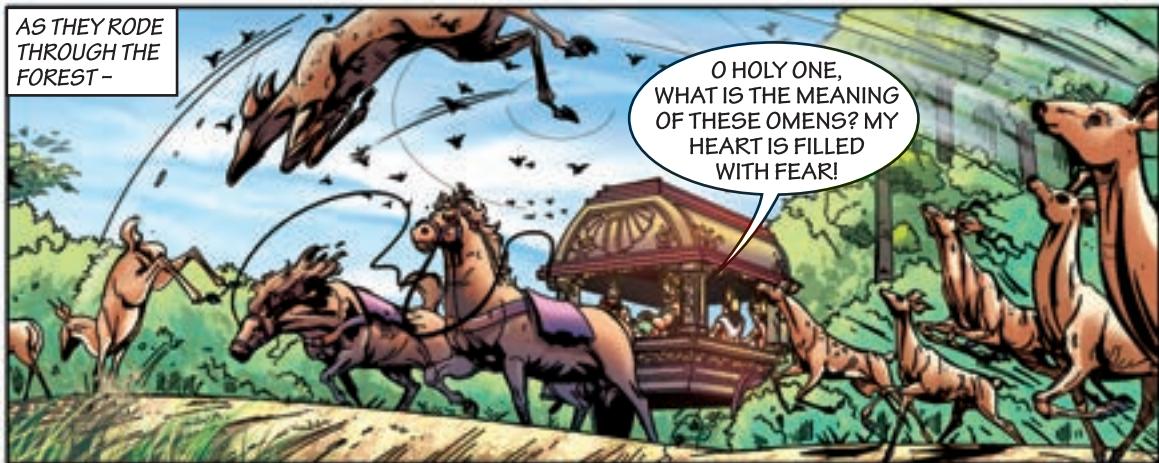


KING DASHARATHA AND HIS FAMILY SET OFF FOR AYODHYA.



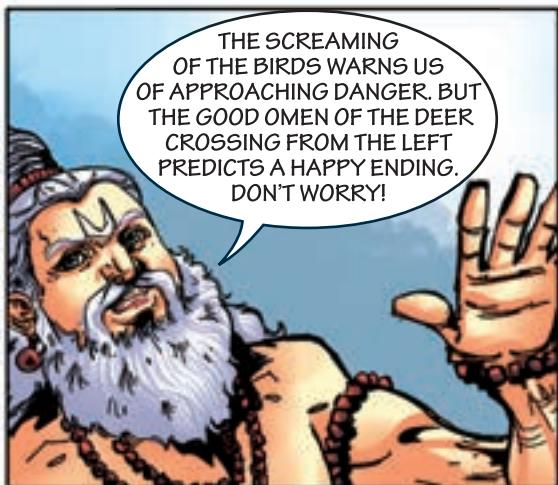
AS THEY RODE
THROUGH THE
FOREST -

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

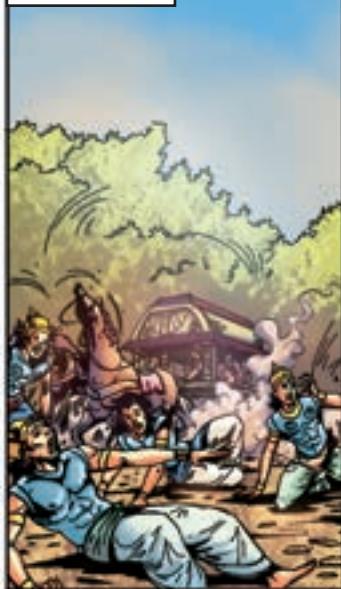


THE SCREAMING
OF THE BIRDS WARNS US
OF APPROACHING DANGER. BUT
THE GOOD OMEN OF THE DEER
CROSSING FROM THE LEFT
PREDICTS A HAPPY ENDING.
DON'T WORRY!

SUDDENLY, A FIERCE STORM SPRANG UP.



DASHARATHA'S ARMY FELL
UNCONSCIOUS.

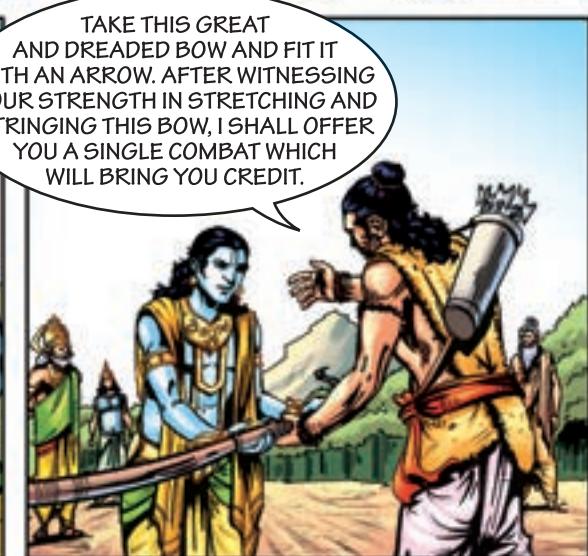
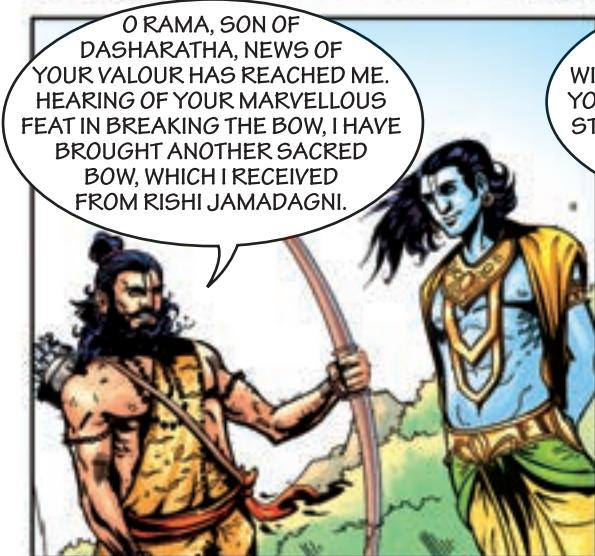
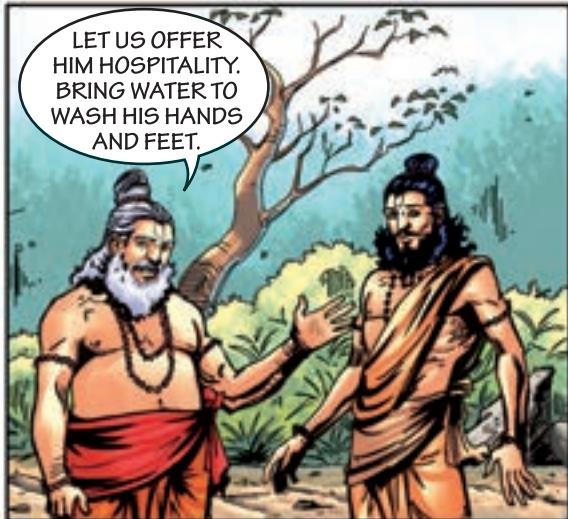
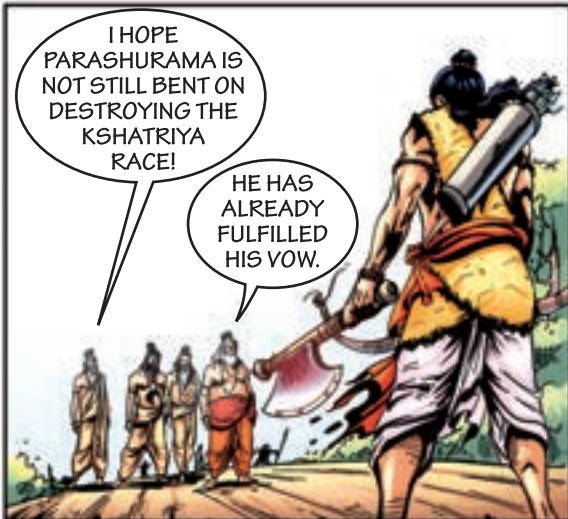


