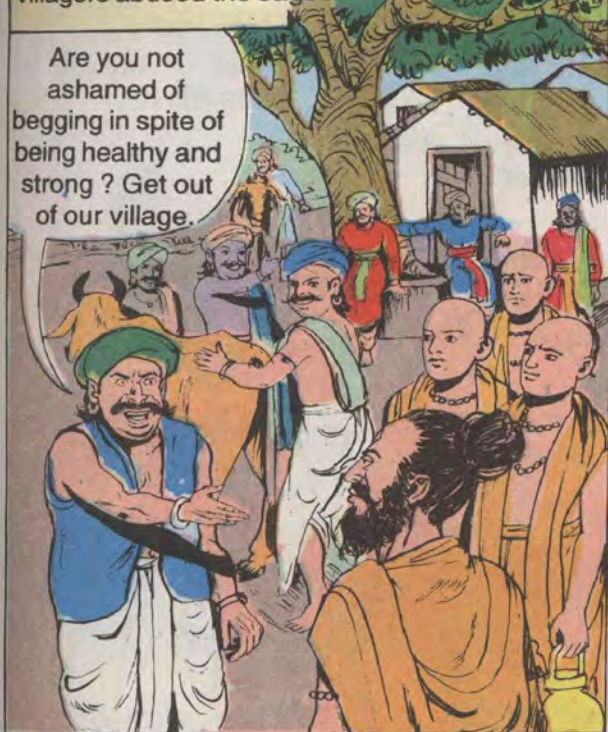


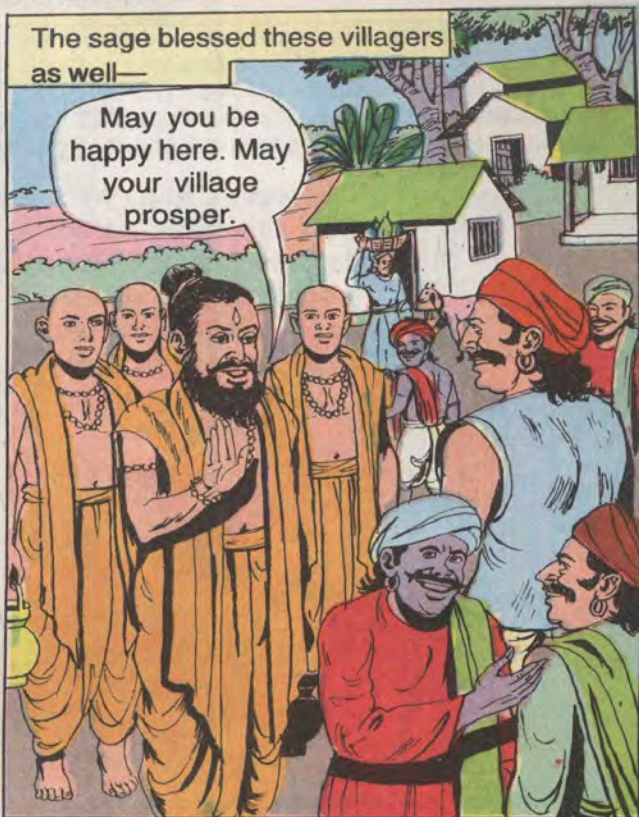
The group of sages came to another village. The villagers abused the sages

Are you not ashamed of begging in spite of being healthy and strong? Get out of our village.



The sage blessed these villagers as well—

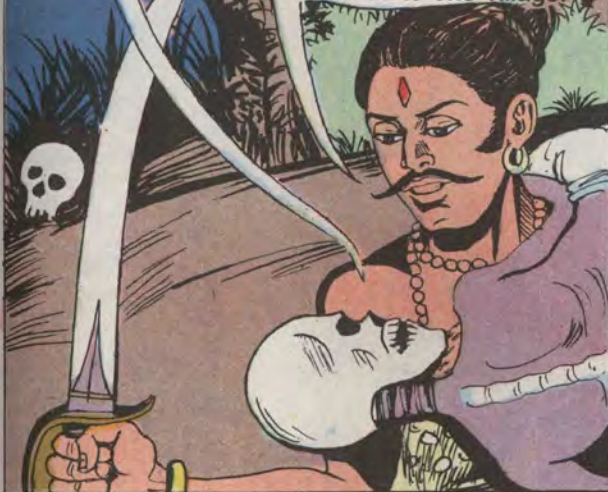
May you be happy here. May your village prosper.



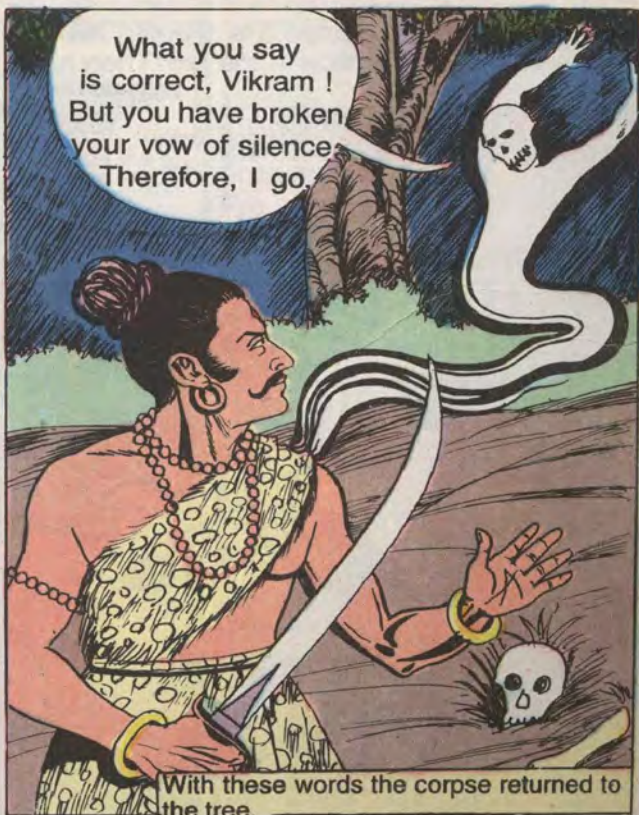
Concluding the story the Vetaal within the corpse said—

The sage blessed the good people with destruction and the bad people with prosperity. Tell me king Vikram! Was it right?

The blessing by the sage was absolutely correct. Wherever they go good people do good to others and bad people spread evil. That is why it is right that good people scatter to different villages and bad people remain confined to one village.

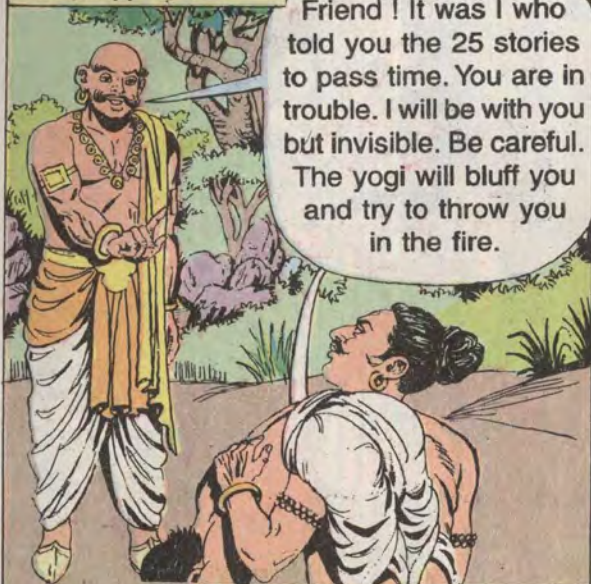


What you say is correct, Vikram! But you have broken your vow of silence. Therefore, I go.



With these words the corpse returned to the tree.

Vikram went to the tree again and carried the corpse back. Once again the corpse told a story and in excitement Vikram replied. The corpse again returned to the tree. This continued till the 25th story when Vikram remained silent. Agni Vetaal appeared—



Friend ! It was I who told you the 25 stories to pass time. You are in trouble. I will be with you but invisible. Be careful. The yogi will bluff you and try to throw you in the fire.

Explaining all this the Vetaal disappeared.

At last Vikram came to the yogi with the corpse. The yogi uttered angrily—



O king ! Why are you so late ? Anyway be ready now.

The yogi sat on the corpse. He chanted mantras and offered sacrifice in the fire. Then he said—



King ! Now go around the pyre.

The yogi followed the king and extended his hand to push the king into the fire—



Now let me push him into the fire.

Alert Vikram suddenly turned and pushed the unsuspecting yogi into the fire.

Here rascal !
Reap what you
had sown.

Oh !
Help me !

The yogi fell into the fire and started burning.

Suddenly a golden-man emerged from the fire—

O king ! I am a divine
golden-man. I am pleased with
your virtues. Put me safe in your
treasury. During the day cut me as
much as you want from my lower
limbs. During the night I will grow
back to normal. Thus you will
always have an unending
stock of gold.

O Golden-man !!
I promise to spend all the
wealth you bless me with
for public welfare.

Vikramaditya took the golden-man and
placed it safe in the treasury of Avanti.

One day while Vikramaditya was sitting in his court, an aged stranger came—



I convey my greetings to the brave King Vikramaditya, the king of kings.

Every one in the court looked at this stranger with curiosity. The king asked—



Tell me gentleman, where from do you come and what for ?

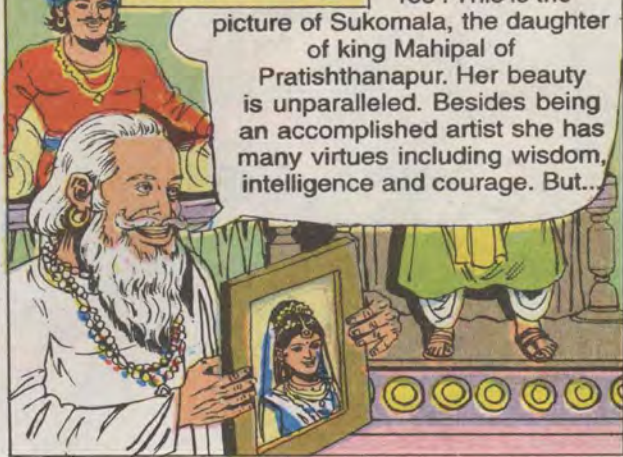
Sire! I am a globetrotter. I came to Avanti and took this opportunity to visit your court.

The king was curious—



Gentleman ! This world is full of astonishing things. Have you also come across something strange ?

The visitor took out a beautiful picture and placed it before the king—

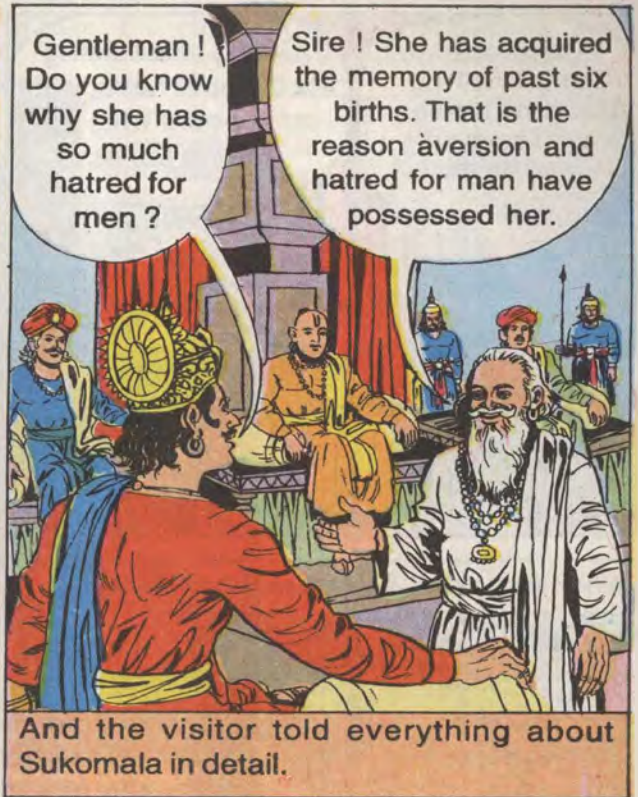


Yes ! This is the picture of Sukomala, the daughter of king Mahipal of Pratishtanapur. Her beauty is unparalleled. Besides being an accomplished artist she has many virtues including wisdom, intelligence and courage. But...



