



GANGA

THE DIVINE BEAUTY

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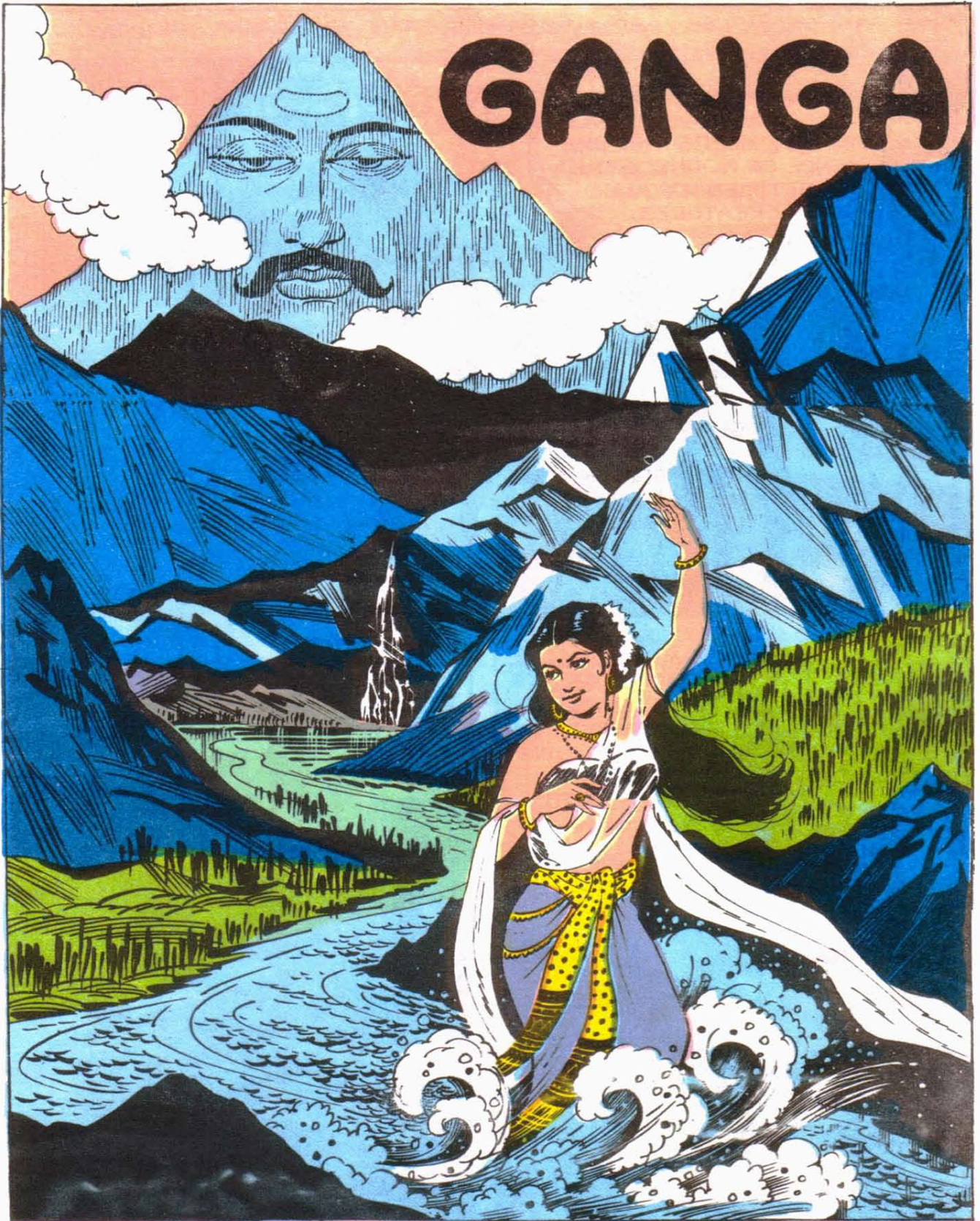
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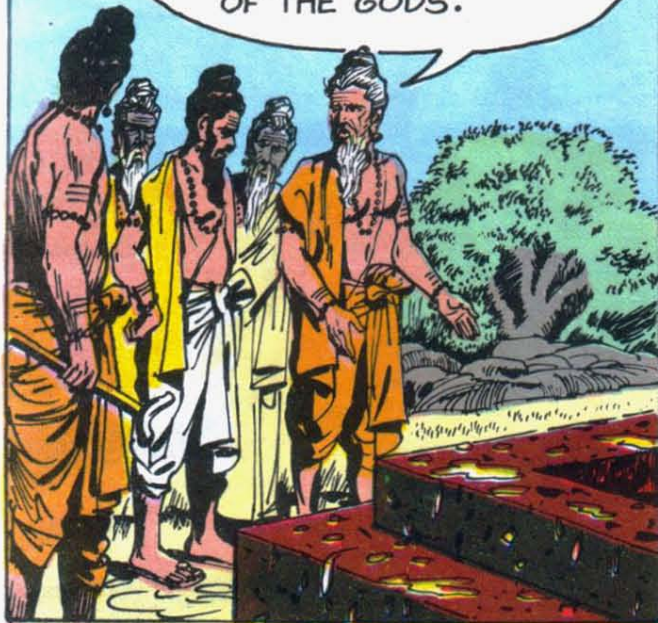
BEAUTIFUL, PURE, STRONG-WILLED GANGA
WAS THE ELDER DAUGHTER OF MOUNT HIMAVAN. SHE HAD
THE POWER OF PURIFYING ANYTHING THAT
TOUCHED HER.

ONE DAY, THE DEVAS, LED BY BRAHMA, CAME TO MOUNT HIMAVAN.



AT ABOUT THAT TIME, LIFE ON EARTH WAS BECOMING IMPOSSIBLE FOR ALL RIGHTEOUS PEOPLE.

OUR SACRIFICE HAS BEEN RUINED ONCE AGAIN. AT THIS RATE WE WILL INCUR THE DISPLEASURE OF THE GODS.



MONTHS OF HARD LABOUR WASTED. OUR CROPS HAVE BEEN DESTROYED IN A SINGLE NIGHT.



THE MURDERERS HAVEN'T SPARED EVEN OUR BABES. WHAT HAVE WE DONE TO DESERVE THIS?



AT LAST -

WE ARE HELPLESS AGAINST ENEMIES, WHO DON'T SHOW THEMSELVES. LET THOSE OF US, WHO HAVE SURVIVED, HIDE IN THE CAVES.



THEIR MYSTERIOUS TORMENTORS WERE A GROUP OF ASURAS* WHO HID IN THE OCEAN BY DAY AND CAME OUT TO HARASS THEM AT NIGHT.

I'VE SPOTTED THEM. THEY'VE GONE INTO THE CAVES.

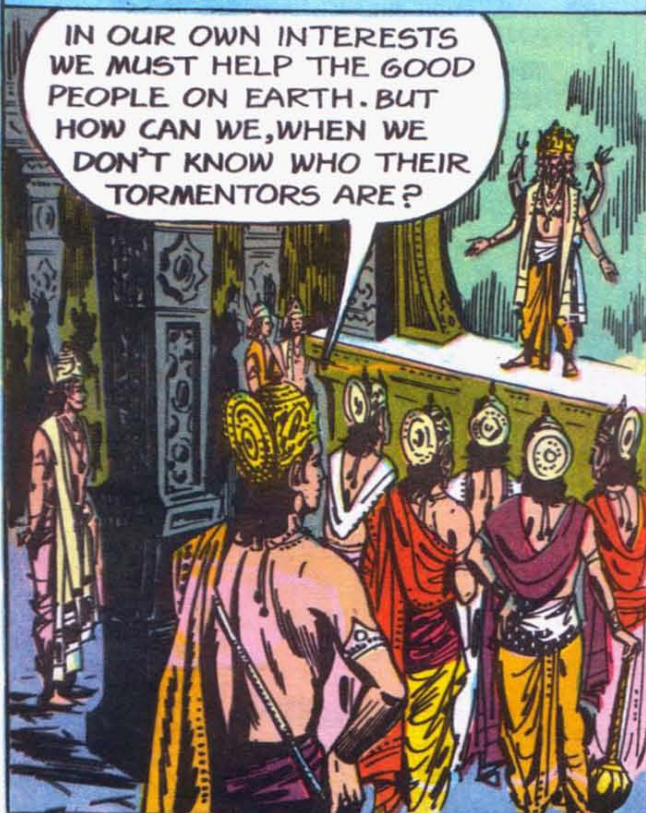
NEVER MIND. WE'LL FOLLOW THEM.

NOT A SINGLE ONE OF THEM SHOULD BE SPARED.



IN HEAVEN, THE DEVAS WERE PERTURBED BY THE PLIGHT OF THE PEOPLE. THEY HELD COUNCIL.

IN OUR OWN INTERESTS WE MUST HELP THE GOOD PEOPLE ON EARTH. BUT HOW CAN WE, WHEN WE DON'T KNOW WHO THEIR TORMENTORS ARE?



BRAHMA MADE A SUGGESTION.

LET US SEEK THE HELP OF VISHNU. HE WILL KNOW.

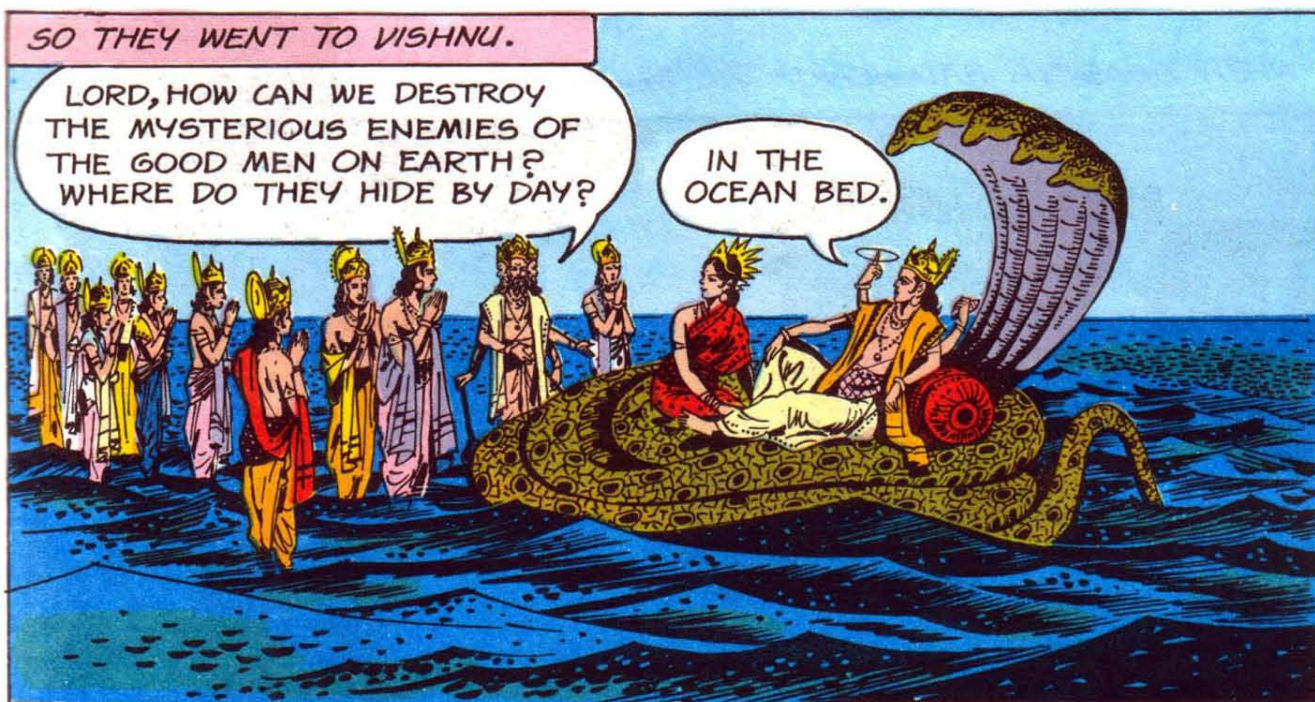


* A RACE CONSTANTLY AT WAR WITH THE SURAS OR DEVAS.