JUST THEN -



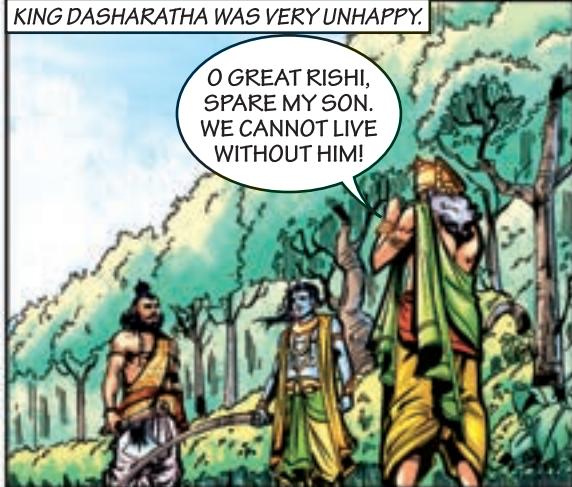
THE SON OF RISHI JAMADAGNI,
PARASHURAMA WAS AN INCARNATION
OF LORD VISHNU. AFTER HIS FATHER WAS
KILLED BY KING KARTAVIRYA ARJUNA OF
MAHISHMATI, PARASHURAMA VOWED
TO EXTERMINATE THE KSHATRIYA RACE.
HE WENT AROUND THE GLOBE 21 TIMES
ON THIS MISSION.





THE GREAT BOW OF SHIVA

KING DASHARATHA WAS VERY UNHAPPY.



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 PITAMAHÄ[^] 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.



AND SO THEY DID.



*THE DIVINE ARCHITECT

[^]GRANDFATHER

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

RUDRA WAS ENRAGED...



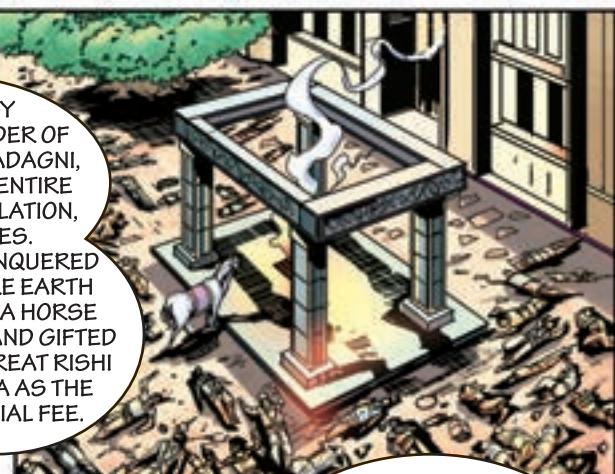
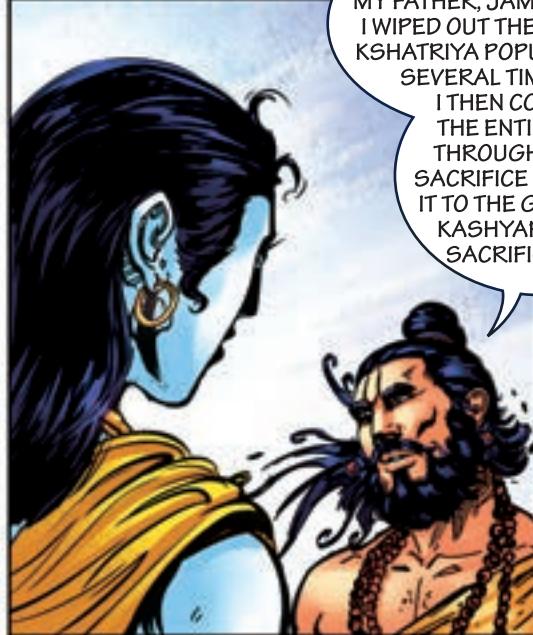
...AND IN HIS ANGER, GAVE AWAY HIS BOW AND ARROWS TO RAJARSHI DEVARAATA, KING OF VIDEHA. LORD VISHNU ENTRUSTED HIS SUPERB BOW TO RICHIIKA, A DESCENDANT OF SAGE BHRIGU.

RICHIIKA, 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.