O king ! She has a vice that veils all her virtues. She is a man-hater. She hates mere mention of a man. She orders murder when she sees even a shadow of man.

Disappointed with this nature of his daughter the king has made a house for her in a garden outside the city.



Gentleman ! Do you know why she has so much hatred for men ?

Sire ! She has acquired the memory of past six births. That is the reason aversion and hatred for man have possessed her.

And the visitor told everything about Sukomala in detail.

The king offered the old man one lac gold coins as gift. The old man raised his hand—



What is this ?

Here, O king ! Please accept this gift of seventy million gold coins from me.

The visitor turned into a handsome god. The king got up and bowed before him—



O divine one ! Why did you come to this world ?

O king ! I had heard your praise in the heavens. I have come to see that with my own eyes. Please seek some boon from me.



Divine one !
There is nothing
that I don't have,
and I have no
craving for more.

O king ! Beholding
the divine is never with-
out a boon. Take this
divine tablet.



What are
its
properties ?

This is a disguising
tablet. Put it in your mouth
and you will be disguised
as you desire.

The god left after giving the tablet.

When the god left, the king said to Matribhatt—

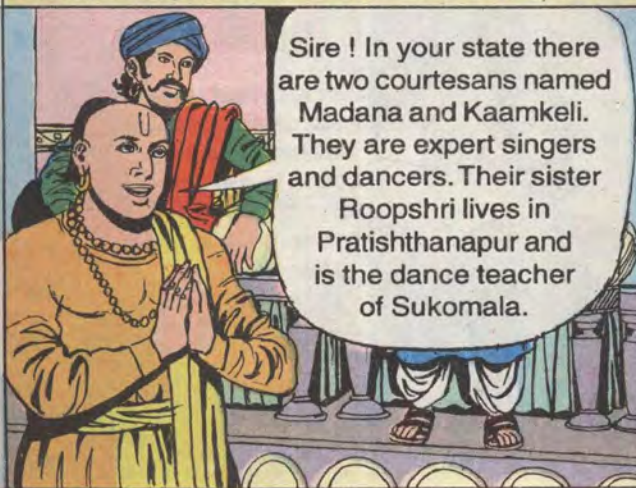


I want all
information
about princess
Sukomala
and how to
get her.



It appears
that time is ripe
for shattering of
Sukomala's
ego.

Within two days Matribhatt collected all information—



Sire ! In your state there
are two courtesans named
Madana and Kaamkeli.
They are expert singers
and dancers. Their sister
Roopshri lives in
Pratishthanapur and
is the dance teacher
of Sukomala.



Alright, we
will do what we
want with their
help.

The king made arrangements to go to
Pratishthanapur.

Three days later, one night Vikramaditya, Vetaal, Matribhatt, Madana and Kaamkeli left for Pratishtanapur in fast moving chariots.



The five arrived at the outskirts of Pratishtanapur. As soon as they came near Sukomala's garden they heard a thundering sound

Vetaal! What is this? Look! Who is that?



She is Marjari Devi, the guardian of Sukomala's palace, sitting on the roof. Now that she has seen us males, she is informing Sukomala. On getting her command she will kill us all.

So we should now disguise ourselves.



With the help of the divine tablet they turned into women.

The five women went to Rupashri's residence. Madana introduced them—

They are my fast friends Vikrama, Vetaala, and Bhatta. Vikrama is an expert dancer and singer and these two are expert musicians.

You all are welcome. Please take rest. I am going to the princess to give dance lessons.



Coming to the palace Rupashri informed Sukomala—

Princess! Five dancers from the court of King Vikramaditya are my guests today. They all are experts in their fields.

Is it so? Let me meet them. I would love to watch them perform.



Rupashri took her five guests to the palace. Madana and Kaamkeli danced there and Vikrama sang. Sukomala said—

Great Vikrama ! Your voice is as beautiful as you are. From now on you should live with me.

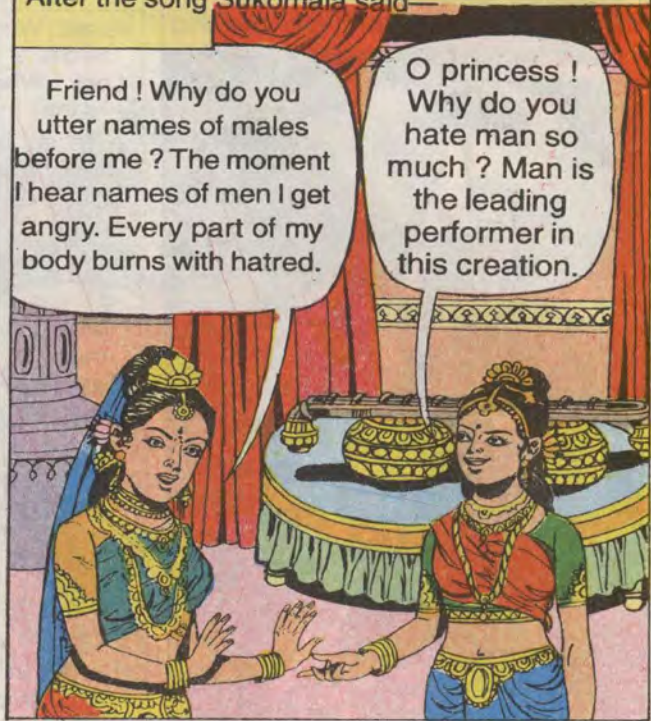


Gradually Sukomala and Vikrama became fast friends.

One day Vikrama sang prayers for Shankar, Vishnu, Rishabh, Neminath and Parshvanath. After the song Sukomala said—

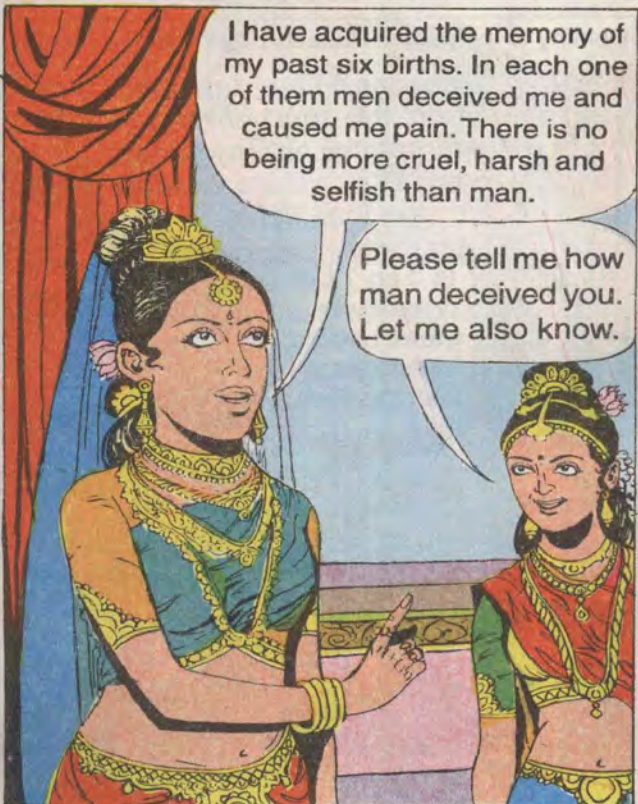
Friend ! Why do you utter names of males before me ? The moment I hear names of men I get angry. Every part of my body burns with hatred.

O princess ! Why do you hate man so much ? Man is the leading performer in this creation.



I have acquired the memory of my past six births. In each one of them men deceived me and caused me pain. There is no being more cruel, harsh and selfish than man.

Please tell me how man deceived you. Let me also know.

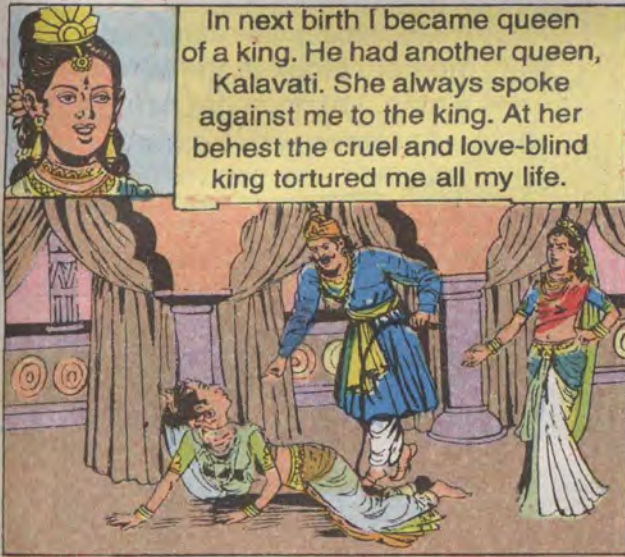


Sukomala told the story of her past six births—

Six births before, I was the wife of a merchant named Dhan. Although rich, the merchant was stingy. Once I gave a Damadi [a coin of smallest denomination at that time] to a beggar. The merchant turned red with anger and beat me up. I had fractures and bruises all over. The miser neither gave me medicine nor food. I died of hunger and thirst in extreme pain.



In next birth I became queen of a king. He had another queen, Kalavati. She always spoke against me to the king. At her behest the cruel and love-blind king tortured me all my life.



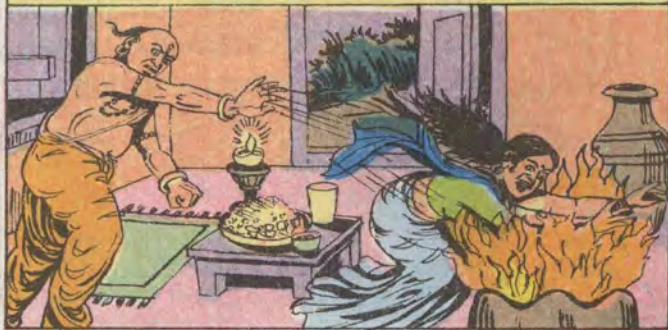
In third birth I was a doe in the Malayachal forest. There also when I was pregnant my selfish and cruel mate wounded me with his sharp horns and left me bleeding.



In the fourth birth I became a goddess. Even in that birth the god I loved always neglected, insulted and tortured me.



In the fifth birth I was the wife of a Brahmin. He was very sinful and evil. One auspicious day when he cooked prohibited food and was about to eat I tried to explain him—"My lord! Think for a moment. It is an auspicious day. Please do not commit the great sin of eating prohibited food during the night." In rage he held my hair and threw me in fire.

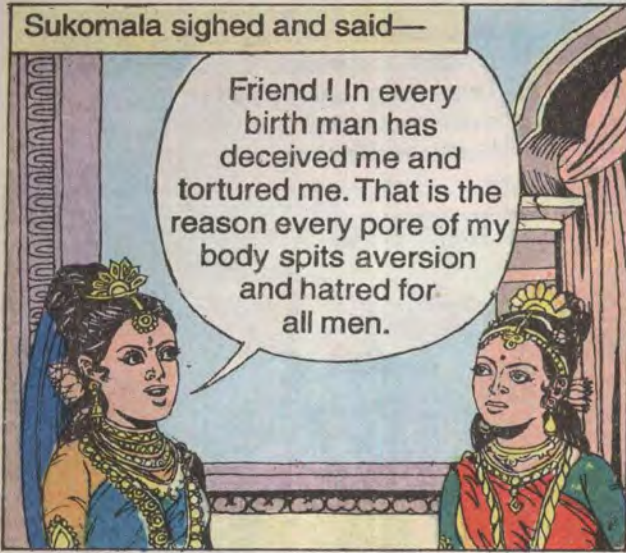


In the sixth birth I was a she-parrot. I was nursing two chicks when there was a forest fire. I asked my mate—"My lord! We should at once fly with our chicks to some safe place. Each one of us can carry one chick. But the parrot was so cruel and selfish that he wounded me with his beak and flew away. I and my two chicks turned to ashes.



