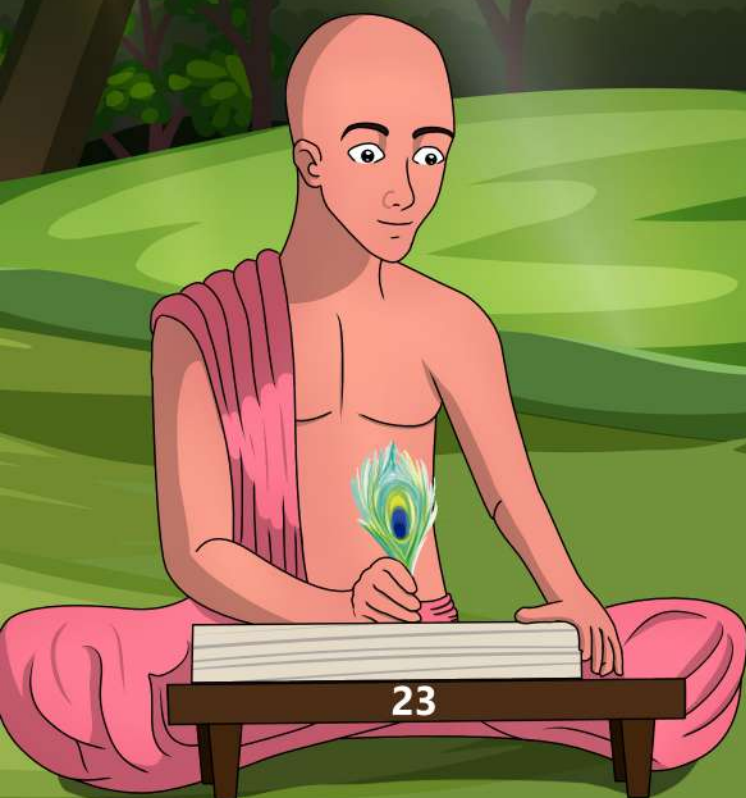


Keshi and Gautam

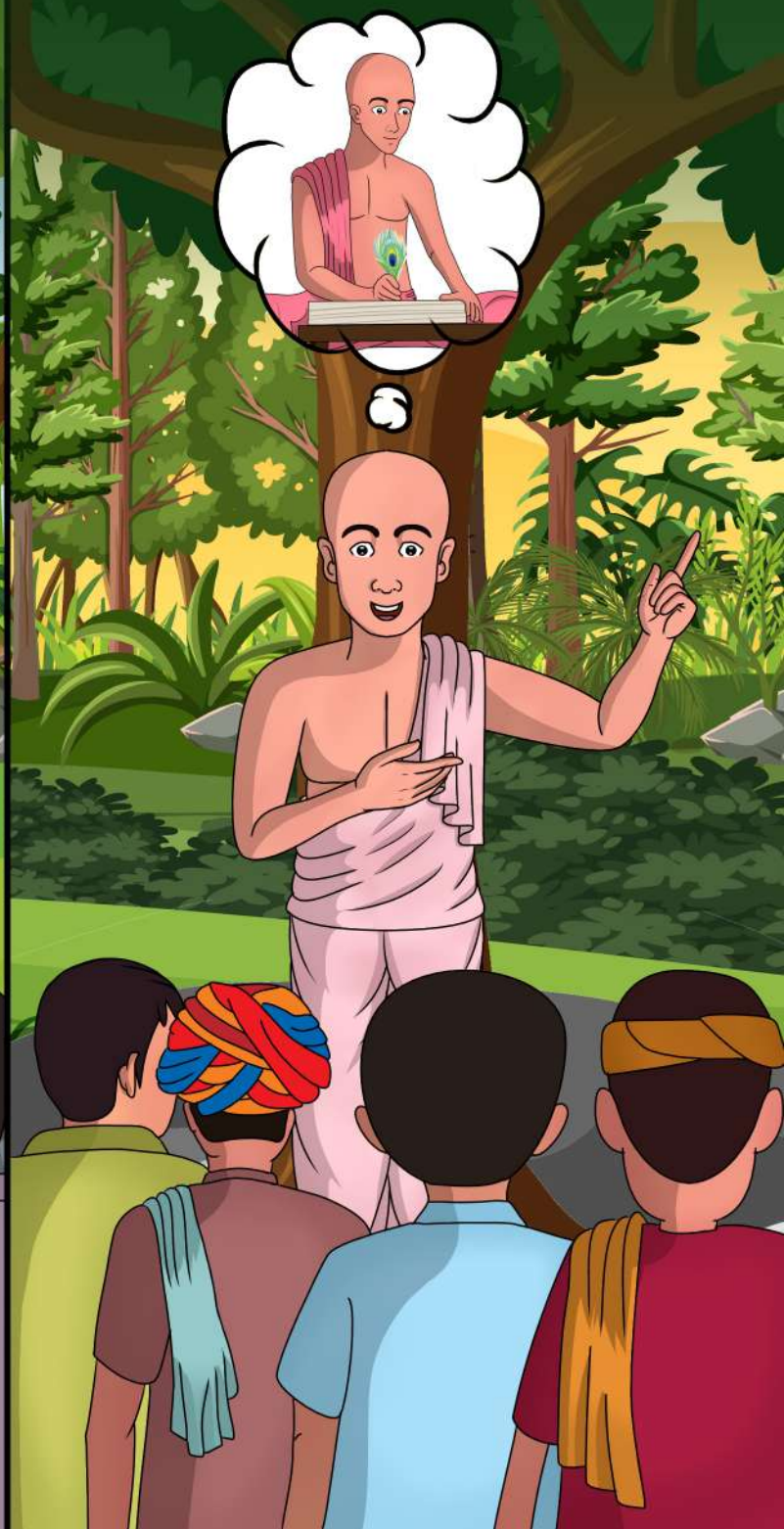


Lord Parshvanath was the twenty third Tirthankara. He had reestablished the religious order (Jain Sangh). Mahavira was the twenty fourth Tirthankara. He lived two hundred and fifty years after Parashvanath. As in Jain tradition each Tirthankara reestablishes religious order and so did Mahavira. Considering the environment at that time, he had modified rules and brought some