

# TASHI

## THE EXPLORER MEETS

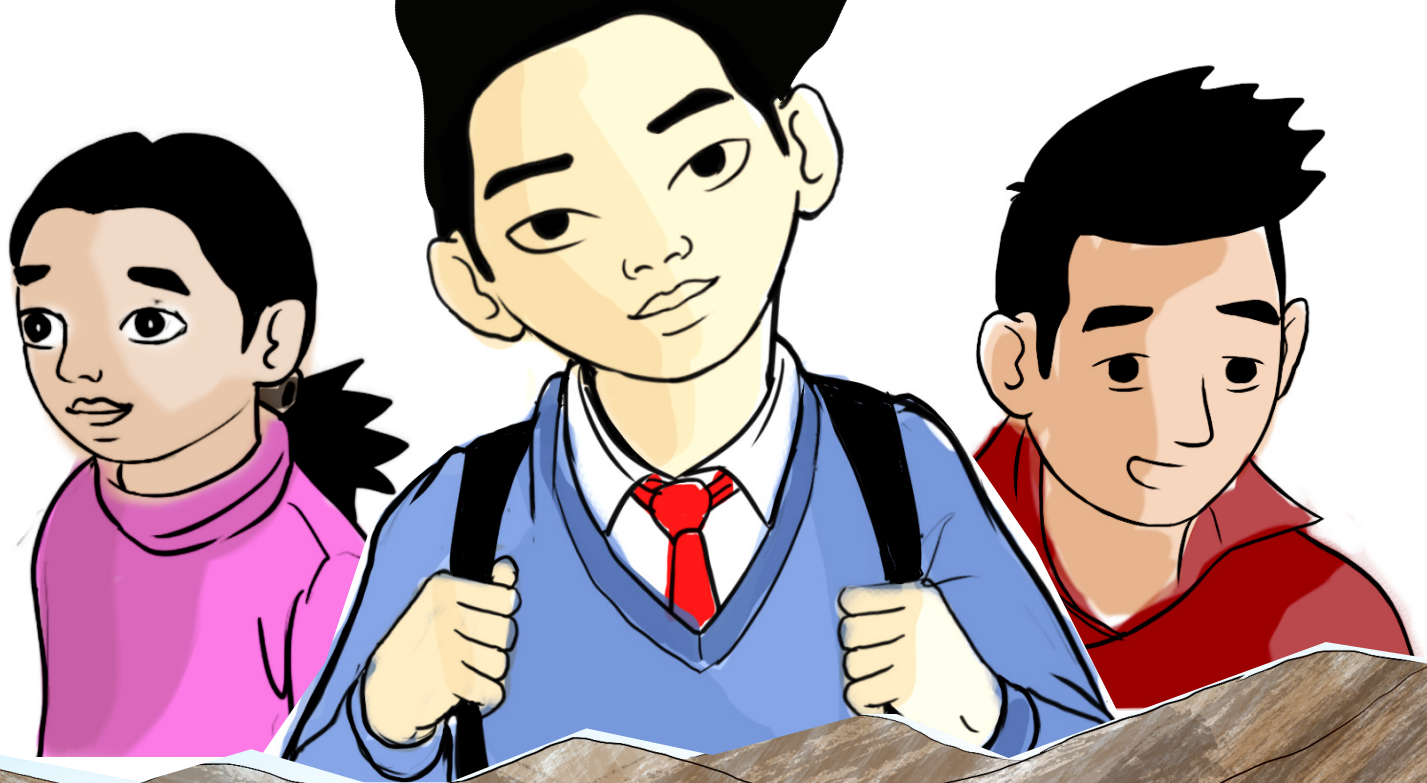
# THE CHANGPA

**Illustrators**

Haninder Sharma & Sharwari Dogre

**Editor**

Saloni Bhatia





**Dedicated to the children and teachers of the  
Nomadic Residential School, Puga, Changthang, Ladakh**

**Authors:** The contents of this publication were created as part of a workshop with the students and teachers of the Nomadic Residential School, Puga, Changthang, Ladakh. Workshop facilitated by Haninder Sharma, Ruchi Mathur, Tundup Churpon, Jigmat Norboo and Jigmet Namgial.

**Editor:** Saloni Bhatia

**Illustrators:** Haninder Sharma & Sharwari Dogre

**Designer:** Varun Manoharan

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# Preface

The high-altitude Himalaya, characterized by huge geological formations, largely infertile due to extreme weather conditions, have pockets of land where immense biodiversity exists. These resource rich areas provide great value for the subsistence of nomadic communities, like the Changpas of Ladakh, who have traditionally engaged (and survived) with nature and its resources, as these oases not only provide food and medicine for their wellbeing but also water for millions of people living downstream.

With time, various changes have taken place in the lifestyle of Changpas. Their sustainable relationship with nature, have suffered disruptions with the introduction of industrial alternatives, tourism and the new economy around it, uneven access of technology and education, resulting in urban migration and resettlement. However, in recent years, remigration (return) to the region and conversations on how to strike a balance between traditional knowledge and beneficial aspects of technology are being observed. Thus, the documentation and dissemination of traditional knowledge systems and availability of such resources within local formal education platforms has become increasingly relevant and necessary.

In view of this, the Wildlife Management Department, Union Territory Administration of Ladakh and United Nations Development Programme, through the project SECURE Himalaya, worked closely with Achi Association India (AAI) for the documentation, dissemination and revival of conservation based traditional practices. AAI, whose work has contributed immensely to the preservation of extraordinary but endangered cultural heritage of Ladakh, conducted a series of interviews and workshops with Changpa elders and students of the Nomadic Residential School, Puga with the aim of introducing traditional knowledge-based modules in the education system.

The content and methodology were conceptualised by Abeer Gupta and Joyoti Roy, AAI, workshops conducted by Ruchi Mathur, Tundup Churpon, Jigmat Norboo and Jigmat Namgial. They were made possible with the immense contribution of the Changthang High Altitude Nomadic Research Institute, who have set up a craft studio and research centre in Puga. Based on the material generated, a content and illustration team, with Haninder, Sharwari Dorge and Saloni Bhatia made the volumes come together with additional inputs and photographs from Gulzar Hussain and publication design by Varun Manoharan.





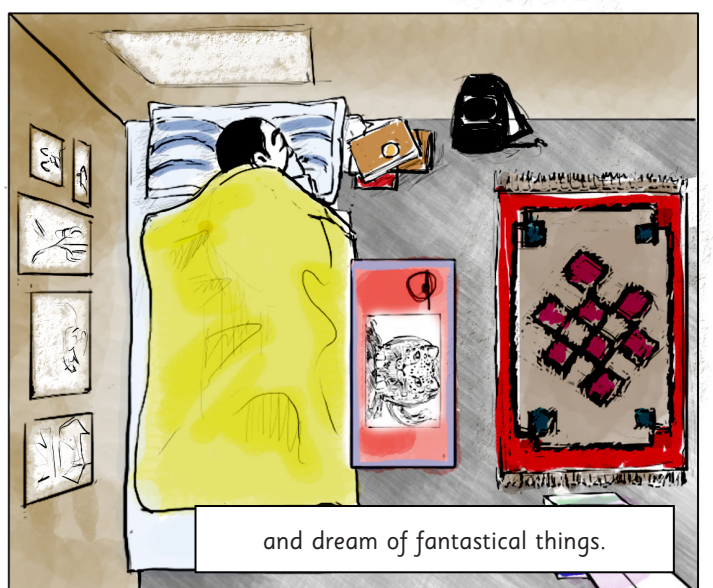
Somewhere in a village in Ladakh lived a boy named Tashi Dawa.



He loved drawing and dreaming up fantastical worlds.



Everyday he would draw till he slept...

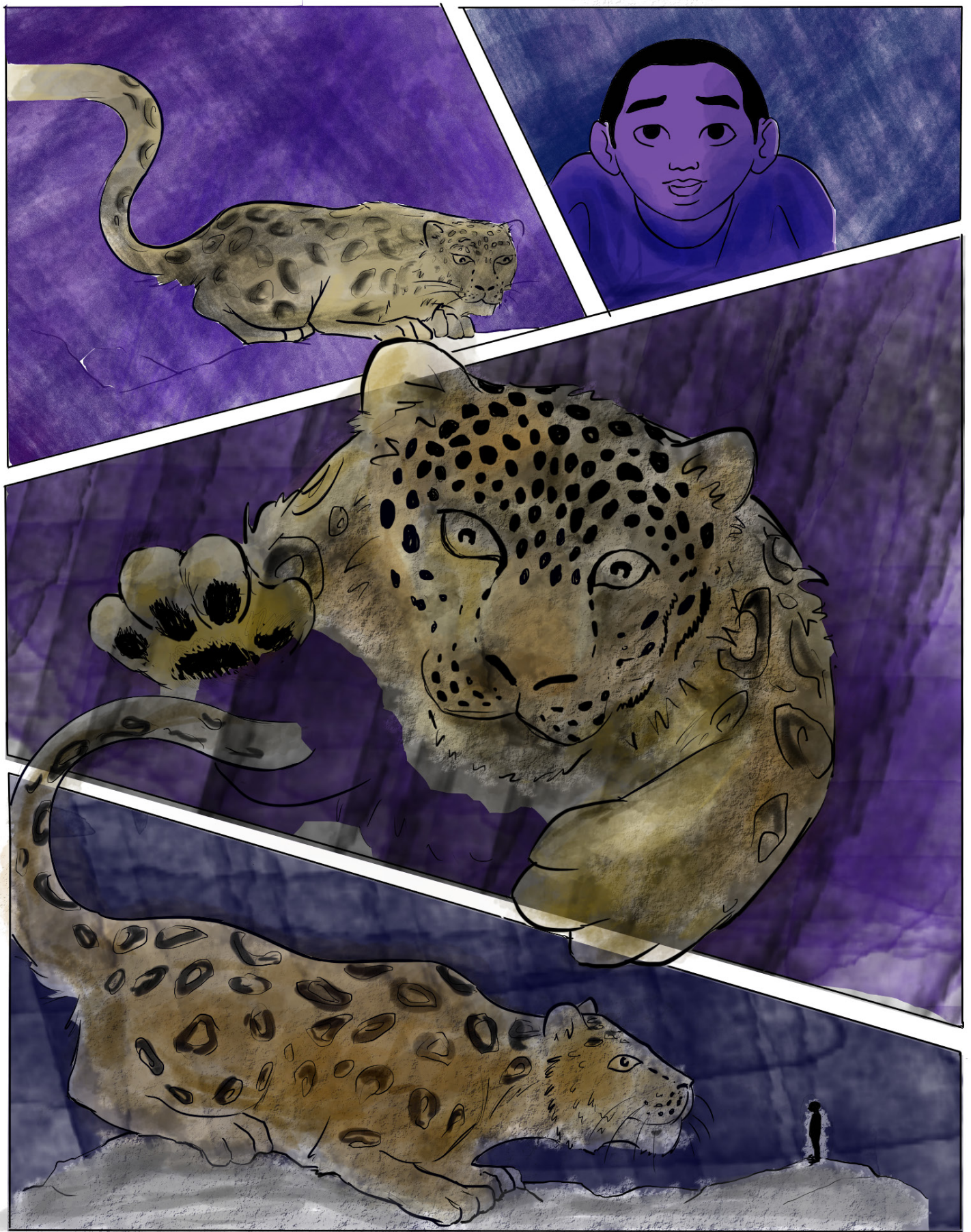


and dream of fantastical things.