Sukomala sighed and said—

Friend ! In every birth man has deceived me and tortured me. That is the reason every pore of my body spits aversion and hatred for all men.

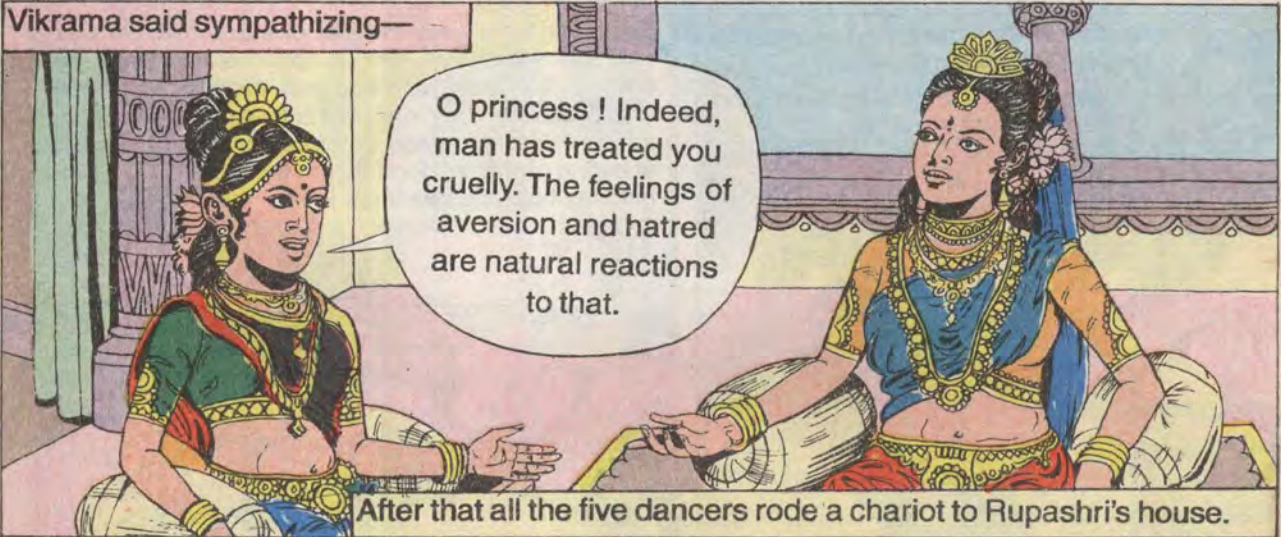


My mind is set afire the moment I look at the face of a man. I at once get him cut to pieces with a sword.



Vikrama said sympathizing—

O princess ! Indeed, man has treated you cruelly. The feelings of aversion and hatred are natural reactions to that.



After that all the five dancers rode a chariot to Rupashri's house.

One day Rupashri said—

Vikrama has become an inseparable friend of Sukomala. She gets unhappy if she doesn't see Vikrama.

Yes ! Now she avoids talking to anyone else.



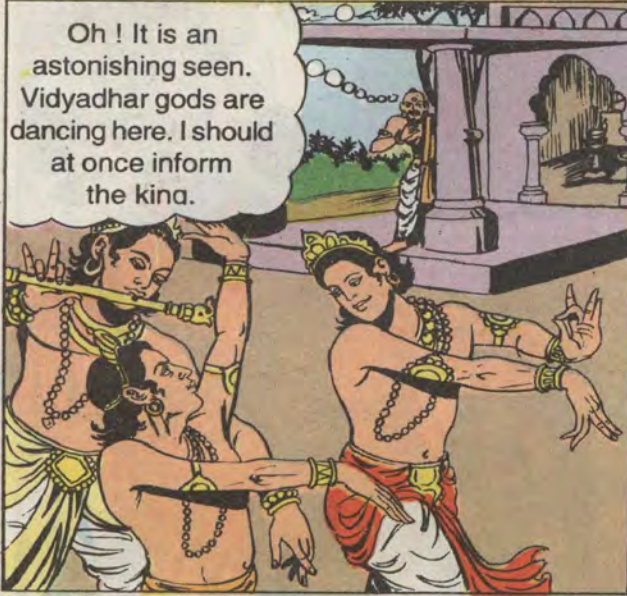
A few days later Vikrama said to Madana and Kaamkeli—

Vetaala will take you two to Avanti. I will stay here for the time being.



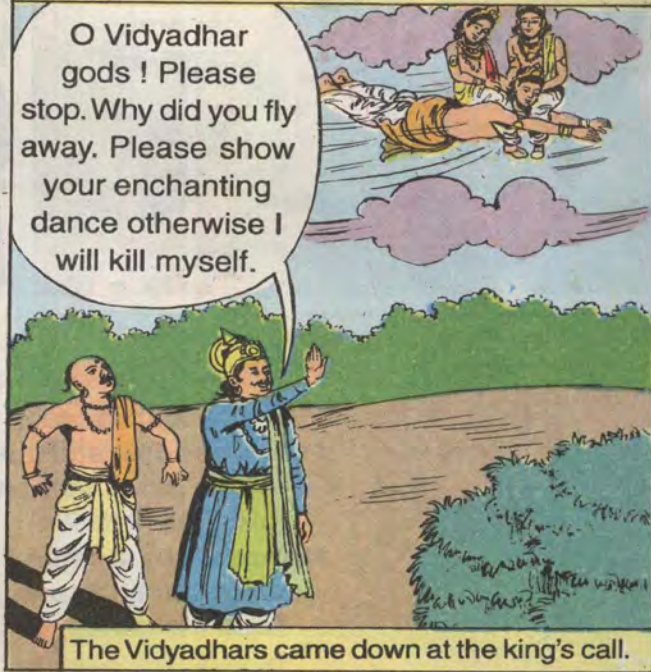
NEXT NIGHT In the garden at the back of the palace there is an ancient temple. There is a large courtyard in front of it. The courtyard is surrounded by Ashoka, Champak and other trees. In the moonlit night three Vidyadhars# are dancing in the courtyard. The priest sees them performing.

Oh ! It is an astonishing seen. Vidyadhar gods are dancing here. I should at once inform the king.



The priest brought King Shalivahan. The Vidyadhars flew into the sky when they saw the king. Shalivahan called—

O Vidyadhar gods ! Please stop. Why did you fly away. Please show your enchanting dance otherwise I will kill myself.



The Vidyadhars came down at the king's call.

The Vidyadhars performed before the king. The king was enchanted at the performance. He said—

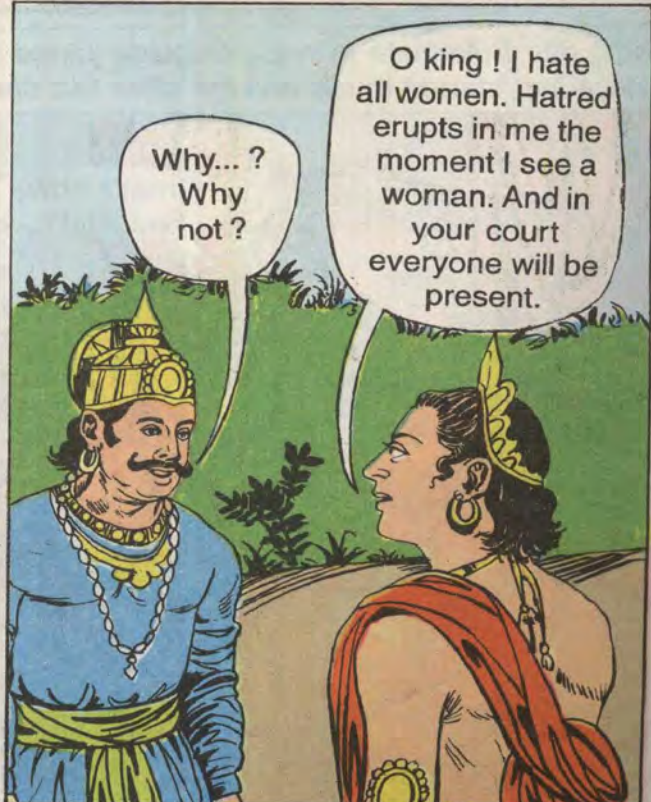
Kindly give such performance in my court and fill everyone with joy.

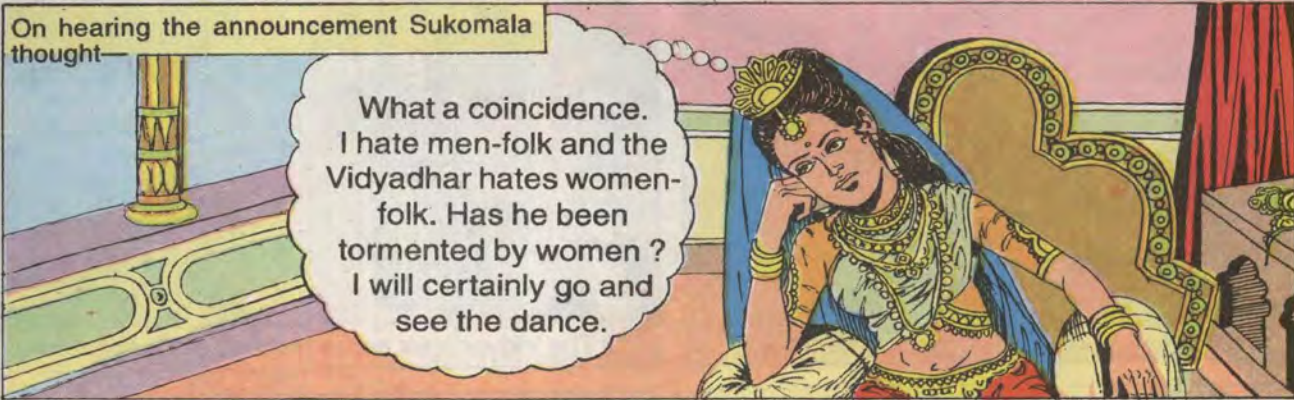
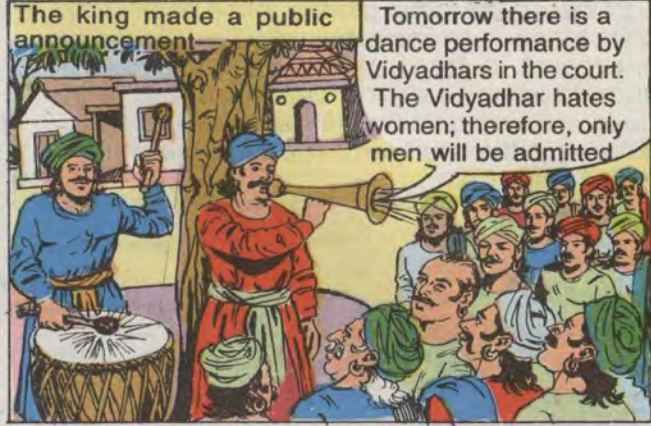
O King ! We dance only in solitude, not in public.



Why... ?
Why not ?

