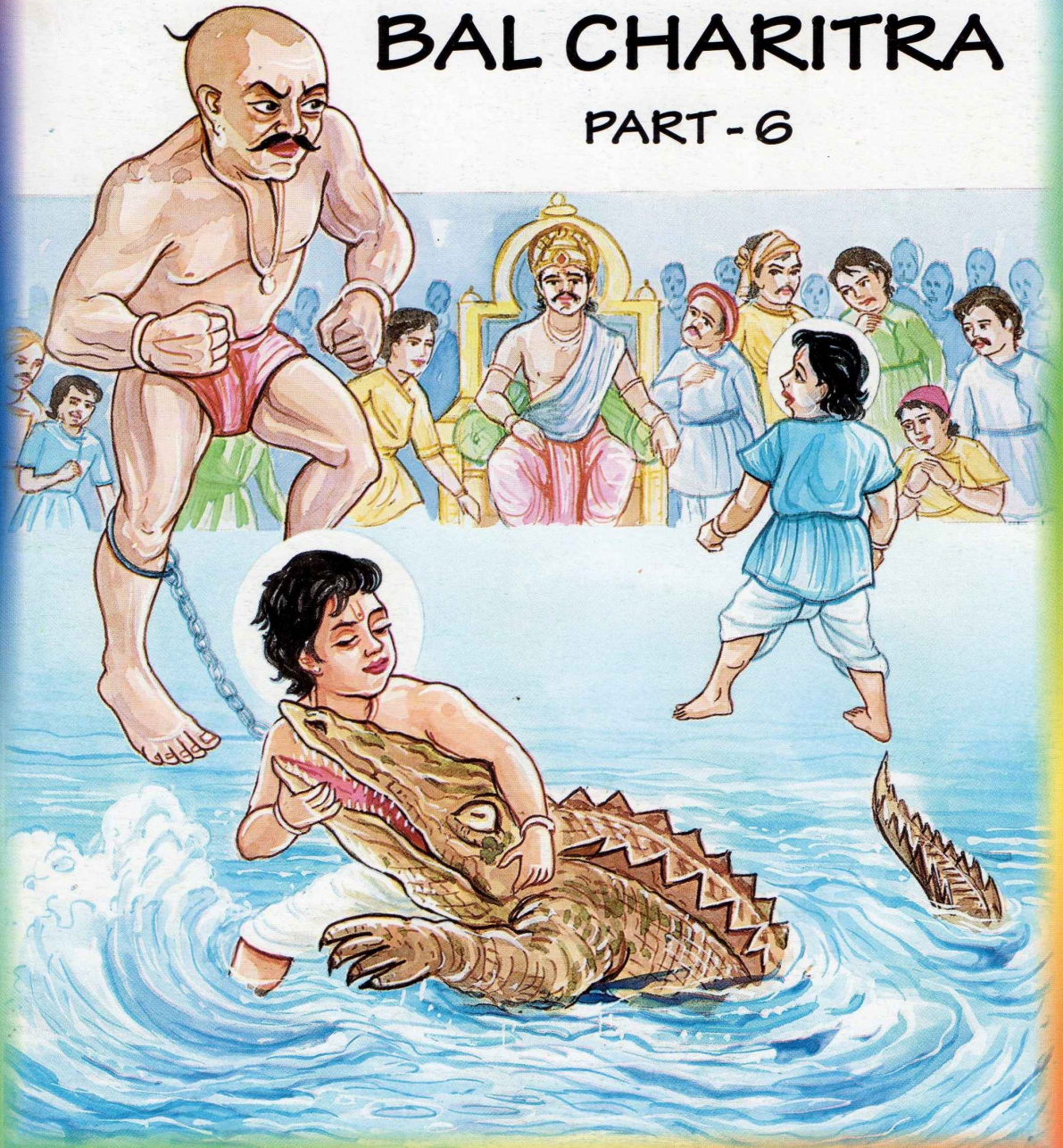
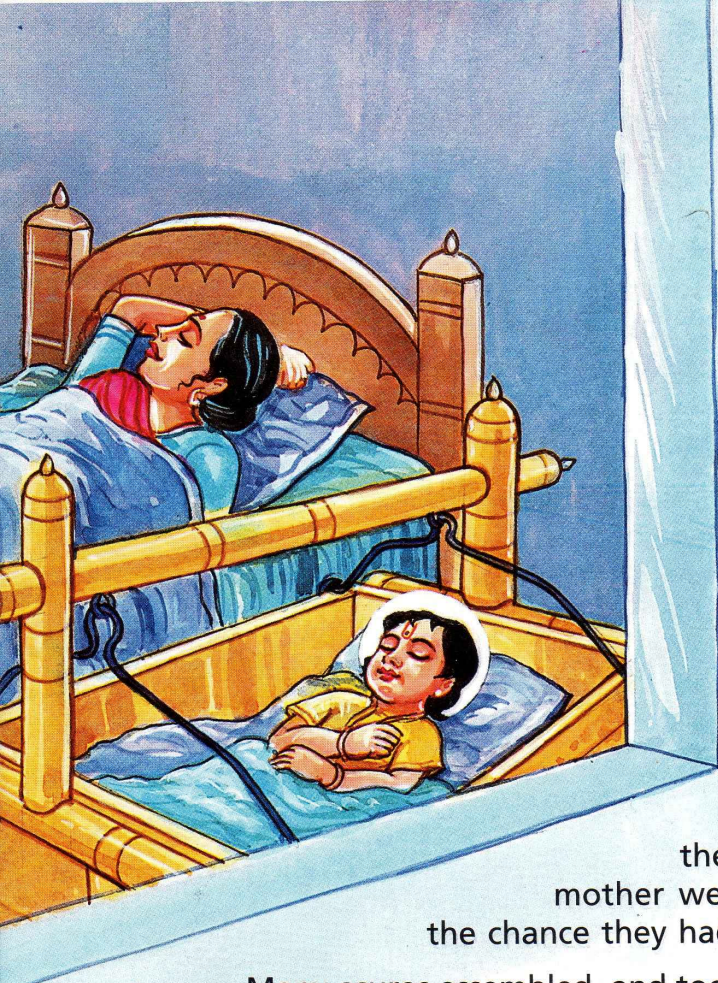


|| Shree Swaminarayano Vijaytetram ||

**SHREE**  
**GHANASHYAM**  
**BAL CHARITRA**  
**PART - 6**





## THE DEMON CAMP

One day, Dharmadev and Rampratap had gone to market with some friends to buy clothes. Bhaktimata and Ghanashyam were alone in the house. Ghanashyam was asleep in his cradle, and Bhaktimata was taking rest.

Now, you know that evil always is opposed to goodness. Ghanashyam was so pure and good, and so all evil beings hated him and wanted to kill him. The evil asura demons were always watching him, waiting for their chance. And so, when

they saw that Ghanashyam and his mother were alone, they decided this was the chance they had waited for.

Many asuras assembled, and took the form of soldiers. Then they marched to Chappaiya, with horses and elephants, and many weapons. When they reached near to Dharmadev's house, they set up camp in a field. Tying up their elephants and horses, they pitched their tents in the field. It looked such a wonderful sight. Many people from the village saw them, thinking that some great king must have come on pilgrimage to Ayodhya.

Two of the asuras then went to Dharmadev's house to snatch the baby Ghanashyam away.

Meanwhile some of the asuras began to play wrestling



games, while others were singing loud songs. It was such a sight to see, and by that time many village people had gathered round to watch them.

Meanwhile, back in the house, the two evil asuras lifted Ghanashyam easily from his cradle, being careful not to waken Bhaktimata. The little lord Ghanashyam did not even stir, and slept peacefully. But when the asuras returned to the field with the sleeping child, they were surprised to see so many people there. "How can we kill him with so many people watching?" they thought.

So the evil asuras cast a magic spell. Suddenly the skies turned dark. It was like the blackest night. Then arrows began to rain down out of the sky! The village people panicked, and ran for their lives, rushing back to their homes.

At last the asuras had their chance. They began to dance around the sleeping Ghanashyam, whooping and yelling and chanting. "Kill him!





Kill him! Kill him!” they yelled. And “Let’s eat him up!” Their eyes were red, and their weapons glinted in the darkness. It was a terrible sight to behold.

Just at that moment, little Ghanashyam opened his eyes. There was no fear at all in him. He gazed at the horrible looking asuras, not with fear or anger, but with love. But evil cannot bear the purity of love. To the asuras, Ghanashyam’s looks were like rays of burning light. As Ghanashyam gazed on them with his innocent eyes, the asuras began to burn with heat. They began to writhe in pain, yelling and shrieking, smoke pouring from their clothes. Then, one by one, they burst into flames and fell to the ground. Soon there were only little piles of ash, smoldering on the earth.

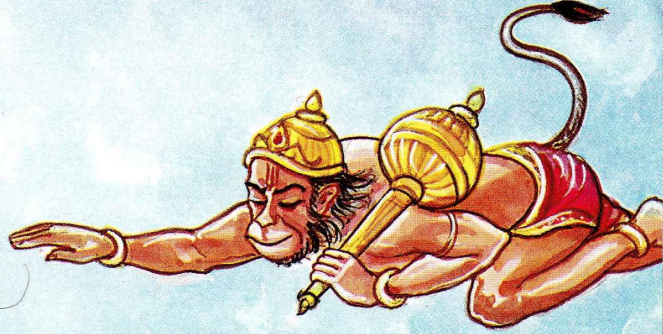


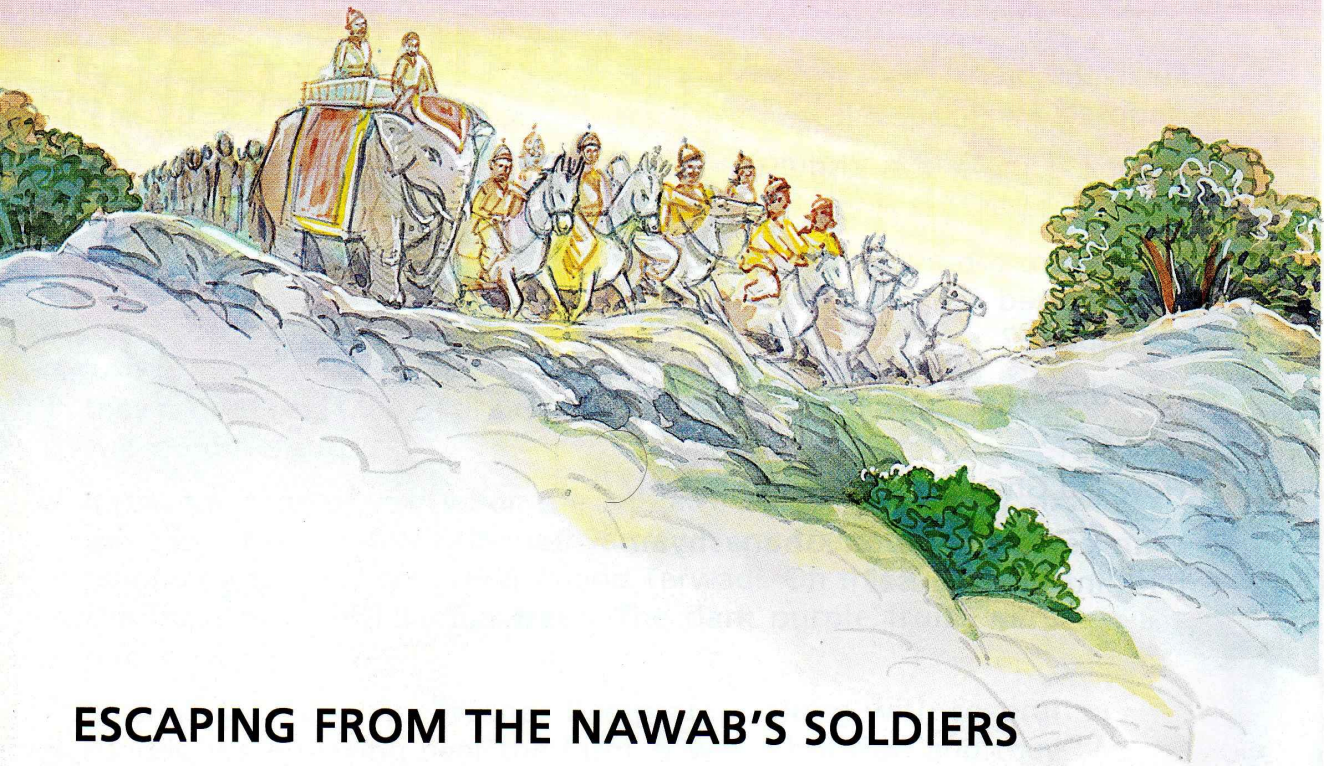
Up in the skies, Hanuman heard the shrieks of the asuras. He rushed down to earth to protect the little lord Ghanashyam. But it was all over. So he gently picked up the little child and carried him back to the house. As he entered, Bhaktimata awoke. When Hanuman told her what had happened, she could hardly believe him.

