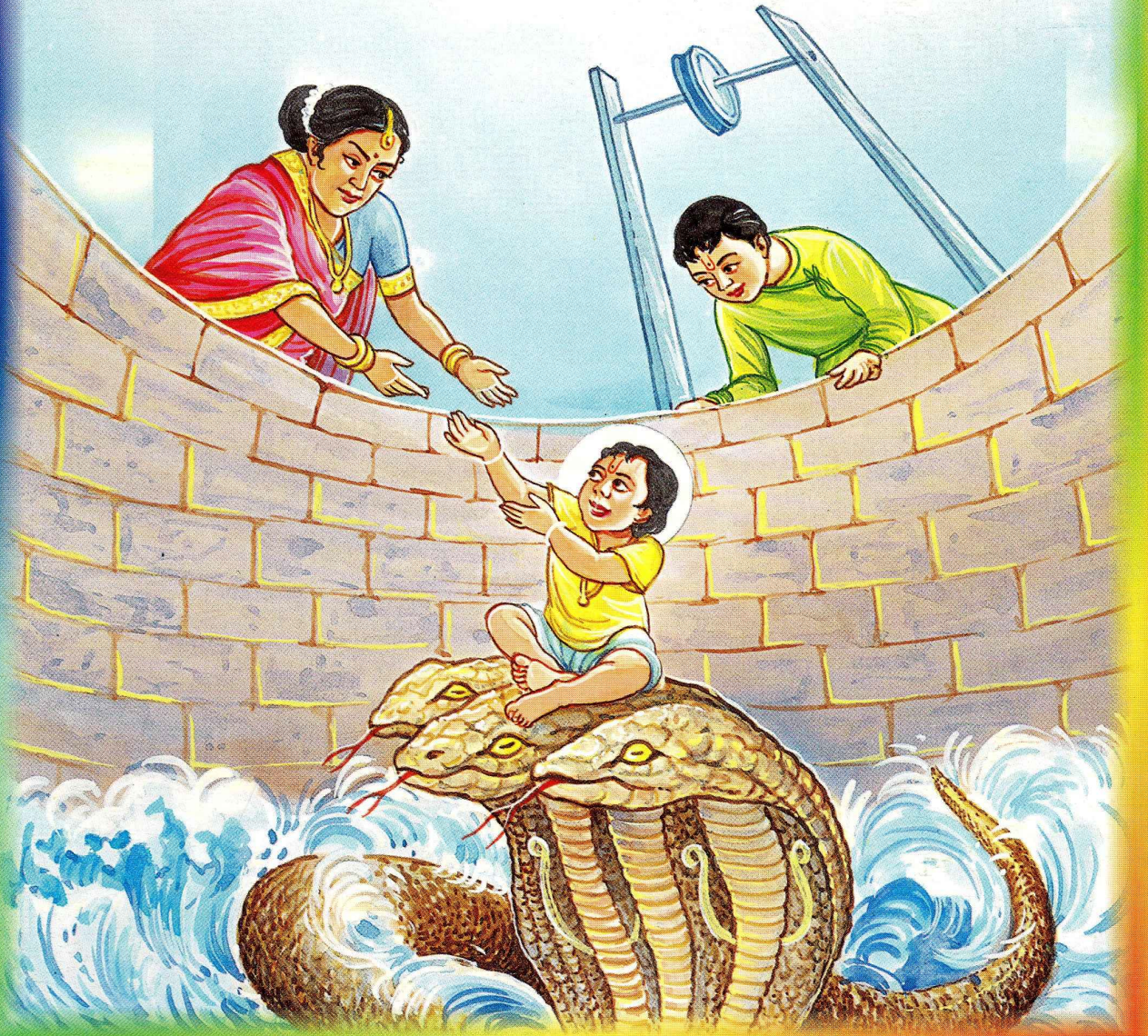


॥ Shree Swaminarayano Vijaytetram ॥

SHREE
GHANASHYAM
BAL CHARITRA
PART - 2



THE DANCE OF NARAD

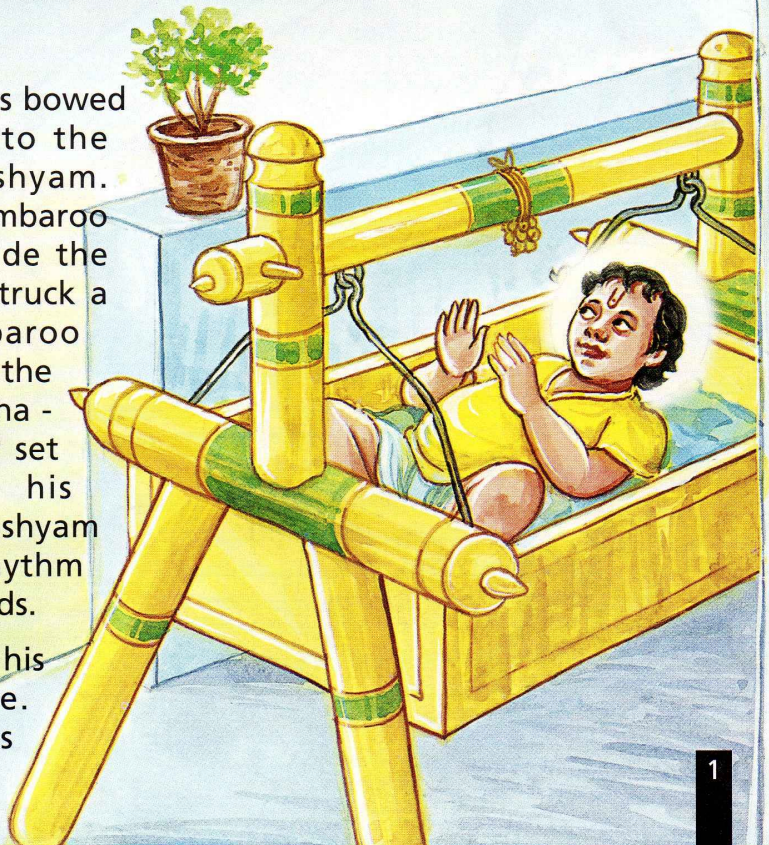
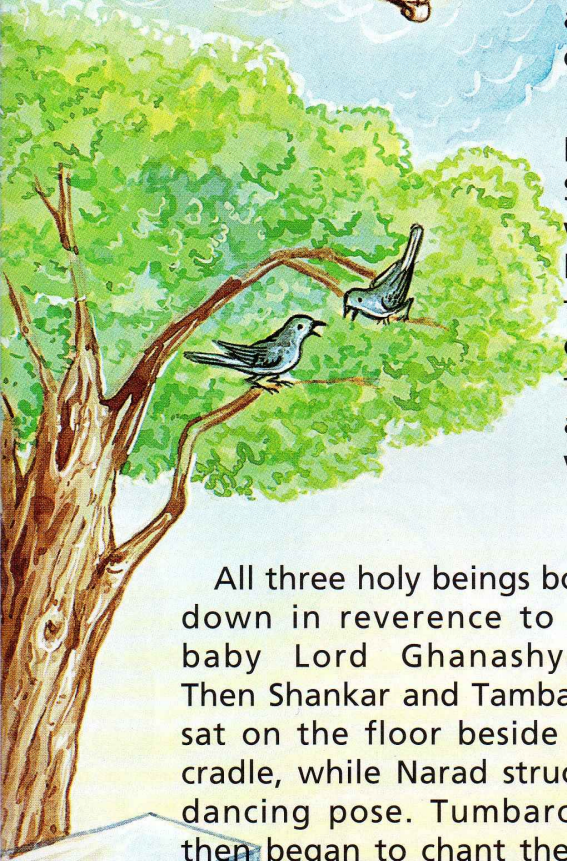
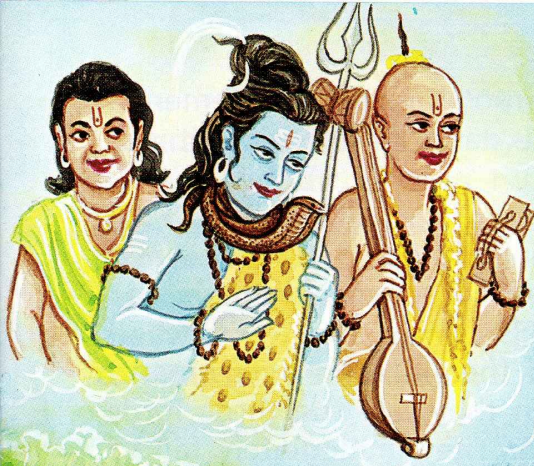
It was a beautiful warm day in the village of Chappaiya.

Bhaktimata was in the kitchen preparing food for the family. In the shade of the verandah, the baby Ghanashyam was lying in his cradle. His eyes looked up at the birds in the trees, and when He heard their singing He clapped his hands in joy.

At that time, high above in the heavens, Lord Narad, along with Shankar and Tumbaroo, were watching Ghanashyam at play. Seeing his innocence and joy, their hearts were filled with love, and they decided to come to earth and be with him. In a flash they appeared beside his cradle, and Ghanashyam gurgled happily when he saw them.

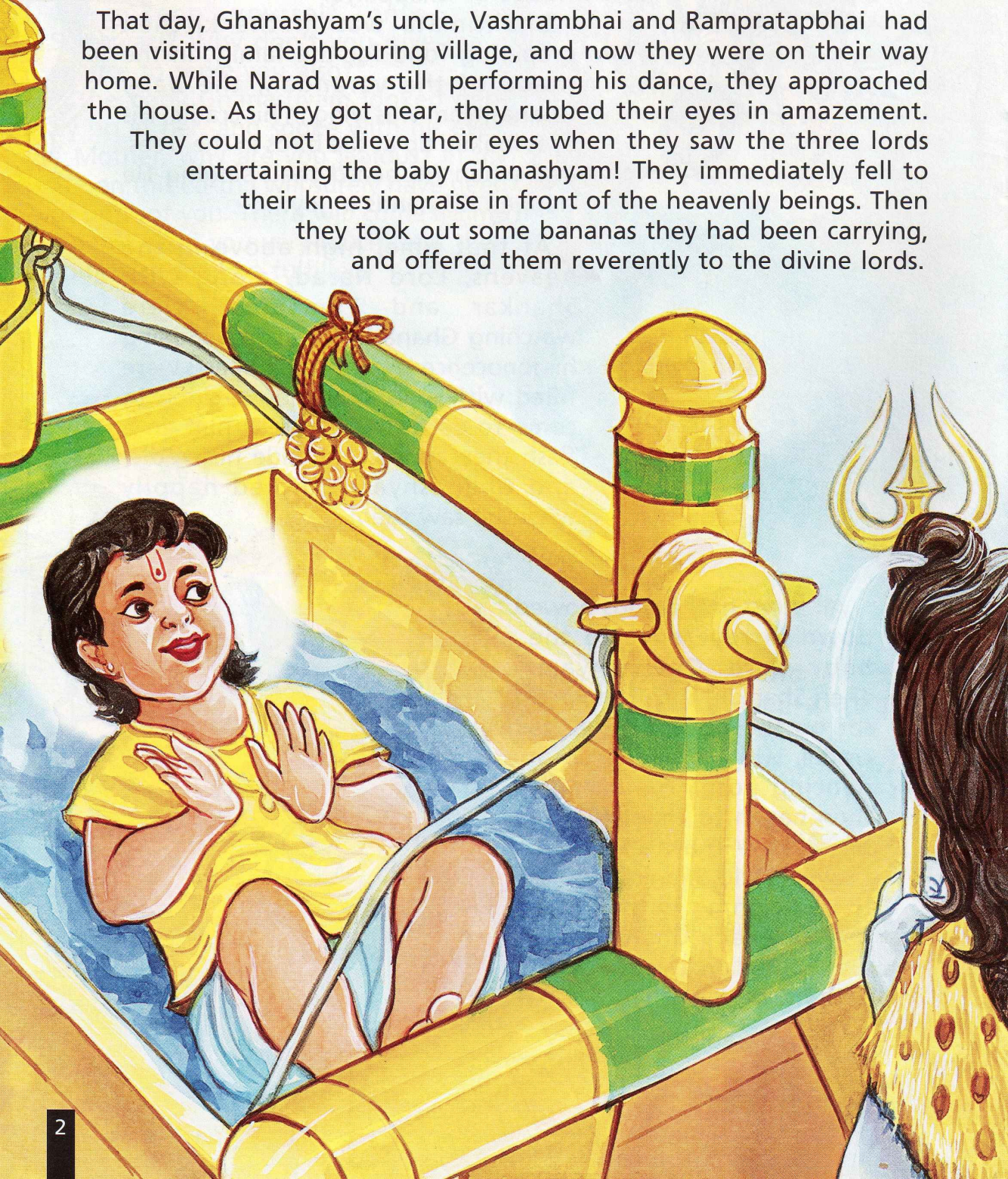
All three holy beings bowed down in reverence to the baby Lord Ghanashyam. Then Shankar and Tambaroo sat on the floor beside the cradle, while Narad struck a dancing pose. Tumbaroo then began to chant the beat - Tha - Thaya - Tha - Thaya, while Shankar set the rhythm with his damroo. Baby Ghanashyam also joined in the rhythm with his clapping hands.