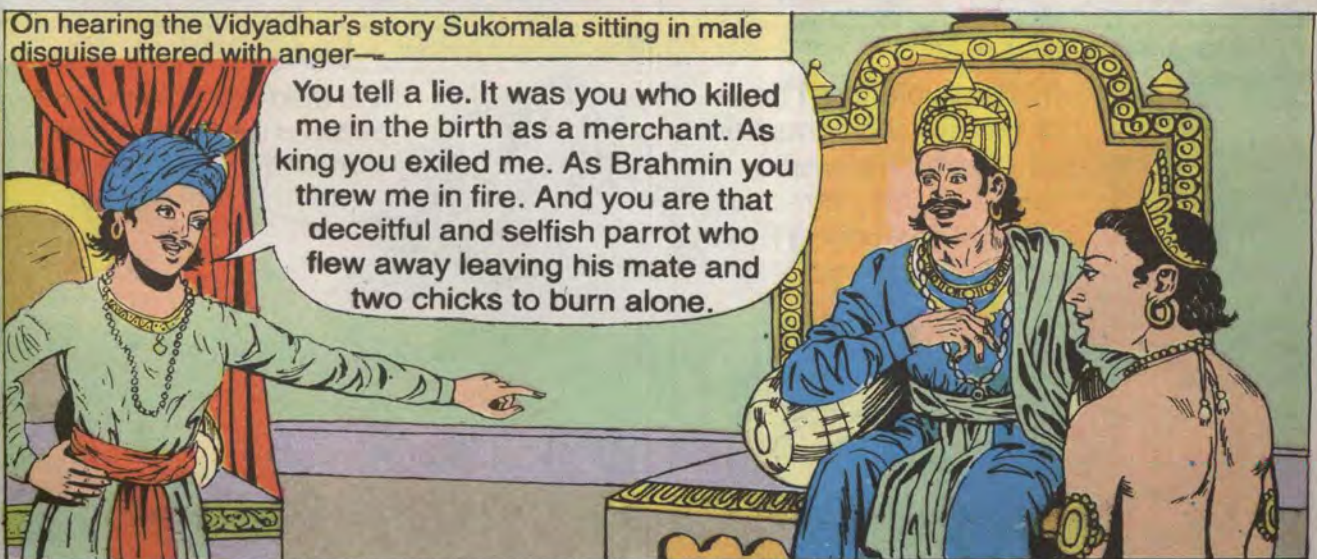
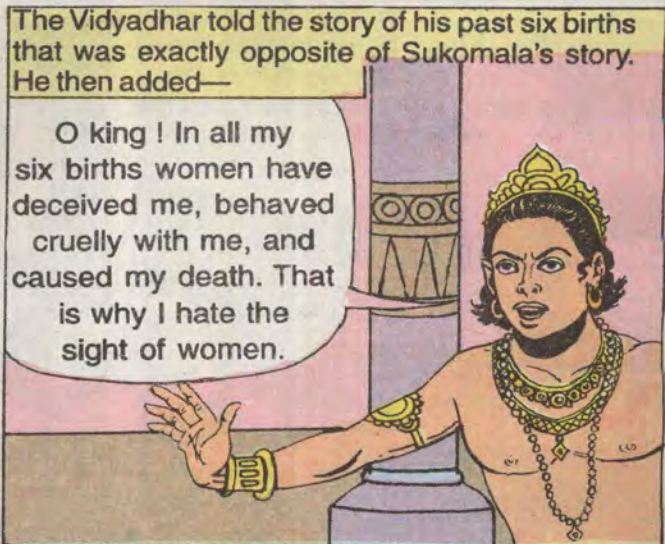
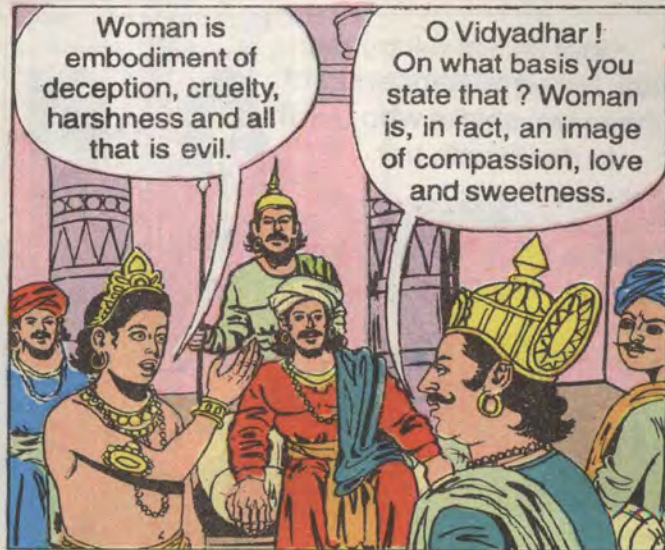
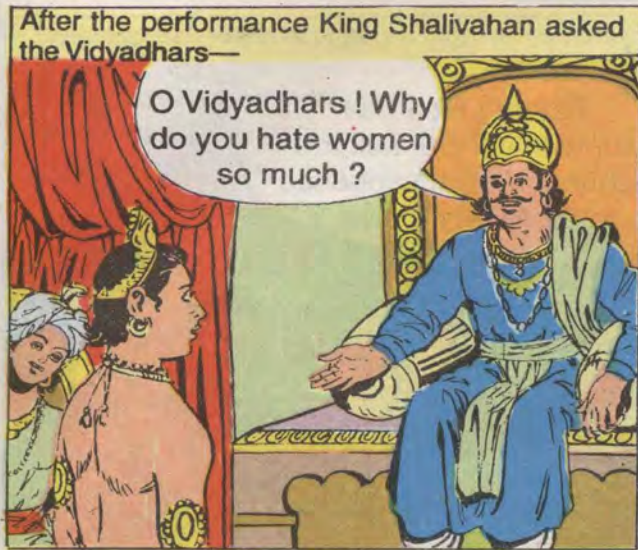
O king ! I hate all women. Hatred erupts in me the moment I see a woman. And in your court everyone will be present.





Next day Sukomala in male disguise joined the audience. The court was packed. One Vidyadhar started music and the other two danced. The audience clapped.



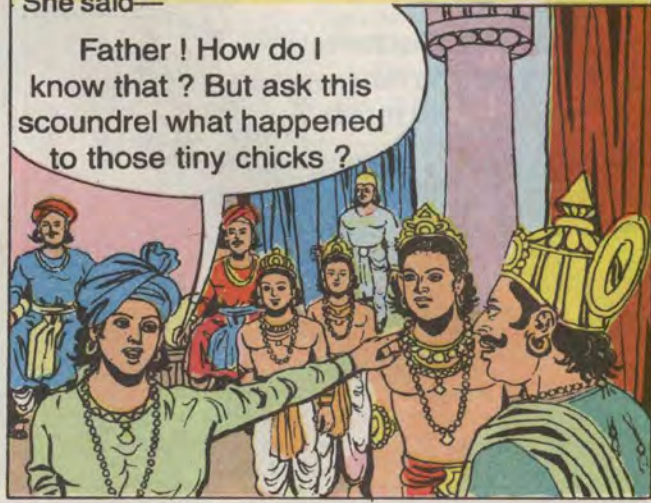


King! If I am a liar just ask her what happened of those two chicks who burnt to death with her... ?

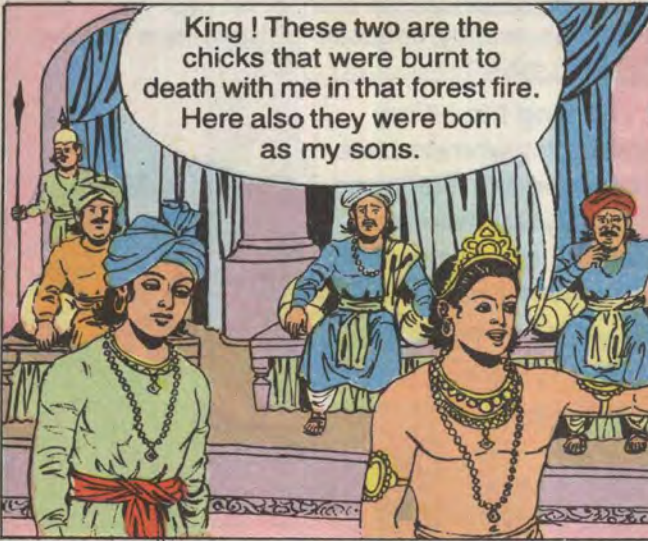


Sukomala was at a loss to answer this question. She said—

Father ! How do I know that ? But ask this scoundrel what happened to those tiny chicks ?



King ! These two are the chicks that were burnt to death with me in that forest fire. Here also they were born as my sons.

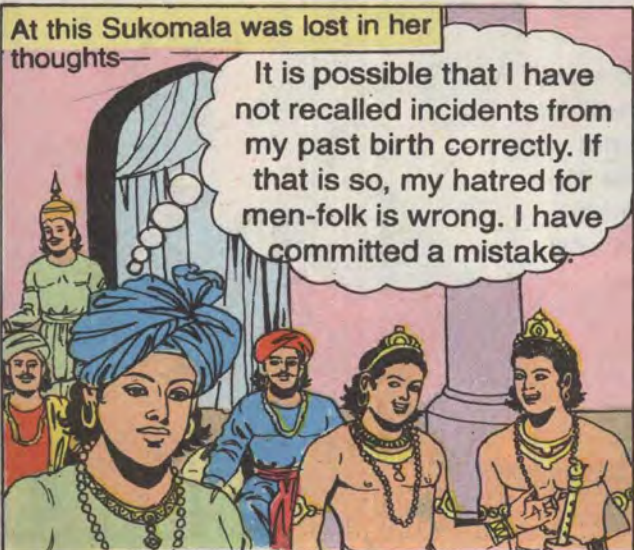


Yes ! It is true. We two were burnt alive as parrots in our last birth. We have reincarnated as his sons. Our mother had flown away leaving us burning alone.



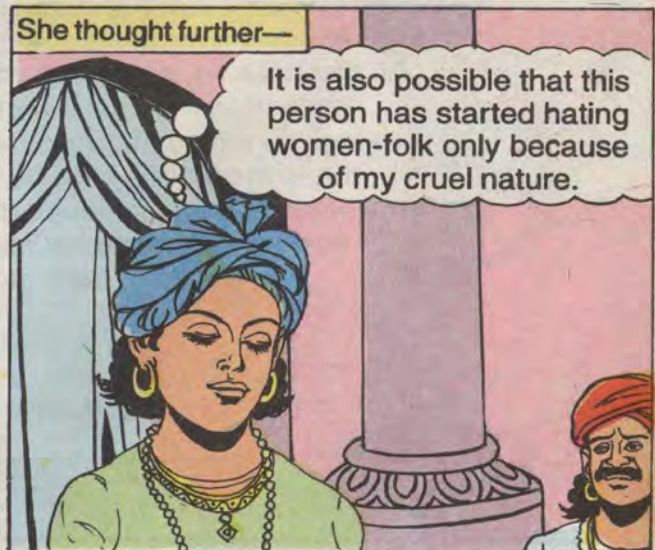
At this Sukomala was lost in her thoughts—

It is possible that I have not recalled incidents from my past birth correctly. If that is so, my hatred for men-folk is wrong. I have committed a mistake.



She thought further—

It is also possible that this person has started hating women-folk only because of my cruel nature.



Sukomala was in a disturbed state of mind. She said—

Father ! It was my mistake. Now I would like to marry this woman-hater, my husband of six births.

What is this man-hater Sukomala doing ?

How come this sudden transformation ?

Amazed Shalivahan asked—

Daughter ! Are you sure ? Do you really want to marry this person ?

Yes, father ! I will condone my mistakes by marrying him. Doesn't he hate women just because of me ?



King Shalivahan said to the Vidyadhar—

O Vidyadhar ! You have obliged me by making my daughter change her attitude. Please marry her now and relieve me of my worries.

No, sire ! Please excuse me.

The Vidyadhar refused for some time but in the end agreed. At an auspicious moment the two were married. King Shalivahan said after blessing the couple—

O divine person ! Please stay for some time in my seven storeyed palace. This will add to our happiness.