SO THEY WENT TO VISHNU.

LORD, HOW CAN WE DESTROY
THE MYSTERIOUS ENEMIES OF
THE GOOD MEN ON EARTH?
WHERE DO THEY HIDE BY DAY?

IN THE
OCEAN BED.



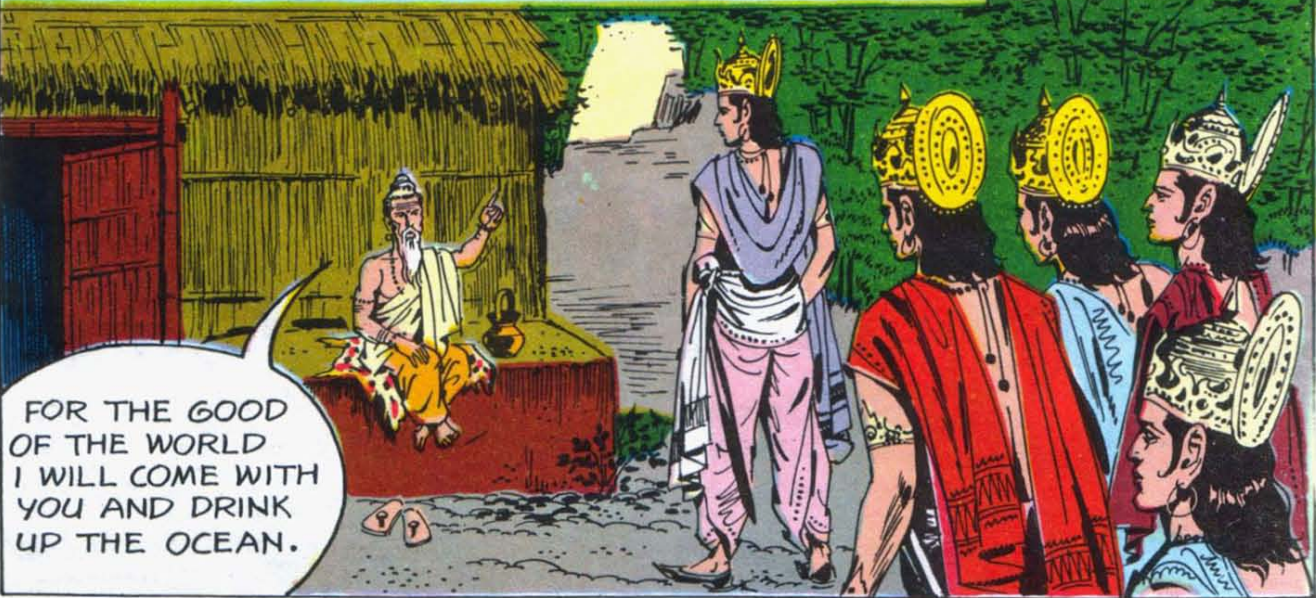
TO KILL THEM YOU WILL
HAVE TO DRY UP THE
OCEAN. GO TO SAGE
AGASTYA. HE ALONE
CAN HELP YOU.



YOU MAY GO TO SAGE
AGASTYA NOW AND DO
WHAT IS TO BE DONE.



WHEN AGASTYA HAD HEARD THE WHOLE STORY -

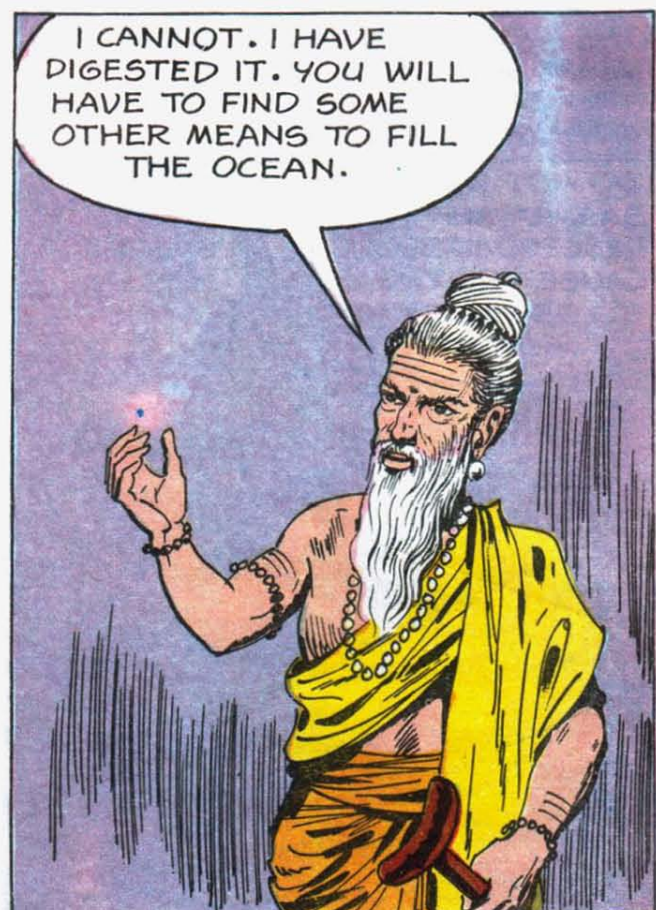
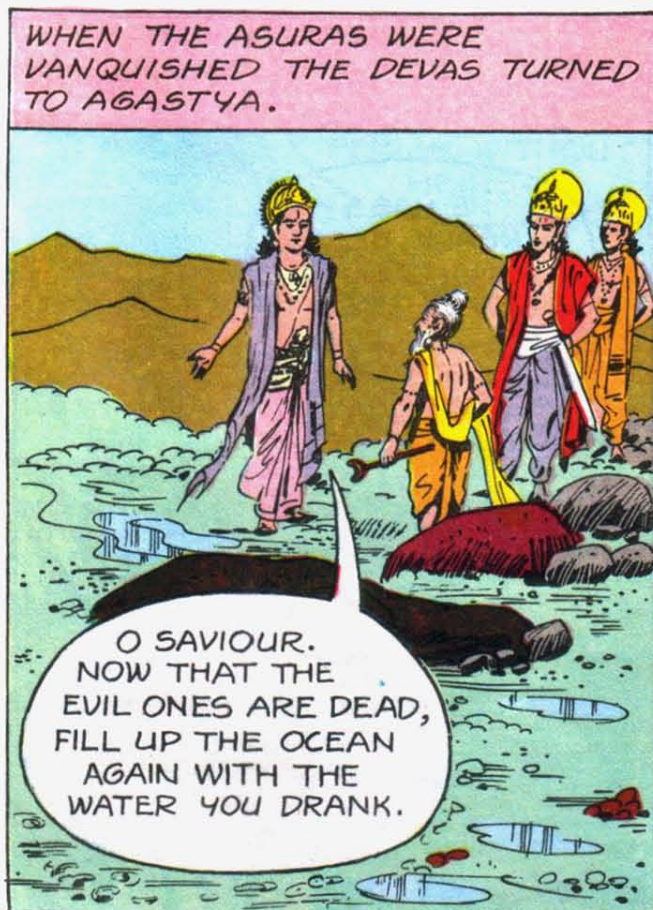


WHEN THEY REACHED THE OCEAN -



AS AGASTYA BENT DOWN AND BEGAN TO DRINK UP THE OCEAN, THE EVIL ASURAS WERE EXPOSED -





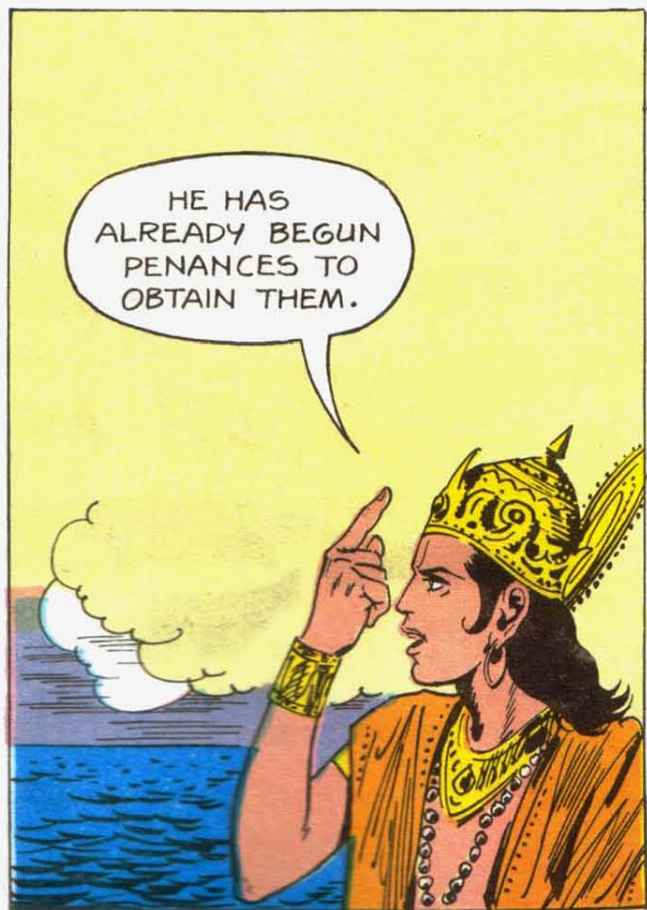
THE DEVAS DID NOT KNOW WHAT TO DO. THEY WENT TO BRAHMA.



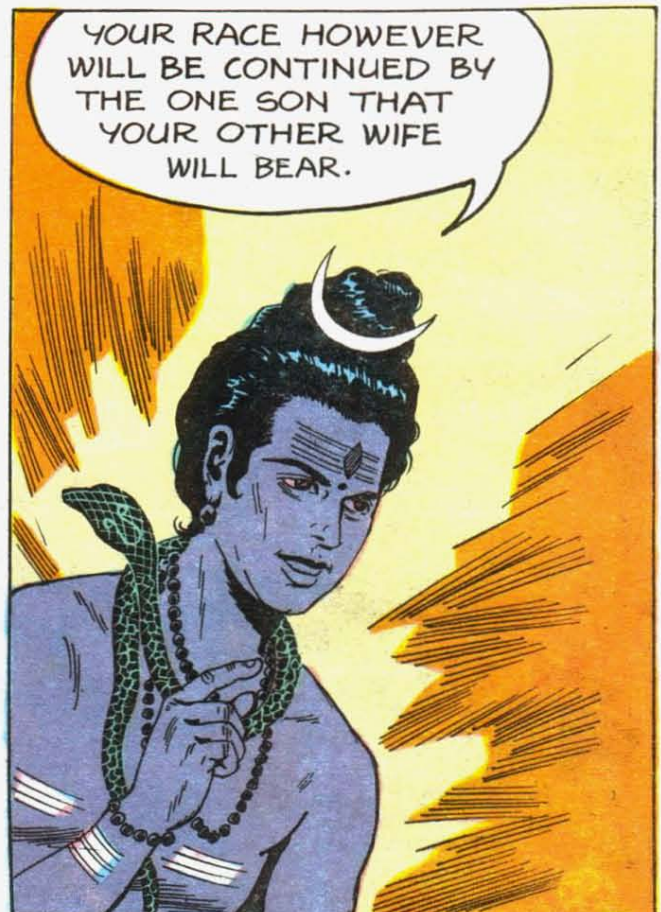
THE DEVAS WAITED A NUMBER OF YEARS AND STILL NOTHING HAPPENED. SO THEY WENT TO VISHNU AGAIN. THERE -



