



Tales of Durga

Vol. 514 Rs. 25



Amar Chitra Katha: the Glorious Heritage of India



Tales of Durga

Goddess Durga is as widely worshipped as Vishnu and Shiva. She is the fierce form of Devi who, as Shakti, is considered the personification of universal energy. According to the Devi Bhagavata the Universe is but Her manifestation – and even Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva worship Her. Durga is worshipped in sixty-four forms as Ambika, Kali, Chamundi, Devi, Uma, etc.

The worship of Durga is supposed to be more than 4,000 years old in India. The names of Uma and Parvati occur in the Taittiriya Aranyaka and the Kena Upanishad. Some Indologists are of the opinion that the figure seated on a lion in the coins of Azes I, the Shaka ruler (c. 5 B.C. to A.D. 30), represents Ambika or Durga.

Durga is worshipped in one form or another in almost every Indian village.

This Amar Chitra Katha is based on the Durga-Saptashati of the Markandeya Purana.



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Editor : Anant Pai

© India Book House Limited, 1978. • Reprinted September, 1998.

ISBN 81-7508-129-5

Published by Anant Pai for India Book House Limited, Fleet Bldg, Mathuradas Vasantji Road, Marol Naka,

Andheri (East), Mumbai - 400 059 and printed by him at Tritop Art-n-Print, A/57, 1st Floor,

Blundup Industrial Estate, Parnalil Silk Mills Compound, L. B. S. Marg, Blundup (W), Mumbai - 400 078.

DURGA - THE SLAYER OF MAHISHA



THE ASURA, MAHISHA, ONCE PERFORMED SEVERE PENANCES TO PROPITIATE BRAHMA. PLEASED WITH HIS AUSTERITIES, BRAHMA APPEARED BEFORE HIM.



LORD,
MAKE ME
IMMORTAL.

ALL WHO ARE
BORN MUST DIE.
YOU CANNOT
ESCAPE DEATH.

MAHISHA BECAME THOUGHTFUL.

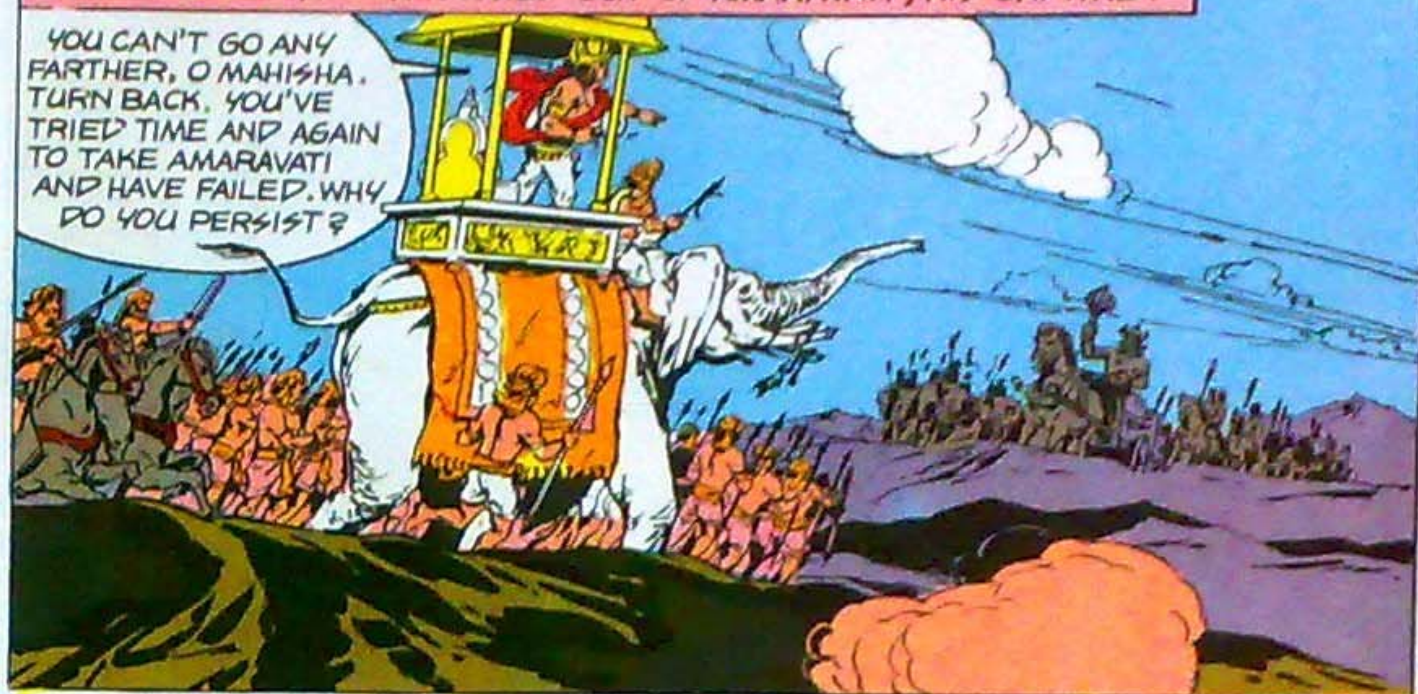
WHAT SHALL I
DO? HAVE I PERFORMED
ALL THOSE
PENANCES FOR
NOTHING? AH!
I HAVE IT!





A LITTLE LATER, INDRA RUSHED OUT OF AMARAVATI, HIS CAPITAL.

YOU CAN'T GO ANY FARTHER, O MAHISHA. TURN BACK. YOU'VE TRIED TIME AND AGAIN TO TAKE AMARAVATI AND HAVE FAILED. WHY DO YOU PERSIST?



INDRA, I'VE COME TO FIGHT! NOT TO TALK. USE YOUR WEAPONS INSTEAD OF YOUR TONGUE!

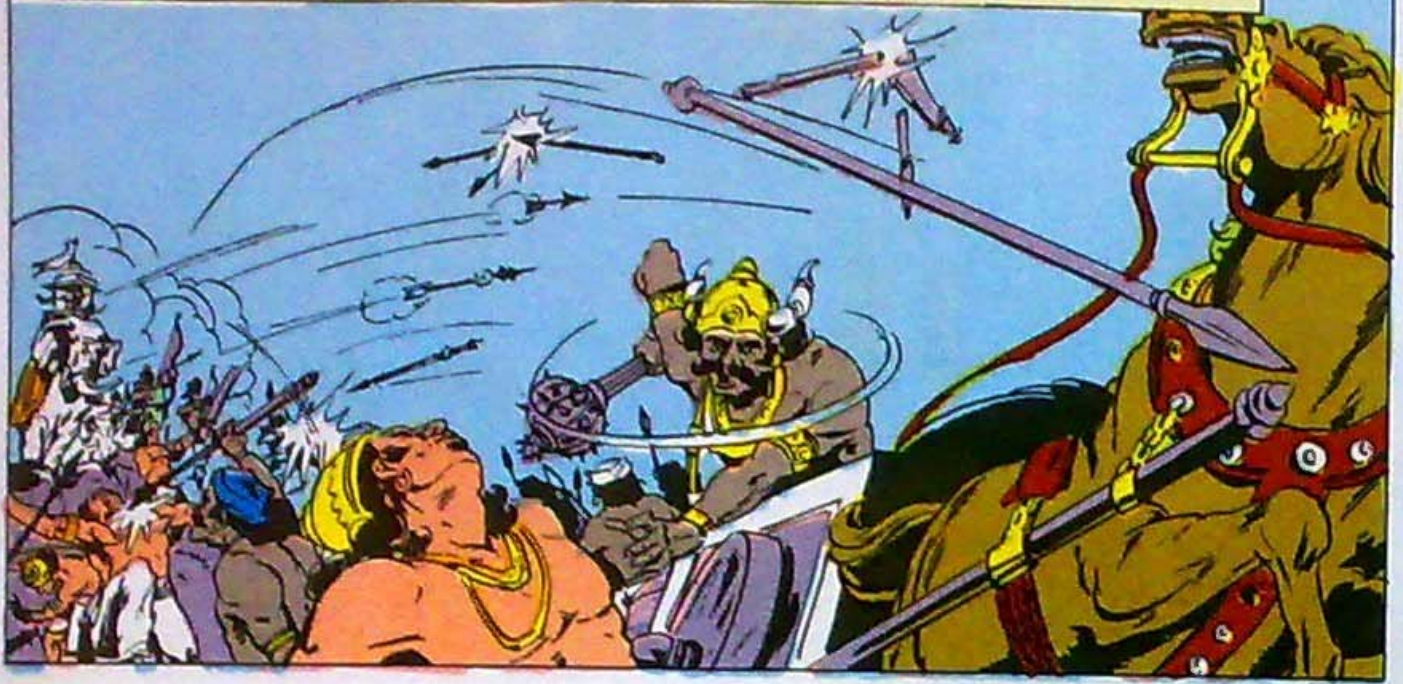


STUNG BY MAHISHA'S WORDS, INDRA DARTED FORWARD BRANDISHING HIS WEAPON — THE THUNDERBOLT.

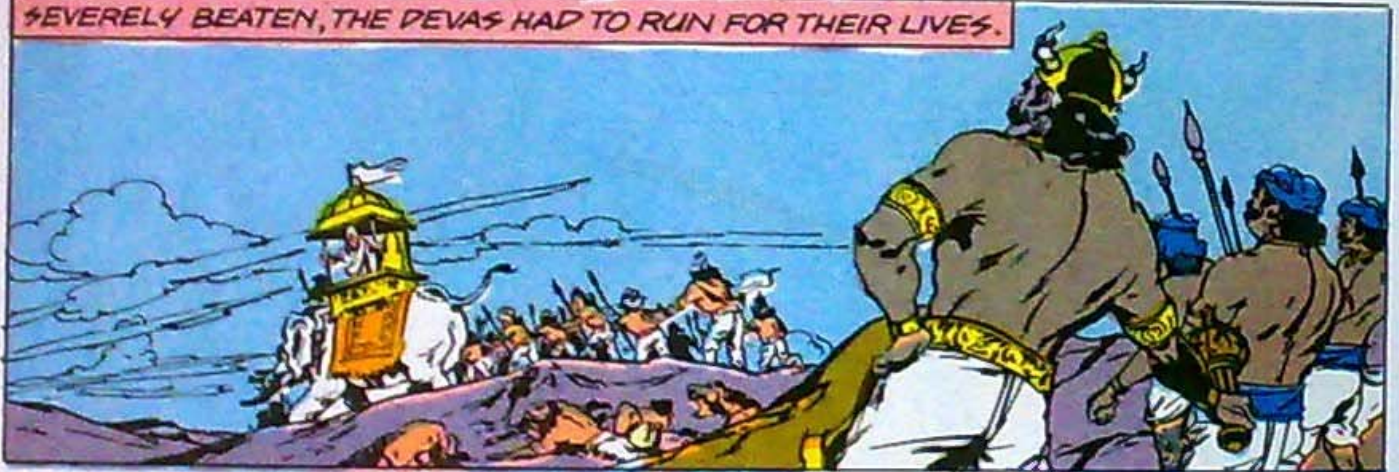
ATTACK, O DEVAS. LET NO ASURA ESCAPE.



THEN ENSUED A FIERCE BATTLE BETWEEN THE DEVAS AND THE ASURAS.