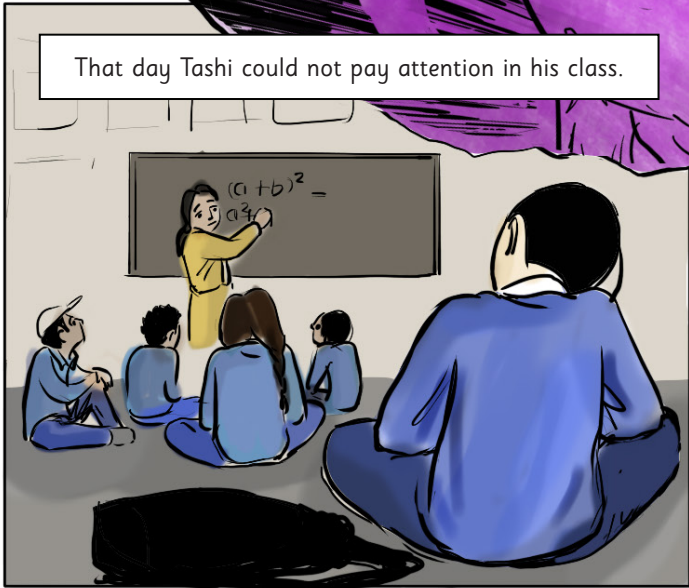
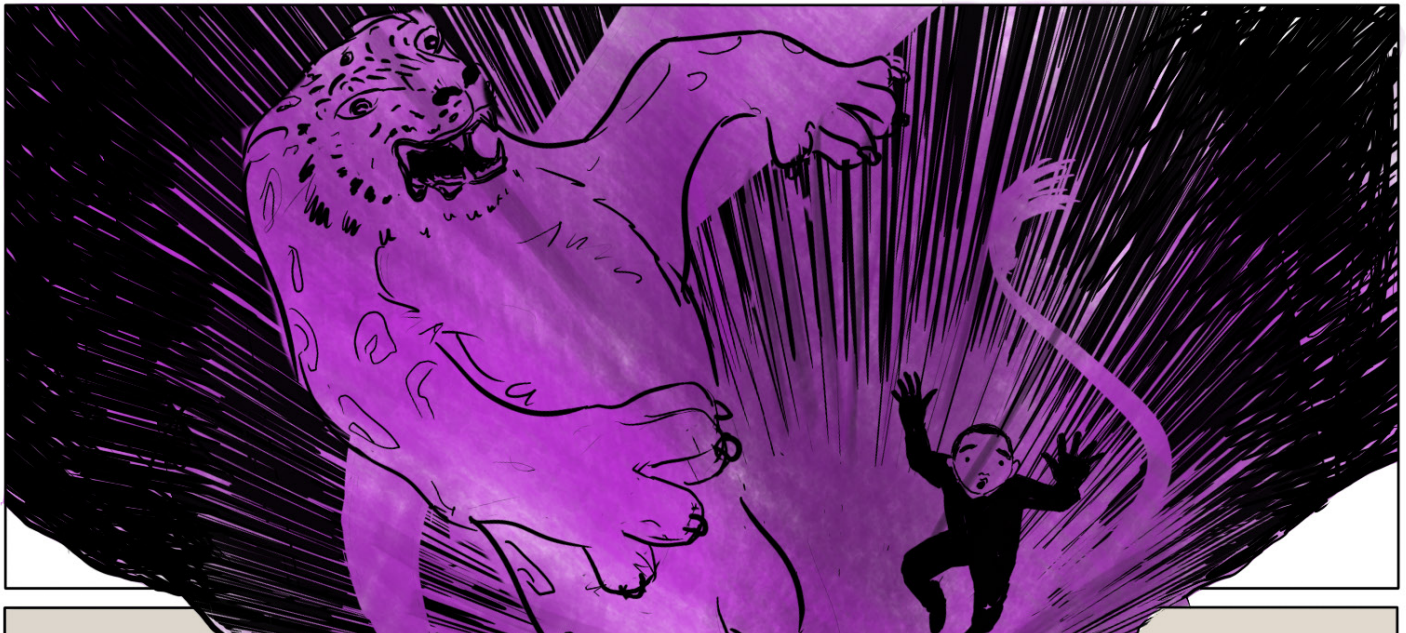


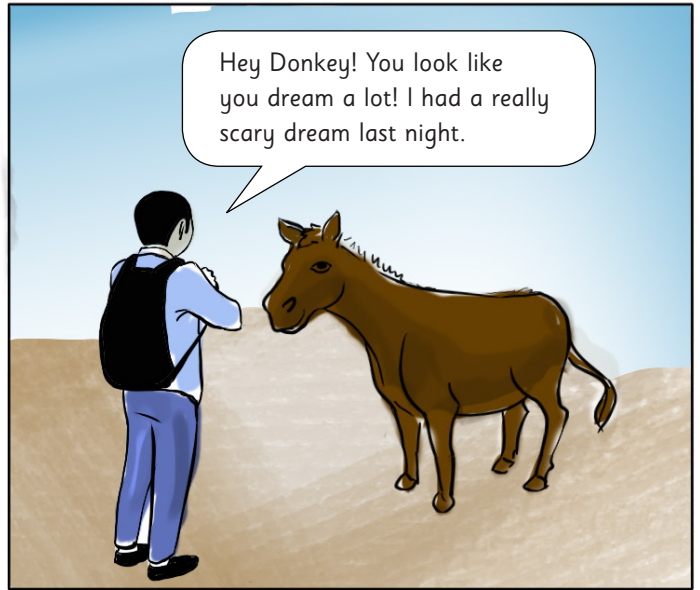
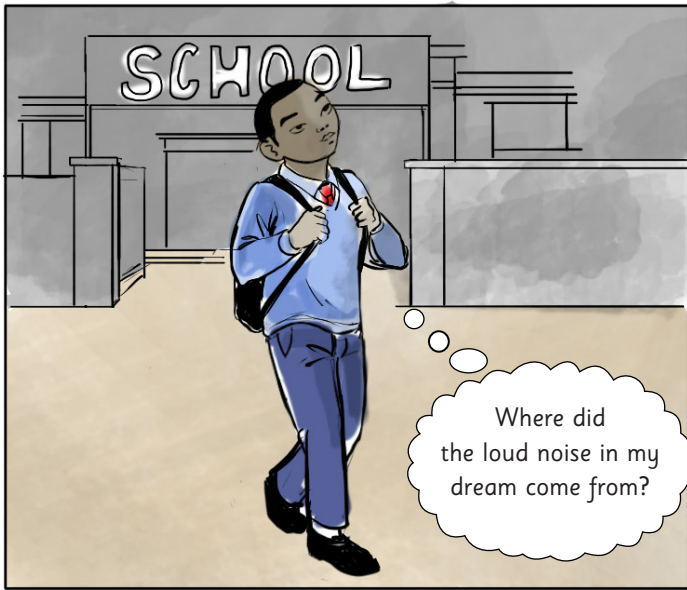
Tashi would often reach his magical land in his dreams.



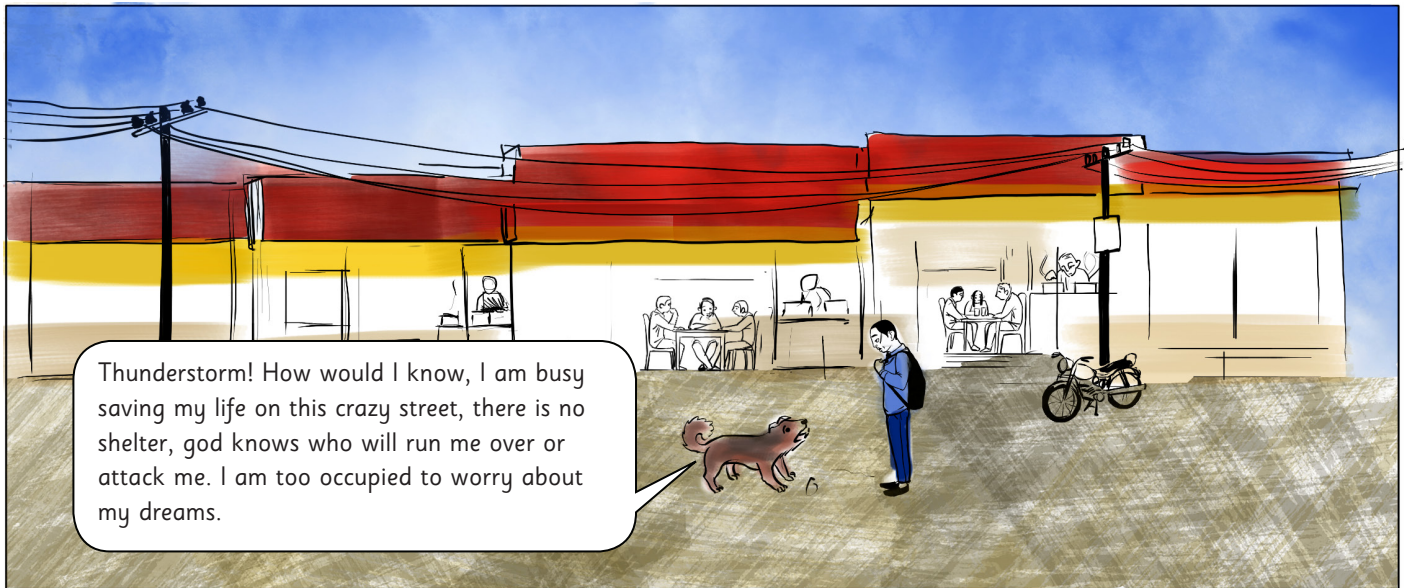








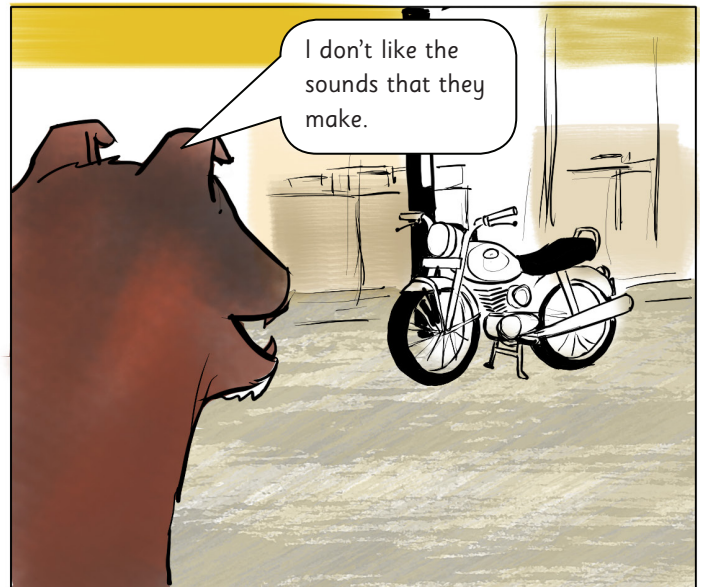




Thunderstorm! How would I know, I am busy saving my life on this crazy street, there is no shelter, god knows who will run me over or attack me. I am too occupied to worry about my dreams.



Do you want to play some games for a while? I like to chase cars and bikes to cheer myself up.