changes in religious order. So some practices were a little bit different than the order established by Parashvanath.

250 years
After Parashvanath



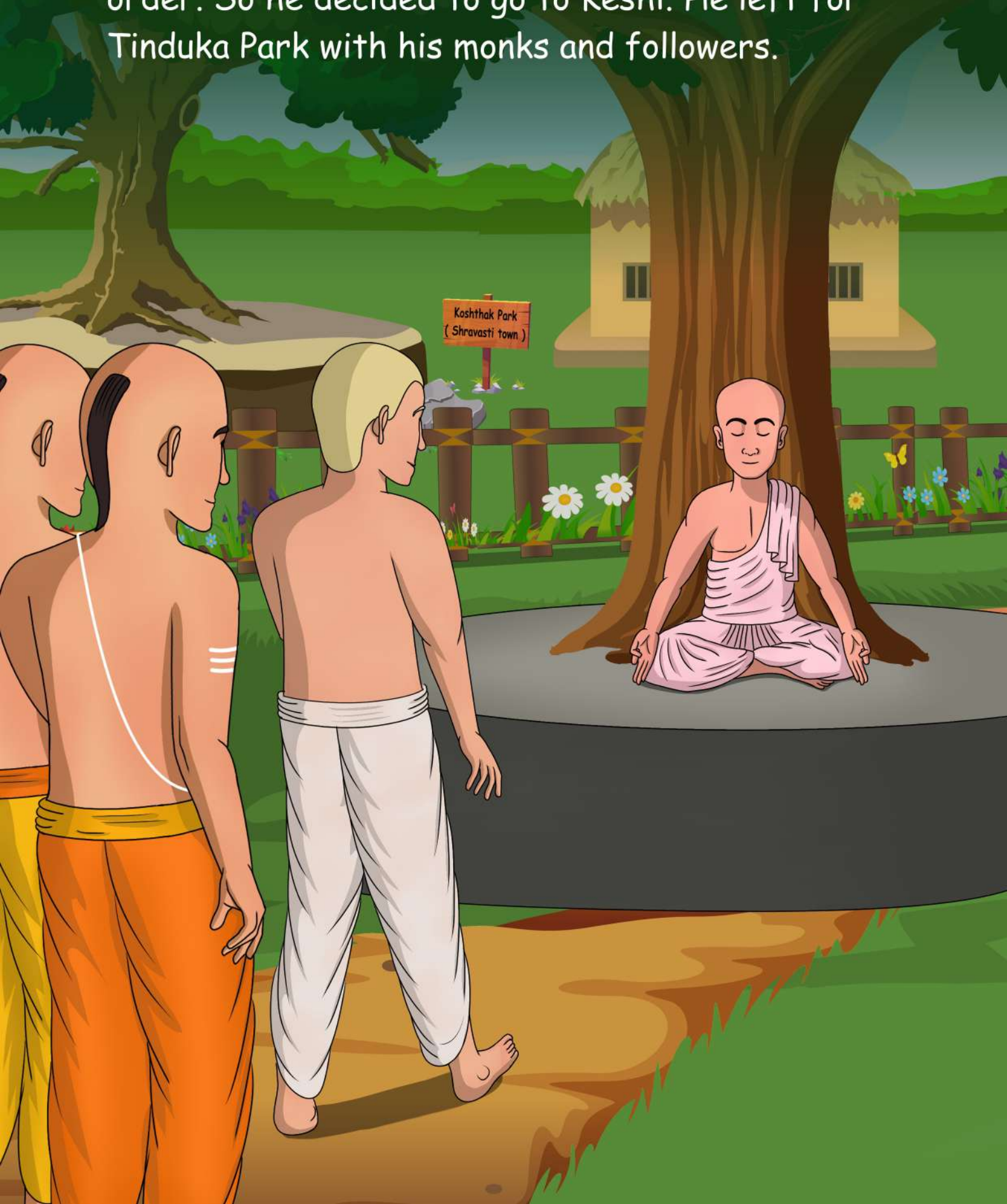
Indrabhuti Gautam was the head of monks in the order established by Mahavira. At that time there was also Muni Keshi, a learned monk following Parashvanath. Both Keshi and Gautam were moving about from place to place with their monks observing the vows strictly and preaching the Dharma.



