



BAHUBALI

HE GAVE UP HIS EMPIRE TO LEARN THE TRUTH

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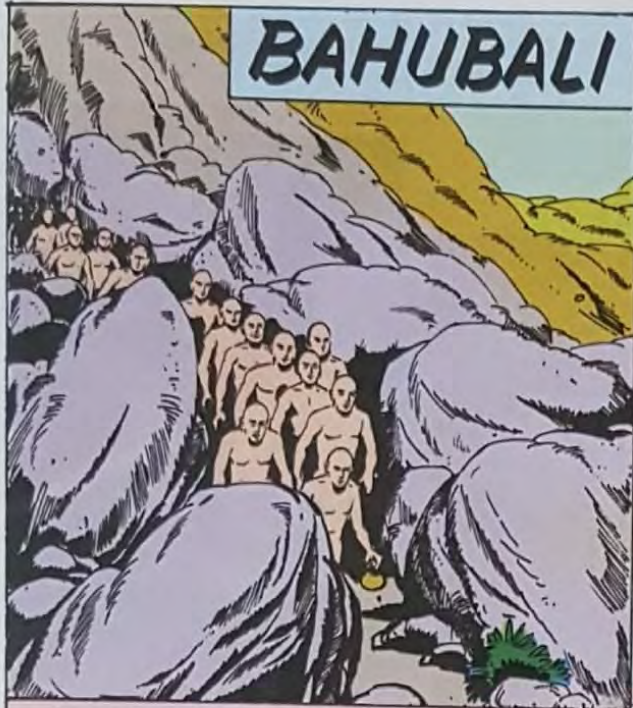
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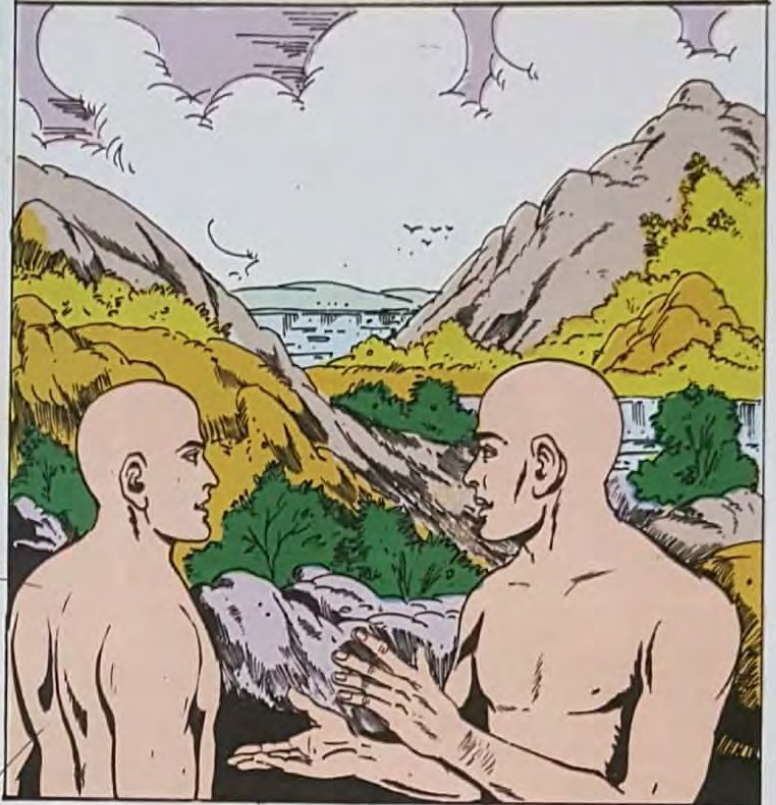
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BAHUBALI



IN THE THIRD CENTURY BC, MANY JAINA MONKS OF MAGADHA LEFT THE LAND OF THEIR ANCESTORS TO ESCAPE A SEVERE DROUGHT. THEY CROSSED THE VINDHYAS AND CAME DOWN TO SOUTH INDIA.

AS THE MONKS WANDERED FROM PLACE TO PLACE, TWO OF THEM STOPPED AT A BEAUTIFUL SPOT IN KARNATAKA.



THEY CLIMBED A SMALL HILL...

... AND SAT DOWN TO MEDITATE.



THE TWO MONKS WERE CHANDRAGUPTA MAURYA, THE EMPEROR WHO HAD GIVEN UP THE THRONE OF MAGADHA, AND HIS GURU, BHADRA BAHU SWAMI. THE PLACE WHERE THEY FOUND PEACE AND QUIET TO MEDITATE WAS KALVAPU, TODAY KNOWN AS SHRAVANA BELAGOLA.

NEARLY TWELVE HUNDRED YEARS LATER, TWO PILGRIMS WERE ON THEIR WAY TO BELAGOLA. THEY WERE CHAVUNDARAYA, THE CHIEF MINISTER OF TALAVANAPURA, AND HIS OLD MOTHER KALALA DEVI.



THEY CLIMBED THE CHANDRAGIRI, A SMALL HILL NAMED AFTER CHANDRAGUPTA MAURYA...



...AND PRAYED AT THE CAVE OF BHADRABAHU SWAMI.



LATER THEY MET THEIR SPIRITUAL TEACHER, NEMICHANDRA.



SIR, WE SEEK YOUR BLESSINGS. WE ARE BENT ON FINDING THE IMAGE OF BAHUBALI THAT KING BHARATA OF KORE HAD INSTALLED.

I'VE CONSULTED PUNDITS, HISTORIANS AND TRAVELLED MEN. THEY ALL SAY...



... THAT IT IS IMPOSSIBLE TO REACH PAUDANAPURA WHERE THE IMAGE WAS INSTALLED.

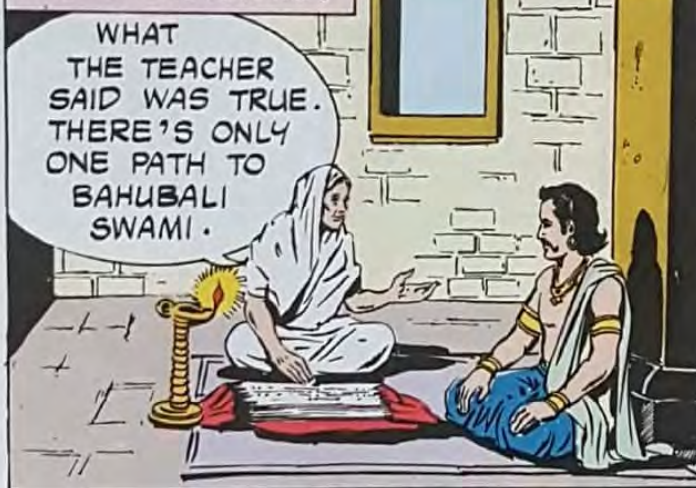


NO, I DON'T BELIEVE IT.





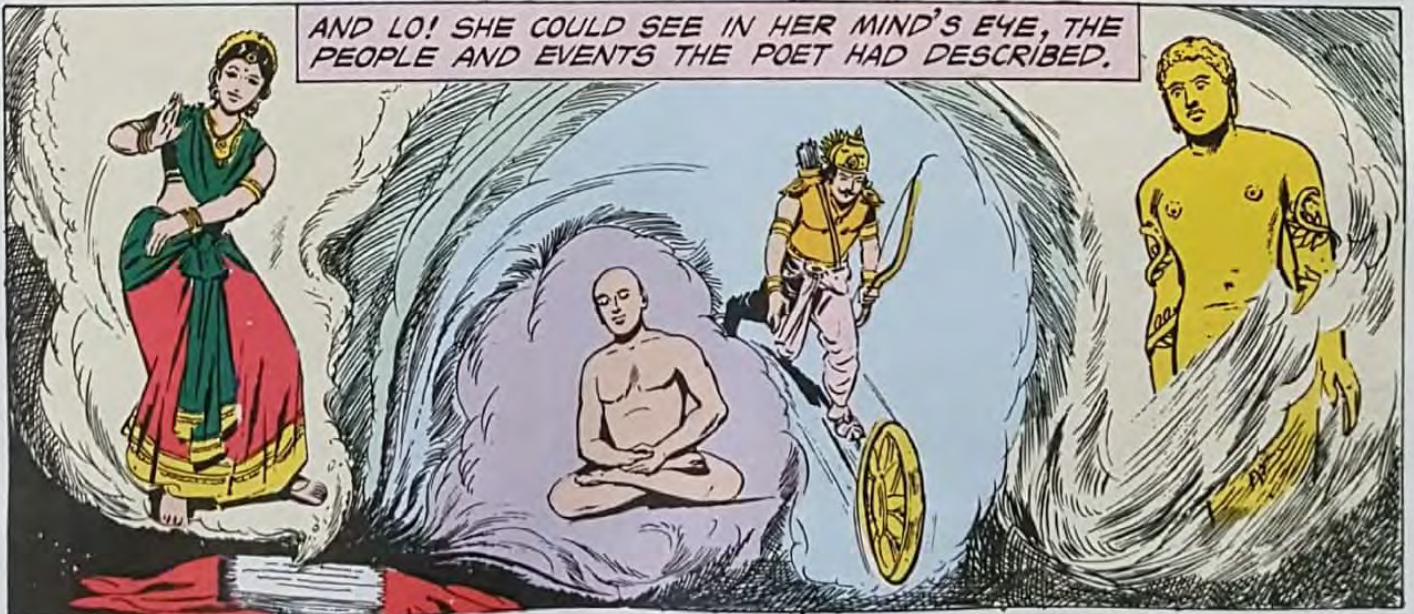
MOTHER AND SON SPENT THE NIGHT ON THE CHANDRAGIRI.



KALALA DEVI OPENED POET PAMPA'S ADI PURANA, THE SACRED BOOK SHE HAD READ AND REREAD MANY TIMES.



AND LO! SHE COULD SEE IN HER MIND'S EYE, THE PEOPLE AND EVENTS THE POET HAD DESCRIBED.