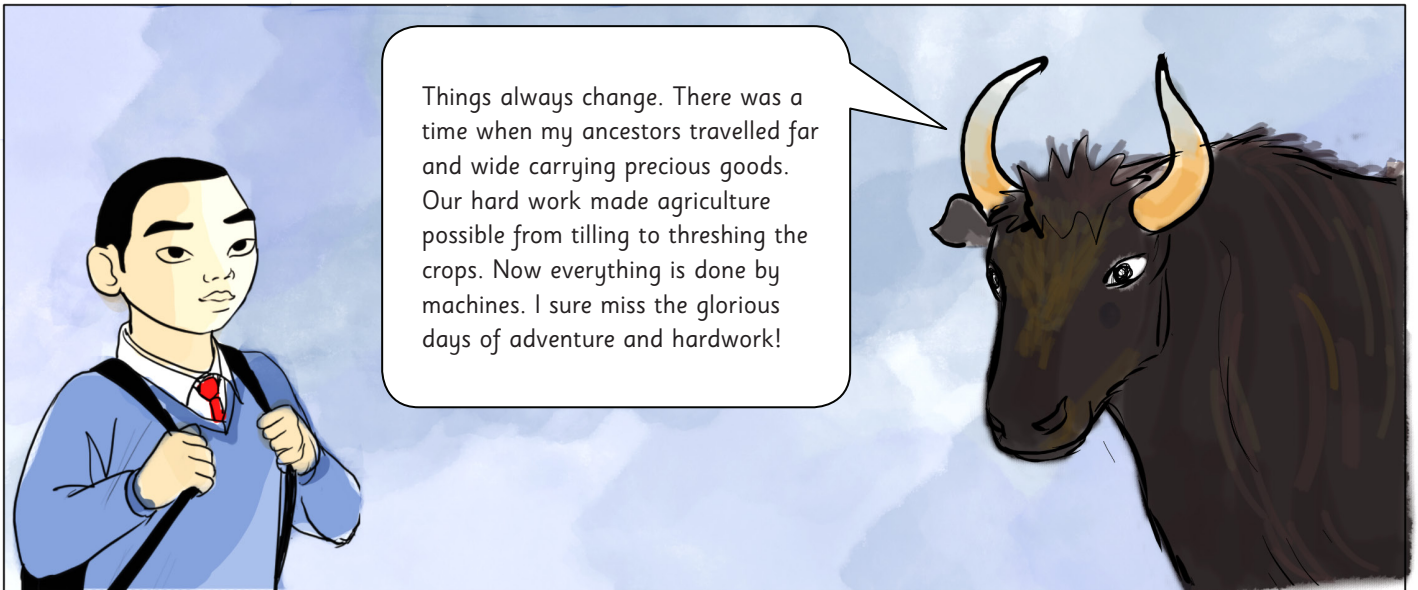
I don't like the sounds that they make.



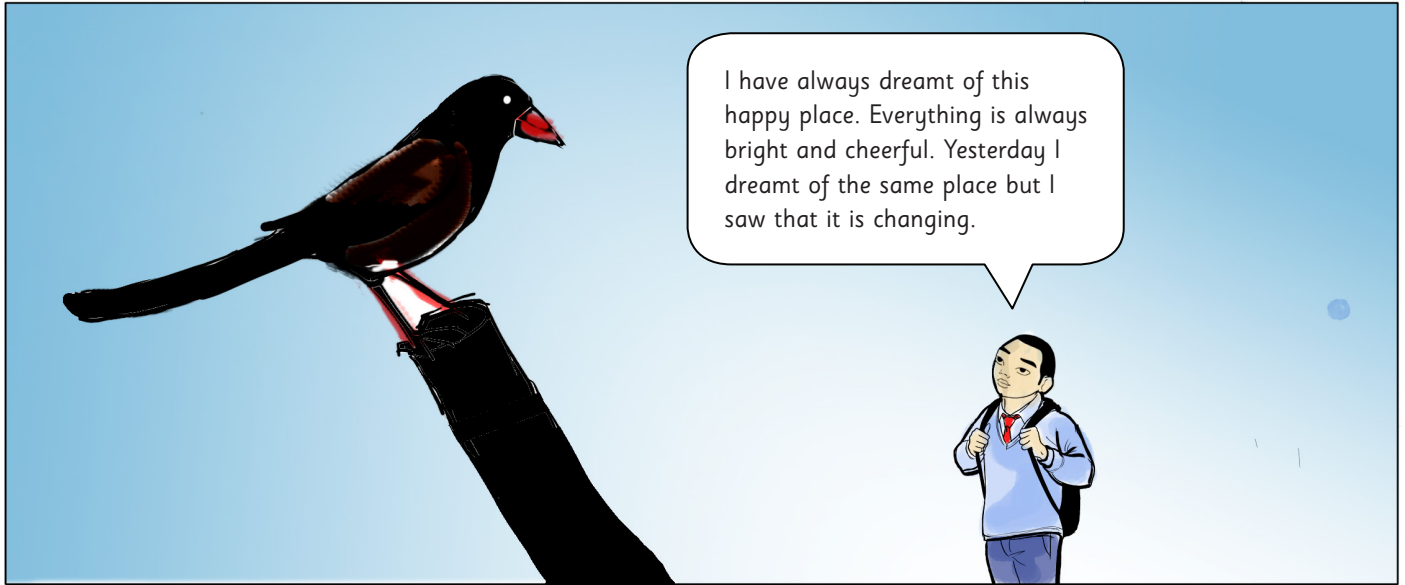
No thanks, doggy, I don't feel like playing games.



And you need to leave the donkey alone!







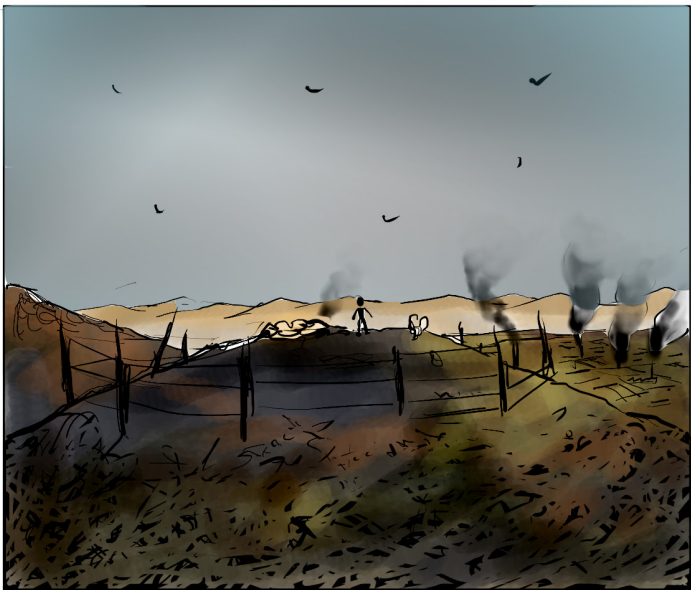




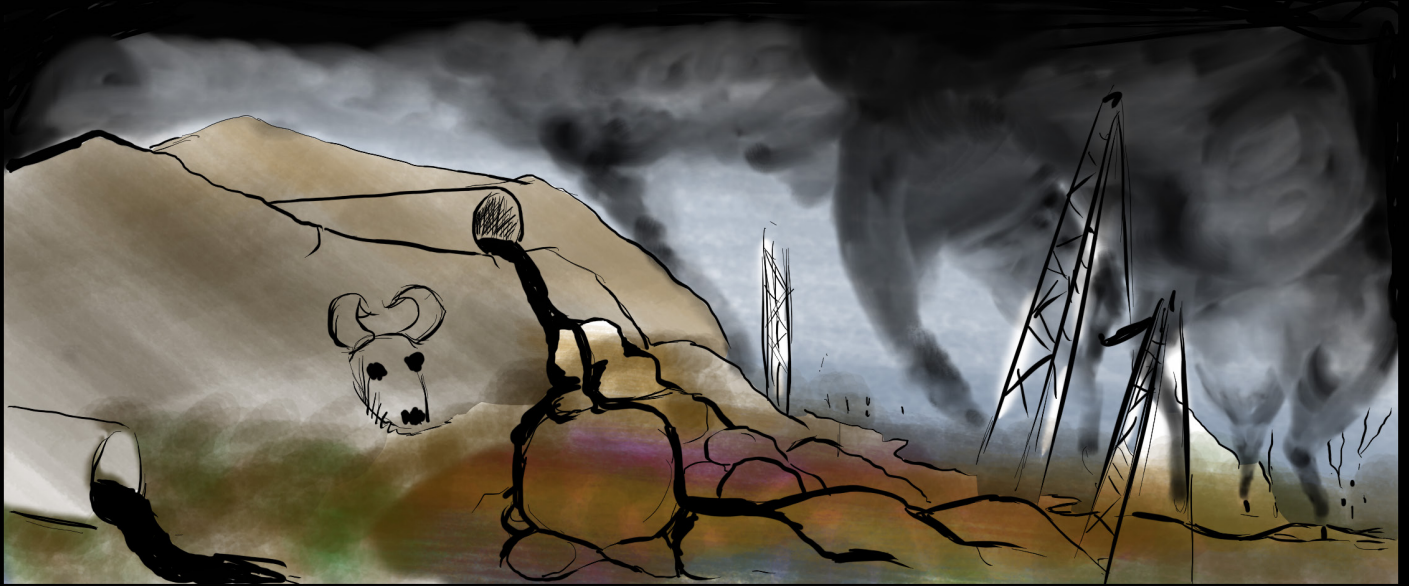
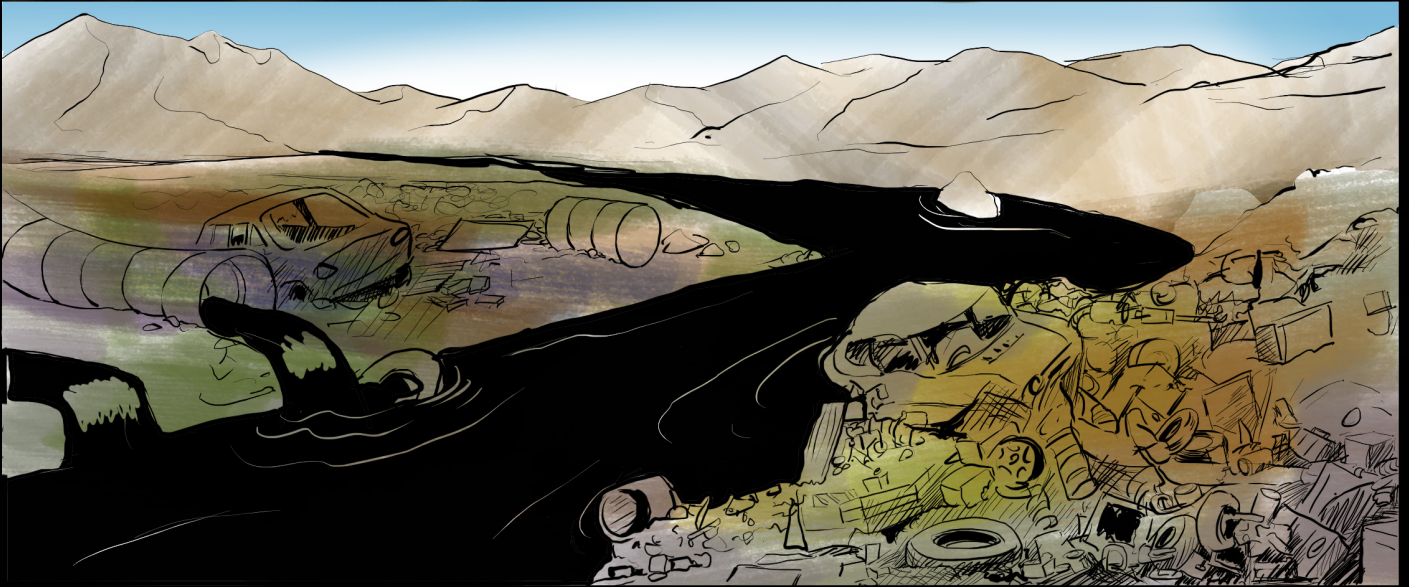