Once in their wanderings both Keshi and Gautam came to Shravasti town. Keshi stayed with his monks in Tinduka Park. Gautam halted in Koshtak Park. In their outer living, the monks of the two orders looked different from one another. So the monks from both orders started thinking which order was right. Keshi and Gautam came to know about this. They wanted to make them know the reality. So they decided to meet each other.



Gautam knew that Keshi belonged to the older order and observed all the basic principles of that order. So he decided to go to Keshi. He left for Tinduka Park with his monks and followers.



When Keshi saw Gautam coming towards him, he came a few steps nearer Gautam and received him. He offered Gautam pure kinds of hay mats to sit upon.



Keshi and Gautam then sat there. They were shining like the sun and moon. Many people collected them out of curiosity. Even angels came there to enjoy the discussion about the Ascetic order. They then started their talk

KESHI: I want to ask you something, Holy man.

GAUTAM: Sir, ask whatever you like

KESHI: The law taught by the great Sage Parshva recognizes only four vows but the law of Vardhman Mahavir enjoins five vows. Both laws pursue the same goal. Then what has caused this difference?



Gautam: Have no doubts about these broad differences, O wise man. Wisdom recognizes the truth of the law. It also recognizes methods to arrive at the truth. The Saints at the time of Rishabhdeva, the first Tirthankar were simple but slow in understanding. They could understand the law but with difficulty. The saints of the present period of Mahavir are of reasoning type and slow in understanding too. They can observe the law with difficulties. The saints of the period second to twenty third Tirthankara were simple and wise. They can easily understand and observe the laws. So there are two forms of law. They understood that celibacy was covered in the vow of non-possession.



KESHI: Well, Gautam, you have great wisdom. You have removed my doubt. But I have another doubt. Could I place it before you?

GAUTAM: Yes, O wise Saint.

KESHI: The law taught by Vardhman prohibits wearing of clothes or allows just bare minimum simple white clothes by the monks but the law of Parshvanatil allows under and upper garments of different colors. Can you clarify this difference.



GAUTAM: O wise man! The Tirthankaras have fixed what is necessary for carrying out the law. They have decided the matter by their perfect knowledge. The outward symbols of the monks are for easy recognition by laymen. They are for observing self- discipline properly. Only right knowledge, right faith and right conduct are the true means for final liberation of the soul from a real point of view. There is no difference about it in the law of both Tirthankaras. The color of clothes had no attraction to the monks of law of Parshvanath as they are simple and wise. But the monks Mahavir 's order would make an issue. They would argue on different colors.



