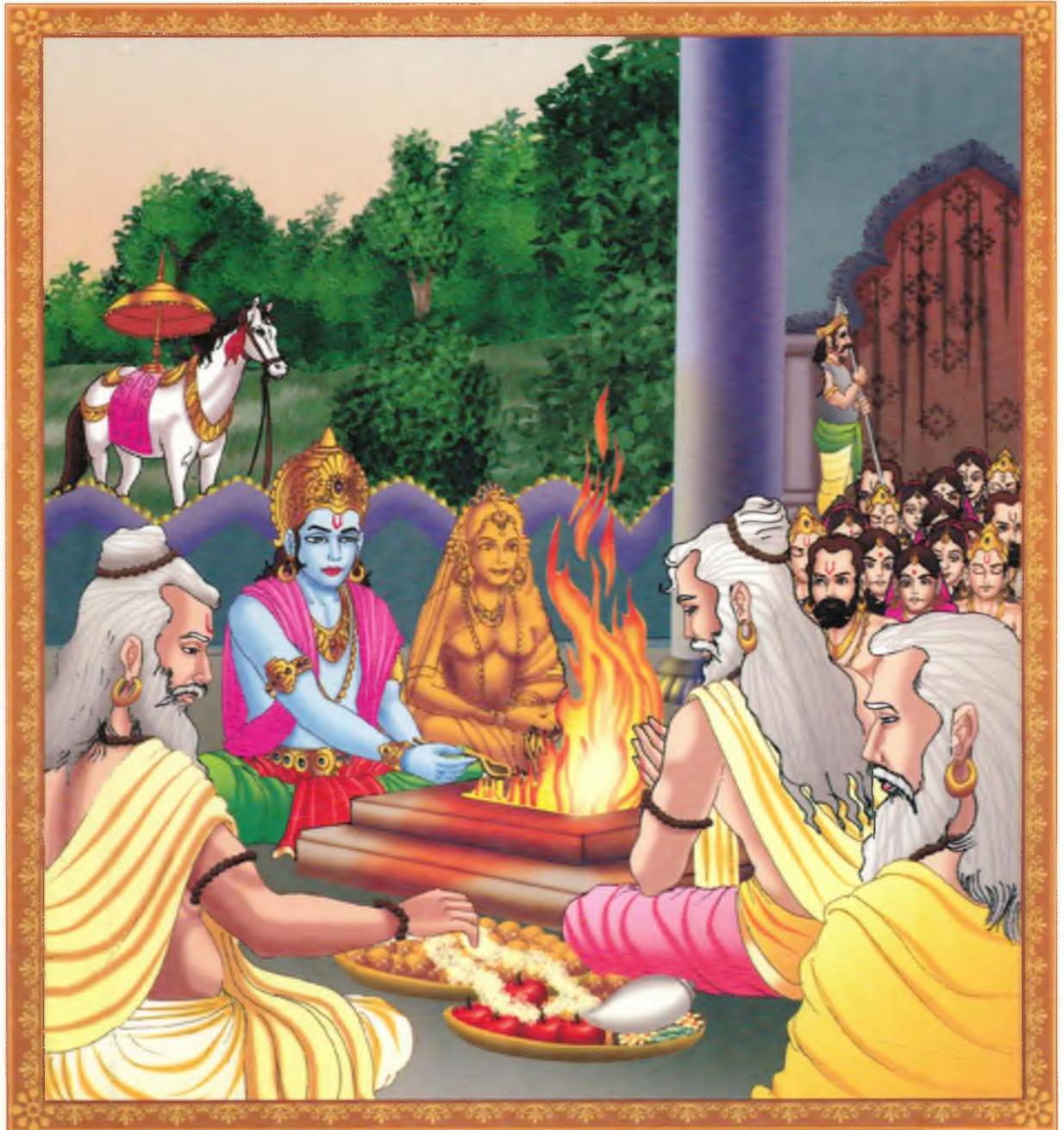


# RAMAYANA

## PART 10

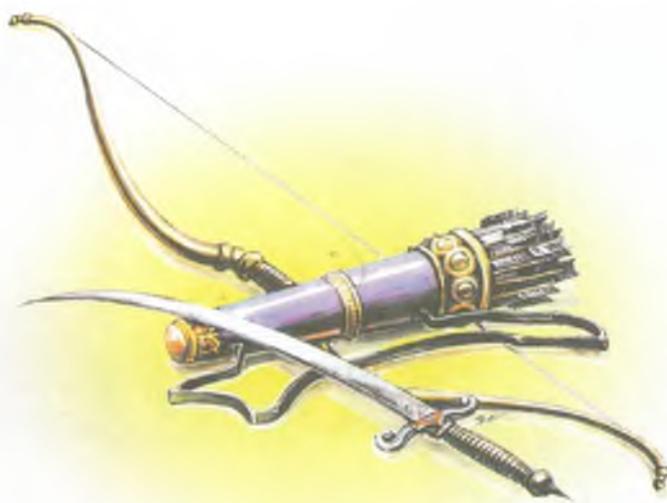


DREAMLAND

# RAMAYANA

## PART 10 UTTARA EPISODE

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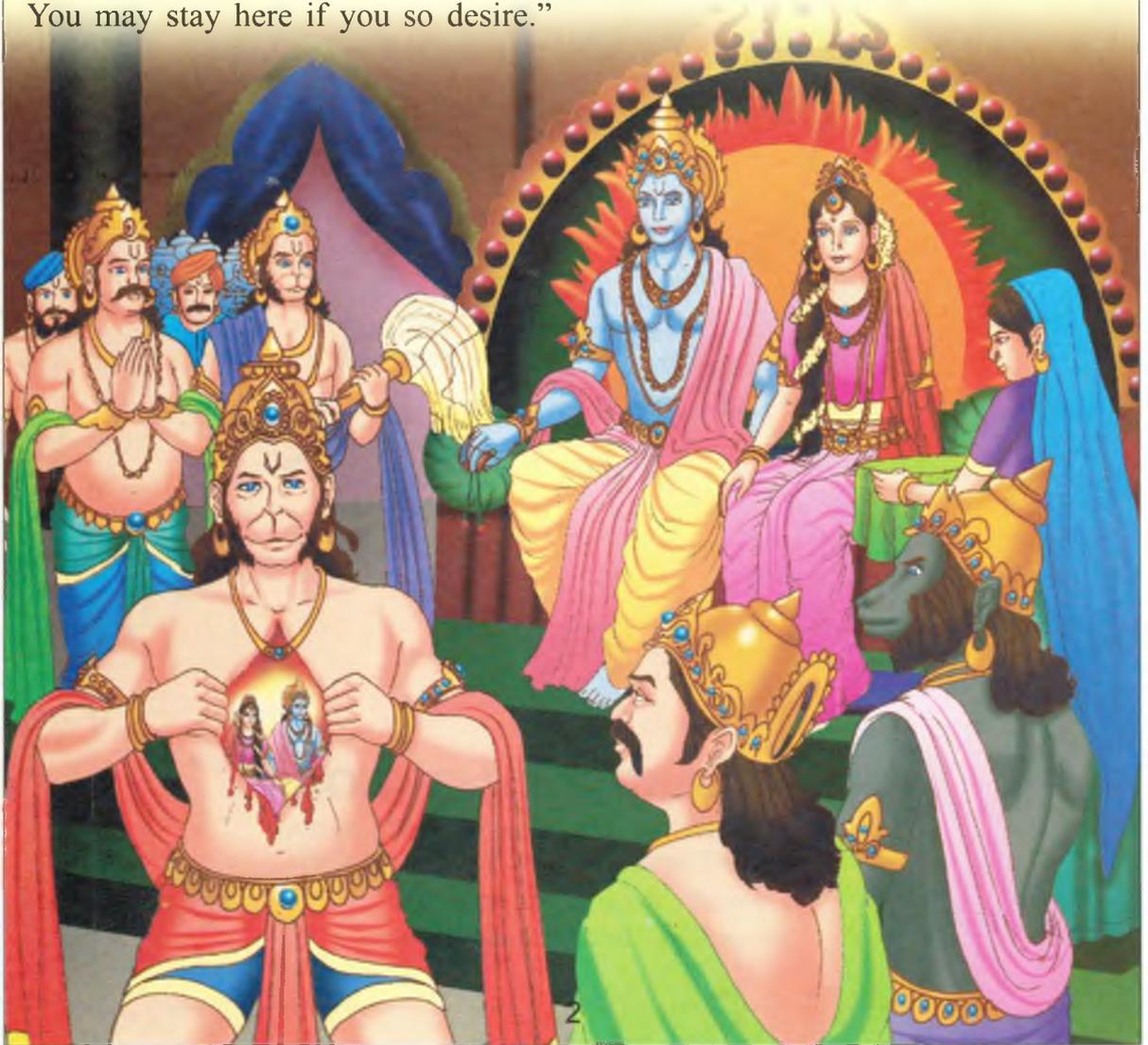
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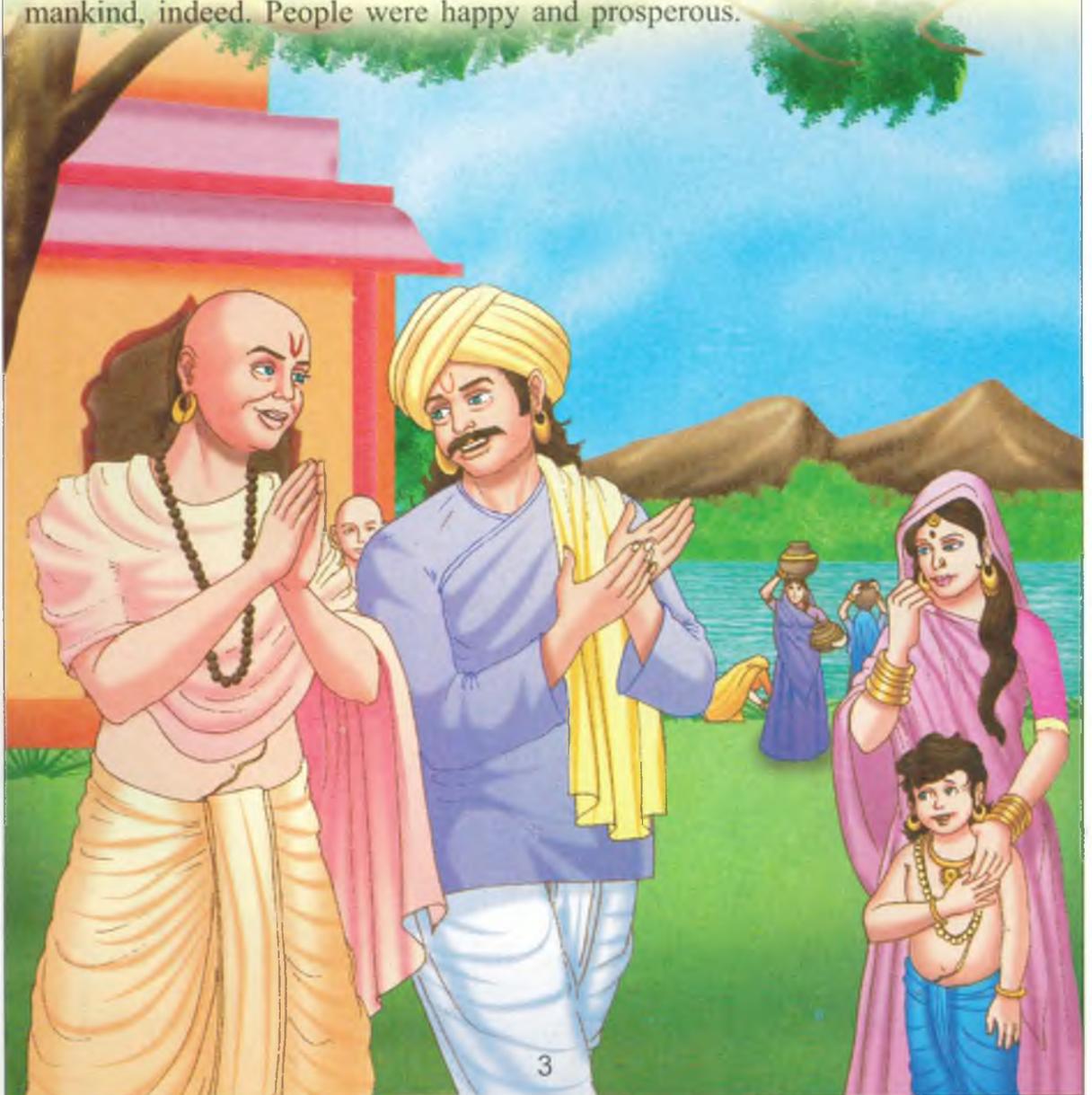
Rama gave rich gifts to all the Vanaras when they were about to leave Ayodhya after his coronation. Everybody was ready to leave but seeing Hanumana hesitating, Sugreeva asked him, "Are you not going with us ?" "My Lord ! would you permit me to stay here and serve Rama ?" asked Hanumana with his folded hands.

