

# ASHOKA

THE LIFE OF A GREAT SON OF INDIA, AS  
DEPICTED IN THE PALI TEXTS





# ASHOKA

ASHOKA WAS THE SON OF KING BINDUSARA WHO RULED INDIA FROM HIS CAPITAL OF PATALIPUTRA IN THE THIRD CENTURY B.C. HE EXCELLED HIS BROTHERS IN THE ART OF WAR. THEREFORE, WHEN A REBELLION BROKE OUT IN THE DISTANT PROVINCE OF TAXILA, HE WAS SENT TO SUPPRESS IT.



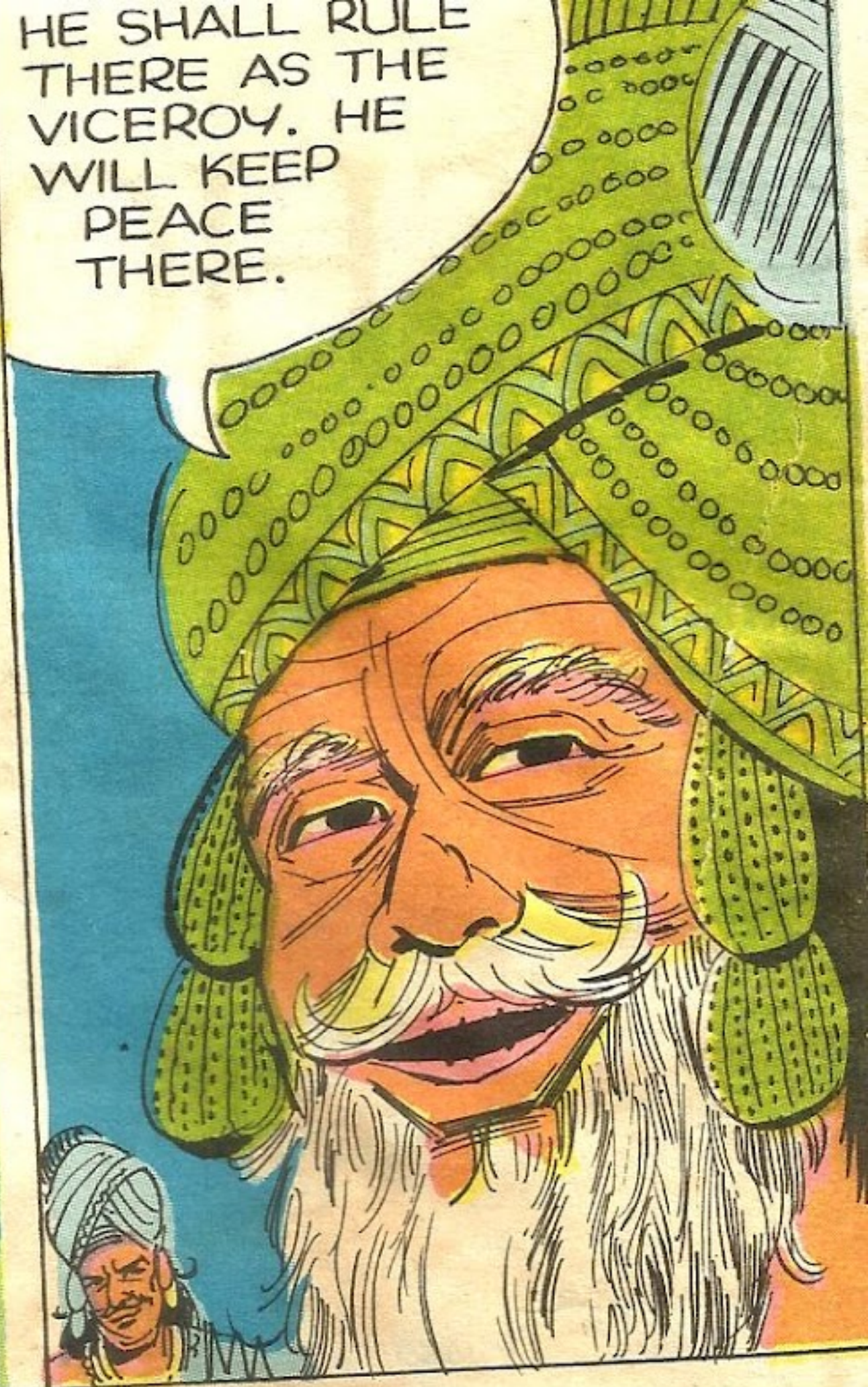


WEEKS LATER -

OUR MAJESTY! WE HAVE  
HAPPY NEWS HERE. ASHOKA  
HAS SUCCESSFULLY  
PUT DOWN THE  
REBELS.



HE SHALL RULE  
THERE AS THE  
VICEROY. HE  
WILL KEEP  
PEACE  
THERE.



BINDUSARA HAD A HUNDRED SONS BESIDES ASHOKA. THEY WERE  
NOT HAPPY TO HEAR THE NEWS.

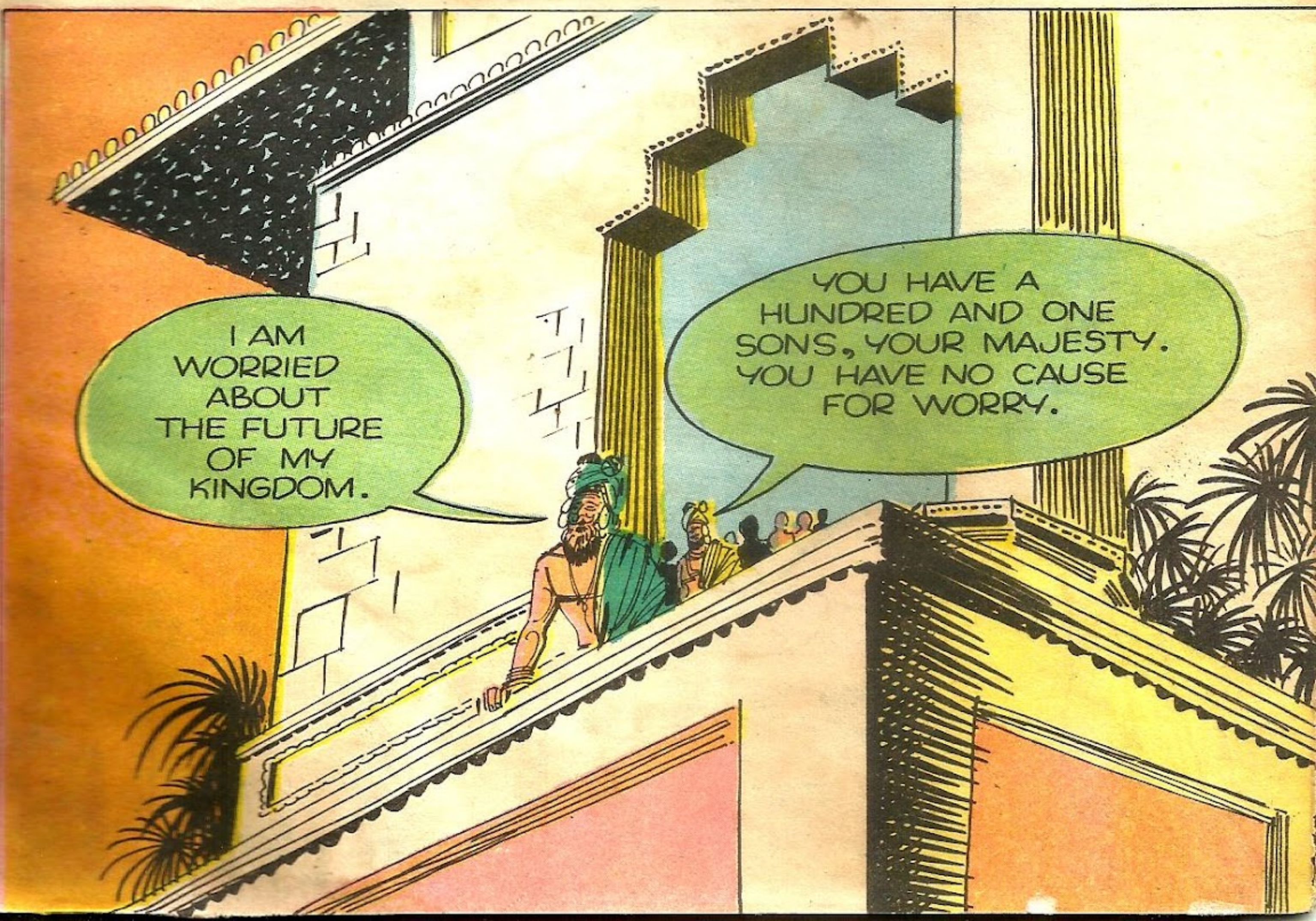
ASHOKA HAS  
ALWAYS BEEN  
PROUD. THE  
SUCCESS WILL  
GO TO HIS  
HEAD.

IT WILL  
MAKE HIM  
MORE  
ARROGANT.

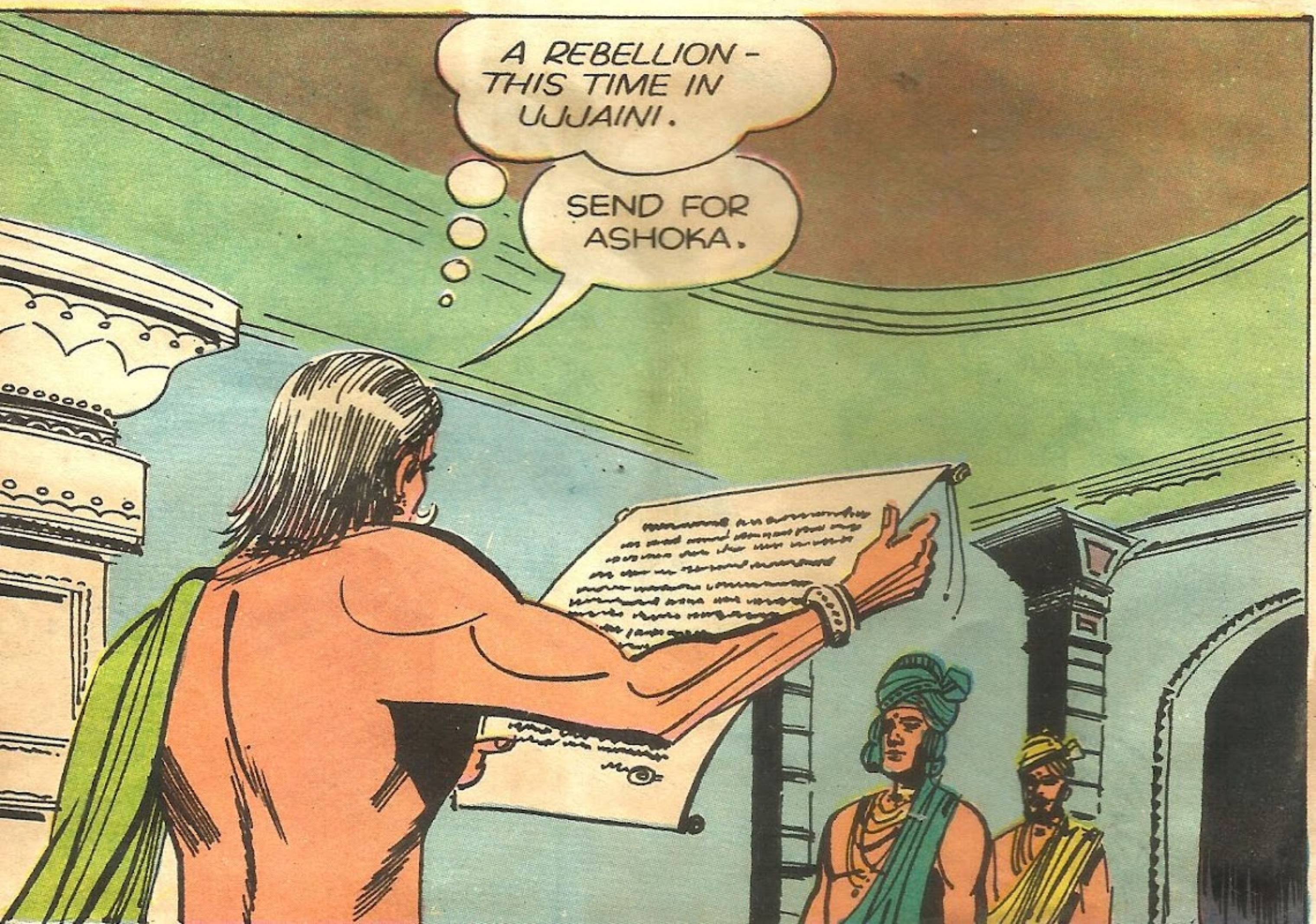




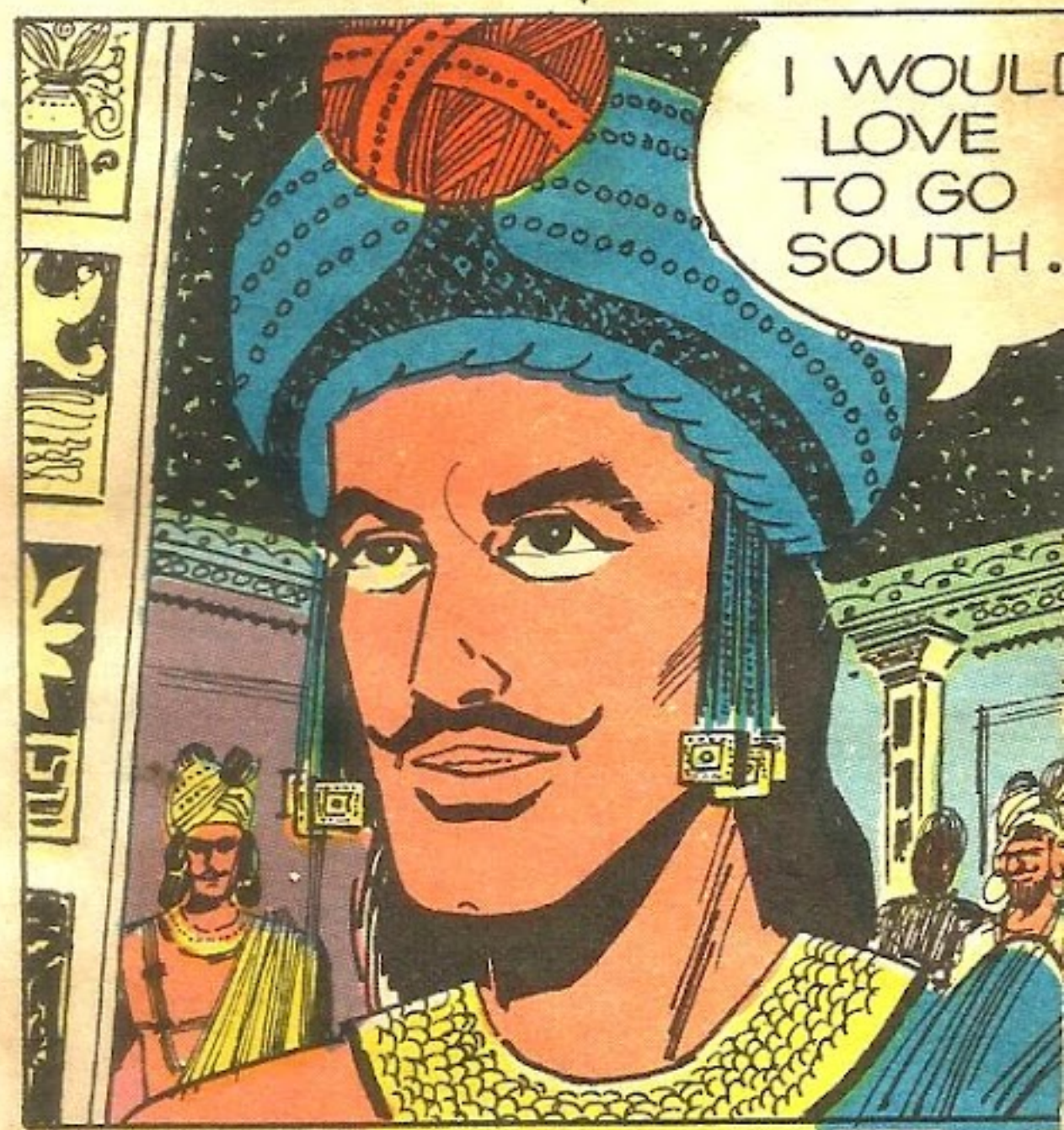
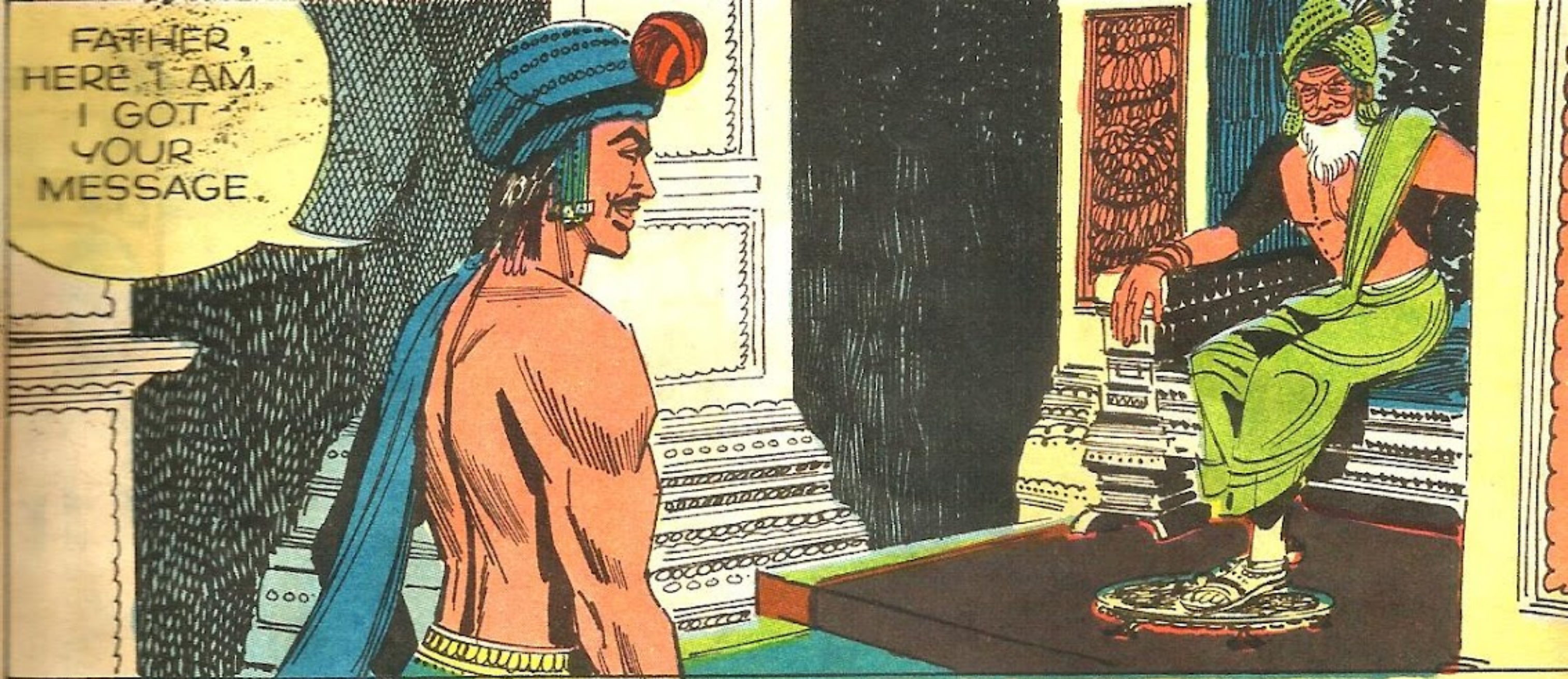
BUT THEY WERE UNHAPPIER STILL, WHEN THE KING RECALLED ASHOKA FROM TAXILA.