KESHI: You have removed my doubt, O wise man. But I have another doubt, kindly explain it to me.

GAUTAM: Kindly let me know your doubt, O wise man.

KESHI: Gautam, you stand surrounded by thousands of enemies. They are attacking you but you have humbled them all. Can you tell me how have you done it?

GAUTAM: By conquering one, five are subdued. By conquering five, ten are subdued. By conquering ten, I have subdued all the enemies.



KESHI: Can you tell me who you call the enemies?

GAUTAM: Self is the wandering element. Four passions and five sense feelings are her instigators. I have conquered these enemies, O wise Monk.

KESHI: You are very intelligent, O Guatam. You have destroyed my doubt. But I have another doubt also.

GAUTAM: Please tell me.

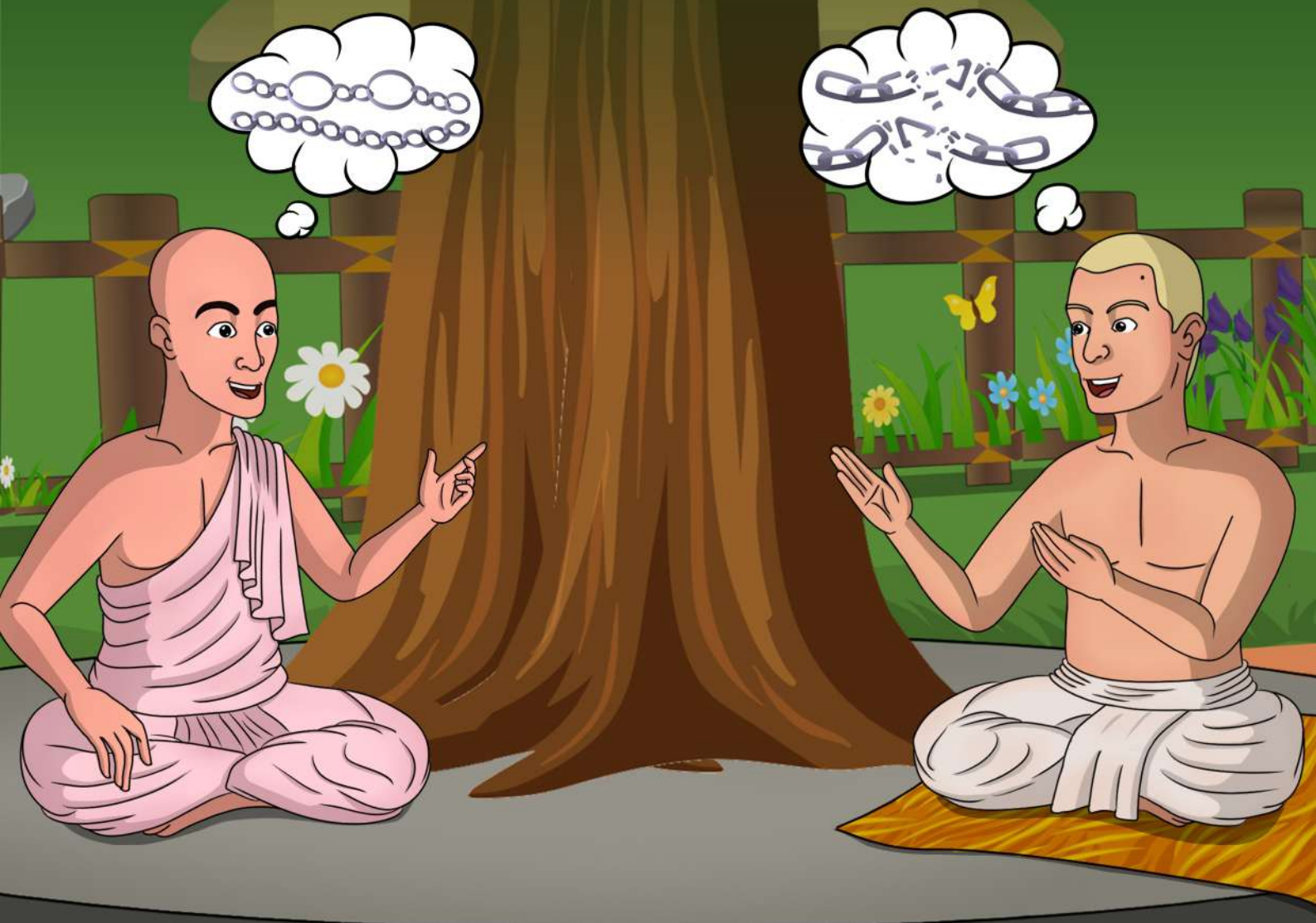


KESHI: We see many souls in shackles in this world. How are you without shackles, O Gautam?