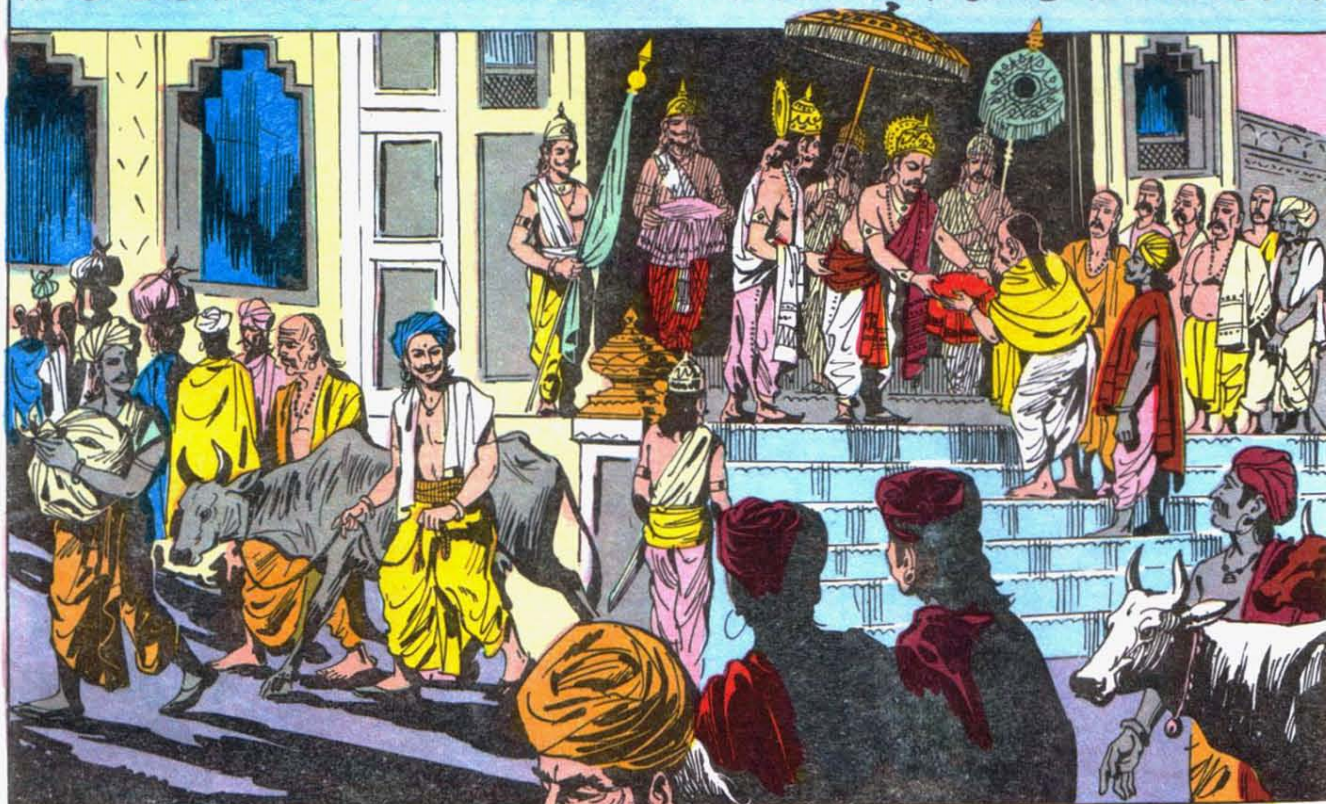
HE HAS ALREADY BEGUN PENANCES TO OBTAIN THEM.



AT THAT MOMENT ON EARTH, LORD SHIVA APPEARED BEFORE KING SAGARA AND HIS QUEENS, KESHINI AND SUMATI.



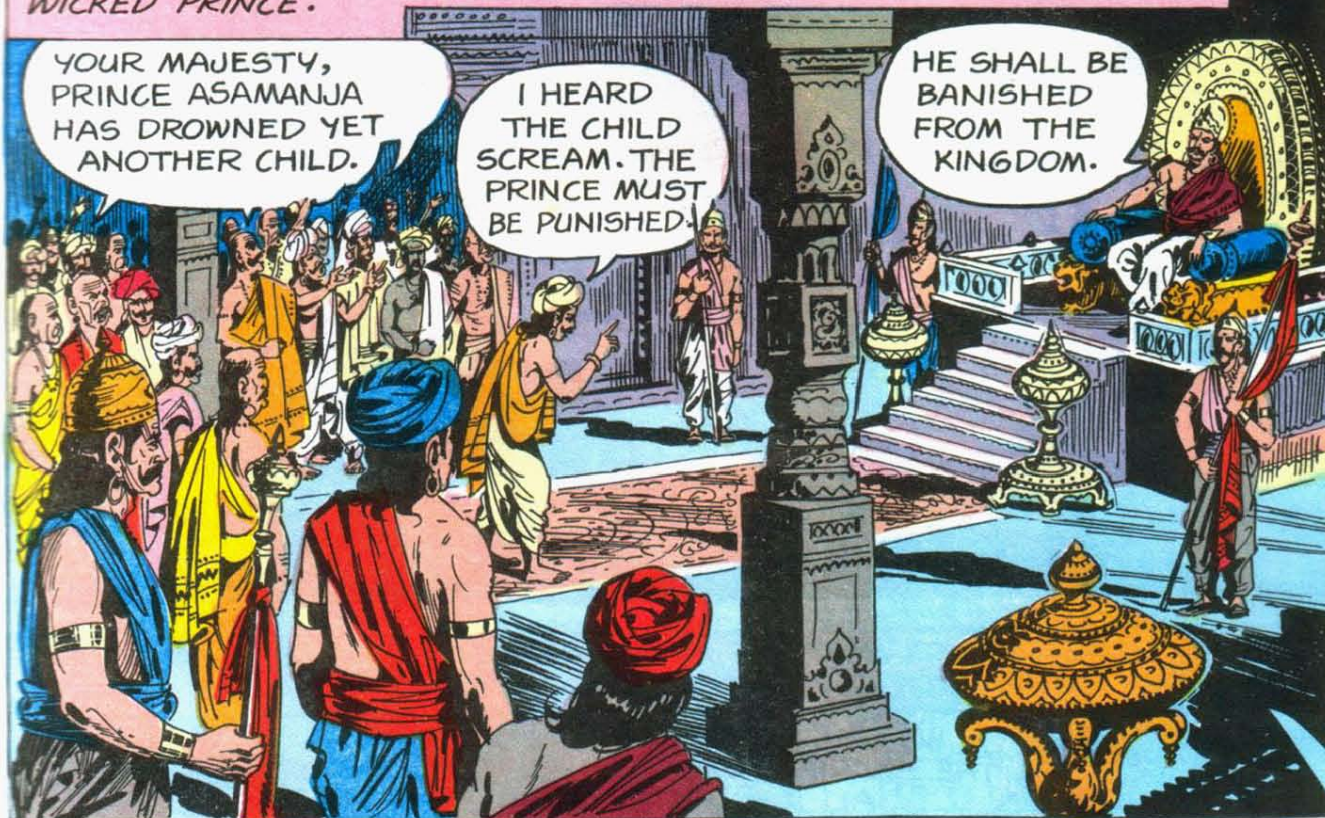
ACCORDINGLY, IN COURSE OF TIME, BOTH WIVES BORE CHILDREN. KING SAGARA WAS OVERJOYED AND GAVE MANY GIFTS TO THE POOR.



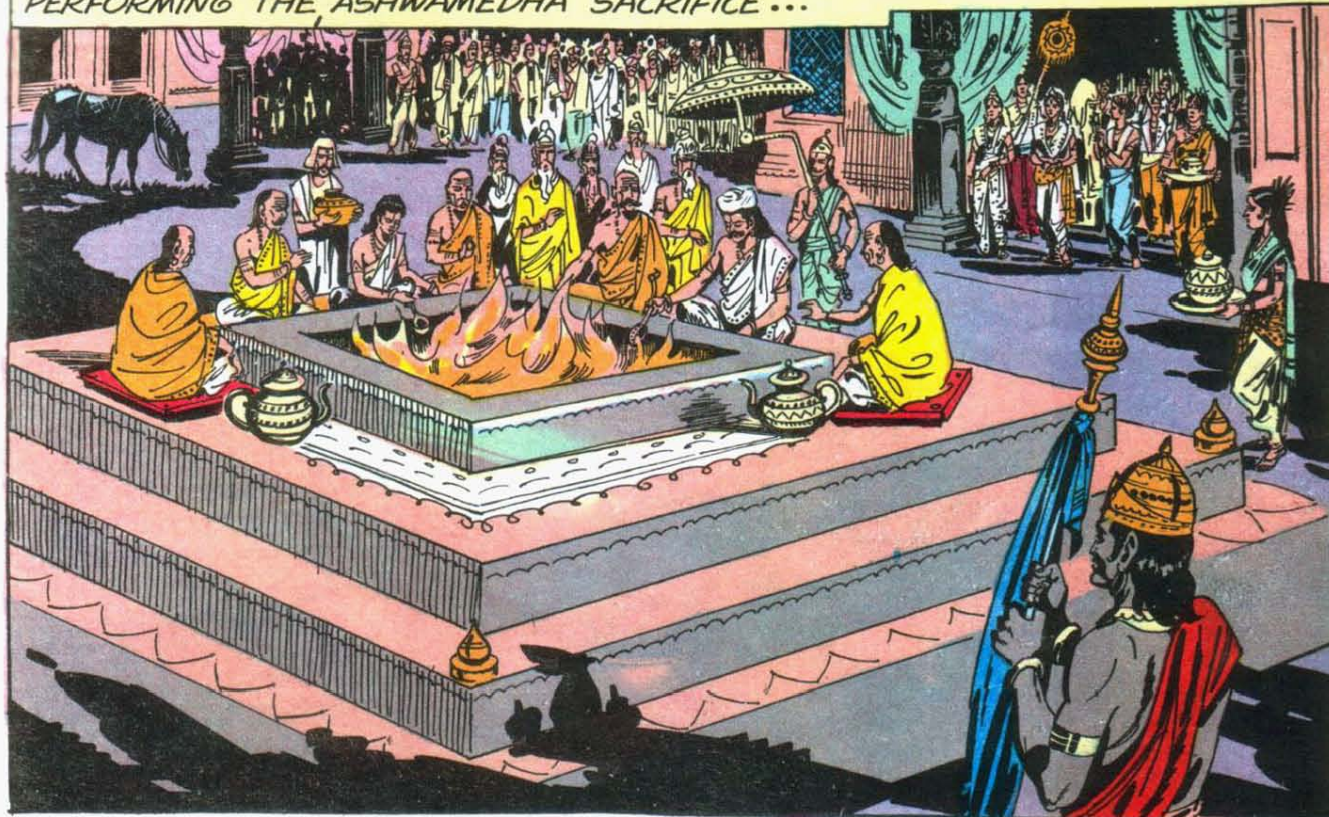
DAYS PASSED AND THE BOYS GREW UP. THE 60,000 SONS OF SUMATI WERE BRAVE, STRONG LADS, WHO WERE CONSCIOUS OF THEIR ROYAL STATUS.