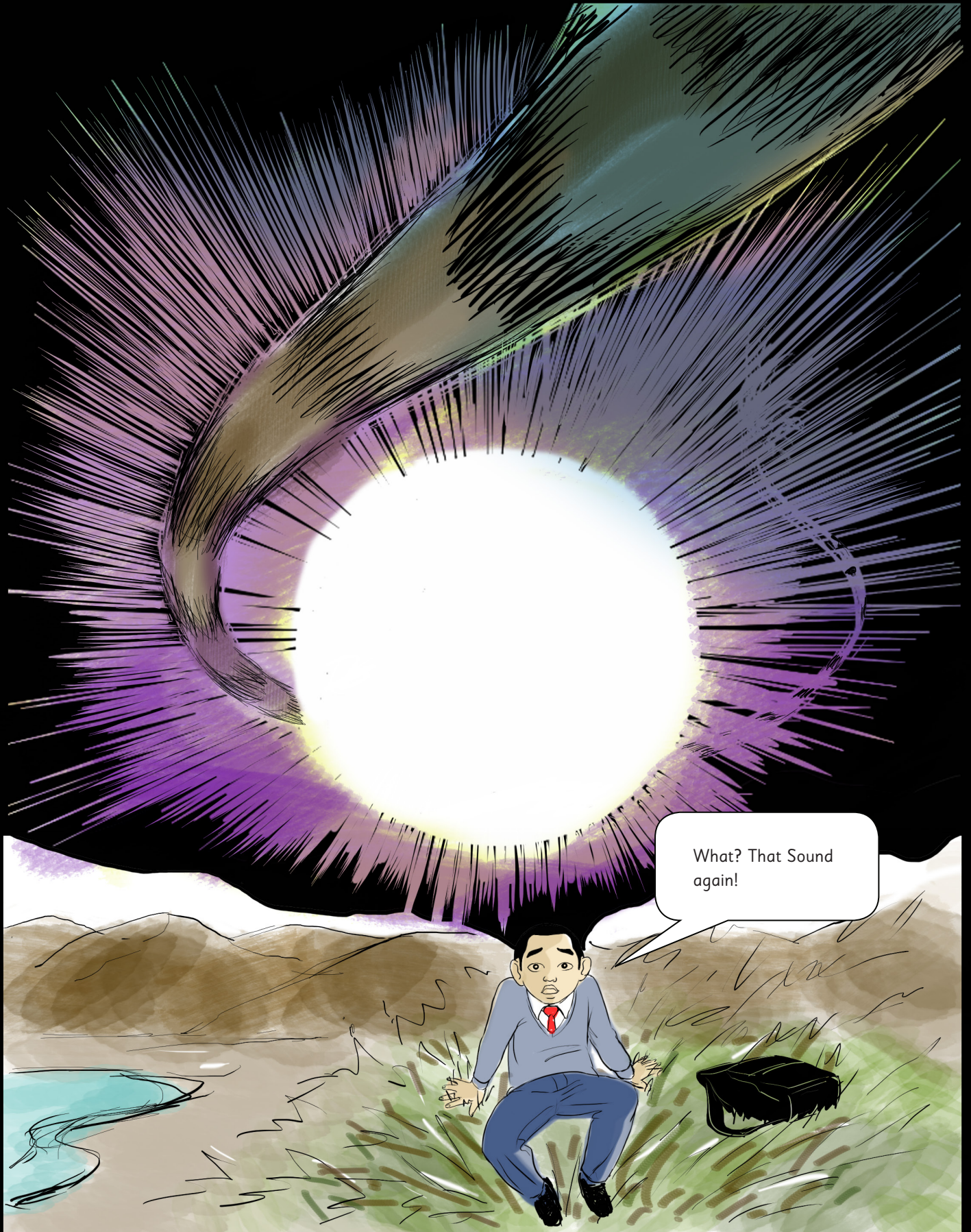


When Tashi comes out of the burrow, he finds himself in a very strange place.









What? That Sound again!



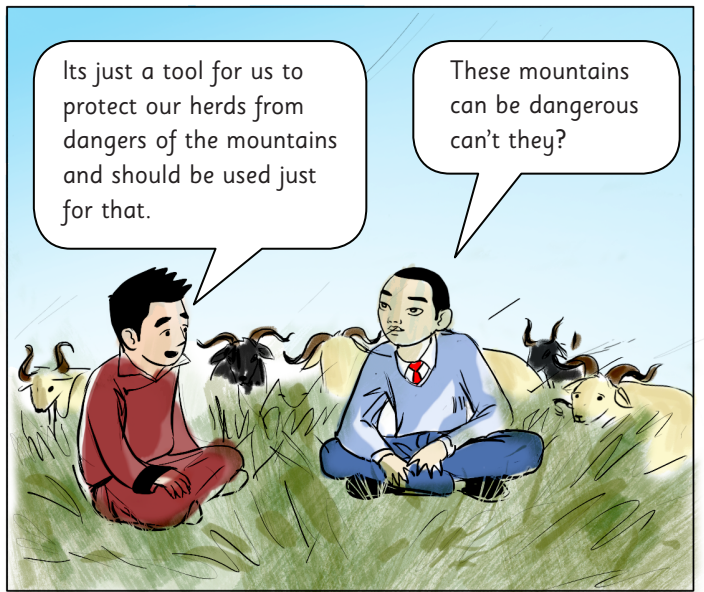


The sound of my slingshot is loud enough to be heard in Leh!

That can't be true! You turned goat-hair into this deadly weapon!

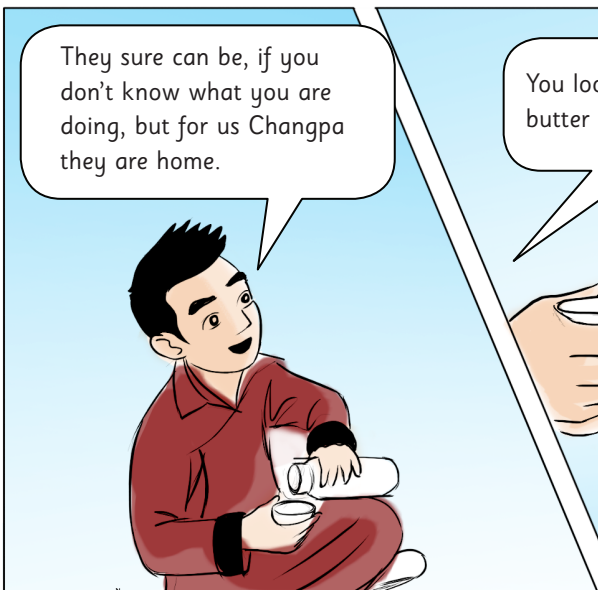


It's not really deadly. Although some people use it to hurt little animals, that's not right.



Its just a tool for us to protect our herds from dangers of the mountains and should be used just for that.

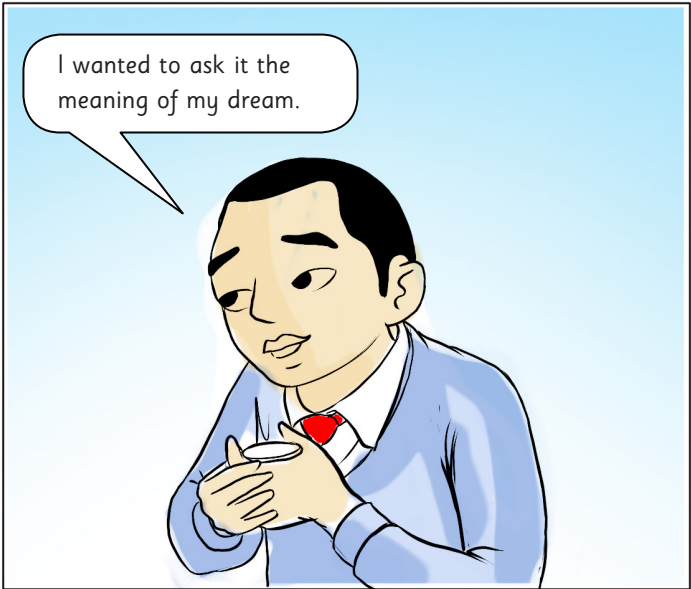
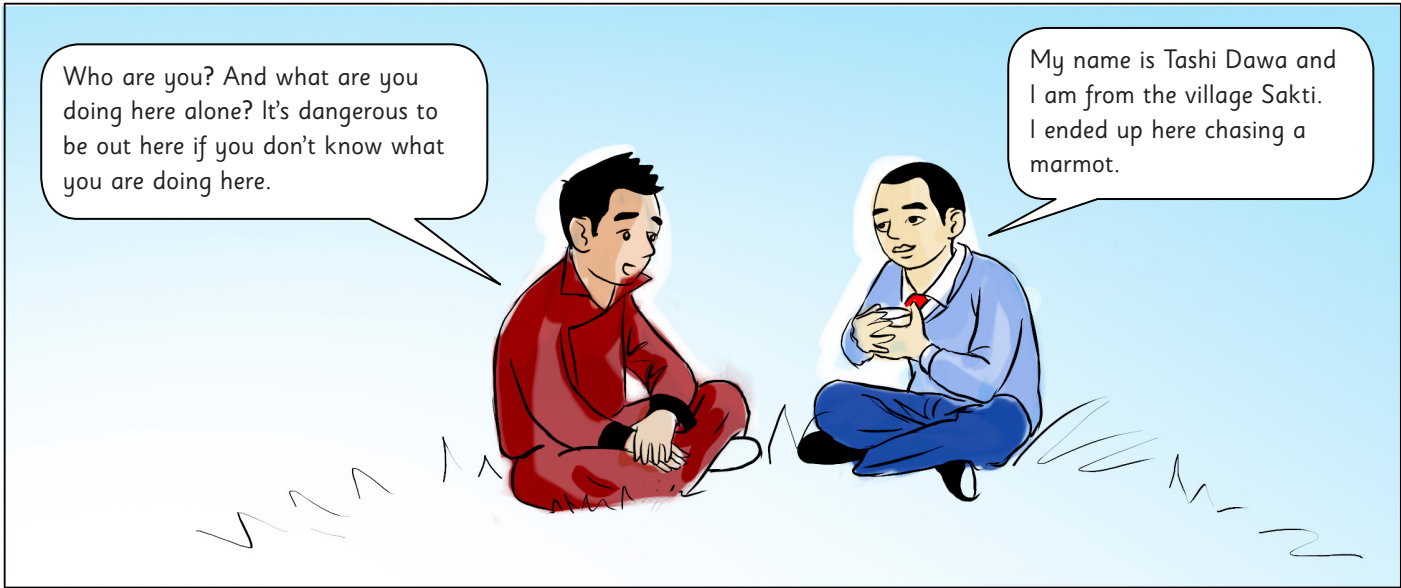
These mountains can be dangerous can't they?



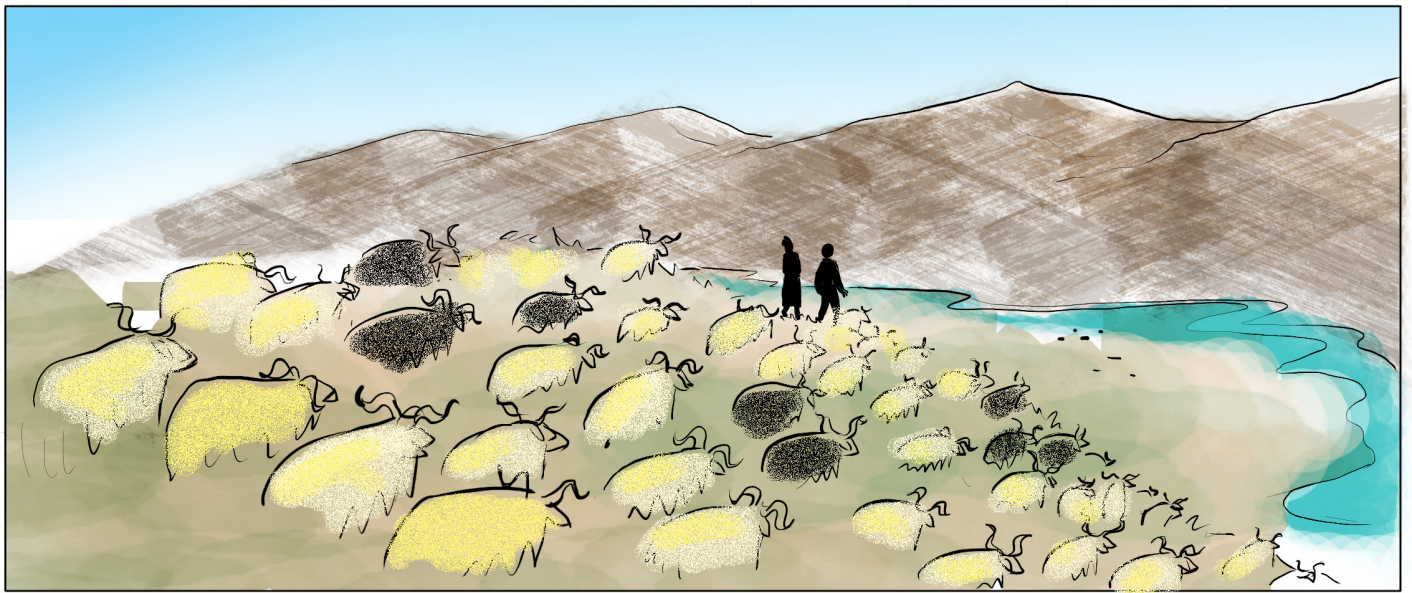
They sure can be, if you don't know what you are doing, but for us Changpa they are home.