GAUTAM: I have removed all shackles. I have destroyed them by right means. I am now free, O wise man.

KESHI: What do you call shackles, O Gautam.

GAUTAM: Deep attachment and hatred and infatuation for the family are the shackles. I have cut off those shackles by adopting the order of Mahavira. Now I am free.



KESHI: You are very wise, Gautam. You have removed my doubt. But I have another doubt.

GAUTAM: Do not hesitate to tell me, O wise man.

KESHI: O Gautam, in the innermost heart there grows a plant that bears poisonous fruit. How have you removed that plant?

GAUTAM: I have thoroughly clipped that plant. I have removed it completely with the roots. I no longer get the poisonous fruit.



KESHI: What is that plant, O Gautam?

GAUTAM: Love of existence is that dangerous plant. It brings forth dangerous fruit. I have uprooted it completely. I now live pleasantly.

KESHI: You have removed my doubt, Gautam. I still have doubts.

GAUTAM: Kindly tell me, Keshi.



KESHI: There is blazing up dreadful fire all around. It is burning the embodied souls. How have you put out that fire?

GAUTAM: I have taken excellent water from the rivers produced by clouds. I always pour that water on the fire. The fire has subsided so it does not burn me.

KESHI: What is that fire, Gautam?

GAUTAM: Passions (Anger, conceit, deceit and greed) are the fire. Knowledge, virtuous life and penance are the water. The fire sprinkled with this water does not burn me.



KESHI: You have cleared my doubt, Gautam. I have yet another doubt.

GAUTAM: Please tell me.

KESHI: The stubborn, dreadful bad horse is running about. You are riding on it, o Gautam. How is it that it does not run off on the wrong path with you?

GAUTAM: I control it properly by the bridle of knowledge. It does not go astray with it and keeps to the right path.

KESHI: What is that horse, Gautam?

GAUTAM: Mind is that stubborn dreadful bad horse. I control it by discipline.