Then Narad began his divine dance. Ghanashyam's eyes



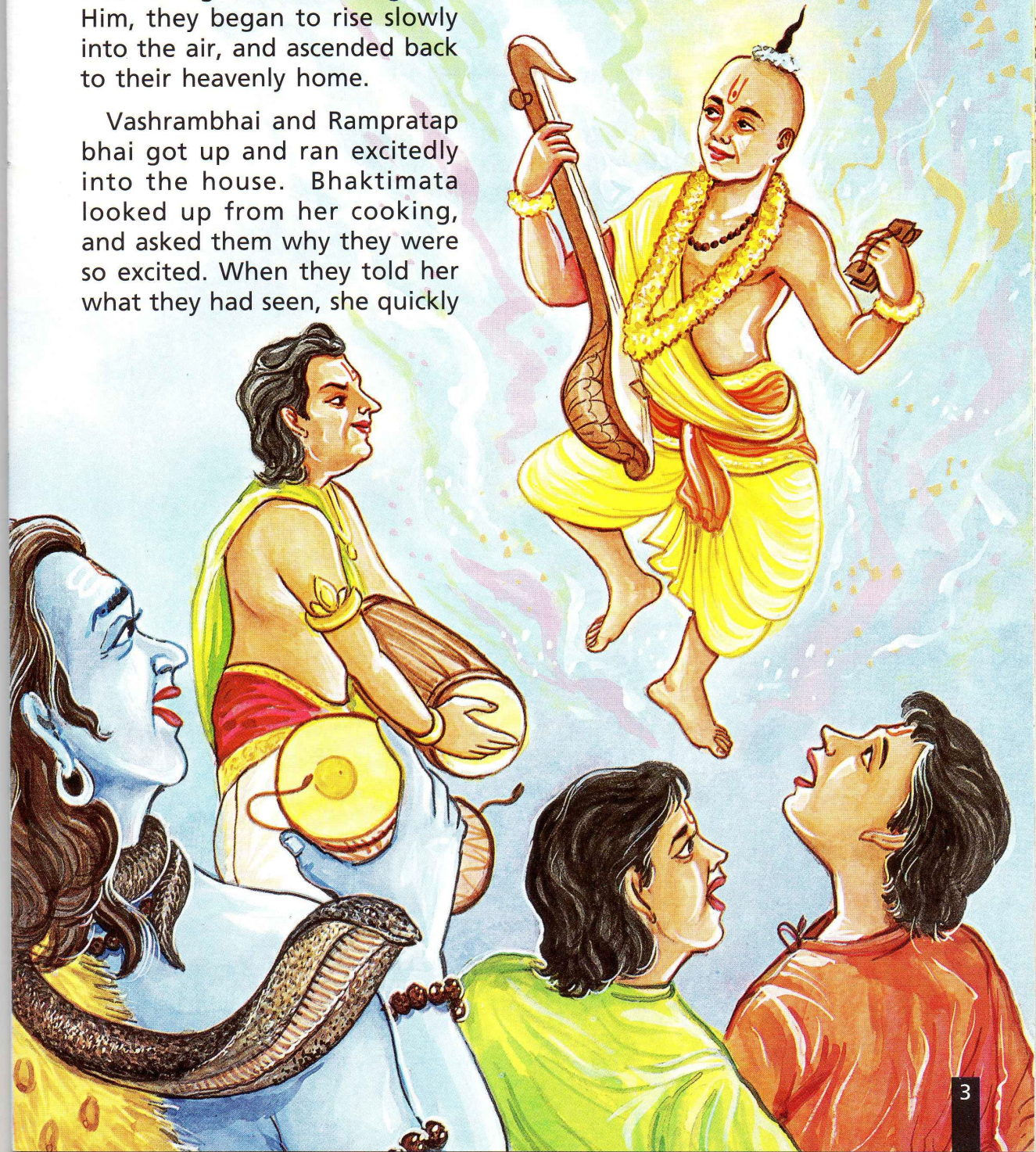
That day, Ghanashyam's uncle, Vashrambhai and Rampratapbhai had been visiting a neighbouring village, and now they were on their way home. While Narad was still performing his dance, they approached the house. As they got near, they rubbed their eyes in amazement.

They could not believe their eyes when they saw the three lords entertaining the baby Ghanashyam! They immediately fell to their knees in praise in front of the heavenly beings. Then they took out some bananas they had been carrying, and offered them reverently to the divine lords.



Narad stopped his dance, and stepping forward, accepted the offering of bananas. Then, raising his hand, he blessed Uncle Vashrambhai and Rampratapbhai . Then all three lords turned to the baby Ghanashyam. Showering their blessings on Him, they began to rise slowly into the air, and ascended back to their heavenly home.

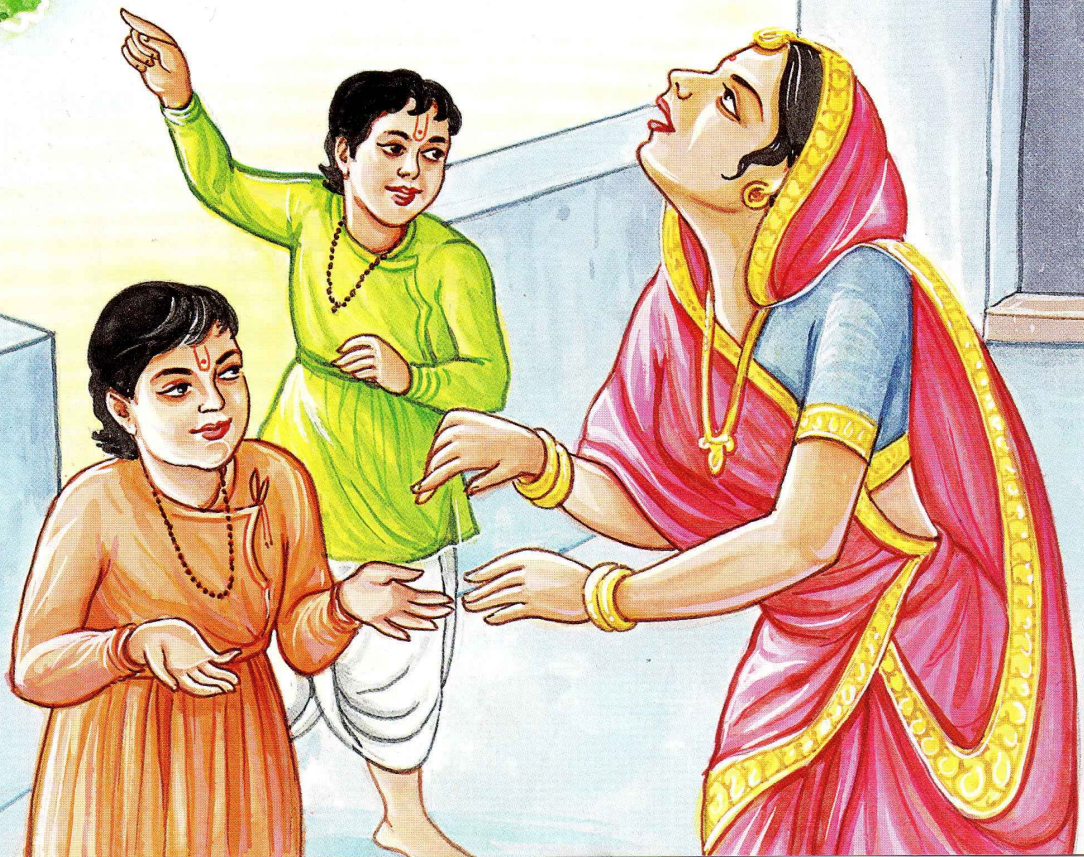
Vashrambhai and Rampratap bhai got up and ran excitedly into the house. Bhaktimata looked up from her cooking, and asked them why they were so excited. When they told her what they had seen, she quickly



pushed aside her vegetables and rushed outside. She looked up to the skies, trying to see the divine beings. But Narad, Shankar and Tumaroo were no longer to be seen. Then she looked down at her darling baby. Ghanashyam was still clapping his hands in time to the divine music!

STUDY

1. Who were watching Ghanashyam as he lay in his cradle on the verandah?
2. What was the instrument that Shankar was playing?
3. Fill in the gaps: "Ghanashyam's uncle's name is _____ ."
4. What did Rampratap offer to the three lords?
5. Can you do a dance like Narad? Try it!



SHESHNAG AND THE WELL

Near the house of Dharmadev and Bhaktimata was a well where the family used to draw their water from. One day, the little Ghanashyam was playing near the well with his cousin Sister Balwantabai. Bhaktimata was inside the house, doing her chores.

As they were playing, Balwantabai caught sight of a beautiful butterfly nearby, and she ran towards it. While she was chasing the butterfly, Ghanashyam began to crawl towards the well. Reaching the low wall of the well, he pulled himself up, and clambered on top of the wall. He leaned over, and peered down into the deep, dark well.

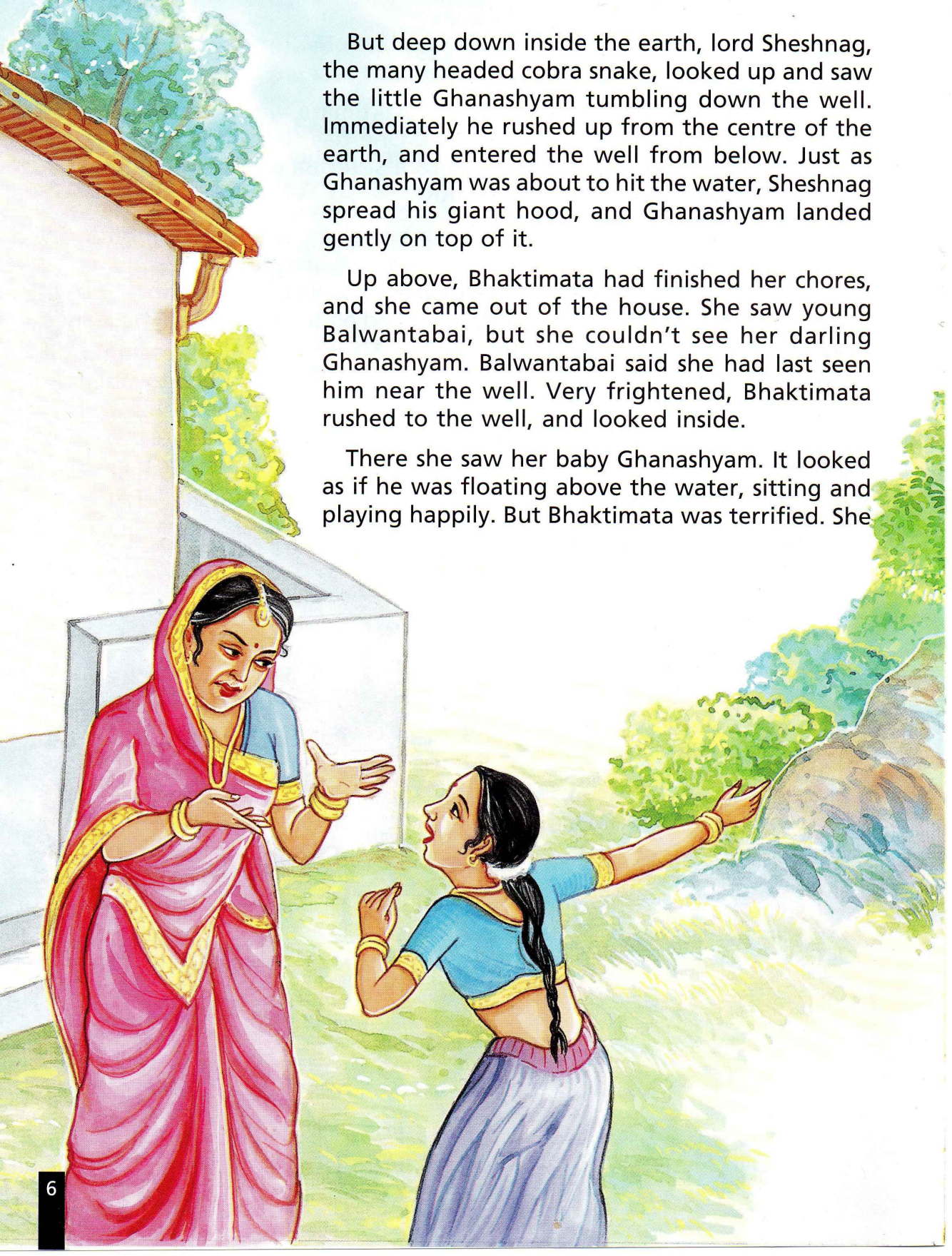
Then he lost his balance, and tumbled down inside!