Sire ! As you wish.



It is night and three persons are sitting in a garden talking—

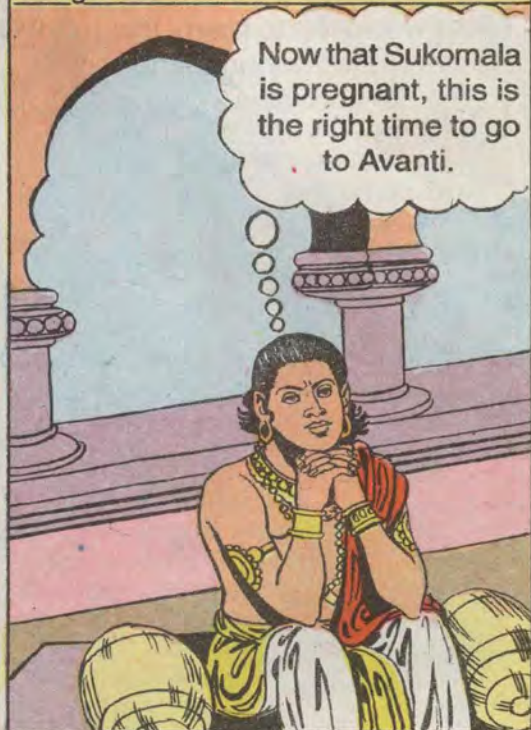


Sire ! You have cleverly accomplished your mission by transforming yourself as a Vidyadhar.

Yes, friend ! Now that this mission is over, I am worried about Avanti. Please proceed there soon and take charge of the state. I will stay here some more.

Matribhatt and Vetaal returned to Avanti.

After spending some more happy days Vikram, disguised as a Vidyadhar, thought—



Now that Sukomala is pregnant, this is the right time to go to Avanti.

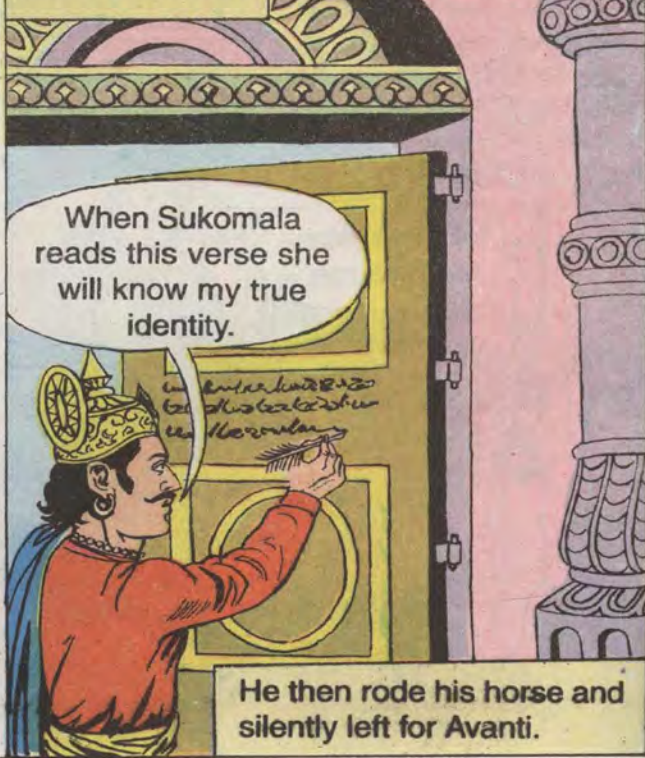
Vikram thought of a serious excuse and said to Sukomala—



Darling ! It is essential for me to go to my place for some time. I promise you that very soon I will return and take you along.

My lord ! Please come back soon. I will wait for you.

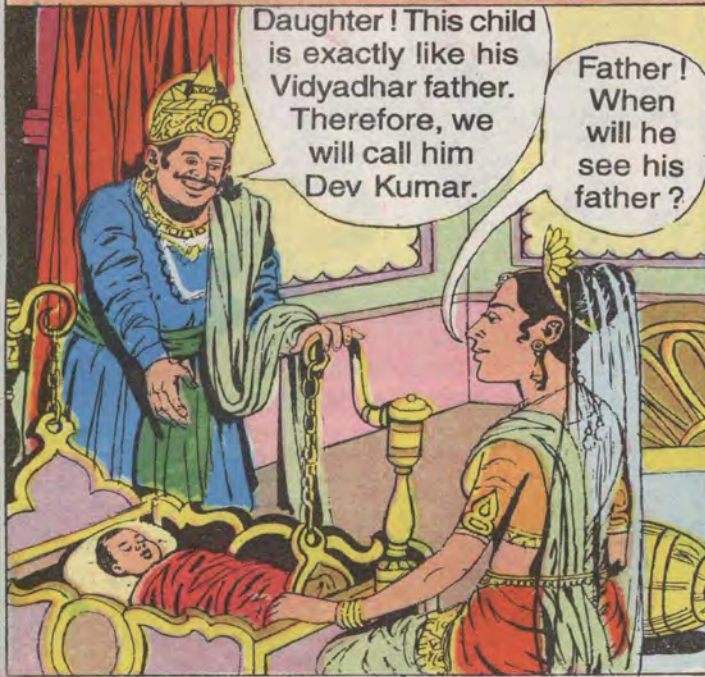
One night Vikram went to the back door of the palace and wrote about his true identity.



When Sukomala reads this verse she will know my true identity.

He then rode his horse and silently left for Avanti.

In due course Sukomala gave birth to a beautiful son. When king Shalivahan saw the child he said—



Gradually Dev Kumar grew. He attended school and mastered all arts. One day a friend taunted him—



When Dev Kumar came and asked his mother, she started crying—



One day while moving around in the palace, Dev Kumar came to the back door. By chance he looked at the door.



I, who carry scepter to protect the land, return to my Avanti after marrying a pure hearted princess.

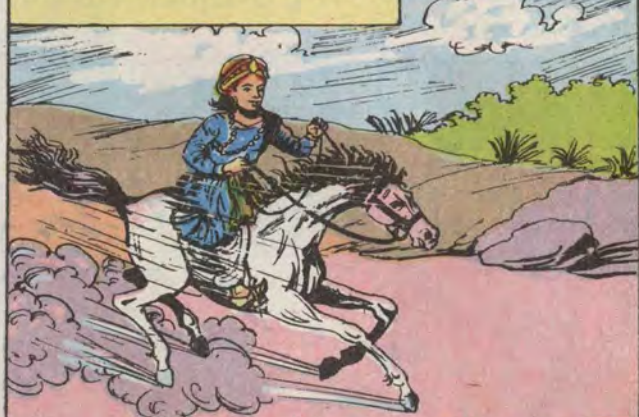
Dev Kumar came and told everything to his mother.

Is your father the king of Avanti ? Let's go there at once.

No, mother ! Father has cheated you. I will also use bluff to meet him. I will see that you meet him with all due honour.



Getting blessings from King Shalivahan and Sukomala, Dev Kumar left for Avanti alone.



Enduring all hardships of the journey he arrived at Avanti.

Roaming around, Dev Kumar came to a courtesan named Kaali. He placed a lot of money before her and said.

Kaali ! I need your help and not your body. Just give me all information about the city and I will make you rich.

All right, my lord ! I will tell you whatever you ask me. You may make yourself at home here.



Dev Kumar rested during the night and in the morning asked—

At which floor does the royal couple sleep ? Tell me how to reach there ?

The royal couple sleeps at the seventh floor. The way to the palace is through the garden.



Dev Kumar collected information from Kaali and started making his plan.

When Vikramaditya reached his palace in the evening, Agni Vetaal came and said—

Sire ! I am going to divine islands to attend some divine celebrations. Please don't summon me for two months.

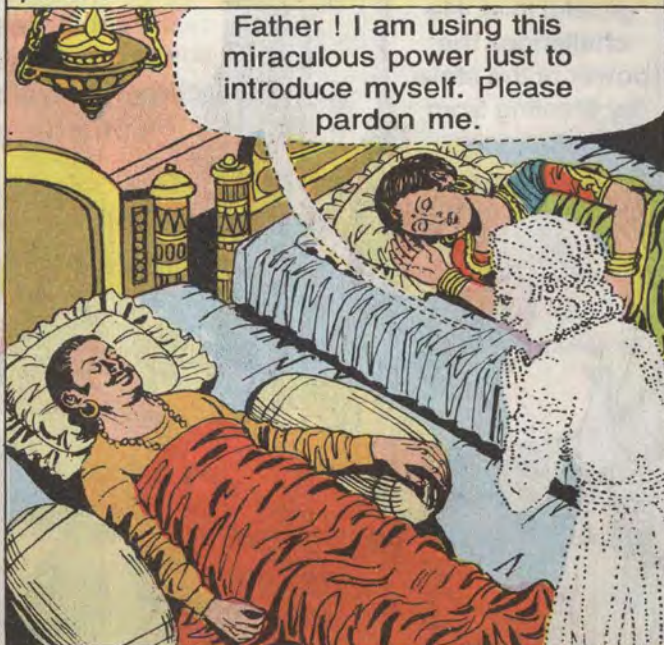
Alright, friend !
Bon voyage.



After bidding goodbye to Vetaal the king went to bed.

During the second quarter of night Dev Kumar employed his power to turn invisible and entered the palace. First he silently paid respect to parents—

Father ! I am using this miraculous power just to introduce myself. Please pardon me.



After that he took the queen's jewel box.

With his miraculous power he came straight to Kaali's house. When Kaali saw so much ornaments she uttered with surprise—

Oh God ! From where you got so many ornaments ?

Silence !
These ornaments belong to queen Kalavati. Keep them safe.



Next day there was great commotion in the palace

Theft in the palace !
Queen's jewel box is missing.

Who could be such reckless thief ?



Vikramaditya called an emergency meeting of officers—

This must be some highly reckless and guileful thief. He challenges the power of the state by stealing from the palace.

Sire ! No matter how reckless the thief is, rest assured I will catch him within three days.

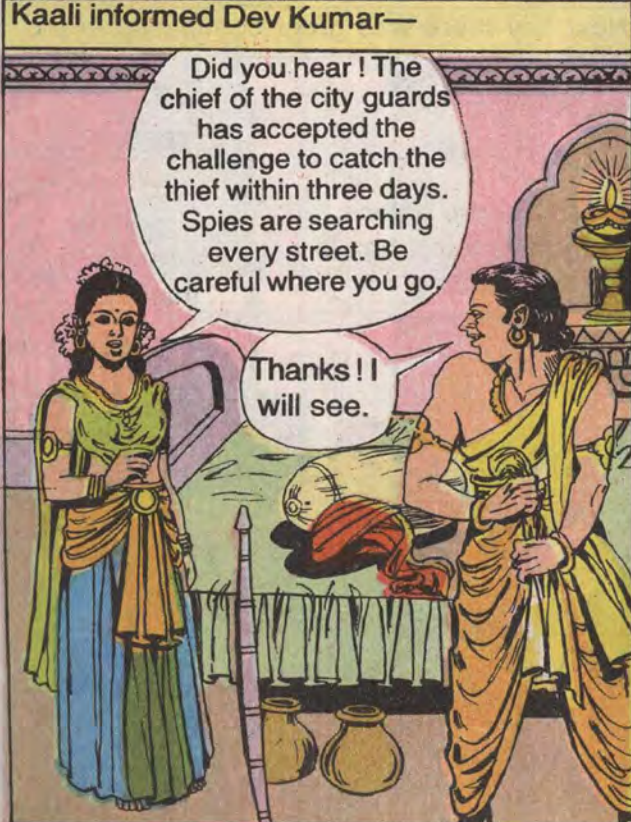


Alright, but if you fail to catch the thief within three days you will get the punishment the thief deserves.