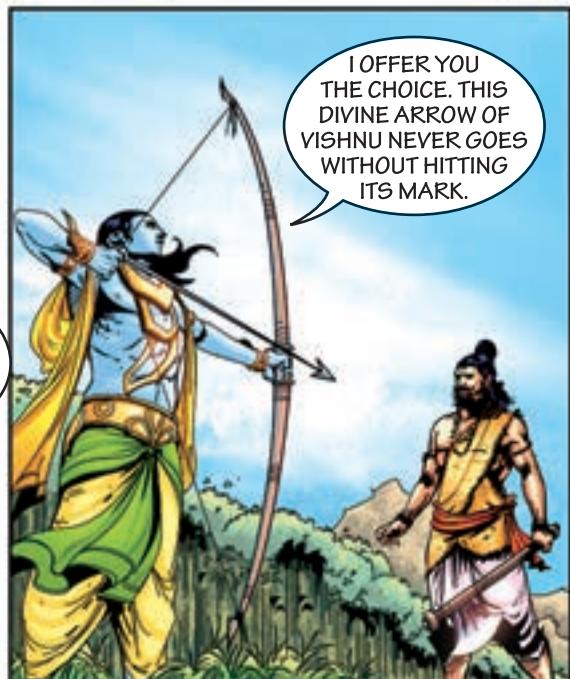
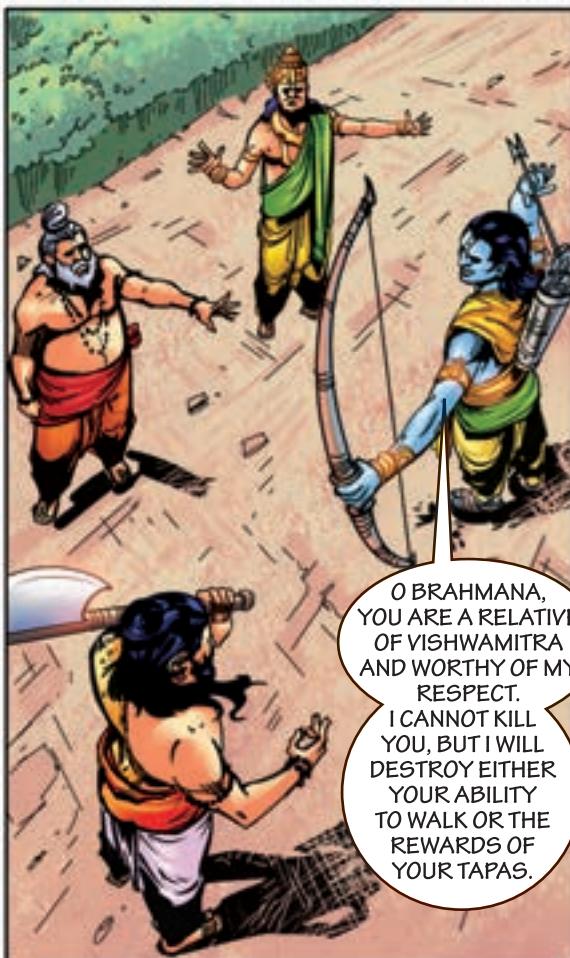
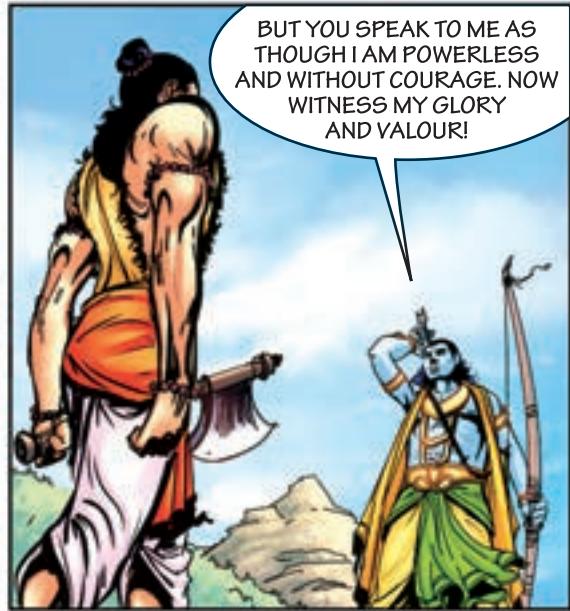
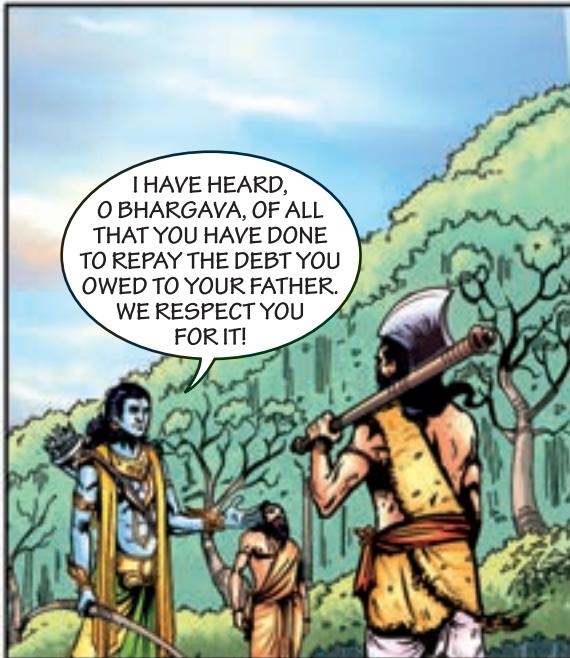
ENRAGED BY THE CRUEL MURDER OF MY FATHER, JAMADAGNI, I WIPE OUT THE ENTIRE KSHATRIYA POPULATION, SEVERAL TIMES.

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.