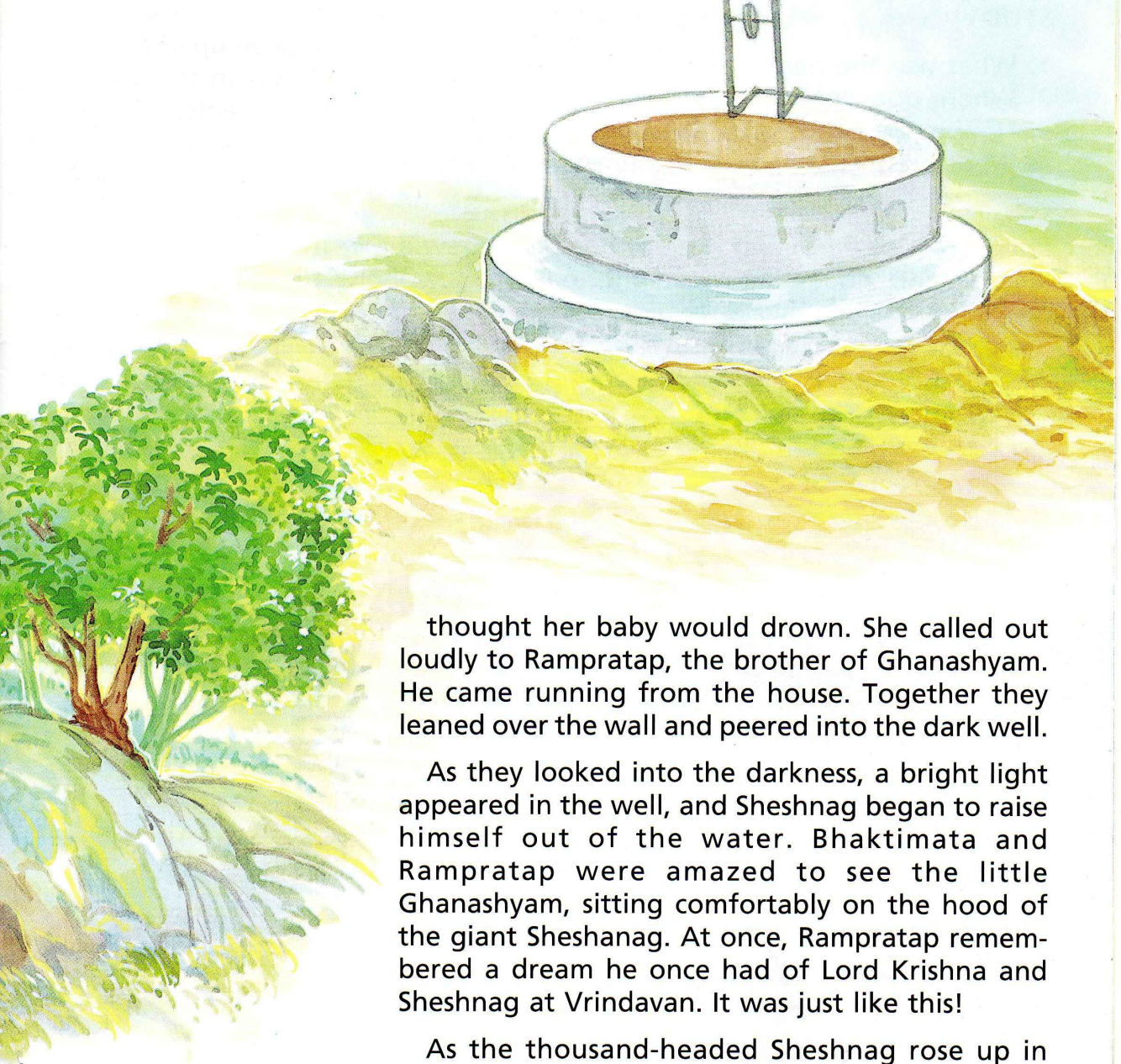


But deep down inside the earth, lord Sheshnag, the many headed cobra snake, looked up and saw the little Ghanashyam tumbling down the well. Immediately he rushed up from the centre of the earth, and entered the well from below. Just as Ghanashyam was about to hit the water, Sheshnag spread his giant hood, and Ghanashyam landed gently on top of it.

Up above, Bhaktimata had finished her chores, and she came out of the house. She saw young Balwantabai, but she couldn't see her darling Ghanashyam. Balwantabai said she had last seen him near the well. Very frightened, Bhaktimata rushed to the well, and looked inside.

There she saw her baby Ghanashyam. It looked as if he was floating above the water, sitting and playing happily. But Bhaktimata was terrified. She





thought her baby would drown. She called out loudly to Rampratap, the brother of Ghanashyam. He came running from the house. Together they leaned over the wall and peered into the dark well.

As they looked into the darkness, a bright light appeared in the well, and Sheshnag began to raise himself out of the water. Bhaktimata and Rampratap were amazed to see the little Ghanashyam, sitting comfortably on the hood of the giant Sheshanag. At once, Rampratap remembered a dream he once had of Lord Krishna and Sheshnag at Vrindavan. It was just like this!

As the thousand-headed Sheshnag rose up in the well, the happy little Ghanashyam raised his arms towards his mother. Reaching down, she caught his arms and pulled him up, and clasped him tightly, tears rolling down her cheeks.

Lord Sheshnag bowed his head before Bhaktimata and Ghanashyam, and then descended into the waters. As he returned to his home in the centre of the earth, the light in the well went out.

STUDY:

1. What was the name of Ghanshyam's cousin Sister?
2. Where does lord Sheshnag live?
3. How many heads does Sheshnag have?
4. What was the dream of Rampratap?



THE UNIVERSE IN GHANSHYAM

One day, Bhaktimata was sitting on her bed, breast-feeding the baby Ghanashyam. When he had finished, he lay gently in her lap, smiling up at her, while Bhaktimata played with his fingers.

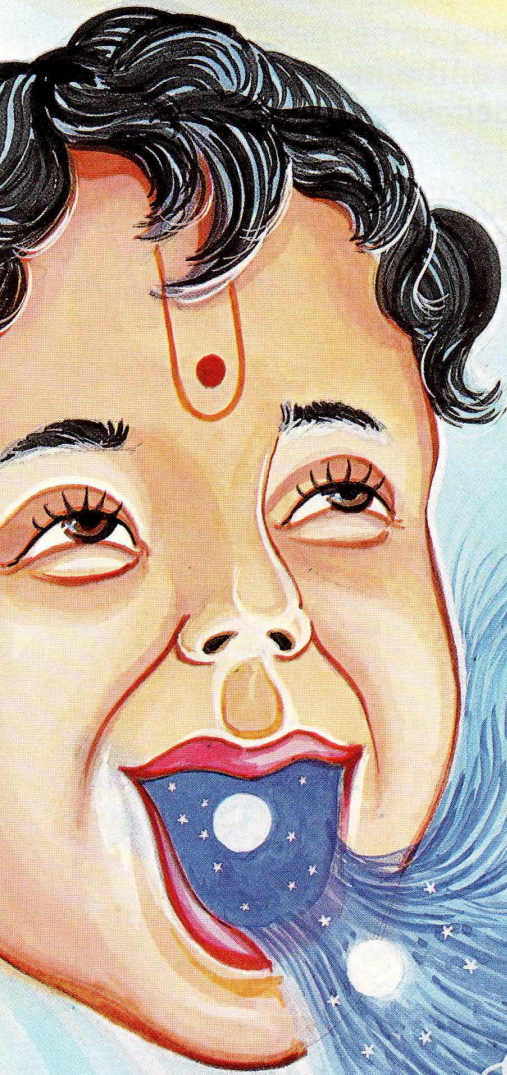
It was a warm day, and the sun rays came softly through the window, and fell on the happy pair. Soon, Ghanashyam began to feel sleepy from the warm sun, and all the milk he had taken. He rubbed his eyes with his little hands, and yawned sleepily, as his mother watched him adoringly.



As the baby Ghanashyam yawned, Bhaktimata looked into his mouth - and was amazed at what she saw!

It was as if she was being drawn into the yawning mouth, and the mouth opening wider and wider, revealing the whole universe!

There she saw all the gods in their heavenly splendour. There was Brahma, Vishnu,



Shiv and Indra too. All were smiling and bestowing their blessings on her.

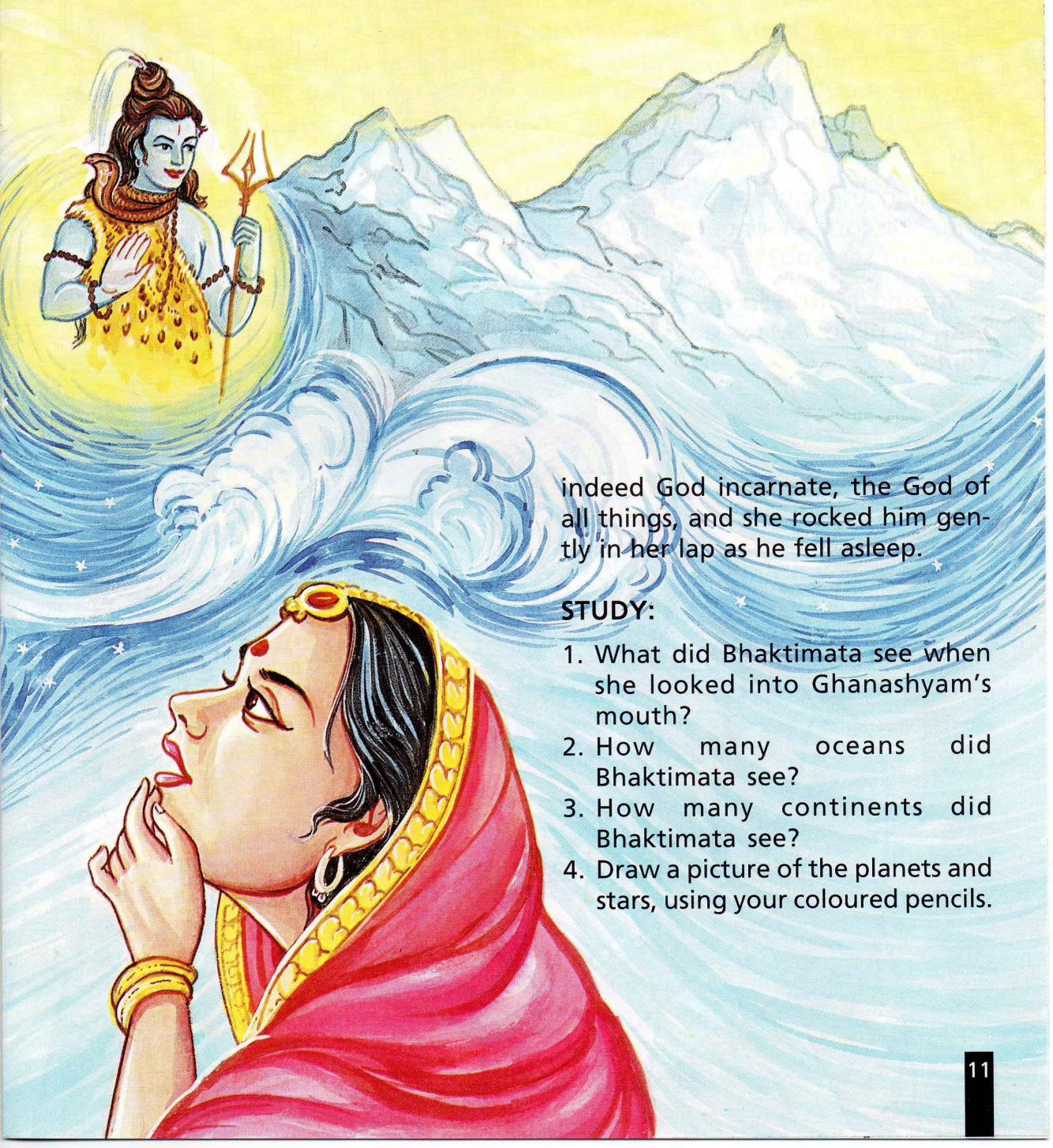
Then, it was as if she was being transported all around the world. She saw the highest mountain ranges, and the seven oceans, and the nine continents.

Then suddenly the whole universe began opening up to her. She saw the countless stars in all their glory, and the planets with their rings and moons

and colours never seen on earth, and many other wondrous sights that she could not describe.

Soon, she became dizzy from the experience, and briefly closed her eyes.

When she opened them again, she saw her baby Ghanashyam smiling knowingly at her. Now she knew that the baby she had been blessed with was



indeed God incarnate, the God of all things, and she rocked him gently in her lap as he fell asleep.