"You pose to be more attached to Rama than anybody else. But can you prove that your devotion is true and sincere ?" enquired Sugreeva. Hearing this, Hanumana remembered Rama and Sita and then tore off his chest with his nails. Sugreeva was amazed to see images of Rama and Sita therein. Everybody present there could not help praising Hanumana. Sugreeva was so impressed that he said, "You are an embodiment of all noble values. Your devotion to Rama is unequalled. So, I free you from all the bonds. You may stay here if you so desire."



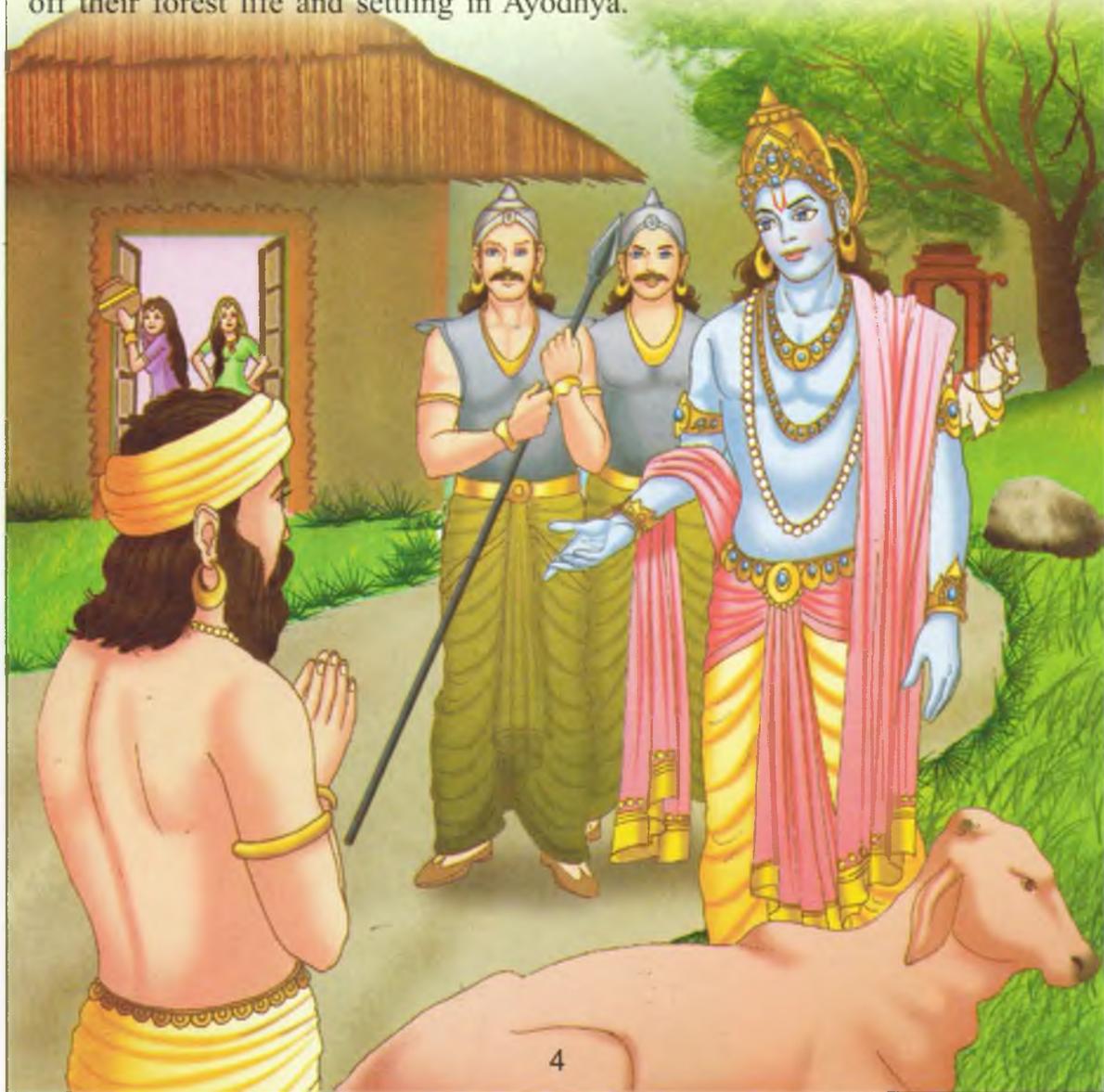
Thus, the Rama Rajya came into existence. In the Rama Rajya, people co-operated with one another and they observed the rules of religion and society. Nobody suffered in any way and nobody died an untimely death.