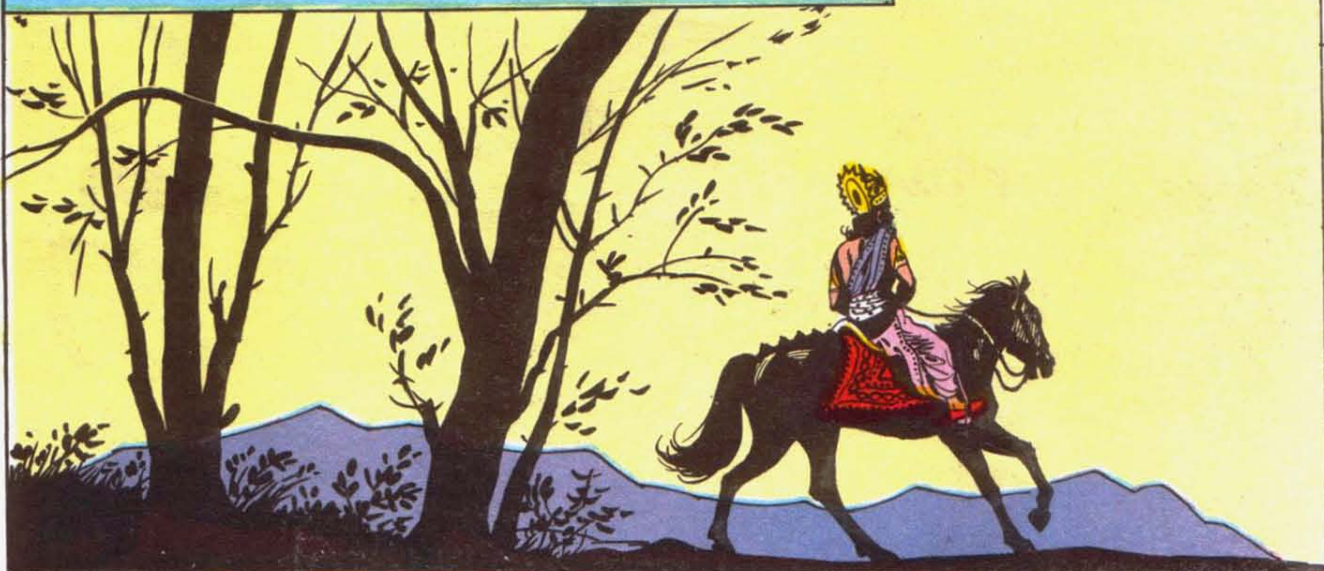
QUEEN KESHINI'S SON ASAMANJA, HOWEVER, GREW UP TO BE A WICKED PRINCE.



BUT ASAMANJA'S SON AMSUMAN WAS A VERY KIND AND CONSIDERATE BOY AND THE PEOPLE LOVED HIM. ONCE, WHEN KING SAGARA WAS PERFORMING THE ASHWAMEDHA SACRIFICE ...



... INDRA STOLE THE SACRIFICIAL HORSE.



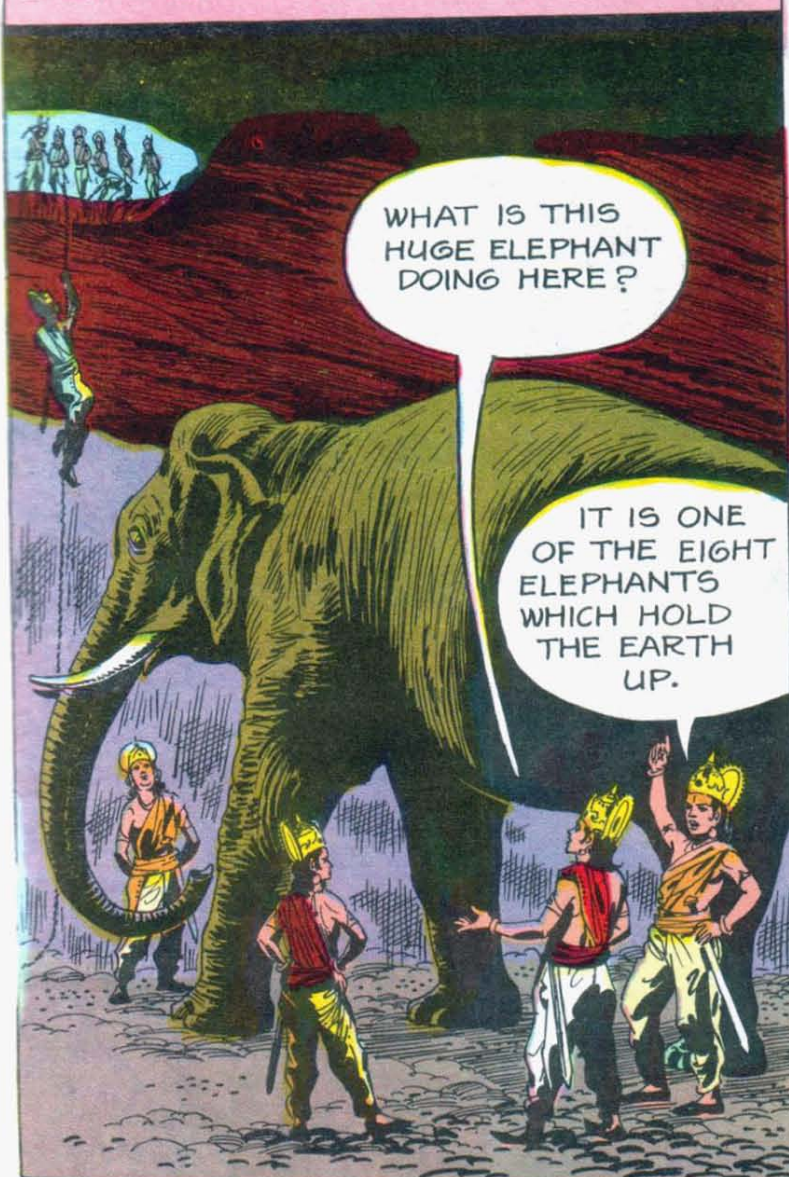
WHEN THEY DISCOVERED THAT THE HORSE WAS STOLEN, THE OFFICIATING PRIEST AND SAGARA TURNED TO THE 60,000 PRINCES.



THE SONS OF SAGARA SEARCHED THE WHOLE EARTH BUT COULD NOT FIND THE HORSE. AT LAST -



WHEN THEY REACHED THE NETHER WORLD—



THEY SEARCHED FOR A WHILE . THEN —



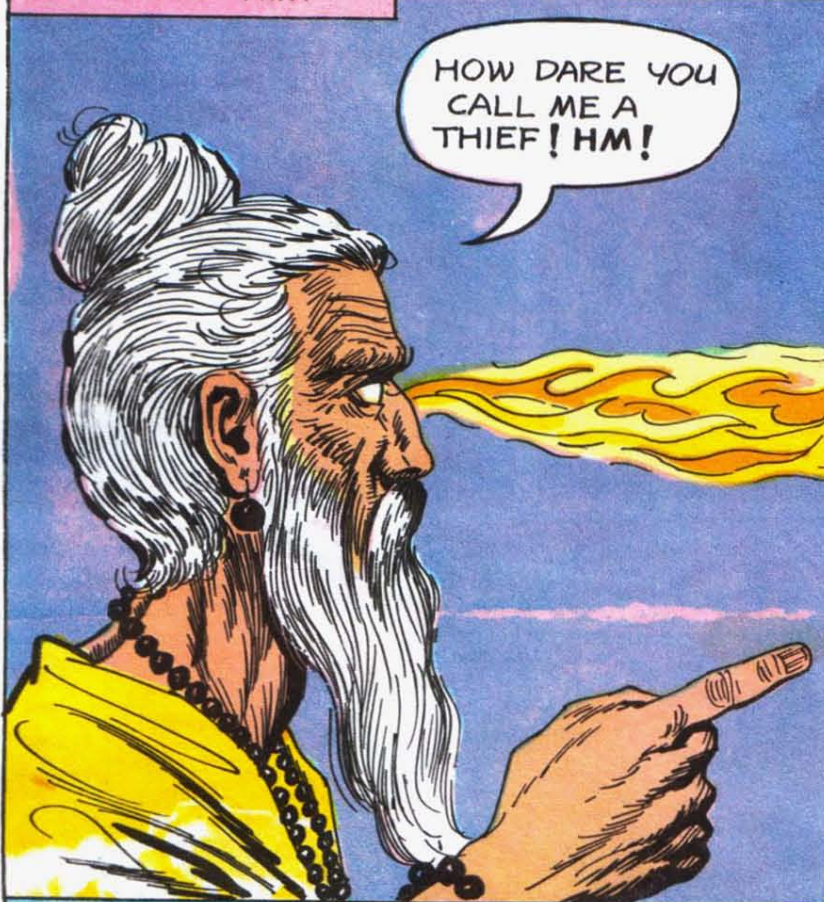
WHEN THE SAGARAS HAD DUG THE EARTH TO TUNNEL THEIR WAY TO THE NETHER WORLD, THE PANIC-STRICKEN INHABITANTS OF THE EARTH RAN HITHER AND THITHER. THE ELEPHANT TO MAINTAIN THE BALANCE OF THEIR WEIGHT, MOVED, CAUSING A TREMENDOUS EARTHQUAKE.



MEANWHILE, OBLIVIOUS OF THE HARM THAT THEY HAD DONE, THE SONS OF SAGARA MOVED ON AND CAME TO WHERE SAGE KAPILA SAT MEDITATING.

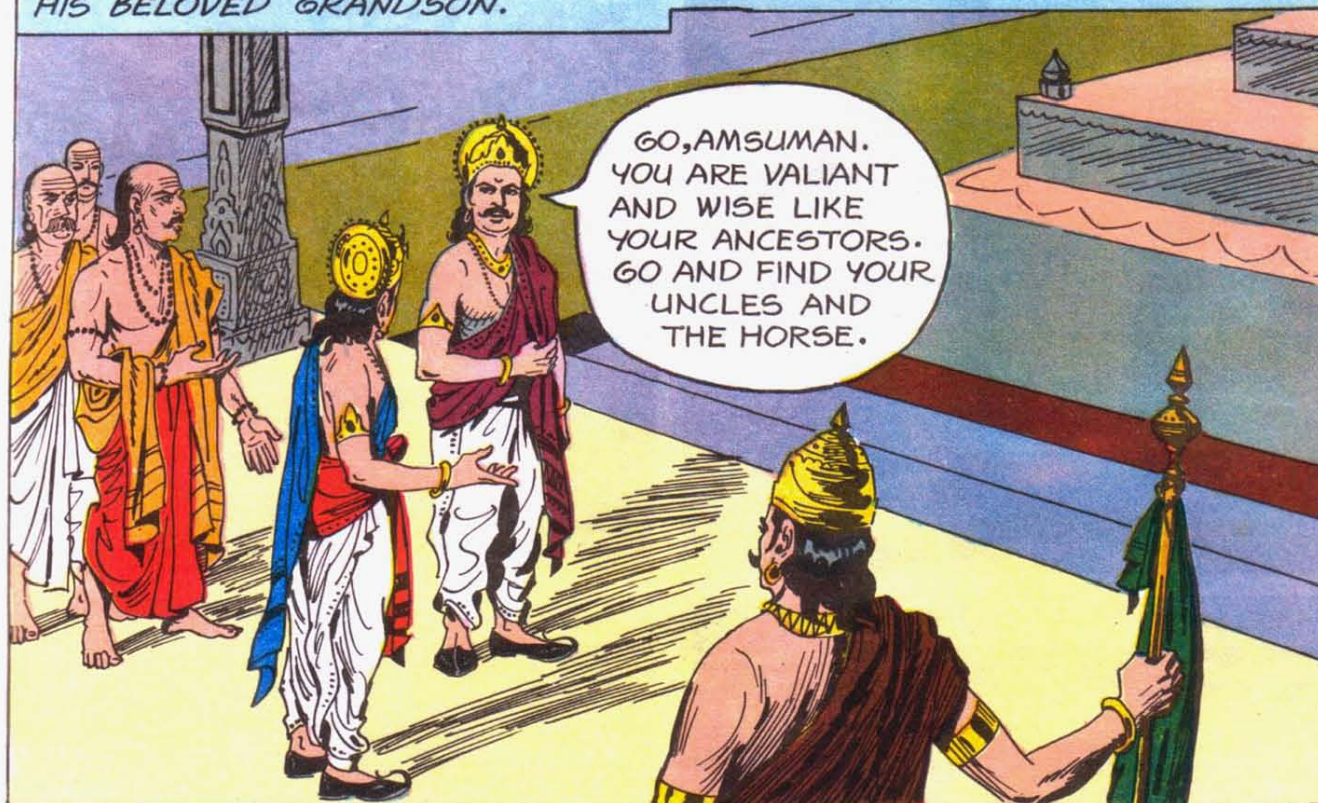


AS THE ENRAGED PRINCES WERE ABOUT TO ATTACK HIM -

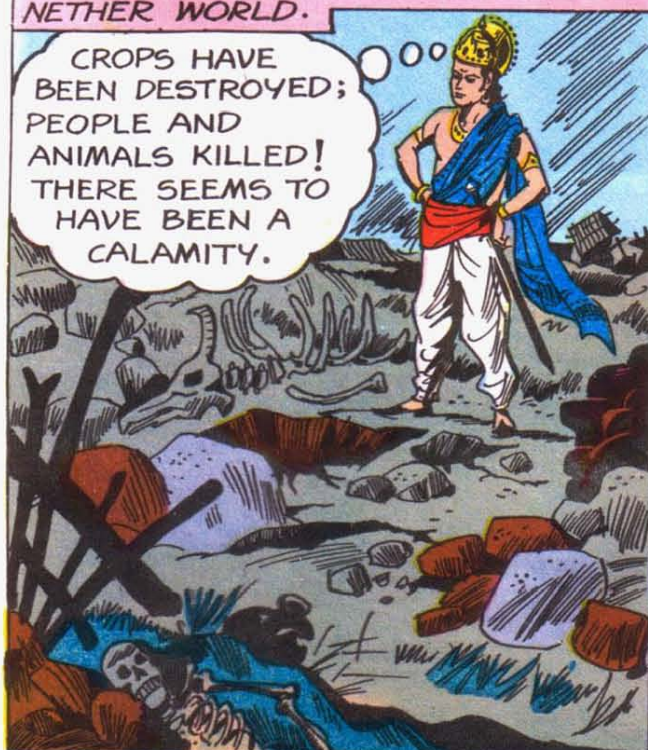


ANGERED BY THEIR AUDACITY, THE POWERFUL KAPILA BURNED THE 60,000 PRINCES TO ASHES BY UTTERING BUT ONE SYLLABLE.