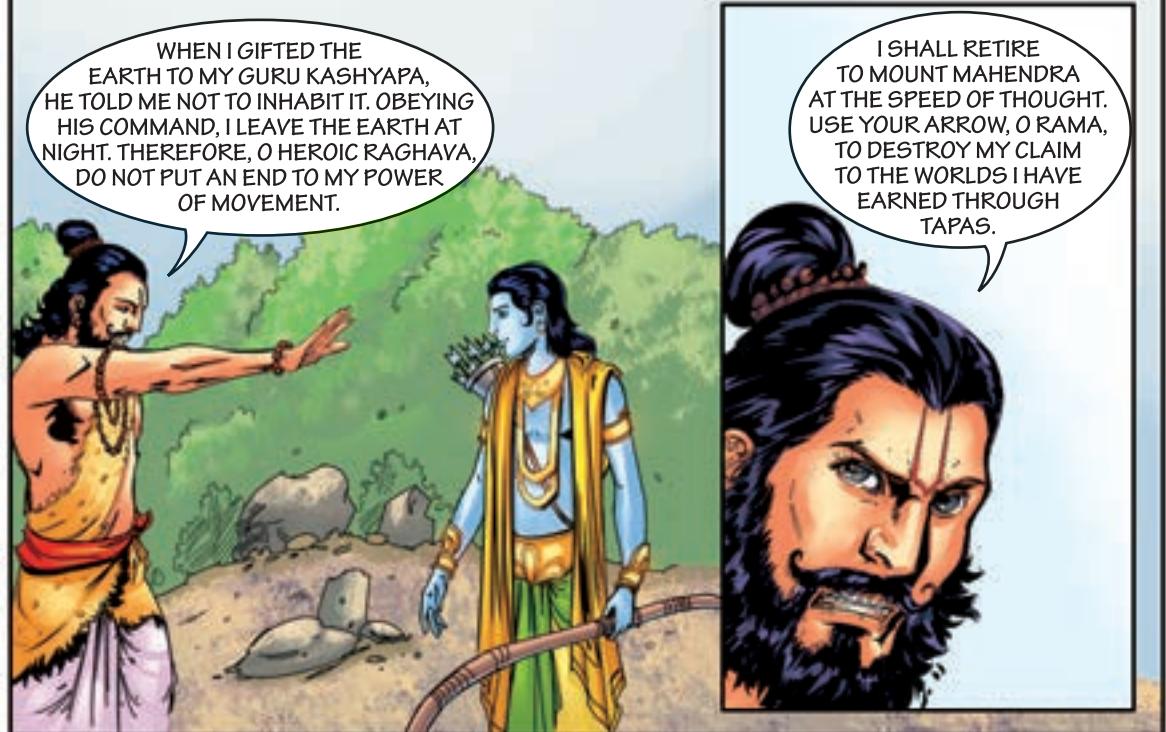
THE GREAT BOW OF SHIVA



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



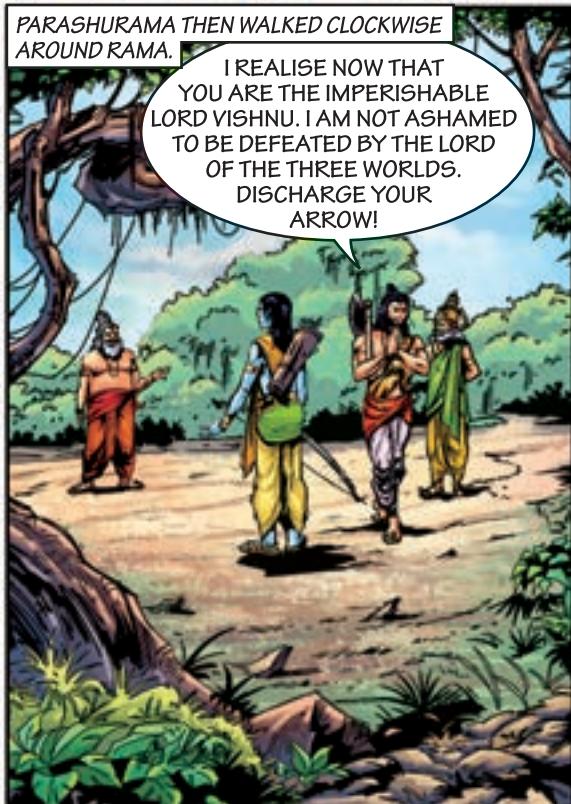
PARASHURAMA WAS DAZZLED BY THE SPLENDOUR OF RAMA.



THE GREAT BOW OF SHIVA

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 GREAT BOW OF SHIVA

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.



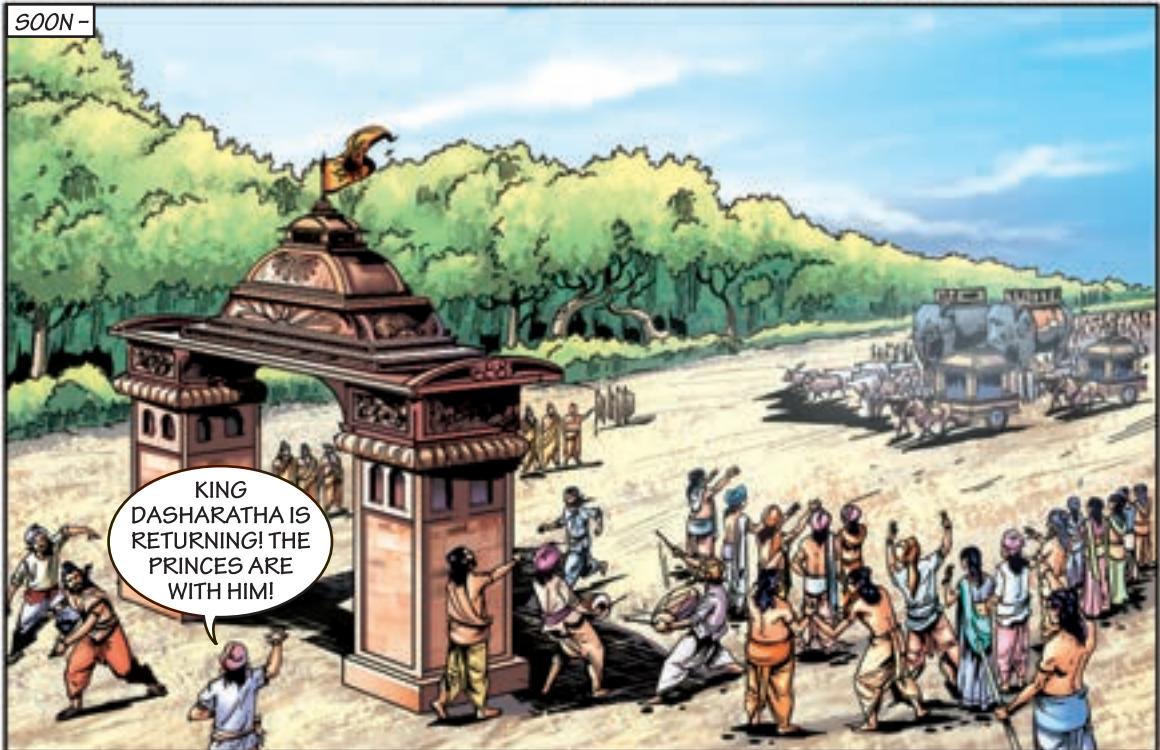
THANK GOD!
I FEEL AS IF WE
WERE BOTH
REBORN!