AT THE COURT OF RISHABHADEVA, THE EMPEROR OF AYODHYA, THE EMPEROR AND HIS CELESTIAL GUEST, INDRA, WERE WATCHING A DANCE PERFORMANCE.

THE ASSEMBLED KINGS AND NOBLES WERE WONDER-STRUCK BY THE MATCH-LESS BEAUTY OF THE DANCER, NILANJANA.



NILANJANA SUDDENLY SLOWED DOWN.



BUT INDRA, THE KING OF THE CELESTIALS WAS ALARMED.

SHE IS DEAD! AND THE DANCE IS NOT OVER.



INDRA ACTED SWIFTLY. HE CREATED A CHARACTER WHO LOOKED EXACTLY LIKE NILANJANA.

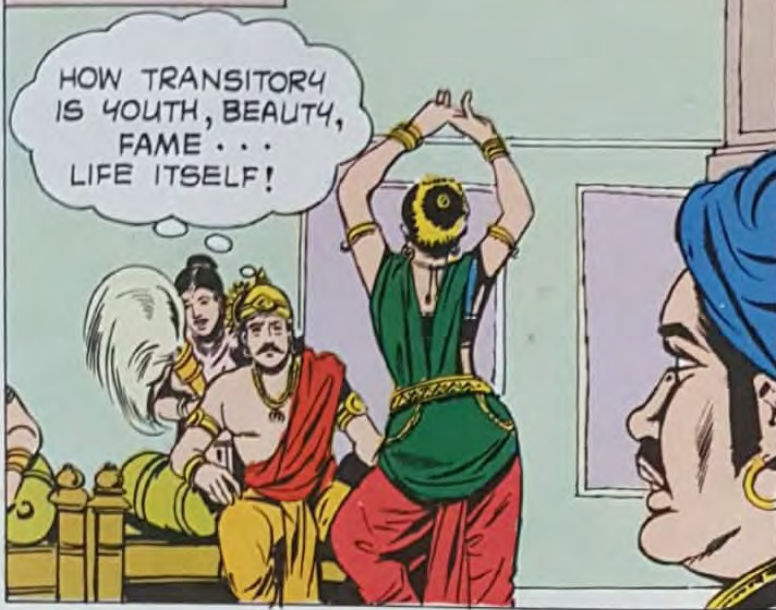


AND THE DANCE WENT ON.

I WAS QUICK ENOUGH. NO ONE HAS NOTICED ANYTHING.



INDRA WAS MISTAKEN. RISHABHADEVA HAD SEEN IT ALL.



WHAT THEN IS PERMANENT? I MUST GIVE UP THIS LIFE OF PLEASURE AND SEEK THE TRUTH.

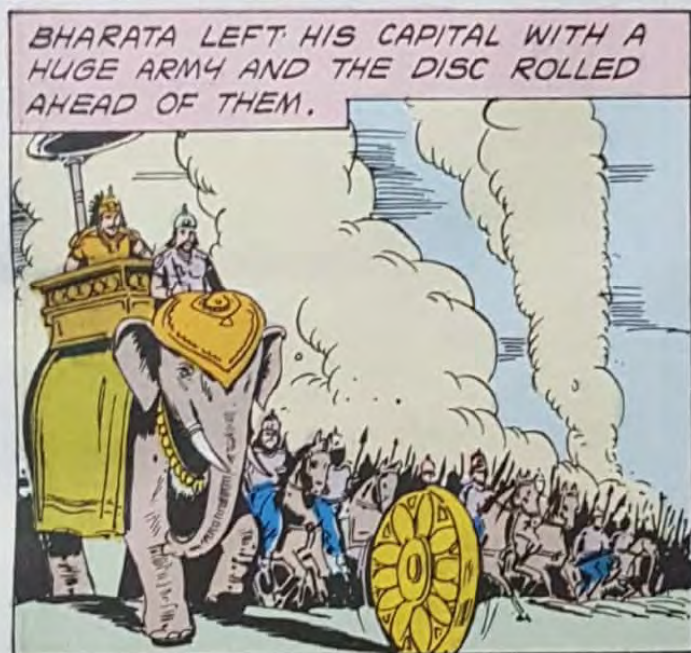
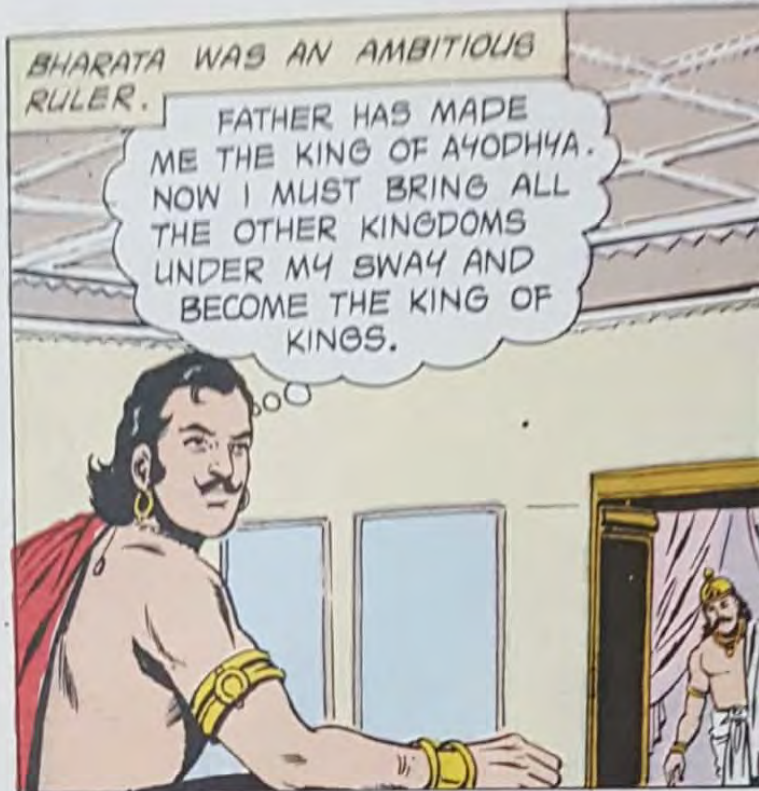


THAT WAS HOW RISHABHADEVA CAME TO RENOUNCE THE WORLDLY LIFE.

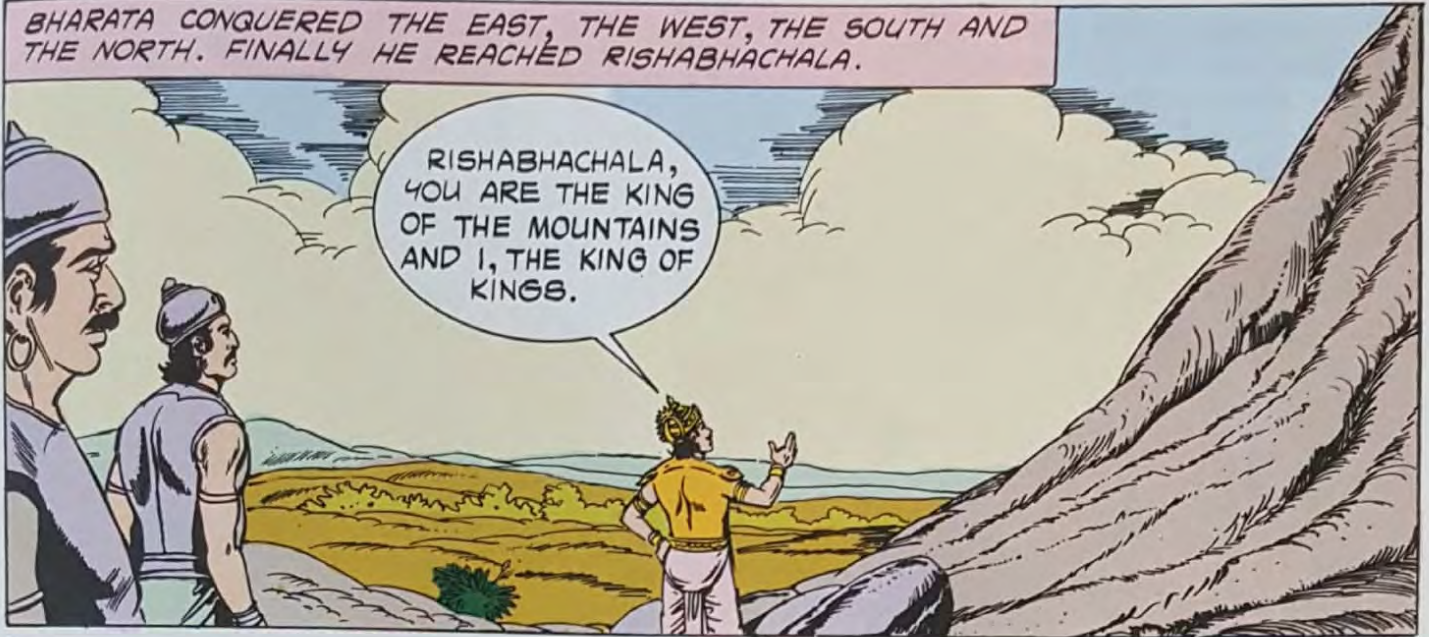


BHARATA, THE ELDEST SON OF THE EMPEROR, RISHABHADEVA, WAS CROWNED KING OF AYODHYA. HIS HUNDRED BROTHERS AND HIS STEP-BROTHER, BAHUBALI, WERE GIVEN TERRITORIES TO RULE OVER.





BHARATA CONQUERED THE EAST, THE WEST, THE SOUTH AND THE NORTH. FINALLY HE REACHED RISHABHACHALA.