MEANWHILE, AT THE SACRIFICE, WHEN THE PRINCES DID NOT RETURN, SAGARA REMEMBERED SHIVA'S WORDS. HE TURNED TO AMSUMAN, HIS BELOVED GRANDSON.

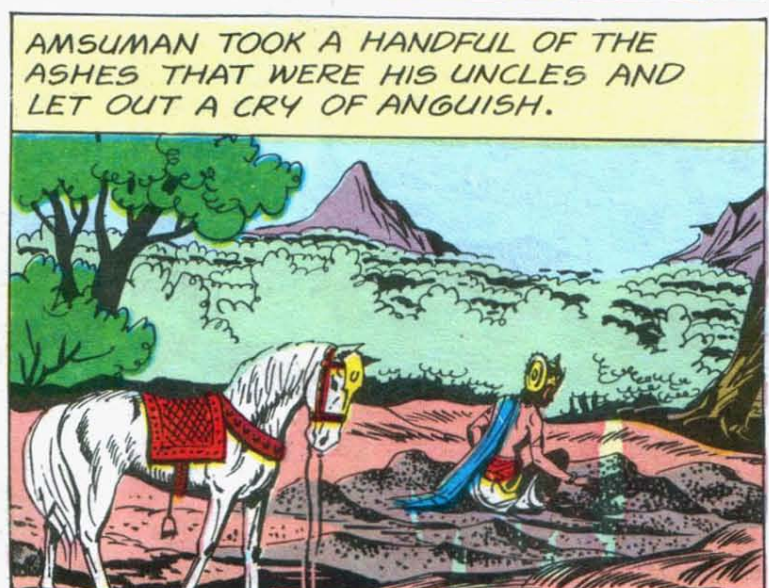
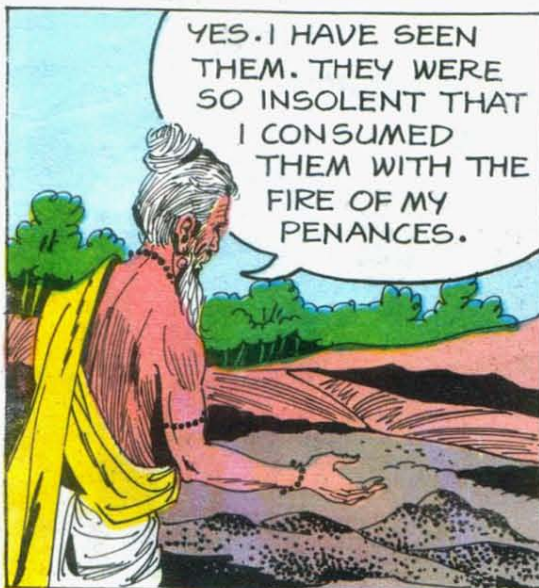
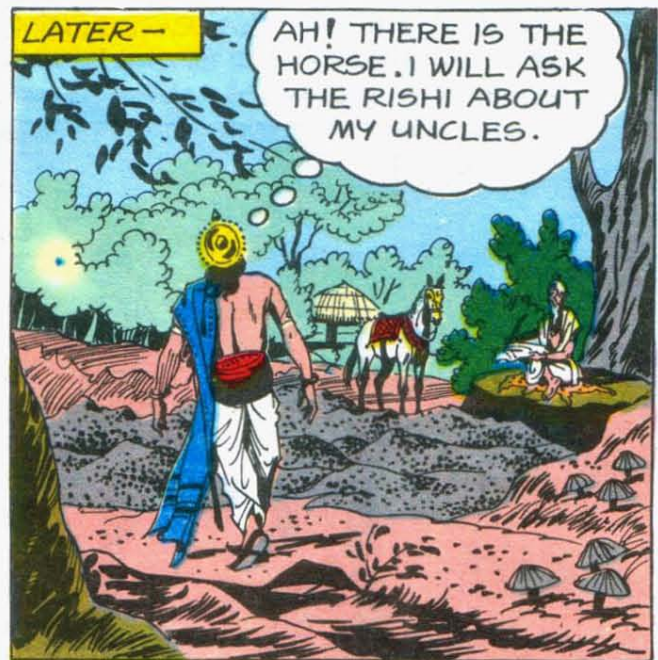


AMSUMAN SET OUT AND SOON CAME UPON THE PLACE WHERE HIS UNCLES HAD ENTERED THE NETHER WORLD.

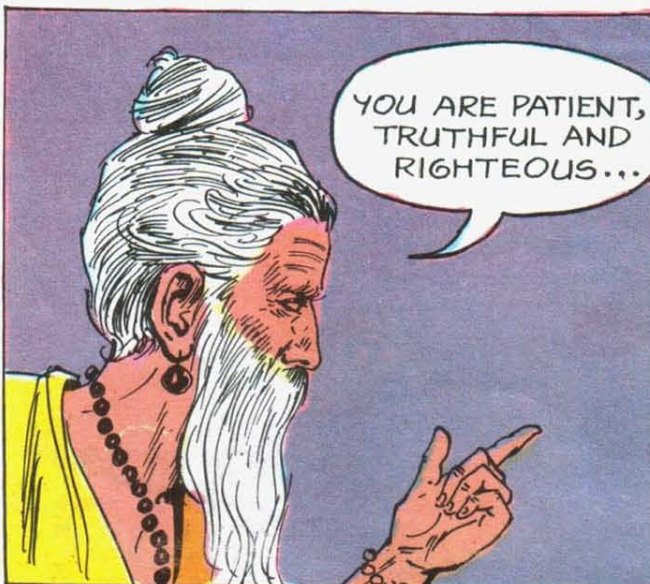
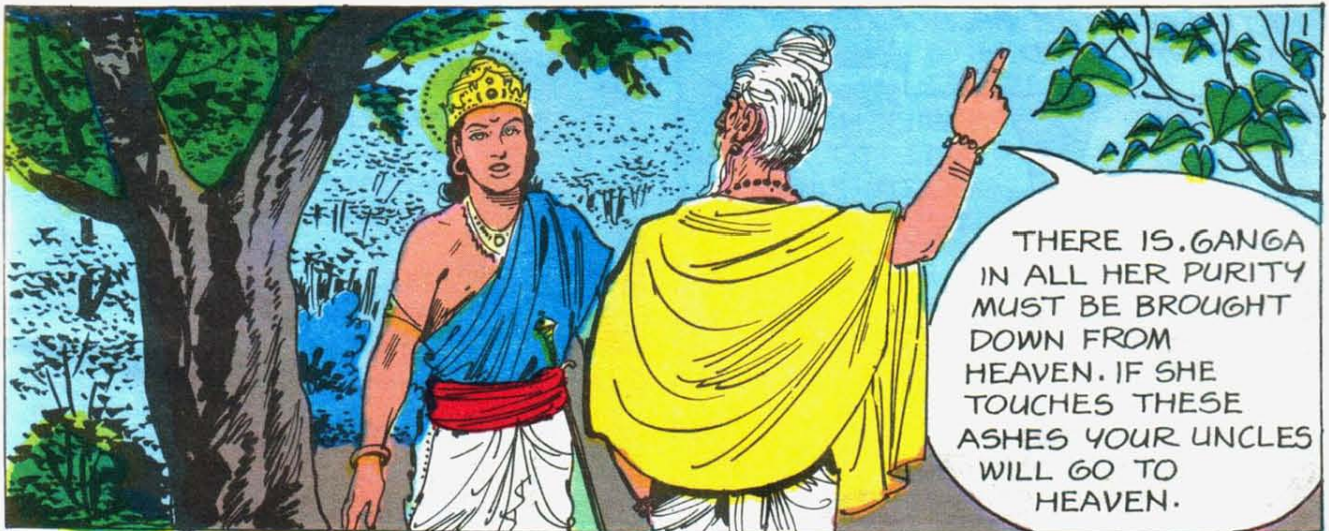
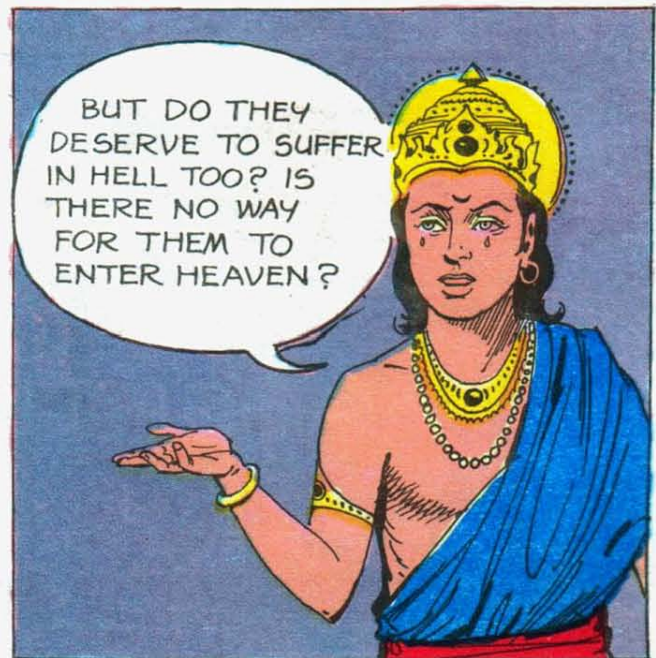
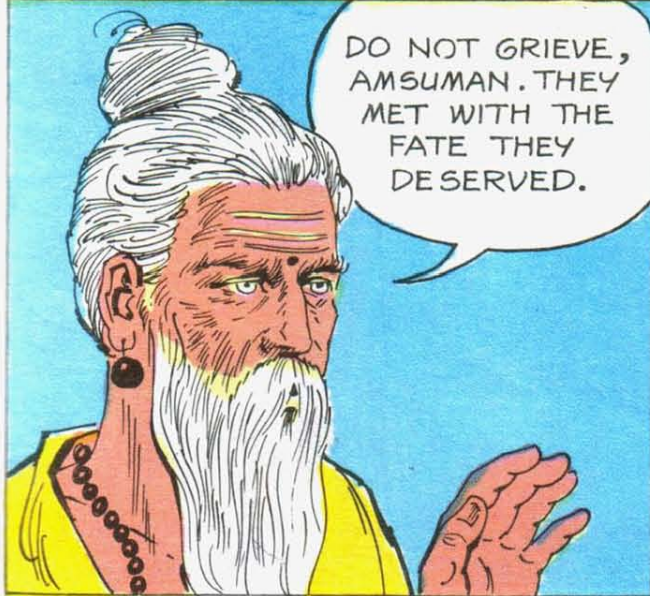


I WILL ENTER THIS CRATER. PERHAPS MY UNCLES ARE IN THE NETHER WORLD.

