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# ᎠᎩᎩᎩ ᎠᎩᎩᎩ ᎠᎩᎩᎩ ᎠᎩᎩᎩ Legend of the Giant Turtles



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From A Story By Benny Smith

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Legend of the Giant Turtles

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# Glossary

DhSBP	Ancient Ones/Elders
ŌŌSA SV	Beautiful Land
hG	Canoe
DhCWY	The Cherokee People
JhñC	Children
4M	Corn
ŌŌLŌA	Creator/God
RGĀ	Earth
đŌh	Eggs
LSb	Turtle
DhW	Fire
Dđŵ đđh	Into The Water
LZ đđL đY	It Is Not Good
Ađ Tđ	Spring Day
KW	Tobacco

# About the Author

Benny Smith was raised in the traditions, practices, customs and values of Keetoowah life ways. He is a fluent Cherokee speaker and literate in Cherokee syllabary. The grandson of Red Bird and Lucy Fields Smith, he was educated by Cherokee elders in ceremonial and spiritual customs. He completed his teaching certification in 1962 and received his Master's Degree in 1966. During his educational career, he has taught at small schools in Alva, Keys and Waynoka and went on to coach at Haskell Indian Nations University from 1971-2002. He also served as Associate Dean of Students. Benny enjoys hunting, shoeing horses and translating Cherokee language documents.

# Cherokee Syllabary

D<sub>a</sub>

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B<sub>yv</sub>

DhḡBP ḡḡḡḡ ḡḡḡḡ ḡ ḡḡḡ ḡ ḡḡ  
ḡḡḡḡ, ḡḡḡḡḡ ḡḡḡḡḡ ḡḡḡḡḡ. ḡḡḡḡḡ  
ḡḡḡ, ḡḡ ḡḡḡḡ ḡḡḡ ḡḡḡḡḡ ḡḡḡḡḡḡ.  
ḡḡ ḡḡḡḡ ḡḡḡ ḡḡḡ ḡḡḡḡḡḡ. ḡḡḡḡ  
ḡḡ ḡḡḡḡḡ ḡḡḡ ḡḡḡ ḡḡḡḡḡḡ ḡ ḡḡḡḡḡḡḡ  
ḡḡḡḡḡ ḡḡḡḡḡḡ ḡḡḡ ḡḡḡ ḡḡḡḡḡḡḡ ḡḡḡḡḡḡ  
ḡḡḡḡḡḡḡ ḡḡḡ ḡḡḡḡḡḡḡḡḡ ḡḡḡḡḡḡḡ  
ḡḡḡḡḡḡḡḡ.

The Ancient Ones tell of that when the earth was still new, God created the Cherokee people. He gave them tobacco, corn and fire, all important things to help them survive. He put them at the place where the giant turtles lived. The land was surrounded by water on all sides but the water was not fit to drink. However, the land provided everything they needed as long as they followed God's teachings.







ግልጽ ኩሪ ድጅግርጋ ደጋፊ ፀ ሊኔኔ. ሃሠ ለኩ  
ጥቅሞወከረ, ደካሃዞ ደፀሃወኩጥ ኔህ  
ደከሙጥ ገደቁ ገከጋ ፀፆርጋ. ገከወደቀዐ  
ፀሠወጋወኩጥ ገደቁ ሄከፀ ድጅግርጋ ጋረ  
ገከገወኩ ፀፀጊ ደፀግጥከህፆ  
ፀፀሮወቶወጥጥ.

For the most part, the turtles lived in the water. Early in the spring, the female turtles, full of eggs, would come out of the water to lay their eggs in the ground. They became very tired after they laid the eggs and would go back to the shallow part of the water to float around and rest.