STUDY:

1. What did Bhaktimata see when she looked into Ghanashyam's mouth?
2. How many oceans did Bhaktimata see?
3. How many continents did Bhaktimata see?
4. Draw a picture of the planets and stars, using your coloured pencils.

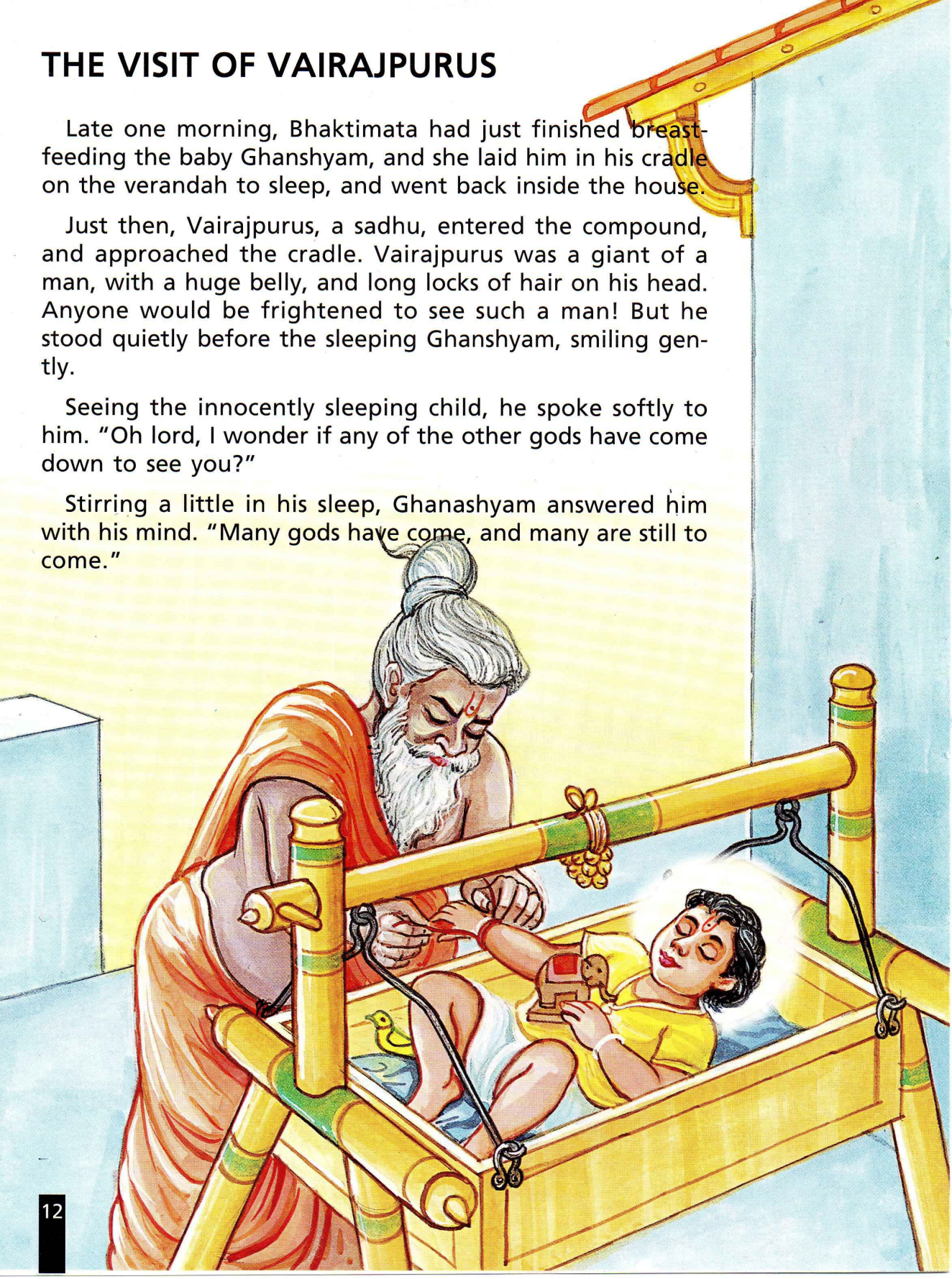
THE VISIT OF VAIRAJPURUS

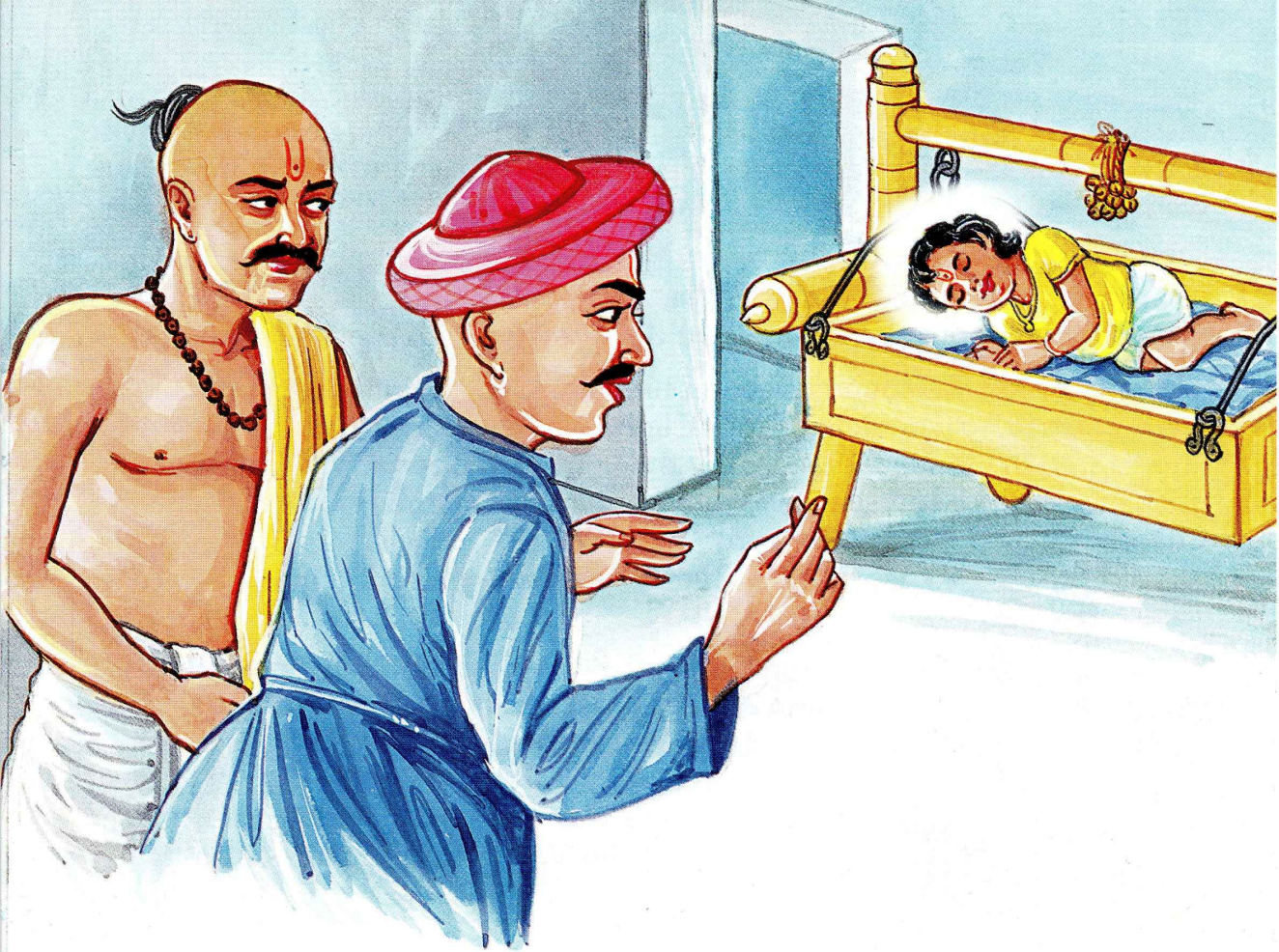
Late one morning, Bhaktimata had just finished breast-feeding the baby Ghanshyam, and she laid him in his cradle on the verandah to sleep, and went back inside the house.

Just then, Vairajpurus, a sadhu, entered the compound, and approached the cradle. Vairajpurus was a giant of a man, with a huge belly, and long locks of hair on his head. Anyone would be frightened to see such a man! But he stood quietly before the sleeping Ghanshyam, smiling gently.

Seeing the innocently sleeping child, he spoke softly to him. "Oh lord, I wonder if any of the other gods have come down to see you?"

Stirring a little in his sleep, Ghanshyam answered him with his mind. "Many gods have come, and many are still to come."





Hearing Ghanashyam's sweet voice in his mind, Vairajpurus was overjoyed. He exclaimed, "Oh lord, you yourself are God come down to earth, so surely everyone will come to see you." Saying this, he bent over the cradle and placed some toys in it for the baby Ghanashyam to play with. Then he took a sacred silk thread from his bundle, and tied it around the baby's wrist to protect him. He then blessed the babe, and set off for the religious fair at Shraavan lake.

On his way to the fair, he stopped by the lake near the village of Agiyara to drink some water. There, a brahmin called Ramdutt was taking his ritual bath. As Ramdutt rose from the water, he got a fright to see the giant Vairajpurus standing beside him! Recovering from the shock, he looked up at Vairajpurus and spoke. " Oh Maharaj, I have never seen anyone as tall as you in my life! They say that many, many years ago, in the Age of Truth, there were many men like you. But in today's world, you must be the only one. Tell me, where are you coming from, and where are you going?"

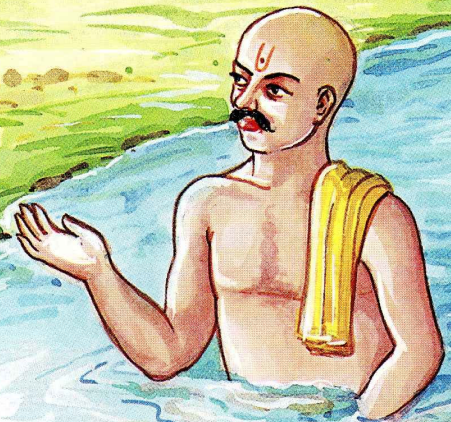
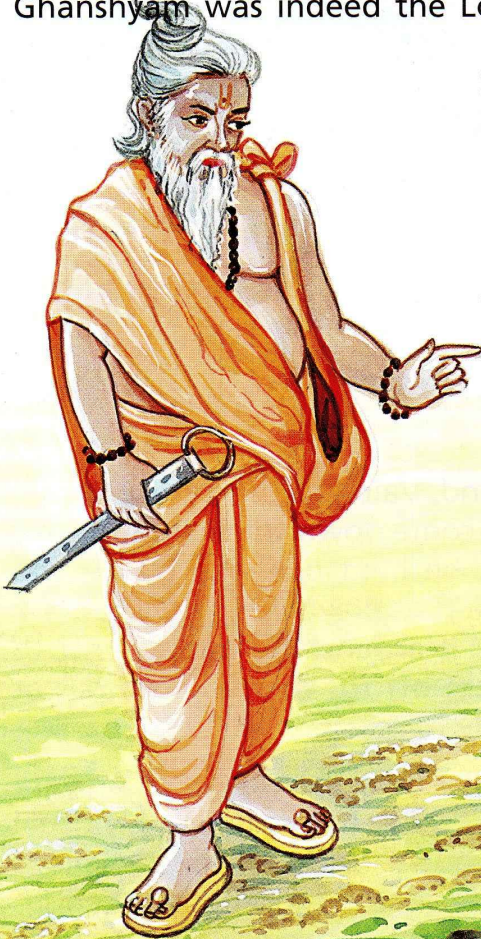
Vairajpurus answered him, that he had been to Chhapaiya village to visit the baby Ghanshyam, the son of Dharmadev, and that he was on his way to the religious fair at Shravan lake. He then bid farewell to the brahmin, and went on his way.

Ramdutt was fearful that Vairajpurus may have done some harm to Ghanshyam. He rushed to Chhapaiya, and called Dharmadev from the house, and told him about Vairajpurus. Quickly they went to check the cradle.

Ghanashyam was sound asleep in his cradle. But Dharmadev and Ramdutt were amazed to see that a bright light was glowing from the baby boy! They stared in wonder. Then slowly the light began to fade, and Ghanshyam opened his innocent eyes, and smiled at them. Ramdutt knew then, that Ghanshyam was indeed the Lord.

STUDY:

1. Describe Vairajpurus in your own words.
2. How did Ghanshyam speak to Vairajpurus?
3. Fill in the blank. "There were many men like Vairajpurus in the age of _____."
4. Where was Vairajpurus going to?
5. What did Vairajpurus give to Ghanshyam?