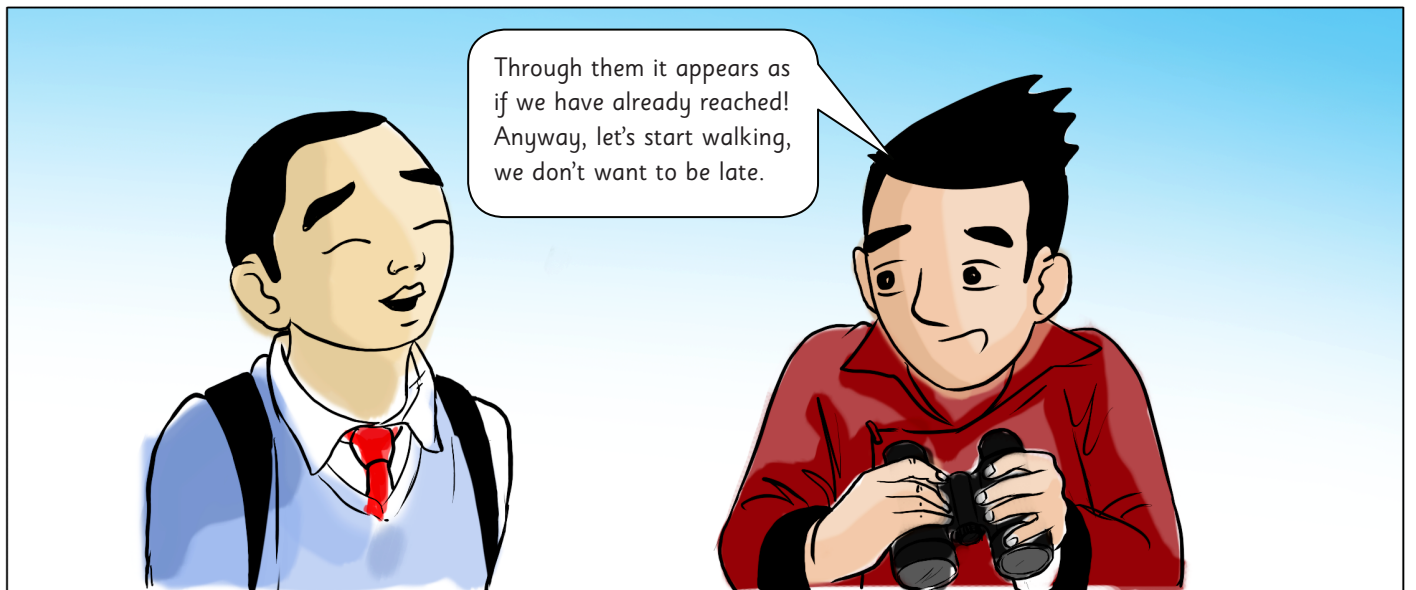
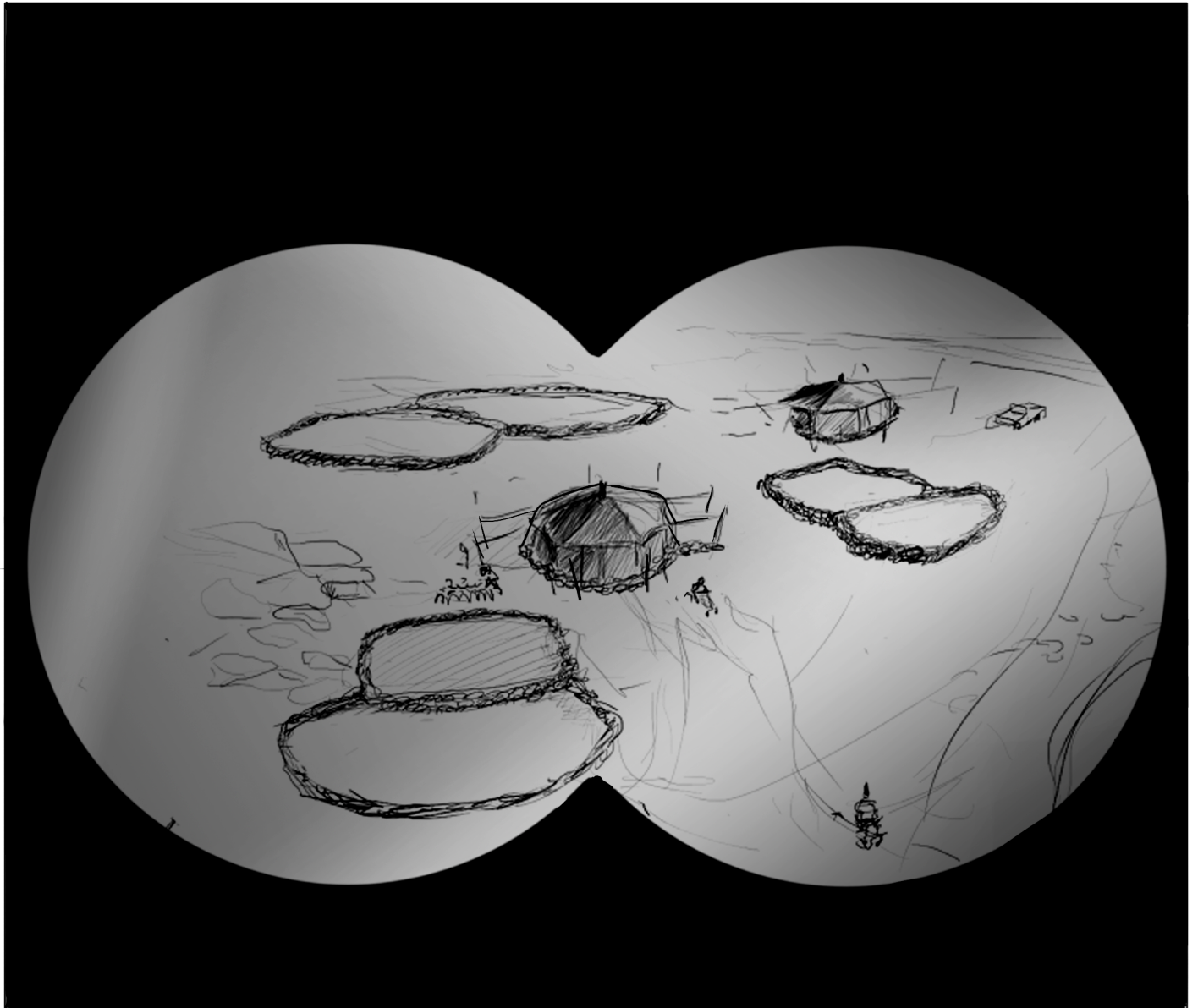


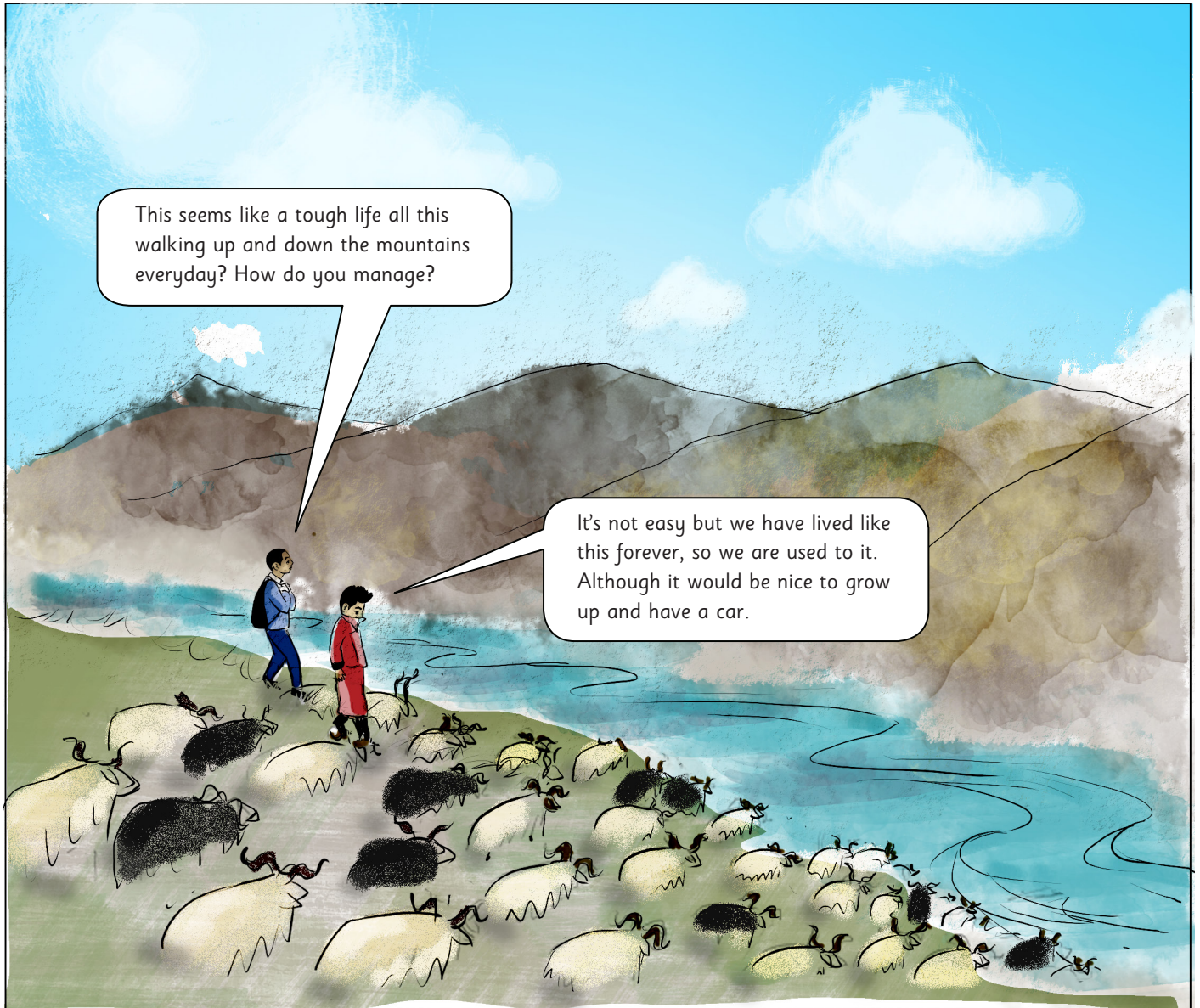
You look weak, have some of this butter tea and dried yak cheese.