So Hanuman took her outside and showed her the field. There she saw the proof. All over the field were the little piles of smoldering ash....all that remained of the evil asuras.

## STUDY:

1. Fill in the blank. "Evil is always opposed to \_\_\_\_\_."
2. What did the asuras disguise themselves as?
3. What were the asuras doing while they waited for Ghanashyam to be kidnapped?
4. How did the asuras make the villagers go away?
5. How did Ghanashyam kill the asuras?
6. Who came and took Ghanashyam back into the house?





## ESCAPING FROM THE NAWAB'S SOLDIERS

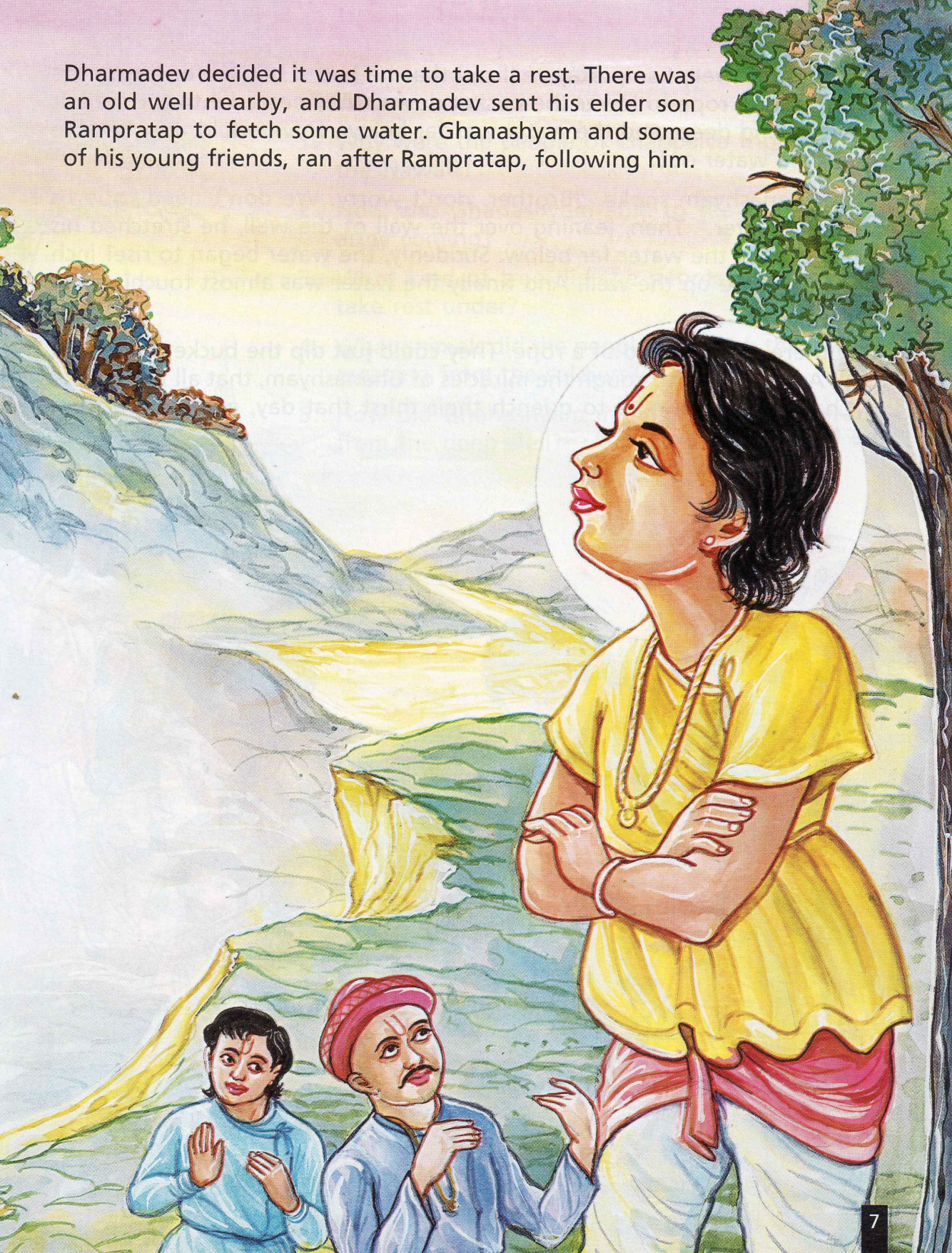
There was a cruel Nawab in the days when Ghanashyam was a little boy. He used to send his soldiers out to the villages, terrorizing the people, stealing their cattle and kidnapping the children. Everyone was afraid of him.

One day, Ghanashyam's grandfather had a feeling that the soldiers of the Nawab were coming to the village. He asked his son to climb a tree, to see. Ghanashyam was standing nearby. Suddenly he began to grow, and grow. Getting taller and taller, soon he was higher than the tree. Being so tall, he was able to see far into the distance. There over in the north, far away, he could see the soldiers heading for the village, their horses kicking up clouds of dust.

In a flash, Ghanashyam became his normal size, and told the family what he had seen. Quickly they told the rest of the villagers, and then set about gathering up their things from the house, and rounding up all the cattle. Then the whole family, with all their cows and buffaloes, and all the other people of Chappaiya, set off for the village of Nabpur, to escape the Nawab's soldiers.

They had been walking for a long time, and the sun was very hot on their heads. Everyone was tired and thirsty. Coming to a big banyan tree,

Dharmadev decided it was time to take a rest. There was an old well nearby, and Dharmadev sent his elder son Rampratap to fetch some water. Ghanashyam and some of his young friends, ran after Rampratap, following him.

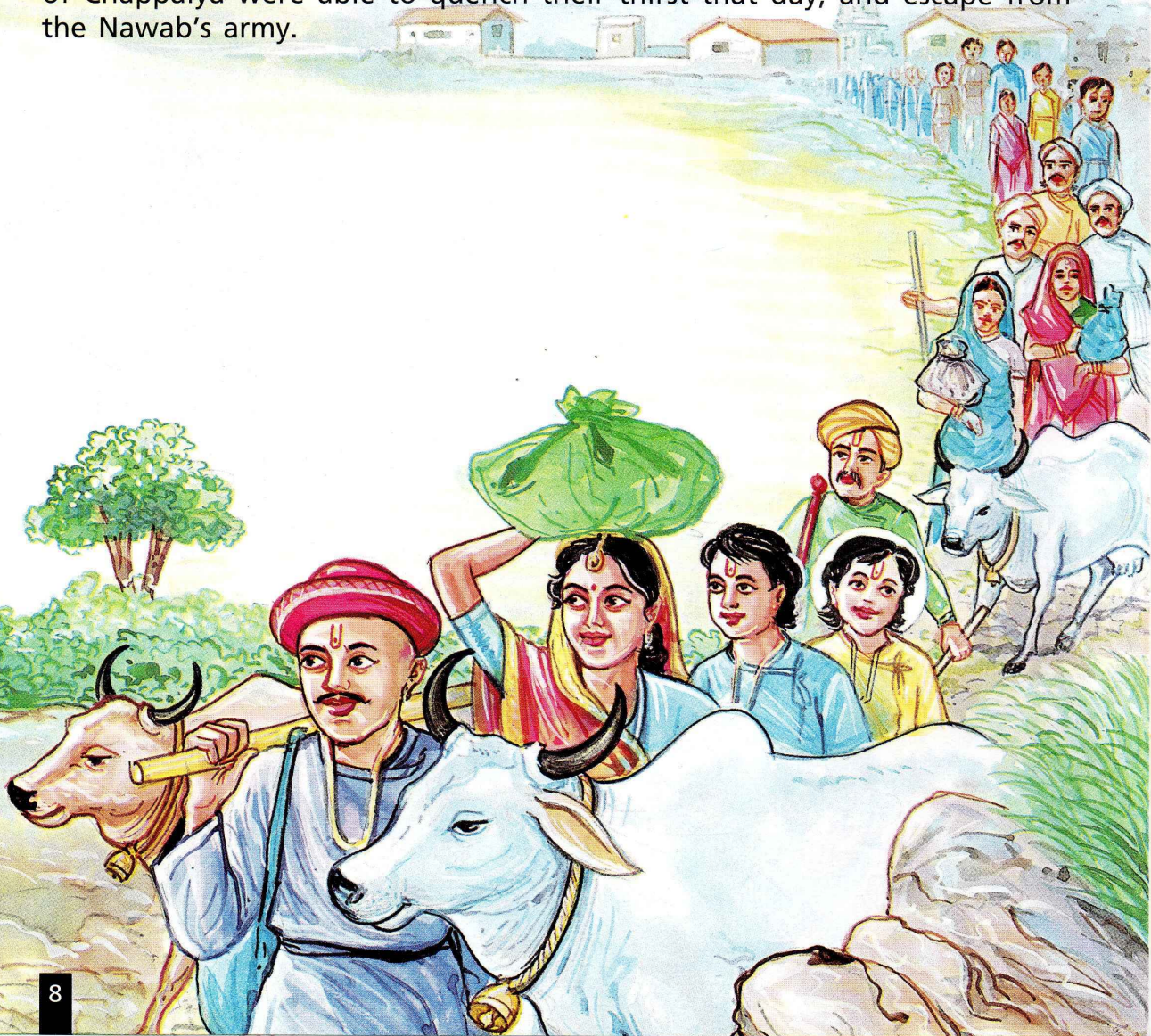




Reaching the well, Rampratap realized that he had a bucket for lifting the water, but no rope to lower the bucket down. They peered into the well. It was dark and deep, and the water was far below. How would they be able to get the water out?