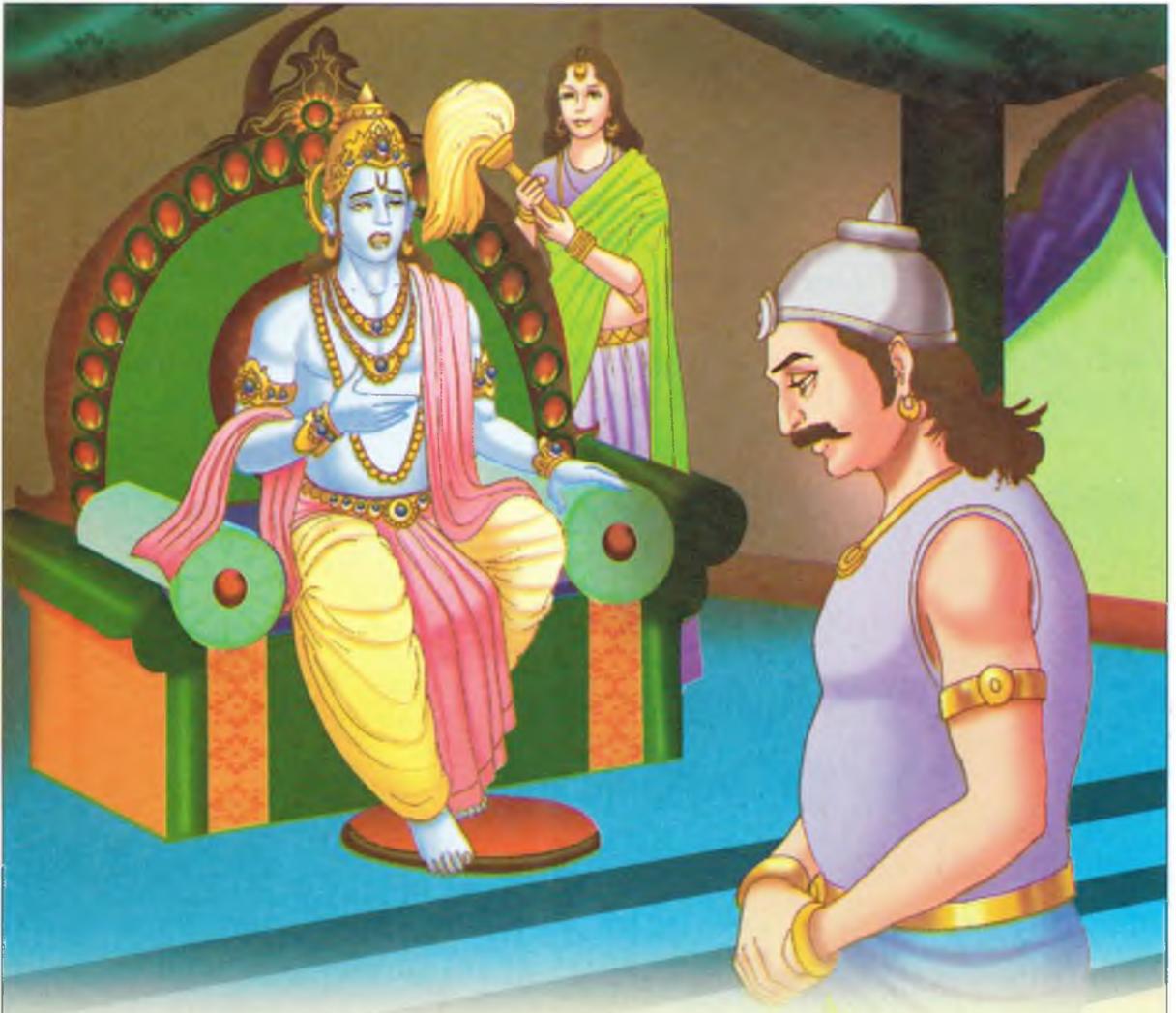
People were free from disease and poverty. Pain and ignorance were not there at all. Men as well as women remained absorbed in virtue and they became noble. The strong and the weak lived in affection. Even birds and animals loved one another. The soil gave rich crops and plants bore delicious fruit and beautiful flowers. Rivers carried sweet water and the hills were rich in precious stones. That age was the Golden Age of the history of mankind, indeed. People were happy and prosperous.



Rama had a sublime routine. Having a bath in the Saryu early in the morning, he sat for his prayers. Then, he had sermons from his Preceptor Vasishtha on matters of religion, worldly life and the duties of an ideal ruler. He always had his meals in company with his brothers.

Then coming to the court, Rama attended to his state-affairs. He loved his subjects from the core of his heart. So, he used to give interviews to common people daily to know their troubles. Then, he took steps to redress them as early as possible. The saints and hermits living in the vicinity of Ayodhya often visited Rama's Capital. Seeing the people enjoying the blessings of Rama, they felt so happy that sometimes they felt like leaving off their forest life and settling in Ayodhya.





Rama used to hold his court in the evening daily. The spies informed him of all the happenings and of the troubles of the people. One day, a spy came to the court as usual and bowing low before Rama, he stood silent on one side. Seeing him silent, Rama suspected that something wrong had happened. So, he said to the spy, "Don't be afraid at all. Say whatever you want to say without any sort of hesitation. I want to know whether any of my subjects is in trouble."

"My Lord ! I want to be excused." Saying so, the spy again became silent as if his tongue were not ready to say what he wanted to say. Seeing him silent again, Rama said, "Why don't you tell the news you have brought ? Is it unpleasant news ? Say what it is. I am impatient to know it." "Your Majesty ! a washerman, while reproaching his wife, was saying something improper regarding our Queen," said the spy in a faltering voice.

Having been ordered to say everything in detail, the spy said, "Sir, I heard the harsh words which the washerman was speaking to his wife.

"Say everything clearly," said Rama.

"Your Majesty ! somebody had taken away the washerman's wife. When she returned the next day, her husband flew into a rage and said, "You unfaithful bitch ! I am an ordinary man. I am not so great as Rama who has accepted his wife Sita even after she remained in Ravana's custody for such a long time. Get lost at once. There is no room for you here." Saying so, the spy became silent.