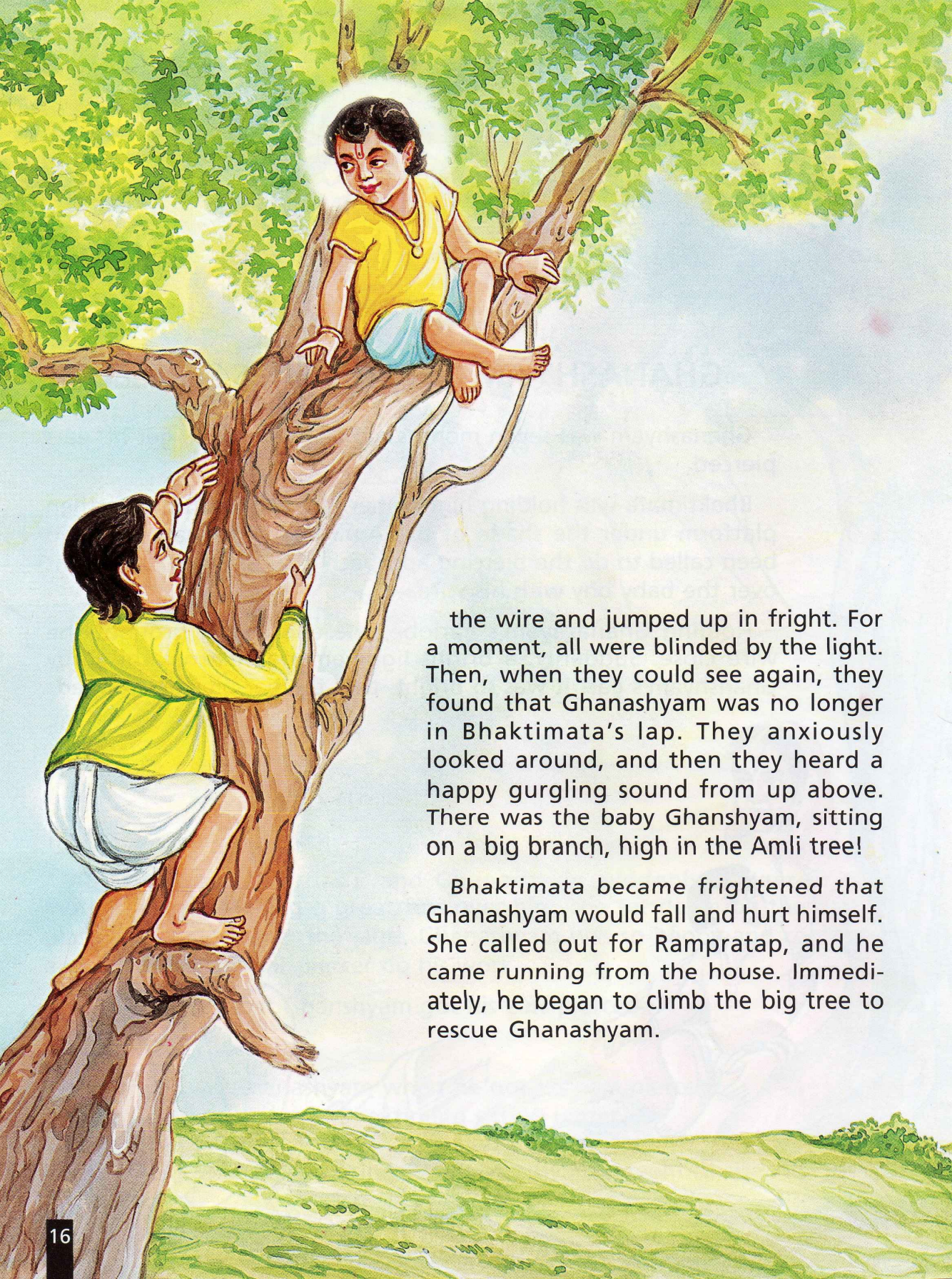


GHANASHYAM GETS HIS EARS PIERCED

Ghanashyam was seven months old. It was time to get his ears pierced.

Bhaktimata was holding him on her lap, sitting on the earthen platform under the shade of the Amla tree. The man who had been called to do the piercing approached Bhaktimata, and bent over the baby boy with his wire.

Holding Ghanashyam's earlobe, the ear-piercer brought the wire close. Suddenly, a bright light emanated from the Baby Ghanashyam's ear! It was so bright, that the ear-piercer dropped



the wire and jumped up in fright. For a moment, all were blinded by the light. Then, when they could see again, they found that Ghanashyam was no longer in Bhaktimata's lap. They anxiously looked around, and then they heard a happy gurgling sound from up above. There was the baby Ghanashyam, sitting on a big branch, high in the Amli tree!

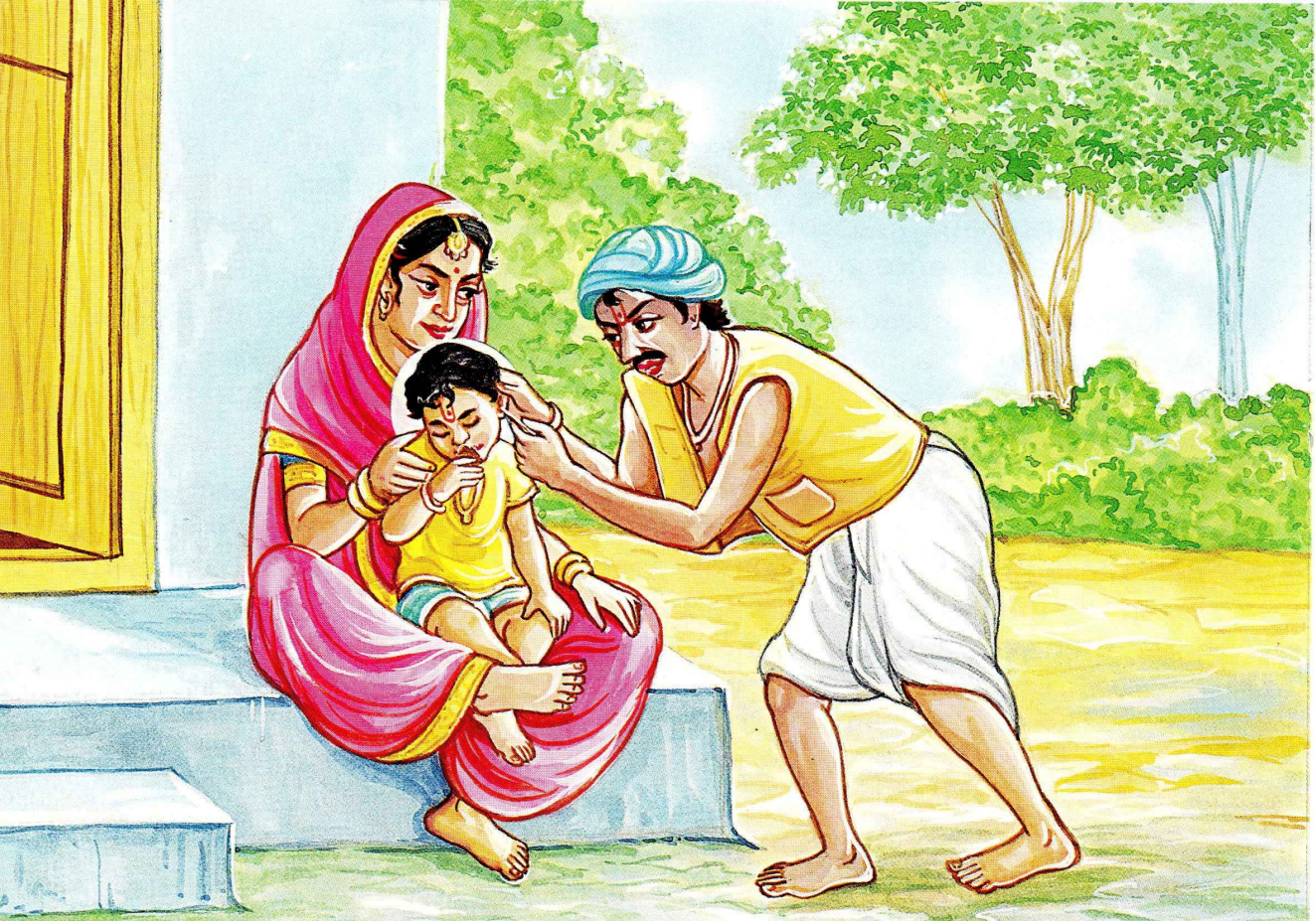
Bhaktimata became frightened that Ghanashyam would fall and hurt himself. She called out for Rampratap, and he came running from the house. Immediately, he began to climb the big tree to rescue Ghanashyam.

Branch by branch, Rampratap came closer to Ghanshyam. Then, reaching the branch where Ghanshyam was sitting, he stretched out his arms to pick up the baby. Suddenly there was a flash of light - and Ghanshyam had disappeared again. Looking down, Rampratap saw that the baby Ghanshyam was once again in Bhaktimata's arms!

Rasmpratap descended from the Amli tree, and approached Bhaktimata. Again there was a flash of light, and again Ghanshyam was back in the tree, smiling mischievously down at them! Bhaktimata and Rampratap were perplexed. They didn't know what to do.

Suddenly, Bhaktimata had an idea. She went into the house, and returned with a piece of sweet jagri. Ghanshyam loved jagri. Bhaktimata held the jagri up to Ghanshyam. He stretched out his arms for it, but couldn't reach it. Holding out her arms, Bhaktimata told him, "If you want some jagri, then you must come down."





Again there was a flash, and Ghanashyam suddenly appeared in his mother's arms. Making a great fuss over him, she sat down on the earthen platform, and fed him the jagri. Ghanashyam was so happy and contented, and finally let the ear-piercer do his work.

And so it was that Ghanashyam got his ears pierced.

STUDY:

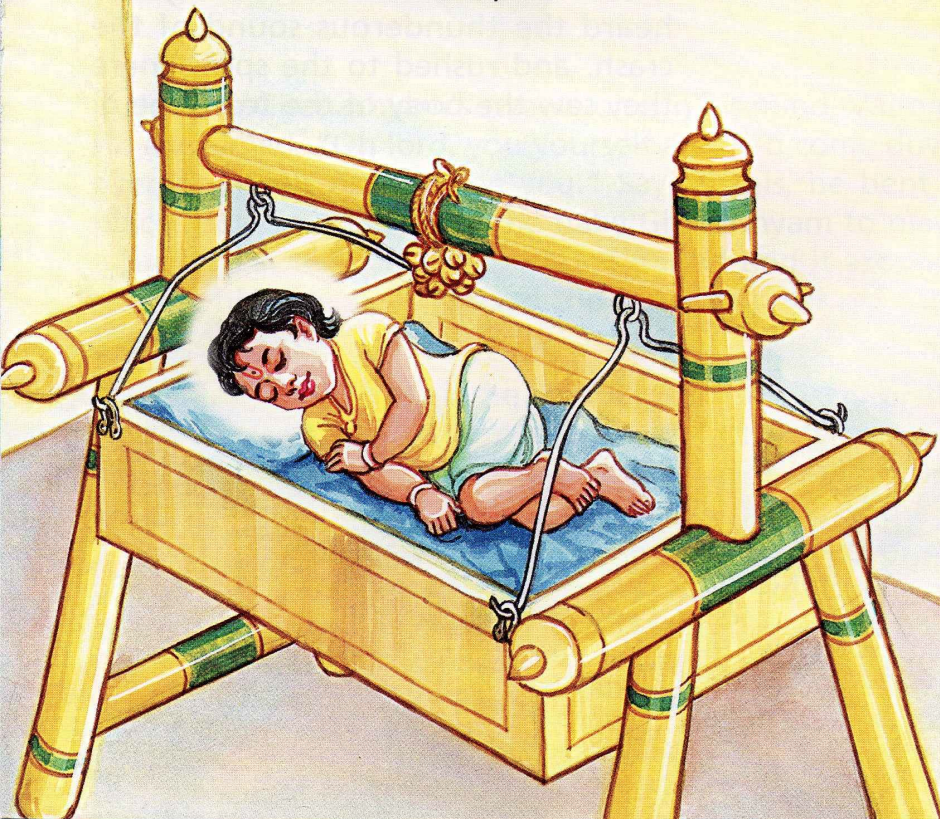
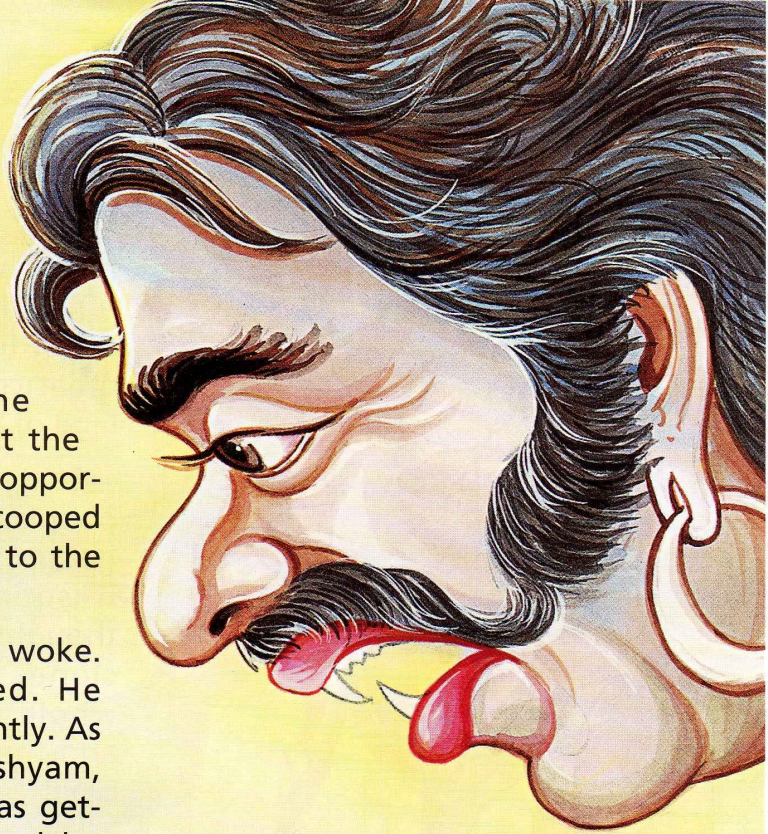
1. How old was Ghanashyam when he got his ears pierced?
2. What kind of tree was Bhaktimata sitting under?
3. Do you know what the fruit of the tree is used for?
4. What did Bhaktimata bring for Ghanashyam, to entice him out of the tree?