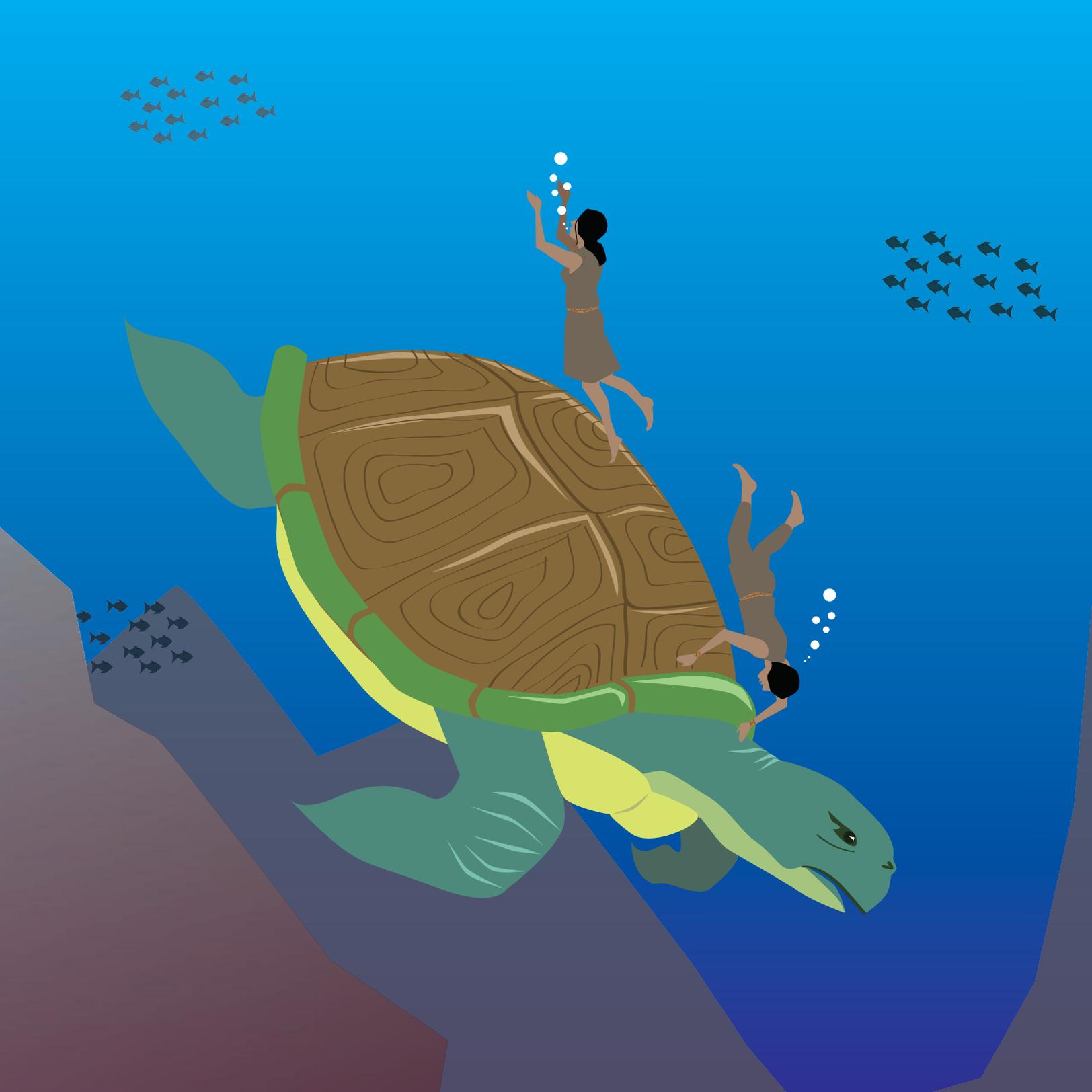
Θ ΛΗΝC CΘΗΤΤ ΔΘΡΩΗΛΒ Θ ΛΣΒ,  
D4ΩΥΗ 9CGLT ΘΗΩΗΡΩ ΔΥCΩΗΛΡ  
CΦΛ9 ΘΘΛΩ. ΗΩ ΤΣ Θ ΗΩ DδC  
ΔΩ4Τ, “ΤΛΥΑΛ Θ ΛΣΒ DΦΛ ςΘΗ ΤΑΑΛ  
GΗΜCΤ.” VZ CΘΥΑΩΛΤ. DEΛ ΗΡ  
ΩΙΩ9 CΘΥΑΩΛΤ. CΥCΛΖ DΑΑδΤ  
SΘΥΑΩΛΤ ΗΣΛ ΛΣΒ.

Even though the children knew how sacred the turtles were to the Cherokee, over time they got bored from their task of caring for the turtles because they did the same thing day after day. One day one of the boys said, “Let’s ride one of the turtles until they start diving into the deep water.” So the children rode on the turtle’s back. The first time they rode it for just a short while. The next day they rode the turtles longer.