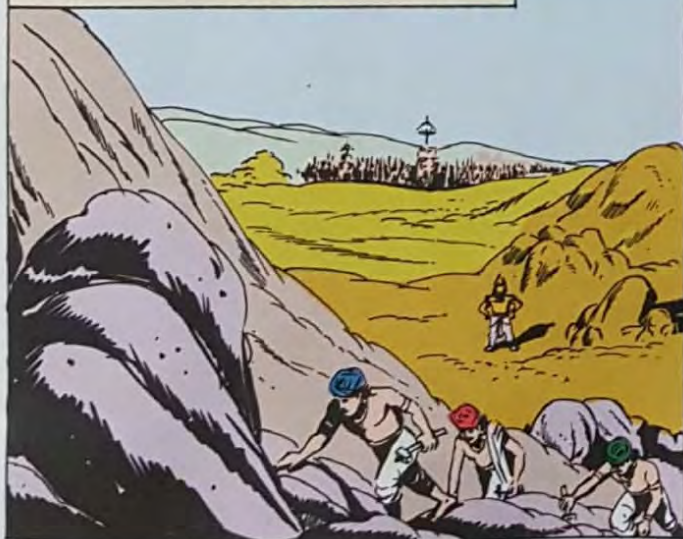


BHARATA TURNED TO HIS MINISTER.

LET THE STORY OF MY CONQUESTS BE INSCRIBED FOR POSTERITY ON THE PEAK OF IMMORTAL RISHABHACHALA.



BHARATA WATCHED, AS THE SCULPTORS WALKED UP TO THE PEAK.



BUT BEFORE LONG THEY WERE BACK.





BHARATA STRODE UP THE PATH WHICH LED TO THE PEAK.

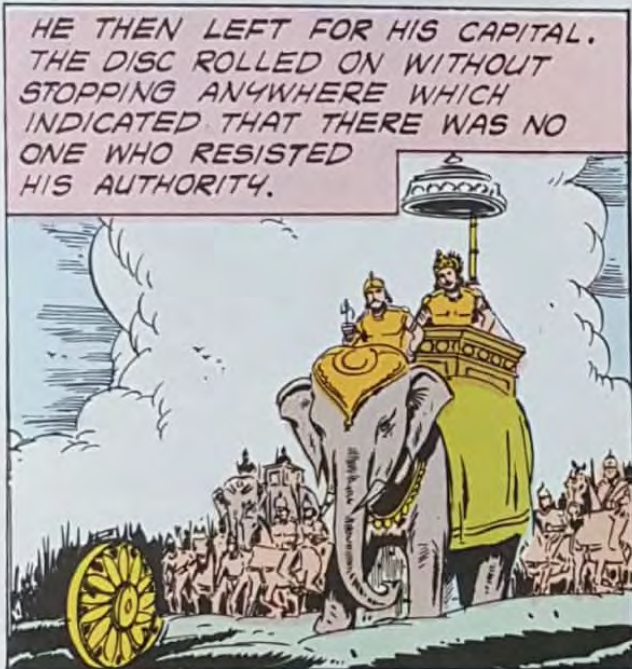


WHAT HE SAW THERE SHATTERED HIS EGO.



THE PEAK WAS COMPLETELY COVERED WITH INSCRIPTIONS—THE INSCRIPTIONS OF THOSE WHO HAD COME THERE BEFORE HIM!







BHARATA'S EMISSARIES WENT TO THE CAPITALS OF HIS HUNDRED BROTHERS, AND SOON RETURNED.



MAHARAJ, YOUR BROTHERS HAVE SURRENDERED THEIR KINGDOMS AND RETIRED TO THE FOREST TO MEDITATE.

THEY HAD ONLY TWO ALTERNATIVES— TO RULE THEIR KINGDOMS ACCEPTING YOU AS THEIR MASTER OR...

... TO RETIRE TO THE FOREST AND MEDITATE.

SO THEY CHOSE TO GIVE UP THEIR KINGDOMS AND REMAIN FREE. I ADMIRE THEM.



NOW ONLY ONE PERSON REMAINS TO BE SUBDUED— YOUR STEP-BROTHER, BAHUBALI.

I'LL SEND HIM A MESSAGE.



BHARATA'S EMISSARY VISITED PAUDANAPURA, THE CAPITAL OF BAHUBALI'S KINGDOM.

MAHARAJ, I BRING YOU GIFTS FROM THE EMPEROR.

I THANK HIM FOR THINKING OF ME. HE MUST BE CELEBRATING HIS VICTORY.





AT BHARATA'S COURT—



THE TWO ARMIES MET ON THE OUTSKIRTS OF PAUDANAPURA.



THE OLDER AND WISER MINISTERS ON BOTH SIDES ADVISED AGAINST UNNECESSARY BLOODSHED.

THE CONTEST IS BETWEEN YOU AND YOUR BROTHER. KEEP YOUR ARMIES OUT OF IT AND PREVENT A WAR.

WHAT DO YOU SUGGEST?



LET THERE BE SINGLE COMBAT BETWEEN YOU AND BAHUBALI.

ALL RIGHT; I AGREE IF BAHUBALI IS WILLING.

I HAVE NO OBJECTION.

THEN YOU AND YOUR BROTHER WILL ENGAGE IN THREE KINDS OF COMBAT.



THE FIRST COMBAT BEGAN. THE TWO BROTHERS LOOKED STRAIGHT INTO EACH OTHER'S EYES WITHOUT BLINKING.



THIS WENT ON FOR HOURS. AT LAST BHARATA'S EYES BEGAN TO STING. SO GREAT WAS THE PAIN THAT...



...HE HAD TO LOWER THEM.



THE TWO BROTHERS THEN ENTERED A POOL TO BEGIN THE SECOND COMBAT.



BHARATA SPLASHED WATER WITH ALL HIS STRENGTH.



BUT BAHUBALI FACED THE ONSLAUGHT WITHOUT FLINCHING.



WHEN IT WAS BAHUBALI'S TURN, BHARATA COULD NOT BEAR THE IMPACT OF THE WATER FLUNG AT HIM.



AND HE WAS DEFEATED ONCE AGAIN.

THEN BEGAN THE WRESTLING MATCH.



BAHUBALI LIFTED BHARATA EFFORTLESSLY.





AS BAHUBALI LOWERED BHARATA, HORNS WERE BLOWN, DRUMS WERE BEATEN.



BHARATA WAS ENRAGED.



THE NEXT MOMENT —



BUT BAHUBALI STOOD UNPERTURBED.
THE DISC FLEW TOWARDS HIM...



... CIRCLED HIM ...

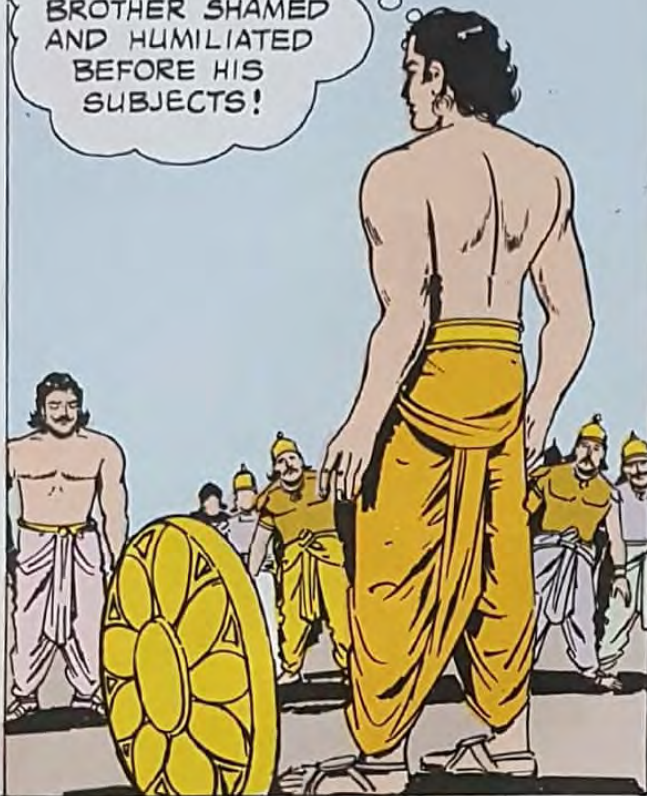


... AND CAME TO A HALT BY HIS SIDE.



BAHUBALI LOOKED AT BHARATA.

AND THERE STANDS MY BROTHER SHAMED AND HUMILIATED BEFORE HIS SUBJECTS!

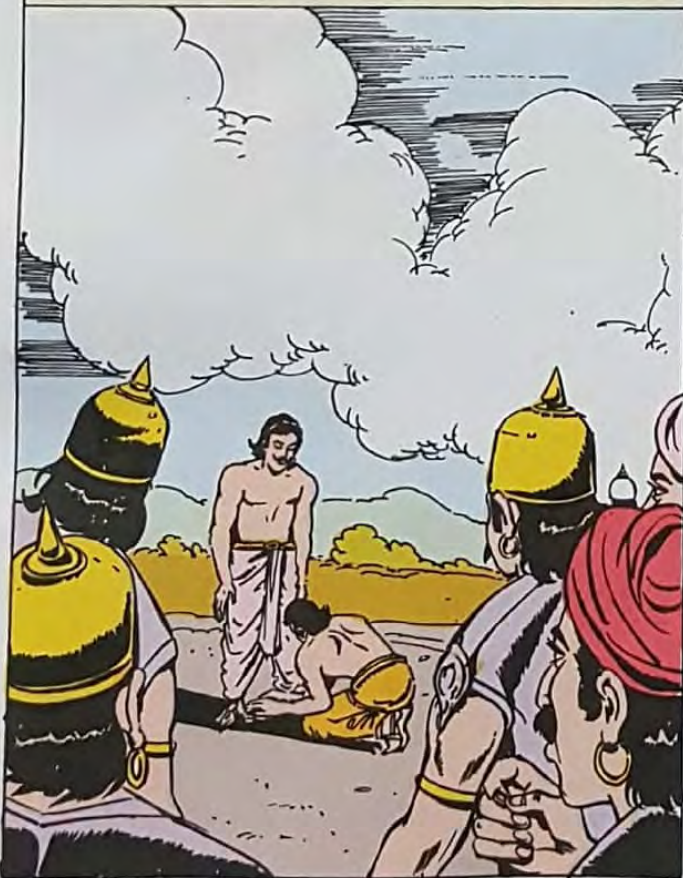


PEOPLE LUSTILY CHEERED HIM AS HE WALKED UP TO BHARATA.