“What happened then ? Did the washerman allow her to remain there or not ?” asked Rama serenely. “No, sir; he turned her out,” replied the spy.

Rama dismissed the court and retired to his palace with a heavy heart. The words of the washerman regarding Sita pinched him like anything. Having given a cool thought to the entire matter, he said to himself, “For the sake of the religious and social principles, I will have to part company with Sita. But it is essential that the veracity of this happening be proved before taking any step.” So, Rama asked his soldiers to investigate whether the happening in the washerman’s house was true or not. The report submitted by the soldiers supported what the spy had said.





Rama could not sleep in peace at night. He remained restless all the night through. When his three brothers came to greet him the next morning as usual, they found him sad and dejected. Rama's pale looks and gloomy mood stunned his brothers. They all suspected something ominous to happen. After some time Rama addressed Lakshmana in a serene voice and said, "Take Sita with you at once and leave her in the forest."

"Brother ! what is the matter after all ? What is her fault ? Why have you decided to part from her ?" asked Lakshmana.

"That is God's will, brother. What I have said, is for the good of all. If my order is violated. I shall end my life." Hearing Rama's words, the three brothers stood dumb as statues.

Then, collecting courage, Bharata said with folded hands, "Brother ! I am a man of ordinary wits but you are omniscient. I would like to know whether a fish can live away from water. Can a crop grow without rain ? -Can Sita survive in separation from you now ?"

"You are right, Bharata. But I am not only a son, brother and husband, but a ruler also. A ruler has to live up to the expectations of his subjects," said Rama. Saying these words, Rama told his brothers what the washerman had said to his wife. To keep Sita in the palace will amount to a slur on our exalted dynasty. I have got to save it from this slur."

"Whoever said such words for Sita is sure to go to hell," said Lakshmana. "Come what may, brother. Go and carry out my order," said Rama. "I am here to obey you, brother," said Lakshmana. Saying so, Lakshmana set out to the forest in a chariot with Sita in it.





Reaching the dense forest, Lakshmana requested Sita to get down. Sita complied with the request, but she felt frightened to see the dreadful forest on all sides and said, "Lakshmana ! there is no hermitage even anywhere around. This dense forest is the abode of fierce wild animals. Why have you brought me here ?" "Respected Sister-in-law ! your husband Rama has ordered me to leave you here in this forest and I can never disobey him, you know," replied Lakshmana in a faltering voice.

Hearing these words, Sita fell down senseless. As soon as Lakshmana advanced to give her support, a divine voice said, "Lakshmana ! leave her here and rush back to Ayodhya. She will survive." Hearing this Lakshmana returned to Ayodhya, leaving Sita lying there.

Coming to herself, Sita looked around but she could see no sign of Lakshmana and his chariot. She said to herself, "Have I been sent to this forest with Lakshmana to get rid of me? I have already suffered a lot. Even death is not ready to accept me." Thinking so, she began to bewail bitterly. By chance, Saint Valmiki happened to pass that way. Hearing Sita bewail so bitterly, he came to her and said, "Who are you, my daughter? Why are you here alone and why are you weeping like that?"

"I am Sita, daughter of King Janak of Mithila and Queen of Rama, the ruler of Ayodhya, O Saint," said Sita. Saying so, she related her woeful tale to the Saint.



Hearing Sita's tale of woe, Saint Valmiki could not make out the reason of sending Sita to the forest by her husband Rama. So, he asked, "My daughter ! let me know the reason behind your expulsion."

"But I myself do not know, O fatherly saint. My husband's younger brother brought me here in a chariot and left me here when I was lying unconscious under the shock of being expelled for no reason," said Sita.

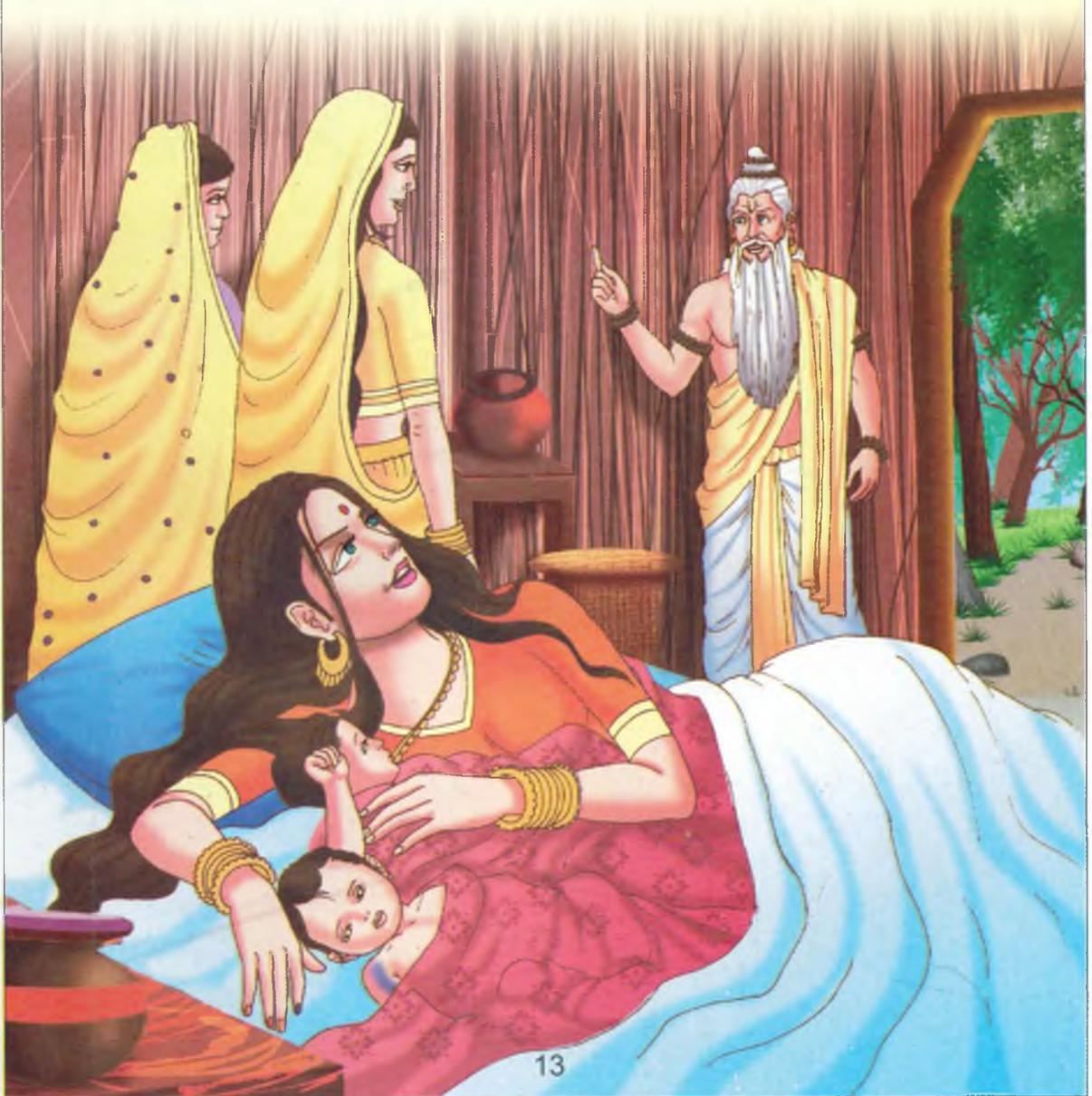
Then, the Saint retorted, "Your father, Janaka, has been my disciple. So, you are quite safe, my daughter. Shed all worry and sorrow. Have patience ; your husband shall come one day in person to take you. Come with me to my hermitage and stay there." The Saint gave Sita useful and consoling sermons and took her to his hermitage.