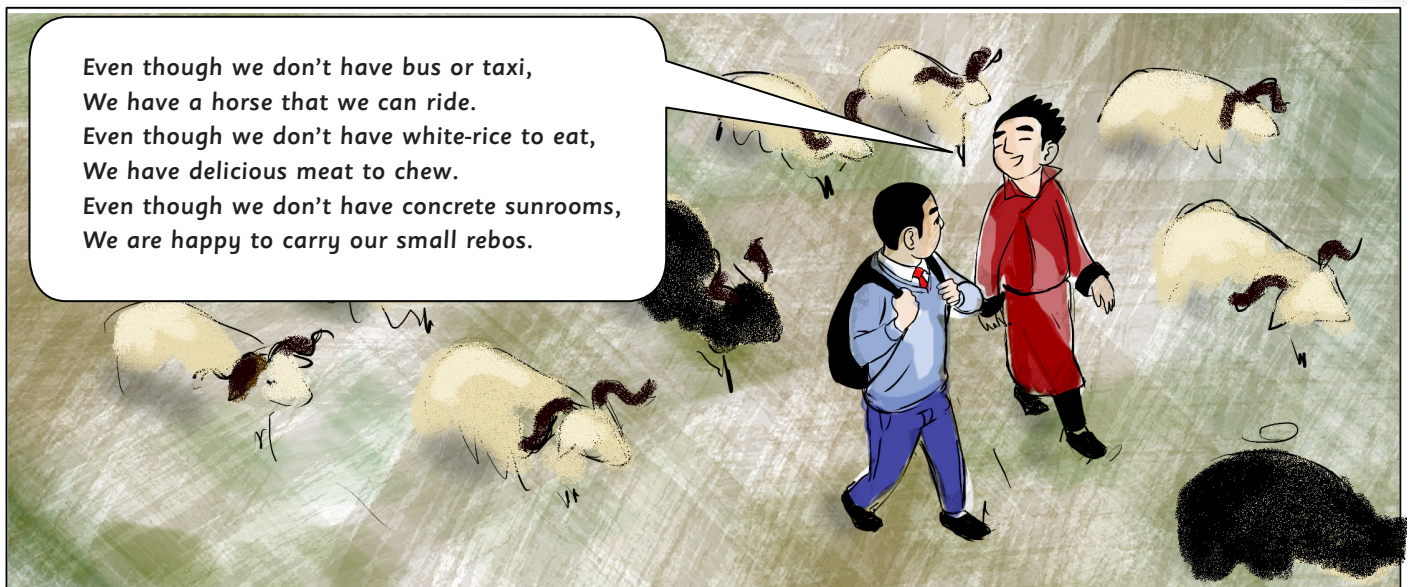






This seems like a tough life all this walking up and down the mountains everyday? How do you manage?

It's not easy but we have lived like this forever, so we are used to it. Although it would be nice to grow up and have a car.



Even though we don't have bus or taxi,  
We have a horse that we can ride.  
Even though we don't have white-rice to eat,  
We have delicious meat to chew.  
Even though we don't have concrete sunrooms,  
We are happy to carry our small rebos.



You sing well, I am curious to know more about your life... Wish I had met you earlier.

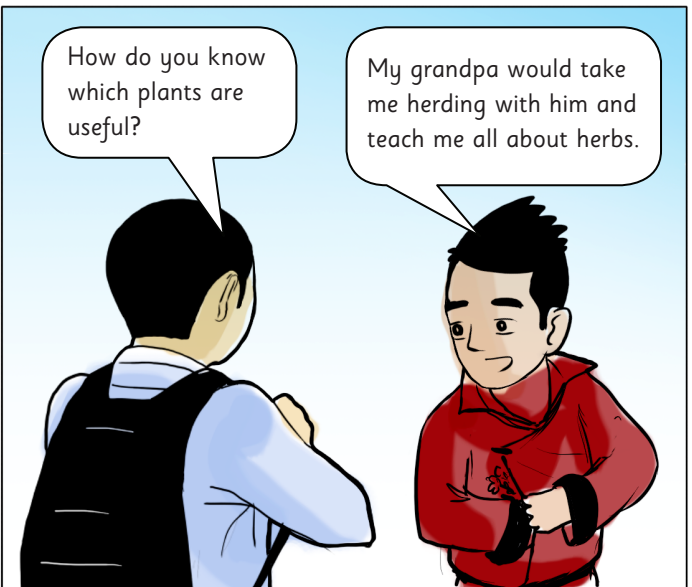
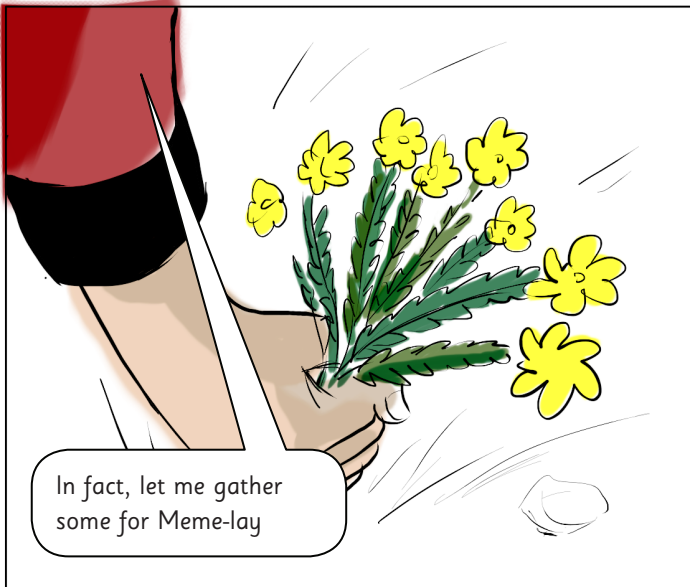


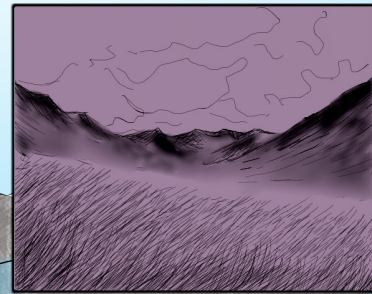
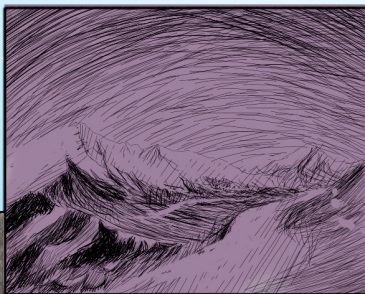
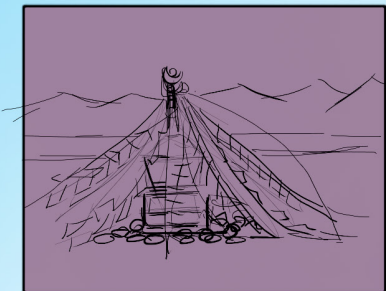
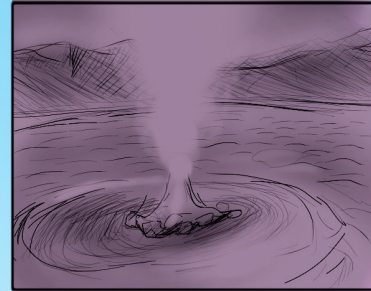
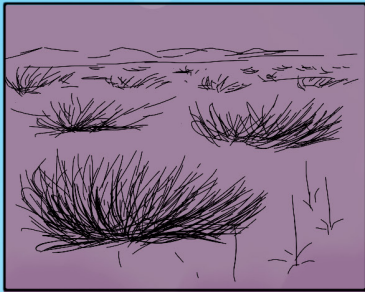
If you really want to know, you will have to live out here and learn to listen to the land.

What do you mean? It looks pretty much empty.



Medicines?!

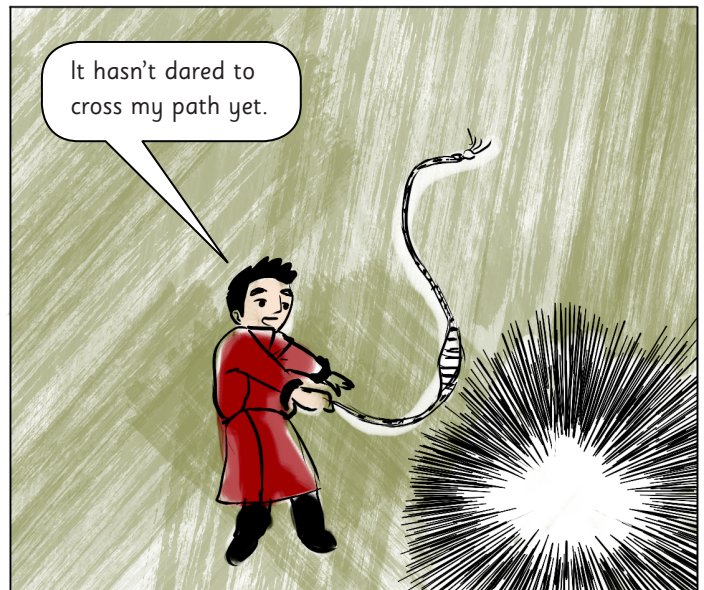




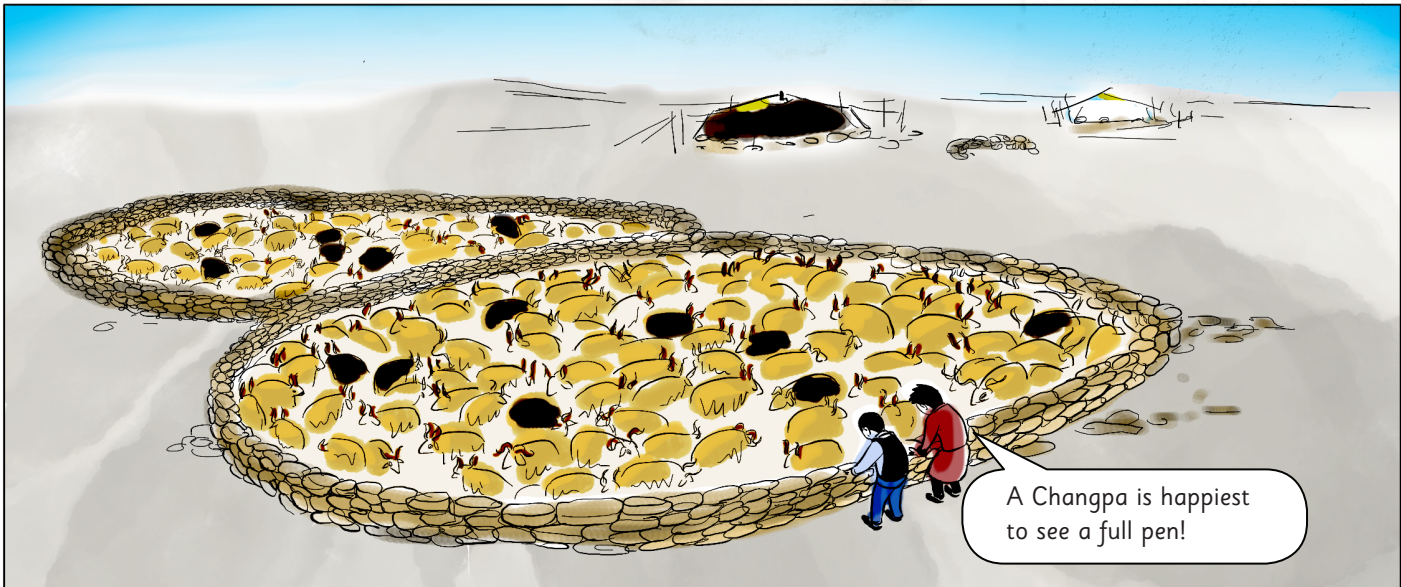
What else can you get here?

Fuel for fire. Rocks for my slingshot and setting up rebos and making houses. In fact, for centuries everything we needed was provided only by these lands.













They have been woven by Thinley and I am sure she will become a master weaver one day – she is training under abi-lay.



Why be a weaver?



Because it's our tradition and our rugs are highly appreciated and can be good business, didn't you know?