VICTORY TO BAHUBALI!

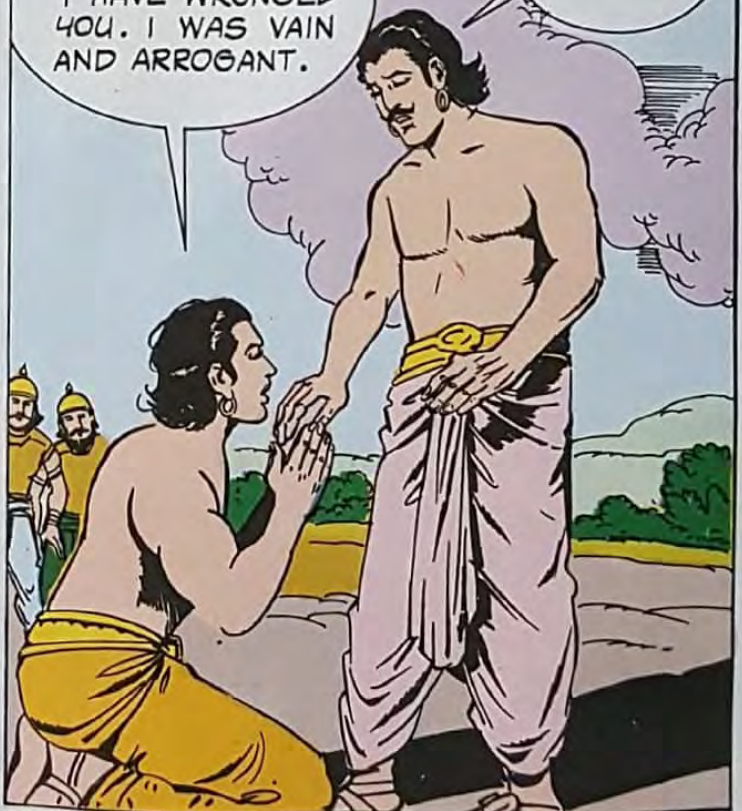


AND THEN THERE WAS SILENCE.



PARDON ME, BROTHER! I HAVE WRONGED YOU. I WAS VAIN AND ARROGANT.

BAHUBALI.





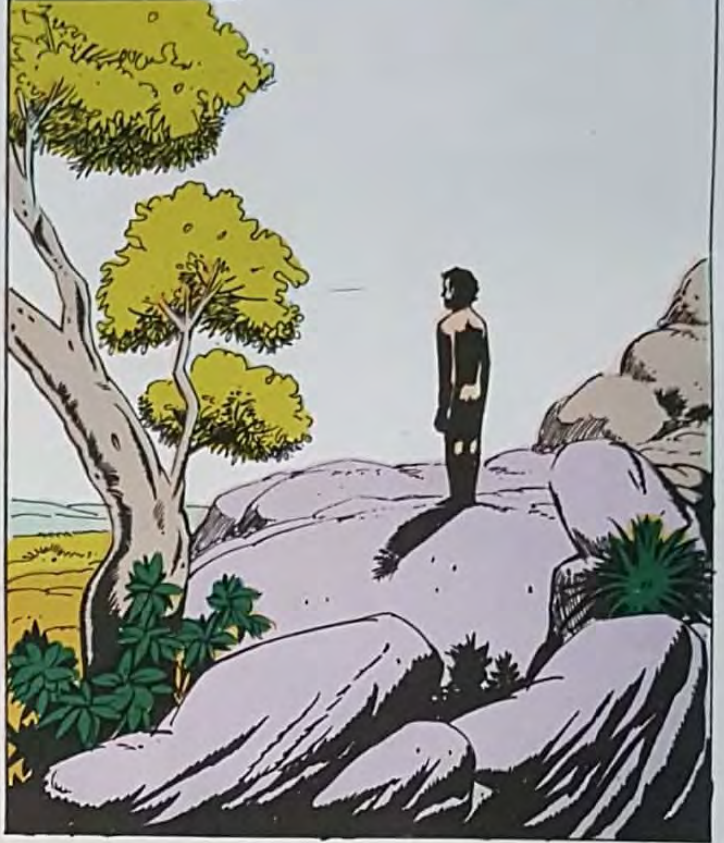
THE NEXT MOMENT, THE TWO BROTHERS WERE LOCKED IN A LOVING EMBRACE. BAHUBALI SHED TEARS OF JOY AS IF HE WERE ANOINTING BHARATA AS THE EMPEROR.



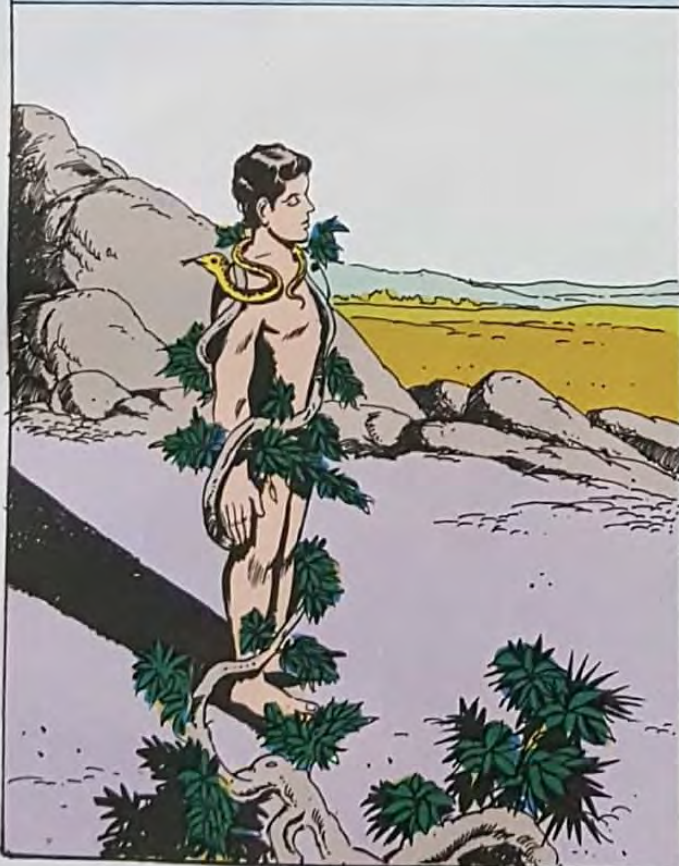
BAHUBALI FIRST SOUGHT THE BLESSINGS OF RISHABHADEVA, HIS FATHER, WHO WAS NOW A THIRTHANKARA...



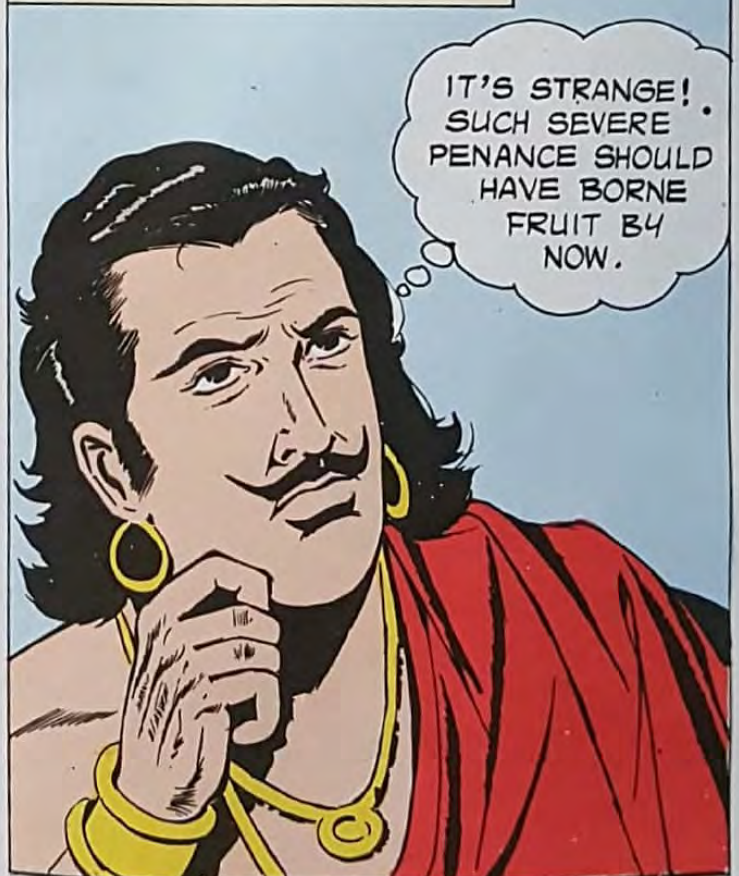
... AND THEN BEGAN A RIGOROUS PENANCE.



CREEPERS COVERED HIS BODY. SNAKES FREELY CRAWLED OVER HIM. BUT BAHUBALI DID NOT STIR.