Sita made Saint Valmiki's hermitage her home. Sita resolved never to end her life, as she could not bear that the descendant of Lord Rama in her womb should perish.

That very night, Sita bore two sons. Hearing the news, Saint Valmiki came there and said to the women, "The one who has been born earlier, should be cleaned with 'grass' or 'Kush' while the other one should be cleaned with the remnant of the reaped crop or Lava."

So, the twin sons of Sita came to be named 'Kush' and 'Lava' respectively.



The twins began to grow up there at the hermitage. They called their mother—Vandevi (forest goddess). In due course, they began to get education from Saint Valmiki himself. Thus they began to grow up living in discipline and serving the Saint with profound devotion.

The Saint composed a song narrating Sita's woeful tale and made both her sons to memorise it.

The twins used to sing this song in a melodious voice, without knowing that this song was about the story of their own mother and the name—Rama—mentioned in the poem was of their own father. The song depicted the story right from Rama's swayamvara to the expulsion of Sita.



The Saint, now, started giving them education in the use of arms and weapons and the other tactics of warfare. Both the brothers became very expert in the use of bow and arrows. So, they grew up to be talented, courageous and fearless warriors. Saint Valmiki himself was a great archer. So, he trained them in the skill of archery to the exceptional extents.

Observing the mastery that the twins had acquired in the use of bows and arrows, the Saint's joy knew no bounds, indeed. On the one hand, he felt proud of them as his pupils and on the other, he felt delighted to think of the exploits that they were to do in the time to come. The Saint could foresee the coming events through his supernatural premonition.



One day, Rama accompanied by his Prime Minister, Sumanta, and his three brothers went to the hermitage of Saint Vasishtha. Bowing low before the saint, Rama said with folded hands, "Revered Preceptor ! I have done a number of yajnas, so to say. But my subjects are insisting on a horse-sacrifice yajna (ashwamedha)." "May your desire be duly fulfilled, Rama !" said the Saint. Saying so, the Saint said to Bharata, "My son ! go and start preparations for the horse-sacrifice yajna."

"I'm here to obey you, Sir," said Bharata. Saying so, Bharata, Lakshmana and Shatrughna left the hermitage. When the preparations for the yajna were over, Rama and Saint Vasishtha inspected them and they felt very pleased to see the arrangements that the three younger princes had made.