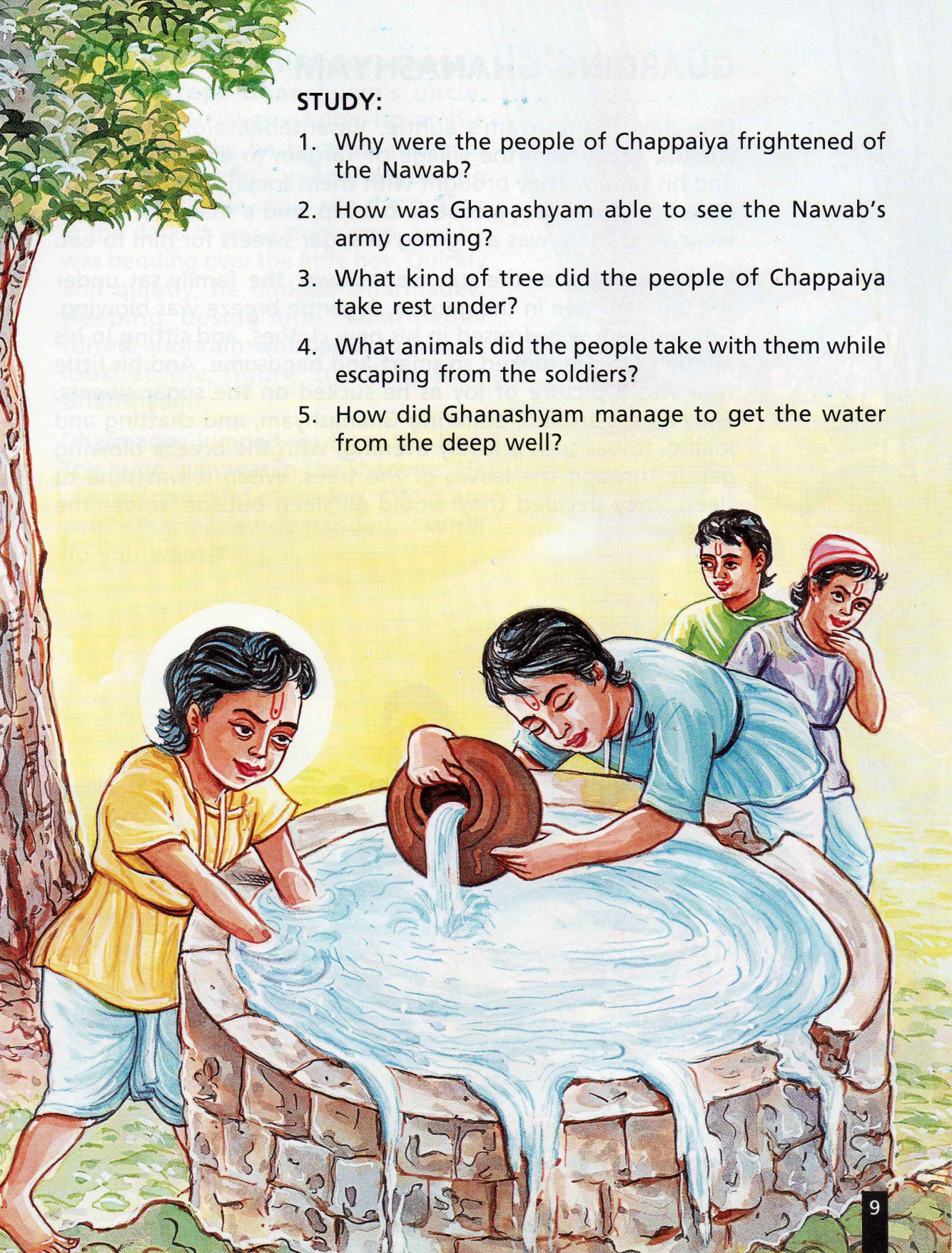
Then Ghanashyam spoke. "Brother, don't worry. We don't need rope to draw the water." Then, leaning over the wall of the well, he stretched his hands toward the water far below. Suddenly, the water began to rise! Inch by inch it came up the well. And finally the water was almost touching the top!

Now there was no need of a rope. They could just dip the bucket in and fill it up. And so it was, through the miracles of Ghanashyam, that all the people of Chappaiya were able to quench their thirst that day, and escape from the Nawab's army.



### STUDY:

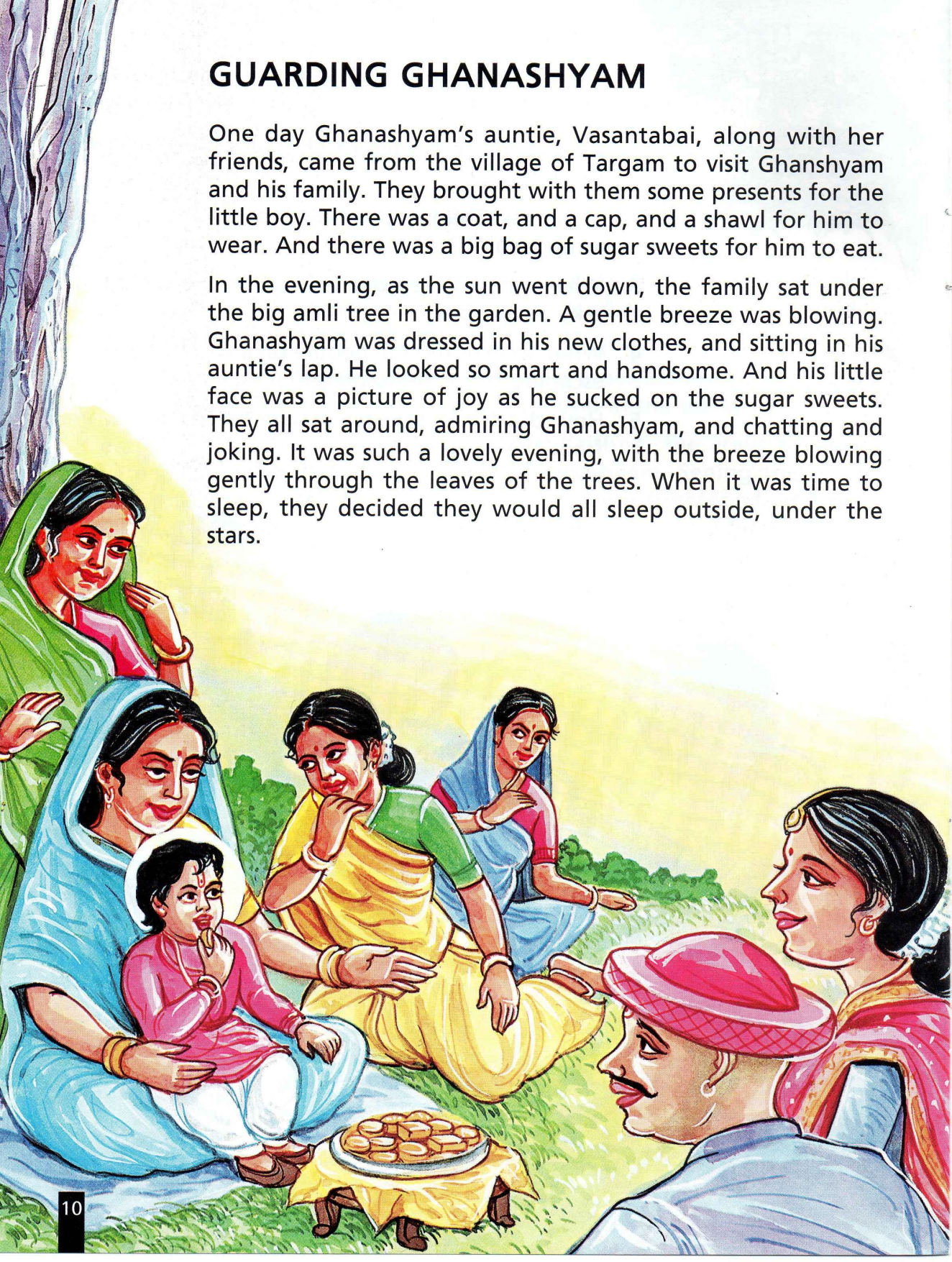
1. Why were the people of Chappaiya frightened of the Nawab?
2. How was Ghanashyam able to see the Nawab's army coming?
3. What kind of tree did the people of Chappaiya take rest under?
4. What animals did the people take with them while escaping from the soldiers?
5. How did Ghanashyam manage to get the water from the deep well?



## GUARDING GHANASHYAM

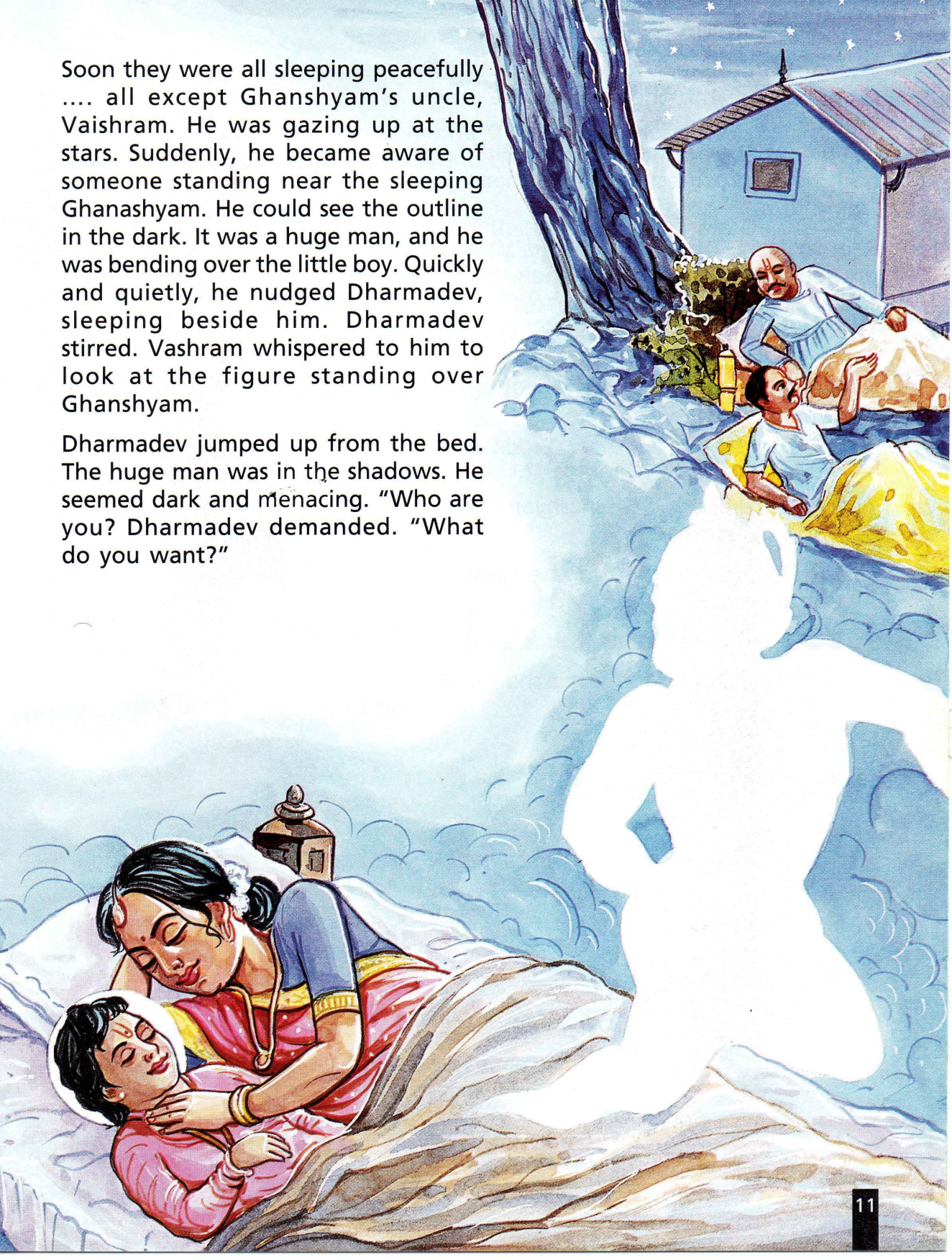
One day Ghanashyam's auntie, Vasantabai, along with her friends, came from the village of Targam to visit Ghanashyam and his family. They brought with them some presents for the little boy. There was a coat, and a cap, and a shawl for him to wear. And there was a big bag of sugar sweets for him to eat.