Kaali informed Dev Kumar—

Did you hear ! The chief of the city guards has accepted the challenge to catch the thief within three days. Spies are searching every street. Be careful where you go.

Thanks ! I will see.

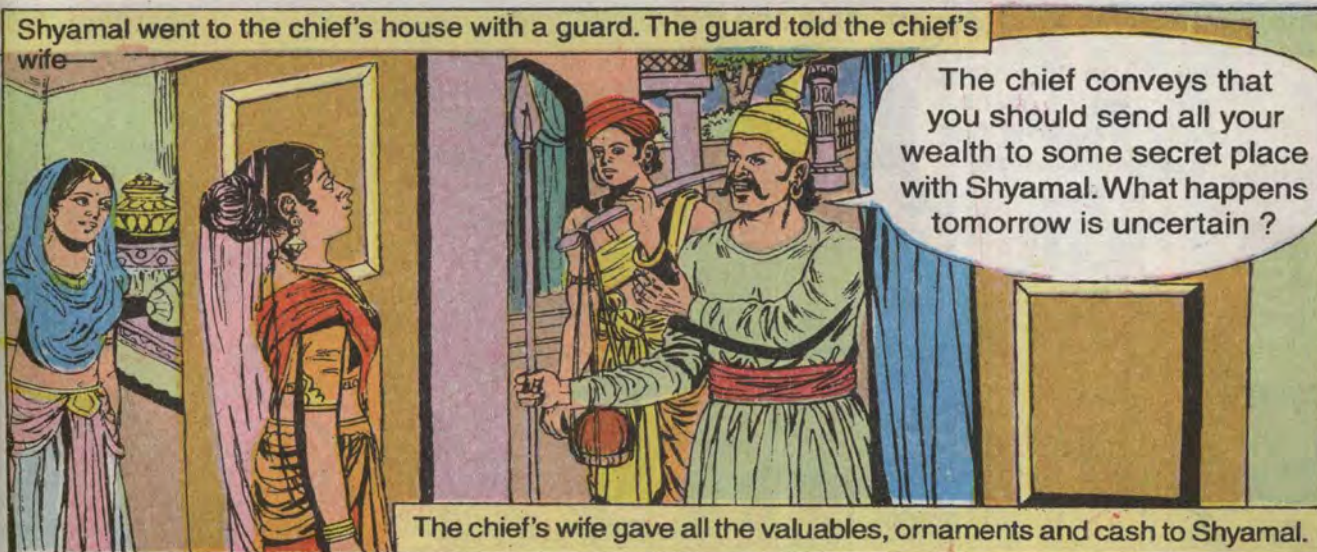
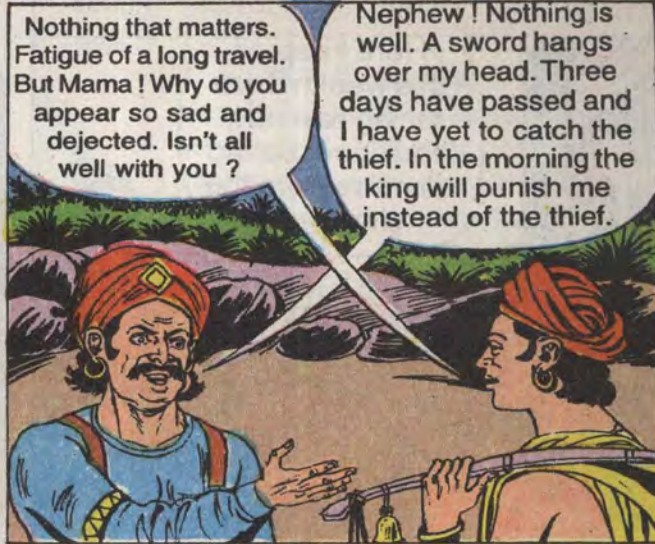


Around midnight on the third day a traveller with a sling-pole stopped the chief of guards on the street—

Mama ! Mama ! Please stop.

Who is it ?





Shyamal brought all the wealth to Kaali's house.



Here keep all this wealth. I am taking rest now. You should bring all news from the city to me.

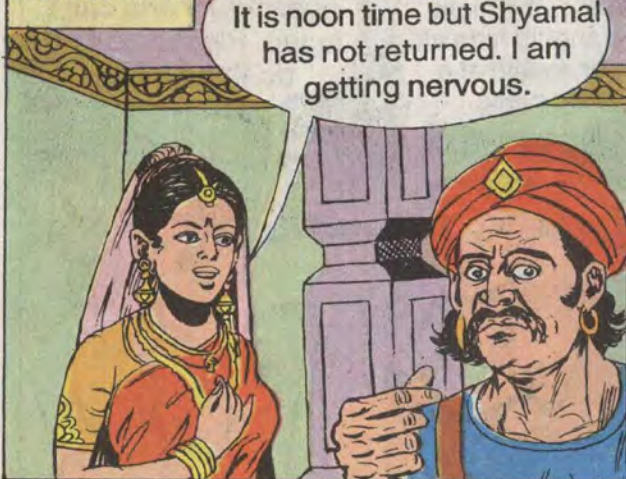
In the morning the chief of guards returned home. His wife said—



During the night Shyamal took all our wealth for safe keeping but he is yet to return.

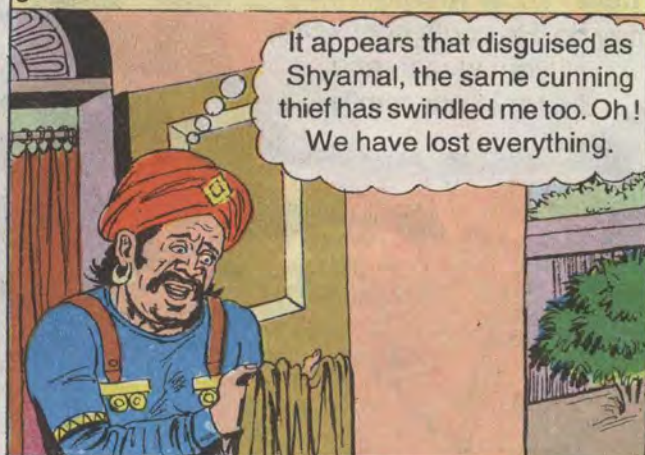
Oh God ! Something is wrong.

When Shyamal did not come even till noon, the chief's wife was worried



It is noon time but Shyamal has not returned. I am getting nervous.

When the chief came out of the house he found the sling-pole and Shyamal's dress lying near the gate.



It appears that disguised as Shyamal, the same cunning thief has swindled me too. Oh ! We have lost everything.

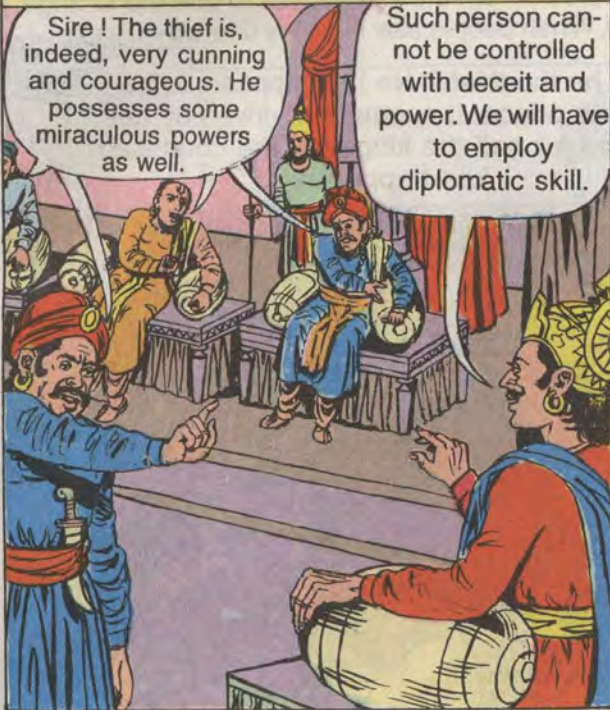
The chief went to King Vikramaditya and told everything—



Sire ! The thief has punished the police chief. The cunning thief has eloped with all my wealth.

He is very cunning and courageous, not just an ordinary thief.

This way who ever took the challenge of catching the thief was robbed by the thief. No one could catch the thief. At last the ministers advised the king—

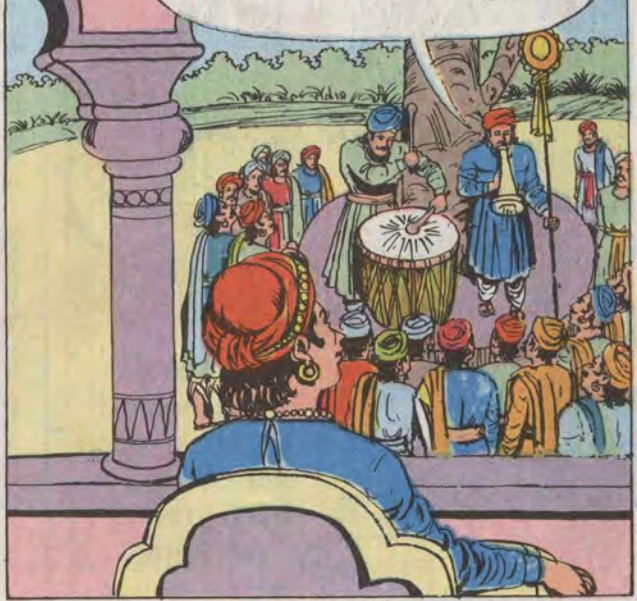


Sire ! The thief is, indeed, very cunning and courageous. He possesses some miraculous powers as well.

Such person cannot be controlled with deceit and power. We will have to employ diplomatic skill.

On the king's instructions an announcement was made—

Citizens of Avanti listen carefully. A thief is harassing the whole city. Whoever catches the thief and brings before the king will be awarded half the kingdom.



Dev Kumar said to Kaali—



Do you hear, Kaali ? It is now your salvation time. Go touch the drum and present me before the king.

Dev Kumar explained the plan to Kaali and sent her.

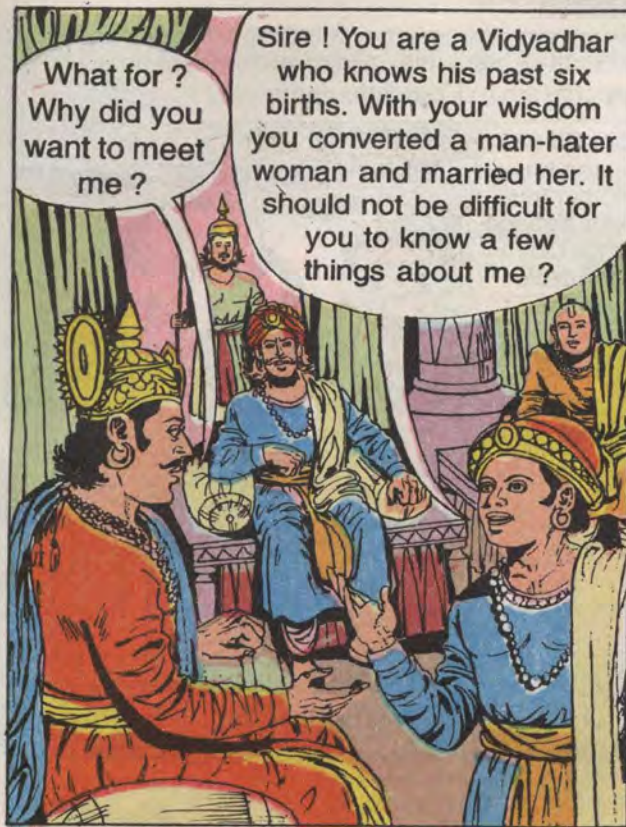
Kaali went and touched the drum. The soldiers presented him before the king. Minister Buddhisagar said—



Misfortune never comes alone. We are already deep in infamy for our failure to catch the thief, and now a courtesan could become master of half the kingdom....