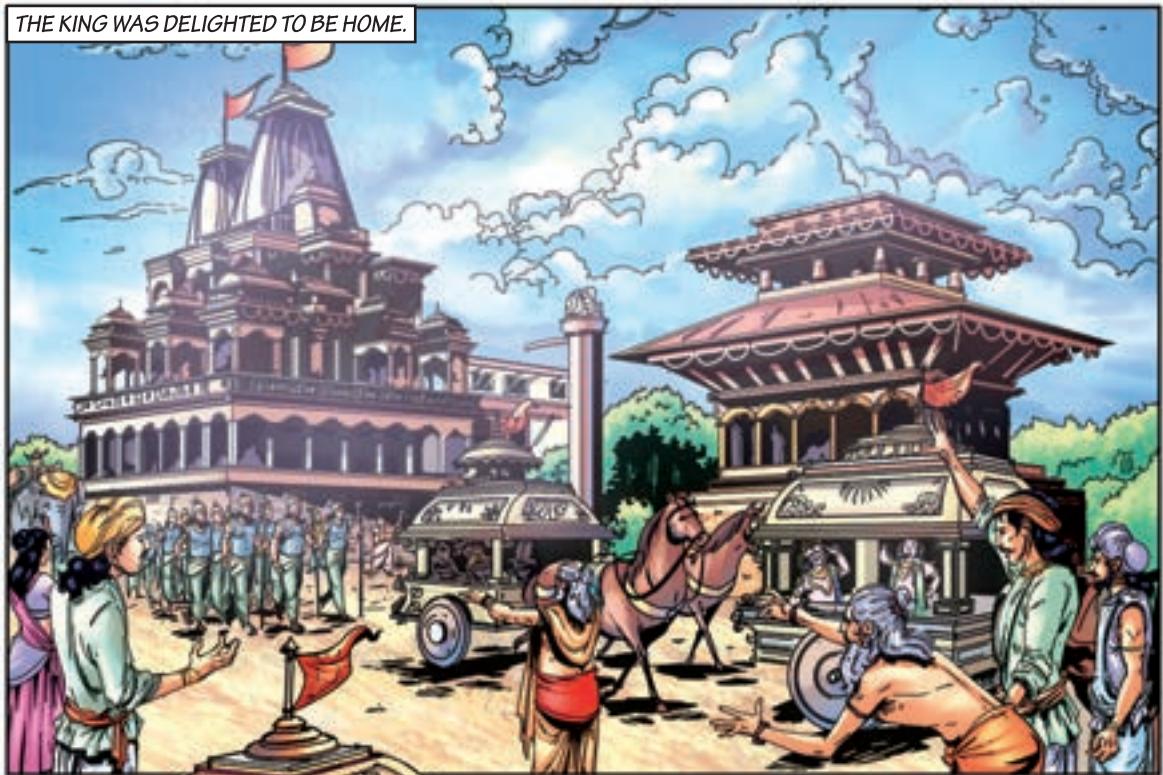
SOON -



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.



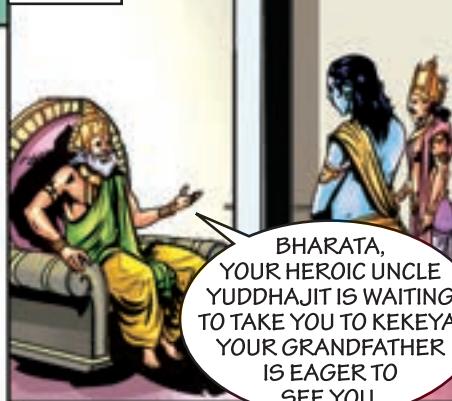
SITA, URMILA, MANDAVI AND SHRUTAKIRTI VISITED THE TEMPLES, WORSHIPPED THE FAMILY GODS AND GREETED ALL THE ELDERS.



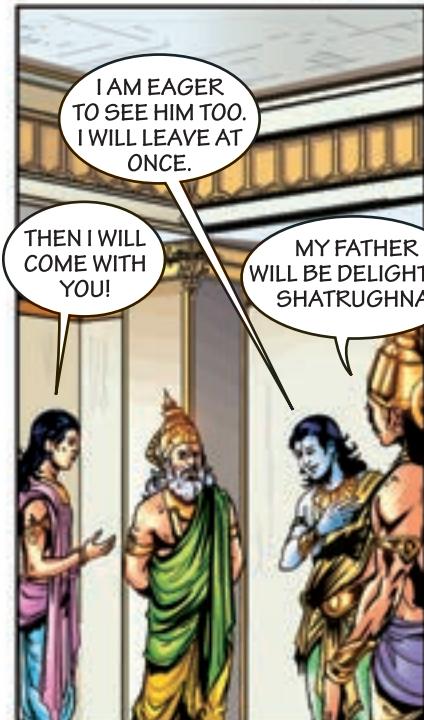
AFTERWARDS, THE BRIDES AND GROOMS WENT TO THE PALACE AND LIVED IN COMFORT AND HAPPINESS WITH THEIR FRIENDS AND RELATIVES.



ONE DAY -



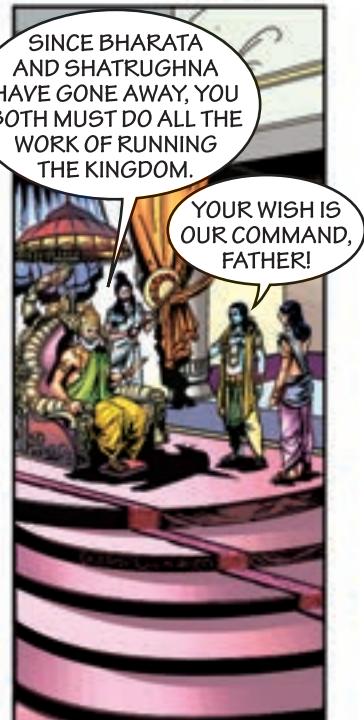
BHARATA,
YOUR HEROIC UNCLE
YUDDHAJIT IS WAITING
TO TAKE YOU TO KEKEYA.
YOUR GRANDFATHER
IS EAGER TO
SEE YOU.