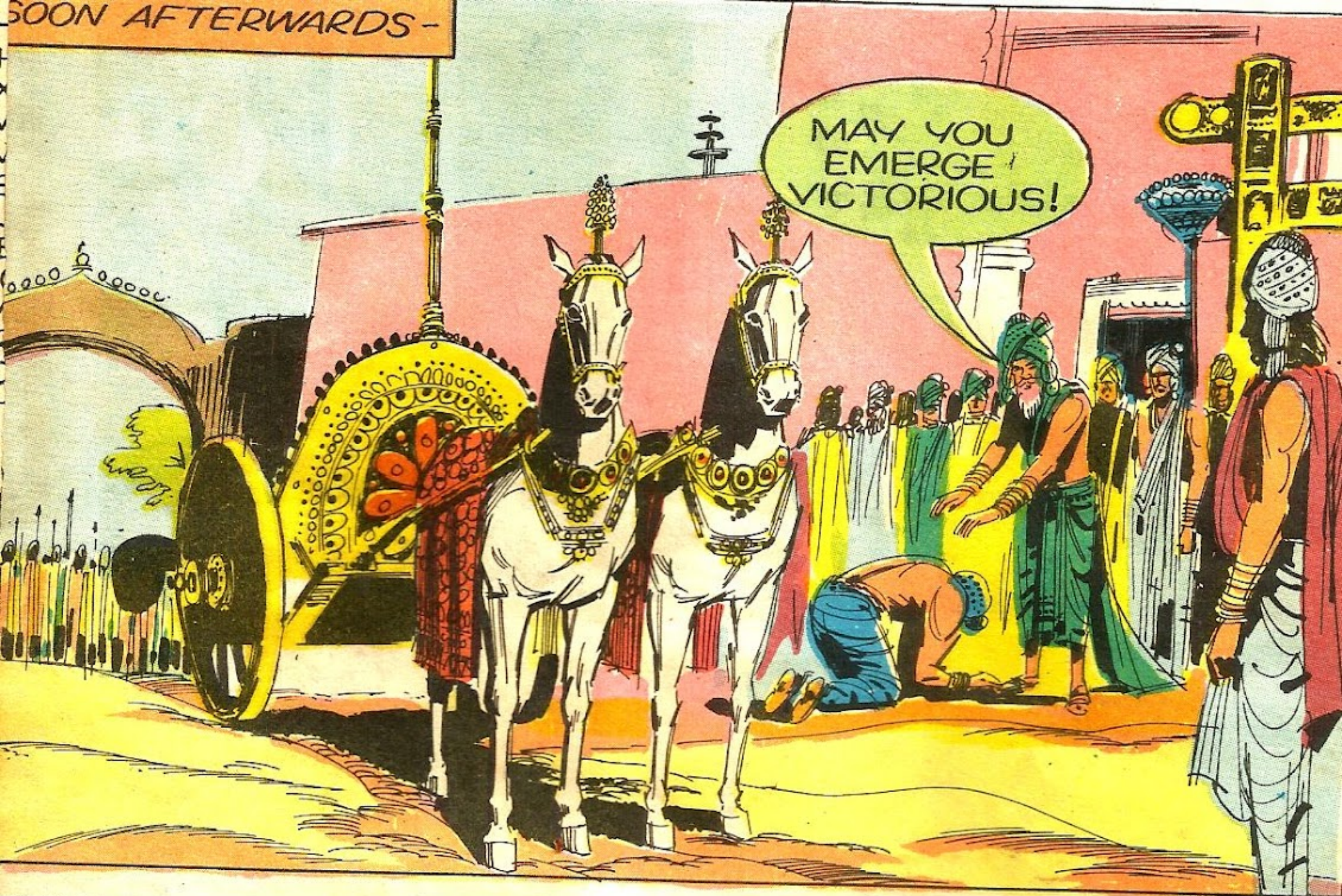




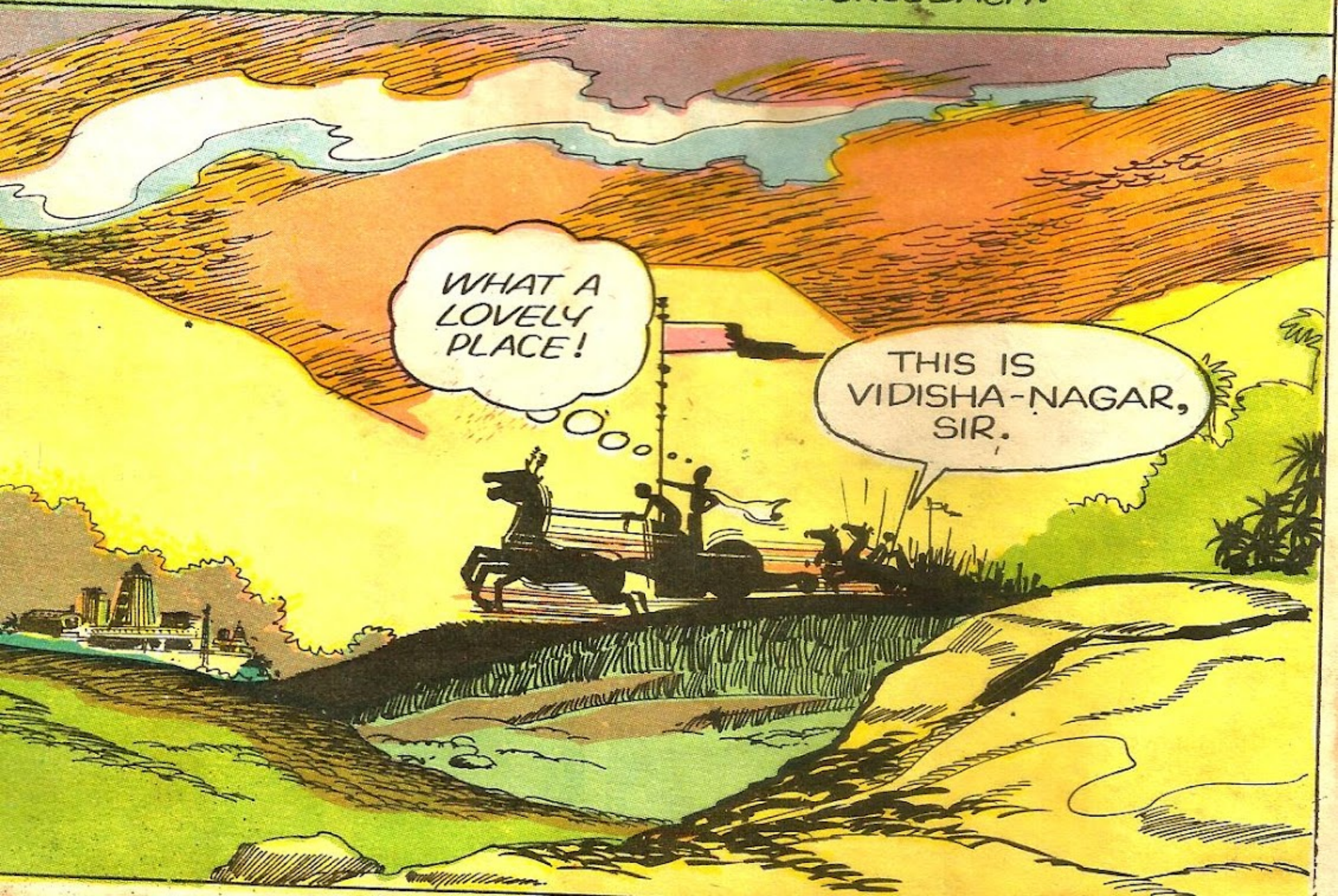




SOON AFTERWARDS -



ASHOKA MARCHED TOWARDS UJJAINI. A GREATER PART OF THE JOURNEY WAS ON HORSEBACK.







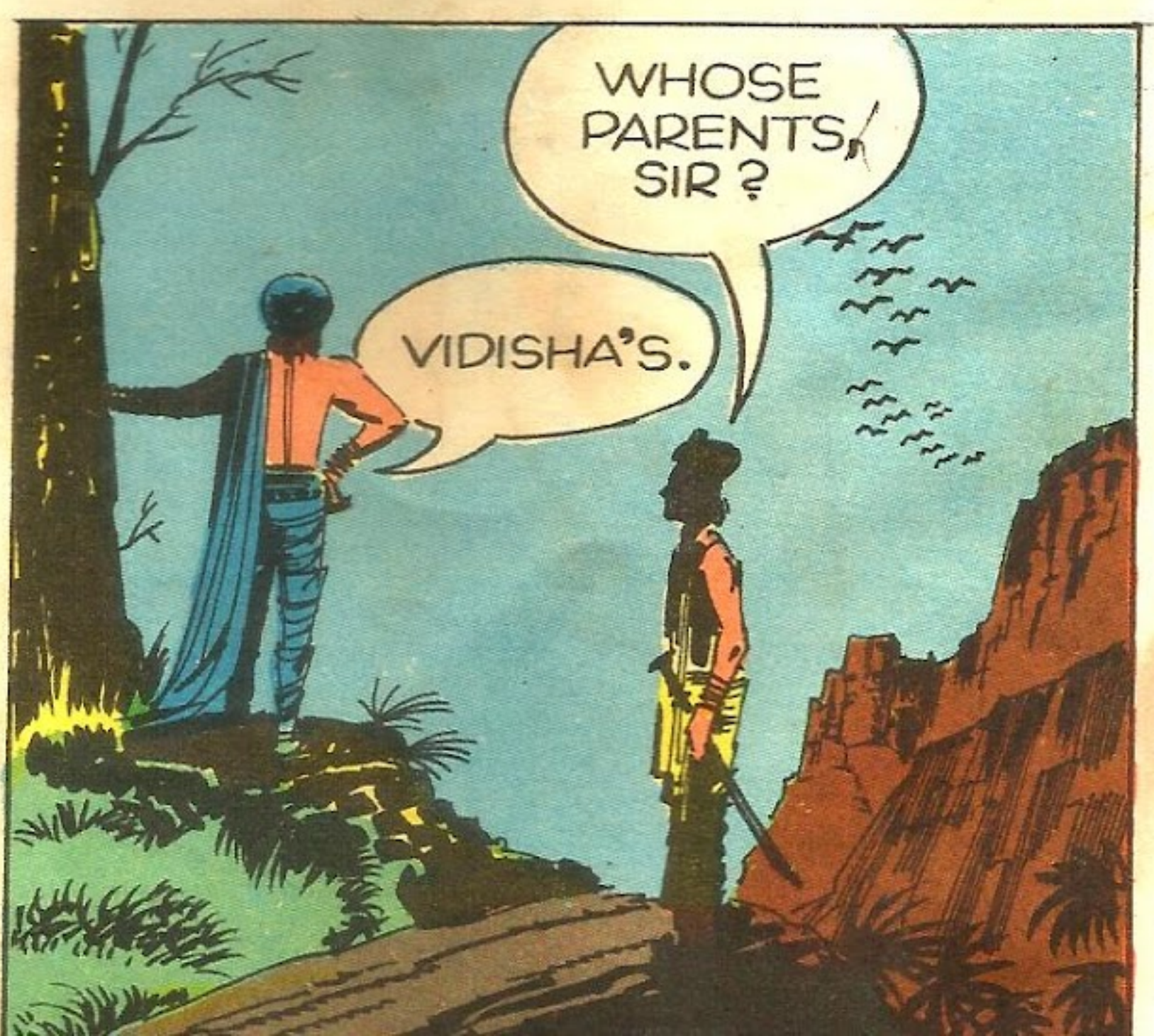
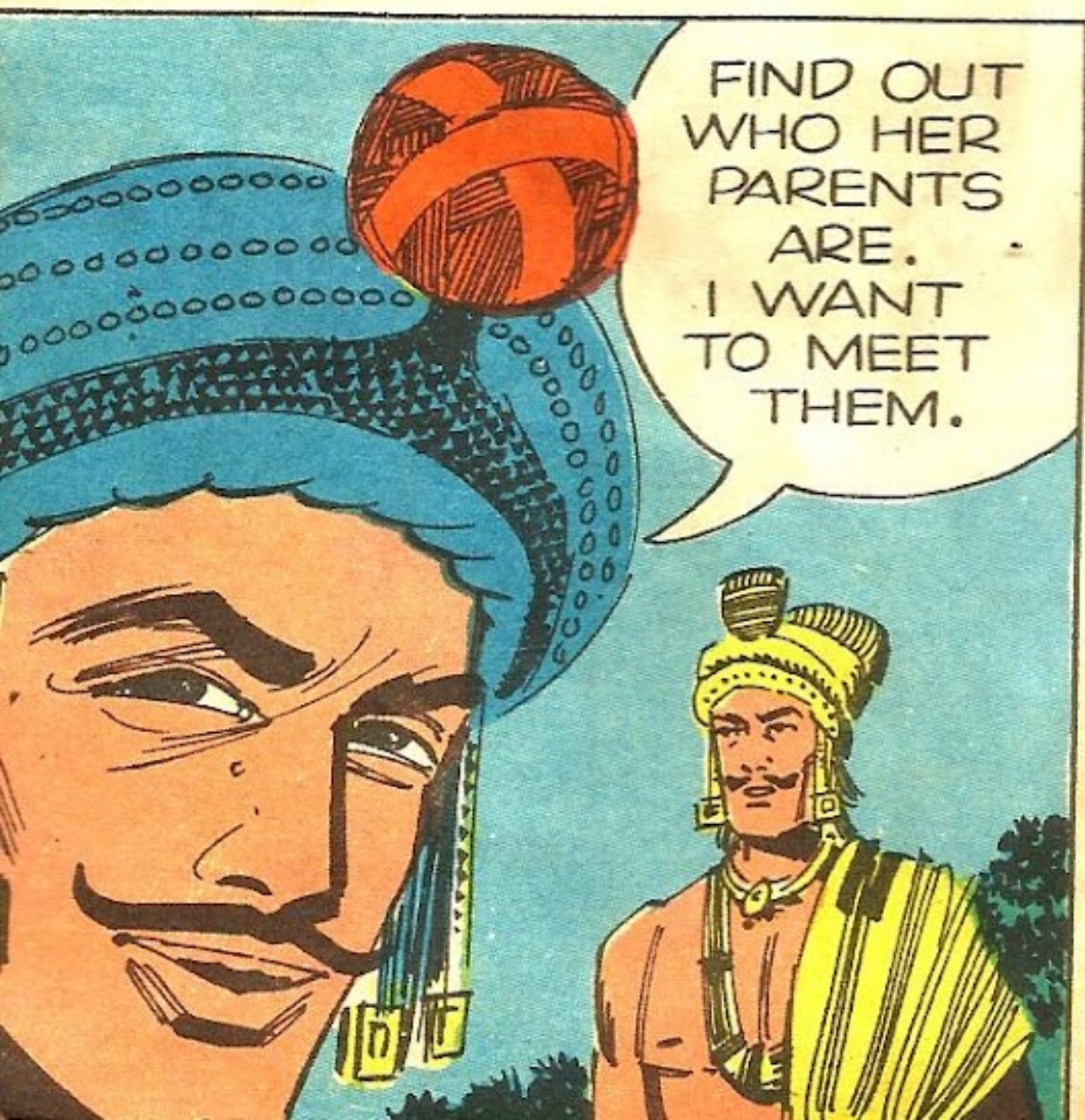
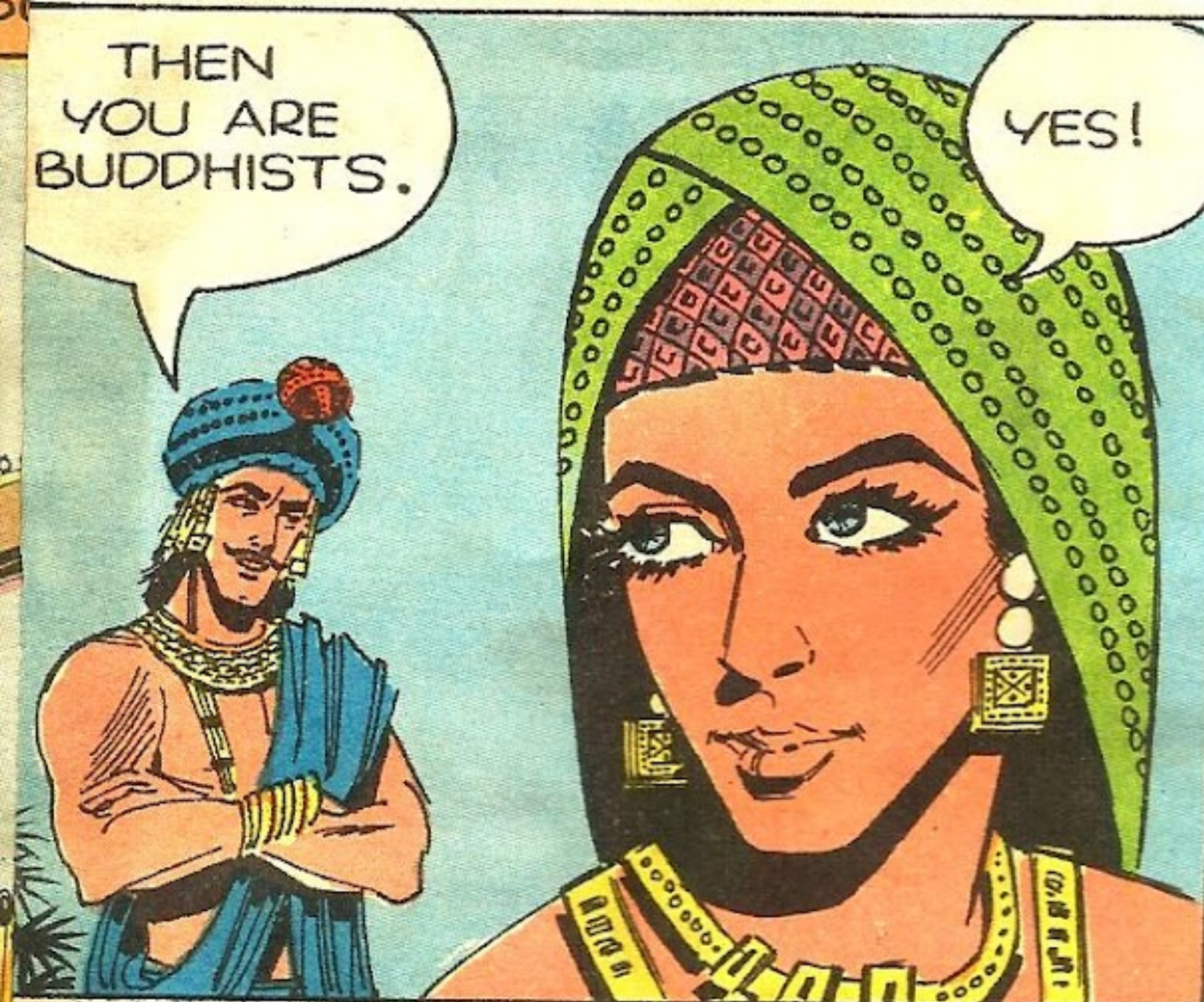
A LITTLE LATER-