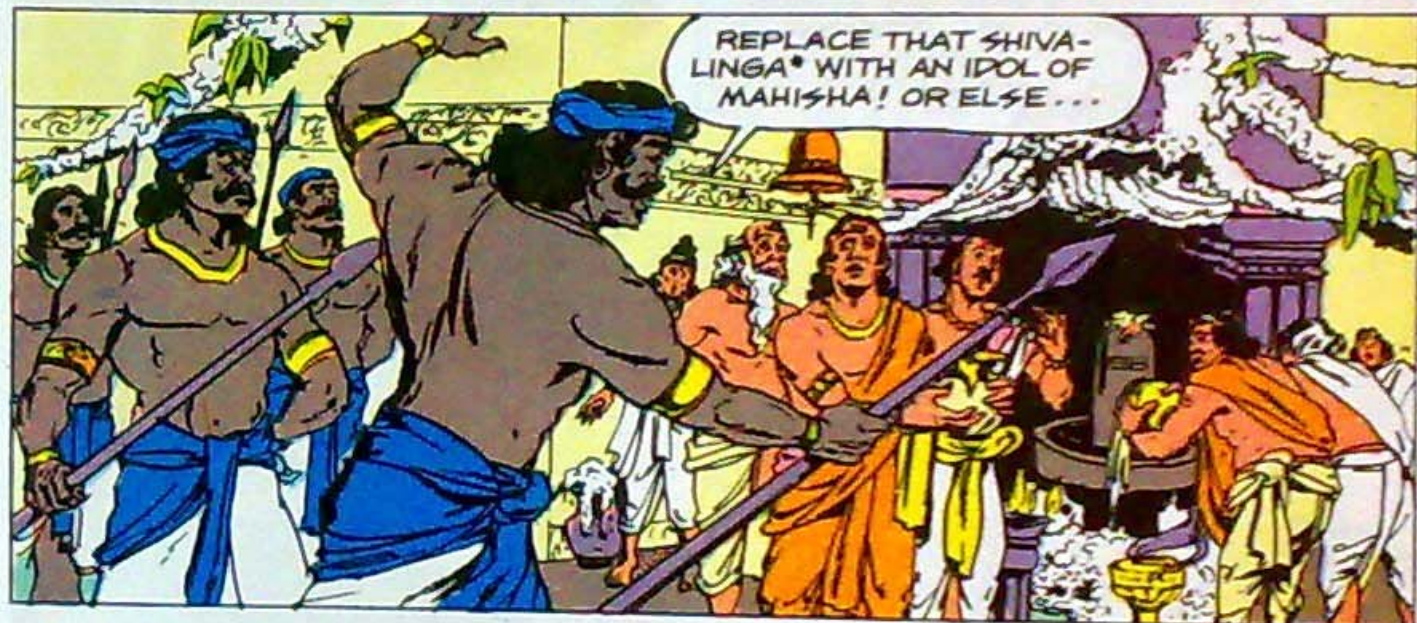
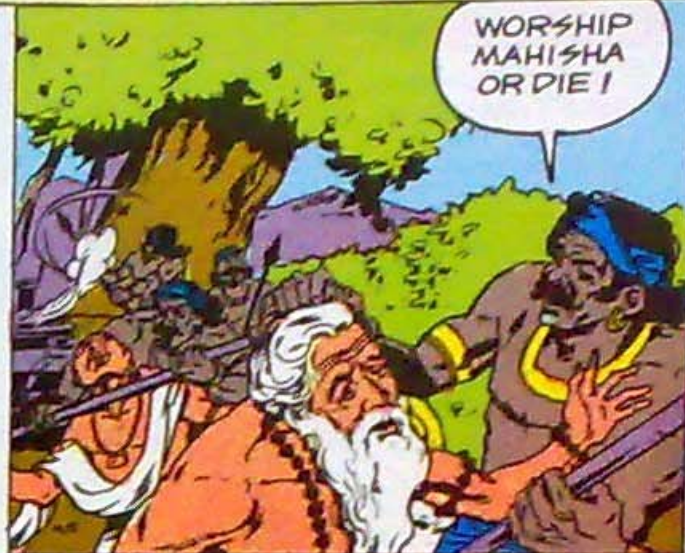
SEVERELY BEATEN, THE DEVAS HAD TO RUN FOR THEIR LIVES.



AFTER DRIVING THE DEVAS OUT OF AMARAVATI, MAHISHA ASCENDED INDRA'S THRONE.



MAHISHA'S MEN BEGAN TO HARASS THOSE PIOUS MEN WHO CONTINUED TO WORSHIP VISHNU OR SHIVA.



* A FORM IN WHICH SHIVA IS WORSHIPPED

MEANWHILE, UNKNOWN TO THEM, THE DEVAS HAD ALREADY ASSEMBLED AT KAILAS, THE ABODE OF LORD SHIVA.

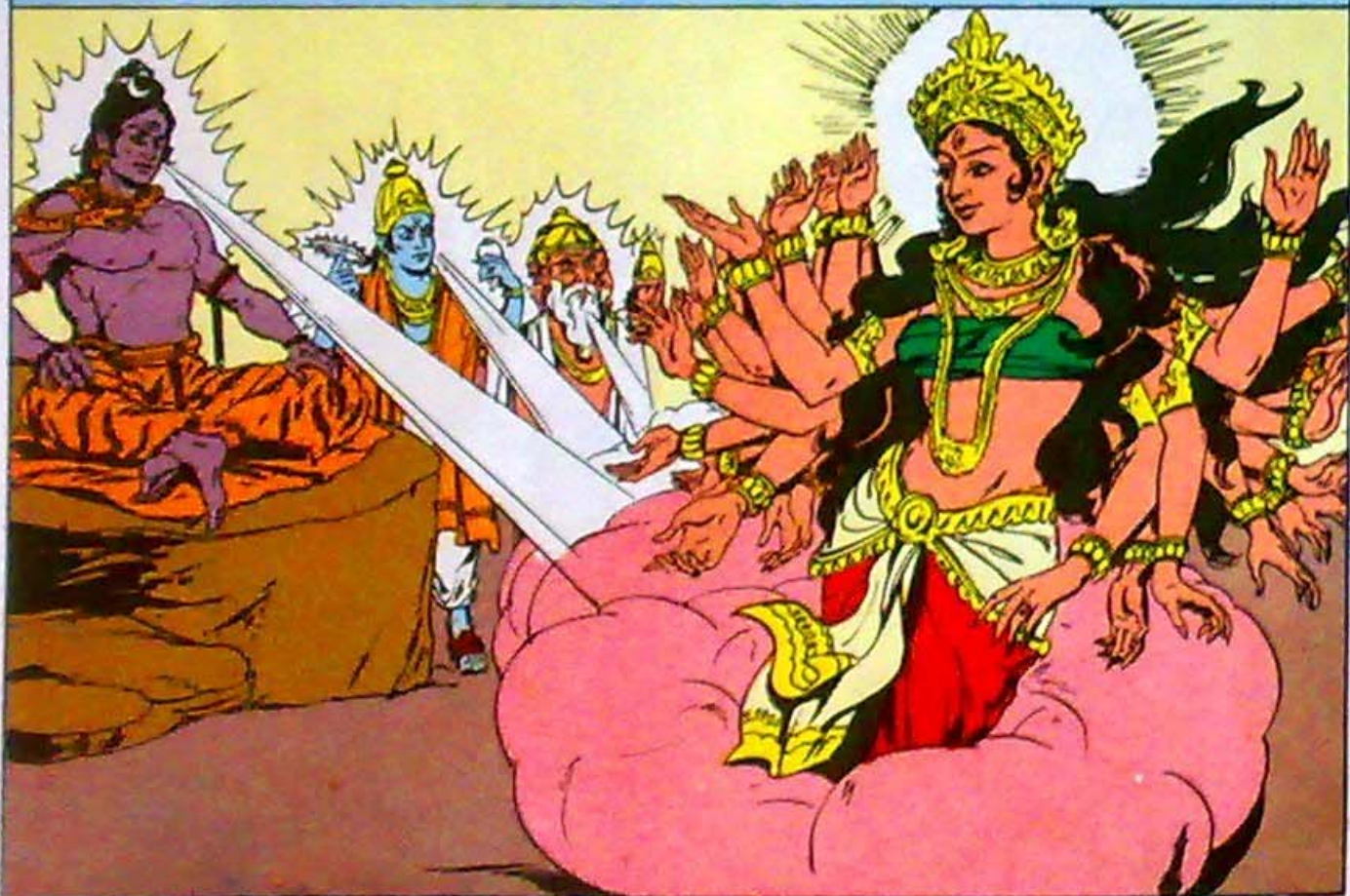
WE ARE HELPLESS AGAINST MAHISHA. WILL EVIL TRIUMPH OVER RIGHT-EOUSNESS?



EVEN AS THE DEVAS SPOKE, AN INTENSE LIGHT ISSUED FORTH FROM THE ENRAGED FACES OF SHIVA, VISHNU AND BRAHMA.



IT WAS JOINED BY SIMILAR RAYS OF LIGHT FROM INDRA AND OTHER DEVAS. AND LO! THE NEXT MOMENT, OUT OF THAT LIGHT A FEMALE FORM WITH A THOUSAND ARMS CAME INTO BEING! IT WAS DEVI DURGA.



O DEVI, YOU ARE THE ORIGIN OF ALL THE WORLDS. YOU ARE DURGA. YOU ARE THE INNER FORCE, THE SOURCE OF ALL STRENGTH. DESTROY MAHISHA AND PROTECT US!



SHIVA DREW FORTH A TRIDENT FROM HIS OWN TRIDENT...



...AND OFFERED IT TO DURGA.



VISHNU AND OTHER DEVAS, TOO, OFFERED WEAPONS TO DURGA.

O DEVI, ACCEPT THIS DISCUS.

— AND THIS THUNDERBOLT.



ARMED WITH THE CELESTIAL WEAPONS AND MOUNTED ON A LION, DURGA EMITTED A BLOOD-CURLING ROAR.



THE SEAS TREMBLED...



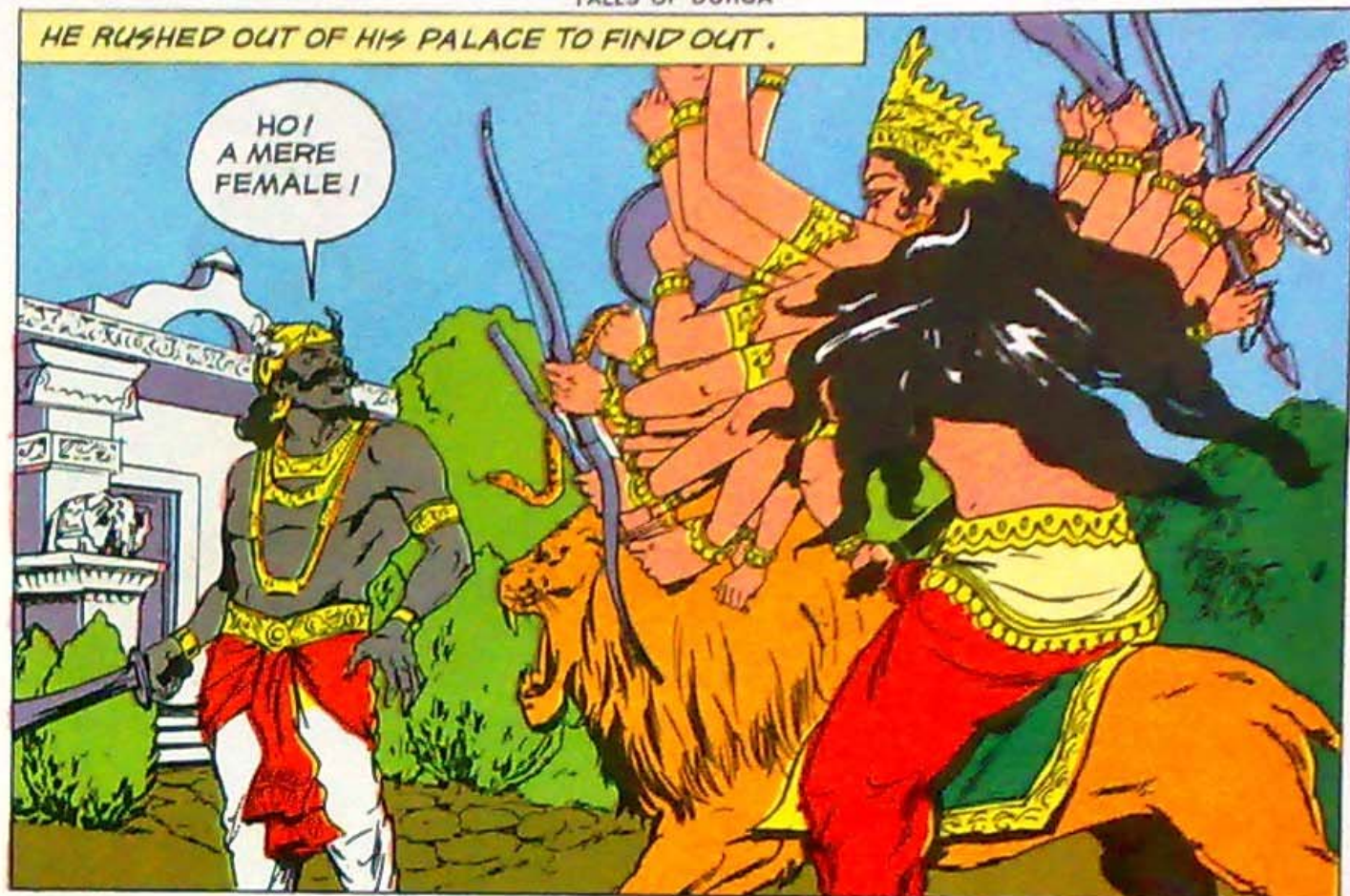
...THE EARTH SHOOK AND THE MOUNTAINS ROCKED.



MAHISHA'S HEART MISSED A BEAT.



HE RUSHED OUT OF HIS PALACE TO FIND OUT.



MAHISHA HASTILY STEPPED BACK AND CALLED TO HIS MEN.