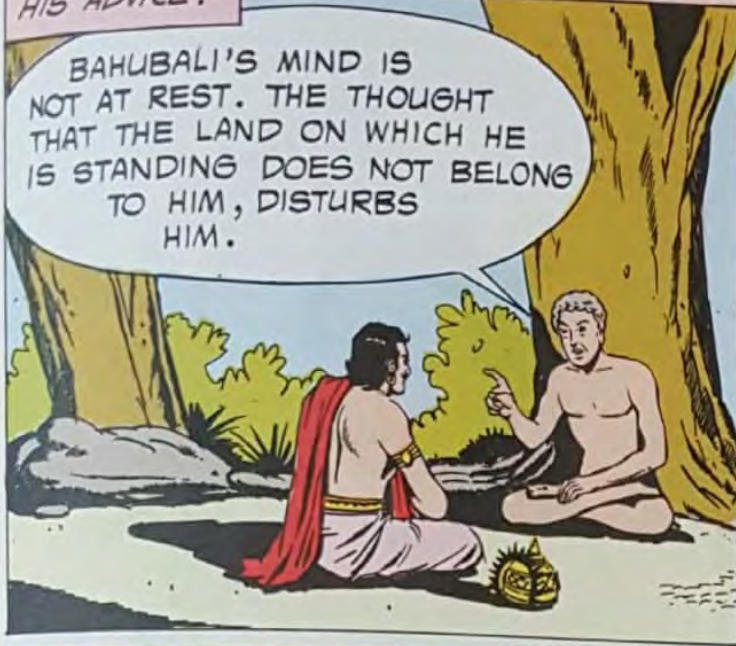
A YEAR WENT BY BUT BAHUBALI HAD NOT YET ATTAINED HIS GOAL. BHARATA WAS PUZZLED.



IT'S STRANGE! SUCH SEVERE PENANCE SHOULD HAVE BORNE FRUIT BY NOW.

HE WENT TO RISHABHADEVA AND SOUGHT HIS ADVICE.

BAHUBALI'S MIND IS NOT AT REST. THE THOUGHT THAT THE LAND ON WHICH HE IS STANDING DOES NOT BELONG TO HIM, DISTURBS HIM.



I MARVEL AT HIM. IT WAS HE WHO GAVE ME THE EMPIRE. AND YET HE FEELS OBLIGATED TO ME!



BHARATA WENT TO BAHUBALI.

BAHUBALI, IF THIS LAND DOES NOT BELONG TO YOU, IT DOES NOT BELONG TO ME EITHER! NONE OF US HOLDS ON TO THE EARTH FOREVER. WE HAVE TO LEAVE IT ONE DAY.



SET ASIDE THOUGHTS OF OWNERSHIP AND CONCENTRATE ON YOUR GOAL.



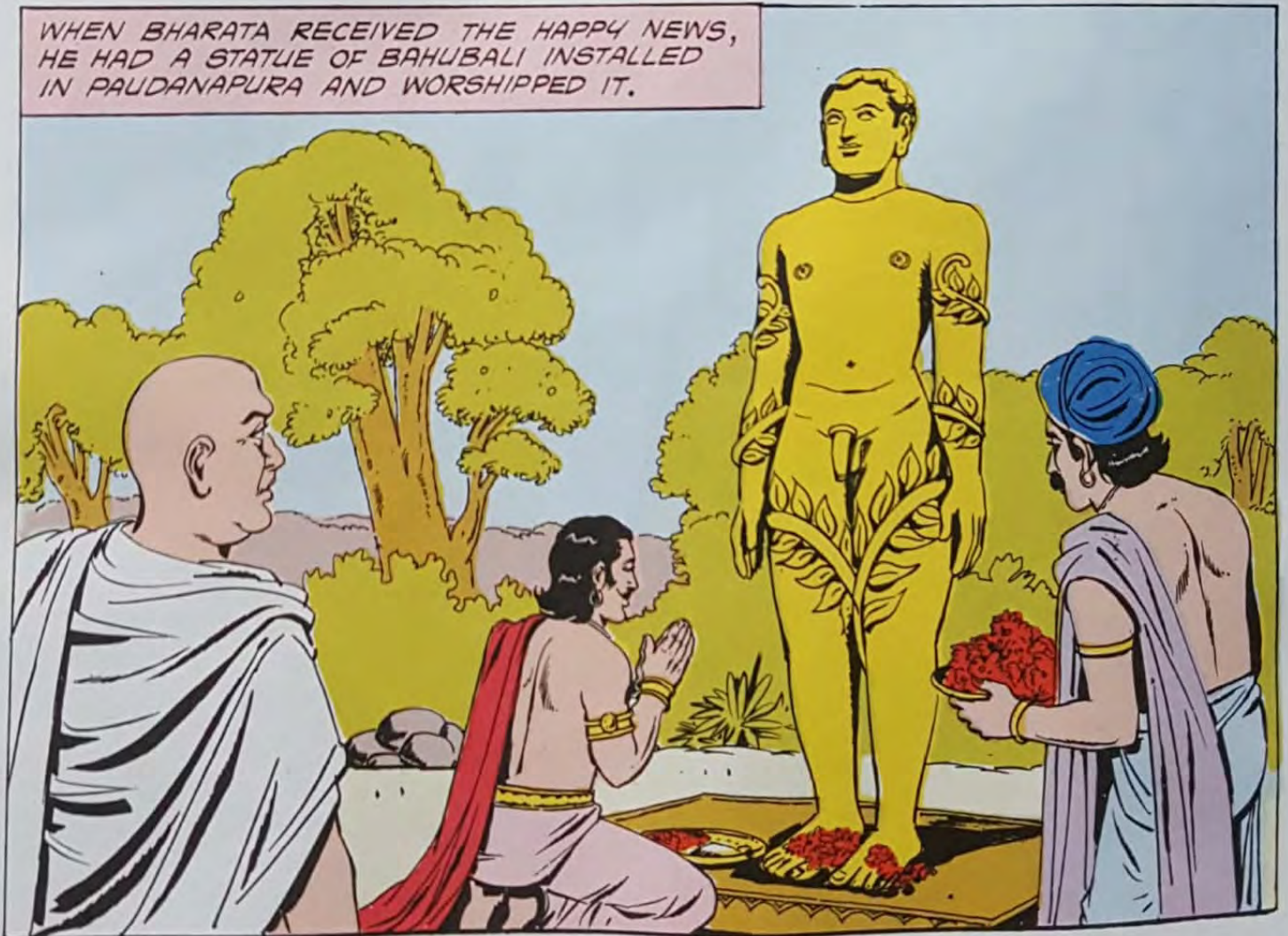
AT LAST BAHUBALI SAW THE LIGHT. HE CONTINUED TO MEDITATE...



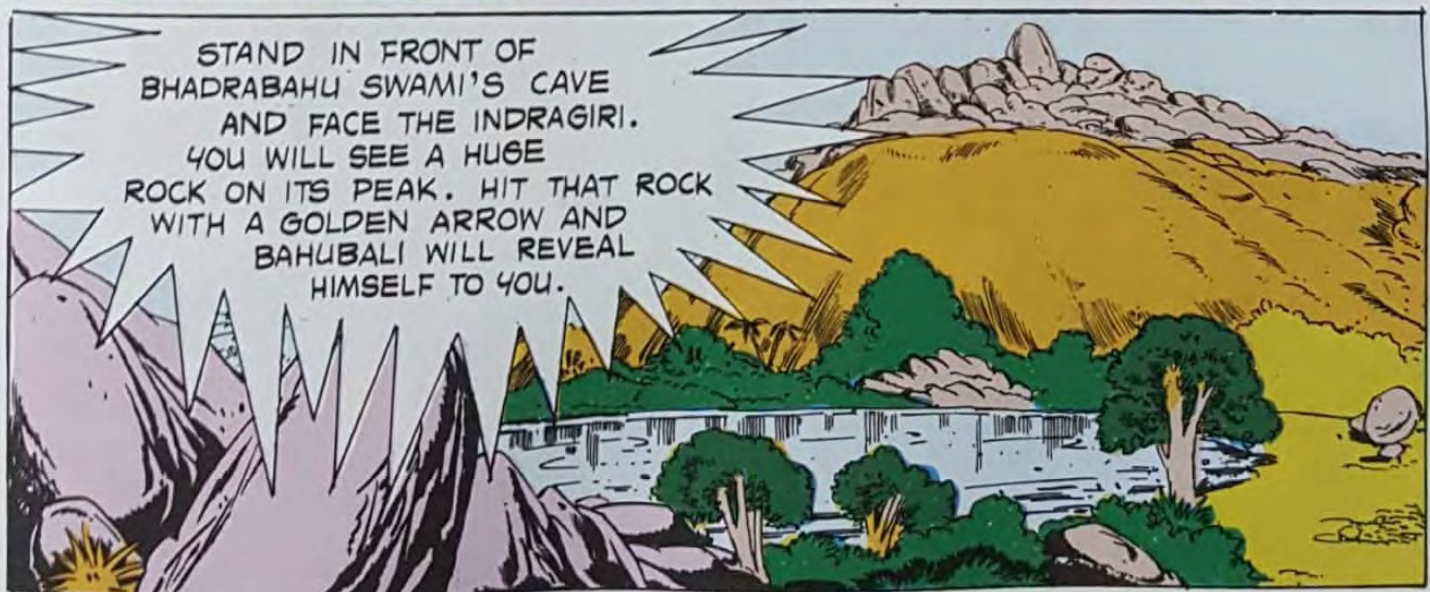
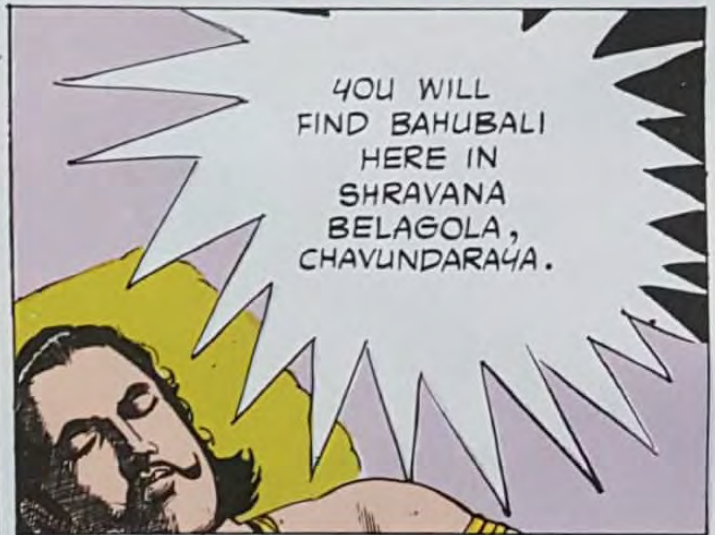
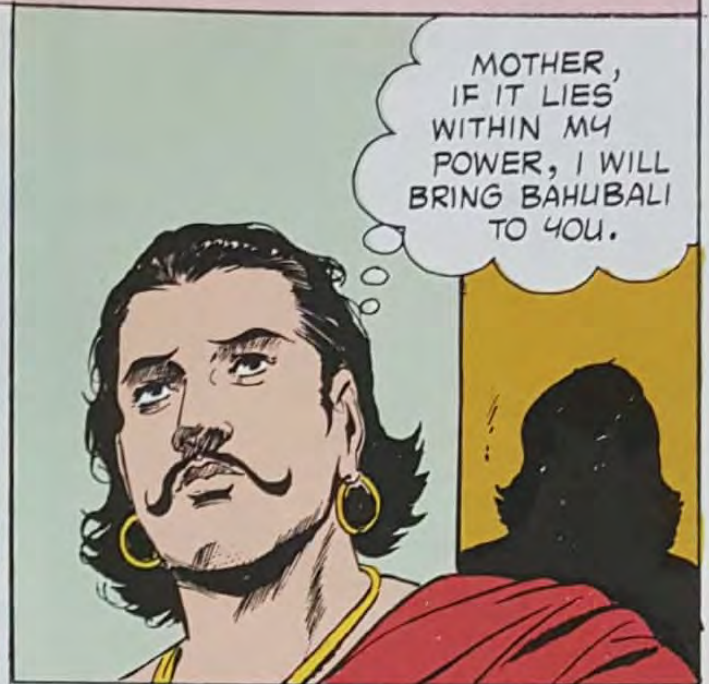
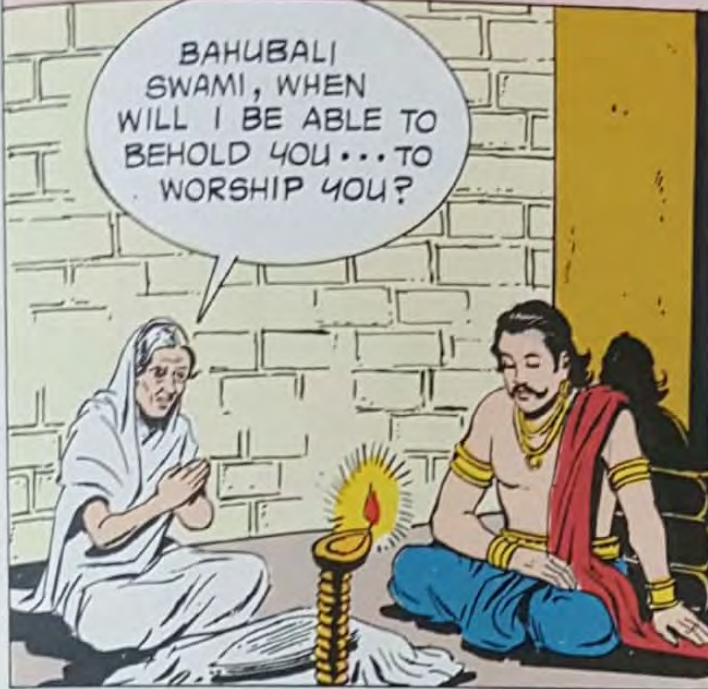
...TILL HE ATTAINED NIRVANA.