ASHOKA WAS CHARMED BY THE BEAUTY OF THE LEADER  
OF THE GROUP.









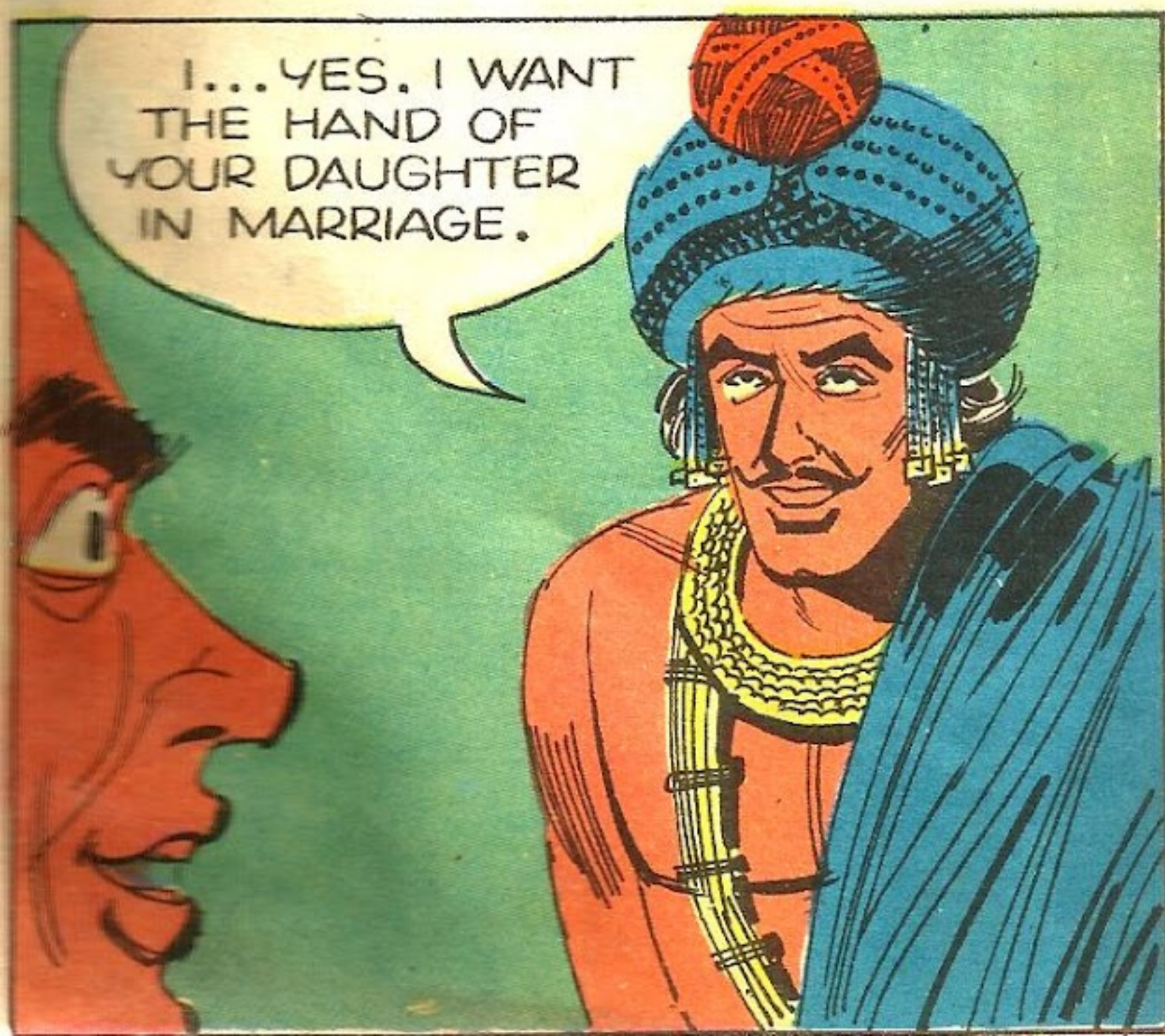
ASHOKA'S MESSENGER SOON RETURNED.



LATER -



I...YES. I WANT THE HAND OF YOUR DAUGHTER IN MARRIAGE.

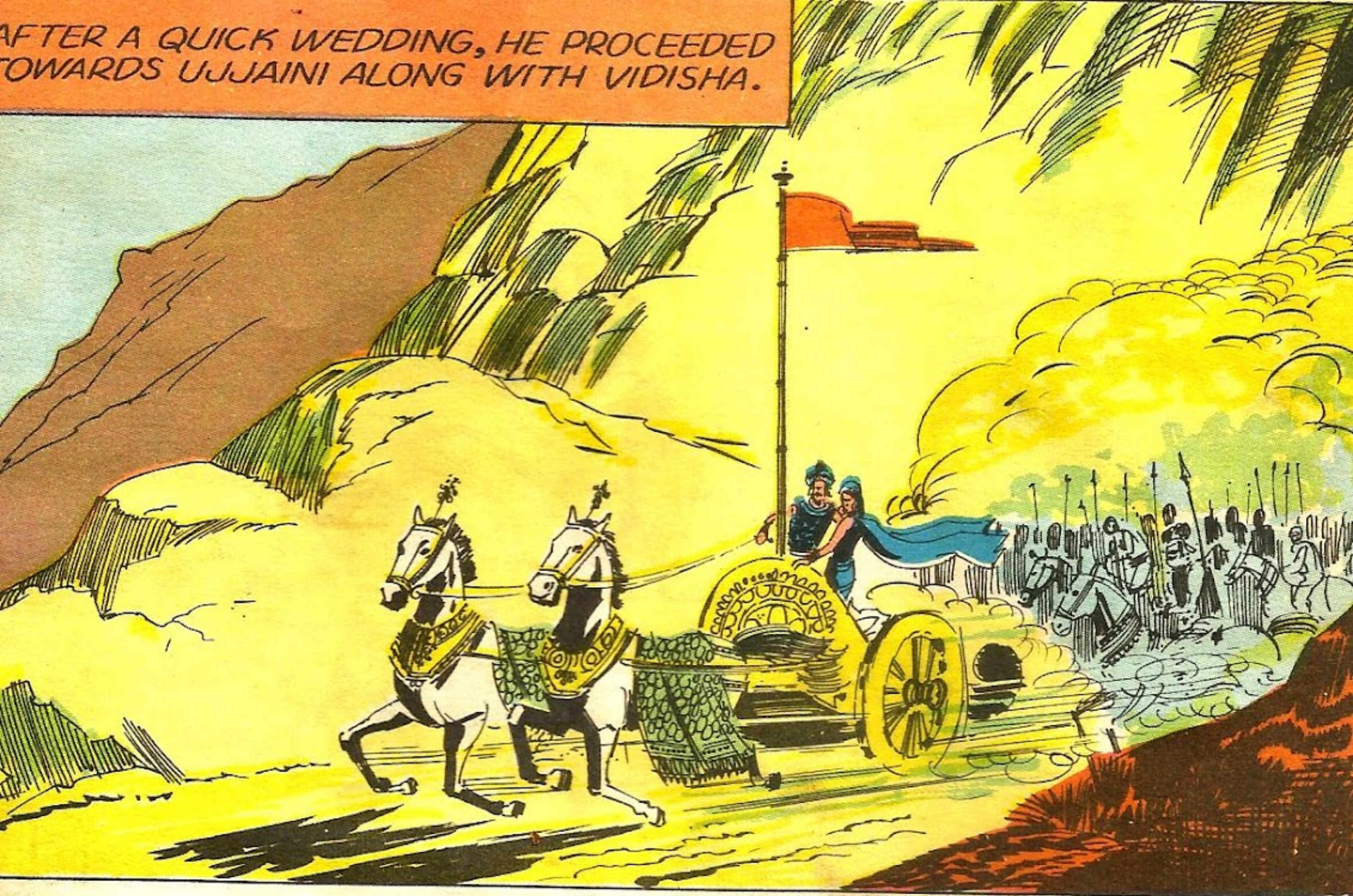


I AM HONoured, SIR.





AFTER A QUICK WEDDING, HE PROCEEDED  
TOWARDS UJJAINI ALONG WITH VIDISHA.



HOKA, A GREAT WARRIOR, IN NO TIME  
ROUTED THE REBELS.



THE REBELS LAID DOWN  
THEIR ARMS.





PEOPLE OF THE CITY GAVE ASHOKA A GRAND WELCOME.



IN THE PALACE GARDENS LATER-



THIS IS AN  
OCCASION  
FOR REJOICING,  
VIDISHA.  
BUT  
YOU LOOK  
SAD.

I DISLIKE  
KILLING...  
EVEN IN  
BATTLES..  
ESPECIALLY  
BY YOU.



THAT'S SILLY.  
YOU SAY IT,  
BECAUSE  
YOU ARE A  
BUDDHIST,  
I AM NOT.



I AM A  
KSHATRIYA  
KING.  
MY DUTY  
ENJOINS  
KILLING  
IF NEED  
BE.

WHAT ABOUT  
BIMBISARA?  
HE TOO WAS  
A KING.  
HE FOUND  
PEACE IN THE  
TEACHINGS  
OF BUDDHA.

THE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN ASHOKA AND  
PISHA PERSISTED. MONTHS LATER, WHEN  
PISHA GAVE BIRTH TO A SON -

A SON!  
I AM VERY  
HAPPY.  
I WILL NAME  
HIM \*MAHINDRA.  
HE WILL CONQUER  
THE ENTIRE  
WORLD.

I WISH, HE  
CONQUERS THE  
HEARTS OF MEN  
AS PRINCE  
SIDDHARTHA  
DID.



TWO YEARS LATER, VIDISHA GAVE BIRTH TO A DAUGHTER.

LORD!  
THIS TIME,  
LET ME  
CHOOSE THE  
NAME.

AS  
YOU  
WISH.

I'LL  
NAME HER  
SANGHA-  
MITRA.

OH, NO!  
THAT'S A  
BUDDHIST  
NAME.

ONE DAY, A MESSENGER CAME FROM PATALIPUTRA.

HIS MAJESTY HAS  
NOT BEEN KEEPING  
GOOD HEALTH. PLEASE  
RETURN TO  
PATLIPUTRA  
IMMEDIATELY.



SHOKA HAD HURRIED  
CONSULTATIONS WITH  
VIDISHA.