Minister ! Compose yourself. Let's first give her a hearing.





What for ?
Why did you
want to meet
me ?

Sire ! You are a Vidyadhar
who knows his past six
births. With your wisdom
you converted a man-hater
woman and married her. It
should not be difficult for
you to know a few
things about me ?

The king looked at him with surprise. The face of
Sukomala surfaced in his memory. He asked—

Do you
come from
Pratishthana-
pur ?

Yes, I am Dev Kumar,
son of queen Sukomala and
grandson of King Shalivahan.
I pay my respects to my
father, King Vikramaditya
of Avanti.



He stepped ahead and touched Vikramaditya's feet

Vikramaditya hugged Dev Kumar and made
him sit on the throne. Tears of joy brimmed
every eye in the court. Vikramaditya said—

Ministers and other members of
the court ! This valorous person is my
son from queen Sukomala. Now you
all know that this son of Vikram excels
his father in strength, cunning,
courage and brilliance.



He added—

His father was believed to
be a god (dev) that is why he
was named Dev Kumar. Since
this day he will be known
as Vikramcharitra.

Hail King Vikramaditya !
Hail prince Vikramcharitra !



Hails of victory filled the court.

After the court the king said—

Come, meet your mothers in the palace and have dinner with us.

No, father ! I have promised my mother that I will not eat as long as I do not meet my father and bring her the news of his well being.

Vikramaditya sent his ministers and soldiers with Vikramcharitra to Pratihthanapur.

Son ! Go at once and bring your mother here. I will make arrangements for Queen Sukomala's reception.



Queen Sukomala and prince Vikramcharitra entered Avanti with great fanfare.

Hail Queen Sukomala !
Long live prince Vikramcharitra !

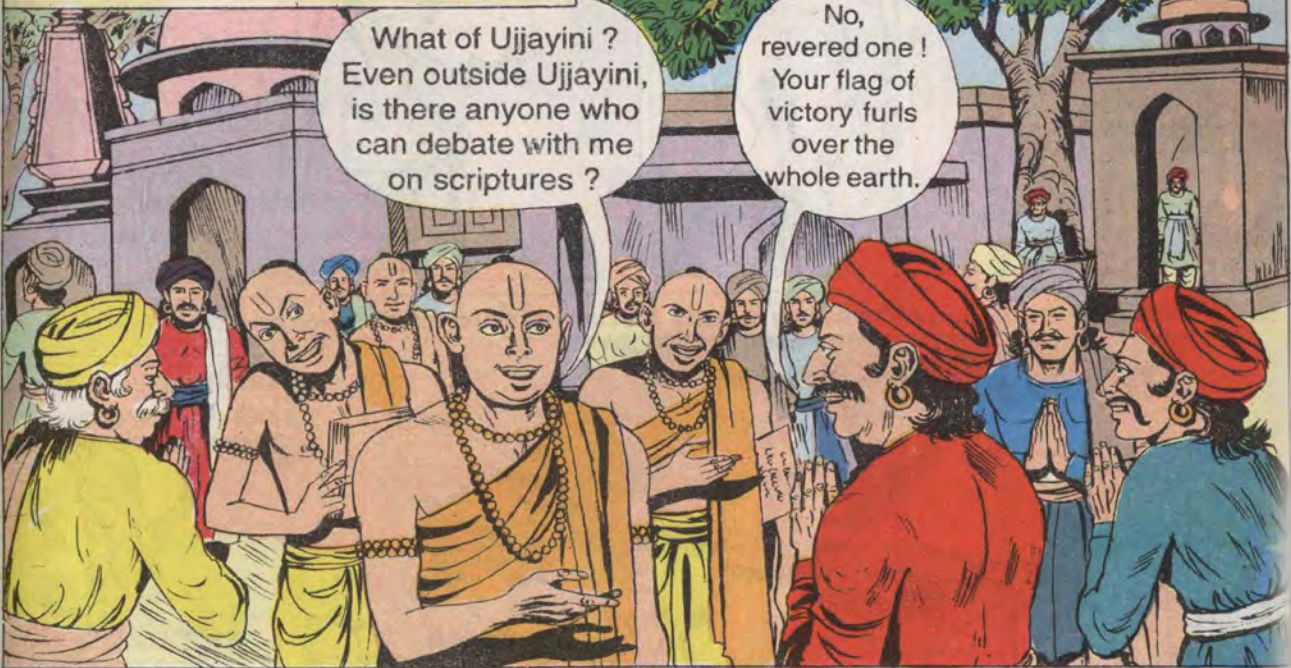


And they lived happily with Vikramaditya.

With his courage, cleverness and wisdom King Vikramaditya erased the feeling of aversion for males from the mind of a woman and brought her back into the mainstream of life. With his statesmanship he accomplished the welfare of masses. Prince Vikramcharitra also added to the glory of his parents by inheriting the courage and ideals of his father.

ACHARYA SIDDHASEN AND KING VIKRAMADITYA Under the rule of King Vikramaditya the people of Ujjayini were happy and affluent. In that city lived Kumud Chandra, a Brahmin scholar of Katyayan clan. He was the son of the state priest Devarshi. Mahapundit [great scholar] Kumud Chandra was an alround scholar and expert of astrology and augury.

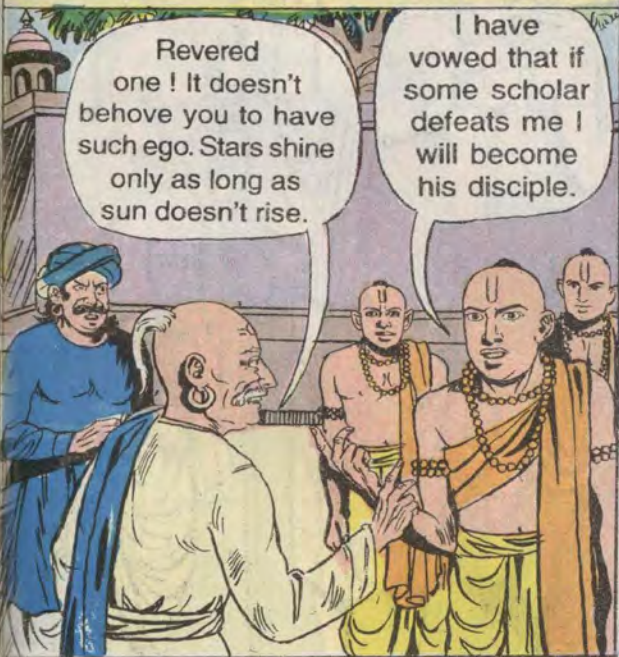
On day Mahapundit Kumud Chandra was walking on the street. People approached and paid him their respect. Kumud Chandra uttered with pride—



What of Ujjayini ? Even outside Ujjayini, is there anyone who can debate with me on scriptures ?

No, revered one ! Your flag of victory furls over the whole earth.

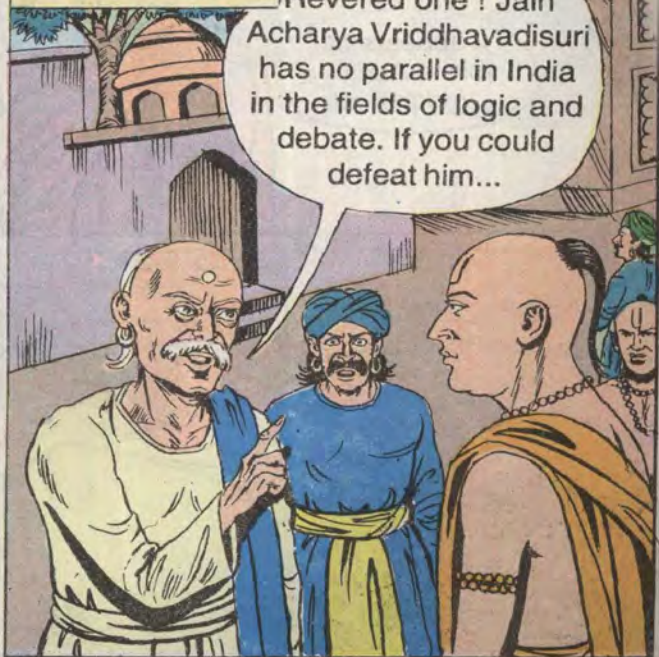
An elderly pundit stepped ahead and said—



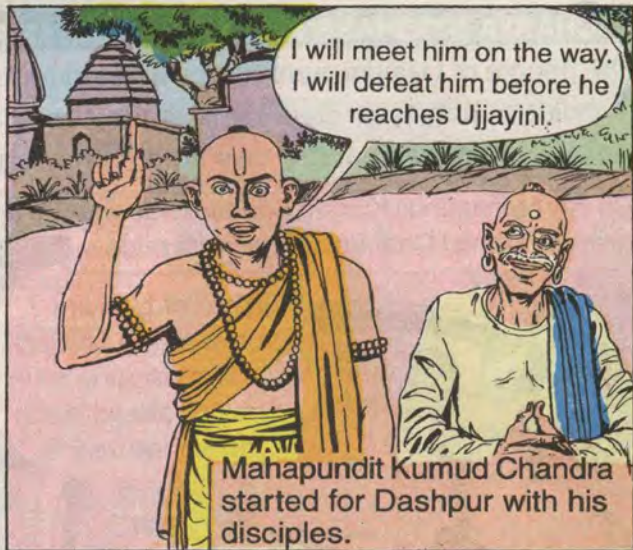
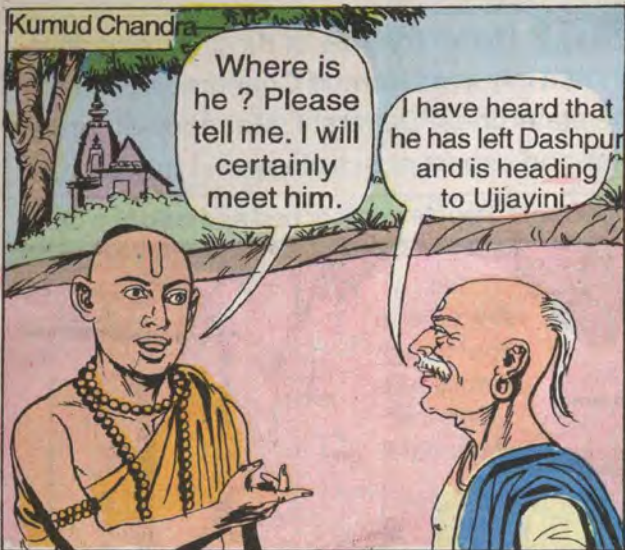
Revered one ! It doesn't behove you to have such ego. Stars shine only as long as sun doesn't rise.

I have vowed that if some scholar defeats me I will become his disciple.