WHEN BHARATA RECEIVED THE HAPPY NEWS, HE HAD A STATUE OF BAHUBALI INSTALLED IN PAUDANAPURA AND WORSHIPPED IT.



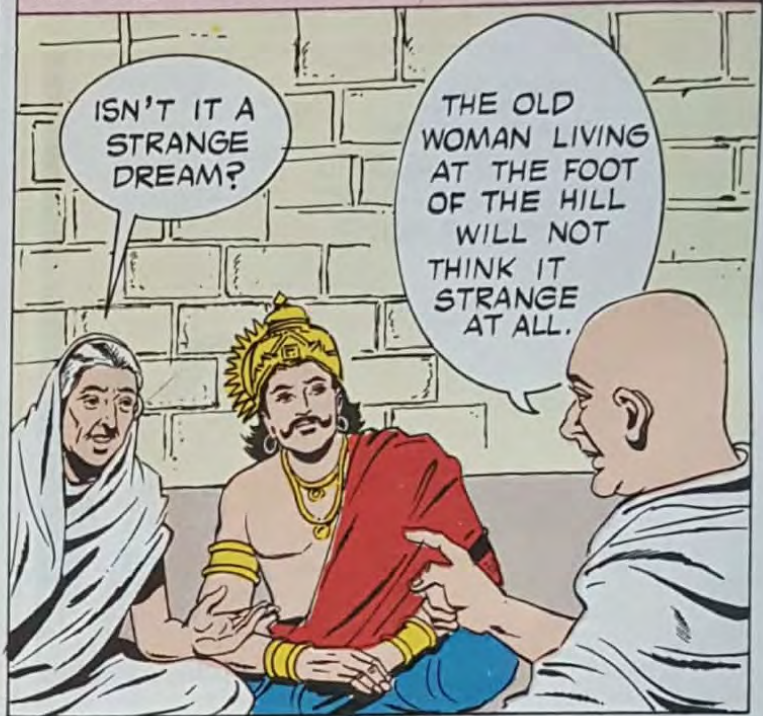
OVER THE YEARS THE STATUE OF BAHUBALI CAME TO BE COVERED WITH CREEPERS AND SNAKES AND IT WAS NO LONGER VISIBLE. THIS WAS THE STATUE KALALA DEVI WISHED TO WORSHIP.



CHAVUNDARAYA WOKE UP WITH A START.



LATER HE NARRATED THE DREAM TO HIS MOTHER AND TO HIS TEACHER.

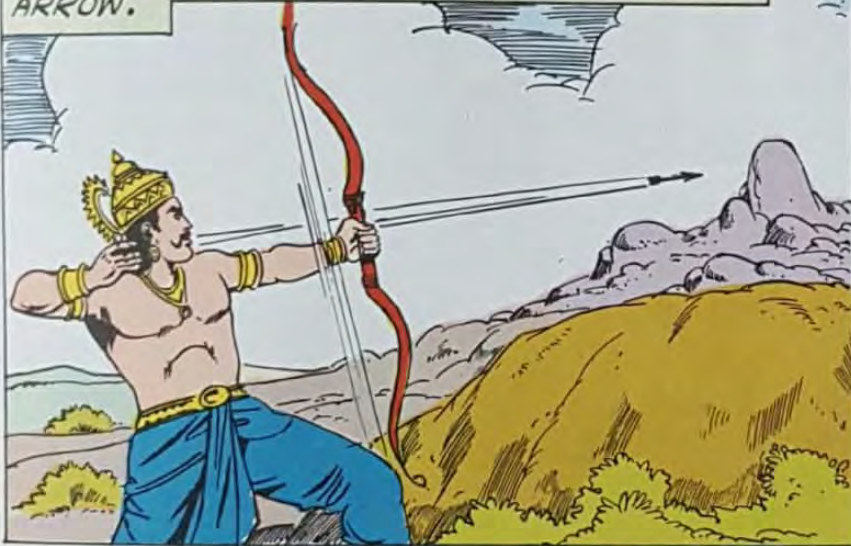


ON AN AUSPICIOUS DAY, CHAVUNDARAYA, NEMICHANDRA, KALALA DEVI AND A TEAM OF ABLE SCULPTORS WALKED TO BHADRABAHU.SWAMI'S CAVE.

CHAVUNDARAYA STOOD OUTSIDE THE CAVE AND FACED THE INDRAGIRI. HE RAISED HIS BOW...



... TOOK AIM AND LET GO THE GOLDEN ARROW.



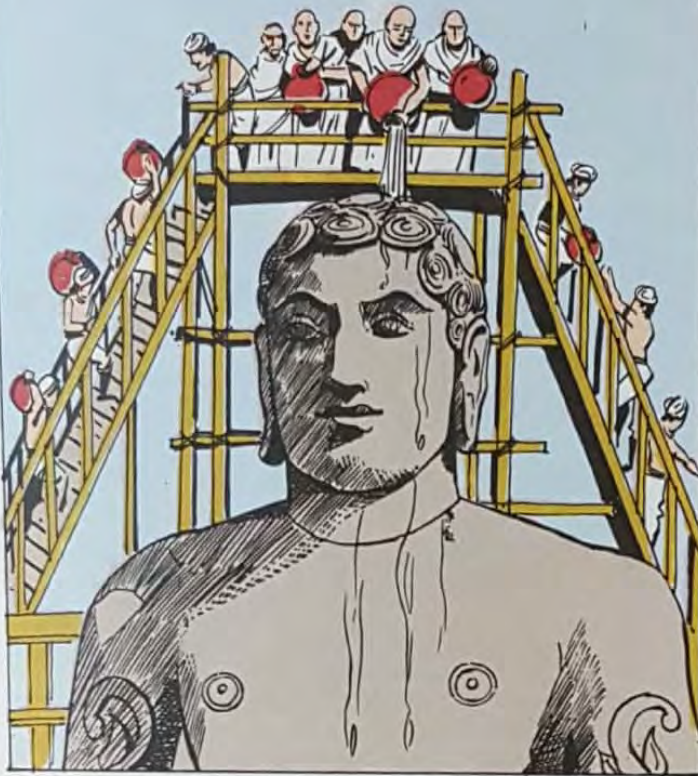
HUNDREDS OF SCULPTORS WORKED
DAY AND NIGHT...



...AND SOON THE IMAGE OF BAHUBALI
WAS READY FOR THE CONSECRATION
CEREMONY.



THE PRIEST BEGAN TO ANOINT THE IMAGE WITH MILK.



CHAVUNDARAYA WAS PLEASED WITH HIMSELF.