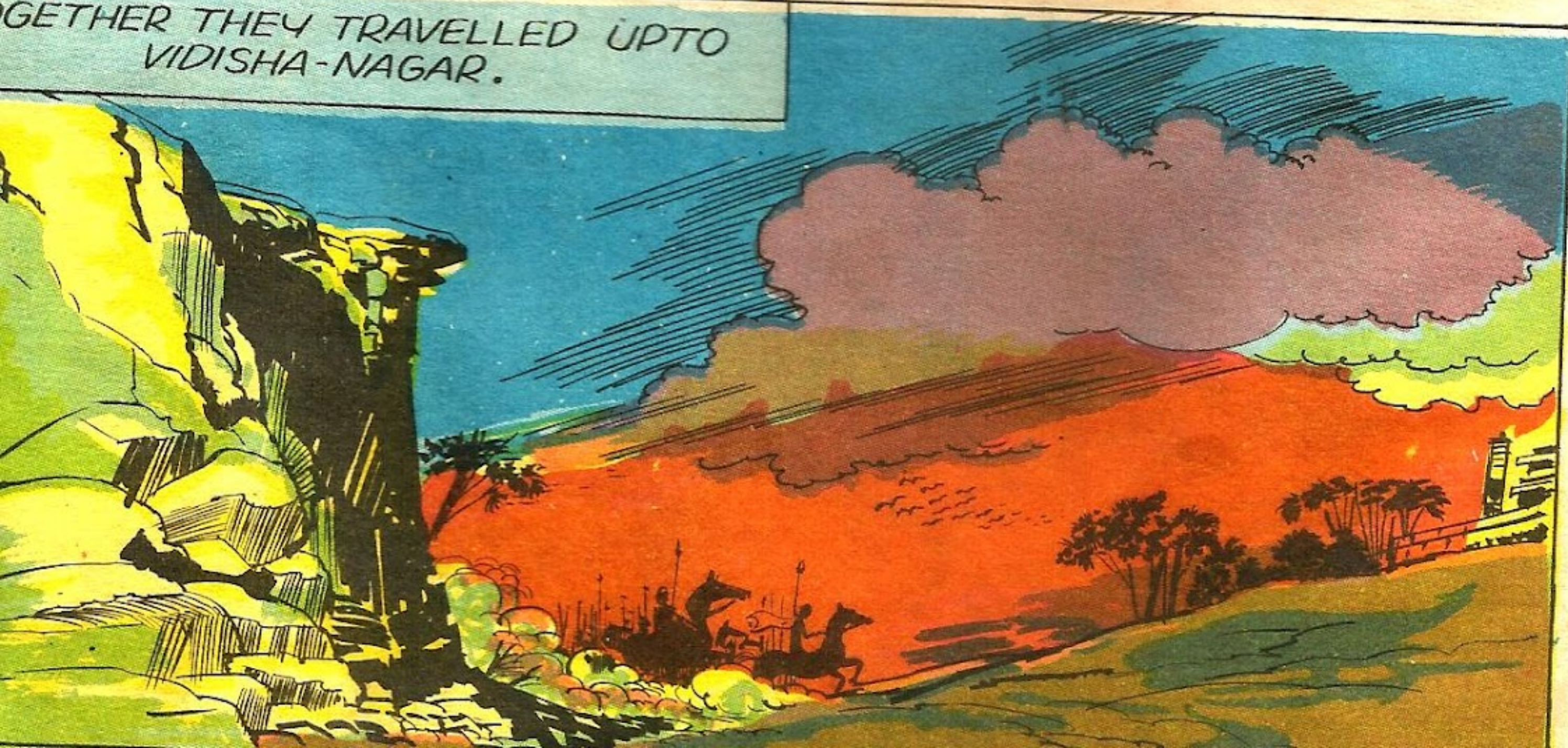
I HAVE RECEIVED  
A MESSAGE FROM  
THE CHIEF MINISTER.  
MY FATHER IS ILL.  
I HAVE TO RUSH TO  
PATALIPUTRA...

...AND  
YOU AREN'T  
FIT TO  
COMPANY  
ME.

WILL YOU STAY  
AT VIDISHA-NAGAR  
WITH YOUR PARENTS?  
I'LL SEND FOR  
YOU LATER.

AS YOU  
WISH,  
MY LORD!

TOGETHER THEY TRAVELLED UPTO  
VIDISHA-NAGAR.









AT PATALIPUTRA, ASHOKA WAS RECEIVED BY THE CHIEF MINISTER.

PRINCE!  
YOUR FATHER  
IS NO MORE.  
AND YOUR  
BROTHERS ARE  
FIGHTING  
AMONGST  
THEMSELVES  
FOR THE  
THRONE.

THE THRONE!  
IT IS MINE!  
I HAVE EARNED  
THE RIGHT TO  
IT.



ASHOKA FORGOT ALL ABOUT THE PROMISE  
HE HAD MADE TO VIDISHA.





ASHOKA WAS RUTHLESS IN KILLING ALL THOSE THAT CHALLENGED HIS RIGHT TO THE THRONE. SUMANADEVI, WIFE OF ONE OF HIS BROTHERS, WAS EXPECTING A BABY AT THE TIME.

PRINCESS!  
I FEAR FOR  
THE LIFE OF  
THE UNBORN  
CHILD.

DO YOU SUGGEST  
THAT I RUN AWAY  
FROM HERE?  
BUT WHERE  
CAN I GO?



I CAN SHOW YOU  
A SECRET DOOR.  
YOU CAN ESCAPE  
INTO THE  
WOODS.

ESCAPING FROM THE PALACE,  
SUMANADEVI WANDERED IN  
THE FOREST.





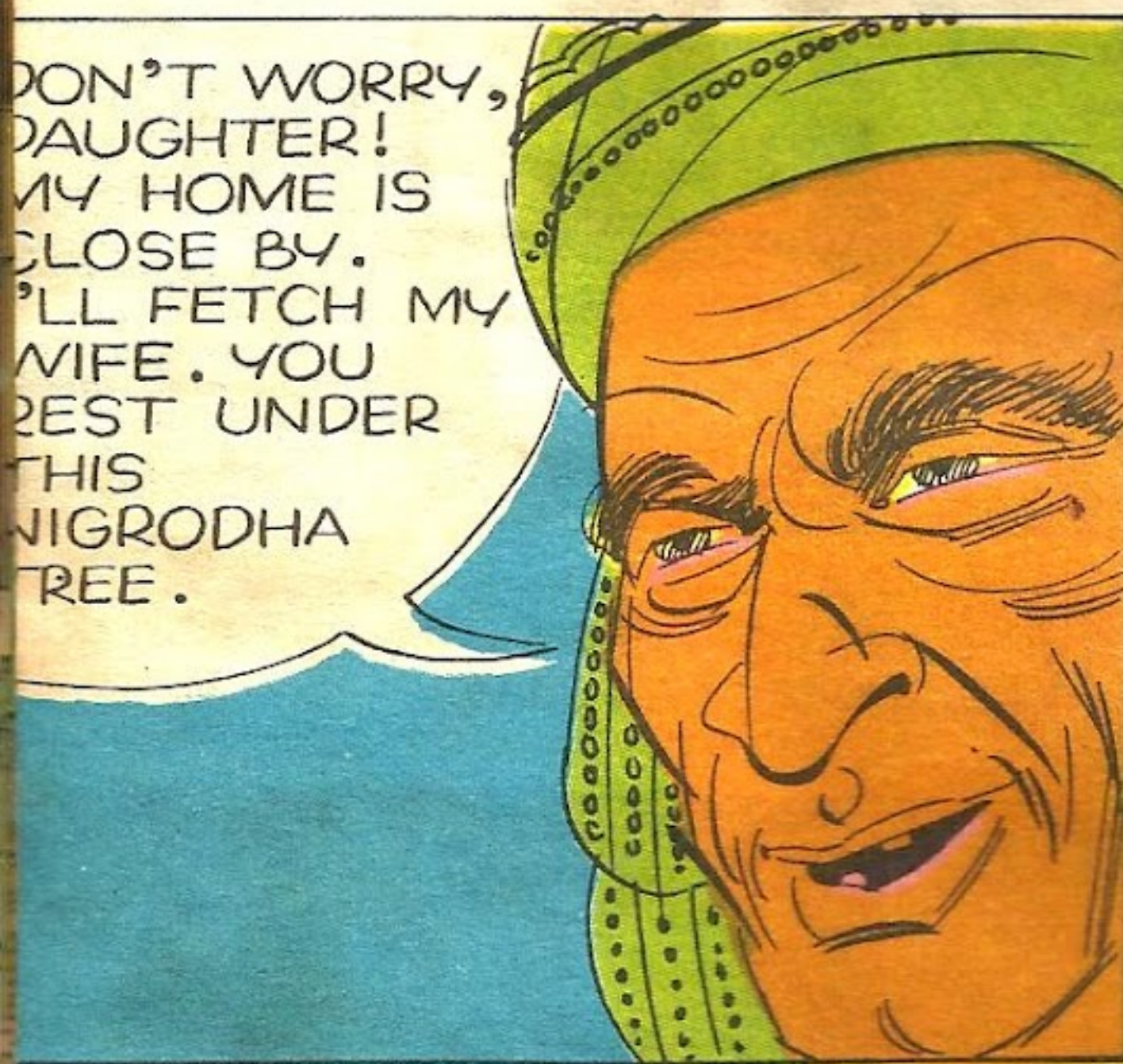
AN OLD MAN, WHO WAS PASSING BY,  
TOOK PITY ON HER.



SHE ACCOMPANIED HIM, WHILE THEY WERE ON THEIR WAY—



DON'T WORRY, DAUGHTER! MY HOME IS CLOSE BY. I'LL FETCH MY WIFE. YOU REST UNDER THIS NIGRODHA TREE.



IT WAS UNDER THAT NIGRODHA TREE THAT A BOY WAS BORN TO SUMANADEVI.

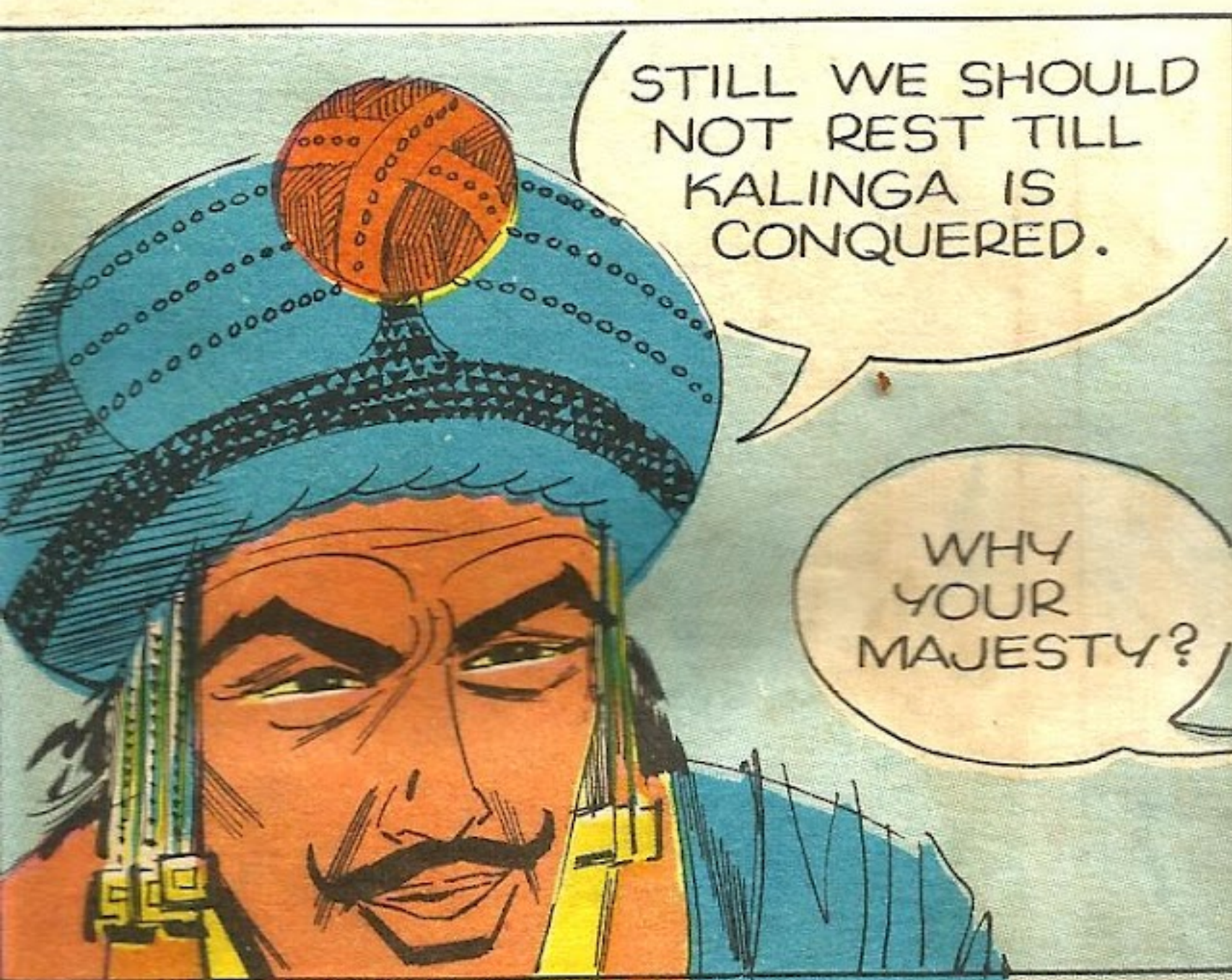
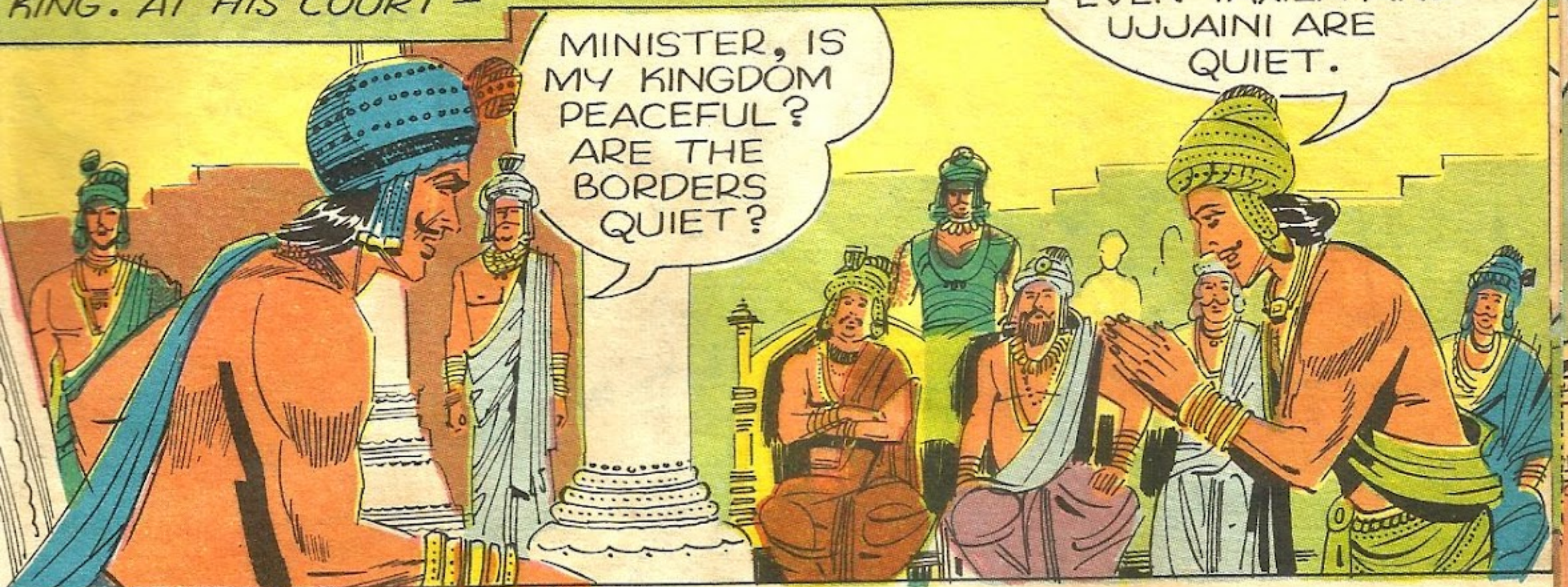


NIGRODHA KUMAR GREW UP IN THAT VILLAGE AND BECAME A MONK AT A VERY TENDER AGE.