AS THE ASURAS HURLED VARIOUS WEAPONS AT HER, DURGA BREATHED HARD.



AS SHE BREATHED, THOUSANDS OF SOLDIERS CAME INTO BEING AND FOUGHT AT HER SIDE.



HER MOUNT STRODE THROUGH MAHISHA'S ARMY, DESTROYING THOUSANDS OF ASURAS.



MAHISHA SEETHED WITH FURY.

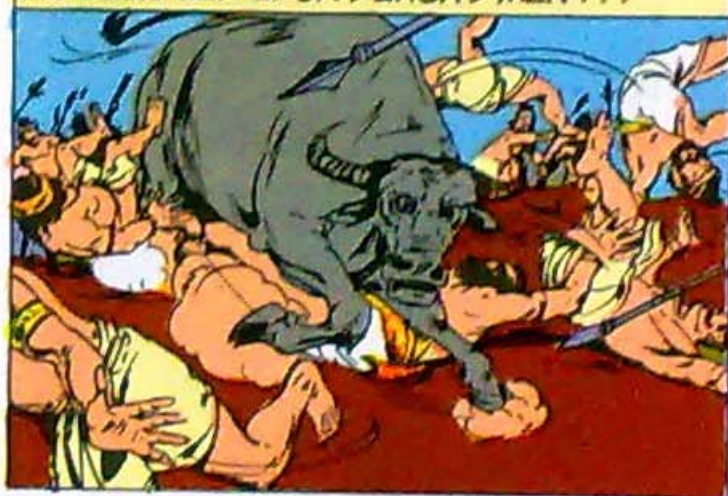
I'LL
ANNIHILATE
THIS MONSTER
AND HER
HORDES.



ASSUMING THE FORM OF A BUFFALO, MAHISHA CHARGED FORTH SNORTING AND BELLOWING.



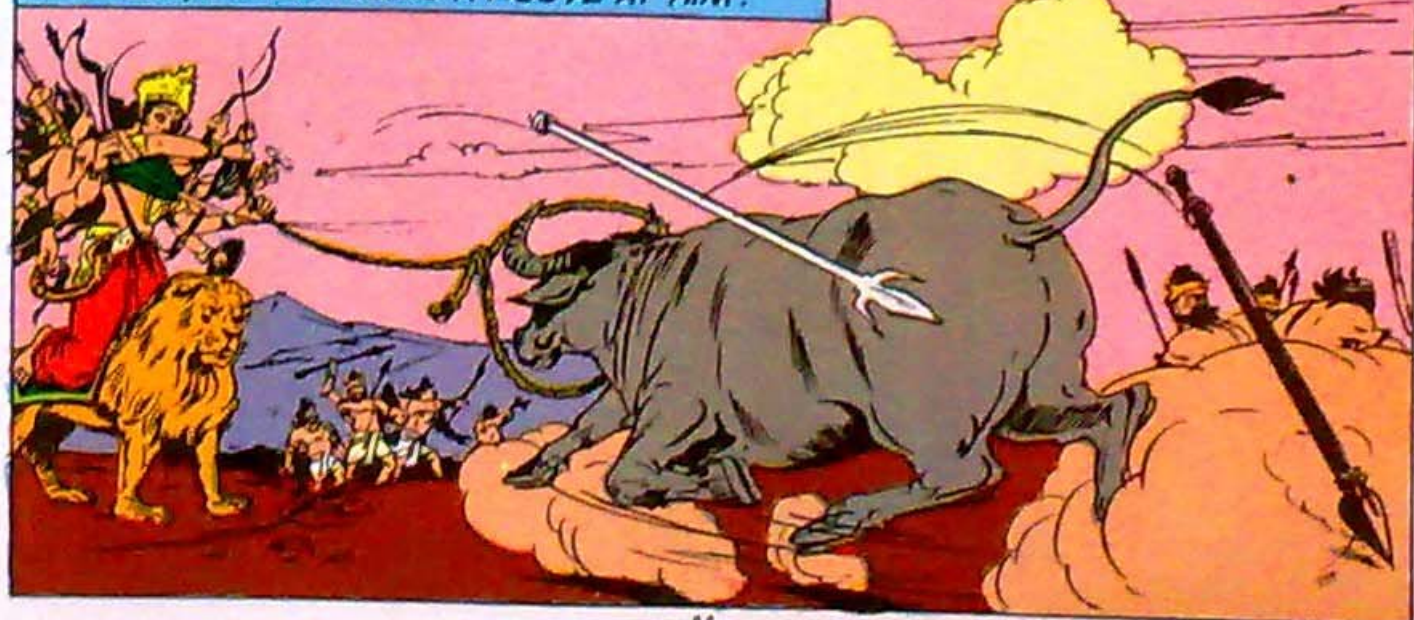
HE TRAMPLED UPON DURGA'S MEN...



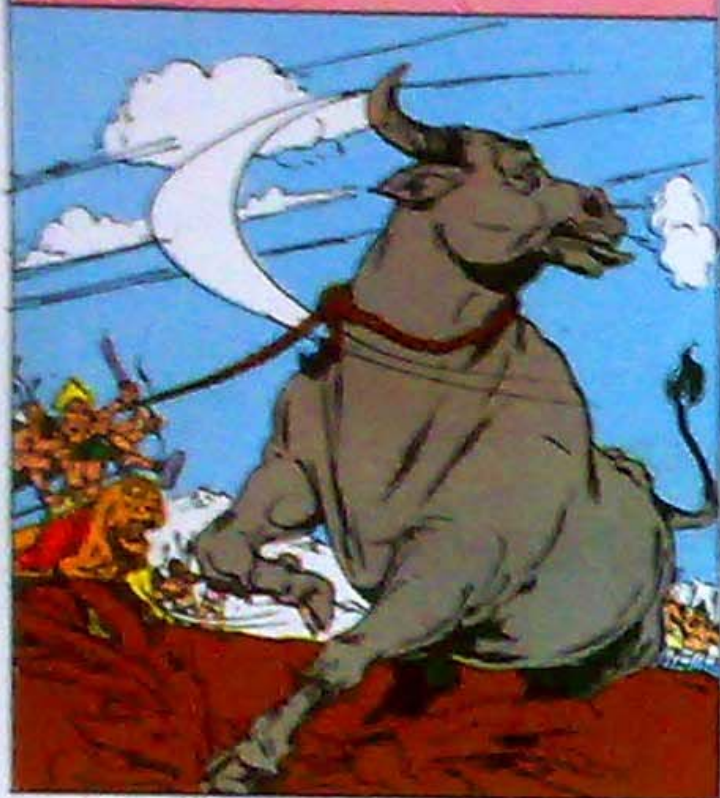
...AND LASHED AT THEM WITH HIS TAIL.



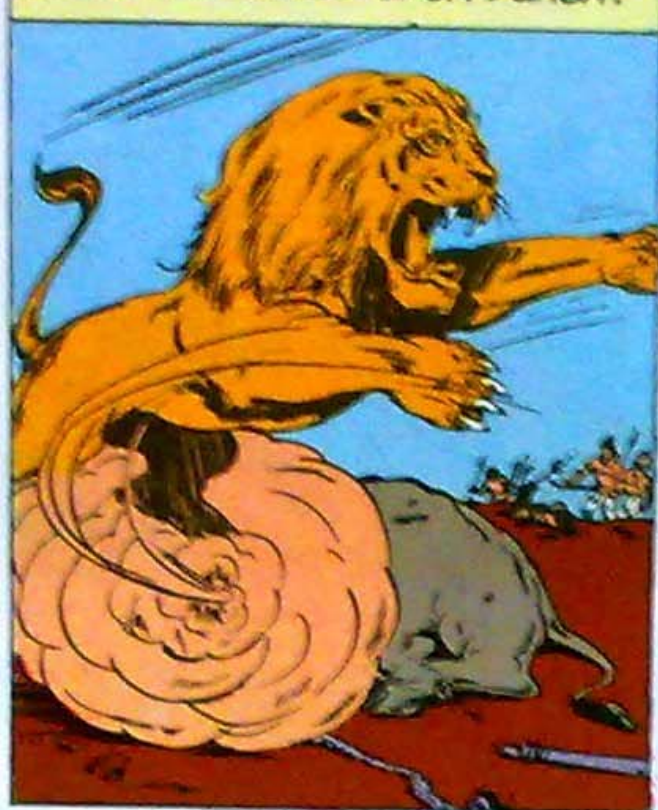
ENRAGED, DURGA FLUNG A NOOSE AT HIM.



MAHISHA HOOK HIMSELF WITH
ALL HIS MIGHT ...



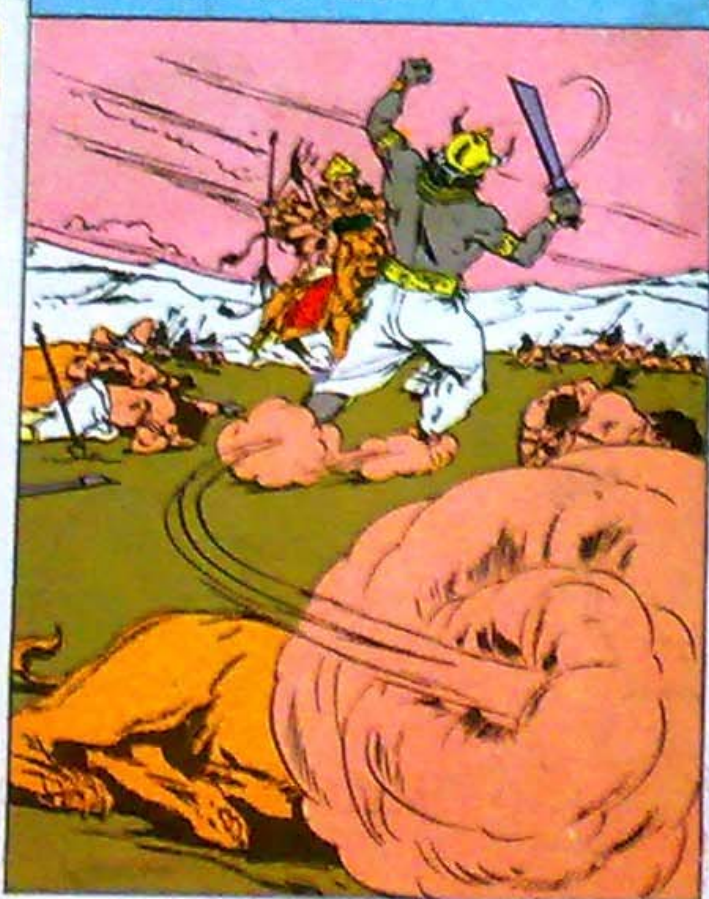
... TRANSFORMED HIMSELF INTO A
LION AND POUNCED UPON DURGA.



AS DURGA CHOPPED OFF THE
HEAD OF THE LION ...



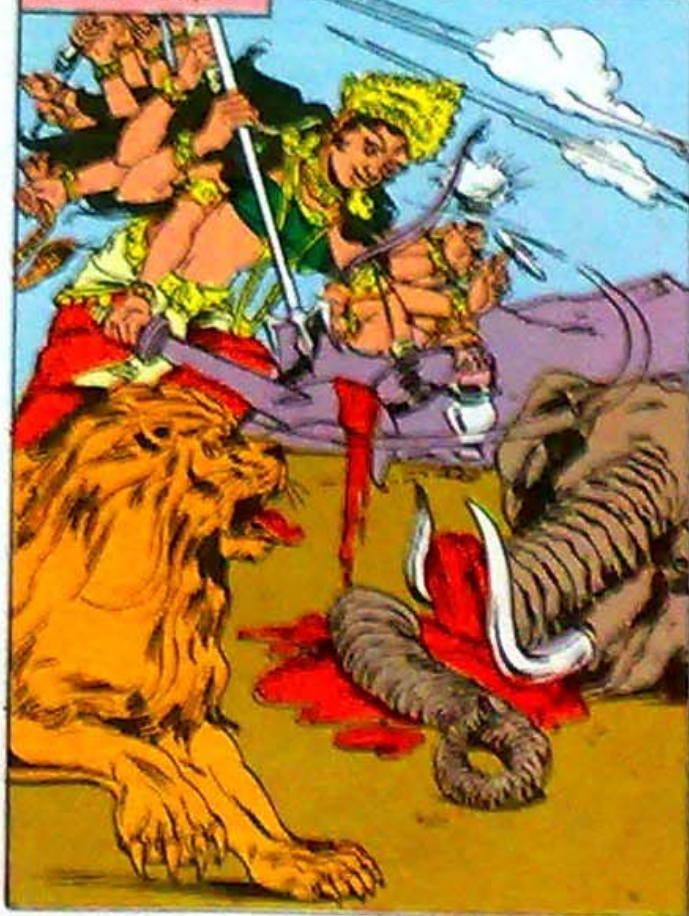
... MAHISHA ROSE IN HIS OWN
FORM AND CHARGED.