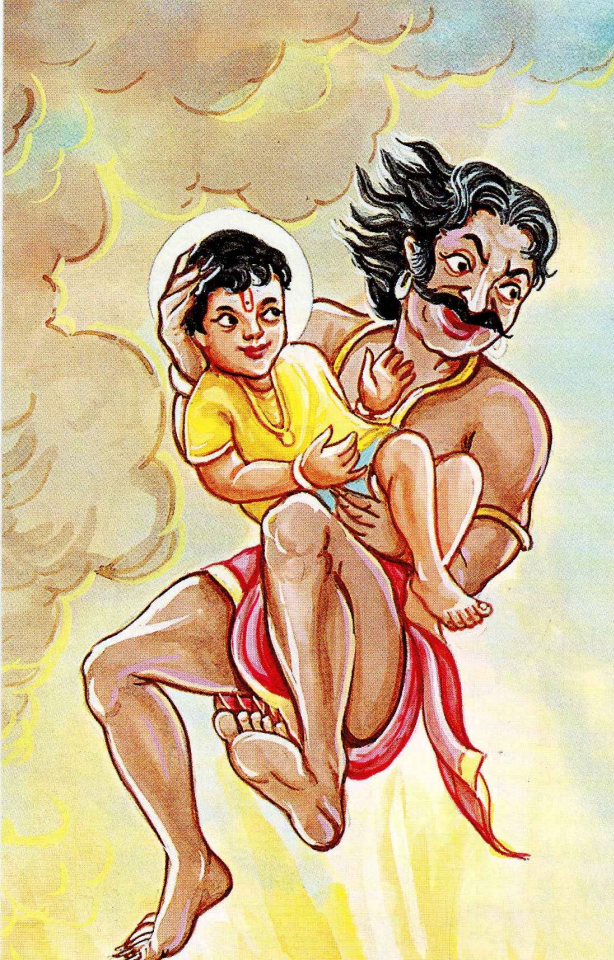
GHANASHYAM AND THE ASURA

Bhaktimata had left the baby Ghanashyam asleep in his cradle, while she was cooking in the kitchen.

Looking down from the skies, an evil asura saw that the baby was alone. Seizing the opportunity, he flew down, and scooped up the baby, and flew back to the skies!

Ghanashyam immediately woke. But he was not frightened. He looked the asura, smiling gently. As the asura looked at Ghanashyam, he saw that Ghanashyam was getting bigger and bigger. And he could feel him getting heavier and heavier. In no time at all,





Ghanshyam was the size, and the shape, and the weight, of the whole earth!

The asura struggled to hold this heavy weight. But it was too much for him. The huge weight pulled him down to the earth, and he fell with a great crash in the forest near the village of Surval, and was killed instantly.

So great was the crash, that the people of Surval rushed out of their houses to see what it was. Some said it sounded like thunder. Others thought that it must have been a cyclone, breaking up the trees. The whole village was talking about it, and they set off for the forest to see what had happened.

A group of shepherds from the village of Satwa were grazing their cattle near the forest at that time. They also heard the thunderous sound of the crash, and rushed to the spot. There they saw the body of the fearsome gi



ant asura, and were amazed. They rushed back to their village, and told everyone. The people of Satwa then set out for the forest to see the sight.

Lord Hanuman, the protector of Ghanashyam, at that moment was flying overhead. Down below he saw the body of the evil giant lying in the forest. He immediately guessed what had happened, and rushed to Ghanashyam's house.

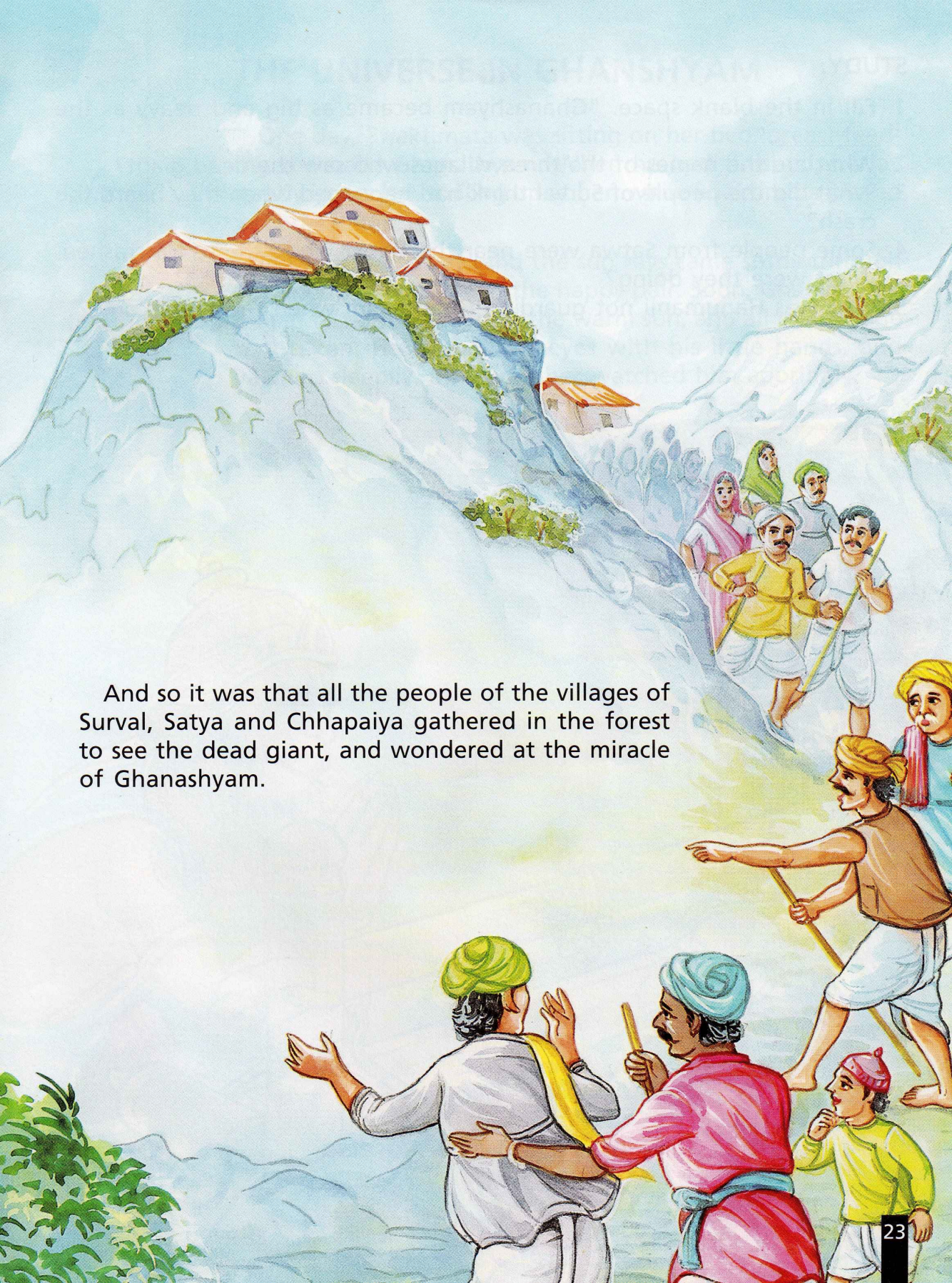
There he found the baby Ghanashyam smiling happily in his cradle. Bowing before Ghanashyam, Hanuman begged his forgiveness. " My lord, I should have been there to protect you from evil. But you were sleeping so peacefully, and I was hungry, and so I went for my food. Please forgive me." he said.





Rampratapbhai and Dharmadev were standing in the doorway, listening to this. When they heard about the adventure, and the death of the asura, they called all the people of the village and headed off for the forest to see the sight.

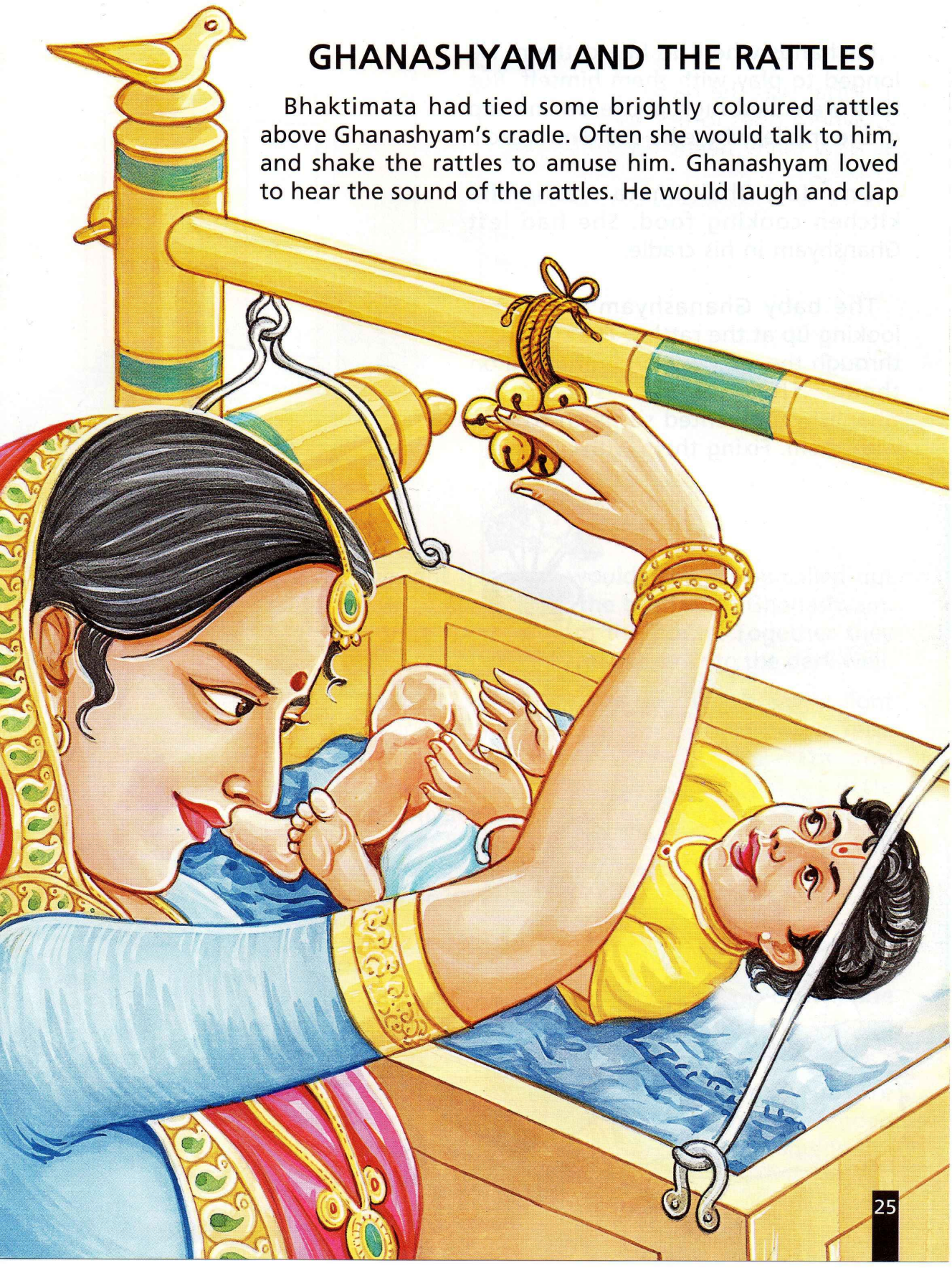




And so it was that all the people of the villages of Surval, Satya and Chhapaiya gathered in the forest to see the dead giant, and wondered at the miracle of Ghanashyam.