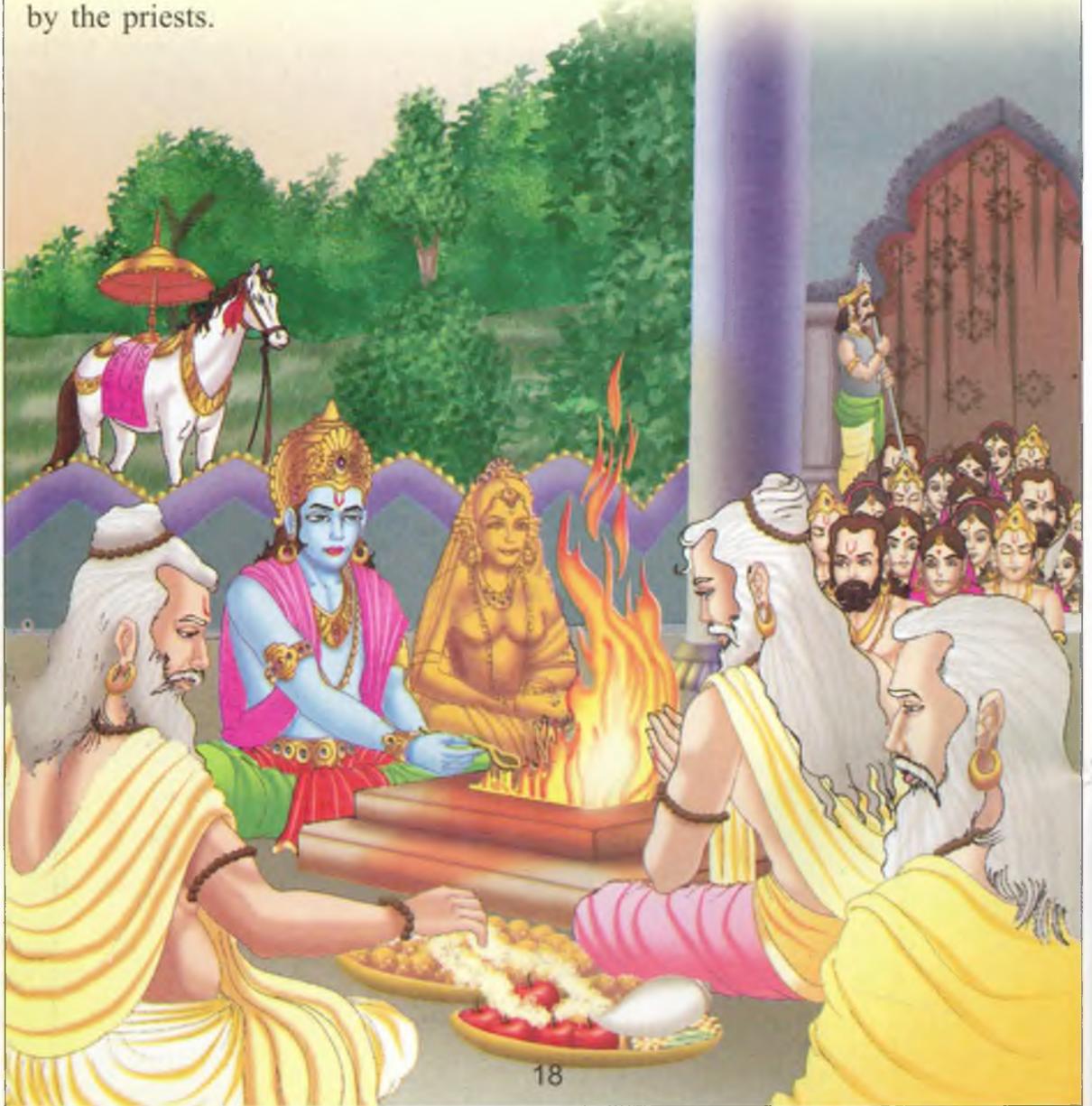
Now Rama summoned a number of messengers. They were sent to various Kings to inform them of the forthcoming 'yajna'. It was done in consultation with Saint Vasishtha.

Receiving the invitation, a number of Kings and Rulers arrived at Ayodhya to take part in the 'yajna'. They included Sugreeva, Vibhishana, Jambvant, Nala, Neela, Kuber and Varuna. About seven thousand hermits including Saint Vishwamitra also reached the site of the yajna. King Janaka also graced the occasion.



Directed by his Preceptor, Rama got prepared a gold image of his wife Sita because Saint Vasishtha had told him that no yajna is considered to be complete until and unless the wife sits on the left of the husband, *i.e.* the performer of the 'yajna'. Everybody who was present on the occasion praised the gold image of Sita.

Two thousand scholarly Brahmanas were deputed to recite the mantras. A beautiful white horse was profusely decorated and brought to the site of the performance. Thus the yajna was started in the month of magha (January) and Rama made offerings of yajna material to the sacred fire as instructed by the priests.



After the completion of the yajna, the horse was brought near the sacred fire and necessary worship was performed. Then, a 'tilak' was put on the fore-head of the horse. A declaration was also hung from its saddle :

“Rama, the Ruler of Ayodhya, claims superiority to all the Kings. Any one who likes to defy this claim, should catch the horse and invite a war from the master of the horse. If the claim is acceptable, a yearly tribute should be sent to Rama.”

Then, taking out an invincible arrow from his quiver, Rama handed it across to Shatrughna and said, “Brother ! accost this horse and return after winning all the Kings.”

“I'll do the needful, brother,” said Shatrughna. Saying so, Shatrughna took the arrow.



Deputed for the over-all victory, Shatrughna proceeded on his mission along with the yajna-horse and a strong contingent of soldiers with him. The force included four thousand horses, two thousand chariots and elephants, a large number of campers, entertainers and dancers.

The Camp-sites for the military journey were ear-marked before hand so that due arrangement for camping could be made well in time at every camp-site. Shatrughna was given special instructions not to trouble anybody anywhere during the journey until and unless somebody came forward with defiance of the declaration hung from the saddle of the yajna-horse.



The first encounter took place between Rama's force and Lavnasur, a very powerful Demon Chief, who had defeated gods, Nagas and a number of Kings of his area.

Shatrughna besieged the Capital of Lavnasur who came out with a large army to face Shatrughna. A fierce battle followed. Seeing Lavnasur killing the Koshala soldiers, Shatrughna shot Rama's invincible arrow at him and he fell down dead on the ground. As a result, his soldiers ran away and victorious Shatrughna proceeded forward. The news of Lavnasur's defeat and death broke the pride of other headstrong rulers and all of them accepted the over-lordship of Rama without taking courage to any sort of opposition. Shatrughna went on marching forward extending Rama's sway on every region he passed through.



Now Shatrughna entered a dense forest. The white horse was being followed by Rama's army under Shatrughna. It was the very forest where Saint Valmiki had his hermitage and where Kush and Lava lived-along with their mother.

When the twin brothers saw the white horse, they liked it very much. Lava said to his brother, "Kush ! look at that horse. How fine it is ! I feel like catching it and keeping it for our daily rides."

"All right ; let us catch it." Saying so, Kush advanced to catch the horse. Lava followed him closely too. Both the brothers caught the horse and tied it to a nearby tree. Then, they read the declaration hanging from its saddle and burst into peals of laughter.



In a short time, Rama's soldiers came there searching for the horse. Seeing it tied to a tree, they flew into a rage but, they did not express their anger in any way. One of the soldiers said, "Boys ! this horse is not meant for you. Leave it ; it is ours."