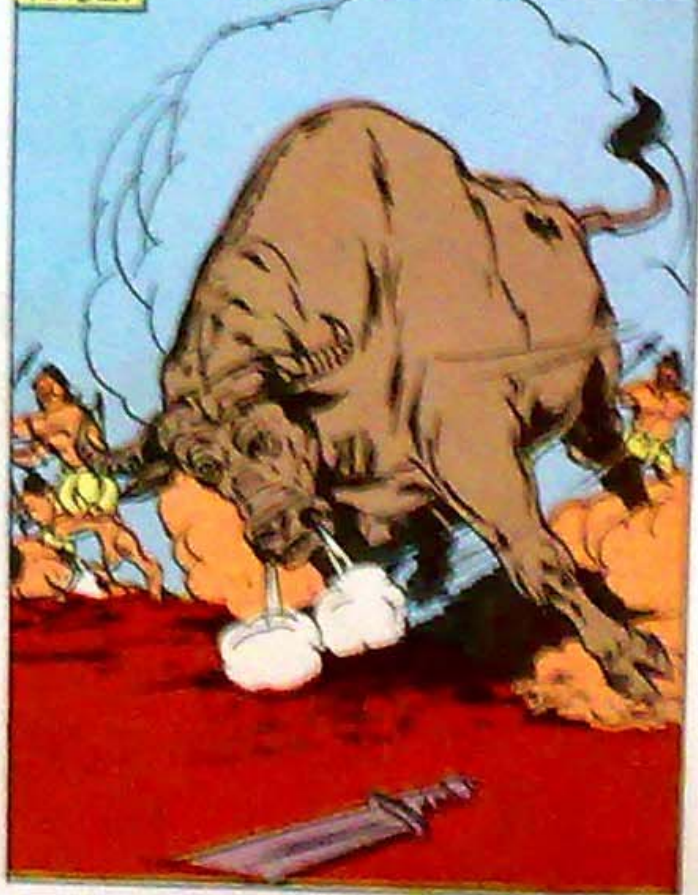
LATER HE ASSUMED THE FORM OF AN ELEPHANT AND TUGGED AT DURGA'S MOUNT WITH HIS TRUNK.



DURGA LOOPEE OFF THE TRUNK WITH HER SWORD.



MAHISHA AGAIN ASSUMED THE FORM OF A BUFFALO AND SNORTED WITH RAGE.



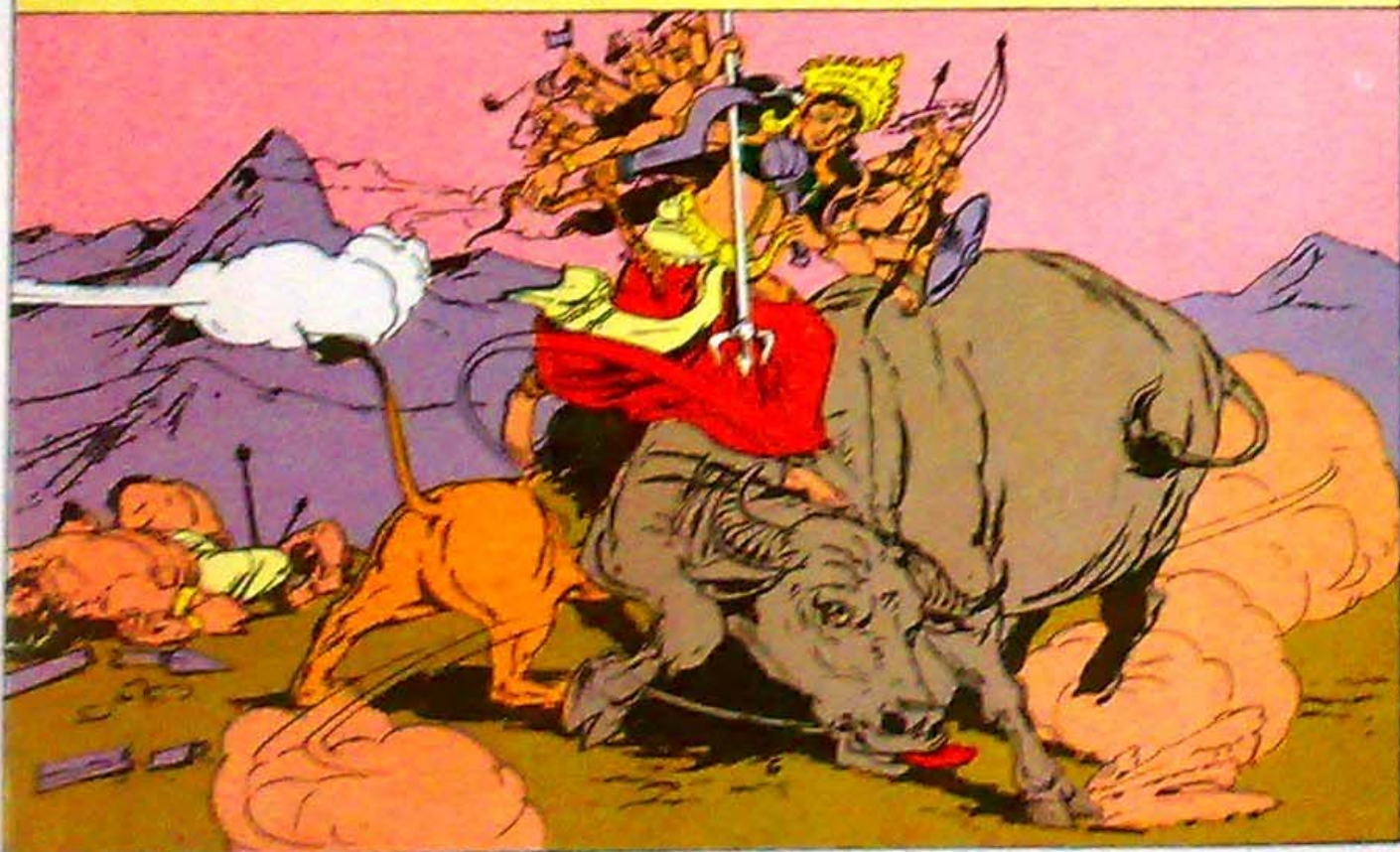
DURGA LOOKED AT HIM WITH CONTEMPT.



ENRAGED, MAHISHA RUSHED AT HER.



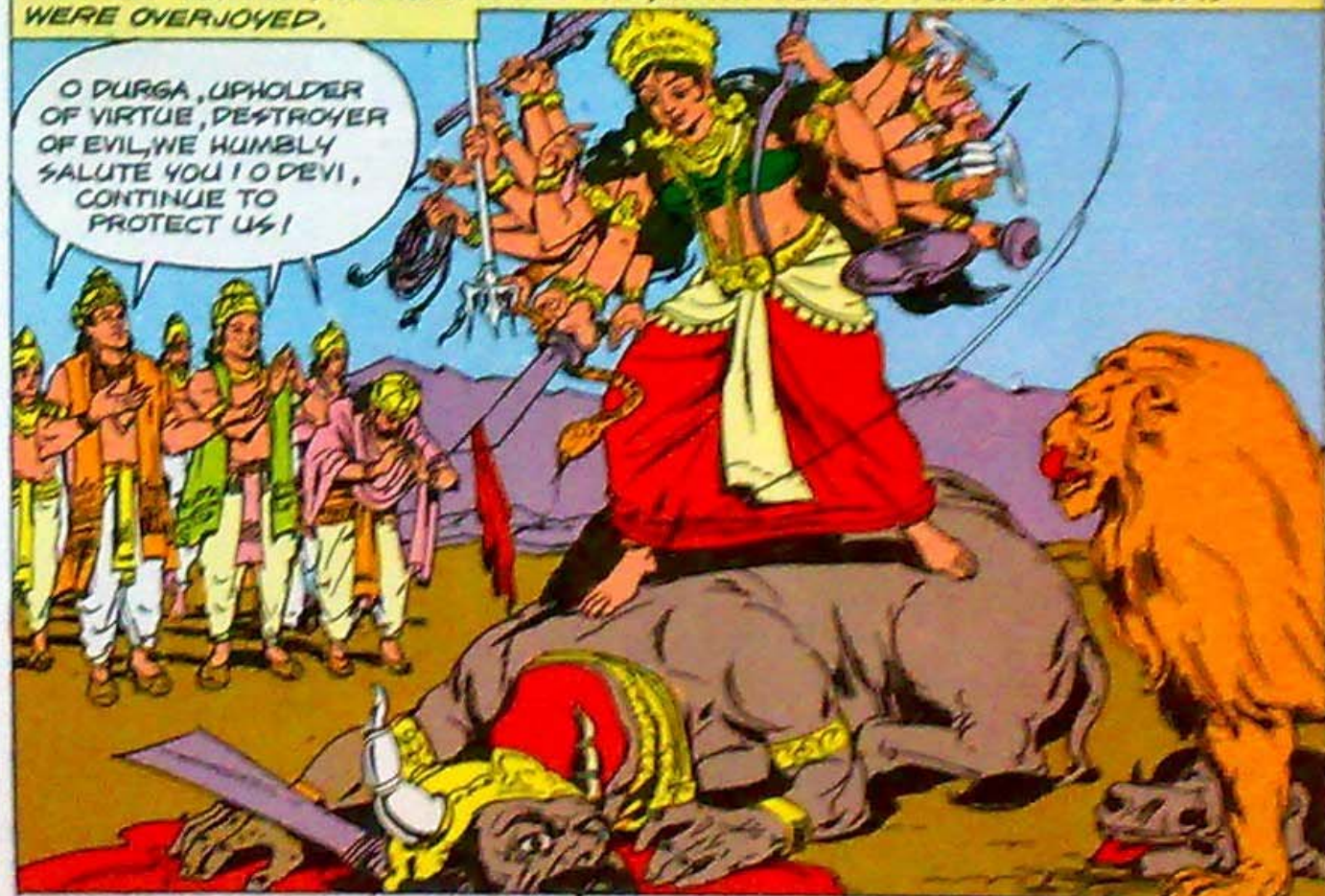
BUT DURGA LEAPT UPON HIM AND PINNED HIM DOWN.



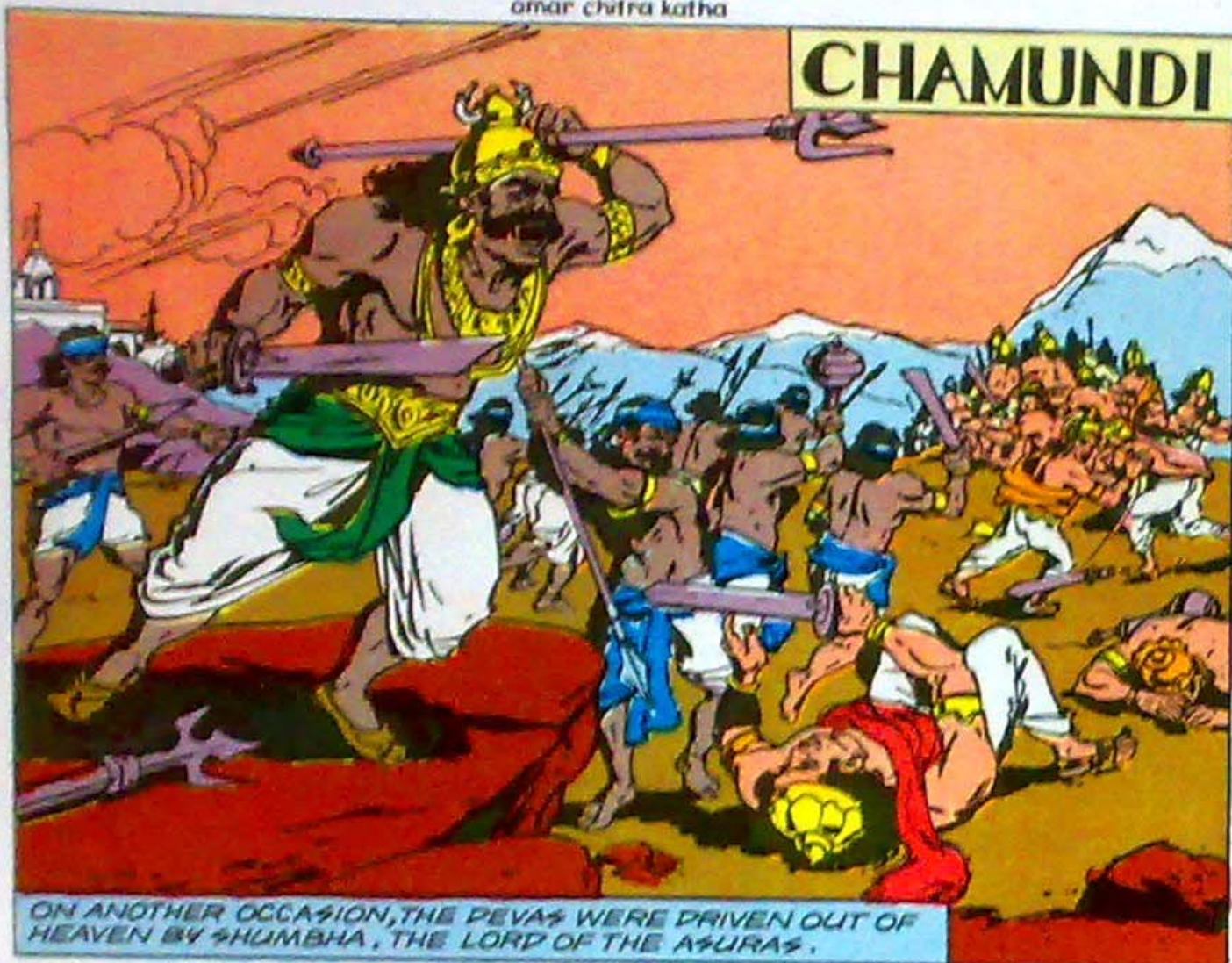
MAHISHA STRUGGLED TO FREE HIMSELF, AS HALF OF HIM EMERGED FROM THE MOUTH OF THE BUFFALO, DURGA RAISED HER SWORD.