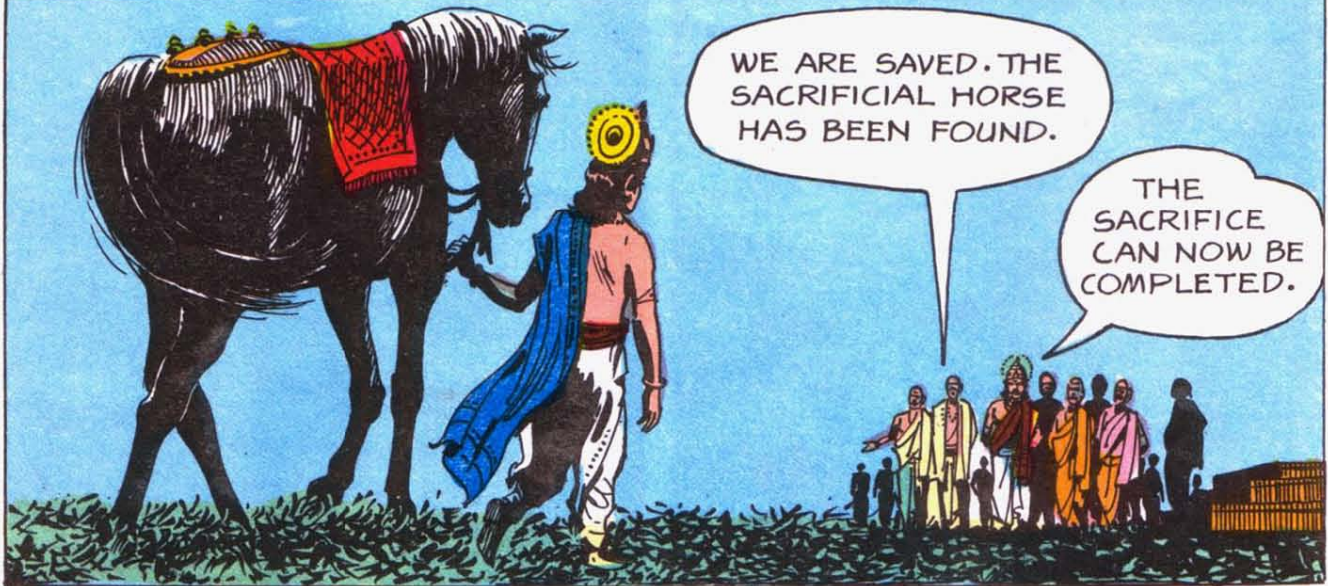




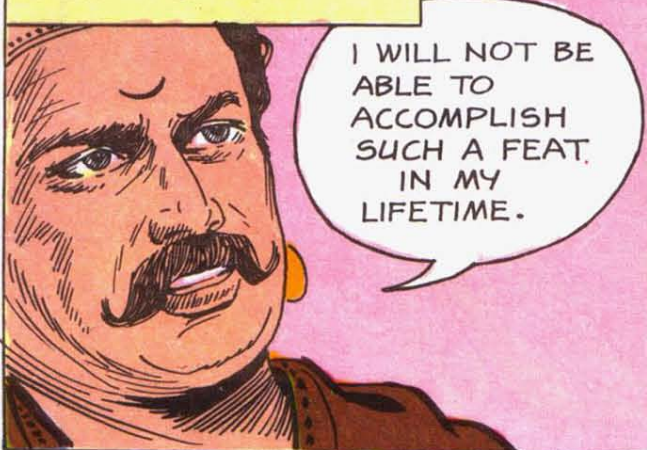
THE SAGE TRIED TO CONSOLE HIM.



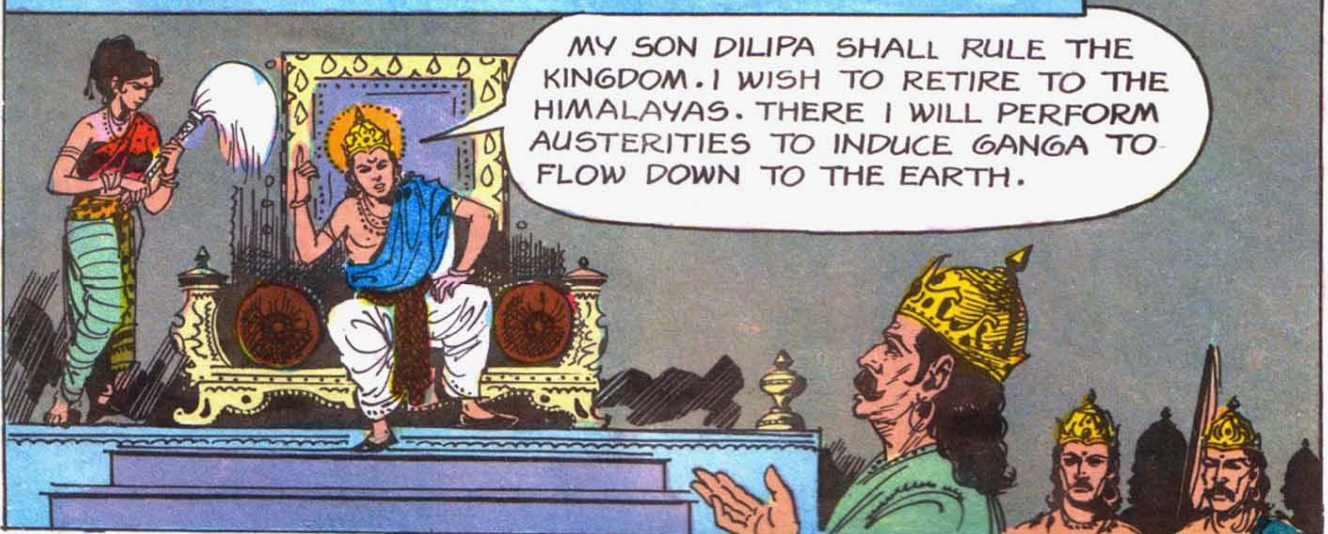
AMSUMAN RETURNED WITH THE HORSE.



LATER, AT THE PALACE, WHEN AMSUMAN TOLD SAGARA WHAT THE SAGE HAD SAID -



WHEN SAGARA DIED, AMSUMAN BECAME KING. BUT -



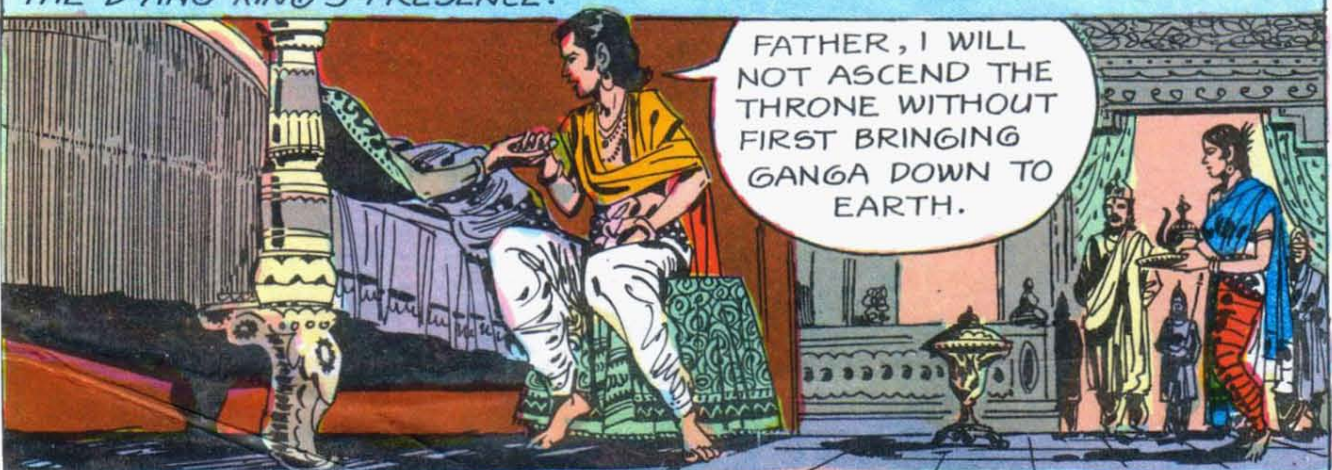
AMSUMAN HOWEVER DIED WITHOUT SUCCEEDING IN HIS ATTEMPTS.
HIS SON DILIPA WAS OVERCOME BY GRIEF.



DAY AND NIGHT HE
THOUGHT ABOUT THE
FATE OF HIS ANCESTORS
AND HOW HE MIGHT
REDEEM THEIR SOULS.
BUT—



AT LAST EVEN DILIPA WAS ON HIS DEATHBED, LEAVING THE TASK
UNACCOMPLISHED. HIS SON BHAGIRATHA, HOWEVER, MADE A VOW IN
THE DYING KING'S PRESENCE.



ACCORDINGLY, WHEN DILIPA DIED,
BHAGIRATHA ADDRESSSED THE
MINISTERS.

I WILL BE KING
ONLY AFTER GANGA
FLOWS ON EARTH.
I ENTRUST THE
KINGDOM TO YOU.



I AM LEAVING
FOR THE FOREST
WHERE I WILL
UNDERGO THE
MOST SEVERE
PENANCES.



FOR YEARS BHAGIRATHA CONTINUED
HIS PENANCES AND MEDITATION.



AT LAST, PLEASED BY HIS SINGLE-MINDEDNESS, BRAHMA APPEARED BEFORE HIM.

ASK FOR A BOON,
O STEADFAST
ONE, AND IT
SHALL BE
GRANTED TO
YOU.

THEN LET
GANGA FLOW DOWN
TO EARTH FROM
THE HEAVEN AND
DELIVER THE
SOULS OF MY
ANCESTORS.

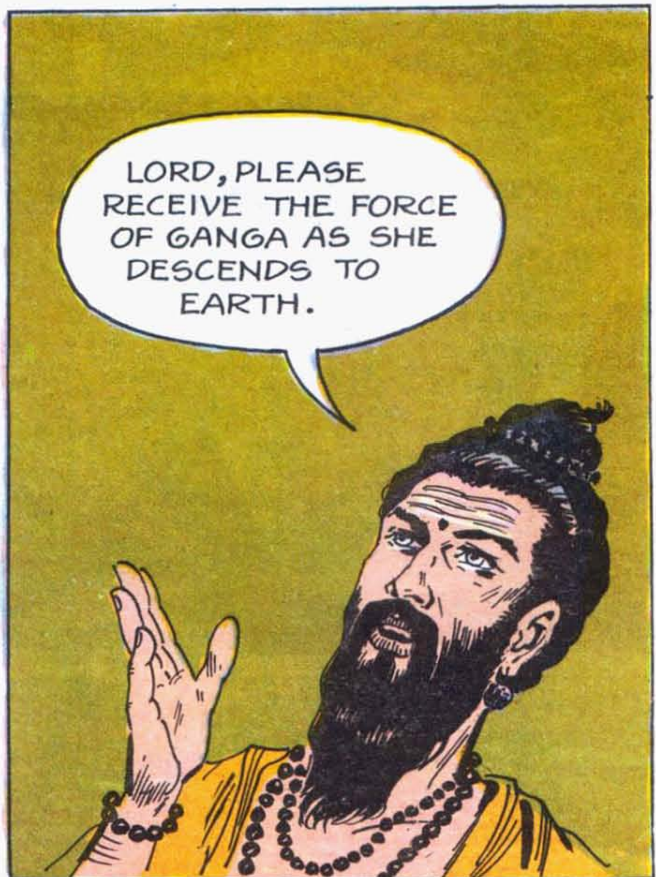
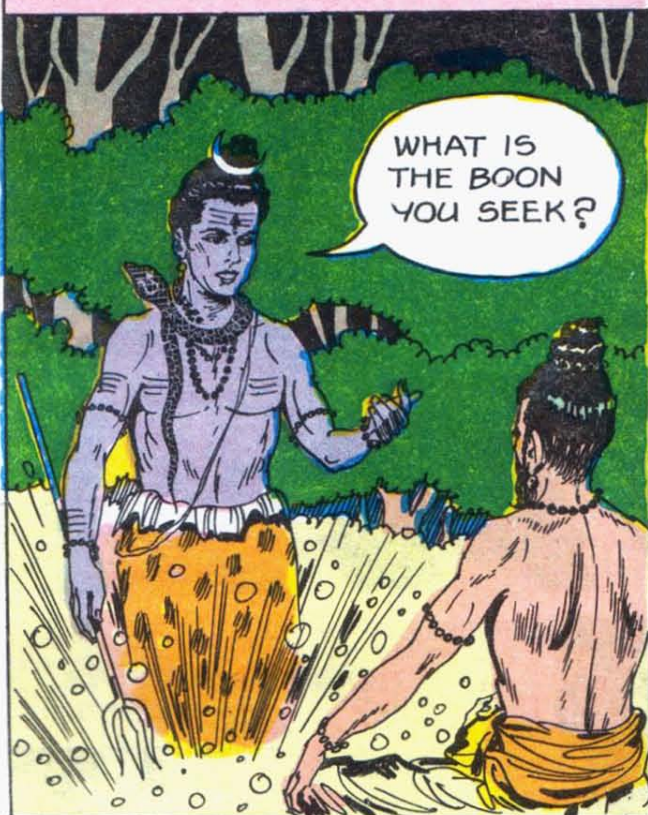
YOUR AIM IS A LOFTY
ONE. BUT THE EARTH
CANNOT SUSTAIN
THE FORCE OF HER
FALL. ONLY SHIVA
CAN WITHSTAND IT.