I HAVE ACHIEVED THE IMPOSSIBLE! I HAVE FULFILLED MY MOTHER'S WISH. I HAVE BROUGHT BAHUBALI TO HER. I HAVE BROUGHT HIM TO ALL THESE DEVOTEES HERE.

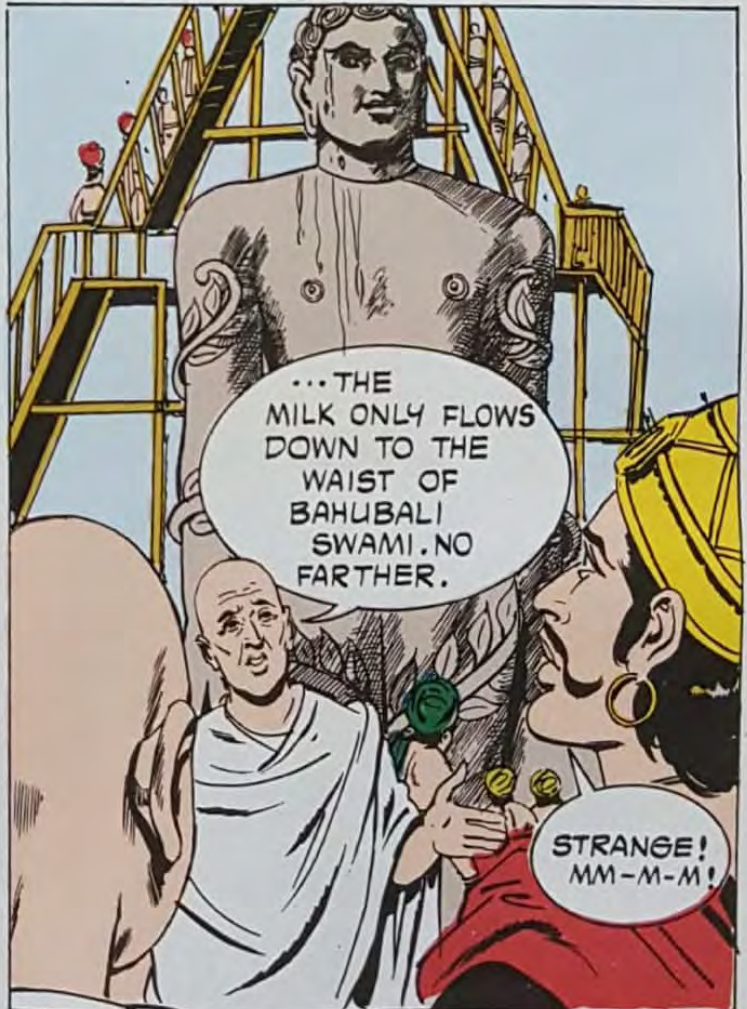


BUT HIS PRIDE WAS SHORT-LIVED.

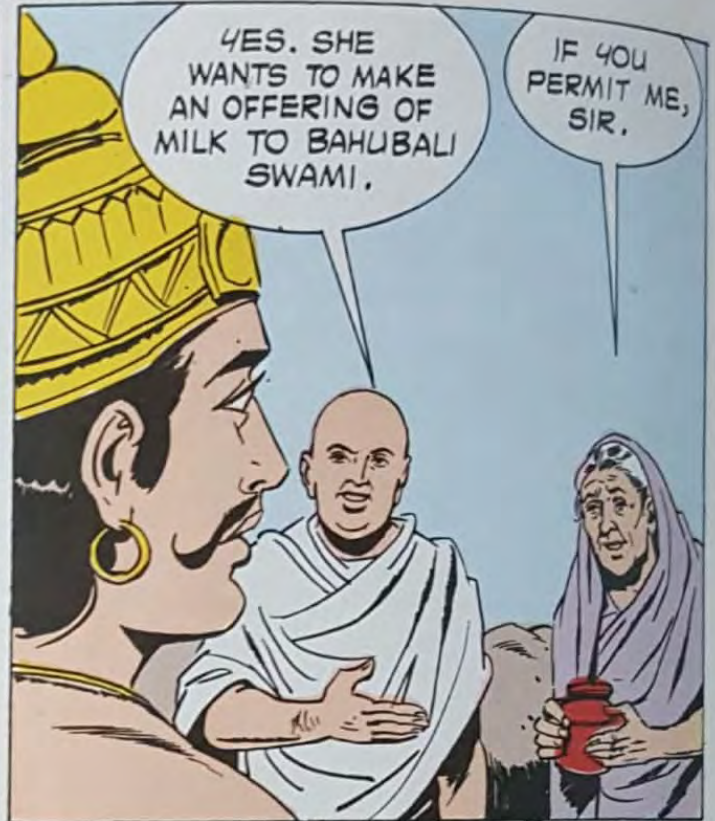
WE HAVE BEEN POURING POTS AND POTS OF MILK. YET...



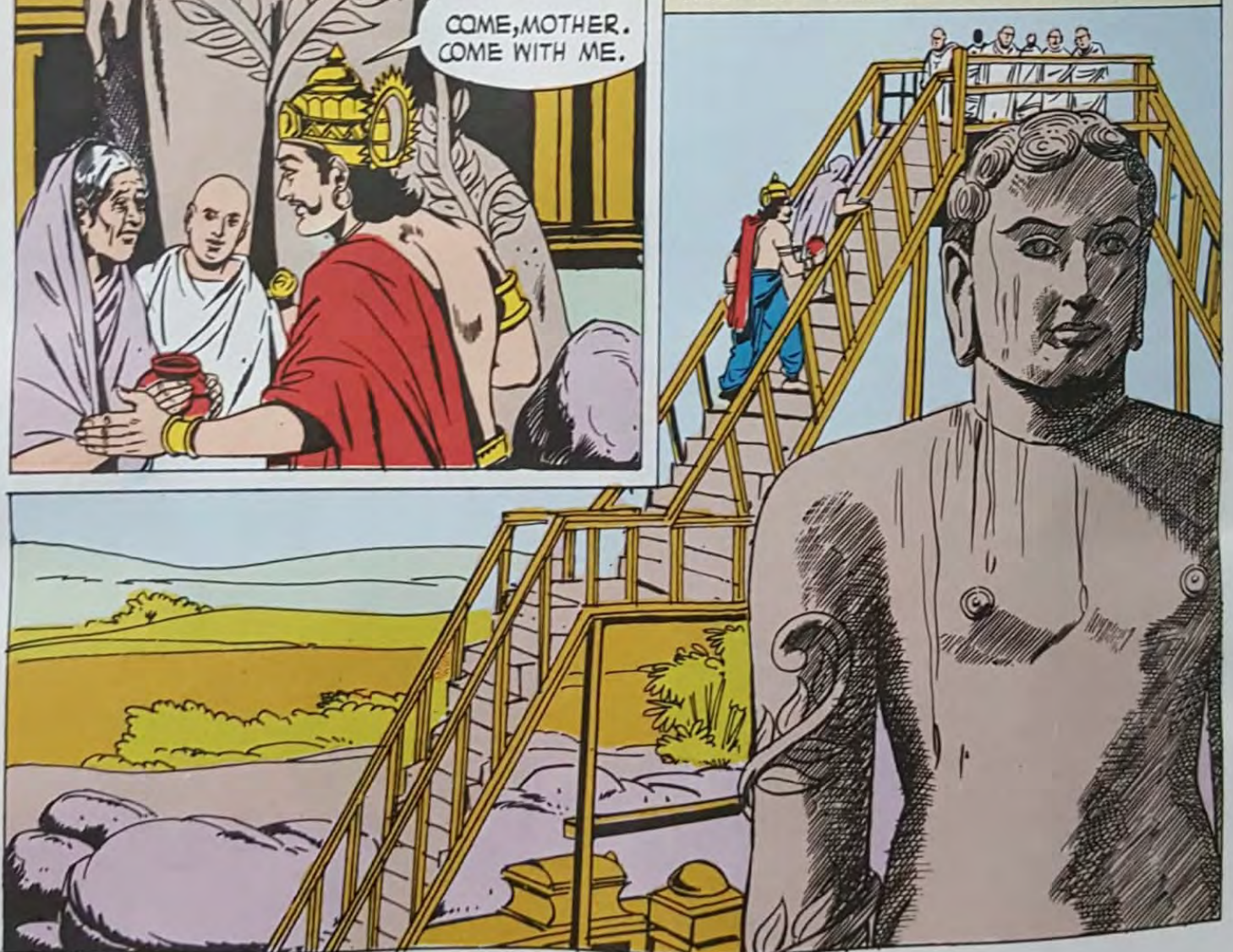
...THE MILK ONLY FLOWS DOWN TO THE WAIST OF BAHUBALI SWAMI. NO FARTHER.



EVEN AS CHAVUNDARAYA TURNED TO NEMICHANDRA FOR GUIDANCE —

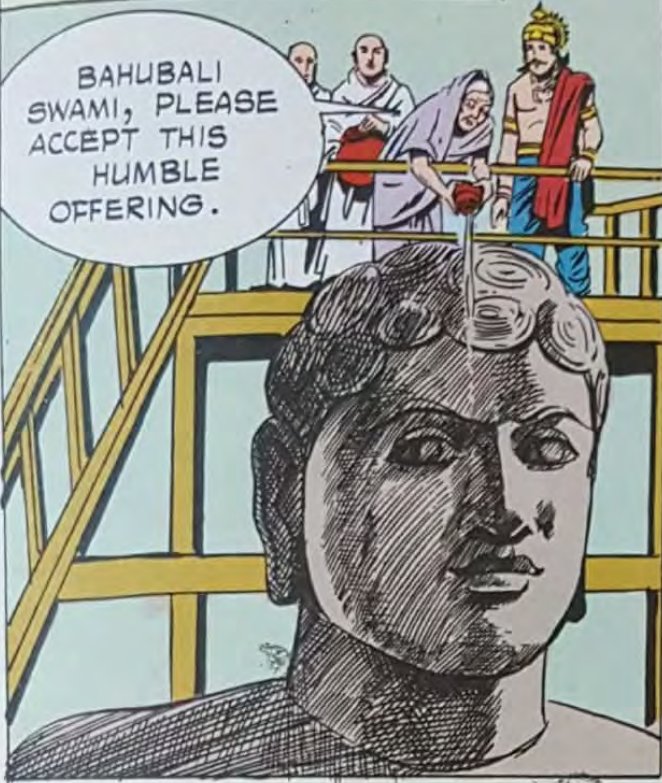


THE TWO CLIMBED THE SCAFFOLD...