Thinley wants to be a rich businesswoman and travel the world like the tourists!!!

Shut up!





Who is this? Your friend nono-lay?



He is Tashi Dawa. He has come here to see a snow leopard.

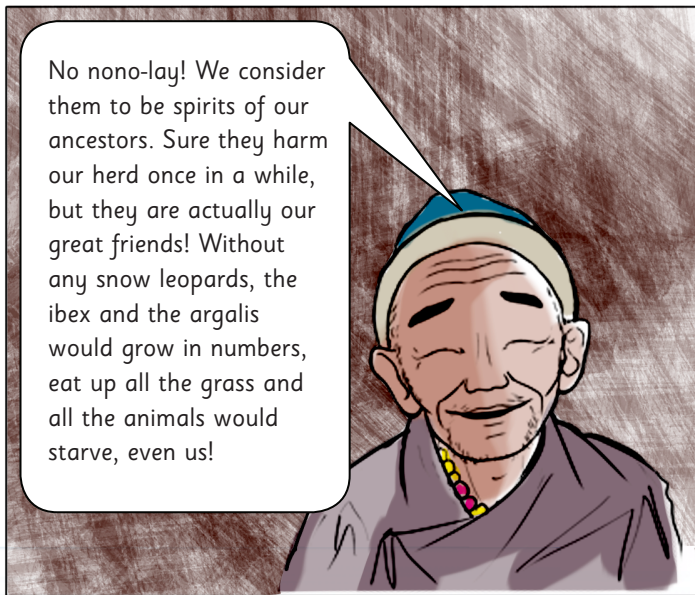
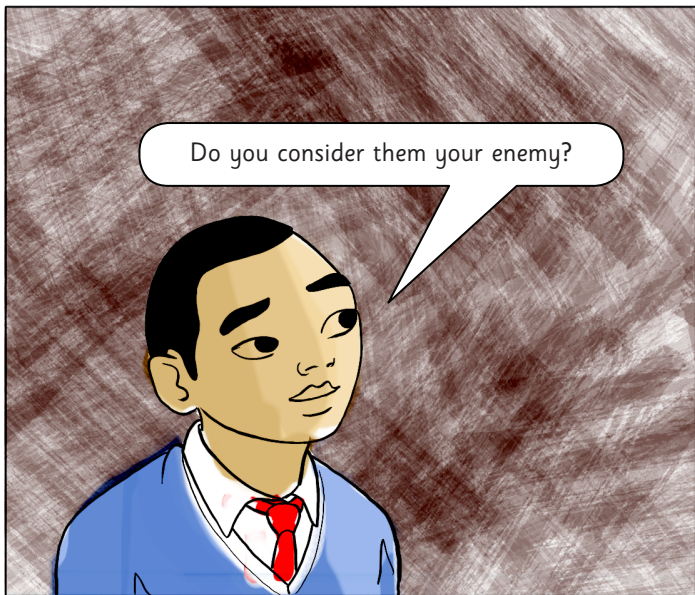


Snow leopards are one of the most difficult animals to find. You can't see them if they don't want to be seen.

But Grandpa didn't you see them when you were young?



Once when I was up in the mountains with the herds, I heard a loud cry from the goats. When I turned around I saw a snow leopard. I grabbed my slingshot and whipped it really hard. The loud sound must have startled it because he jumped and just disappeared. I wouldn't have believed my own eyes if one of my baby goats weren't dead.



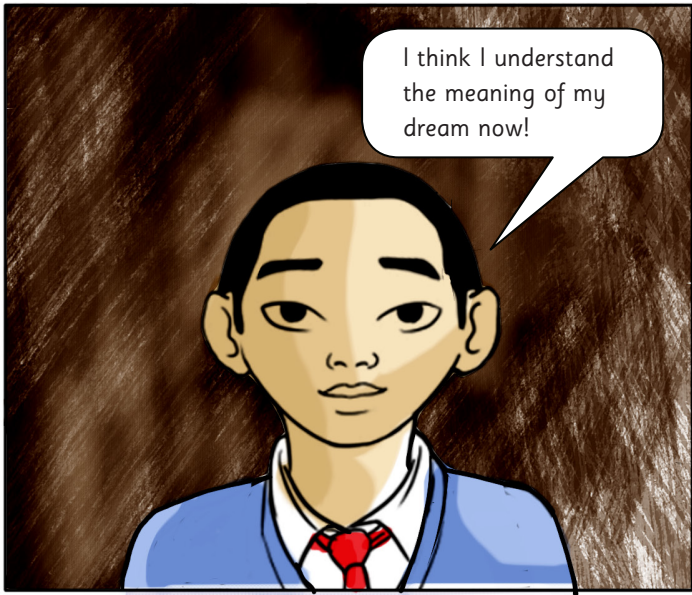


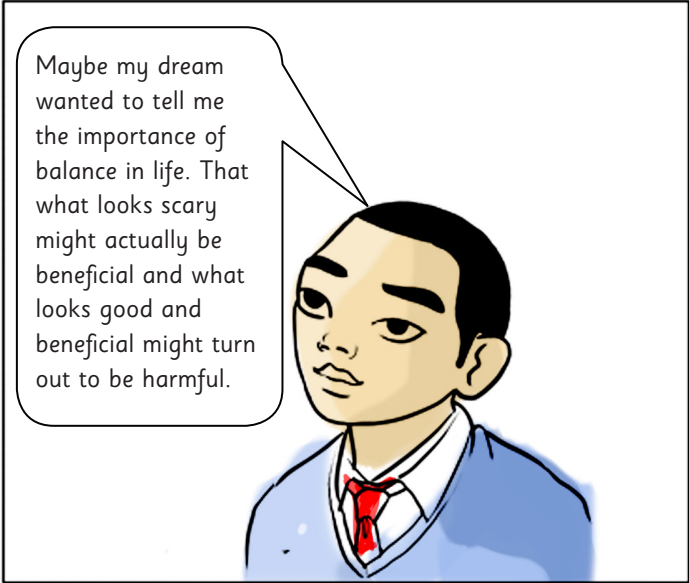
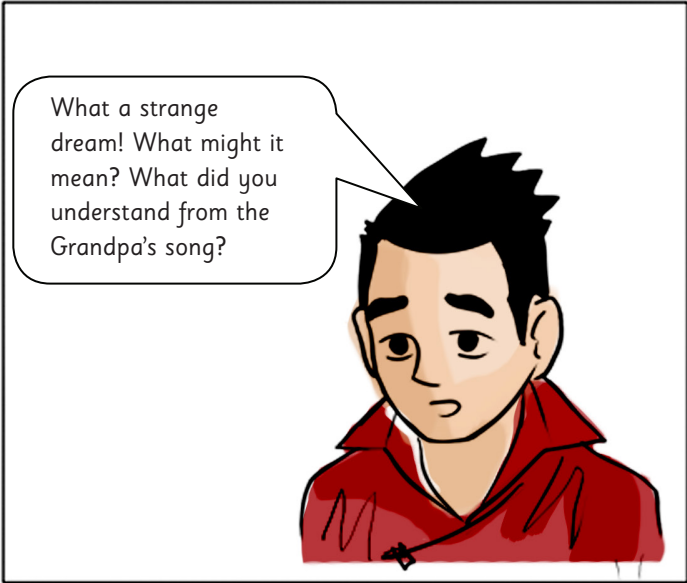
Learn your ABCs but don't  
Drop your Ka-Kha.  
Our language will be lost  
Heed my advice oh brothers!  
Don't wear coats and trousers  
And lose your goncha

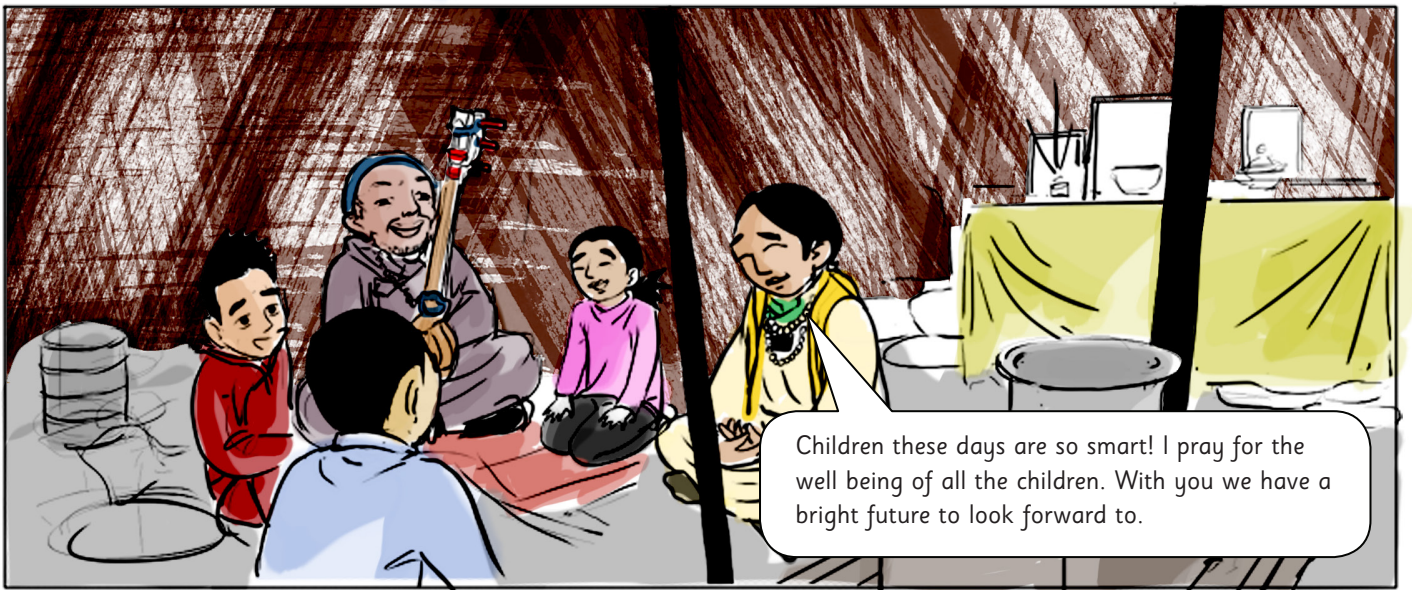
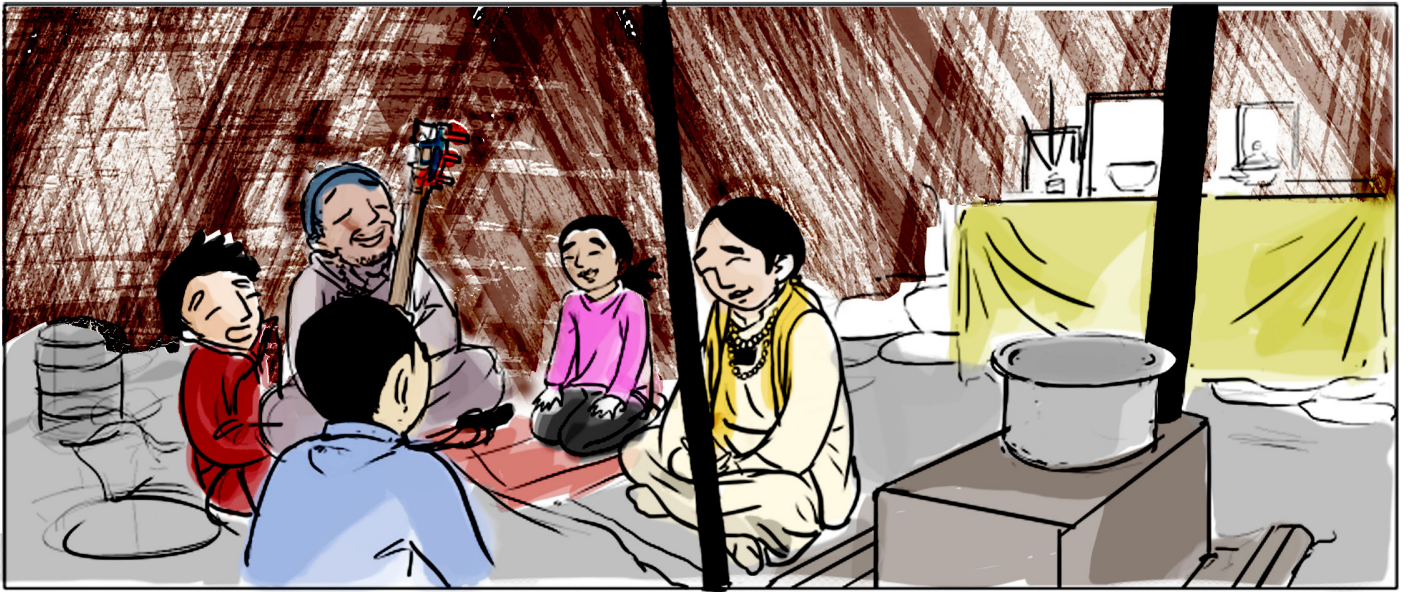
Don't forget how to tie your  
skyerak-belt  
The people of our land.  
Buses, taxis, cars seem to be  
running up and down  
Don't forget how to ride your horses

The people of your land  
You are using gas cylinders  
Leaving your thap-stove and  
bokhar,  
The people of our land!