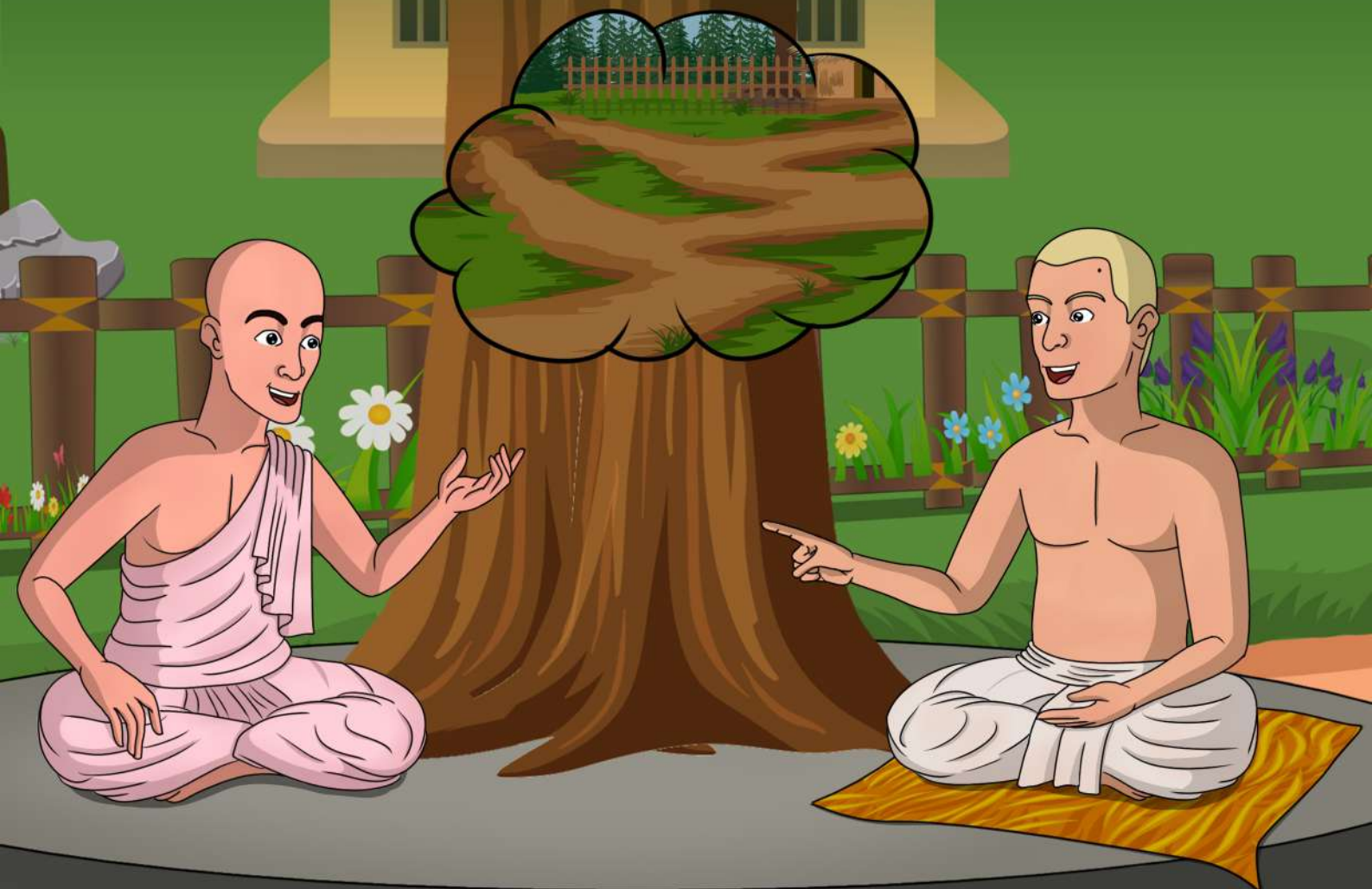


KESHI: You have removed my doubt, Gautam. I still have a few more doubts.

GAUTAM: Please tell me.

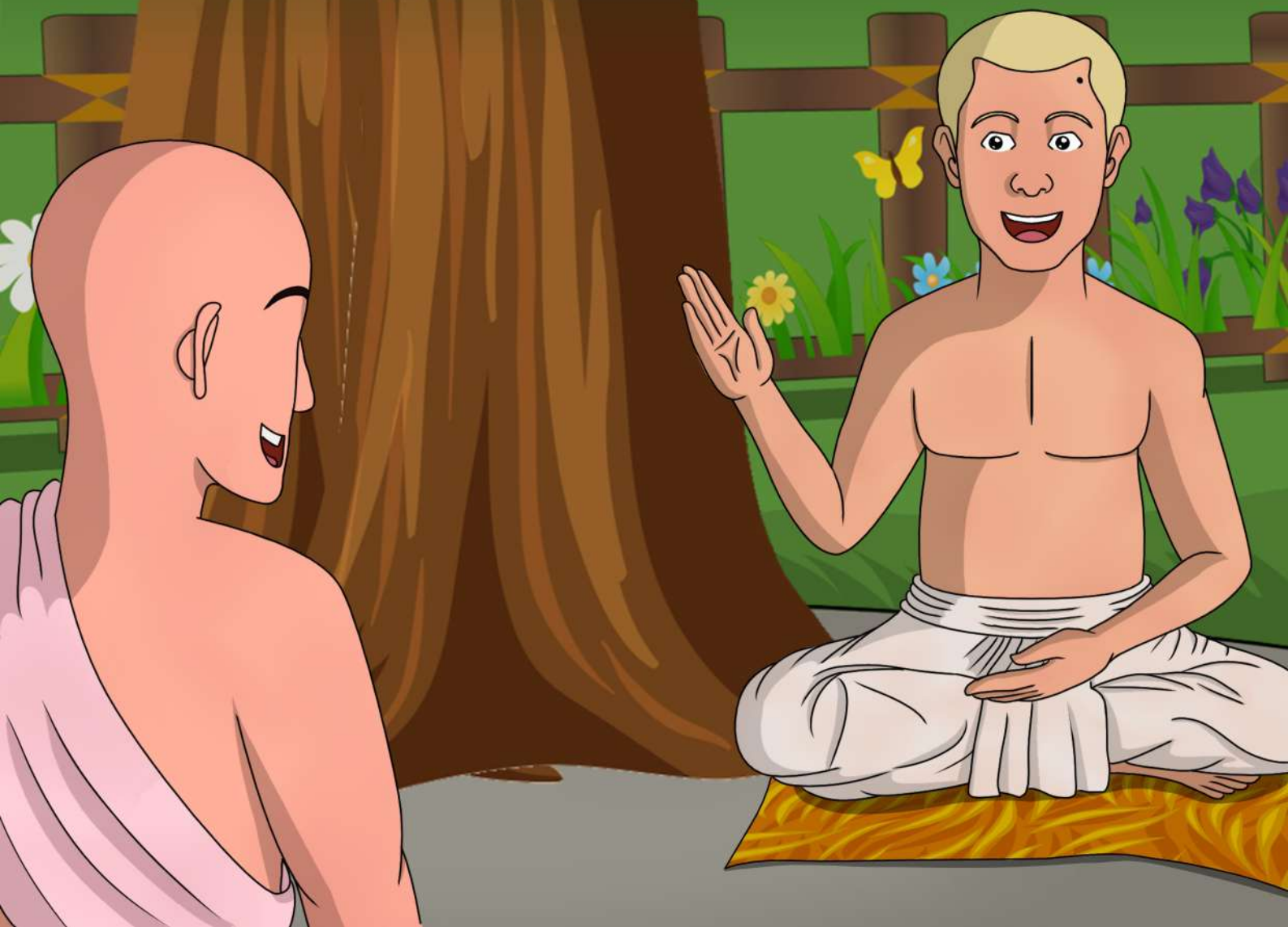
KESHI: There are many bad roads in this world that lead men astray. But you are on the right road. How have you avoided going astray O Gautam?