SOON -

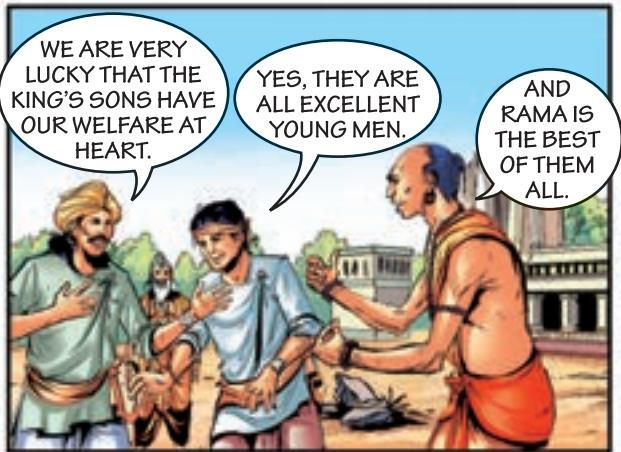


SINCE BHARATA
AND SHATRUGHNA
HAVE GONE AWAY, YOU
BOTH MUST DO ALL THE
WORK OF RUNNING
THE KINGDOM.

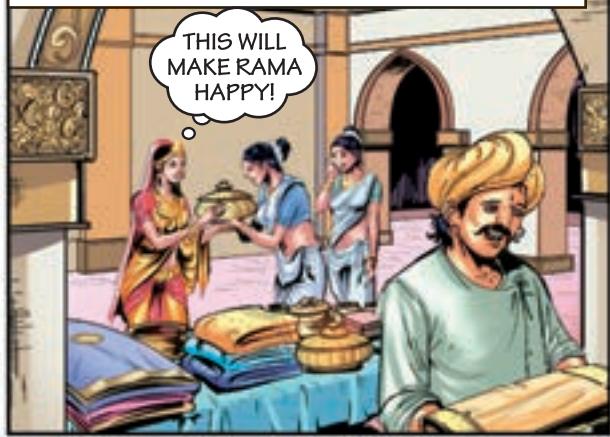


YOUR WISH IS
OUR COMMAND,
FATHER!

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 असूर्तराजस A son of KUSHA (2)

ADHWARYU अधवर्यु 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 आग्नेयास्त्रम Missile of AGNI

AGNI अग्नि God of fire

AGNIVARNA आग्निवर्ण 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 अम्बरीष 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 असमंजस: 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 अस्त्रशस्त्र 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 बाण: Ancestor of RAMA

BHADRA भद्र One of the four elephants holding up the earth

BHAGIRATHA भगीरथ 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 KAMILA

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 चरन् 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 ध्रुवसंधि Ancestor of RAMA

DHUNDHUMARA धृद्युमारा 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 गरुड 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	father of SITA	KAUSTUBHA कौस्तुभ A valuable gem that emerged from the ocean of milk
GIRIVRAJA गिरिराज A city built by VASU. Modern RAJGIR.	JATAKARMA जातकर्म A ceremony in which a newborn is given a mixture of honey and ghee	KEKEYA केक्य 1. KAIKEYI's father 2. The kingdom which he ruled
GOKARNA गोकर्ण The mountain on which BHAGIRATHA spent a thousand years meditating	JAYA जया DAKSHA's daughter	KESHINI केशिनी Wife of SAGARA
HALAHALA हालाहल Poison that came out of the churning of the ocean	KAIKEYI कैकेयी DASHARATHA's youngest wife. BHARATA's mother.	KHADIRA AND PALASA खादिर, पलाश Types of wood
HAIMAVATI हैमावती Another name of GANGA	KAKUTSTHA ककुत्स्था Ancestor of RAMA	KINNARAS किन्नर Musicians of the gods
HANUMAN हनुमान् A VANARA. Son of VAYU. Minister to SUGRIVA.	KALMASHAPADA कल्माषपाद The ogre PRAVRIDDHA turned into	KIRTIRATA कीर्तिरथ King of MITHILA. Ancestor of JANAKA.
HARYASHWA हर्यश्व King of MITHILA. Ancestor of JANAKA.	KAMADEVA कामदेव God of love	KIRTIRATHA कीर्तिरथ King of MITHILA. Ancestor of JANAKA.
HIMAVAN हिमवान् The mountain king, father of PARVATI and GANGA	KAMADHENU कामधेनु VASISHTHA's wish-fulfilling cow	KOSALA कोसल A rich and prosperous territory, the capital of which was AYODHYA
HLADINI ह्लादिनी One of the seven streams that GANGA split into	KAMPILA कम्पिल्य BRAHMADATTA's kingdom	KRAUNCHA क्रौञ्चा The world's tallest flying bird, known for its loyalty to its mate
HOTA होतः See ADHWARYU	KANAUJ कन्नौज A city earlier known as MAHODAYA, built by KUSHANABHA	KRITAYUGA कृतयुग The first yuga. Also called the Satya Yuga.
HRASWAROMA ह्रस्वरोम Father of JANAKA	KANDARPA कंदर्प Another name for KAMADEVA	KRITTIKAS कृत्तिका Six goddesses of the constellation Krittika, after whom KARTIKEYA was named
IKSHVAKU इक्ष्वाकु Son of MANU. The earliest ancestor of the Suryavansha kings, the dynasty to which RAMA belonged, and after whom it is named.	KARTAVIRYA ARJUNA कर्तवीर्य अर्जुन King of Mahishamati, who killed Rishi JAMADAGNI	KSHATRIYA क्षत्रिय Class of people, traditionally engaged in the military arts
INDRA इंद्र King of gods	KARTIKEYA कार्तिकेय Son of SHIVA, and commander of the divine armies	KUBERA कुबेर God of wealth
INDRA CHAKRA इंद्र चक्र A celestial missile	KARUSHA करुष A kingdom blessed by INDRA	KUKSI कुक्षि Ancestor of RAMA
JAHNAVI जाह्नवी Daughter of JAHNU. Another name for GANGA.	KASHYAPA कश्यप Father of the devas and the ASURAS, and the husband of ADITI and DITI	KUMARA कुमार Another name for KARTIKEYA
JAHNU जाह्नु A great sage	KAUSALYA कौसल्या DASHARATHA's chief queen. Mother of RAMA.	KUSHA कुश 1. Son of SITA and RAMA. LUVA's twin. 2. A sage
JAMADAGNI जमदग्नि A sage; father of PARASHURAMA	KAUSAMBI कौशाम्बी A city founded by KUSHAMBA	KUSHADHWAJA कुशध्वज Brother of JANAKA, king of SANKASHYA
JAMBAVAN जाम्बवान् The king of bears	KAUSHIKA कौशिक Before VISHWAMITRA became a rishi, he was a king called Kaushika.	KUSHAMBA कुशाम्ब Son of KUSHA (2)
JAMBUDVIPA जम्बुद्वीप The island at the centre of the universe, according to Hindu mythology, on which grows the jambu tree. Supposed to represent India.	KAUSHIKI कौशिकी A river. Modern Kosi	KUSHANABHA कुशनाभ Son of the rishi KUSHA (2)
JANAKA जनक King of MITHILA,		