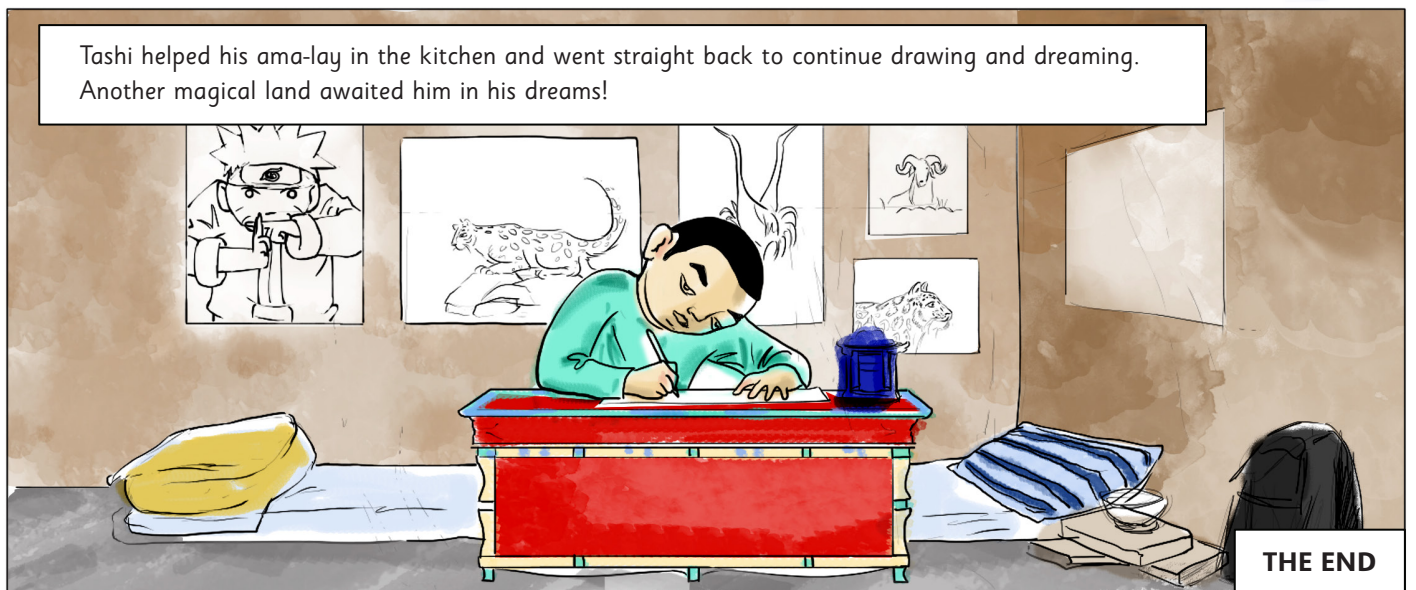
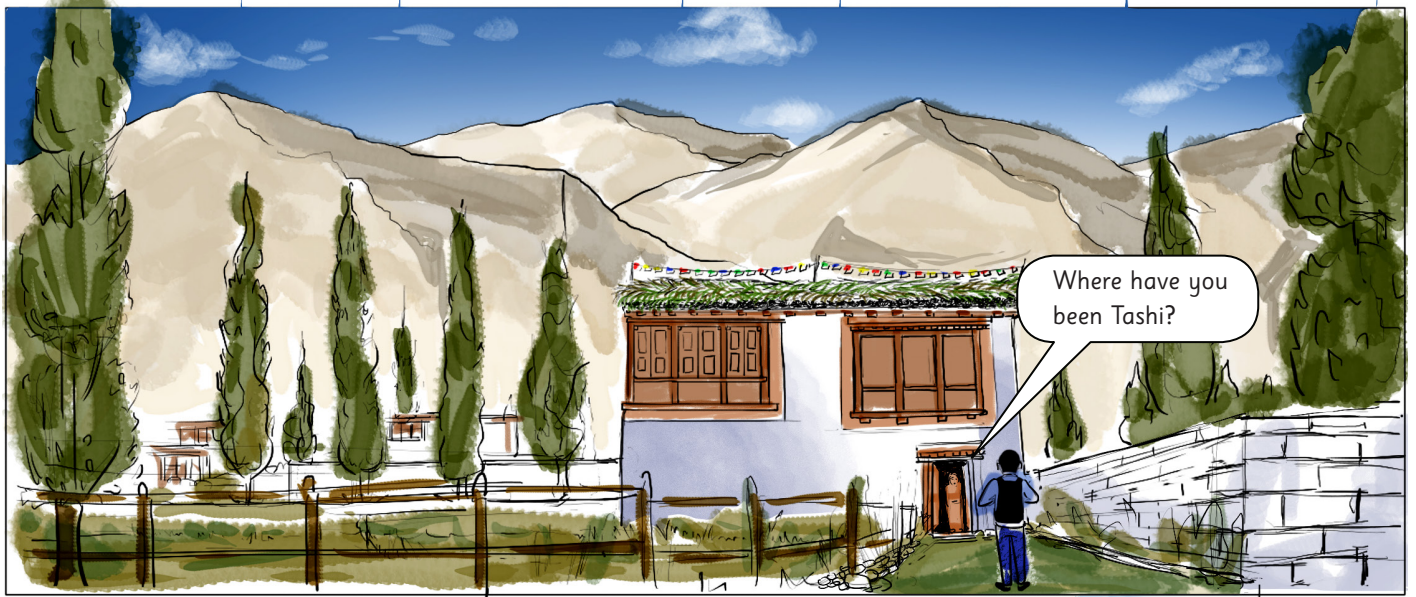


Tashi gifted his binoculars to Paldan ...



and left the rebo with many thoughts and emotions.





**THE END**

## Two folk songs from Ladakh have been used in the storybook:

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### Paldan's Taxi Song:

Bus gang taxi nyaja la rhul gya med na,  
Rta yarga chung chung jik tang gyu yod [2]  
Lalalala...

Das dang pagpey nyaja la za gyu med na  
Shayi shayok chung chung jik da la tad gyu yod [2]  
Lalalala....

Shelkang tupji nyala dug gyu med na,  
Rebo chung chung nyaja la khur gyu yod [2]  
lalalala....

### Translation:

Even though we don't have bus or taxi,  
We have a horse that we can ride.

Even though we don't have wheat-rice to eat,  
We have delicious meat to chew.

Even though we don't have concrete sunrooms,  
We are happy to carry our small rebos.

### Grandpa's Song:

ABC Lab Ka Kha ma phang  
Ka Kha gun rangskat stongsen hay  
Sangchik hay no tang nomo kun  
Acho -----tsik sum.

Ma gon Ma gon Coat ntang patloon  
Rangloos po gonches zhedin hay  
Skyerak kinches po zhedin hay  
Tere hee yul mee koon

Bus tang tazi motor gadi  
Gyen thur la banyuk tang duk hay  
Sta-kha zhonches po zhedin hay  
Tere hee yul mee koon.

Thab tang bokhar skor phangtse  
Gas tang cylinder kol duk hay.

Tere hee mee koon  
Paba thukpa skew tang mokmok  
Das sop bo mane madon hay  
Paba yoches po zhedin hay  
Tere hee yul me koon.

### Translation:

Learn your ABCs but don't  
Drop your Ka kHA.  
Our language will be lost  
Heed my advice oh brothers!

Don't wear coats and trousers  
And forget your goncha  
Don't lose your skyerak (belt)  
The people of your land.

Buses, Taxis, motors seem to be running up and down  
Don't forget to ride your horses  
The people of your land

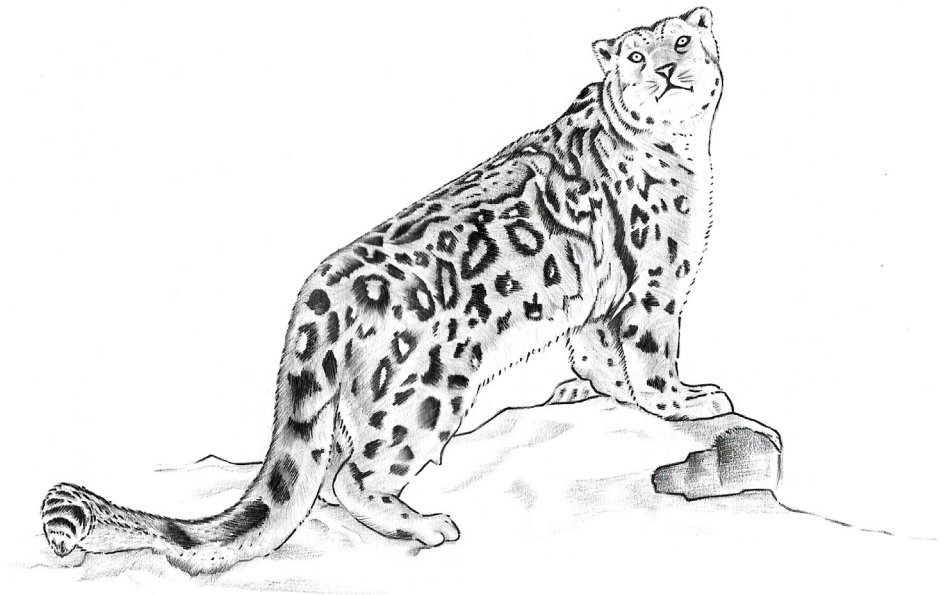
Leaving your thab (hearth) and bokhar,  
You are using gas cylinders  
The people of your land!

Paba thukpa Skew and momo  
Don't eat rice and forget your own food  
The people of your land.









The concept, design and production of this book aims for the revival of traditional ecological knowledge and approaches to wildlife conservation in the form of nature education and outreach to schools in Ladakh.



**Achi  
Association  
India**

**Achi Association India**

Palay House, Old Phey,  
UT Ladakh- 194101  
Ph: +91 60060 16239  
Email: [achiassociationindia@gmail.com](mailto:achiassociationindia@gmail.com)  
[www.achiassociationindia.org](http://www.achiassociationindia.org)  
[www.instagram.com/achiassociationindia](http://www.instagram.com/achiassociationindia)



**Ashoka Trust for Research in Ecology and the Environment (ATREE)**

Royal Enclave, Srirampura, Jakkur Post,  
Bangalore – 560064  
Ph: +91 802363 5555  
Email: [info@atree.org](mailto:info@atree.org)  
[www.atree.org](http://www.atree.org)  
[www.instagram.com/atreeblr](http://www.instagram.com/atreeblr)