GAUTAM: I know all the roads. I know those who are on the right path and those who have chosen the wrong path. So I do not go astray, O wise man.



KESHI: What is that path, Gautam?

GAUTAM: The Heterodox (not in accordance with established or accepted doctrines or opinions, especially in theology) and the Heretics (A professed believer who maintains religious opinions contrary to those accepted by his or her order reject doctrines prescribed by that order.) have all chosen the wrong path. The right path is that taught by Tirthankaras. It is the best path.



KESHI: You have removed my doubt, Gautam. My next doubt is what is a shelter, a refuge, a firm ground for the Jivas carried away by the great flood of water? What is the island for them?

GAUTAM: There is a large island in the midst of waters. That island is not swamped with the great flood of water.

KESHI: What is that island?

GAUTAM: The flood is old age and death that carries away the living beings. Law is the island, the firm ground, the refuge and the best shelter.



KESHI: You have removed my doubt. But I have a few more doubts.

GAUTAM: Please tell me.

KESHI: The boat is drifting in the ocean full of many currents. You are riding that boat. How shall you cross the ocean?

GAUTAM: A boat that leaks will not reach the opposite shore. A boat that does not leak will reach the opposite shore.

KESHI: What is that boat?

GAUTAM: The body is the boat, jiva is the sailor, and the circle of births are currents in the ocean that is crossed by the sages.



KESHI: You have cleared my doubt, Gautam. I have another doubt.