GHANASHYAM AND THE RATTLES

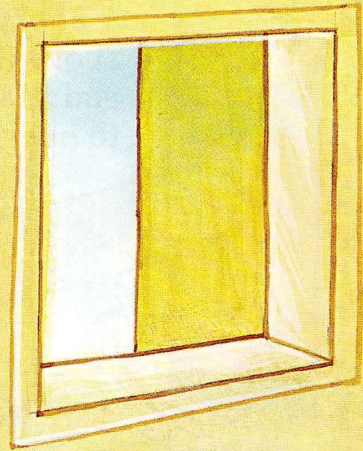
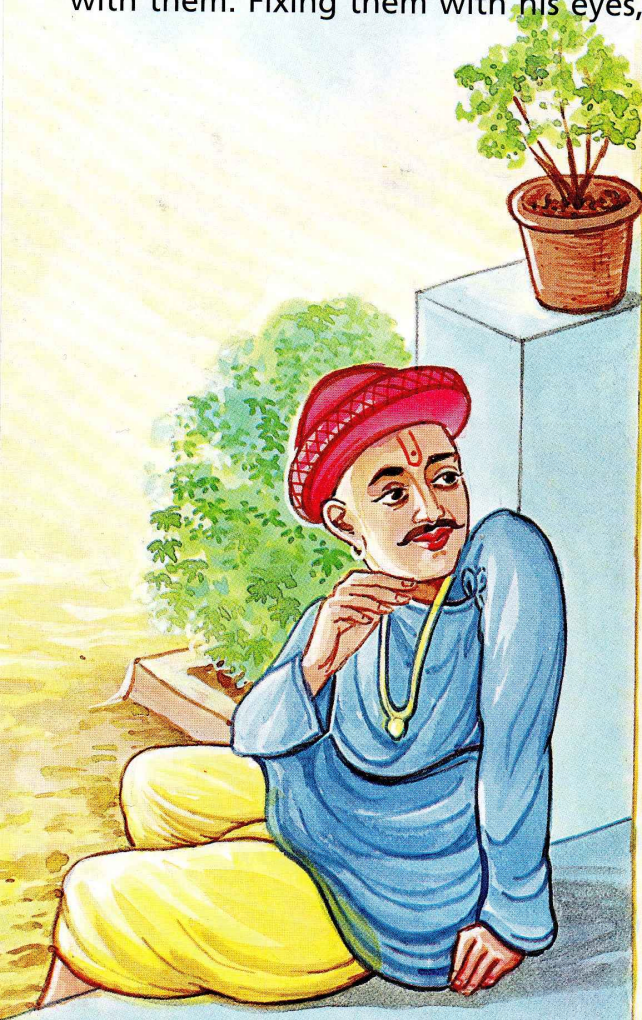
Bhaktimata had tied some brightly coloured rattles above Ghanashyam's cradle. Often she would talk to him, and shake the rattles to amuse him. Ghanashyam loved to hear the sound of the rattles. He would laugh and clap



his hands when he heard them. He longed to play with them himself. But they were tied high above on the top of the cradle, where he could not reach.

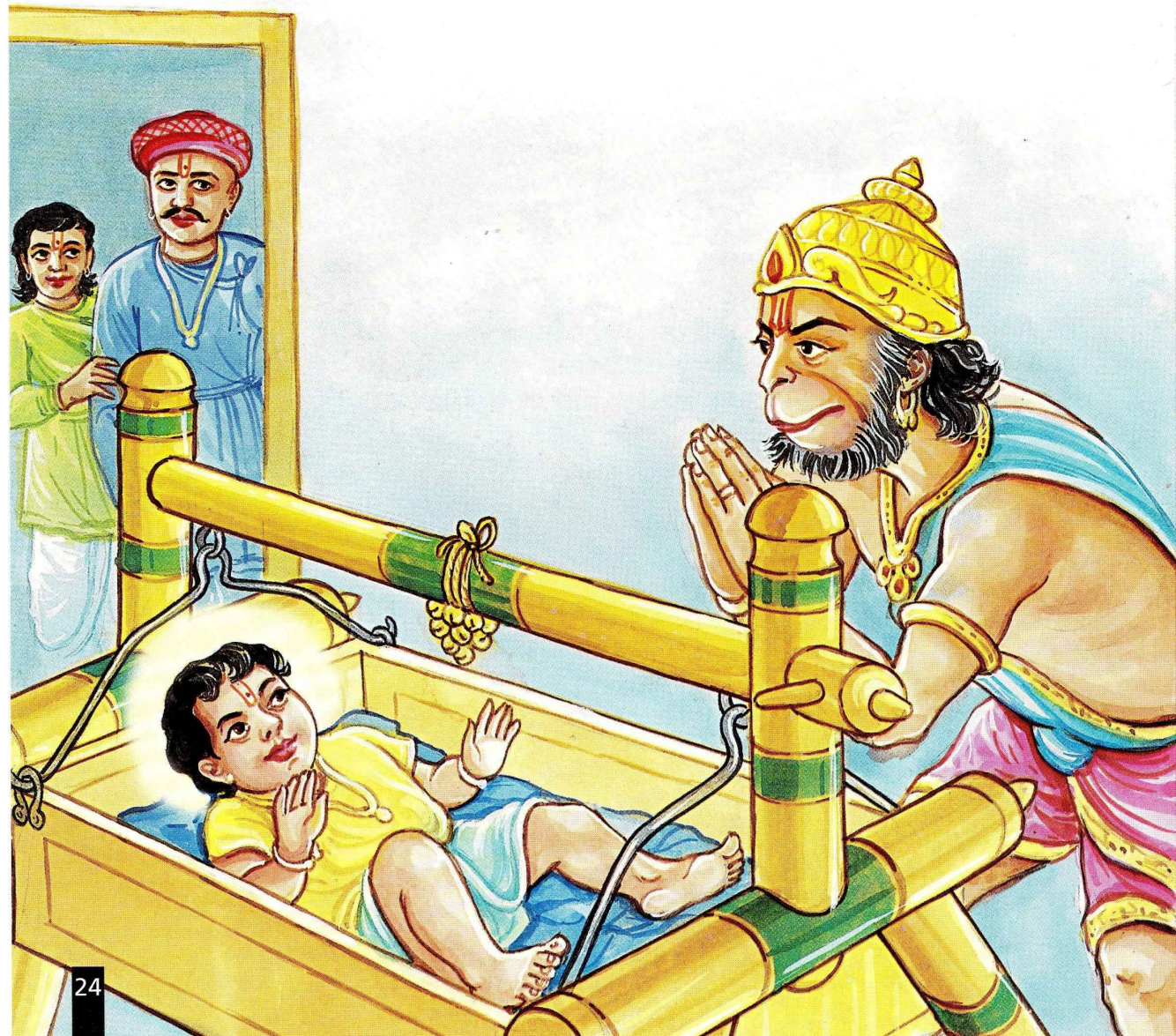
One day, Bhaktimata was in the kitchen cooking food. She had left Ghanashyam in his cradle.

The baby Ghanashyam lay there, looking up at the rattles. The sun came through the window, and glistened on them. They looked so pretty. Ghanashyam wanted so much to play with them. Fixing them with his eyes,



STUDY:

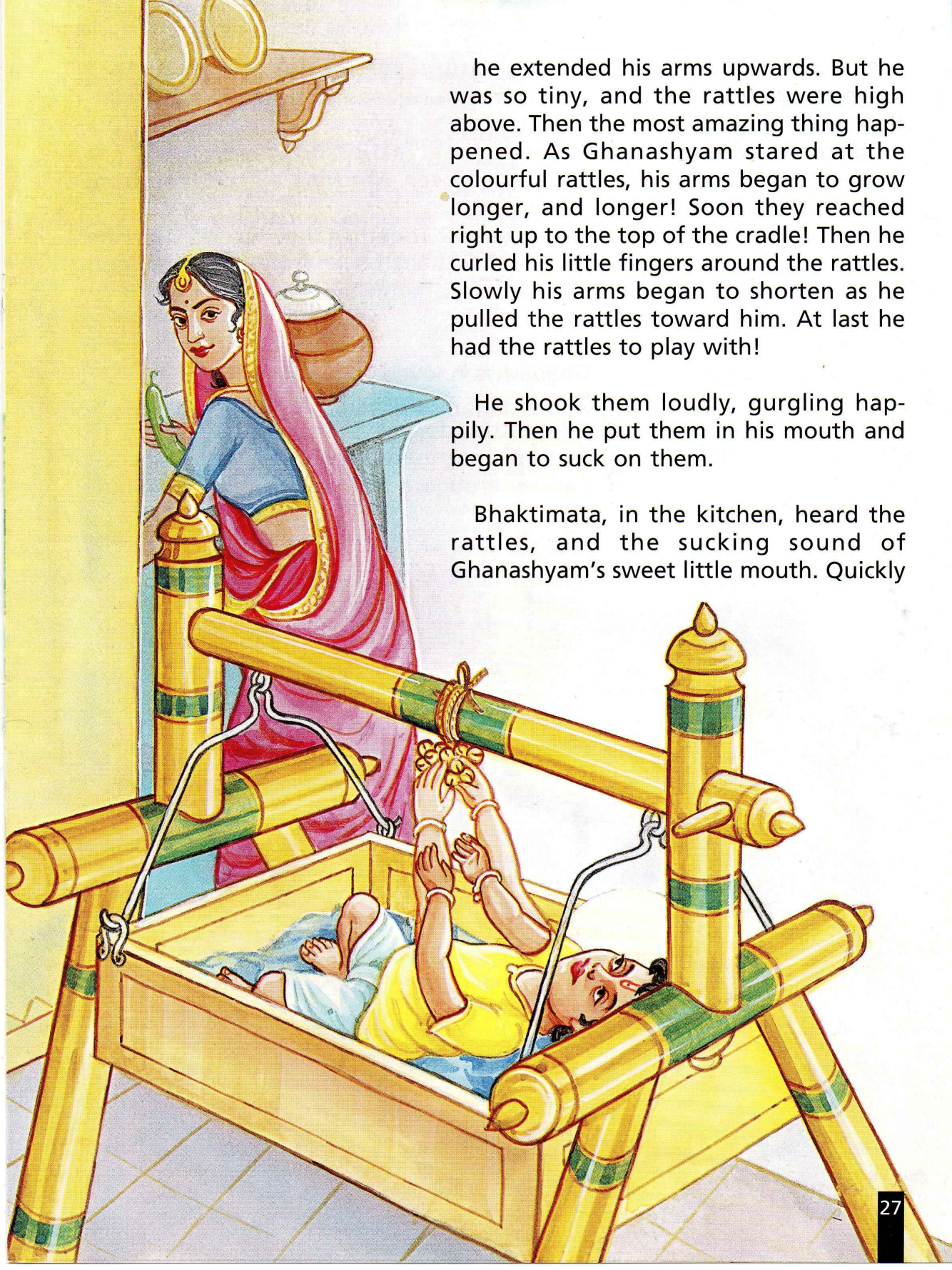
1. Fill in the blank space. "Ghanashyam became as big and heavy as the _____."
2. What are the names of the three villages who saw the dead giant?
3. What did the people of Surval think had happened when they heard the crash?
4. Some people from Satwa were near the forest when the asura crashed. What were they doing?
5. Why was Hanumanji not guarding Ghanashyam when the asura came?



he extended his arms upwards. But he was so tiny, and the rattles were high above. Then the most amazing thing happened. As Ghanashyam stared at the colourful rattles, his arms began to grow longer, and longer! Soon they reached right up to the top of the cradle! Then he curled his little fingers around the rattles. Slowly his arms began to shorten as he pulled the rattles toward him. At last he had the rattles to play with!

He shook them loudly, gurgling happily. Then he put them in his mouth and began to suck on them.