PB 9CGL 0 Jhnc l0LA0J0 i0y0  
GA0A D00 000 0JG0J 0RT. 0 LB  
0S0PE0, 0L0 Lhh000 LB Sh00ET  
0Sh00E TAA L 00Z D00 0ST  
G0L0B0PT.

It reached a point where the children made a game out of seeing who could hold their breath the longest. When the turtles dove downward, the children would grab onto their shell and hold their breath as long as they could before letting go and swimming to the surface.



ΘΖ ΔΗΨΒΡ ΣΗΑϯ ΘΘΛΛΩ ΛΗΗϸ,  
ΣΗΘΗΨΛΤ, “ΡϯΔ ΨΛϸΥΔΛϯϯϯΔ Θ  
ΛΨΒ. ΛΖ ϯϯΛ ΨΥ ΡϯΨΒ ΗΗΨϸΘΨΨ  
ΔΗΥϮ. ϯΗϯΨΚΘ ϯϯΤ ΤΘ ΗΛΓϯΘΗΥΛ ϯΡ  
Θϯϯϯ ϯΨΗ ϯΗΘ ϯΡΤ. ΛΥΛϯΔ  
ΗΨϸΘΨϯϯ.”

When the Elders saw what the children were doing, they got on to them. “Do not ride on the turtle’s backs! It is not good for you to treat the female turtles that way. They travel a long distance to get here and after they lay the eggs, they are exhausted. Treat them with more respect.”