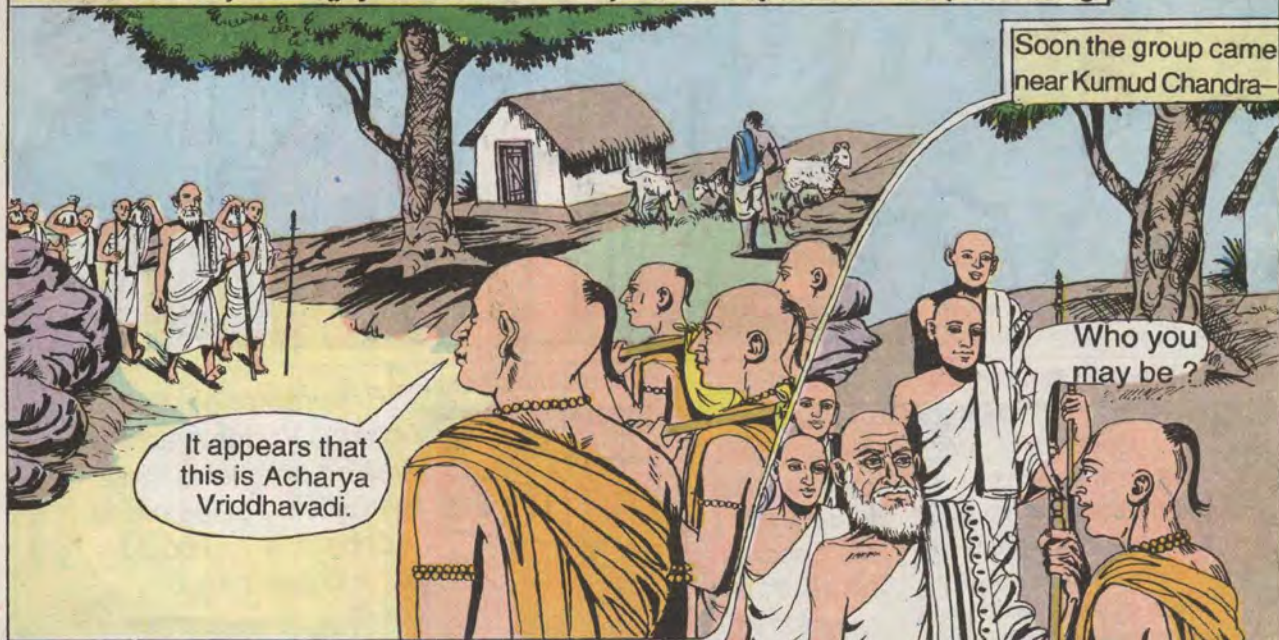
The old pundit said—



Revered one ! Jain Acharya Vriddhavadisuri has no parallel in India in the fields of logic and debate. If you could defeat him...



Some miles away from Ujjayini he saw an elderly Jain acharya and his disciples coming.



The acharya stopped, looked up and said—

People call me Vriddhavadi.

Oh ! You are Acharya Vriddhavadi. I wanted to meet you.

Vriddhavadi said with a smile—

Tell me what do you want ?

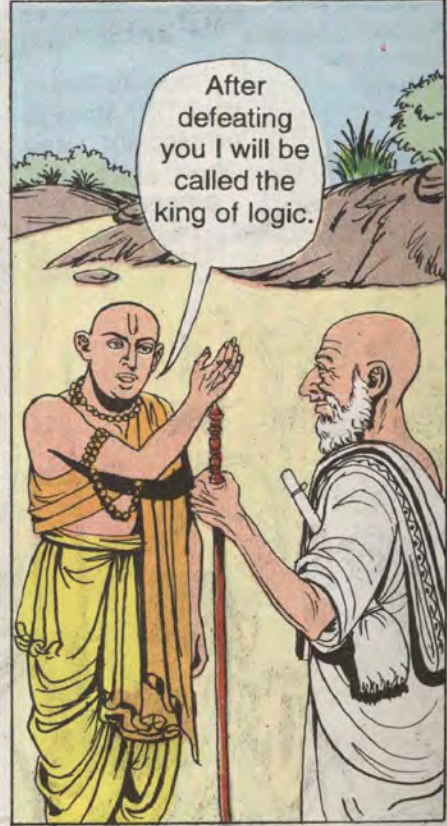
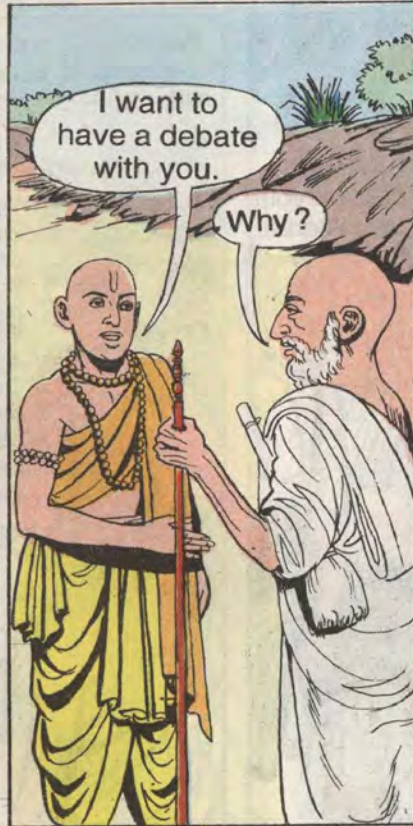
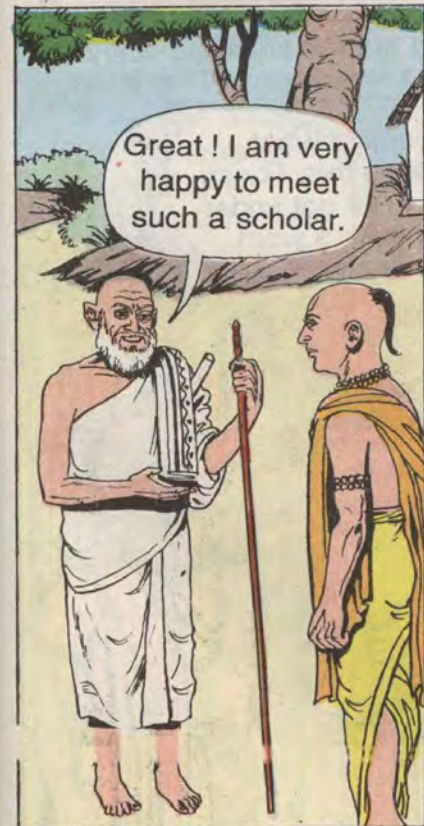
After excelling in fourteen subjects including philosophy, logic, debate and astrology I have established the reign of my wisdom on this earth.

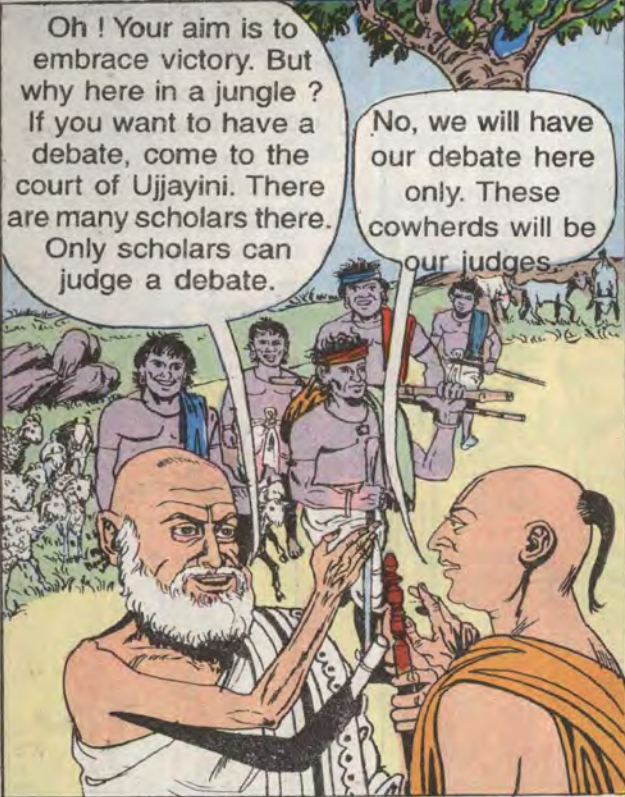
Great ! I am very happy to meet such a scholar.

I want to have a debate with you.

Why ?

After defeating you I will be called the king of logic.





Oh ! Your aim is to embrace victory. But why here in a jungle ? If you want to have a debate, come to the court of Ujjayini. There are many scholars there. Only scholars can judge a debate.

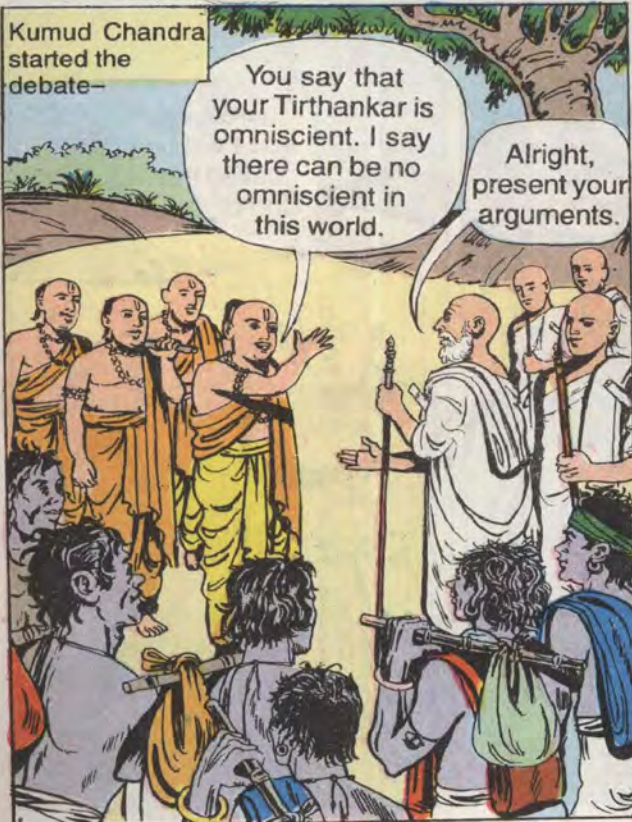
No, we will have our debate here only. These cowherds will be our judges.



By that time many cowherds taking their cows and goats for grazing had gathered there. They were listening with curiosity. Kumud Chandra said—

O cowherds ! You have to be the judges of our debate. Please remain standing here.

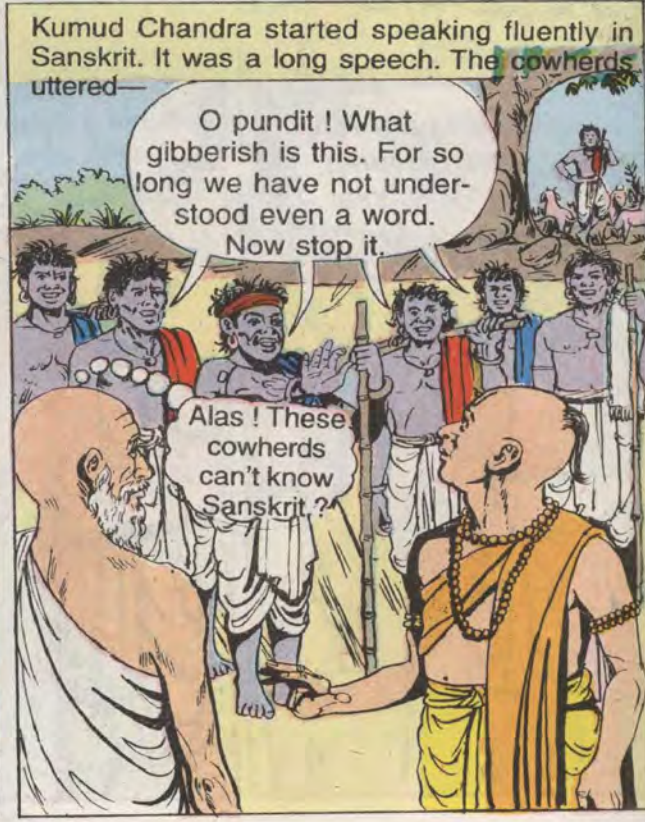
Yes ! Alright ! Go ahead !



Kumud Chandra started the debate—

You say that your Tirthankar is omniscient. I say there can be no omniscient in this world.

Alright, present your arguments.



Kumud Chandra started speaking fluently in Sanskrit. It was a long speech. The cowherds uttered—

O pundit ! What gibberish is this. For so long we have not understood even a word. Now stop it.

Alas ! These cowherds can't know Sanskrit ?