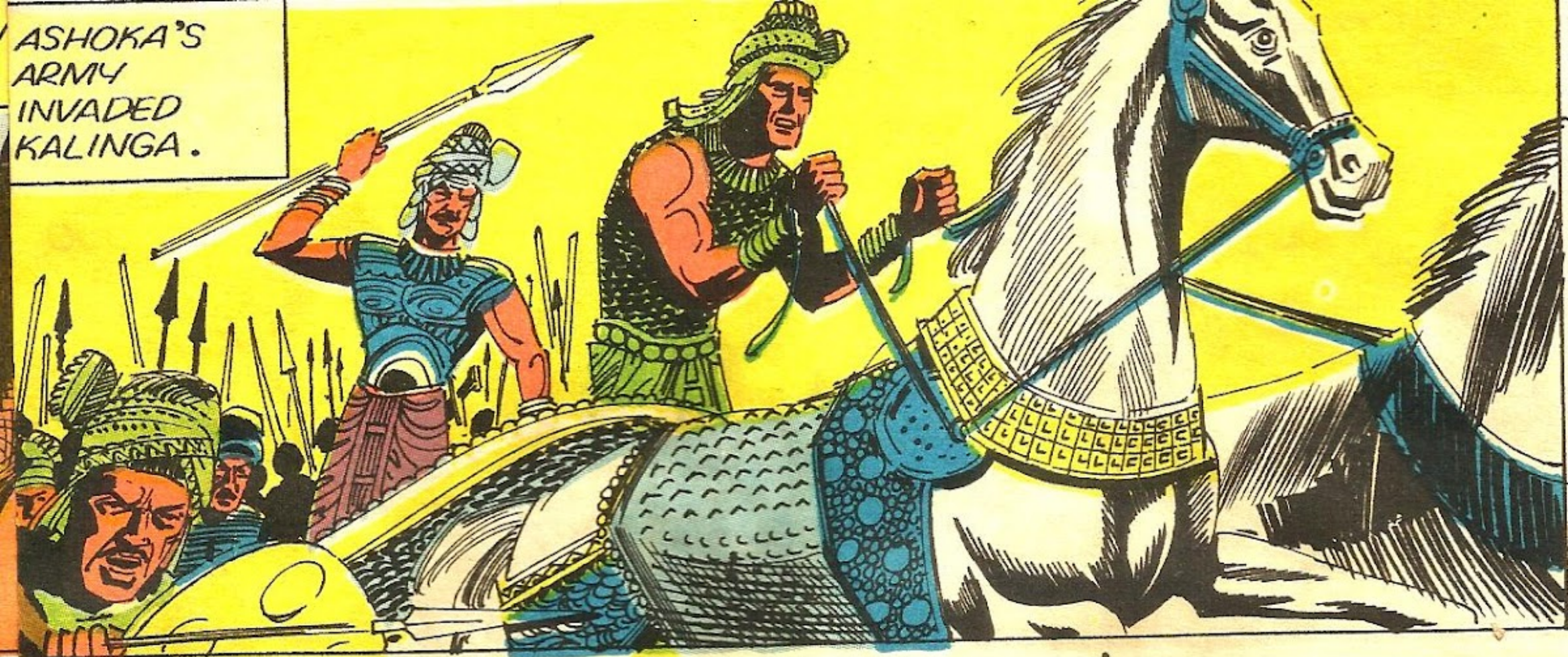


MEANWHILE, ASHOKA HAD BECOME A POWERFUL KING. AT HIS COURT -





ASHOKA'S  
ARMY  
INVADED  
KALINGA.



THE SOLDIERS OF KALINGA  
FOUGHT BRAVELY.



AT LAST—

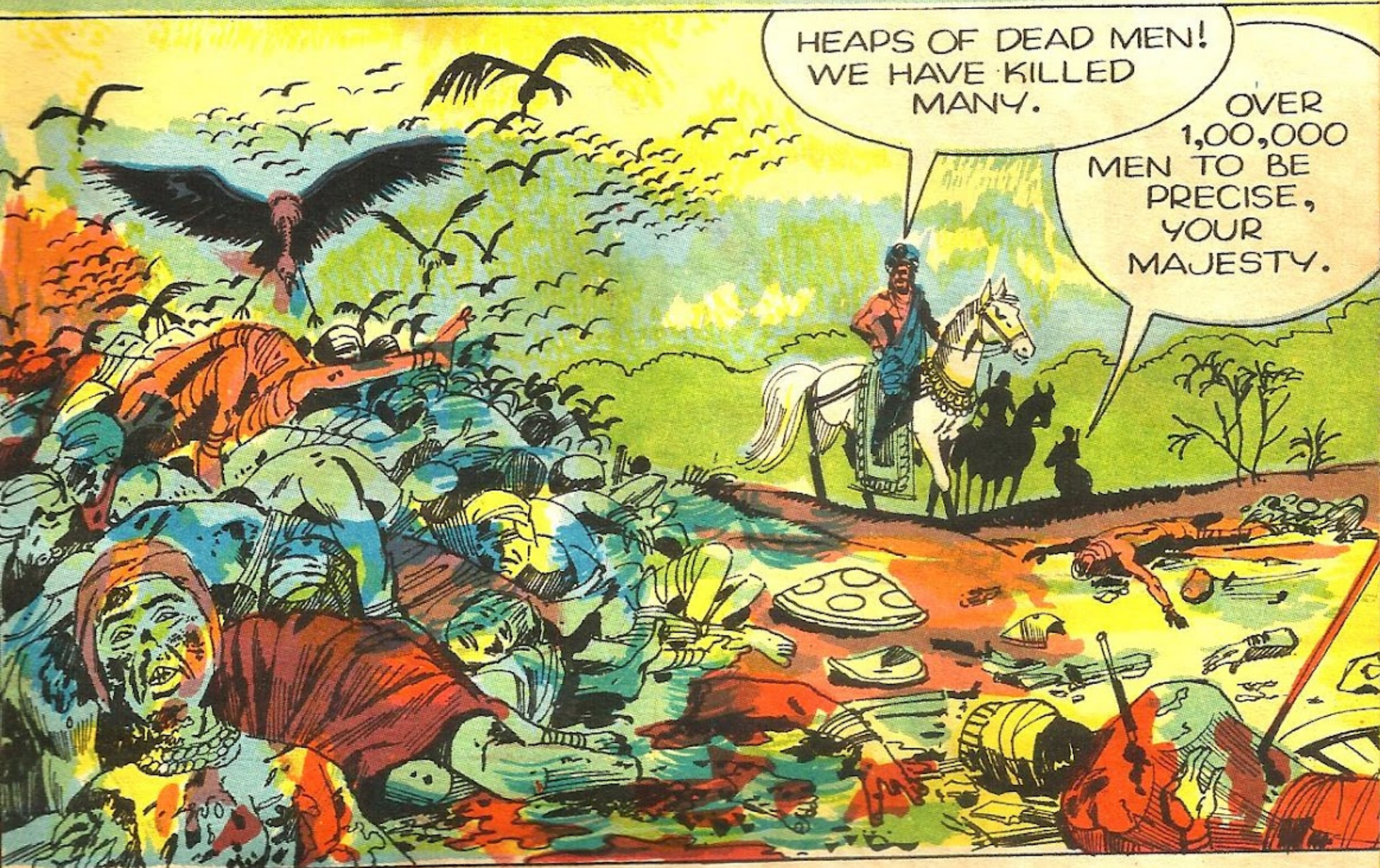
WE HAVE WON.  
KALINGA IS  
OURS.

I  
SHALL  
VISIT  
KALINGA.





AS HE PROCEEDED, HE SAW HORRIBLE SIGHTS.



HEAPS OF DEAD MEN!  
WE HAVE KILLED  
MANY.

OVER  
1,00,000  
MEN TO BE  
PRECISE,  
YOUR  
MAJESTY.



MERCY!  
WE BEG FOR  
MERCY!

WE HAVE  
CAPTURED  
1,50,000  
MEN,  
YOUR  
MAJESTY.

AS ASHOKA MOVED FARTHER -

IT LOOKS  
DESOLATE  
HERE.



LAKHS HAVE  
DIED, YOUR  
MAJESTY.



HE SAW THE SUFFERINGS OF THE PEOPLE.



OH! NO!

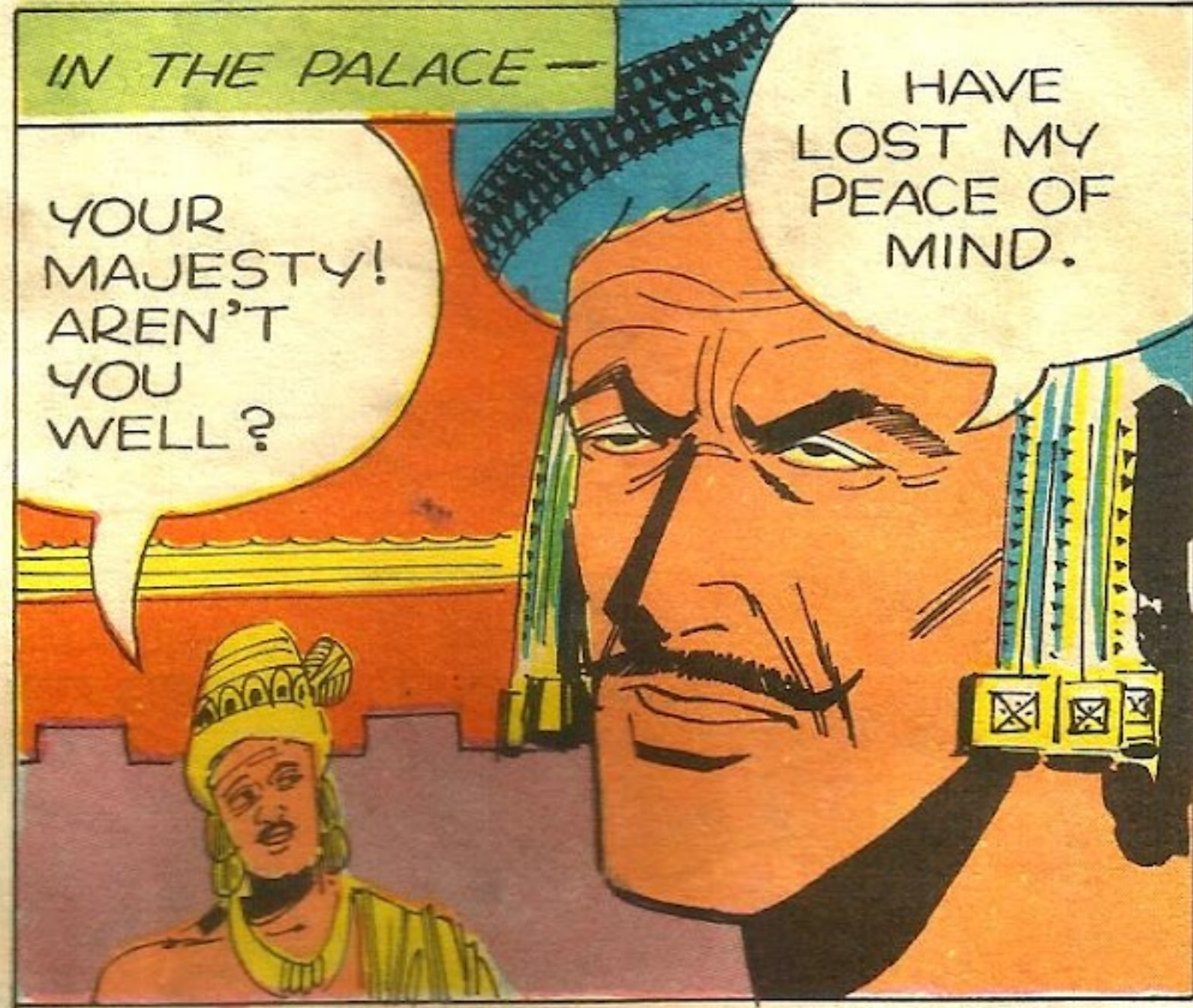
LET'S  
RETURN.



IN THE PALACE —

YOUR  
MAJESTY!  
AREN'T  
YOU  
WELL?

I HAVE  
LOST MY  
PEACE OF  
MIND.

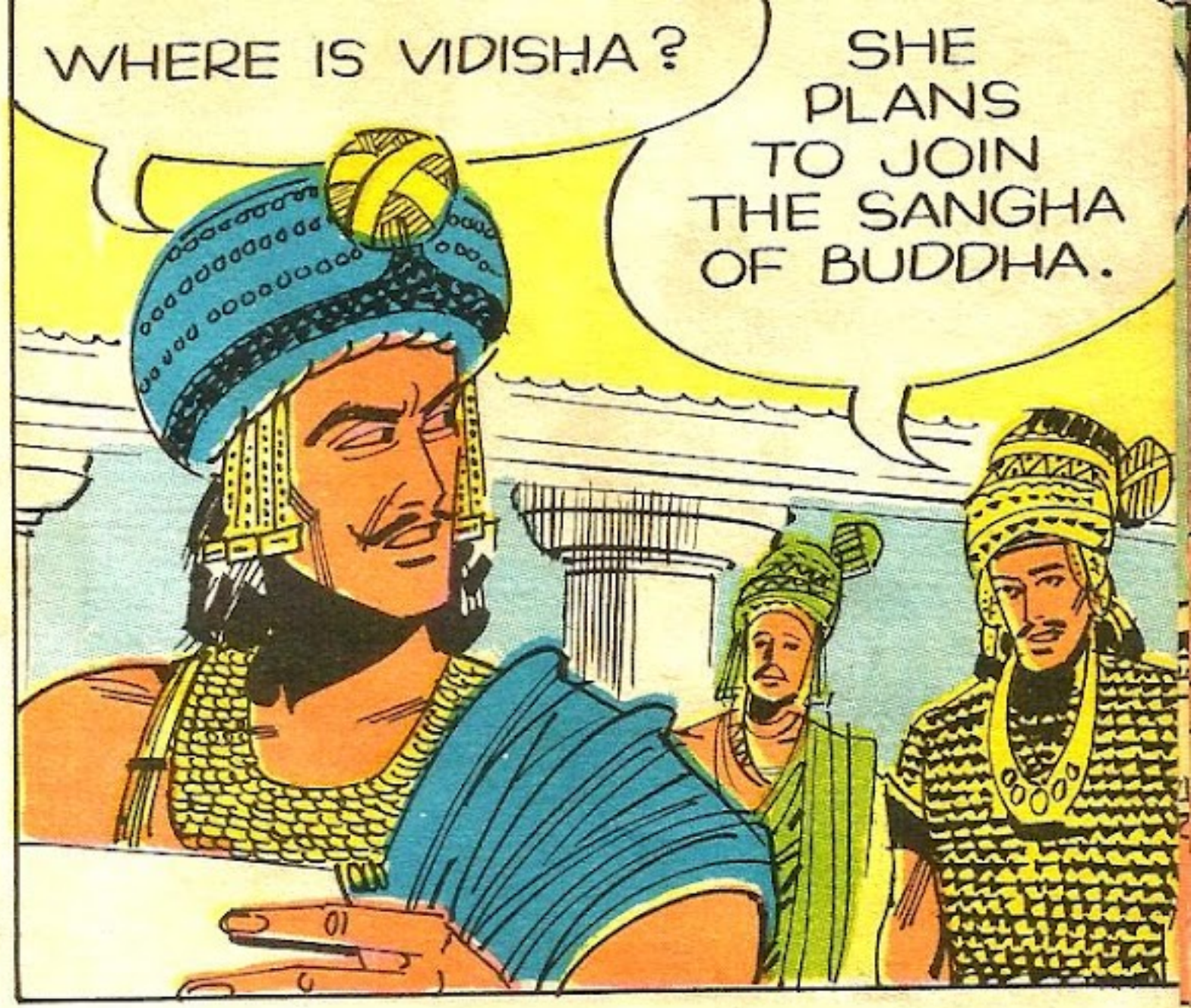
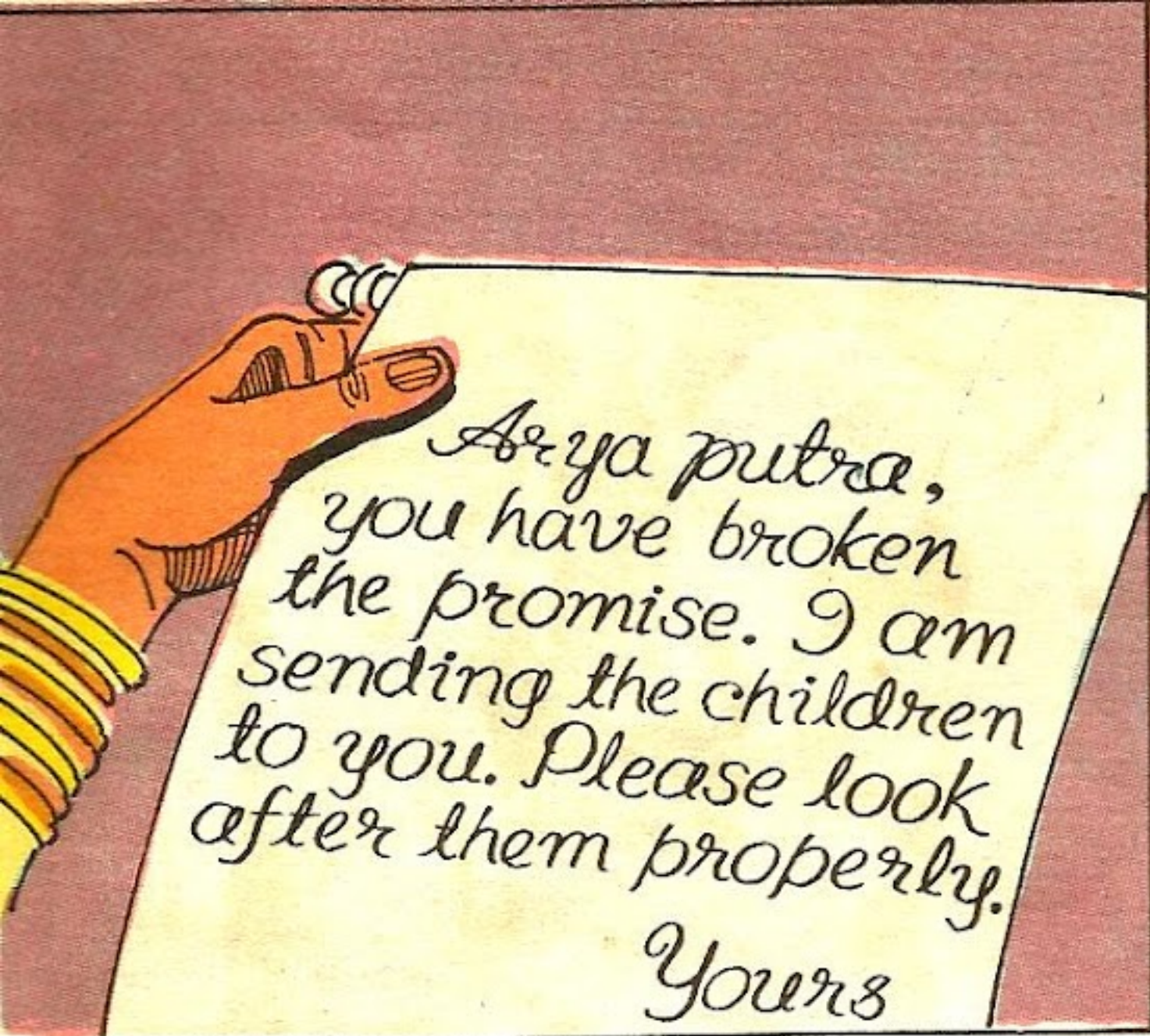


TO ADD TO HIS GRIEF  
A MESSENGER CAME  
FROM VIDISHA-NAGAR.