In the evening, as the sun went down, the family sat under the big amli tree in the garden. A gentle breeze was blowing. Ghanashyam was dressed in his new clothes, and sitting in his auntie's lap. He looked so smart and handsome. And his little face was a picture of joy as he sucked on the sugar sweets. They all sat around, admiring Ghanashyam, and chatting and joking. It was such a lovely evening, with the breeze blowing gently through the leaves of the trees. When it was time to sleep, they decided they would all sleep outside, under the stars.



Soon they were all sleeping peacefully .... all except Ghanshyam's uncle, Vaishram. He was gazing up at the stars. Suddenly, he became aware of someone standing near the sleeping Ghanshyam. He could see the outline in the dark. It was a huge man, and he was bending over the little boy. Quickly and quietly, he nudged Dharmadev, sleeping beside him. Dharmadev stirred. Vaishram whispered to him to look at the figure standing over Ghanshyam.

Dharmadev jumped up from the bed. The huge man was in the shadows. He seemed dark and menacing. "Who are you? Dharmadev demanded. "What do you want?"



Then the figure stepped forward, out of the shadows and into the light of the moon. Then it was clear who he was. It was lord Hanuman! "I am Hanuman." he said, "And I am here to protect my Lord Ghanashyam from harm."

Seeing him, Dharmadev and Vashram praised the monkey king. Then, blessing them, Hanuman rose up into the skies. There, with the moon and stars, he continued to watch over the young Ghanashyam throughout the night.

### STUDY:

1. What presents did Ghanashyam's auntie bring for him?
2. What kind of tree did the family sit under?
3. Do you know what its fruit is used for?
4. Who was the figure in the shadows?



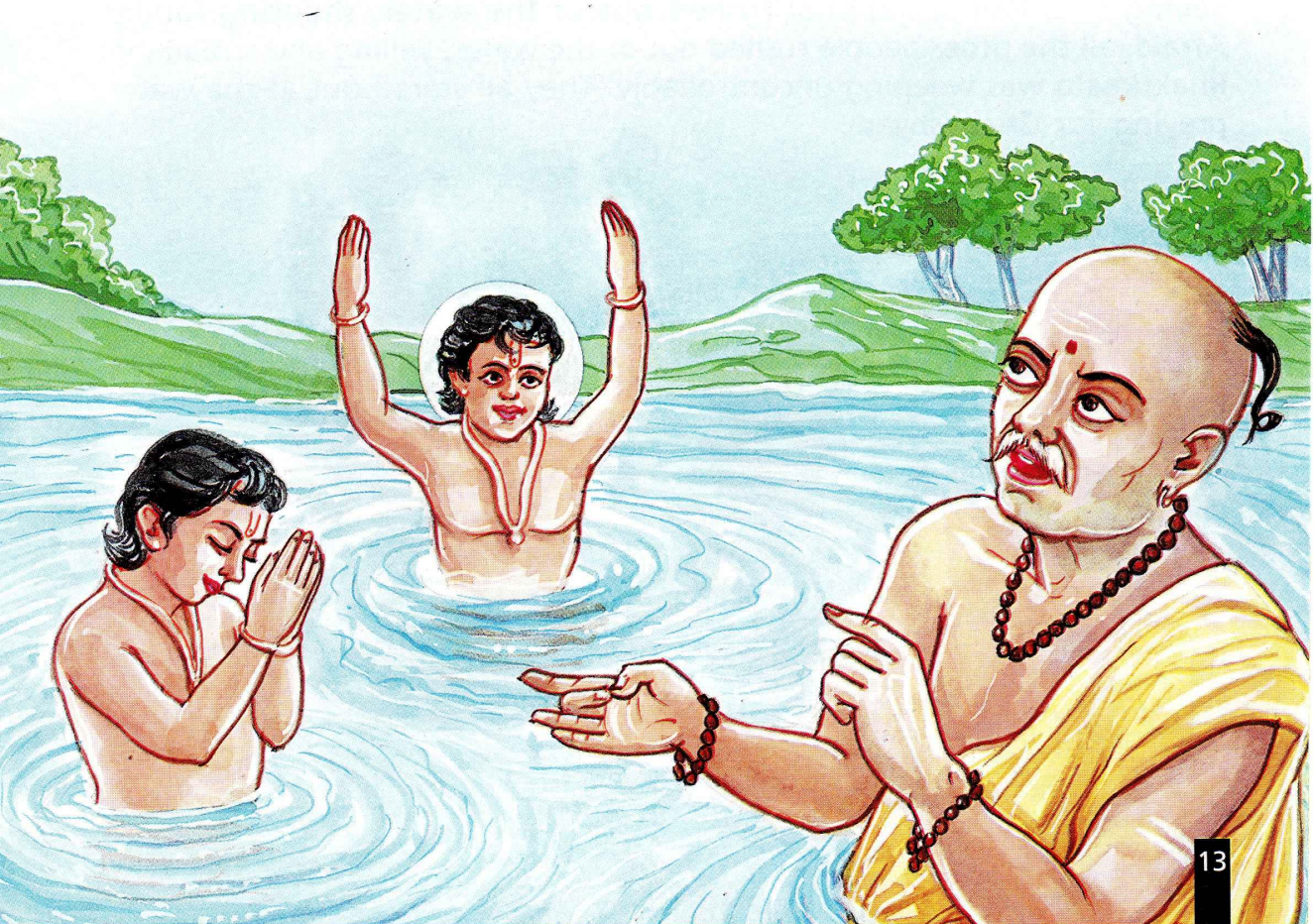
# THE CROCODILE ASURA

The evil demon asuras were always trying to do harm to Ghanashyam. Sometimes they would take the form of other beings, or even animals, to try to catch and kill him.

It was Somvati Amavasaya, the day of the night of no moon. On this day it is the custom to take a ritual bath in the river.

Ghanashyam and his family had gone to the river Saryu, along with a brahmin priest. There were many other people at the river, and there was a happy festival atmosphere.

Ghanashyam and Ramprataphbai took off their clothes, and leaving them with the brahmin, they entered the water. When the water was above his waist, Ghanashyam raised his hands above his head, and ducked down under the water.





At that moment, the evil asura, Gayadutt, was lurking under the water in the form of a huge crocodile, waiting for his chance. As he saw the child Ghanashyam go under the water, he rushed forward and seized him! Picking him up in his jaws, he carried Ghanashyam away into the deep waters, and then disappeared under the surface with him.

Seeing this, Rampratapbhai rushed out of the water, shouting loudly. Afraid, all the other people rushed out of the water, yelling and screaming. Bhaktimata was weeping uncontrollably. They all stared out at the water, praying for Ghanashyam.



Just then the crocodile appeared above the surface, far out in the deep water. Ghanashyam was riding on his back! Holding his jaw in one hand, he was beating the crocodile with the other, driving him towards the shore! It was a sight to see the little boy controlling the huge crocodile.

As they neared the shore, Rampratapbhai took the form of Sheshnarayan, and leaped into the water. Grabbing the crocodile, he began to wrestle with it. Then in a flash, the crocodile turned back to the form of Gayadutt the asura. He was a giant of a man. His face was fearsome to look at. He had deep dark eyes, a huge jutting chin, and his nostrils were like huge deep caves. He had the strength of ten men. But strong as he was, he was no match for Ghanashyam and Rampratap. They continued to wrestle with him, beating and kicking him. Blow after blow they rained on the evil asura. Then Rampratapbhai, as Sheshnarayan, lifted the giant above his head and smashed him down on the shore of the lake.





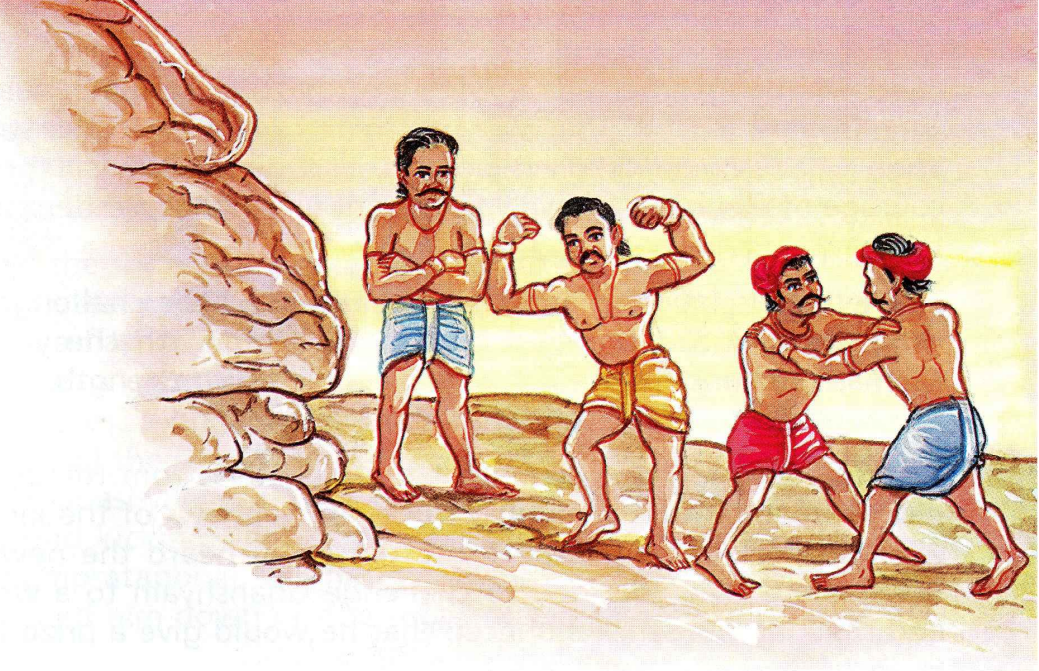


The earth shook for a moment, and the asura lay there dead.

Rampratapbhai. Touching their feet, they praised them for getting rid of the evil Gayadutt asura. And so it was that the fame of Ghanashyam and Rampratap spread far and wide.