FOR A YEAR
BHAGIRATHA
ADORED SHIVA.

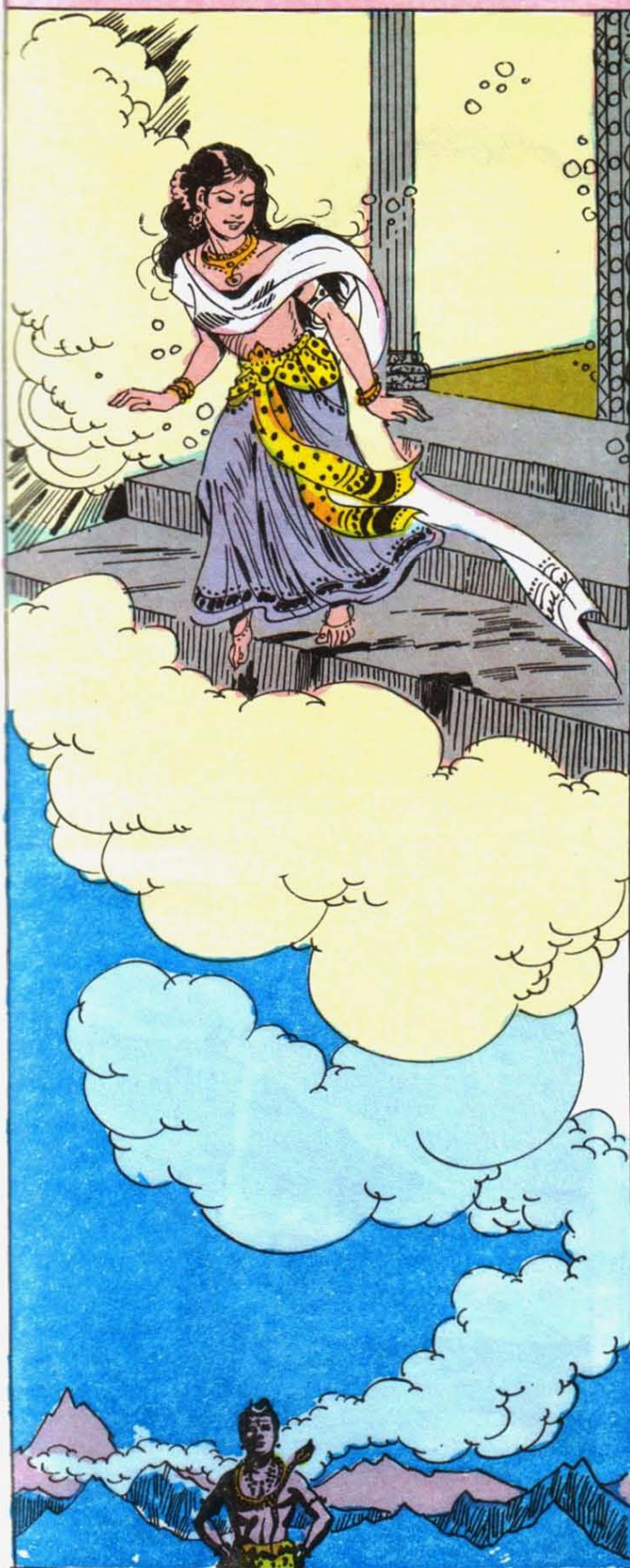
AND BRAHMA DISAPPEARED.

THEN I SHALL
PERFORM
PENANCES
TO PLEASE
SHIVA.

SHIVA APPEARED BEFORE HIM.



IN HEAVEN, GANGA MADE READY
TO DESCEND.



HALFWAY DOWN, A THOUGHT
SUDDENLY OCCURRED TO HER.

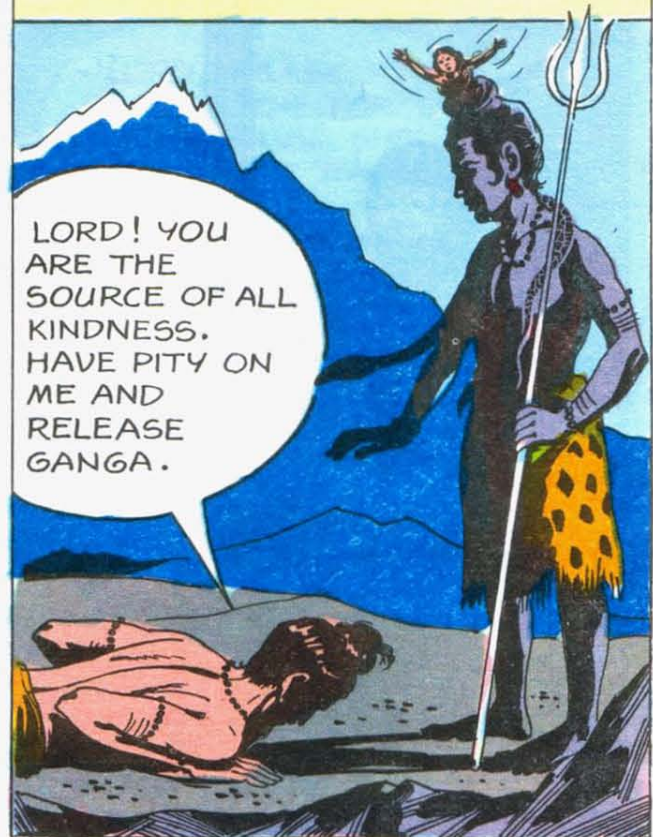
THE MIGHTY
ONE IS OFF HIS
GUARD. I SHALL
SWEEP HIM AWAY
WITH ME TO THE
NETHER WORLD.



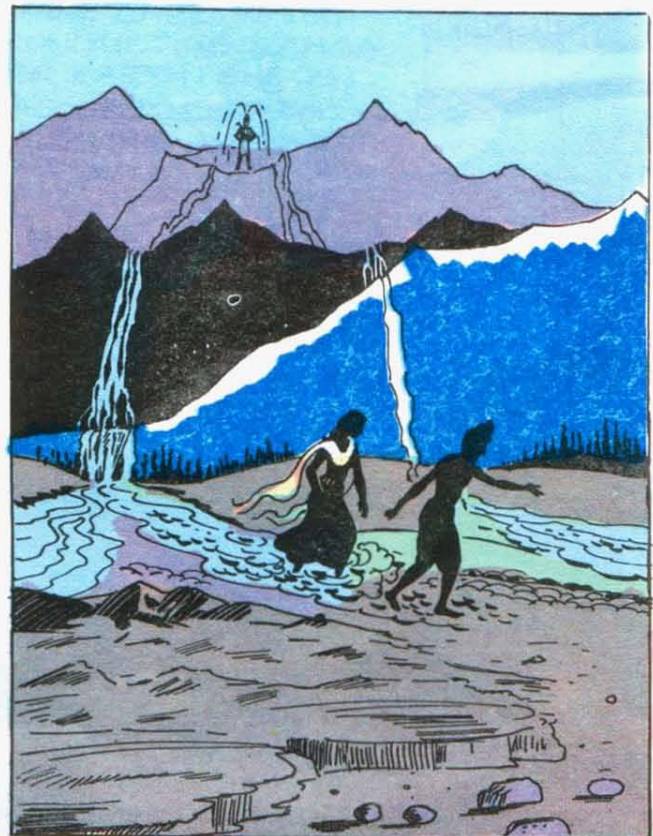
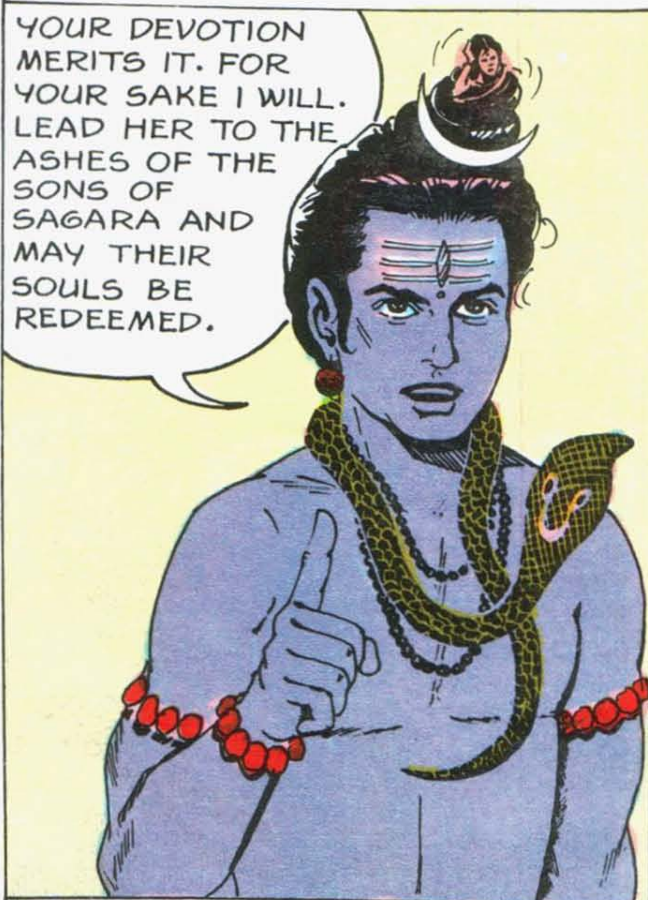
AS GANGA FELL, SHIVA IMPRISONED HER IN HIS MATTED LOCKS. SHE SWIRLED ABOUT IN HER PRISON FOR MANY A YEAR, UNABLE TO ESCAPE.



BHAGIRATHA ONCE AGAIN ADORED SHIVA AND THE MIGHTY GOD APPEARED BEFORE HIM.



YOUR DEVOTION MERITS IT. FOR YOUR SAKE I WILL. LEAD HER TO THE ASHES OF THE SONS OF SAGARA AND MAY THEIR SOULS BE REDEEMED.



GANGA BECAME FURTHER PURIFIED BY HER CONTACT WITH THE LORD'S HEAD. PEOPLE RAN TO HER TO CLEANSE THEMSELVES OF ALL SINS.

MOTHER GANGA
WILL WASH AWAY
OUR SINS.