KUSHAPLAVA कुशप्लव A sacred place where DITI practised austerities	and wife of BHARATA	incarnation of VISHNU
LAKSHMANA लक्ष्मण Brother of RAMA, son of SUMITRA	MANDHATA मांधाता Ancestor of RAMA	PARVATI पार्वती A goddess. Wife of SHIVA and daughter of HIMAVAN.
LUVA लव Son of RAMA; KUSHA's twin	MANTRAMUKTA मंत्रमुक्त A type of weapon directed to the target by reciting a mantra	PATALA पाताल Underworld
MAGADHA मगध A kingdom allied with AYODHYA	MANU मनु Progenitor of mankind; son of SURYA	PAULASTYA VADHA पौलस्त्यवध The death of Paulastya who is also known as RAVANA
MAGADHI मागधी Another name for the river SONA	MARICHA मारीच Mighty rakshasa; son of TATAKA	PAVANI पावनी One of the seven streams that GANGA split into
MAHADEVA महादेव Another name for SHIVA	MARICHI मरीचि A sage born to BRAHMA (1)	PAYASA पायसं Milk pudding
MAHAPADMA महापद्म One of the four elephants holding up the earth	MARU मरु 1. Ancestor of RAMA 2. King of MITHILA. Ancestor of JANAKA.	PHALGUNI फाल्गुनी A constellation
MAHAROMA महारौम King of MITHILA. Ancestor of JANAKA.	MARUTS मरुत्त The 49 wind gods. Sons of DITI.	PRAHLADA प्रह्लाद Grandfather of King BALI
MAHAVIRA महावीर King of MITHILA. Ancestor of JANAKA.	MENA मेना Wife of HIMAVAN. Mother of UMA and GANGA.	PARJANYA पर्जन्य The Vedic god of rain
MAHENDRA महेन्द्र Mountain where PARASHURAMA stays and meditates	MITHILA मिथिला Kingdom of JANAKA	PRAJAPATI प्रजापति Lord of created beings
MAHIDHRAKA महीध्रक King of MITHILA. Ancestor of JANAKA.	MITRA मित्र A Vedic god who guards the world, often associated with VARUNA	PRASUHSRUKA प्रशुश्रुक Ancestor of RAMA
MAHODAYA महोदय Modern KANAUJ, founded by KUSHANABHA	MOHINI मोहिनी A form of VISHNU	PRAPTIJNA प्राप्तिज्ञ King of MAGADHA
MALADA मलद A kingdom blessed by INDRA	MUKTA मुक्त Long range weapons	PRATINDHAKA प्रतीन्धक King of MITHILA. Ancestor of JANAKA.
MANAVASTRA मानवास्त्र Missile of MANU	NABHAGA नाभाग A descendant of PRAVRIDDHA	PRAVRIDDHA प्रवृद्ध Ancestor of RAMA
NALA नल A VANARA, son of VISHWAKARMA	NAGA नाग A mythical being who is part-human and part-snake	PRITHU पृथु Ancestor of RAMA
NALINI नलिनी A stream flowing eastward, split off from GANGA	NAHUSHA नहूषा Ancestor of RAMA	PUNARVASU पुनर्वसु Two of the brightest stars in the Gemini constellation
NANDIVARDHANA नन्दिवर्धन King of MITHILA. Ancestor of JANAKA.	NARADA नारद Son of BRAHMA (1)	PUSHKARA पुष्कर A lake
MANDARA मंदर A mountain used as a churning rod during the churning of the ocean	NARAYANA नारायण Another name for VISHNU	PUTRIYESHTI पुत्र्येष्ठि A yagna conducted to attain children
MANDAVI माण्डवी Cousin of SITA	NILA नील A VANARA, son of AGNI	RAGHU रघु Ancestor of RAMA
	NIMI निमि A king of MITHILA. Ancestor of JANAKA.	RAGHUNANDANA रघुनन्दन Another name for RAMA, meaning descendant of RAGHU
	PARASHURAMA परशुराम Son of Rishi JAMADAGNI, and an	RAJARSHI राजर्षि Royal sage