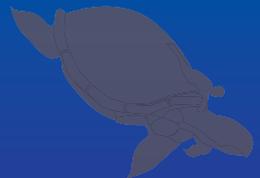
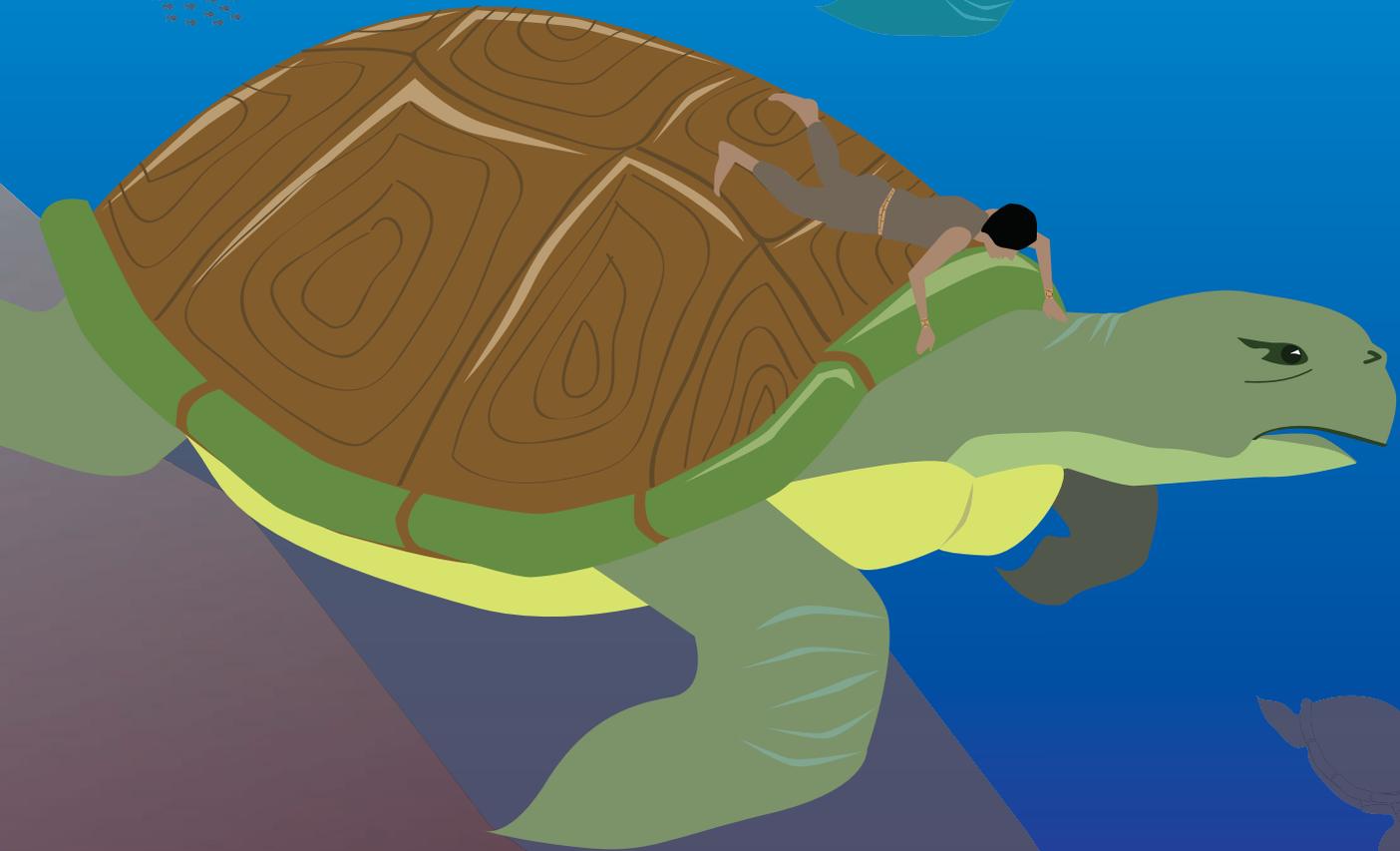
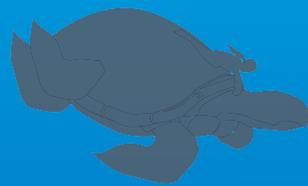
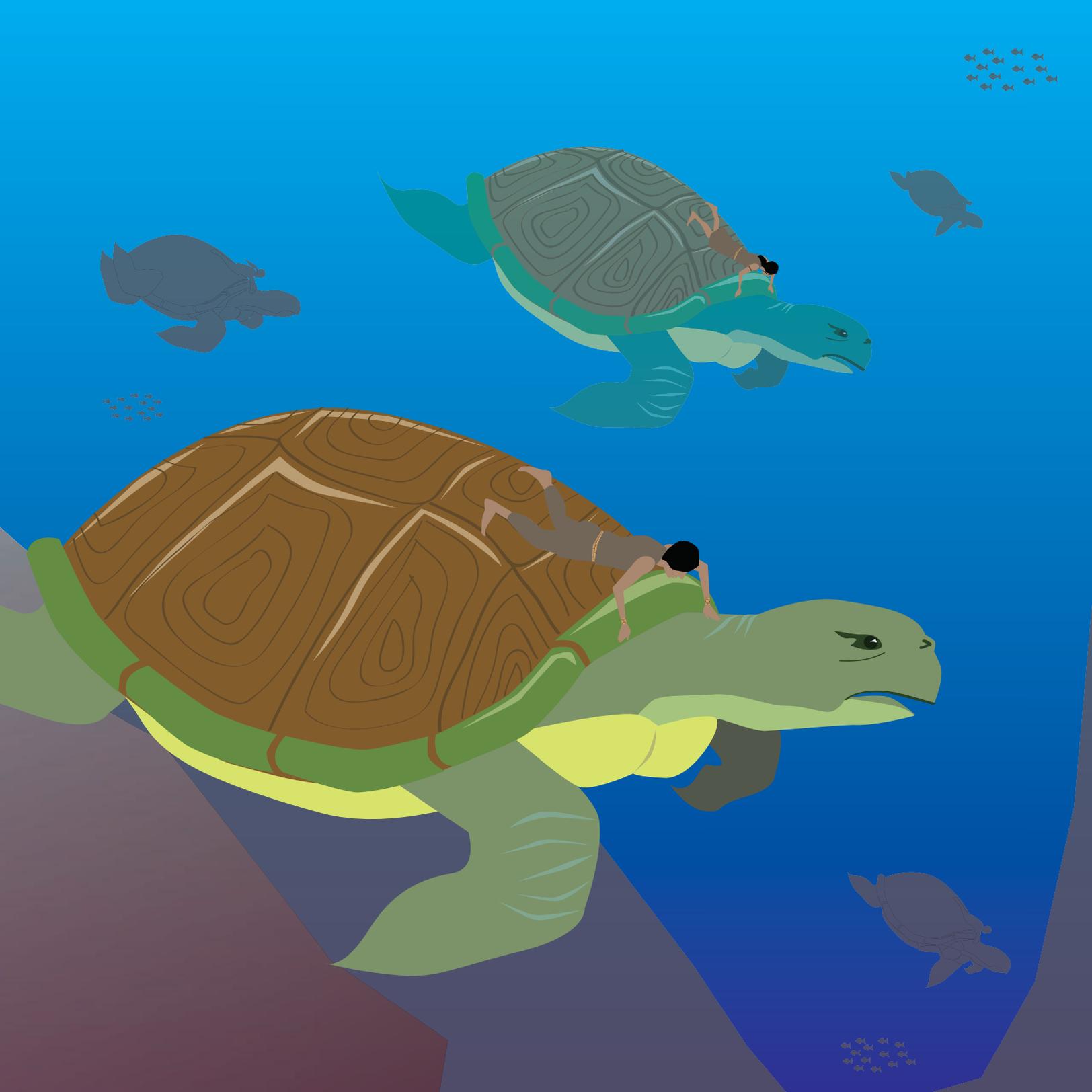
ሁሉ ግንዛቤ ላይ ገና፣ ግንዛቤው ከፋ ሲሆን  
ገንዘብ ላይ ሲሆን ለግንዛቤ ለግንዛቤ  
ግንዛቤው ሲሆን ግንዛቤው ከፋ  
ሲሆን ለግንዛቤ ለግንዛቤ ለግንዛቤ  
ግንዛቤው ሲሆን ግንዛቤው ከፋ  
ሲሆን ለግንዛቤ ለግንዛቤ ለግንዛቤ  
ግንዛቤው ሲሆን ግንዛቤው ከፋ  
ሲሆን ለግንዛቤ ለግንዛቤ ለግንዛቤ