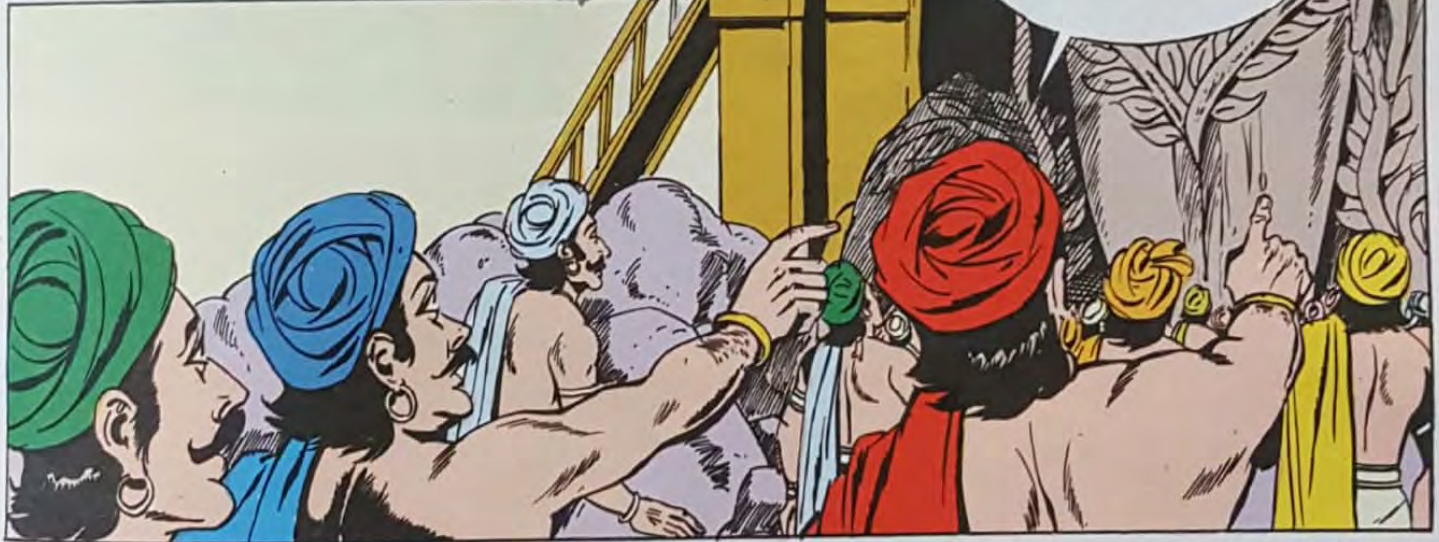


... AND REACHED THE TOP.

BAHUBALI
SWAMI, PLEASE
ACCEPT THIS
HUMBLE
OFFERING.



LOOK! THE
MILK HAS REACHED
THE GROUND!
THE IMAGE IS
FULLY BATHED!



HER ONE
POT OF MILK
COULD DO WHAT
THE THOUSANDS
I OFFERED
COULD NOT, BECAUSE
IT WAS OFFERED
WITH HUMILITY
AND DEVOTION.



NOT SO
MINE, FORGIVE
ME, O
BAHUBALI.



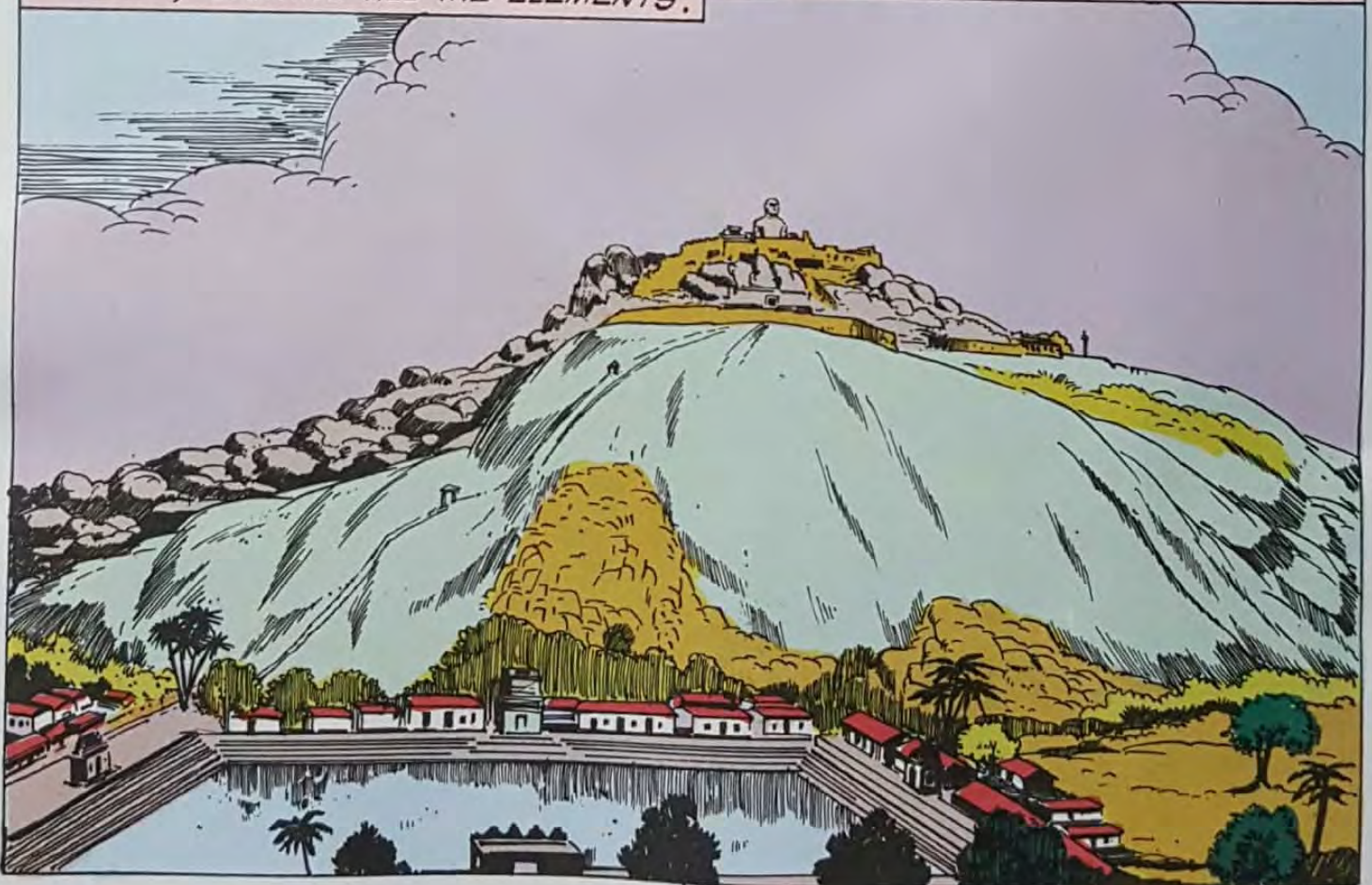
A THOUSAND YEARS HAVE GONE BY,
WE NOW HAVE A MOTORABLE ROAD
FROM THE CITY OF BANGALORE TO
SHRAVANA BELAGOLA.



WE HAVE HELICOPTERS TO SHOWER
FLOWERS OVER BAHUBALI, OR GOMMATA
AS HE IS NOW KNOWN, ON THE
OCCASION OF MAHA-MASTAKA-ABHISHEKA,
THE CEREMONY HELD ONCE IN TWELVE
YEARS WHEN LAKHS OF DEVOTEES
CONGREGATE TO WORSHIP HIM.



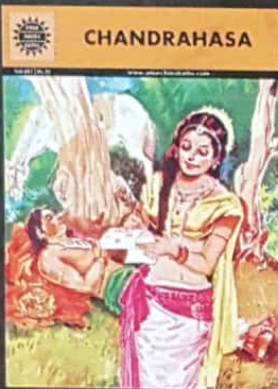
PEOPLE COME AND GO, BUT GOMMATA REMAINS MOTIONLESS, UNPERTURBED,
SERENE, BRAVING ALL THE ELEMENTS.



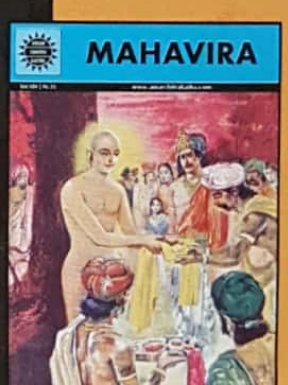
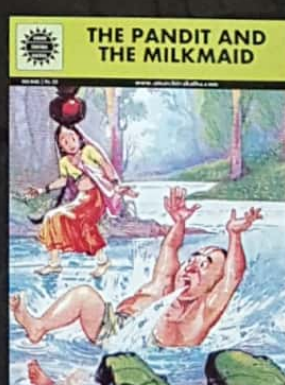
BAHUBALI

Bharata, king of Ayodhya, had an overriding ambition to become king of kings. He set about subduing every kingdom possible including those of his brothers. The only person to oppose his arrogance was his half-brother, Bahubali, who defeated Bharata in single combat. However, Bahubali abdicated all claims to the throne and left for the forests to meditate. Centuries later Chavundaraya, a commander-in-chief of the Ganga dynasty built a 57 feet high statue of Bahubali at Shravana Belagola. This story has been taken from Pampa's *Adi Purana* and Panchabana's *Bhubabali Charita*.

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