THE NEXT MOMENT, MAHISHA FELL DEAD, AT THE FOOT OF DURGA. THE DEVAS WERE OVERJOYED.



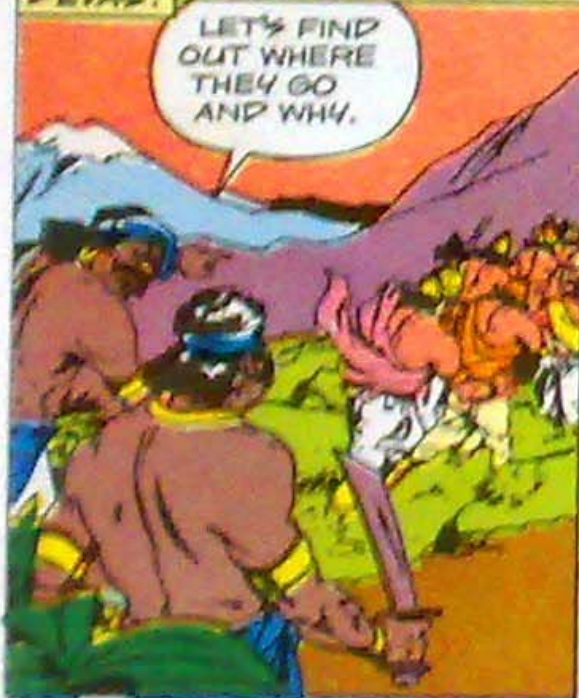
CHAMUNDI



ON ANOTHER OCCASION, THE DEVAS WERE DRIVEN OUT OF HEAVEN BY SHUMBHA, THE LORD OF THE ASURAS.

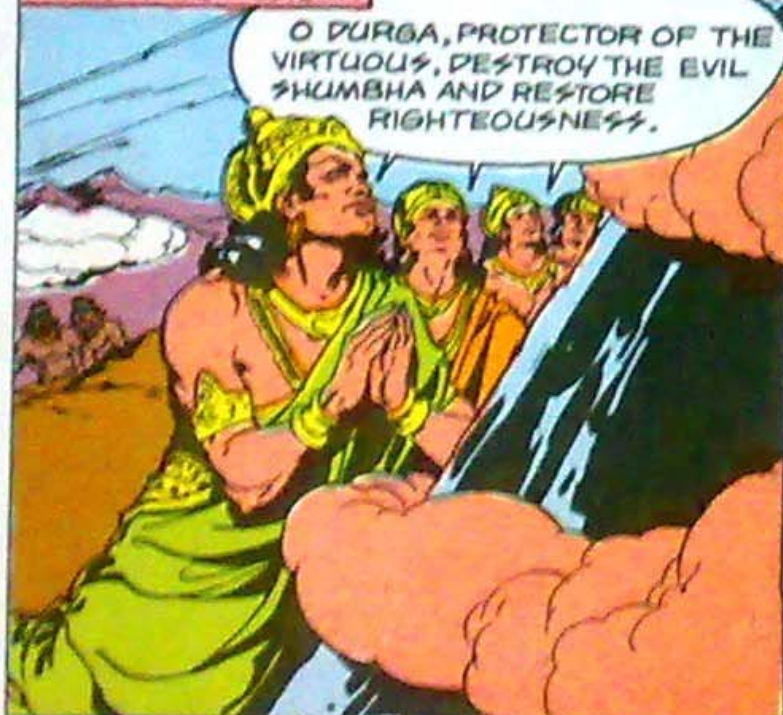
CHANDA AND MUNDA, SHUMBHA'S COMMANDERS, FOLLOWED THE DEVAS.

LET'S FIND OUT WHERE THEY GO AND WHY.



THE DEVAS WENT TO MOUNT HIMAVAT AND PRAYED TO DURGA.

O DURGA, PROTECTOR OF THE VIRTUOUS, DESTROY THE EVIL SHUMBHA AND RESTORE RIGHTEOUSNESS.



JUST THEN PARVATI, SHIVA'S CONSORT, WHO WAS ON HER WAY TO THE RIVER, HAPPENED TO PASS BY.



AND LO! THE NEXT MOMENT, GODDESS AMBIKA* SPRANG FORTH FROM THE BODY OF PARVATI.



WHEN CHANDA AND MUNDA RUSHED TO THE PALACE OF SHUMBHA AND DESCRIBED AMBIKA TO HIM.



CHANDA AND MUNDA RUSHED BACK TO MOUNT HIMAVAT.

O BEAUTIFUL ONE, SHUMBHA THE LORD OF THE THREE WORLDS WHO POSSESSES UNEQUALLED WEALTH WANTS TO MARRY YOU.

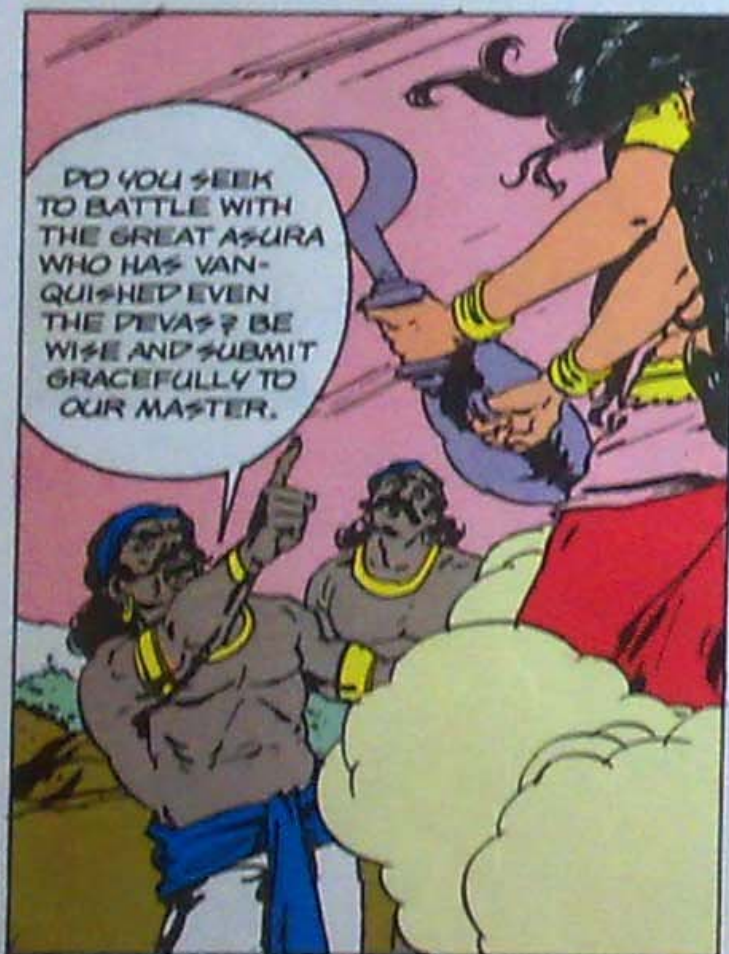
I'VE TAKEN A VOW THAT I'LL MARRY ONLY HIM WHO CAN CONQUER ME IN BATTLE AND HUMBLE MY PRIDE.



DO YOU SEEK TO BATTLE WITH THE GREAT ASURA WHO HAS VANQUISHED EVEN THE DEVAS? BE WISE AND SUBMIT GRACEFULLY TO OUR MASTER.

I KNOW I AM FOOLISH BUT I AM BOUND BY THE ILL-CONSIDERED VOW TAKEN LONG AGO.

WE'LL INFORM OUR MASTER.



WHEN CHANDA AND MUNDA CONVEYED AMBIKA'S MESSAGE TO SHUMBHA —

IF IT'S BATTLE SHE WANTS, SHE SHALL HAVE IT.

THEN HE TURNED TO ANOTHER OF HIS COMMANDERS, DHUMRALOCHANA.

GO, AND BRING HER TO ME.

DHUMRALOCHANA TOOK AN ARMY TO MOUNT HIMAVAT AND CONFRONTED AMBIKA.

IF YOU DON'T GO TO MY LORD, OF YOUR OWN FREE WILL, I'LL HAVE TO TAKE YOU TO HIM BY FORCE.



AMBIKA PRETENDED TO BE AFRAID.

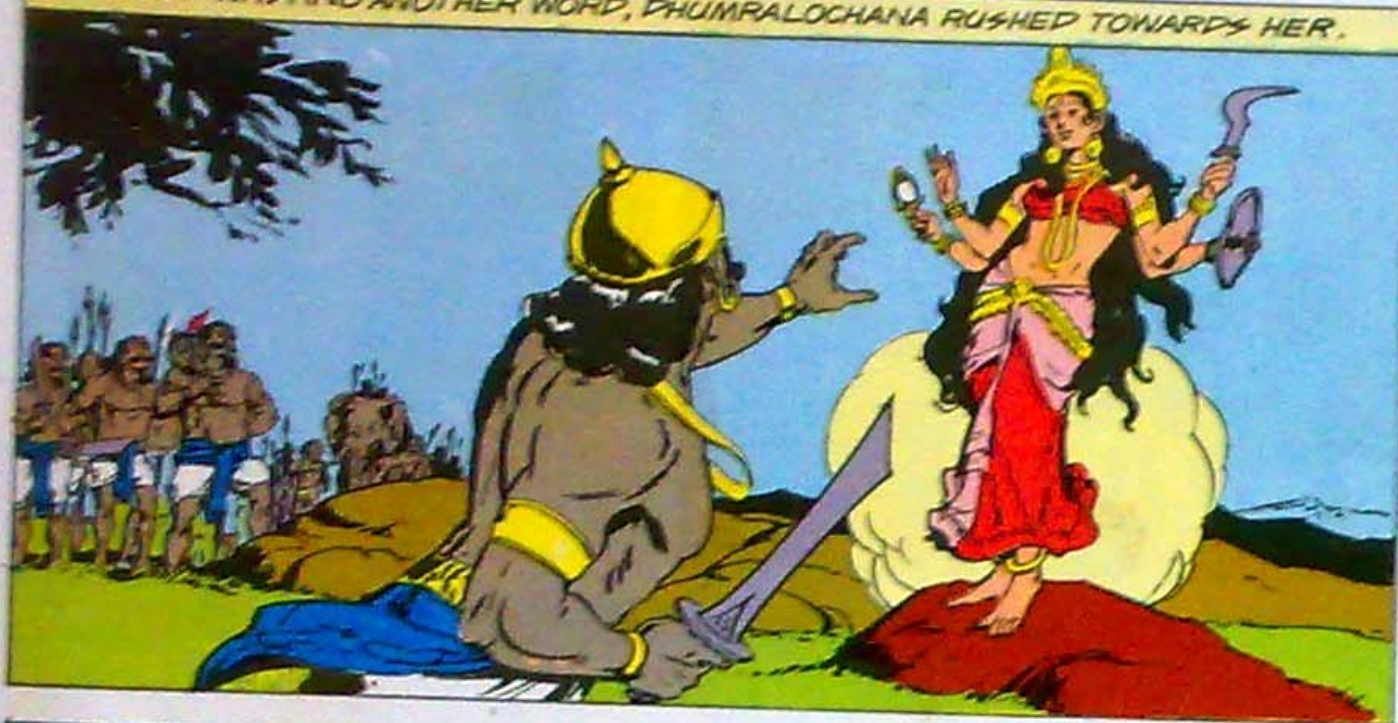
ALAS! SPARE ME. I AM A HELPLESS WOMAN.