YOUR MAJESTY!  
I HAVE BROUGHT  
THIS LETTER FROM  
VIDISHA DEVI.







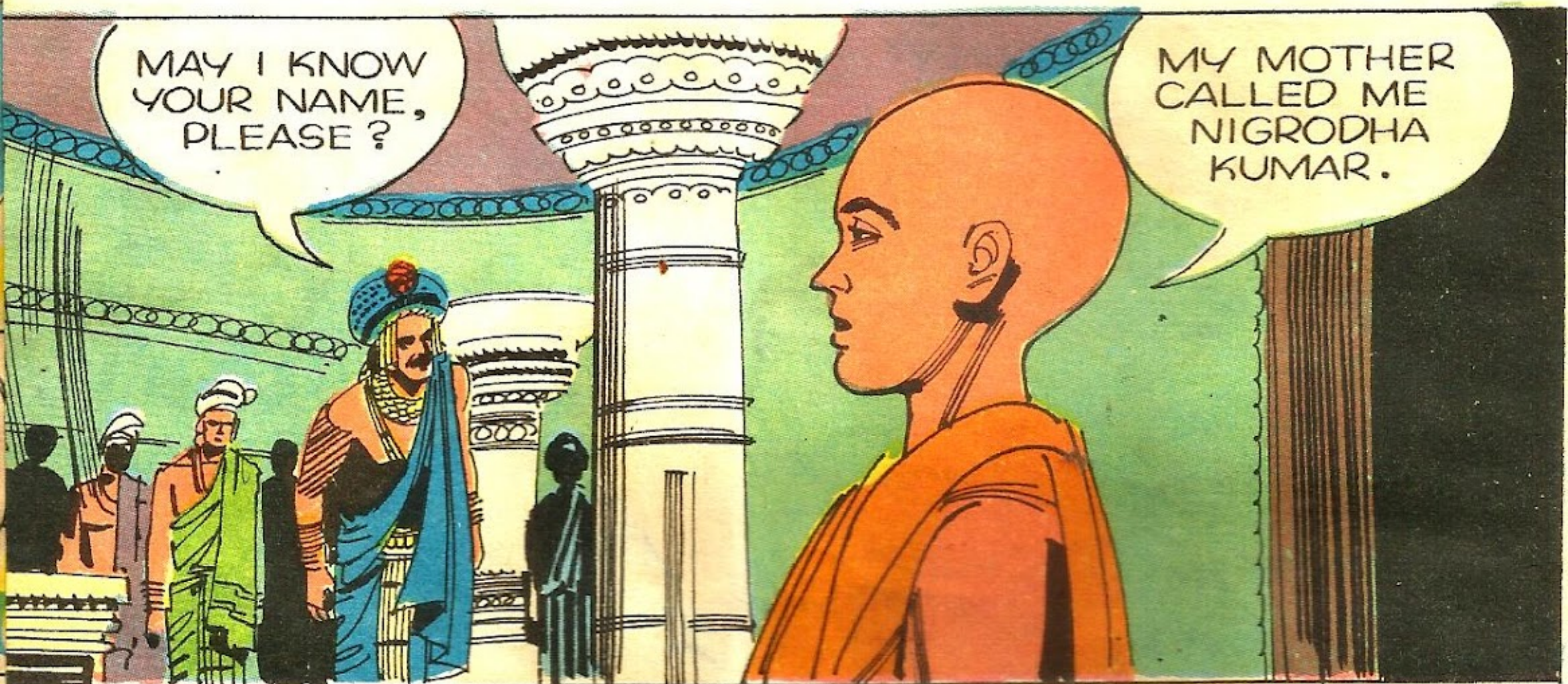
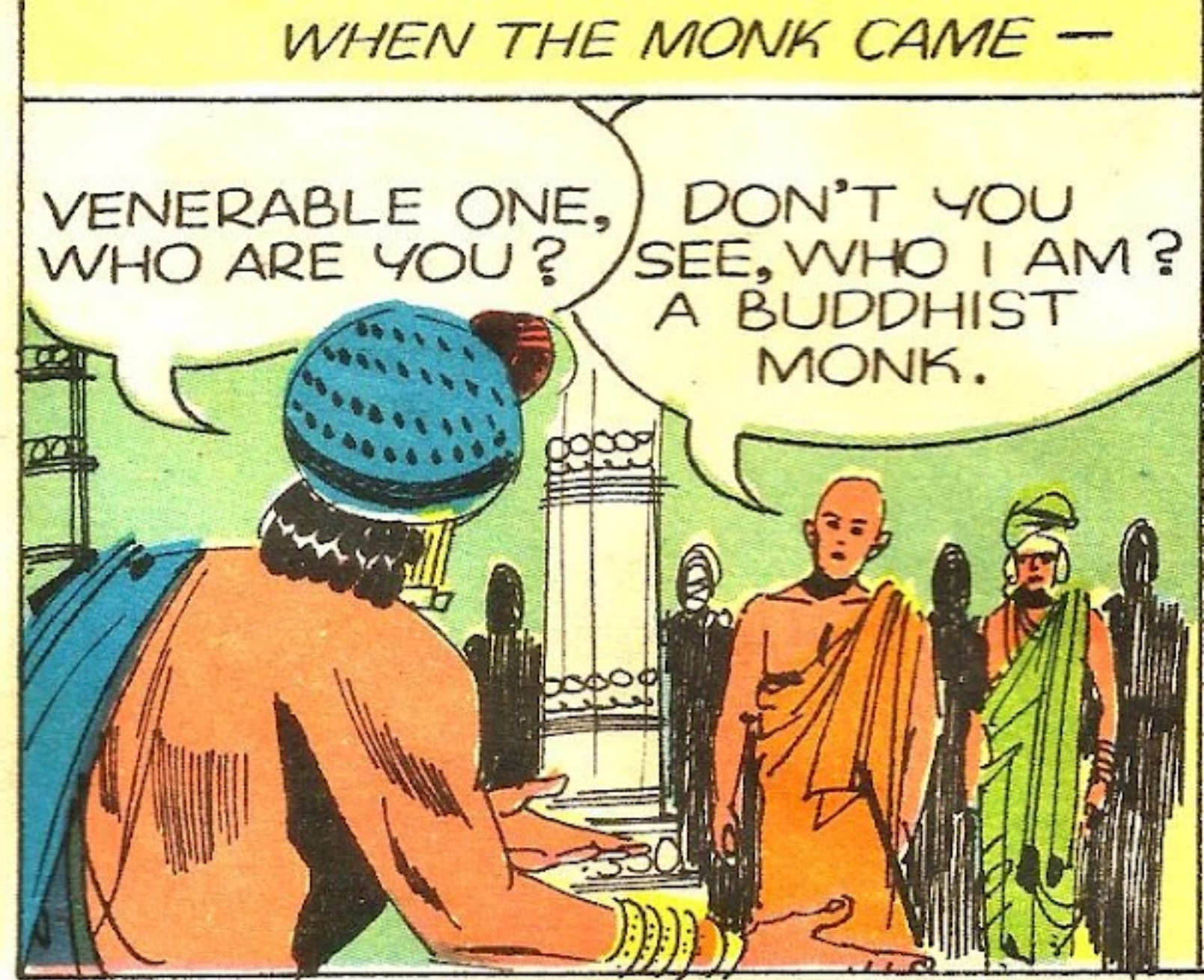
ASHOKA DREW SOME COMFORT  
FROM THE PRESENCE OF HIS  
CHILDREN. BUT HE CONTINUED  
TO BROOD OVER THE KILLINGS.



ONE DAY, FROM HIS PALACE WINDOW,  
HE SAW A MONK PASSING ALONG THE ROAD.





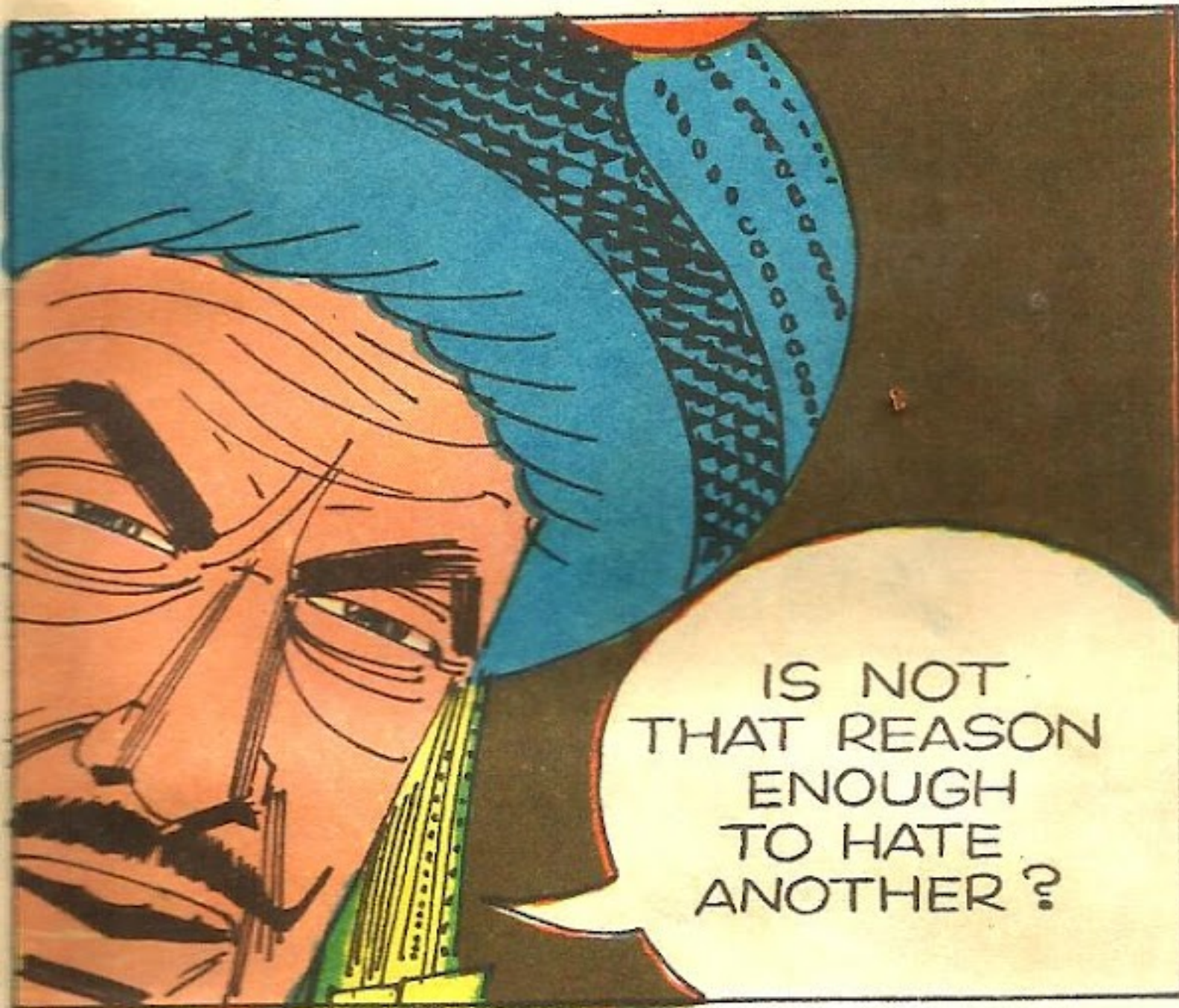







YOU  
HATE ME.  
DON'T  
YOU?


WHY SHOULD I?  
BECAUSE  
YOU KILLED MY  
FATHER?



IS NOT  
THAT REASON  
ENOUGH  
TO HATE  
ANOTHER?



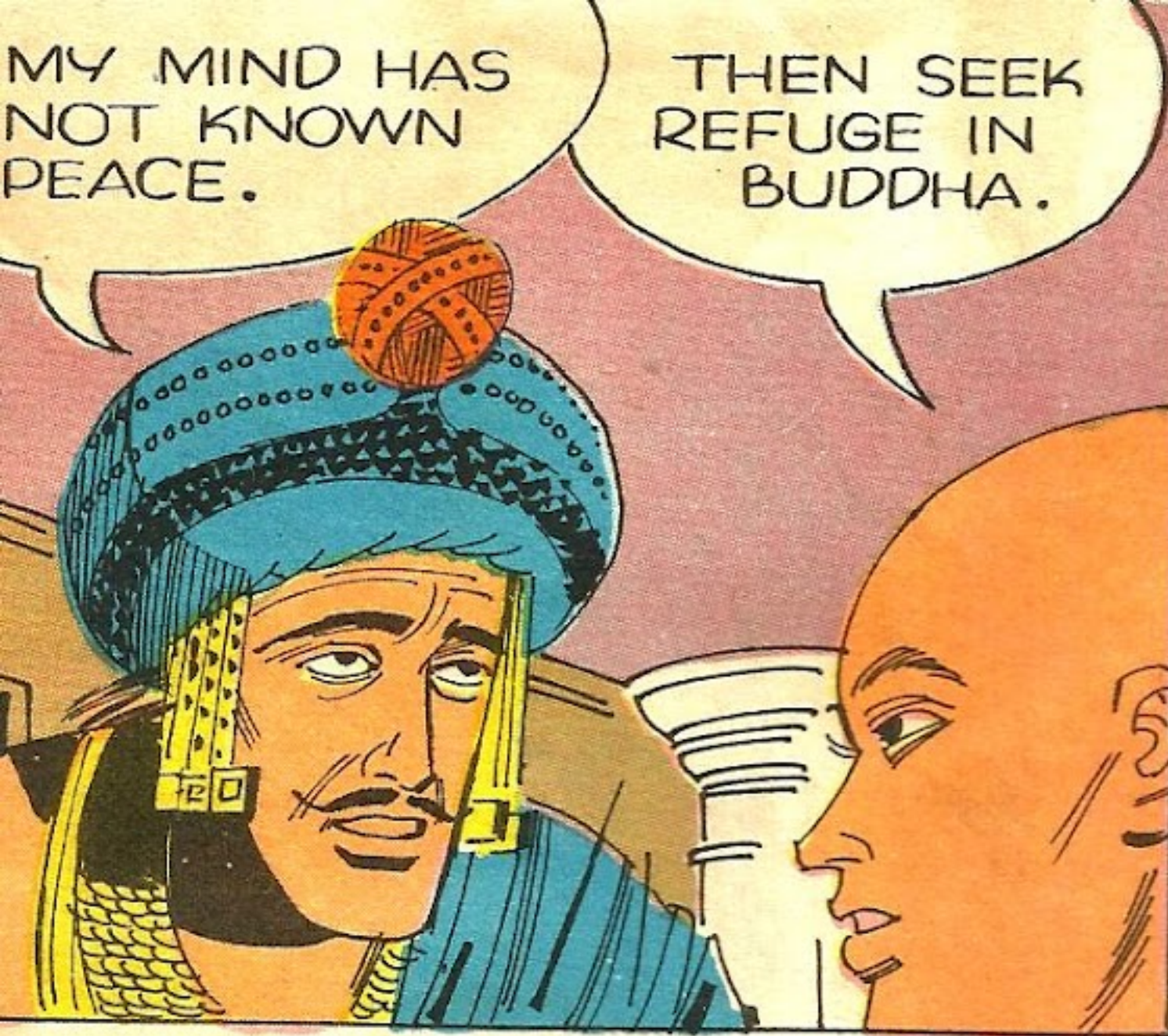
NO. I LOVE ALL.  
HATRED IS  
DESTRUCTIVE.  
IT SHOULD BE  
CONQUERED BY  
LOVE.