Bhaktimata, in the kitchen, heard the rattles, and the sucking sound of Ghanashyam's sweet little mouth. Quickly



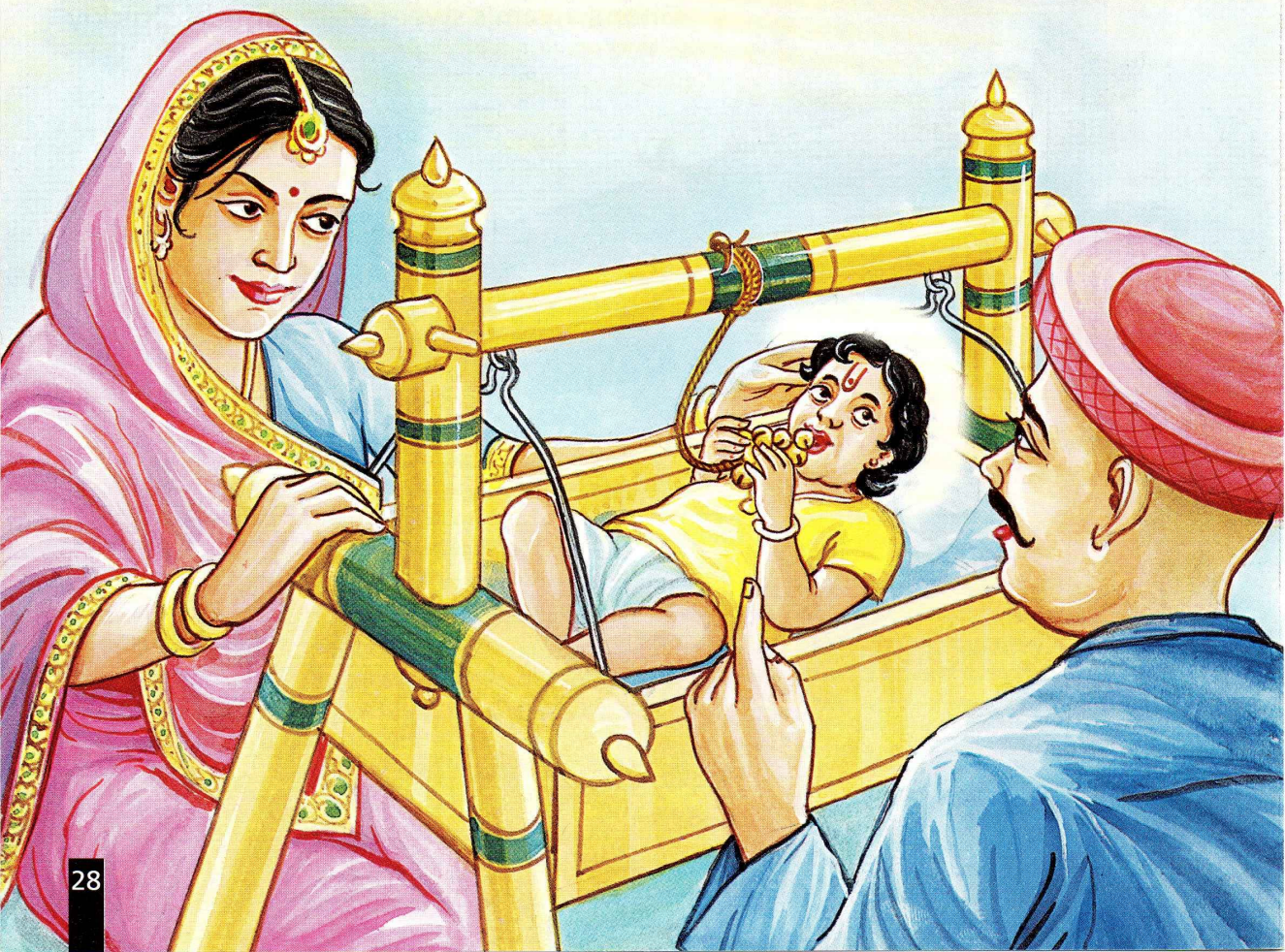
she put down her vegetables and came into the room where Ghanashyam lay. As she saw the rattles in Ghanashyam's hands, she wondered out aloud.

"Now, who could have pulled these rattles down for you?" But Ghanashyam's father, Dharmadev, had been watching all the time from the verandah.

He told Bhaktimata what he had seen. Together they leaned over the cradle, and fussed and played with their baby boy. "Truly" they thought, "Nothing is impossible for our little lord Ghanashyam."

STUDY:

1. Complete the sentence. "Ghanashyam loved to listen to the sound of the _____."
2. How did Ghanashyam get the rattles down?
3. Who was watching Ghanashyam from the verandah?
4. Make a rattle by getting a small cardboard box, and putting some buttons in it.



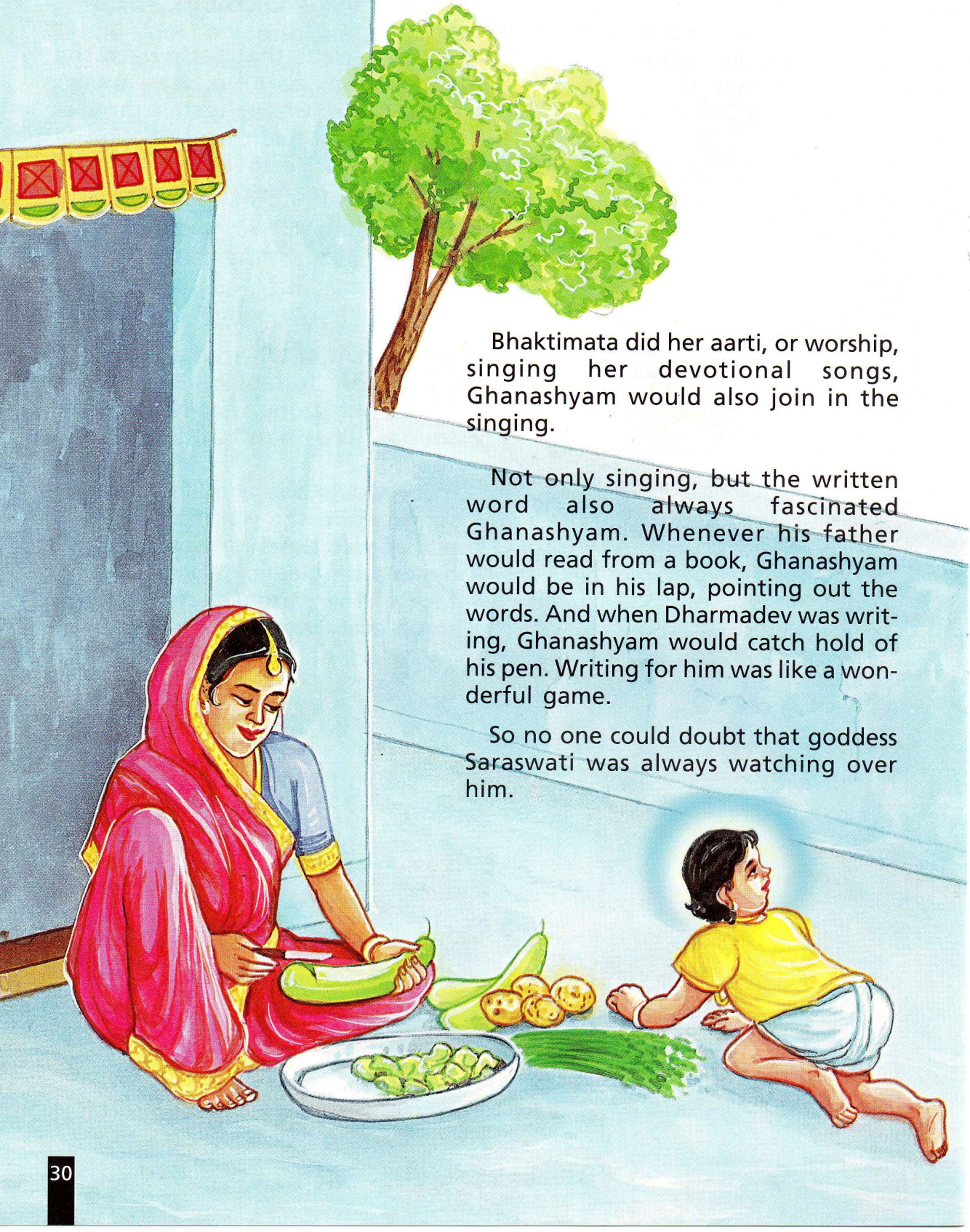
THE TWO GODDESSES

It was clear that Saraswati, the goddess of learning, was always present in Ghanshyam's house. Ghanshyam couldn't get enough of books, and He loved words even before He learned to speak them properly. It was as if Ghanshyam had two mothers - Bhaktimata and Saraswati!

In the evenings, when his mother rocked him in the cradle, and sang her gentle lullabies, Ghanshyam would sing along with her, making sounds like "aah" and "au" and "ee".

She would also sing him children's songs while she was bathing him, and at such times He would clap his hands with glee and splash the surface of the water, as if He understood every word. And when





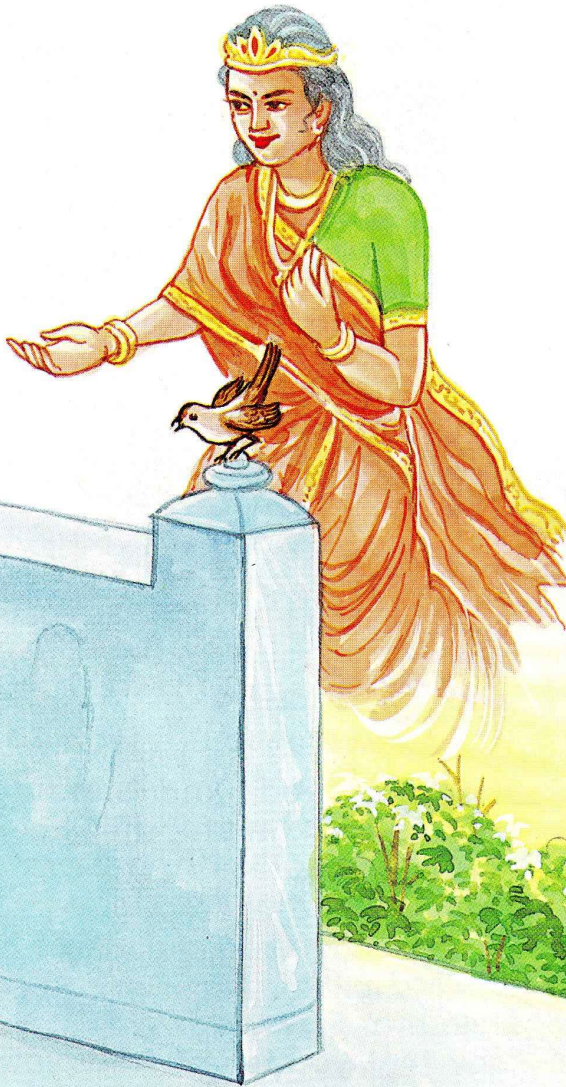
Bhaktimata did her aarti, or worship, singing her devotional songs, Ghanashyam would also join in the singing.

Not only singing, but the written word also always fascinated Ghanashyam. Whenever his father would read from a book, Ghanashyam would be in his lap, pointing out the words. And when Dharmadev was writing, Ghanashyam would catch hold of his pen. Writing for him was like a wonderful game.

So no one could doubt that goddess Saraswati was always watching over him.

The Mother goddess, Lakshmi, was jealous of this. She also wanted to be near the divine child, and shower him with her love. But she could not get near him because Saraswati was always with him. So she made a plan. She asked her friend to take the form of a sparrow, and to go to the verandah of Ghanashyam's house, and call him to play. "When he comes, I will also appear." she said.

So Lakshmi's friend turned herself into a sparrow, and flew to Ghanshyam's verandah.



Bhaktimata was preparing vegetables there, and Ghanshyam was crawling nearby. The little sparrow came to the edge of the verandah, and began chirping loudly, "chee...chee."

Ghanashyam lifted his head, and delighted at the little bird He crawled over to it. Sitting in front of the sparrow, He also tried to chirp like it. Then He stretched out his arms to pick up the bird.

At that moment Bhaktimata looked up from her vegetables. She was frightened that the sparrow would peck her little child. She immediately picked up a cloth and threw it over the sparrow. Ghanshyam burst into tears. He loved the little sparrow so much.

Just then, the little sparrow changed back into a beautiful woman. "I am goddess Lakshmi's friend." she said. "She wants to come and give your son her blessings." At that very moment the goddess Lakshmi appeared at her side. Bhaktimata was stunned to see the two beautiful beings in front of her.

Lakshmi then stepped forward, bowed before Ghanashyam, and then gently picked him up in her arms. "My little Lord", she said, "why do you always keep yourself only with Saraswati? Why don't you give me a chance to serve you also?"

The baby Ghanashyam looked gently up at her, and spoke with his eyes. "Mother, why are you jealous? In my life on this earth I will surely have need of both of you. There will come a time when I need you very much, and then your wish shall be fulfilled."



Lakshmi was overjoyed, and handing Ghanashyam back to Bhaktimata, she showered her blessings on him.

STUDY:

1. Who is Saraswati?
2. Who was jealous of Saraswati? Why?
3. Sing a lullaby that you learnt from your Mother.
4. What plan did Lakshmi make to see Lord Ghanashyam?
5. Why was Bhaktimata afraid of the sparrow?