THEN MARRY OUR LORD!

MY VOW DOES NOT PERMIT ME TO MARRY HIM WITHOUT FIGHTING HIM.



WITHOUT WASTING ANOTHER WORD, DHUMRALOCHANA RUSHED TOWARDS HER.



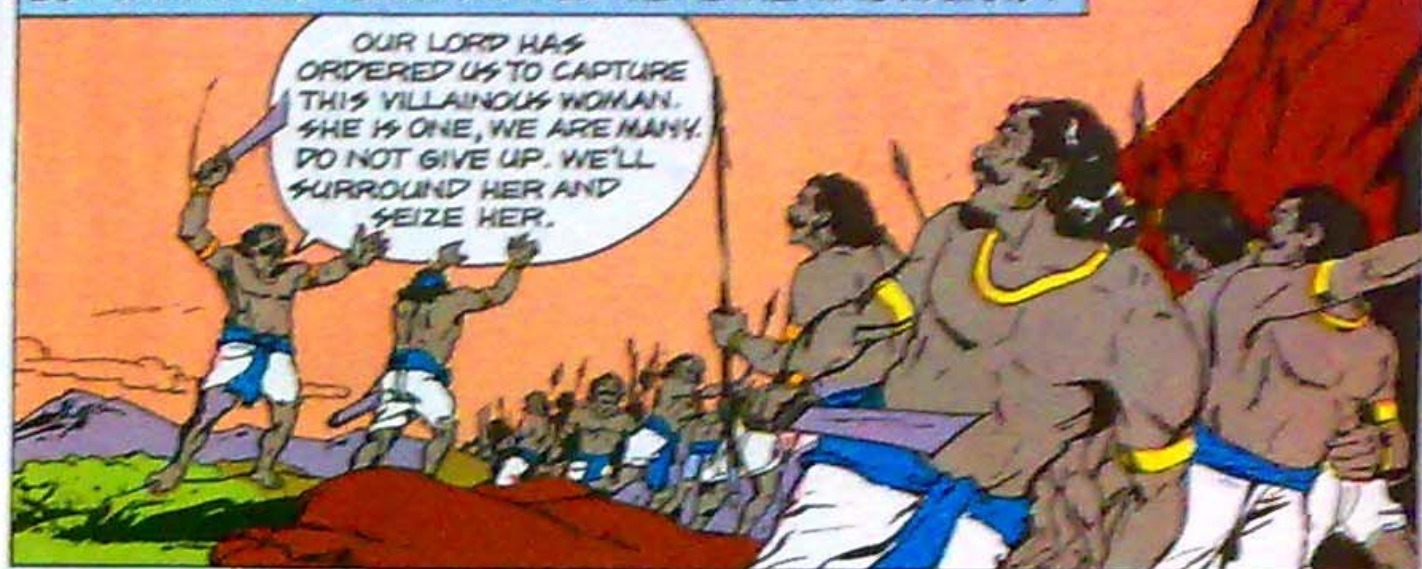
WITH UTTER CONTEMPT FOR THE ASURA, AMBIKA UTTERED A SINGLE SYLLABLE.



THE NEXT MOMENT, A HANDFUL OF ASHES SMOULDERED WHERE THE MIGHTY ASURA ONCE STOOD.



BUT CHANDA AND MUNDA STOPPED THE RETREATING ASURAS.



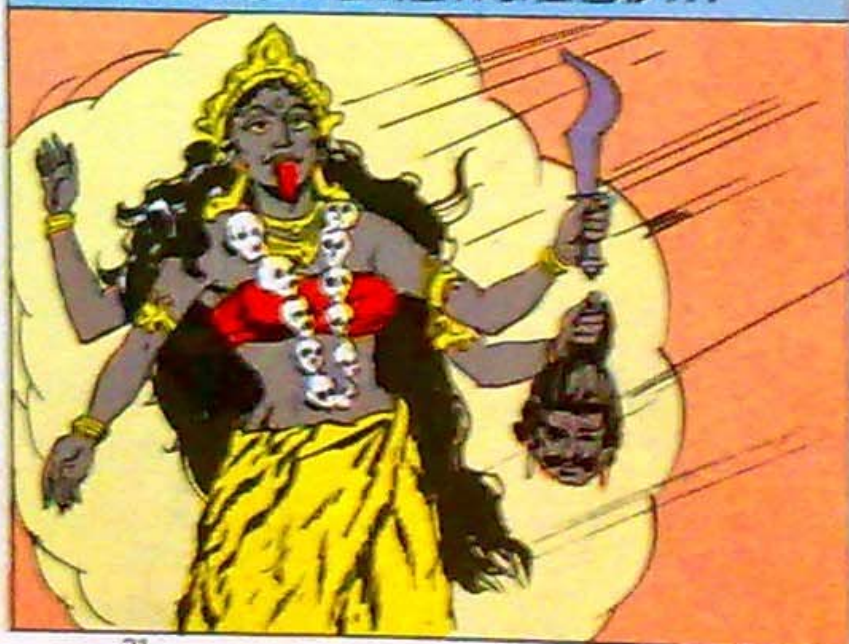
WHEN THE ASURAS CLOSED IN ON AMBIKA, WHO WAS NOW SEATED ON A LION...



...SHE FROWNED.



OUT CAME KALI* FROM HER FOREHEAD...

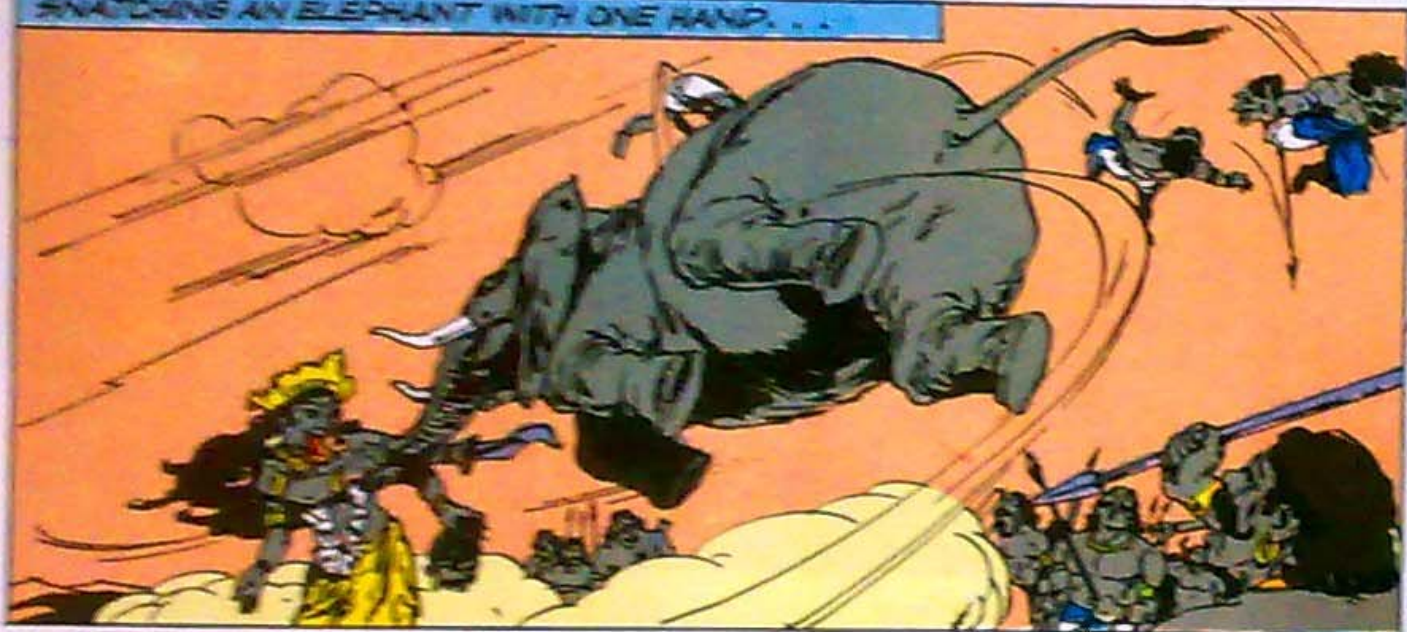


* AN INCARNATION OF DURGA

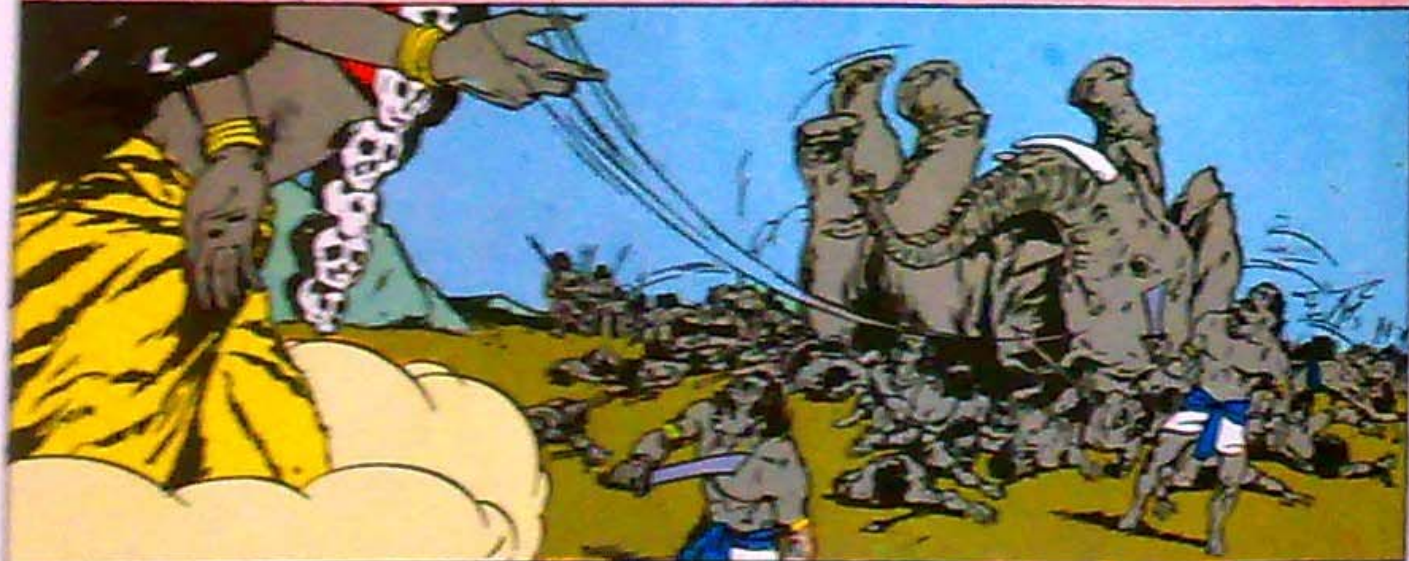
... AND CHARGED AT THE ASURAS.



SNATCHING AN ELEPHANT WITH ONE HAND. . .



... SHE HURLED IT AT THE ASURAS AND CRUSHED THEM TO DEATH.



CHANDA RUSHED AT KALI.



KALI SEIZED HIM BY THE HAIR...



BLIND WITH FURY, MUNDA RUSHED FORTH.



AMBIKA SMILED AT KALI.



... ONLY TO MEET WITH THE SAME FATE!

HOW DURGA SLEW SHUMBHA



WHEN SHUMBHA LEARNED THAT CHANDA AND MUNDA HAD BEEN KILLED, HE CAME IN PERSON TO DEAL WITH AMBIKA. HIS HUGE ARMY SURROUNDED AMBIKA AND KALI.

THEN THE SHAKTIS — THE INNER FORCE OF VARIOUS GODS — ISSUED FORTH ASSUMING FEMALE FORMS*. OUT OF BRAHMA EMERGED BRAHMANI...



* EACH OF THESE FORMS IS CONSIDERED TO BE AN INCARNATION OF DURGA

... OUT OF VISHNU, VAISHNAVI ...



... AND OUT OF MAHESHWARA, MAHESHWARI.