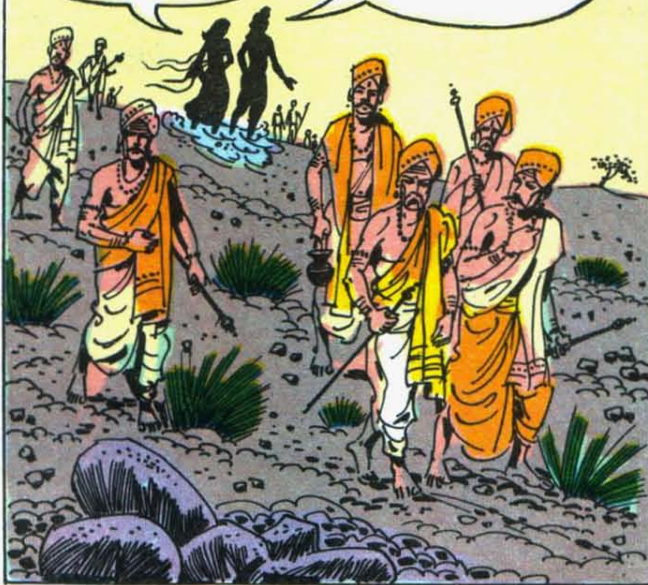
SHE HAS BEEN
SANCTIFIED BY
THE LORD'S
SACRED HEAD.



BUT BHAGIRATHA'S TRIALS WERE NOT YET OVER. THE NETHER WORLD BEYOND THE OCEAN WAS STILL FAR AWAY. ON THE WAY—

WHERE ARE THESE PEOPLE GOING?

TO THE SACRIFICE OF SAGE JAHNU.



I WILL FLOW THAT WAY.

YOU MAY. BUT DO NOT DISTURB THE SAGE.



I WILL GO CLOSER.



TAKE CARE. YOU'LL FLOOD THE SACRIFICIAL FIRE AND DESTROY THE SACRIFICE.

BUT THE IRREPRESSIBLE GANGA RUSHED FORWARD.

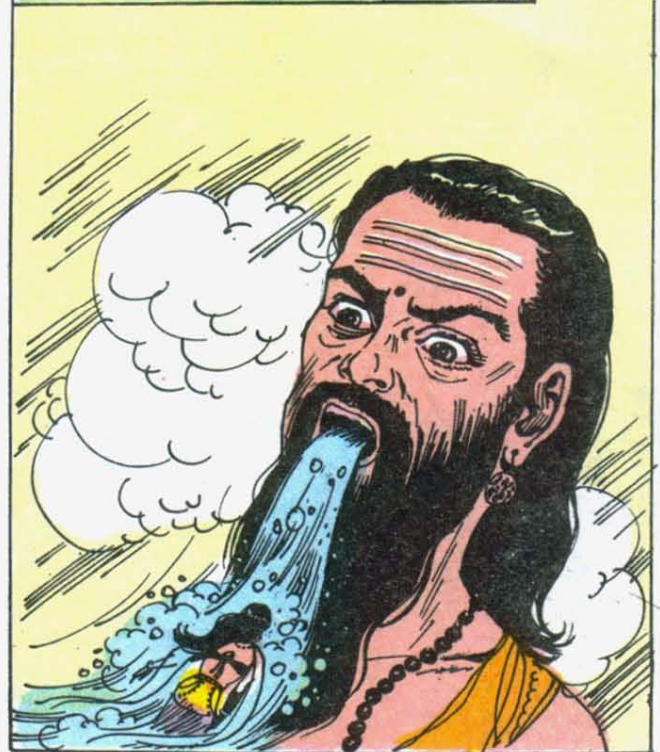


THE SAGE WAS FURIOUS.



YOU SHALL BE
PUNISHED FOR
THIS!

AND THE FUMING SAGE
CONSUMED HER IN ONE
LONG GULP.



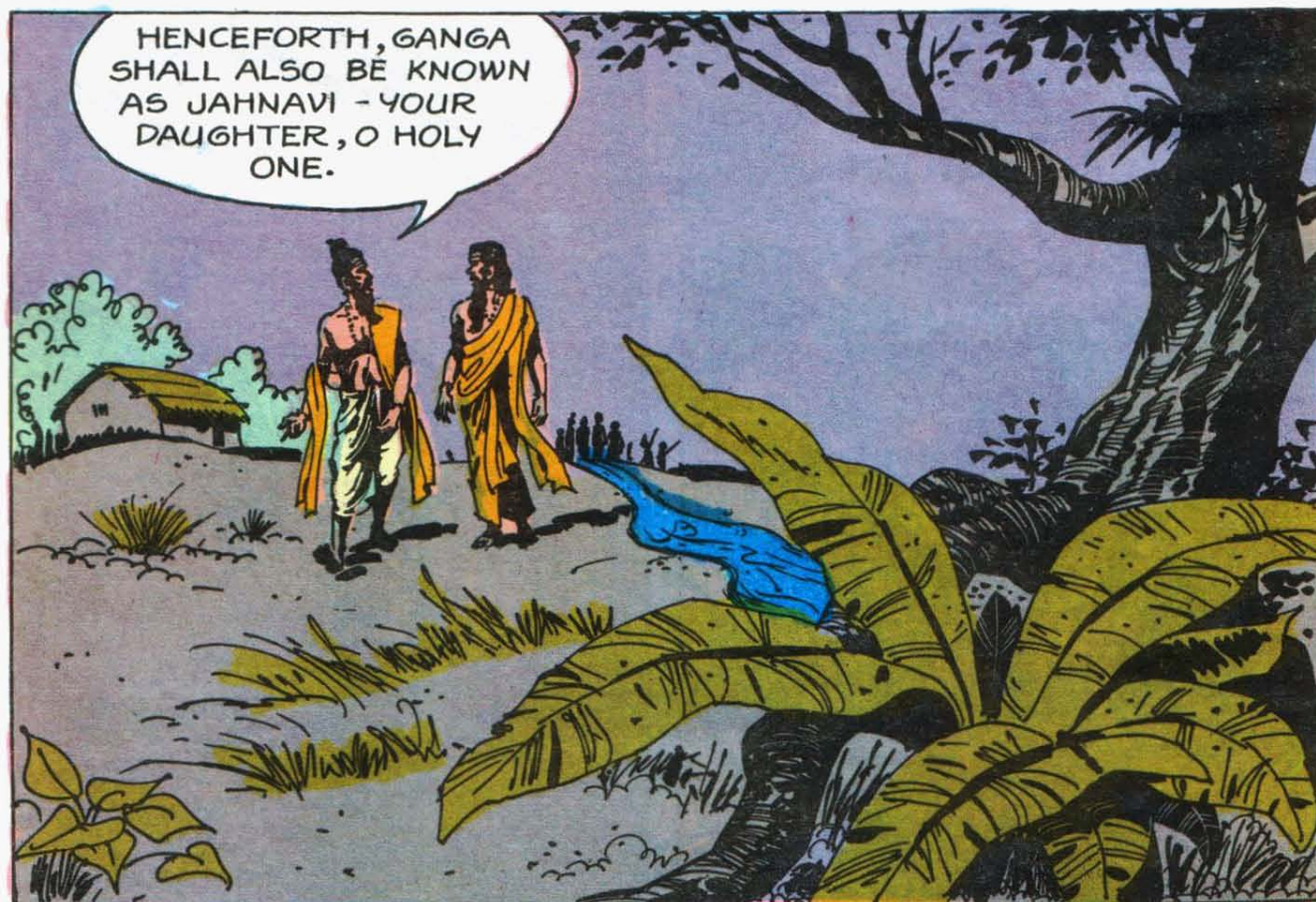
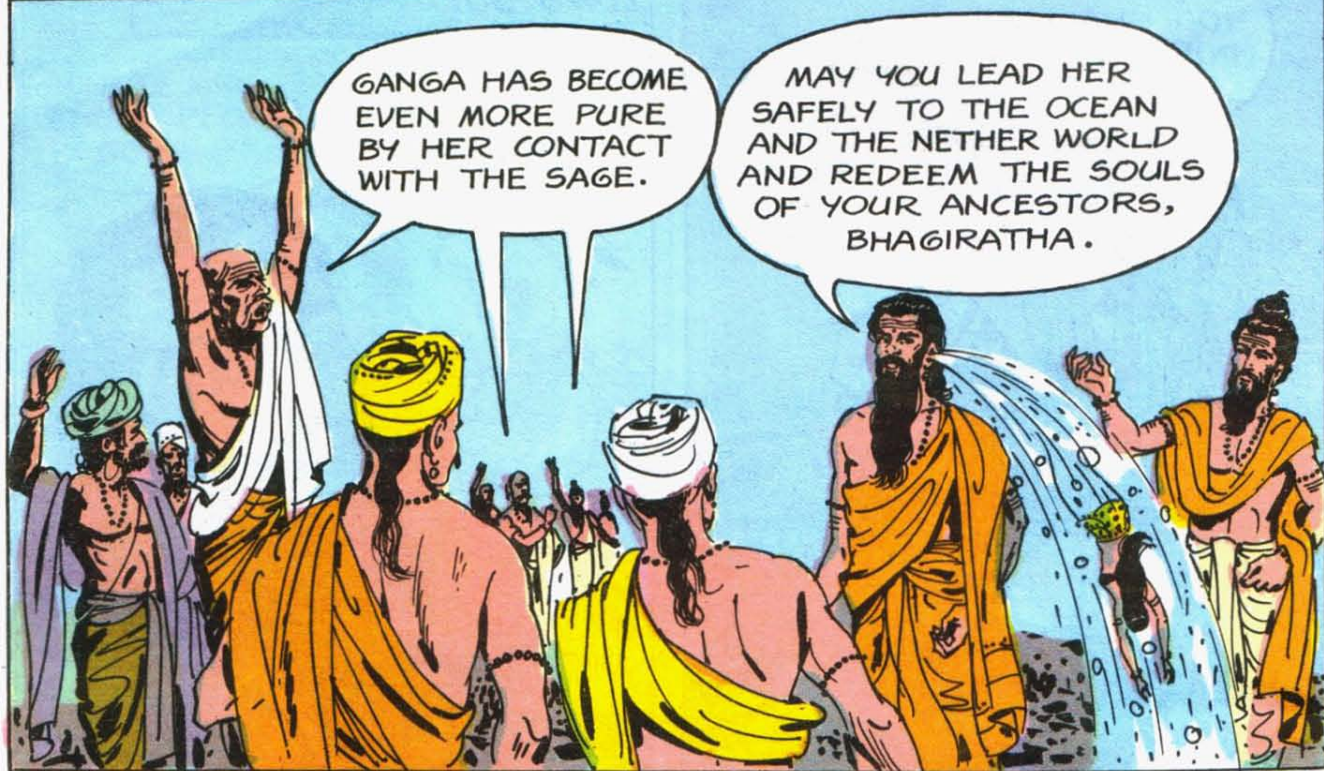
FORGIVE HER,
HOLY ONE, AND
RELEASE HER.



YES, O HOLY
ONE. LET NOT
THE ENDEAVOURS
OF BHAGIRATHA
BE WASTED.



OUT OF RESPECT FOR BHAGIRATHA'S PENANCES, JAHNU RELEASED GANGA.



AT LAST, BHAGIRATHA AND GANGA REACHED THE OCEAN AND THE NETHER WORLD BEYOND. GANGA FLOWED OVER THE ASHES OF THE SONS OF SAGARA AND ONTO THE OCEAN BED. FROM THAT DAY ONWARDS, THE OCEAN CAME TO BE KNOWN AS "SAGARA."



HIS PROMISE FULFILLED,
BRAHMA APPEARED BEFORE
BHAGIRATHA.

THE SONS OF SAGARA
ARE IN HEAVEN AND WILL
REMAIN THERE AS LONG
AS GANGA FLOWS ON
THE EARTH.



SINCE YOU
BROUGHT GANGA
TO EARTH BY
YOUR PENANCES,
SHE SHALL BE
KNOWN AS
BHAGIRATHI
- YOUR
DAUGHTER.



THEN BHAGIRATHA RETURNED TO HIS KINGDOM, ASCENDED THE
THRONE AND RULED WISELY FOR MANY YEARS.