One warm spring day, the turtles had finished laying eggs and were headed toward the water to rest. For some reason, there was an usually high number of turtles that day. There was enough that each child had a turtle to ride. The children rode the tired turtles as they headed back toward the water.



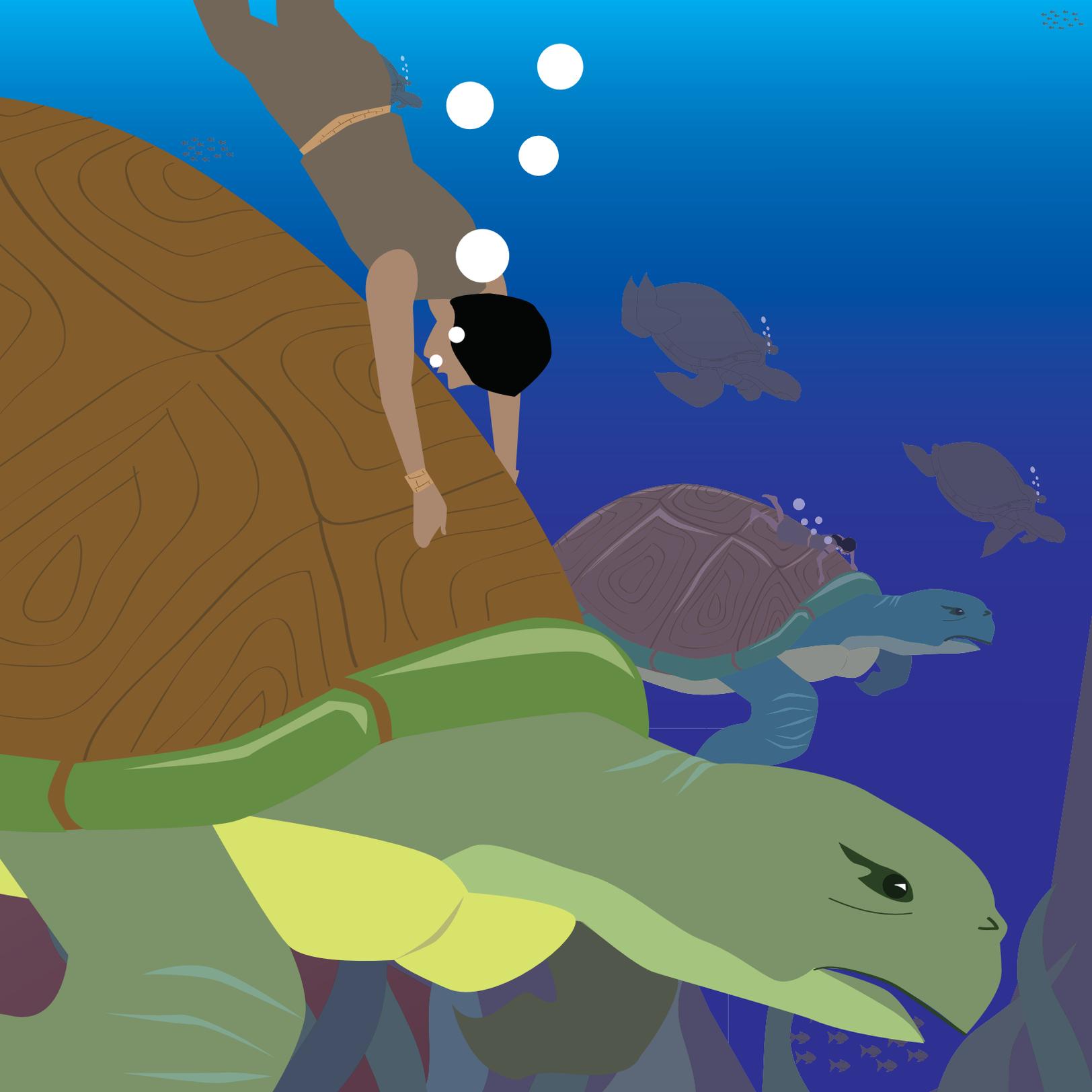
၂၅၅ ၵဇၵ ၵဇၵဃၵၵၵၵၵၵၵၵ, ၵဇၵၵၵၵ ၵဇၵ ၵၵၵ  
ၵဇၵၵၵၵ ၵဇၵၵ ၵဇၵၵ ၵဇၵ. ၵဇၵ ၵဇၵၵ  
ၵဇၵၵ ၵဇၵၵၵၵ ၵဇၵ ၵဇၵၵ ၵဇၵ ၵဇၵၵ  
ၵဇၵၵၵၵ, ၵဇၵၵ ၵဇၵၵၵ ၵဇၵၵၵၵ.