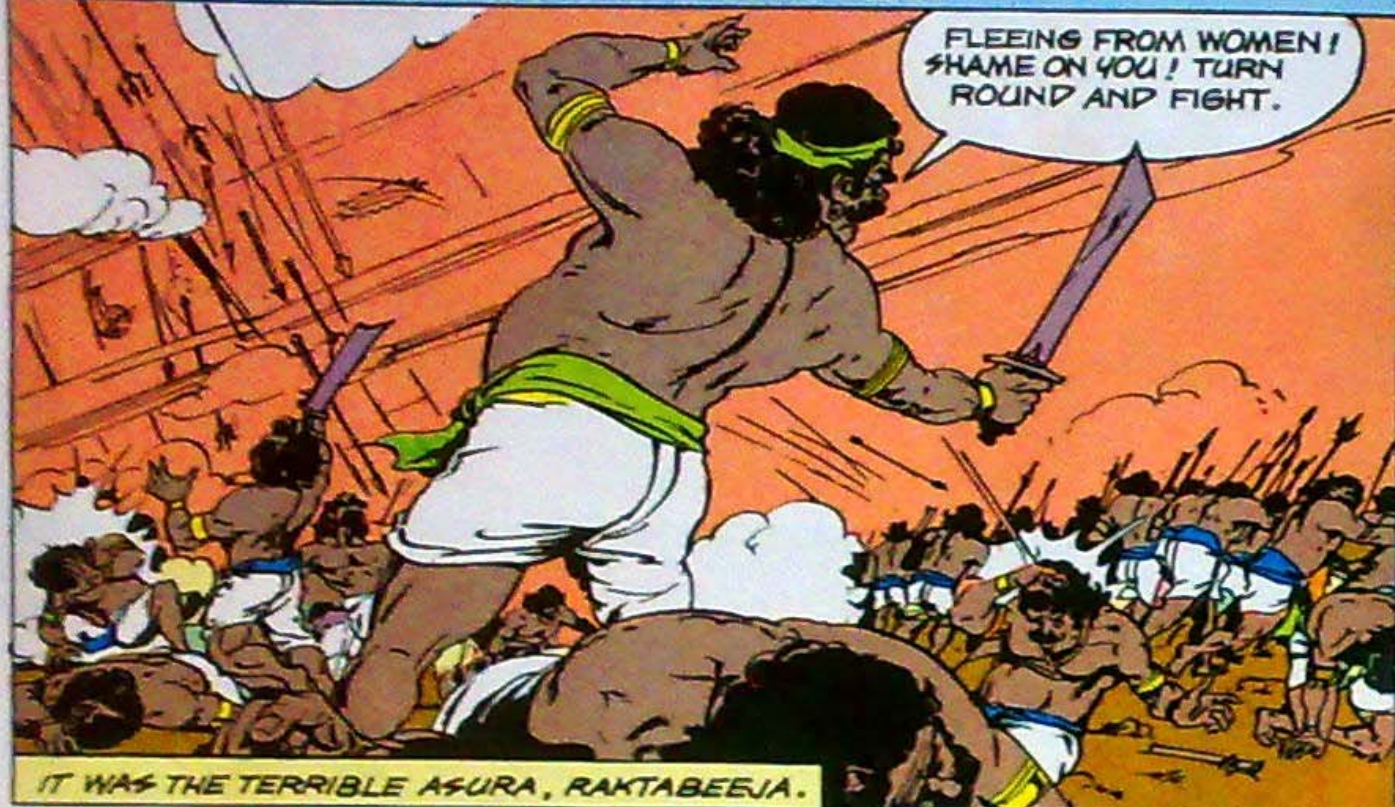
FINALLY OUT OF AMBIKA EMERGED CHANDIKA. SOON THE SKY WAS FILLED WITH HUNDREDS OF SHAKTIS.



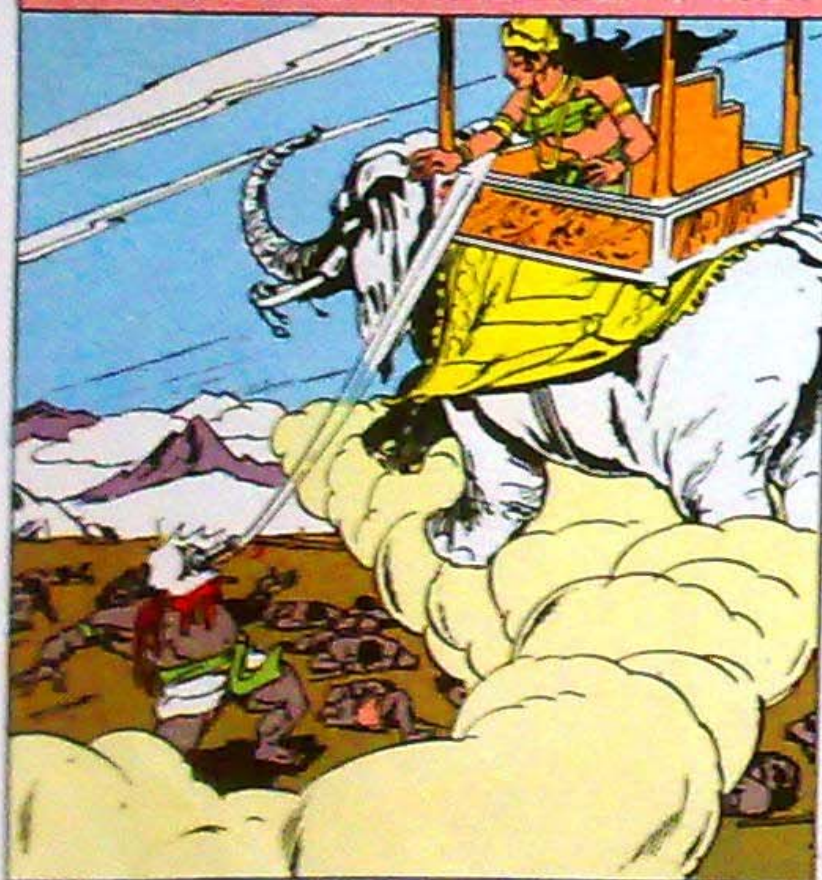
IN THE GREAT BATTLE THAT FOLLOWED, BRAHMANI SPRINKLED WATER FROM HER KAMANDALI ON THE ENEMIES, MAKING THEM WEAK AND INERT.



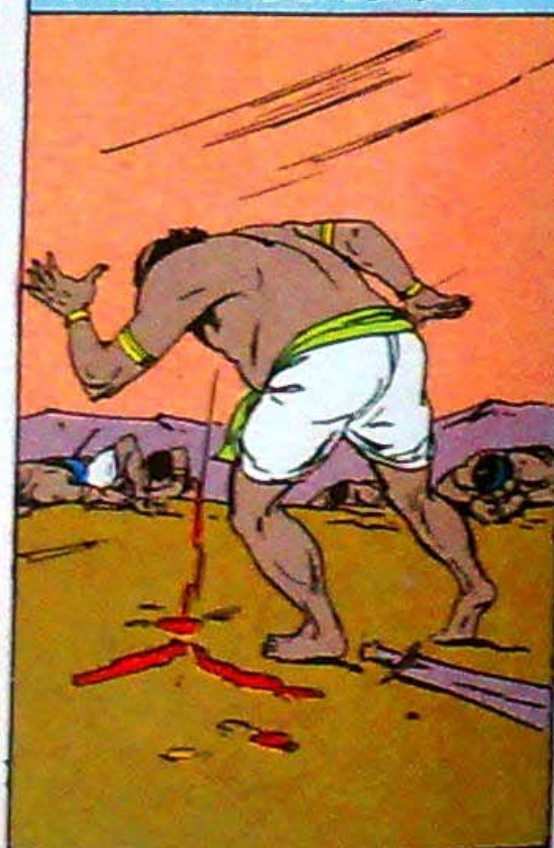
VAISHNAVI FOUGHT WITH THE DISCUS, MAHESHWARI WITH THE TRIDENT, AND VARIOUS OTHER SHAKTIS WITH THEIR RESPECTIVE WEAPONS. UNABLE TO FACE THIS ONSLAUGHT, THE ASURAS BEGAN TO FLEE.



AS RAKTABEEJA RUSHED FORTH, INDRA'S SHAKTI STRUCK HIM WITH HER THUNDERBOLT.



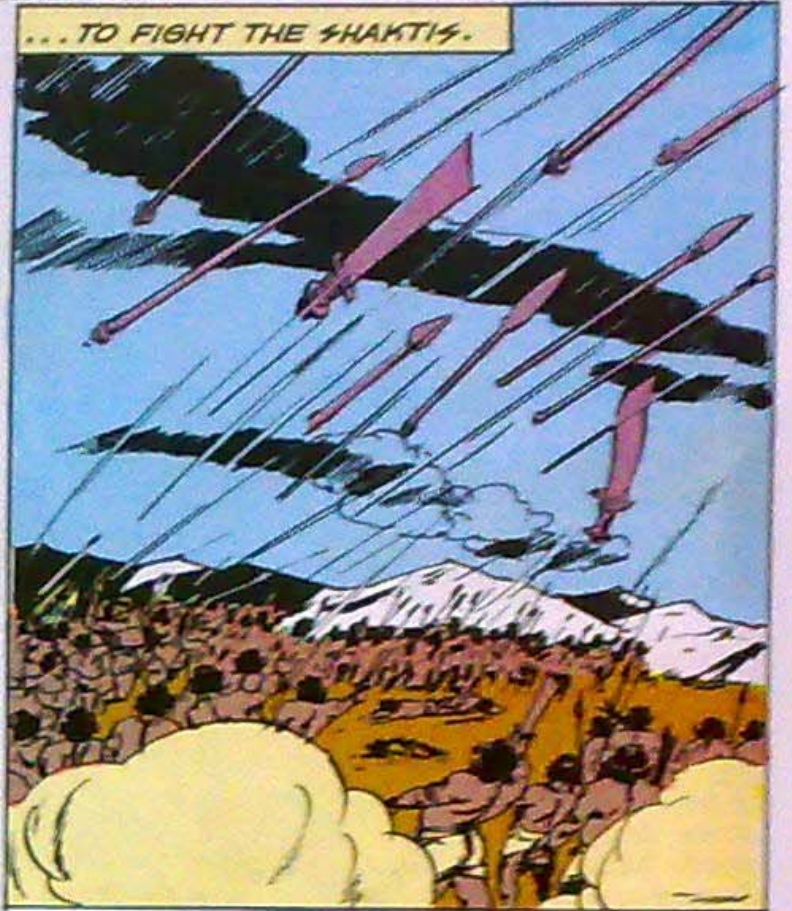
AS EACH DROP OF THE BLOOD FLOWING FROM HIS WOUND TOUCHED THE GROUND...



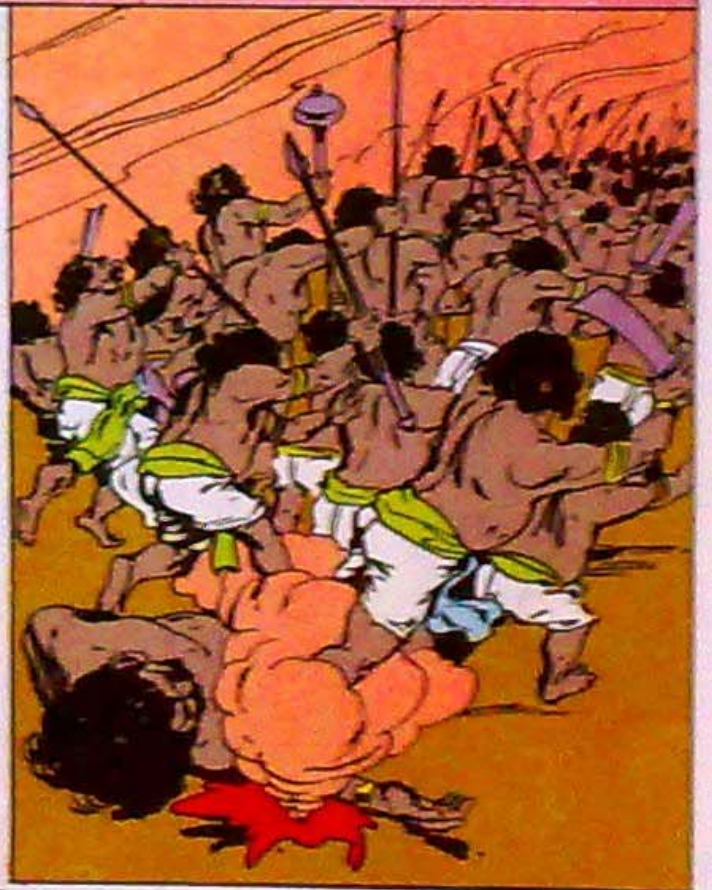
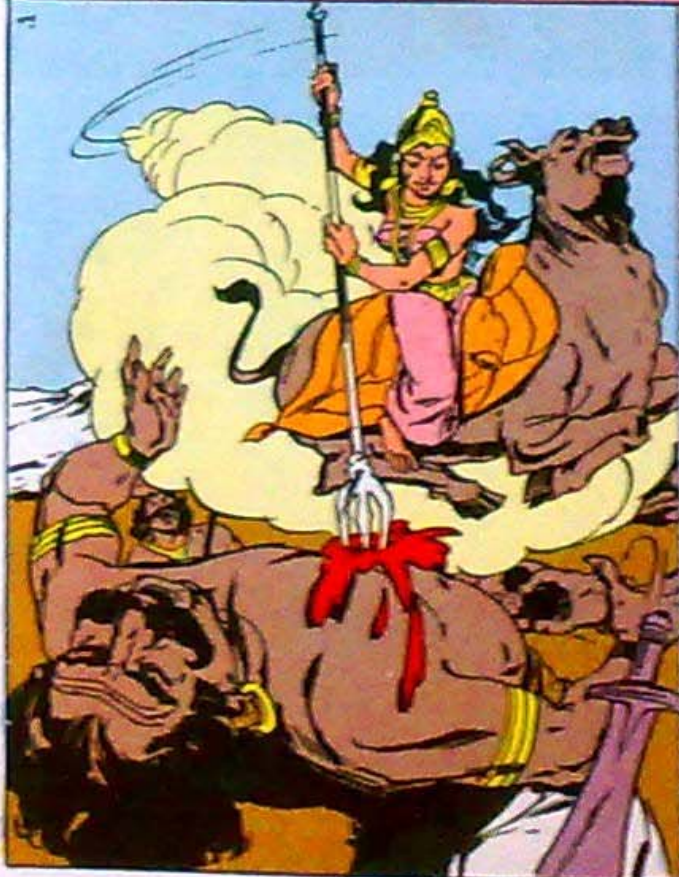
... THERE ROSE A MIGHTY ASURA,
HIS EXACT REPLICA ...