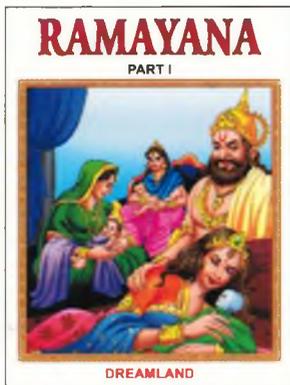
Kush retorted, "Why after all ? Read the declaration. If you want the horse, be ready for a battle. Win us and take away the horse. If you don't have the guts to do that, rush back to your King." The soldiers advised them, "Boys ! you are still very young. To exchange arms with you is not proper for us. So, be wise and return the horse. It is in your interest." "Don't you feel ashamed to beg ? Don't you feel, it is disgraceful for a warrior to beg like that ?" retorted Kush.



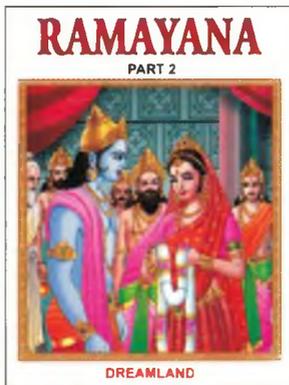
Finding the twins stubbornly defiant, the soldiers were beside themselves with rage. They advanced towards them with a view to teaching them a lesson.

Seeing this, Lava shot arrows that pierced the bodies of many of them and they fell down. Others ran in fear to Shatrughna who asked them in surprise, "Why do you look so frightened ? What has happened ? Where is the horse ?" "Two jungle boys have caught the horse and tied it to a tree, Sir. They have wounded many of our soldiers with their arrows. We have run back to inform you that these boys seem to be very brave warriors," replied the soldiers. "Come on with me. Let me see those boys. I would like to see how brave they are." Saying so, Shatrughna set out to the place where the horse was tied.

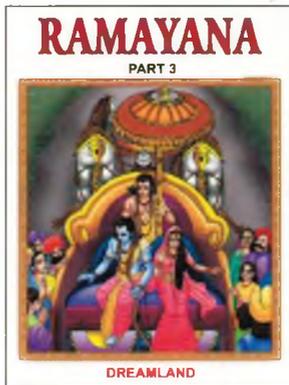




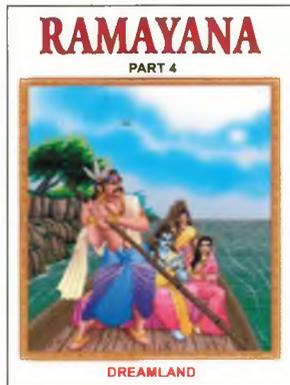
Childhood Episode-I



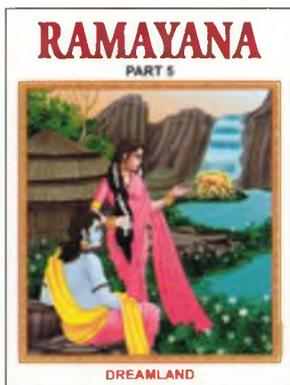
Childhood Episode-II



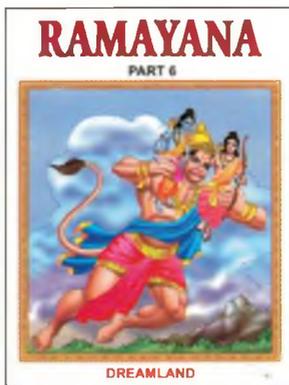
Ayodhya Episode-I



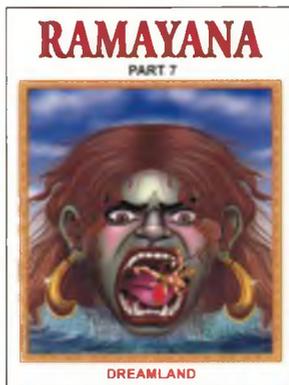
Ayodhya Episode-II



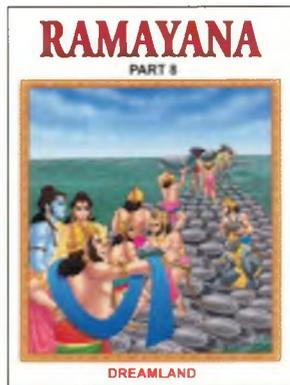
Forest Episode



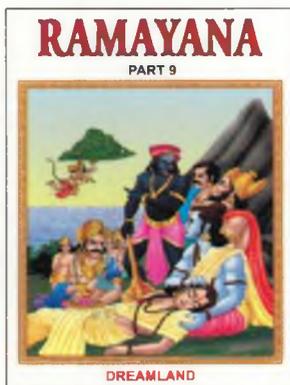
Kishkindha Episode



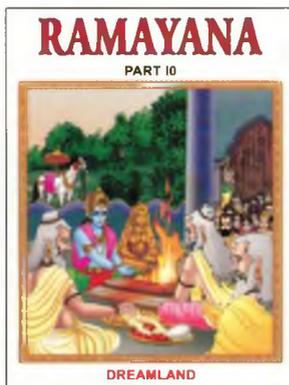
Fascinating Episode



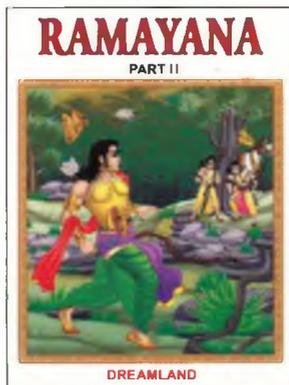
Battle Episode-I



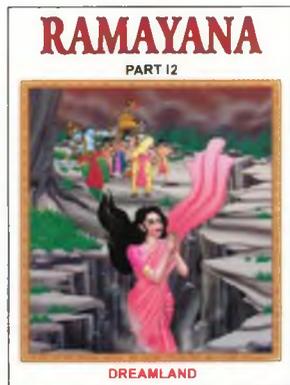
Battle Episode-II



Uttara Episode



Lava-Kusha Episode-I



Lava-Kusha Episode-II



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