After a short rest, the turtles started diving into the deep water one at a time. When the turtles dove under, the children held on tight to the turtle's back and held their breath, just like they had done in the past.



D4യെ AFഛA ടLACB4T AA. KA൪  
AFഛA ഴLൠPβR ൫ LKB ടയെെSP, ൫൪ ൠV  
AFഛA ഴL൪യW൫, D4യെh, L D൪യ KSAL  
TG൫PയWAL ൫ ALhC Shh൫. യLയZയ  
Lhയ൪T! ൫h൪hAFയ൪T ട൫Lയ൪യAT G൪Z  
D൪യ ഴ൫h GhGയE h4 ൫ LKB.

However, something had changed this time. Was there something different about the turtle's back, or maybe the sun caused a change, anyway, the children did not come up to the surface of the water when they let go of the turtle's back. They were stuck! They couldn't get loose and the turtles keep diving deeper into the water.







YGGWYhB, DSWETH Dwekw OLBFWHLT  
Dkw Dwev 9MVT. OMLWA  
OLVPwLl, DVWwWwA KLA Dv  
9RhwWLT. YGGB OLVwP DSGwe  
Dkw. dELSBPw DPZ WShEWLwA  
LhC wPwWLT Sv OwweT.

Out of nowhere, an elderly man appeared and walked over to the edge of the water. He prayed to the Creator, and then he took the staff that was in his hand and touched it to the water. Immediately, the water started receding. The ground started drying and the parents were able to reach the children and pry them off the turtle's backs.



DƆWӨT DөƆƆө ƆLVT. “RyZ4qZ Ty  
hAAq TƆPƆPөө hƆi ƆLLOA TyLq Ky  
9PөөhAB PZ GƆPөөV. Ө LhƆC  
đhөƆƆLVTq Ky DhƆBP, LƆBZ, Өđөө  
hLƆhөөөEӨ Ky ӨhөөLГөөө ƆLLOA  
ƆLƆ, YG9PqB TƆhyөө TMAG  
ƆYMAөө hƆRӨ. đөP JL ӨYGөөө  
ӨYGөөTZ ƆV ƆөөL 4M ƆƆLL ӨӨZ  
BLđhӨ h4өө SGƆYөө TLөөLөƆET.  
LLOA ƆLƆT.”

The elderly man spoke, “We have been told to always be thankful and not neglect the gifts given by our Creator. The children disobeyed their elders and did not treat the turtles properly, and because we as elders did not teach the children to obey the rules, we must now leave this place. We must travel north until we find a place where the corn will grow and there we will have a chance to show ourselves worthy and follow the teachings of our Creator.”