PRAY, WHERE  
DID YOU  
LEARN THIS?  
AT SUCH A  
TENDER  
AGE?

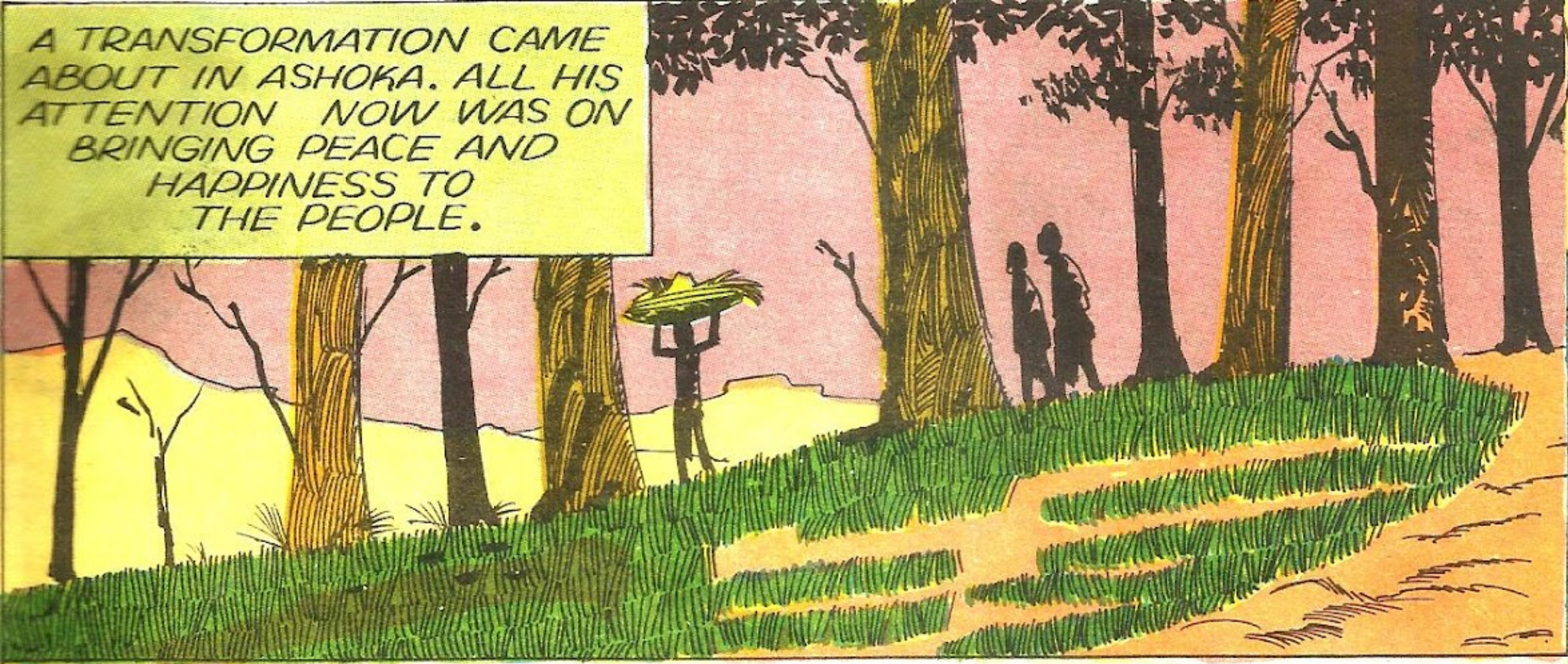
FROM THE  
TEACHINGS  
OF LORD  
BUDDHA.  
THEY BRING  
PEACE TO  
TROUBLED  
MINDS.



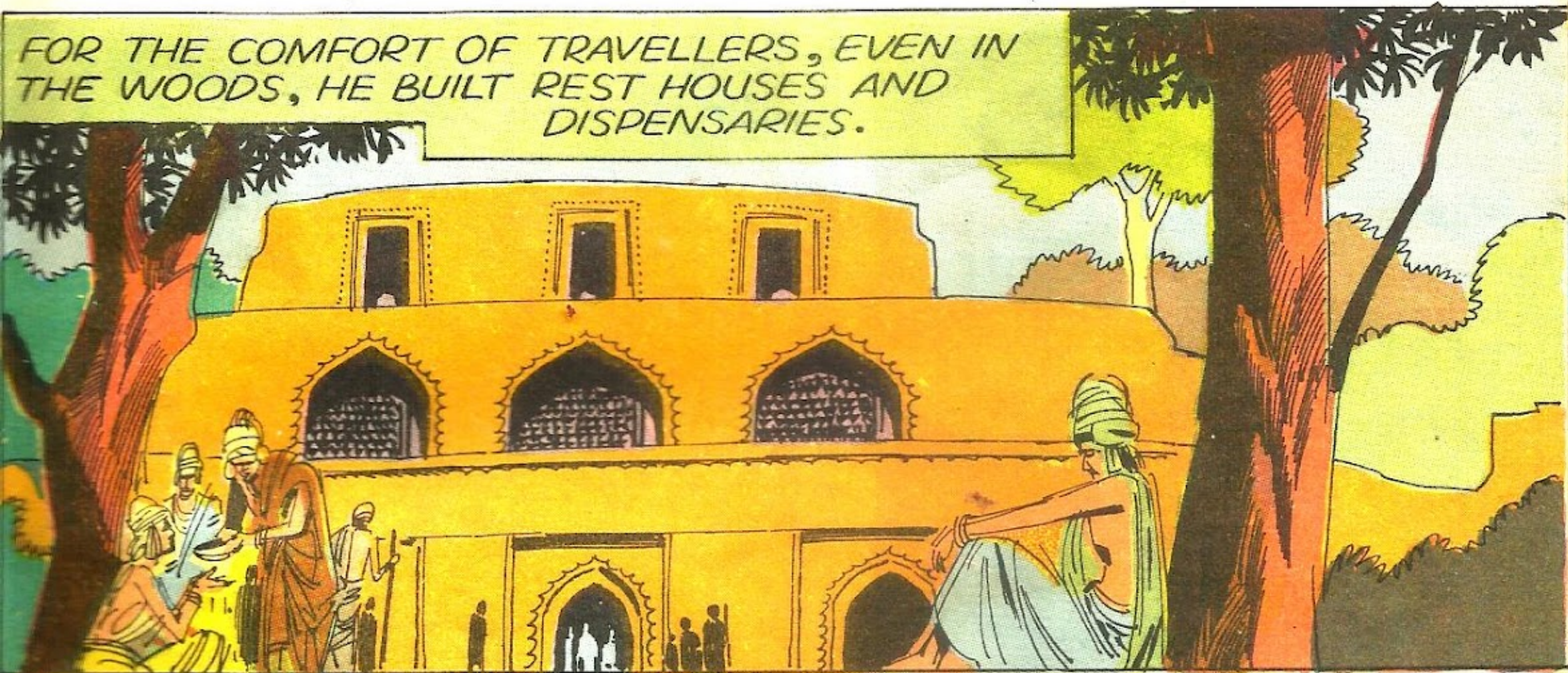




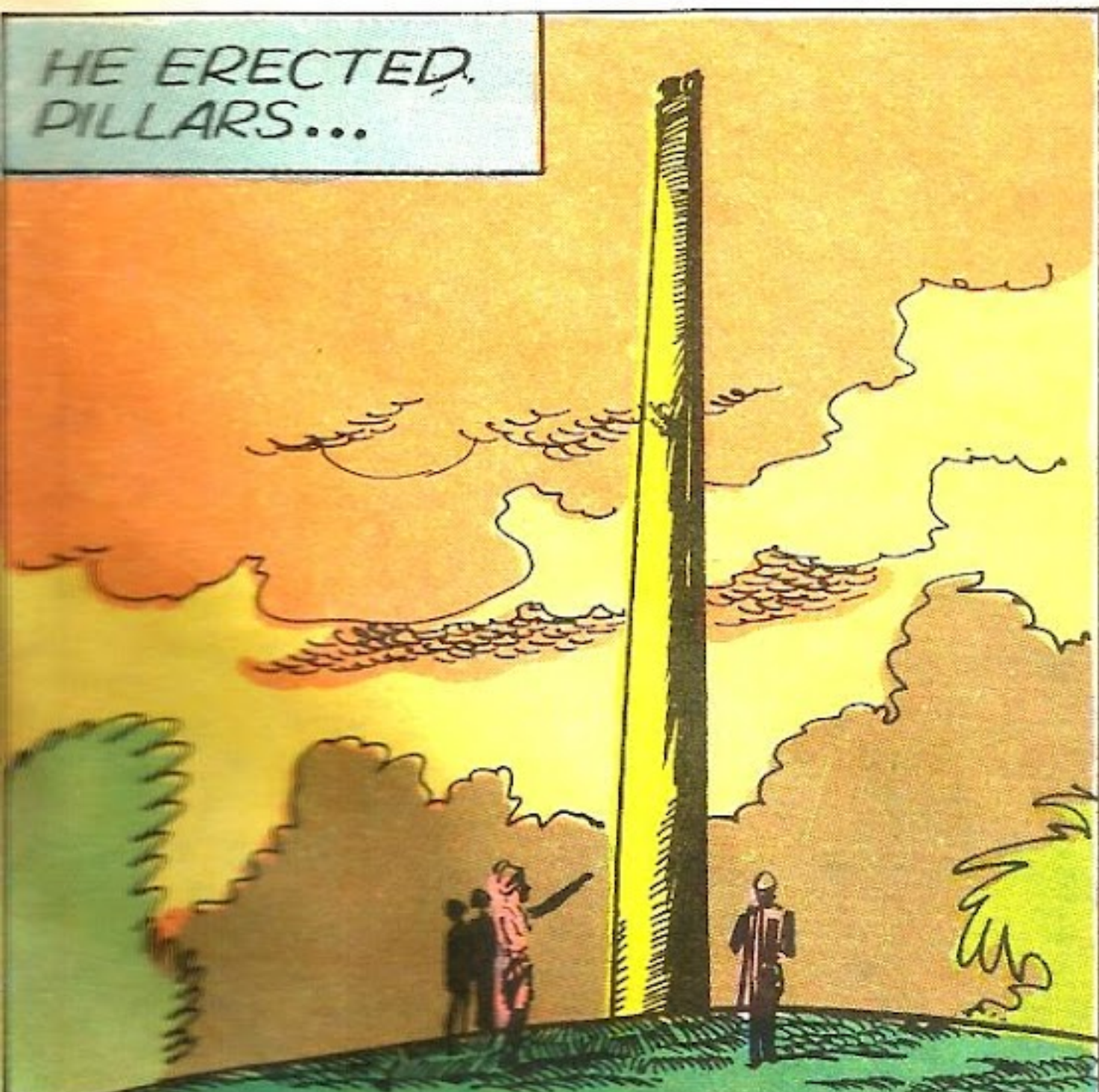
A TRANSFORMATION CAME ABOUT IN ASHOKA. ALL HIS ATTENTION NOW WAS ON BRINGING PEACE AND HAPPINESS TO THE PEOPLE.



FOR THE COMFORT OF TRAVELLERS, EVEN IN THE WOODS, HE BUILT REST HOUSES AND DISPENSARIES.



HE ERECTED PILLARS...



...AND CARVED INSTRUCTIONS ON ROCKS.



PRIYADARSHI, THE BELOVED KING OF GOD SAYS THIS ---



ONE DAY -

I HAVE GIVEN  
AWAY ALL  
THINGS DEAR  
TO ME.

EXCEPT...

EXCEPT  
WHAT,  
MAHINDRA?

YOUR  
CHILDREN.

YOUR SON  
WISHES TO  
JOIN THE  
SANGHA.

MUST YOU,  
MAHINDRA? IT IS  
WITH A HEAVY  
HEART - BUT  
I GIVE YOU  
PERMISSION.

FATHER, ALLOW  
ME TO JOIN THE  
NUNNERY.

OH!  
SANGHAMITRA!!



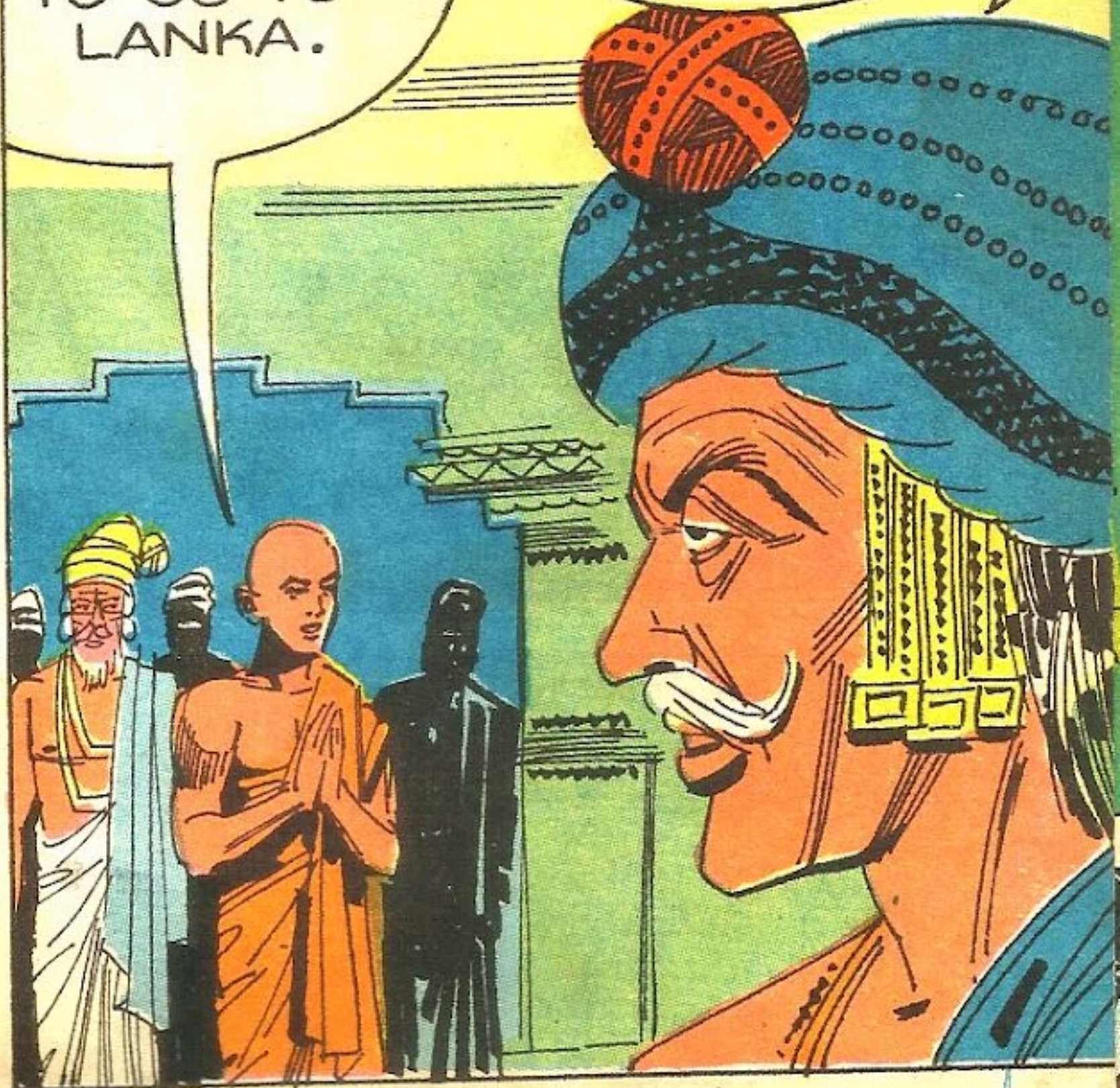
MY HUSBAND AND SON HAVE RENOUNCED THE WORLD. I TAKE NO PLEASURE IN LIFE.

YOU MAY JOIN THE NUNNERY.

AFTER A FEW YEARS—

FATHER, I WOULD LIKE TO GO TO LANKA.

GO, MY SON.  
GO WITH MY BLESSINGS.