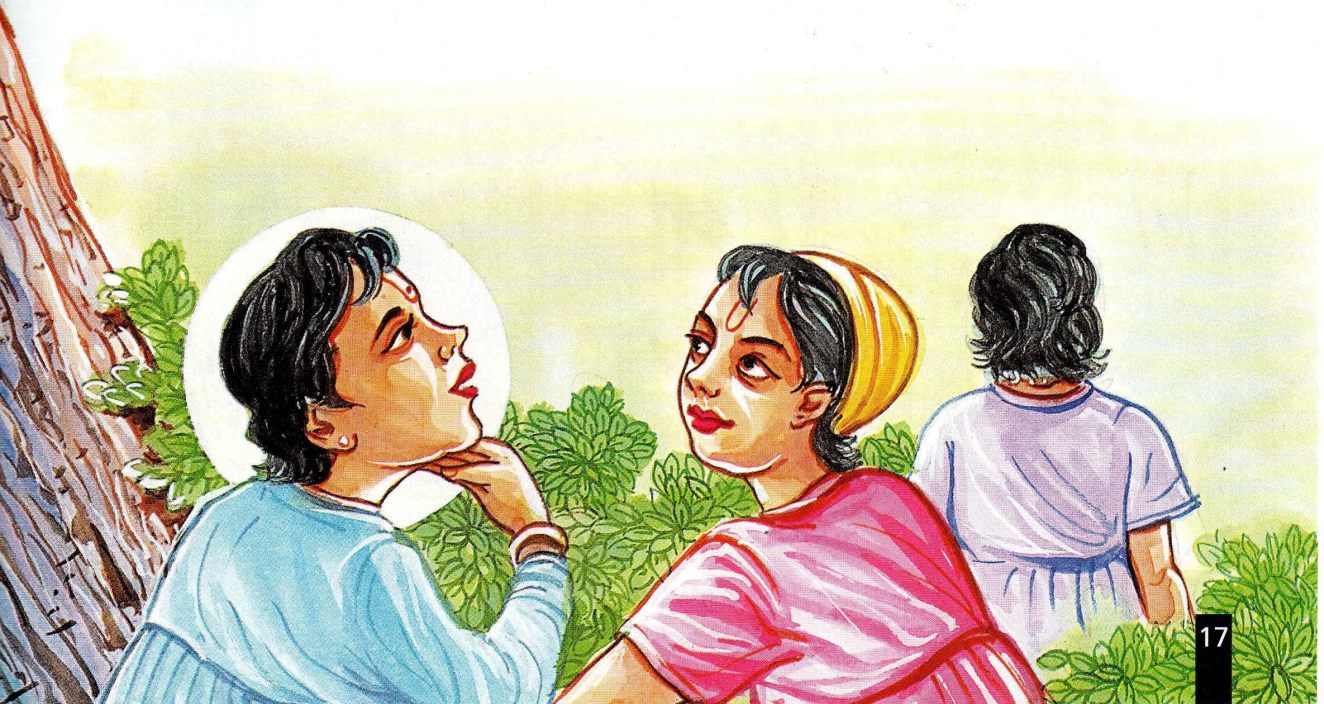
### STUDY:

1. What is Somvati Amavasaya?
2. What form did the asura Gayadutt take to capture Ghanashyam?
3. What form did Rampratap take to rescue Ghanashyam from the crocodile
4. What was the name of the river where they were all taking bath?



## THE WRESTLING MATCH

One day, when Ghanashyam was a young boy, he was playing with his friends on the bank of the river, at Ramghat, near Ayodhya. At that time, a group of famous wrestlers had come from Nepal. They were also on the edge of the river, practising their wrestling. Ghanashyam and his friends watched them, admiring their rippling muscles and their strength. Then Ghanashyam had an idea.



“Let’s challenge them to a wrestling match!” said Ghanashyam. But his friends were fearful. They were so small compared to the strong wrestlers. Then Ghanashyam used his powers, and gave them all the strength and courage of elephants. Bravely they went up to the wrestlers, and challenged them.

The wrestlers laughed at them, but accepted the challenge. Confidently, they stepped forward and began wrestling with the young boys. But Ghanashyam and his friends were filled with such strength, that they dashed the wrestlers to the ground in no time at all.

Many people saw this defeat of the wrestlers from Nepal, and soon the news spread all over Ayodhya. The three nephews of the king of Ayodhya, who themselves were expert wrestlers, also heard the news and became very jealous. They decided to challenge Ghanashyam to a wrestling match, and the king himself announced that he would give a prize to the winner.



Soon the day of the wrestling match arrived. Hundreds of people were gathered around, and the king was sitting on his throne in front of the wrestling space. There was great excitement in the air.

Ghanashyam stepped forward. Then into the circle stepped Bhimsang. He was the strongest and biggest of the three nephews. He looked fearsome, and towered over the young Ghanashyam. He had strong iron chains fixed around his ankles. Stepping towards the crowd, he issued a challenge to



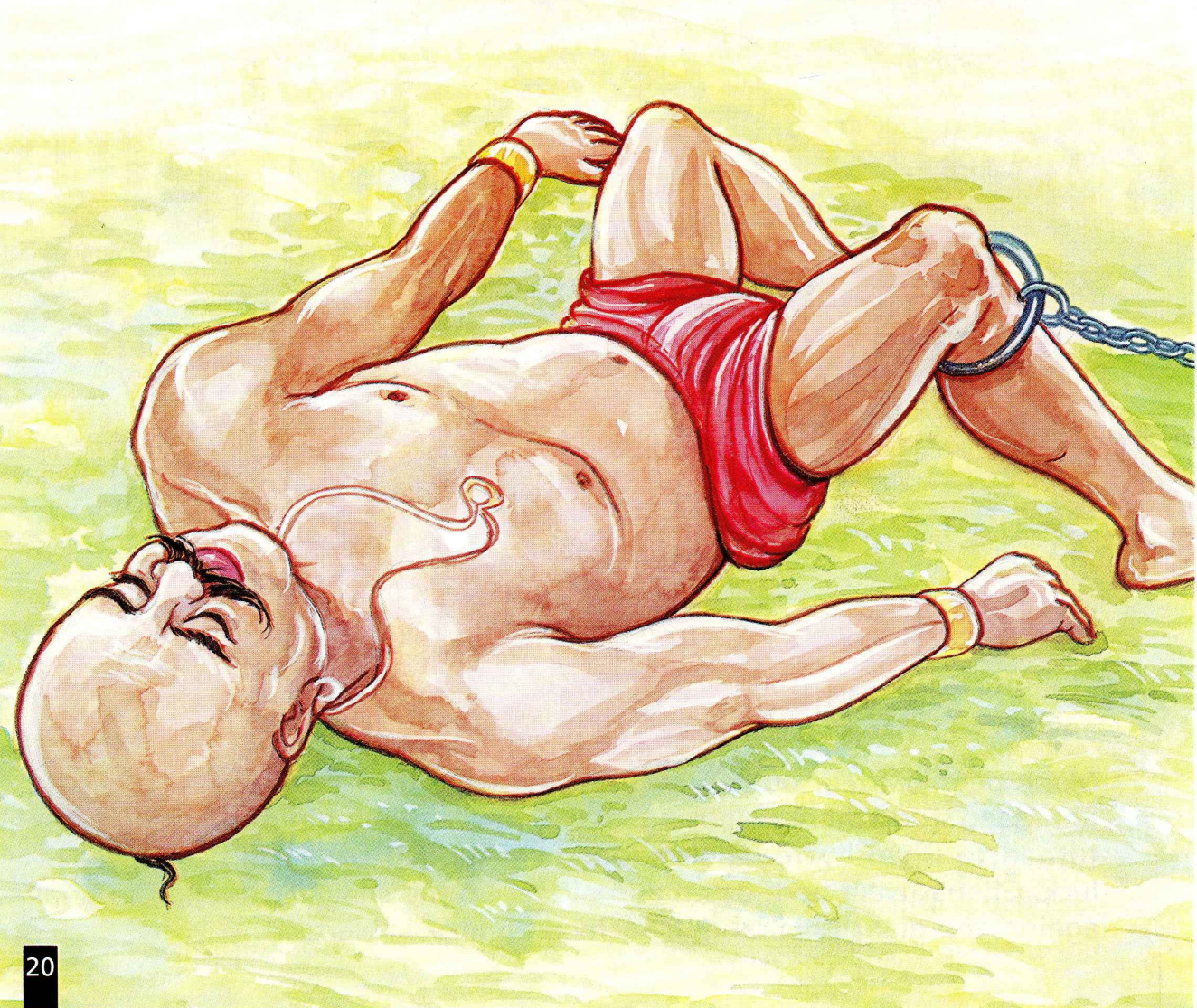
anyone to try to pull him down by the chains.

Many people tried, but no matter how hard they pulled on the chains, Bhimsang stood there unmoving, as strong as a mountain. Then the wrestler turned to Ghanashyam laughing, and challenged the little boy to try his luck. Ghanashyam bent down and picked up the chain. He looked so small against the giant Bhimsang. It seemed an impossible task.

Ghanashyam just smiled at the giant wrestler. The strength of God is more than that of a thousand elephants. For a moment he paused with the iron chain in his hands. Then he gave a sudden pull on the chain.... and Bhimsang came crashing to the ground! As he fell, the ground shook, and the iron chain broke into many pieces. The crowd cheered wildly to see the proud wrestler humbled.

Bhimsang looked shocked and shamed. He couldn't believe what had happened. Then Ghanashyam picked up another iron chain, and fixing it around his ankles he challenged Bhimsang to try to topple him.

Bhimsang growled angrily. He rushed to the boy, and grabbing the chain he gave a mighty tug. But Ghanashyam was unmoved! He stood there, firm as a rock! Bhimsang now became red with rage. Summoning up all his strength, he gave one more mighty pull. Suddenly, the chain snapped, and Bhimsang was flung against a tree and broke his arm!



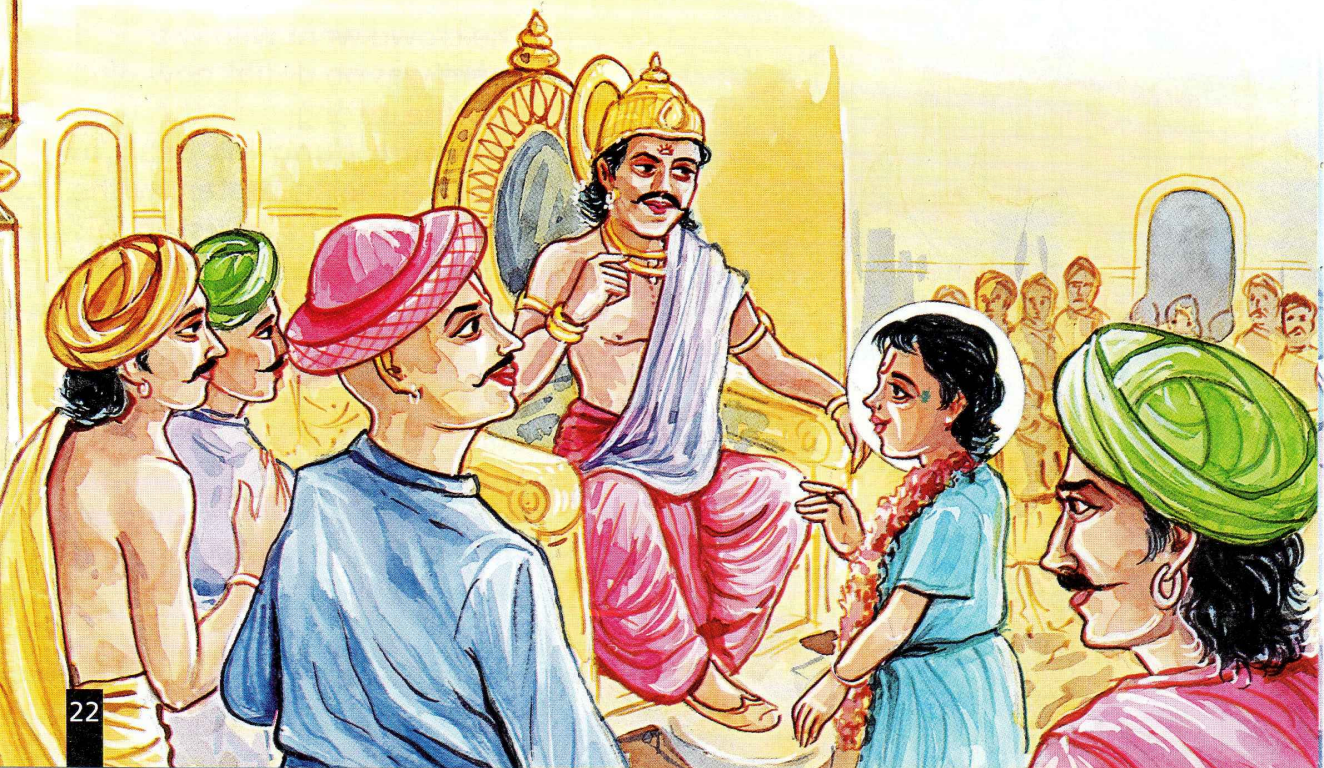


The crowd went wild with joy! There was no doubt now who was the stronger of the two. Bhimsang hung his head in shame at being beaten by the little boy, and nursing his broken arm, he left the ring.