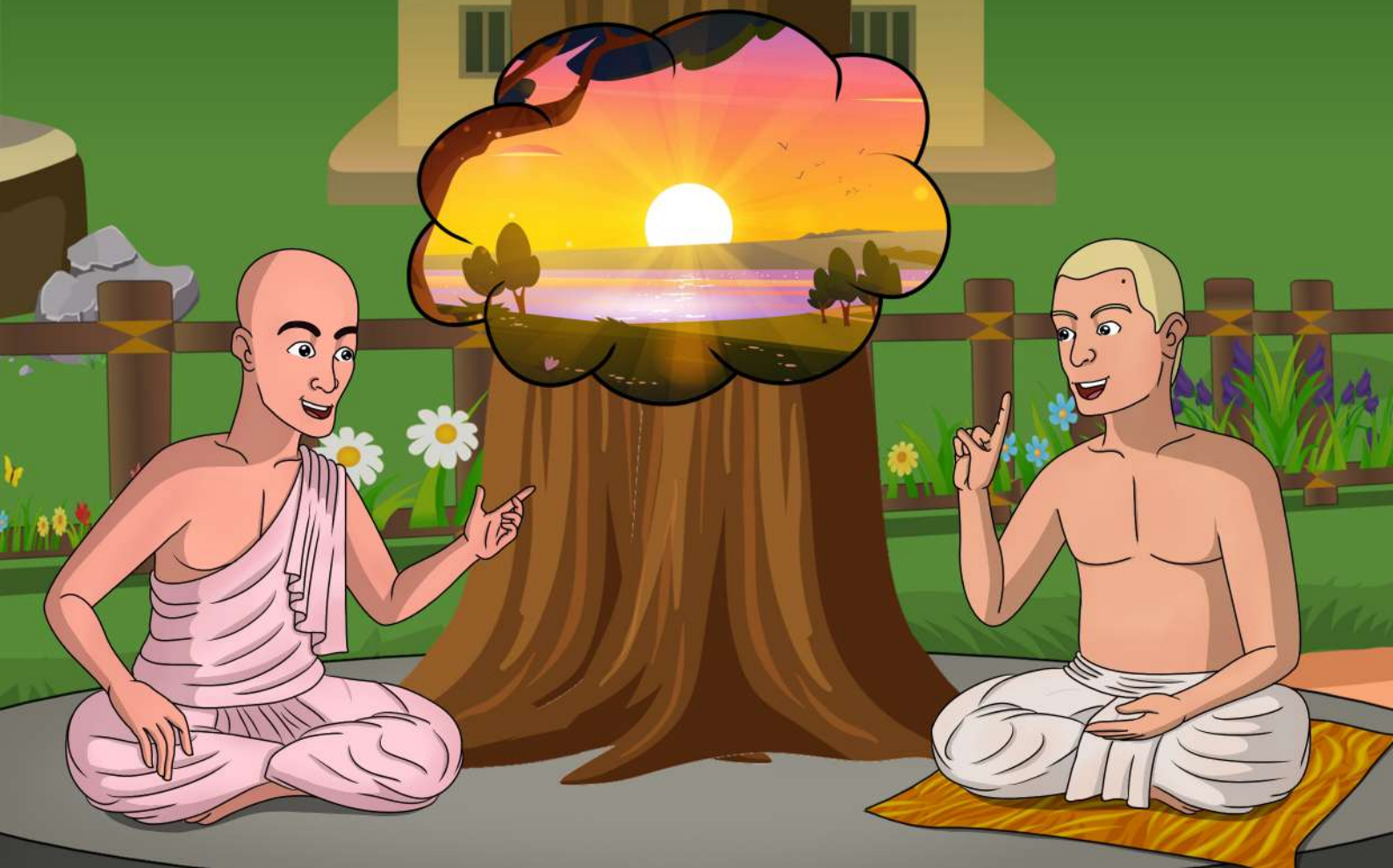
GAUTAM: Kindly tell me, o wise man.

KESHI: In this dreadful, dark despair there live many Jivas (Souls). Who will bring light to the whole world of living beings?

GAUTAM: The spotless sun has risen that illuminates the whole world. He will bring light into the whole world of living beings.

KESHI: What is that sun, Gautam?

GAUTAM: He who has put an end to the circle of births is the sun. He is the Omniscient Jina. He is the luminary who brings light to the whole world of living beings.



KESHI: You have cleared my doubt. Now kindly clear the last doubt also.

GAUTAM: Please tell me that doubt.

KESHI: The living beings are suffering from physical and mental diseases. What is the place where Omniscient can stay in peace without any interference?

GAUTAM: In the uppermost part of the universe there is the place where there is no old age, death, diseases or pain. But it is very difficult to reach there.



KESHI: Which is that place?

GAUTAM: That place is Siddhashila. It is expressed by different names. It is called Nirvana, Freedom from pain, Salvation, Moksha, etc.

KESHI: You have removed all my doubts. Your wisdom is great. You are an ocean of knowledge. I bow to you.



Keshi then adopted the five fold path of Lord Mahavira. Thousands of people who had gathered also had a clear understanding of true Dharma and bowed to the two Great Saints, Gandhar Gautam and Muni keshi.