TWO YEARS LATER —

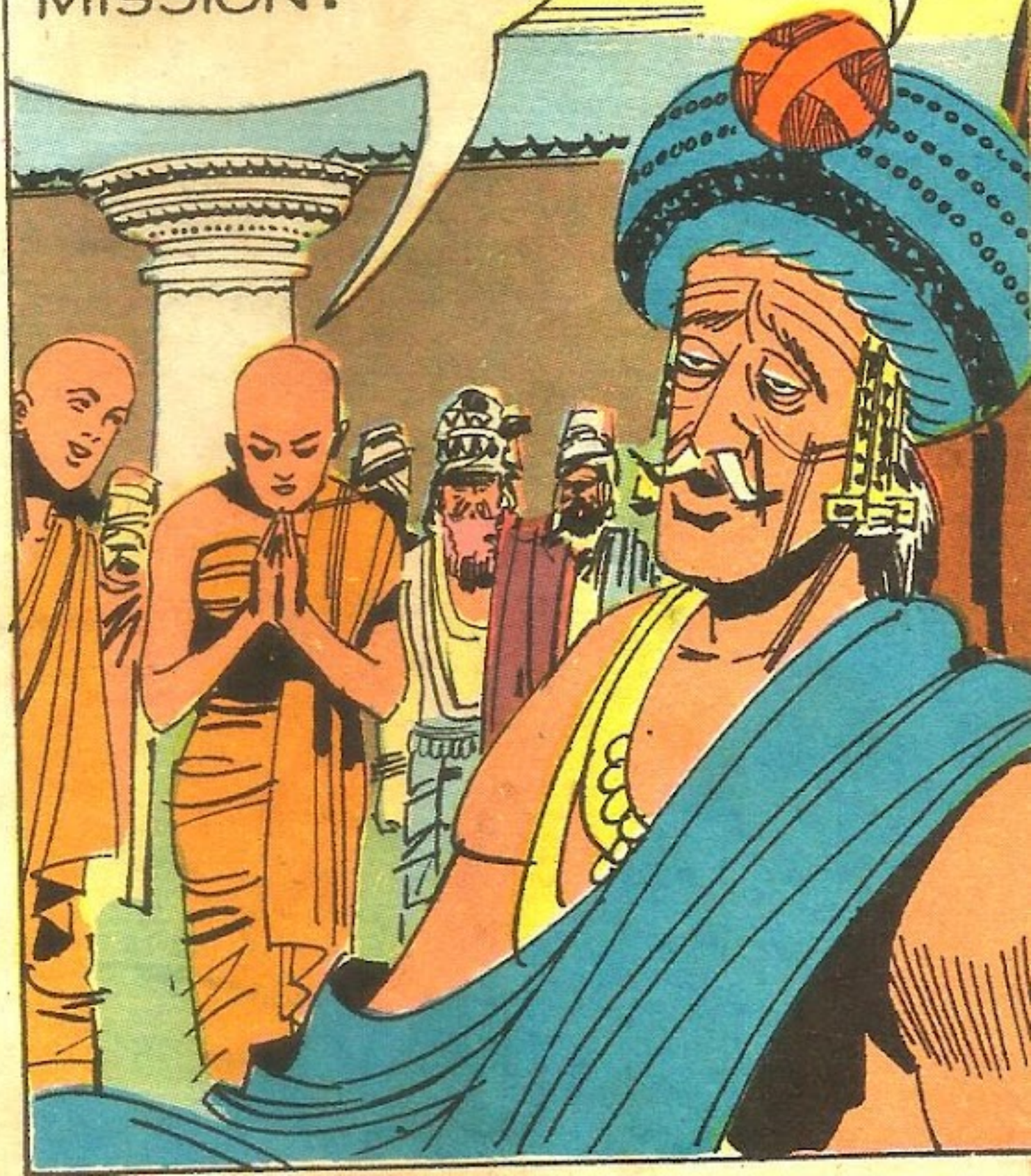
FATHER, I HAVE COME TO BID YOU GOOD-BYE.

WHAT DO YOU MEAN, SANGHA-MITRA?



A MESSAGE HAS BEEN RECEIVED FROM LANKA. THEY NEED NUNS AT THE MISSION.

HM...







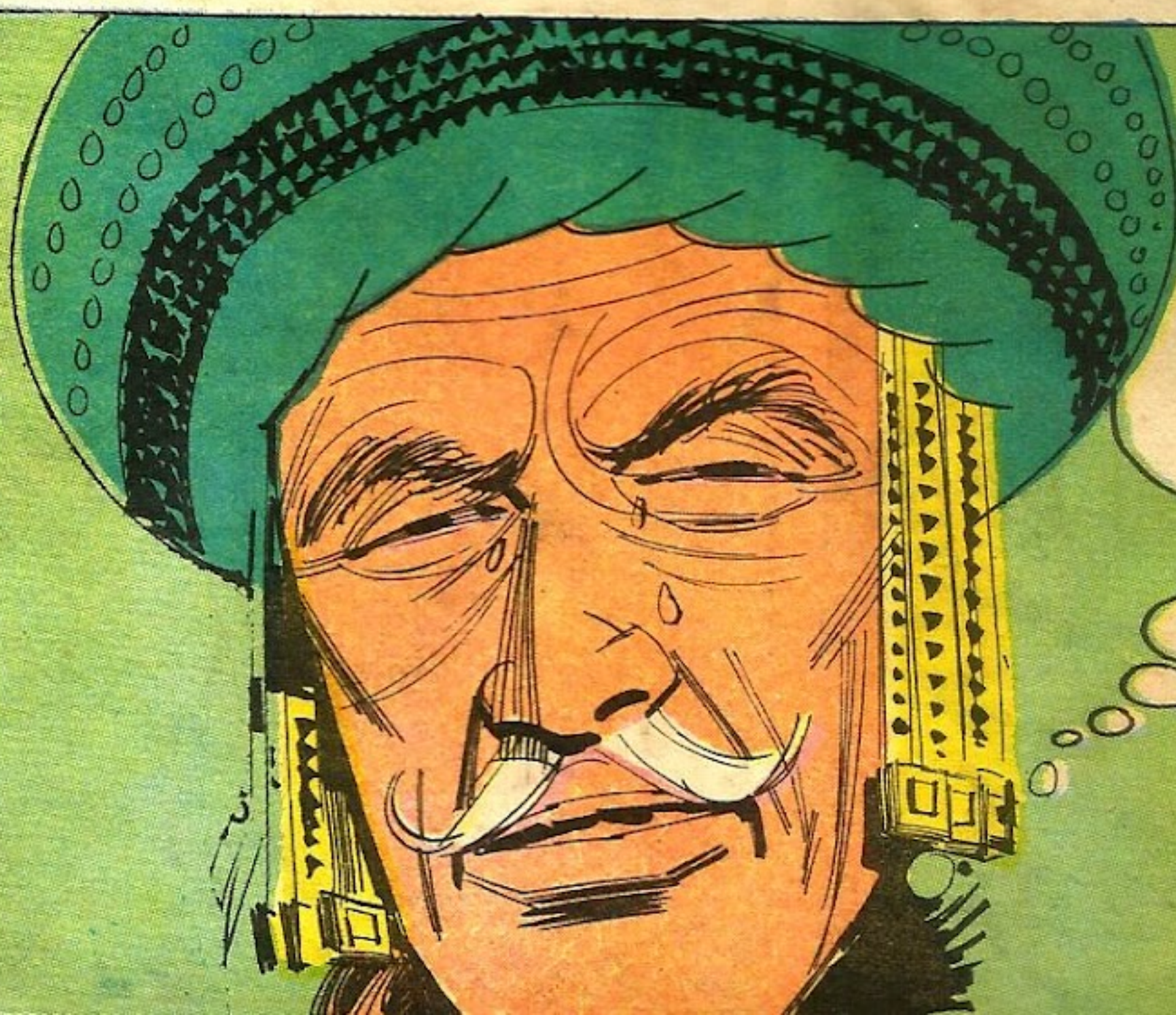
SANGHAMITRA,  
I HAVE GROWN OLD.  
I CAN BEAR GRIEF  
NO MORE.

BE BRAVE. YOU  
FORGET SANGHAMITRA  
IS A MEMBER OF  
THE SANGHA.



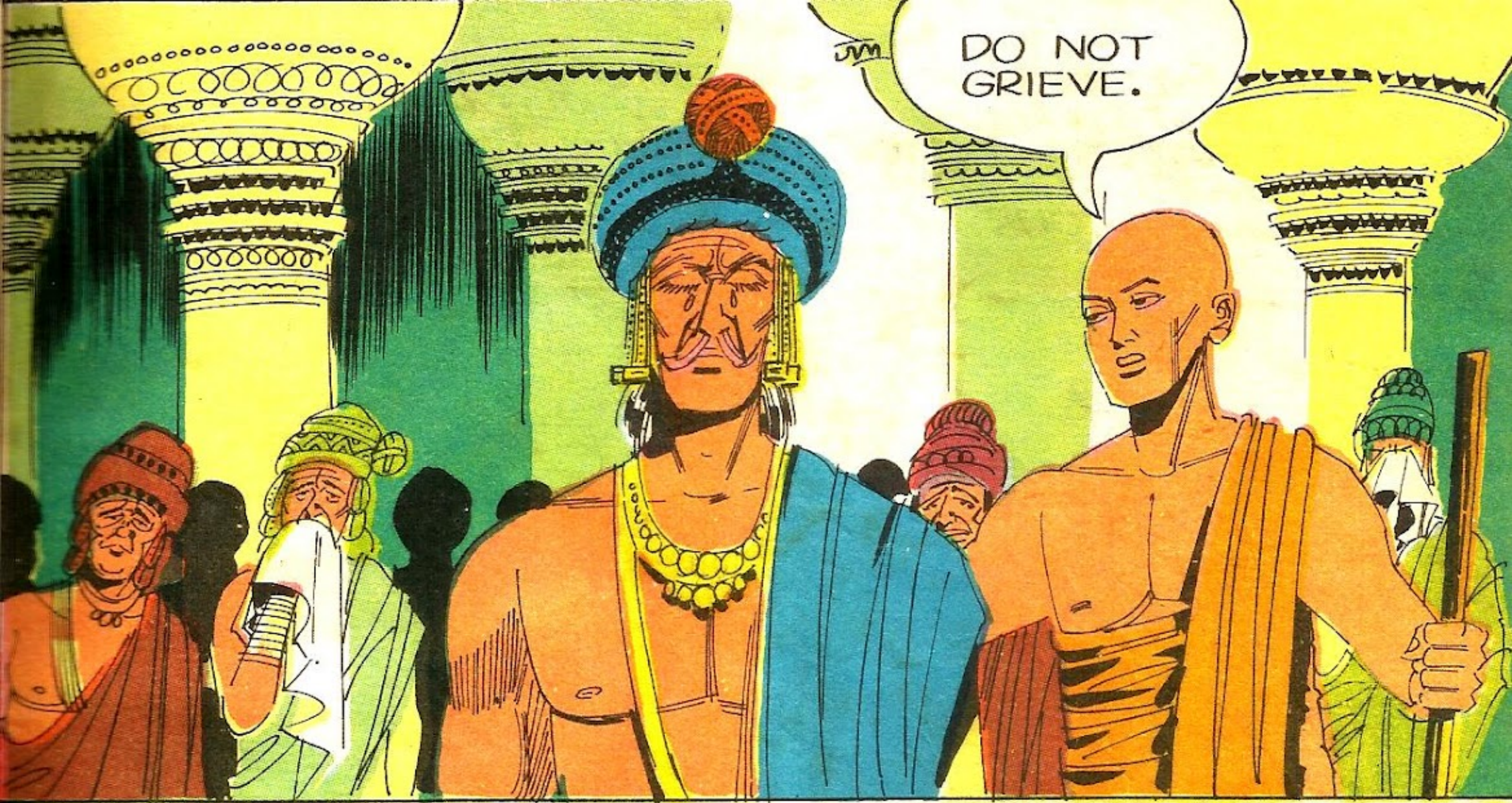
I  
UNDERSTAND.  
I WISH YOU  
SUCCESS.  
GO, MY  
CHILD.

THANK  
YOU,  
FATHER.



OH! VIDISHA,  
YOUR CHILDREN  
HAVE LEFT ME  
JUST AS YOU DID  
FOR THE SAKE OF  
DHARMA.





DO NOT  
GRIEVE.



BY  
SACRIFICING  
YOUR DEAR ONES  
YOU HAVE  
PROVED THAT  
DHARMA IS  
DEAR TO YOU.  
YOU ARE  
INDEED,  
DHARMASHOKA.

THUS ASHOKA BECAME DHARMASHOKA.  
HE RULED FOR MANY YEARS AND LOOKED  
AFTER THE WELFARE OF THE SUBJECTS  
OF HIS VAST EMPIRE AS A FATHER  
WOULD LOOK AFTER HIS CHILDREN.

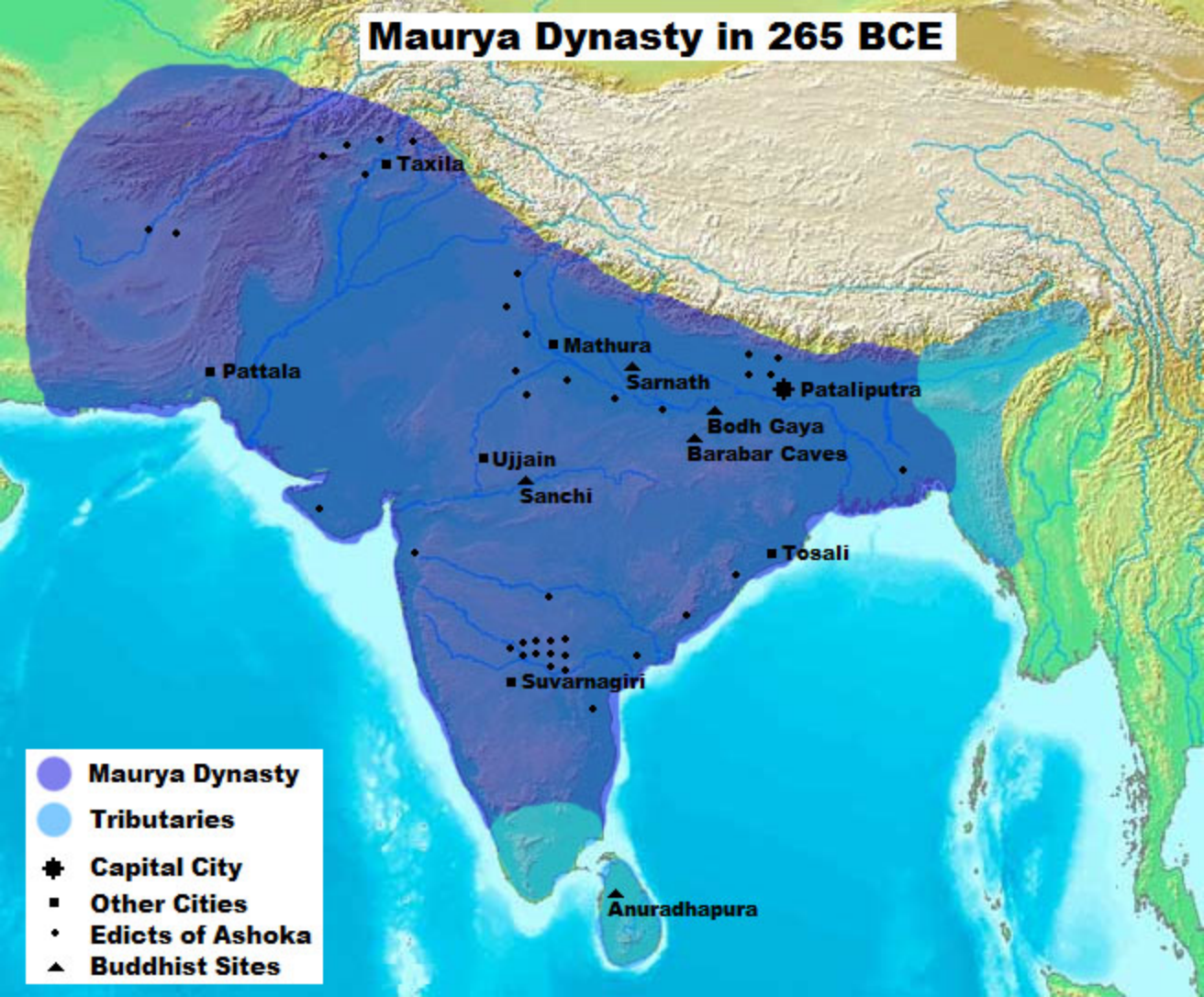


THE FIVE PRINCIPLES OF CO-EXISTENCE, WHICH HE PROPAGATED, ARE STILL RESPECTED THE WORLD OVER. THE ASHOKA PILLAR AT SARNATH REMINDS US EVEN TILL THIS DAY OF HIS GREATNESS. THE 'DHARMA CHAKRA' ON THE ASHOKA PILLAR ADORNS OUR NATIONAL FLAG.





# Maurya Dynasty in 265 BCE



- Maurya Dynasty
- Tributaries
- ★ Capital City
- Other Cities
- Edicts of Ashoka
- ▲ Buddhist Sites