Ghanashyam smiled happily. Stepping forward, the king garlanded him with flowers and presented him with a fine shawl, and Ghanashyam turned toward the crowd as they clapped and cheered and praised him.

## STUDY:

1. Where were the wrestlers from who fought with Ghanashyam and his friends?
2. Can you find it on the map?
3. What was the name of the strongest of the king's nephews?
4. Complete the sentence, " God is stronger than a thousand \_\_\_\_\_".
5. Describe in your own words how Ghanashyam beat Bhimsang.
6. What did the king give Ghanashyam as a prize?

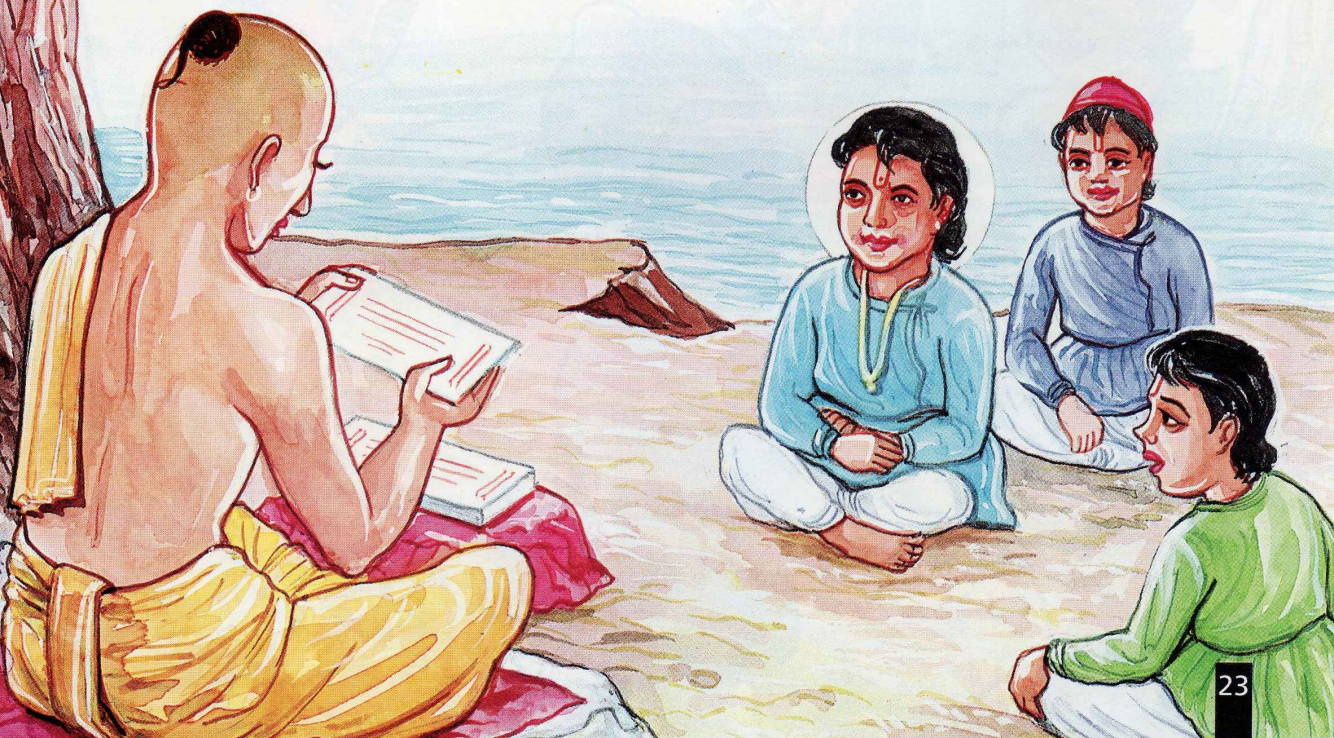




## THE KHAMPA TALAVADI

Near to where Ghanashyam lived there was a pond. On the banks of the pond lived a wise and holy man called Haridas. All day he would sit there, meditating or reading the Ramayana. Often Ghanashyam would visit there with his friends, and they would sit with Haridas while he read them stories from the Ramayana.

On one such visit to the pond, the boys were enchanted to see that all the ground was covered with flower blossoms that had fallen from the trees. It was like a beautiful carpet of flowers. The blossoms of Kadamb and Kevda let off a beautiful scent, filling the whole air with fragrance.



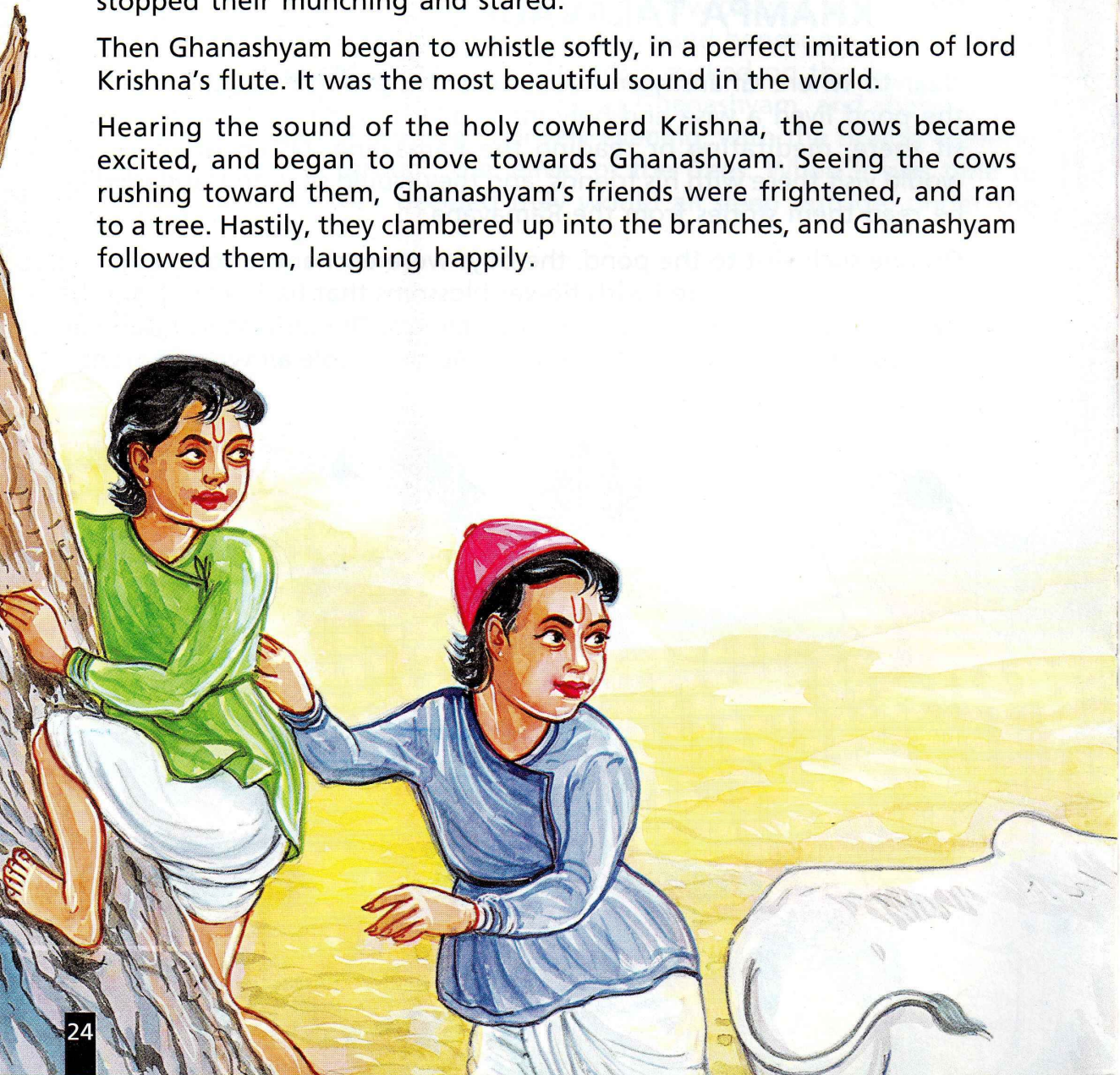


Happily the boys began to run and dance on the fragrant carpet of flowers. Then they began to gather the blossoms and thread them together into garlands. When they had finished, the boys began to decorate young Ghanashyam with the strings of flowers. They tied them round his ankles and wrists, and strung them round his neck. Ghanashyam stood there smiling. He struck a pose, looking exactly like lord Krishna.

So beautiful he looked, that the sage Haridas looked up from his book, entranced by the vision. Even the cows standing in a nearby field, stopped their munching and stared.

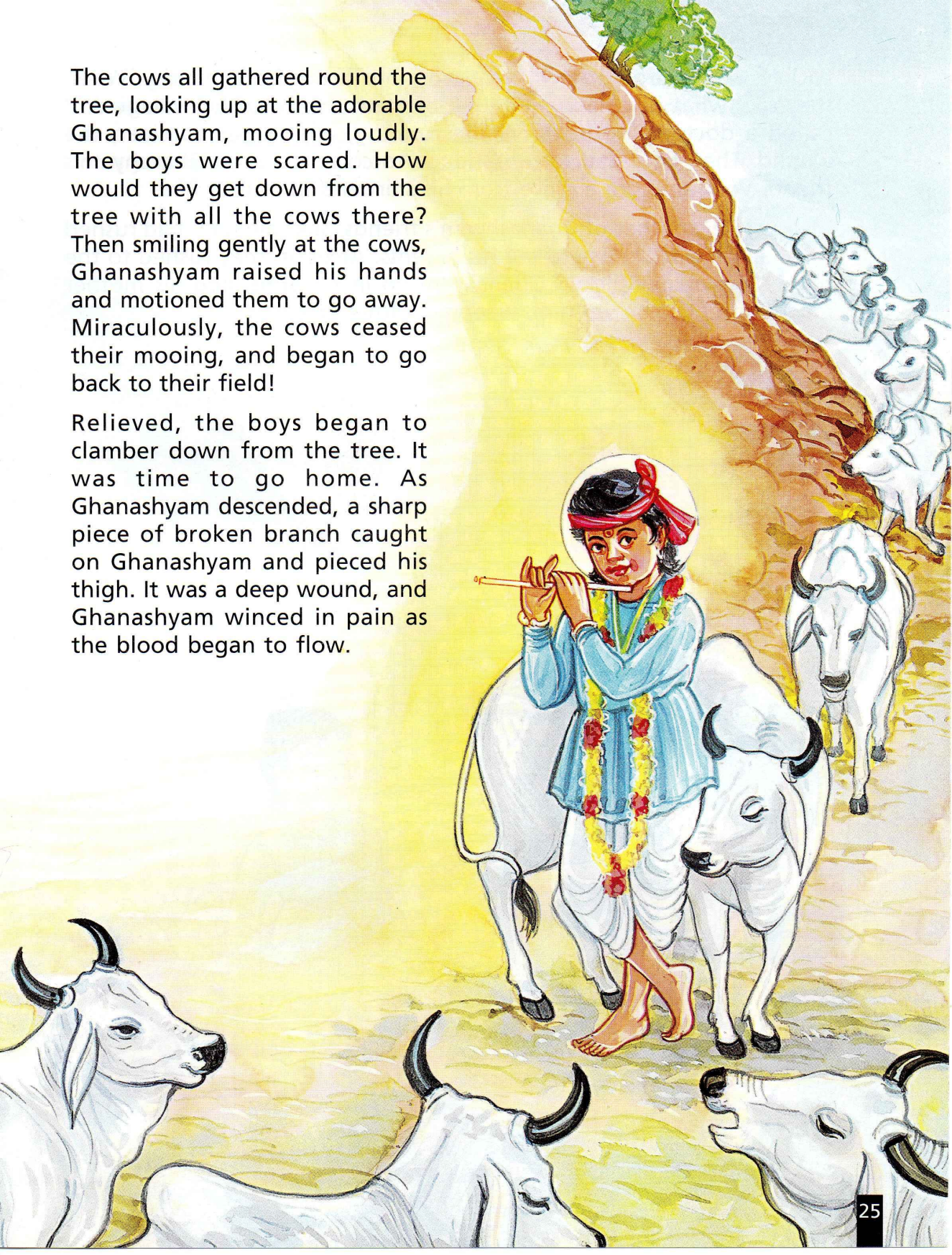
Then Ghanashyam began to whistle softly, in a perfect imitation of lord Krishna's flute. It was the most beautiful sound in the world.