... TO FIGHT THE SHAKTIS.



AS THE SHAKTIS WOUNDED EACH OF THE ASURAS THUS BORN, OUT OF HIS
BLOOD ROSE MANY MORE ASURAS ...



... AND SOON THE BATTLE SCENE WAS FILLED WITH THOUSANDS OF RAKTA-BEEJAS, WHO FOUGHT THE SHAKTIS.



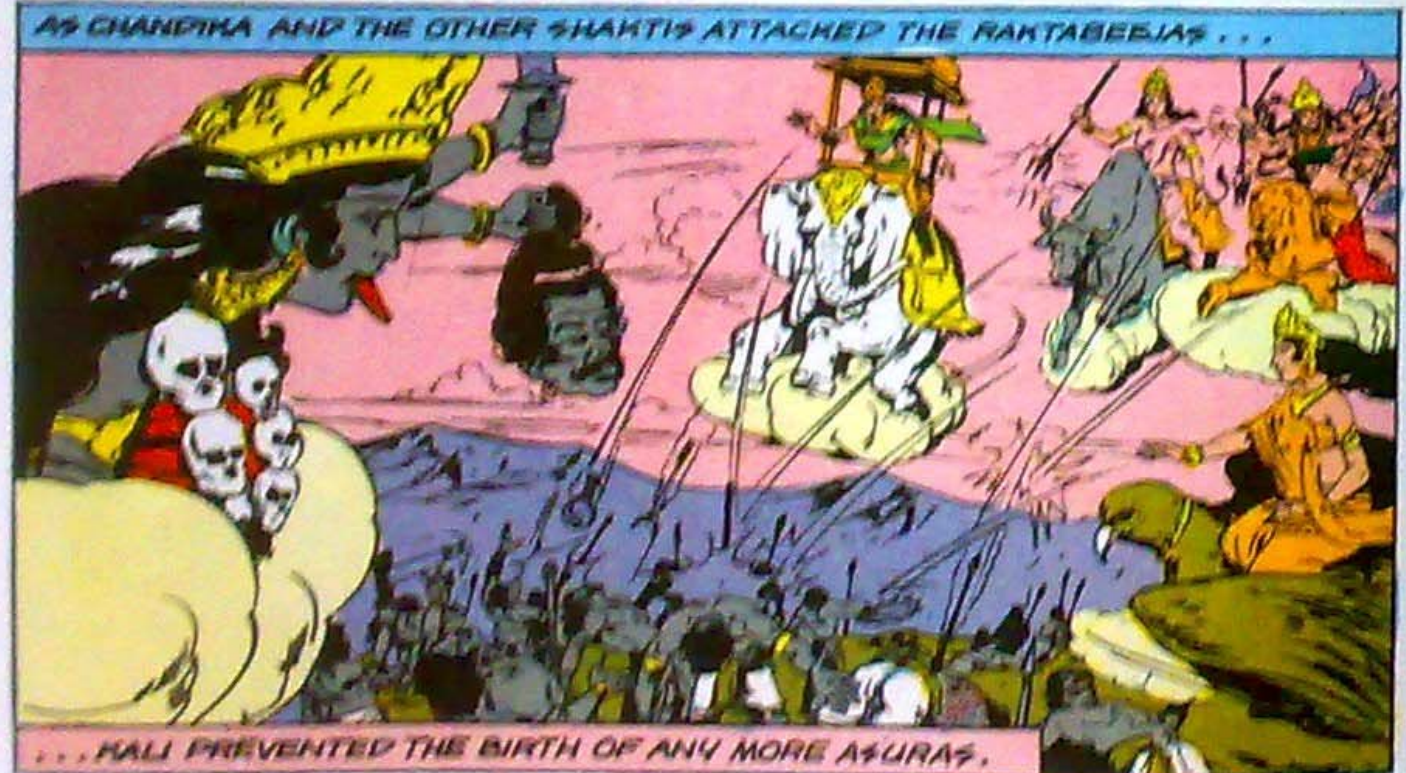
CHANDIKA TURNED TO KALI.

O CHAMUNDI, THESE RAKTA-BEEJAS CAN BE ANNIHILATED ONLY IF WE PREVENT THEIR BLOOD FROM FALLING TO THE GROUND.

LEAVE IT TO ME. NOT A DROP OF THEIR BLOOD SHALL STAIN THE EARTH AGAIN.



AS CHANDIKA AND THE OTHER SHAKTIS ATTACKED THE RAKTABEEJAS...



... KALI PREVENTED THE BIRTH OF ANY MORE ASURAS.

SOON THE HUNDREDS AND THOUSANDS OF RAKTABEEJAS THAT HAD ARISEN WERE WIPE OUT. RAKTABEEJA WAS FURIOUS.



AND RAKTABEEJA RUSHED TOWARDS CHANDIKA.



AS CHANDIKA STRUCK HIM . . .

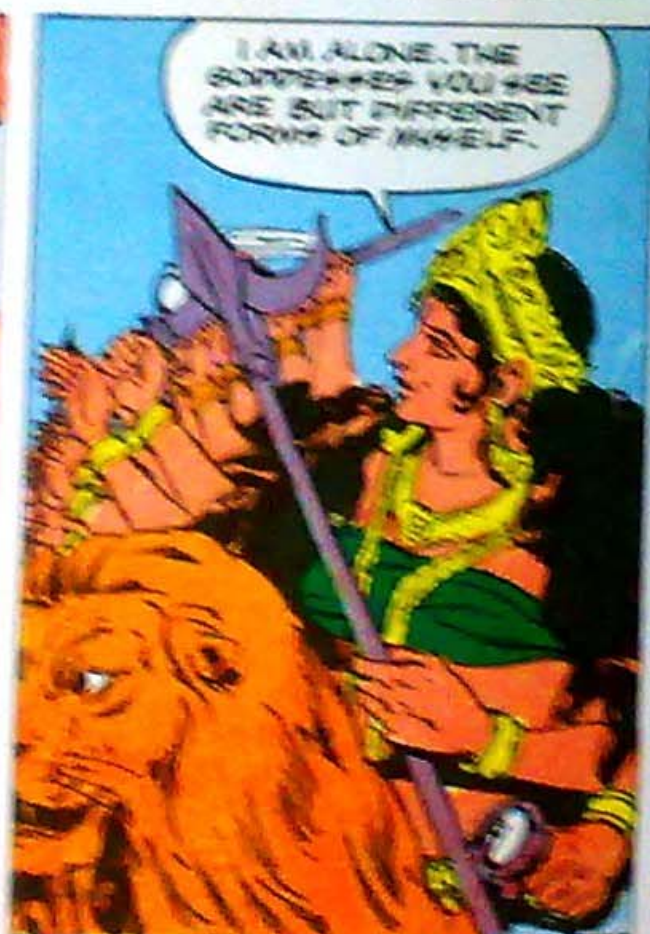


... AND RAKTABEEJA FELL DEAD, TO THE JOY OF THE DEVAS.



SHOULDERS AND HIS BROTHER
SHOULDERS WERE FURNISHED
WITH THE POWER OF THE SUN.

BUT THE MOST POWERFUL ASURA,
NIRAKSHANA, WAS NO MATCH FOR
CHANDRA.



THEN TO THE AMAZEMENT OF SHURPANA, THE VARIOUS SHAKTHI MERGED INTO DURGA.



HOLDING DURGA, SHURPANA RODE INTO THE BAY.



AFTER A FIERCE BATTLE IN MID-AIR, DURGA FLUNG THE SHURPA DOWN...



...AND SLEW HIM WITH HER SPEAR. REJOICING, THE DEVAS HEADED BY INDRA APPEARED ON THE SCENE.



WE SALUTE YOU, O MOTHER DURGA, DESTROYER OF EVIL.



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your Roots

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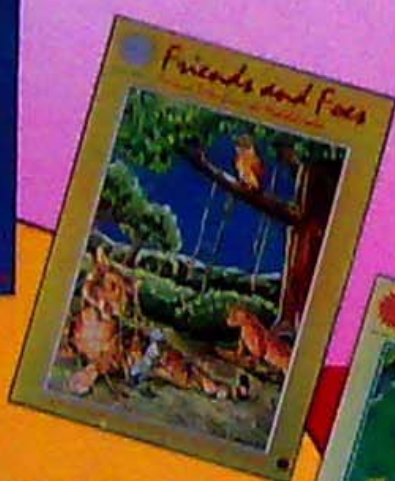
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| 529 KARTVEYA | 581 RAMAN THE MATCHLESS WIT | 620 HITOPADESHA - HOW FRIENDS ARE PARTED | 668 THE ACROBAT - BUDDHIST TALES |
| 530 SHAKUNTALA | 582 MAHAABHARATA | 621 UDAYANA | 669 ASHVINI KUMARS - TALES FROM THE VEDAS |
| 531 KARNA | 583 PANCHATANTRA - THE GREEDY MOTHER-IN-LAW | 622 THE TIGER AND THE WOODPECKER | 670 THE GOLDEN MONGOOSE - TALES FROM THE MAHAABHARATA |
| 532 SUDAMA | 584 GOPAL THE JESTER | 623 KABIR | 671 THE COWHERD OF ALAWI - BUDDHIST TALES |
| 533 ABHIMANYU | 585 JATAKA TALES - THE DOLLARD AND OTHER STORIES | 624 DAYANANDA | 672 THE PRICELESS GEM - A JATAKA TALE |
| 534 BHEESHMA | 586 JATAKA TALES - STORIES OF WISDOM | 625 BATTLE OF WITS | 673 ATYAPPAN |
| 535 MIRABAI | 587 BIBBAL THE GENIUS | 626 THE PANDAVA PRINCES | |
| 536 ASHOKA | 588 GURU GOBIND SINGH | 627 HARSHA | |
| 537 PRAHLAD | 589 KRISHNA AND SHESHUPALA | 628 RAMANA MAHARSHI | |
| 538 THE CHURNING OF THE OCEAN | 590 GURU NANAK | 629 ULLOPI | |
| 539 RANI OF JHANSI | 591 THE SYAMANTAKA GEM | 630 RANA SANGA | |
| 540 PANCHATANTRA - THE JACKAL AND THE WAR DRUM | | 631 CHAITANYA MAHAPRABHU | |
| 541 THE LORD OF LANKA | | 632 VIDYASAGAR | |
| 542 DRAUPADI | | 633 TALES OF MARYADA RAMA | |
| 543 JATAKA TALES - MONKEY STORIES | | 634 CHANDRAGUPTA MAURYA | |
| 544 SUBHAS CHANDRA BOSE | | 635 AMRAPALI | |
| 545 BIBBAL THE WISE | | 636 KRISHNADEVA RAYA | |
| 546 VALI | | 637 YAYATI | |
| 547 GARUDA | | 638 KING SHALIVAHANA | |
| 548 RABINDRANATH TAGORE | | 639 KRISHNA AND THE FALSE VASUDEVA | |
| 549 TALES OF SHIVA | | | |
| 550 SATI AND SHIVA | | | |
| 551 TULSIDAS | | | |
| 552 TANJEN | | | |