RAJGIR राजगीर Another name for the city GIRIVRAJA, founded by VASU	SHANKARA शंकर Another name for SHIVA	SUBAHU सुबाहु A powerful RAKSHASA
RAKSHASAS राक्षस A race of mythological beings	SHANKHAN शङ्खण Ancestor of RAMA	SUCHAKSHU सुचक्षु One of the seven streams that GANGA split into
RAMA राम Prince of AYODHYA. Son of DASHARATHA and KAUSALYA.	SHANTA शान्ता Daughter of DASHARATHA. Adopted by ROMAPADA.	SUDAAMANA सुदामन The foremost of JANAKA's counsellors
RASATALA रसातल One of the underworlds	SHATRUGHNA शत्रुघ्न Son of SUMITRA. Twin of LAKSHMANA.	SUDARSHANA सुदर्शन 1. VISHNU's chakra. 2. Ancestor of RAMA
RAVANA रावण The powerful and evil king of RAKSHASAS, who ruled from his capital, Lanka	SHIGHRAGA शीघ्रग Ancestor of RAMA	SUDHANVA सुधन्वा King of SANKASHYA before KUSHADHWAJA. He was defeated by JANAKA.
RICHIIKA ऋचीक Father of JAMADAGNI	SHIVA शिव The Destroyer; third of the divine triumvirate	SUDHRITI सुधृति King of MITHILA. Ancestor of JANAKA.
RISHYASHRINGA ऋष्यश्रुद्ग A sage born with the horns of a deer	SHLOKA श्लोक Poetry	SUGRIVA सुग्रीव Brother of VALI
ROMAPADA रोमपाद King of ANGA	SHOKA शोक Sorrow	SUKETU सुकेतु 1. Father of TATAKA 2. King of MITHILA. Ancestor of JANAKA.
RUDRA रुद्र Another name for SHIVA	SHUNAKA शुनक Youngest son of RICHIIKA	SUMANTRA सुमन्त्र DASHARATHA's minister and charioteer
SAGARA सागर Descendant of IKSHVAKU. He hollowed out the ocean.	SHUNAHSHEPA शुनश्चेप Nephew of VISHWAMITRA	SUMATI सुमति 1. Wife of SAGARA 2. Ruler of VISHALA
SANAT KUMARA सनत्कुमार A legendary sage who could predict the future	SIDDHASHRAMA सिद्धाश्रम A sacred grove in which VISHNU practised yoga for thousands of years	SUMITRA सुमित्रा DASHARATHA's second queen. Mother of the twins LAKSHMANA and SHATRUGHNA.
SANKASHYA संकाश्या Kingdom of KUSHADHWAJA	SIDHAS सिध् Enlightened souls	SUNDA सुन्द Husband of TATAKA
SARAYU सरयू The kingdom of AYODHYA is situated on the banks of this river	SINDHU सिन्धु One of the seven streams that GANGA split into	SUPRABHA सुप्रभा Daughter of DAKSHA Prajapati
SARGA सर्ग Chapter	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	SURA सुरा Goddess of wine. Another name for VARUNI.
SATANANDA शतानन्द Family priest of JANAKA	SITAYAHA CHARITAM MAHAT सीतायाश्चरितं महत The sublime legend of SITA	SURYA सूर्य Sun god
SATYAVATI सत्यवती VISHWAMITRA's elder sister	SKANDA स्कन्द Another name for KARTIKEYA	SUSANDHI सुसंधि Ancestor of RAMA
SAUMANASA सौमनस One of the four elephants holding up the earth	SLESHMATAKA श्लेष्मातक A tree whose wood is considered sacred	SWARNAROMA स्वर्णरोम King of MITHILA. Ancestor of JANAKA.
SHABALA शबला Another name for KAMADHENU	SONA शोण A river, also known as MAGADHI	TAPAS तपः The practice of deep meditation and austerities to achieve spiritual power
SHAKTI शक्ति Daughter of DAKSHA		TARA तारा A VANARA, daughter of BRUHASPATI. Also wife of VALI.

TATAKA ताटका A YAKSHINI who was cursed to be a rakshasi	VASUDHA वसुधा The earth	VYASA व्यास Author of the Mahabharata
TRISHANKU त्रिशङ्कु A king of the IKSHVAKU race who wanted to ascend into heaven bodily	VASUKI वासुकि The king of serpents who was used as the rope during the churning of the ocean	YAKSHA यक्ष Male nature spirits
TRISHUL त्रिशूल Trident, SHIVA's weapon	VAYAVYA वायव्य Missile of the wind god	YAKSHINI यक्षिणी Female nature spirits
UCCHAISHRAVA उच्चैश्वराः Foremost of horses	VAYU वायु God of wind	YAMA यम God of death and justice
UDAVASU उदावसु King of MITHILA. Ancestor of JANAKA.	VIBHANDAKA विभाण्डक Father of RISHYASHRINGA	YAYATI ययति Ancestor of RAMA and son of NAHUSHA
UDGATA उदगाता One of the four main priests conducting a sacrifice	VIBHISHANA विभीषण RAVANA's brother	YOJANA योजन A measure of distance, approximately 10 kilometres
UMA उमा Another name for PARVATI	VIBUDHA विबुध King of MITHILA. Ancestor of JANAKA.	YUDDHAJIT युद्धाजित Brother of KAIKEYI
UPANAYANA उपनयनम् A sacred thread ceremony to mark the beginning of a boy's formal education	VIDEHA विदेहा A country of which MITHILA was the capital	YUVANASHVA युवनाश्व Ancestor of RAMA
URMILA उर्मिला JANAKA's second daughter and LAKSHMANA's wife	VIJAYA विजय Hour of the morning considered auspicious	
UTTARA KANDA उत्तरकाण्ड Last section of the Ramayana	VIKUSHI विकुष्ठि Ancestor of RAMA	
VAJRA वज्र The thunderbolt, INDRA's weapon	VIROCHANA विरोचन Father of King BALI	
VALI वाली A VANARA. Brother of SUGRIVA.	VIRUPAKSHA विरुपाक्ष One of the four elephants holding up the earth	
VALMIKI वाल्मीकि Author of the Ramayana	VISHALA विशाल 1. The son of king IKSHVAKU and queen Alambusa 2. A city built by Vishala	
VAMADEVA वामदेव One of the family priests at DASHARATHA's court	VISHNU विष्णु The preserver of the universe	
VAMANA वामन The fifth avatar of VISHNU	VISHNU CHAKRA विष्णुचक्र A celestial missile	
VANARA वानर The strong, ape-like children of the devas	VISHRAVA विश्रवस A rishi; the father of RAVANA and KUBERA	
VARUNA वरुण Lord of all waters	VISHWAKARMA विश्वकर्मा The architect of the gods	
VARUNI वारुणी Goddess of wine	VISHWAMITRA विश्वमित्र A revered sage. He was born a king; see KAUSHIKA	
VASISHTHA वसिष्ठ Family priest at the court of DASHARATHA	VIVASWAN विवस्वान् Another name for SURYA	
VASU वसु A son of KUSHA (2)	VRITRA वृत्र An asura who was killed by INDRA	

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