Hearing the sound of the holy cowherd Krishna, the cows became excited, and began to move towards Ghanashyam. Seeing the cows rushing toward them, Ghanashyam's friends were frightened, and ran to a tree. Hastily, they clambered up into the branches, and Ghanashyam followed them, laughing happily.



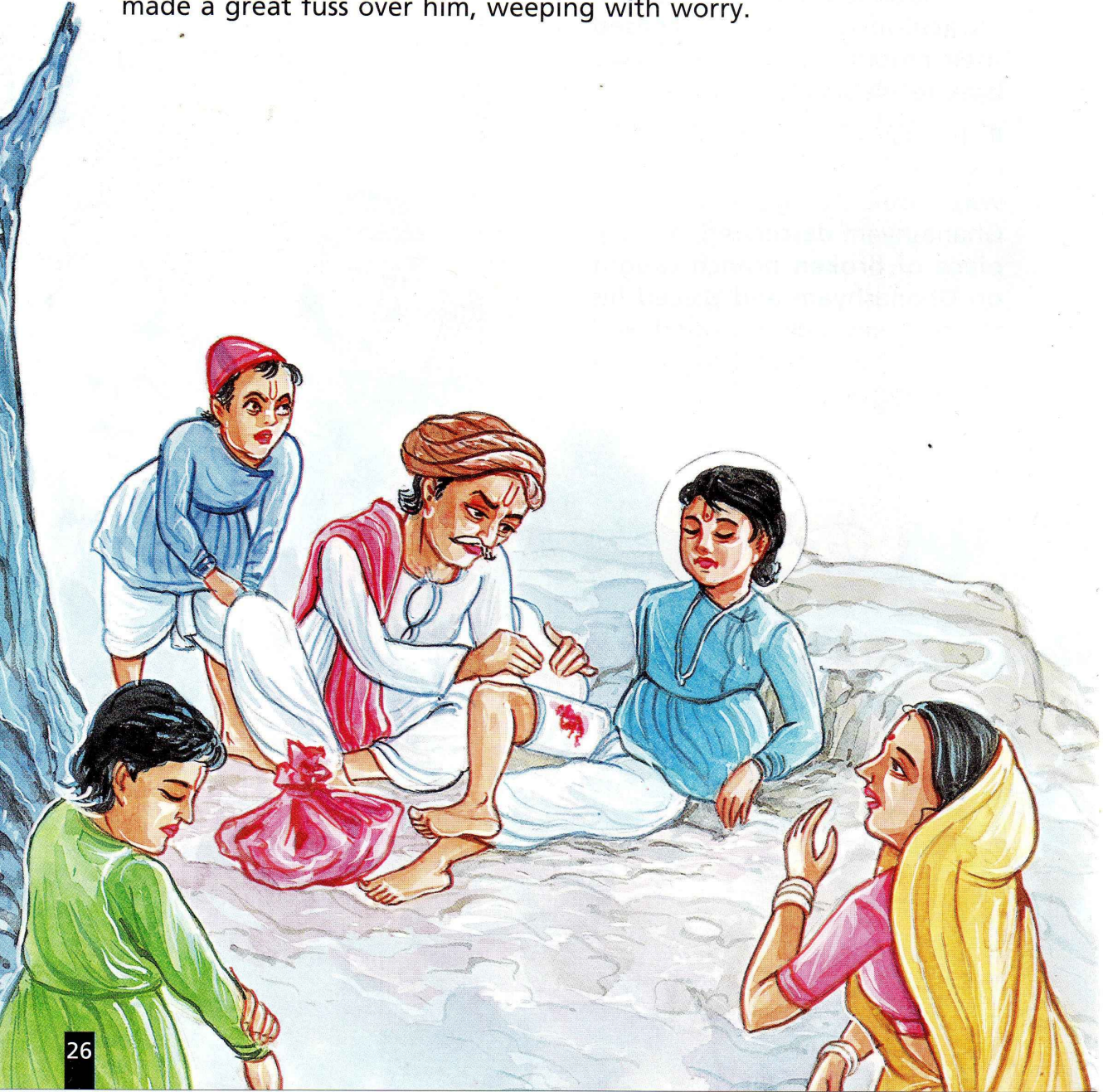
The cows all gathered round the tree, looking up at the adorable Ghanashyam, mooing loudly. The boys were scared. How would they get down from the tree with all the cows there? Then smiling gently at the cows, Ghanashyam raised his hands and motioned them to go away. Miraculously, the cows ceased their mooing, and began to go back to their field!

Relieved, the boys began to clamber down from the tree. It was time to go home. As Ghanashyam descended, a sharp piece of broken branch caught on Ghanashyam and pieced his thigh. It was a deep wound, and Ghanashyam winced in pain as the blood began to flow.



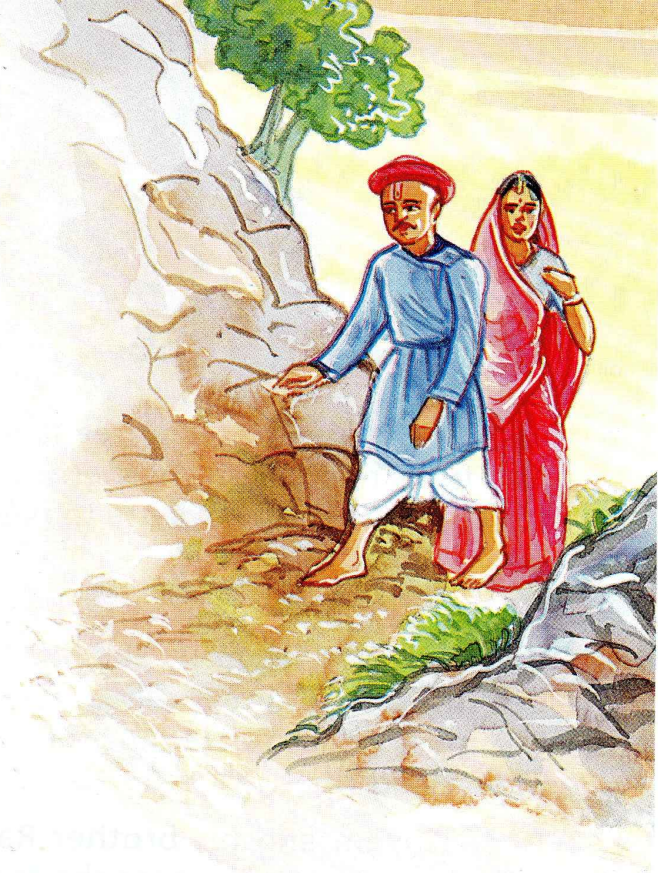
Luckily, a group of women were working in the fields nearby. When they saw what had happened, one of them rushed to her village and called a doctor. The doctor came running, and began to clean the wound. Then he asked for a bandage to cover it up, so Ghanshyam's friend, Veniram, tore a piece from his shirt and gave it to him.

Meanwhile, another of Ghanashyam's friends, Sukhnandan, had rushed to Ghanashyam's house to tell his parents. Anxious, they rushed to the pond. Dharmadev picked Ghanshyam up in his arms, and his mother made a great fuss over him, weeping with worry.



Seeing his mother's fears, Ghanashyam said "Don't worry Ma. I am fine. Here, see for yourself.", and he pulled the bandage from his leg. Everyone stared at Ghanashyam's leg. They couldn't believe it. There was no wound, no blood. Only the smallest of scars could be faintly seen!

Now, khampa means 'cut' or 'wound', so after the miracle of Ghanashyam's wound, the pond was named Khampa Talavadi....and that is what it is called even today.



### STUDY:

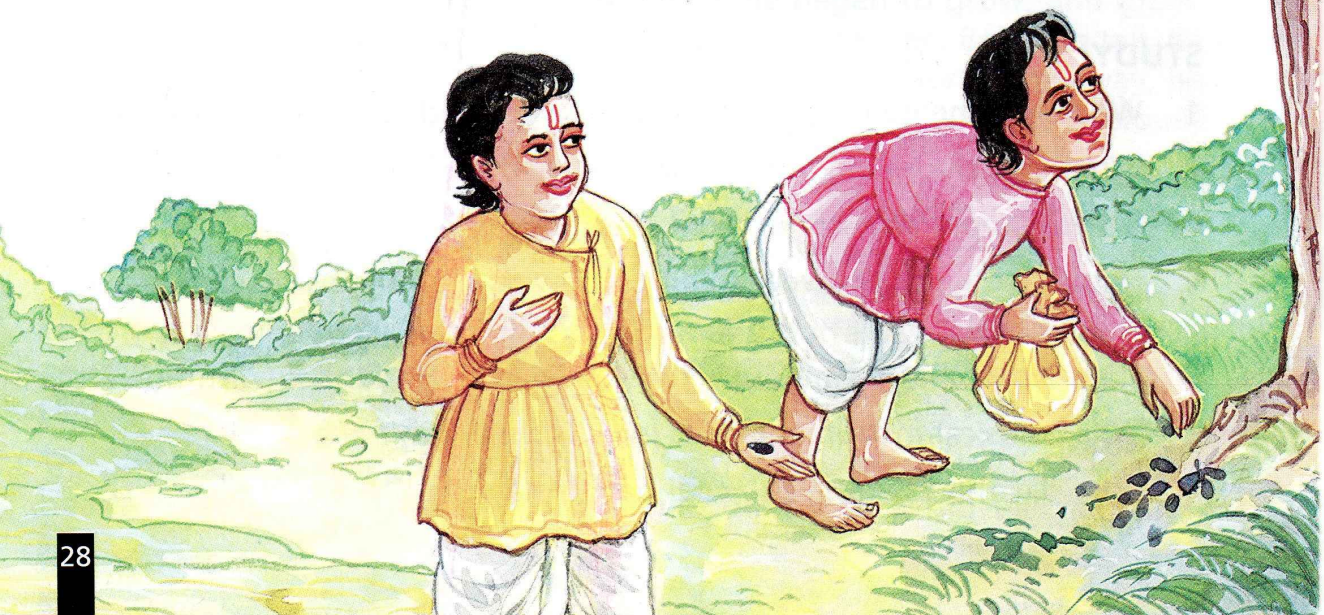
1. What was the name of the wise man who used to sit beside the pond?
2. What was the name of the book he used to read?
3. Do you know any stories from that book?
4. Name two kinds of sweet smelling flowers that were scattered around the pond.
5. Who did Ghanashyam look like when he was garlanded with flowers?
6. What musical instrument does lord Krishna play?
7. How did the Khampa Talavadi get its name?

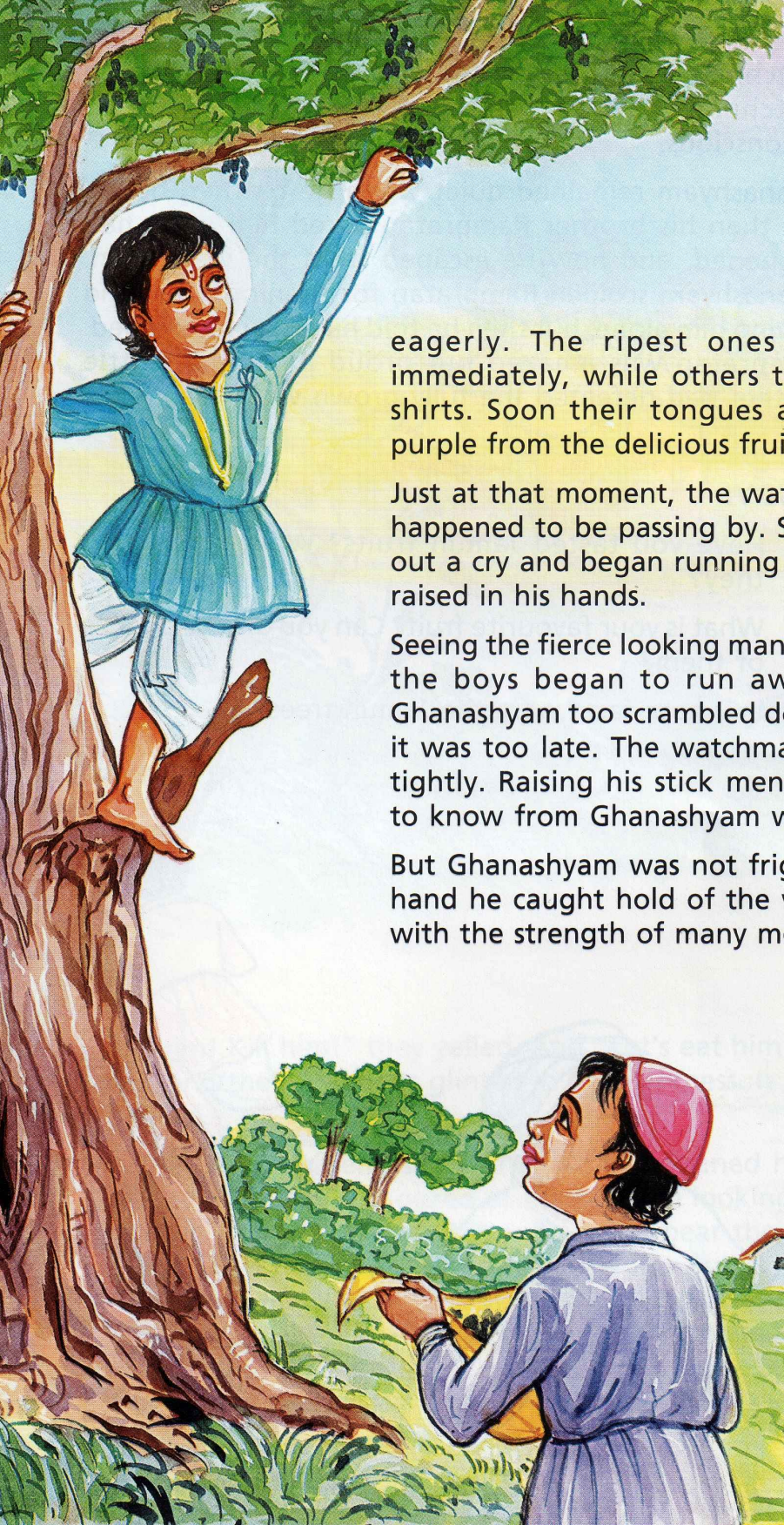
## THE JAMUN TREE

All children love to see a tree laden with fruits. The sight of the lush fruits ripening in the warm sun is so tempting to them, and they cannot resist the desire to pluck and taste them. Ghanashyam was no different.

It was the time of year when the Jamun fruits were ripening on the trees. Not far from Ghanashyam's village there was a farm belonging to a farmer called Anand Tarwadi. On this farm were the most beautiful Jamun trees. The dark purple fruits were plump and ripe.

Ghanashyam and his brother Rampratap, along with several friends, were playing near the farm. It was a hot day, and they could just imagine how juicy and delicious the fruits would taste. So they raced to the tree, and began to jump to try to catch the branches. Ghanashyam clambered up the tree, and standing on the branches began to jump up and down, shaking the ripe fruits from the tree. Soon the ground was littered with the purple fruits, and Rampratap and the friends began to gather them up





eagerly. The ripest ones they began to eat immediately, while others they collected in their shirts. Soon their tongues and lips were stained purple from the delicious fruits.

Just at that moment, the watchman of the orchard happened to be passing by. Seeing the boys, he let out a cry and began running toward them, his stick raised in his hands.

Seeing the fierce looking man running toward them, the boys began to run away in all directions. Ghanashyam too scrambled down from the tree. But it was too late. The watchman caught hold of him tightly. Raising his stick menacingly, he demanded to know from Ghanashyam what he was doing.

But Ghanashyam was not frightened. With his free hand he caught hold of the watchman's arm. Then with the strength of many men he whirled the



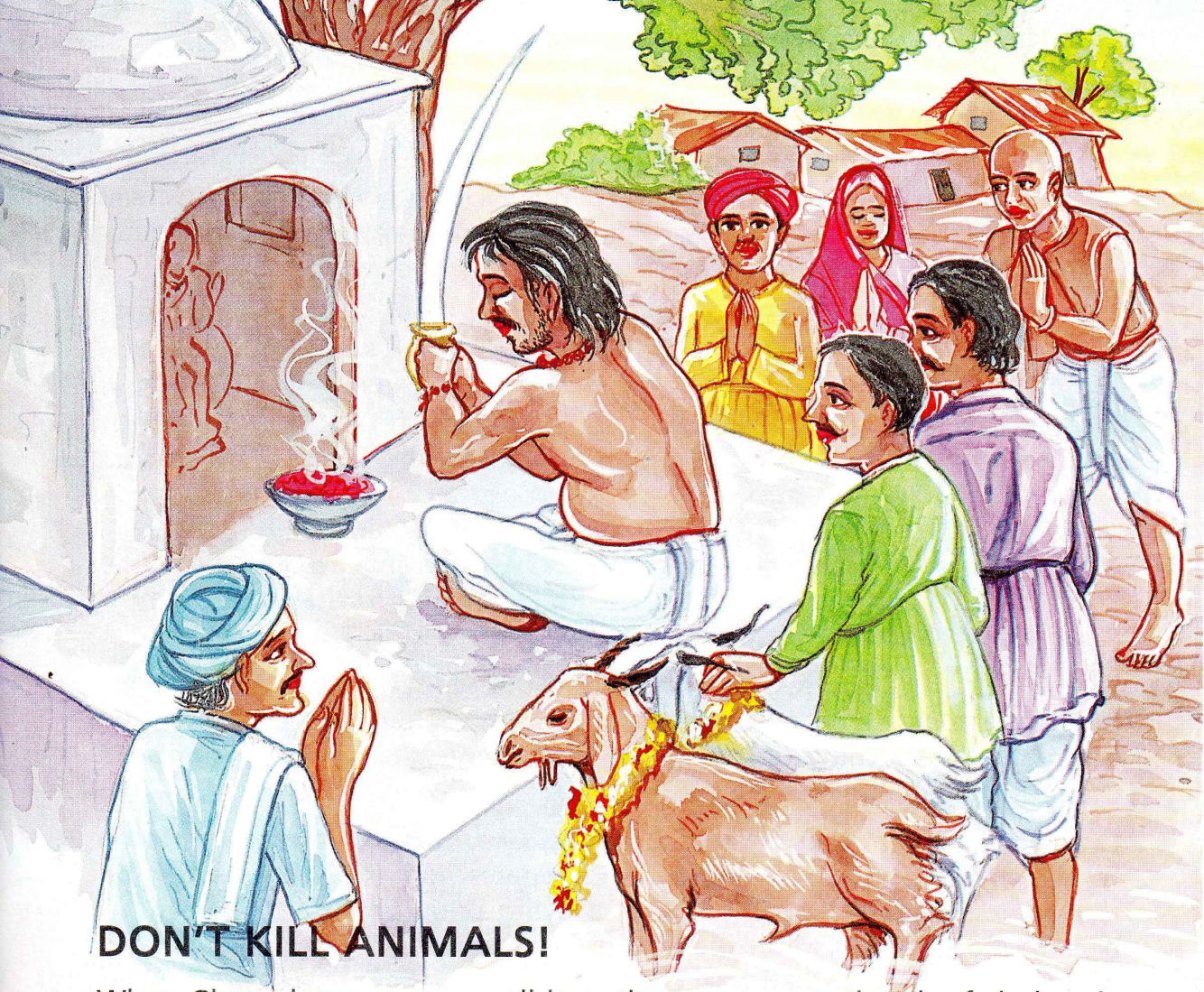
watchman round and round, then let him go. The watchman dashed against a tree, and fell down unconscious.

Ghanashyam remained quiet when he reached home. But then his brother Rampratap asked him what had happened, and how he escaped from the watchman. Ghanashyam scolded Rampratap for running away and leaving him alone, but then he told him how he escaped. Rampratap was amazed but proud at how his little brother had defeated the fully grown watchman.

### STUDY:

1. Have you tasted Jamun fruits? What colour are they?
2. What is your favourite fruit? Can you draw a picture of them?
3. In whose farm were the Jamun trees?





## **DON'T KILL ANIMALS!**

When Ghanashyam was a small boy, there was an outbreak of cholera in the village. Many people were sick and dying with the disease. Because of their superstitious nature, many of the villagers thought that the disease must have been brought on them by the Mother Goddess because she was displeased with them. It was the custom at that time to sacrifice live animals to please the Goddess.

One day, the villagers brought many goats, and gathered them at the temple of the Goddess, ready to sacrifice them. They had called a Bhuvan, a man who practices witchcraft, to make the sacrifices. He was dancing around, shouting and waving a huge sword in the air. Many people were banging on drums, and calling out loudly to the Mother Goddess. It was a terrifying sight to see.

When Ghanashyam heard what was happening he came running to the spot. Seeing the evil looking Bhuvan, he rushed up to him and snatched his





sword away. Then the most amazing thing happened. In front of all the people Ghanashyam took on the form of the Goddess! He stood there, huge and fierce, holding the sword above his head. The crowd suddenly fell silent. Then Ghanashyam spoke in the voice of the Goddess.

“Stop this madness! Killing these poor innocent animals will not make the cholera go away. Killing them is a sin against me, and if you cut off their heads, then I will cut yours off too! Don’t you know that if you kill animals in my name, then you are turning me into an asura, an evil demon. I forbid you to kill! This disease of cholera has been brought on you because God wills it. Only he can take it from

you. If you want to be rid of the disease then you should pray to Ghanashyam Maharaj to release you.”

Saying this, the Goddess then resumed the form of Ghanashyam. For a moment the crowd stood there, open-mouthed. Then they rushed around Ghanashyam, touching his feet and worshipping him, begging him to rid them of the terrible disease.

Later that day another miracle occurred. Ghanashyam in many different forms appeared in all the houses of Chappaiya. In each house he cast out the demon disease, and the sick and dying people became well again. And for the next five generations, no cholera disease came back to Chappaiya.

### STUDY:

1. What disease were the people of Chappaiya suffering from.
2. How did they try to get rid of the disease?
3. What is a Bhuva?
4. What form did Ghanashyam take to prevent the killings?
5. Write in your own words why it is wrong to kill innocent animals.

