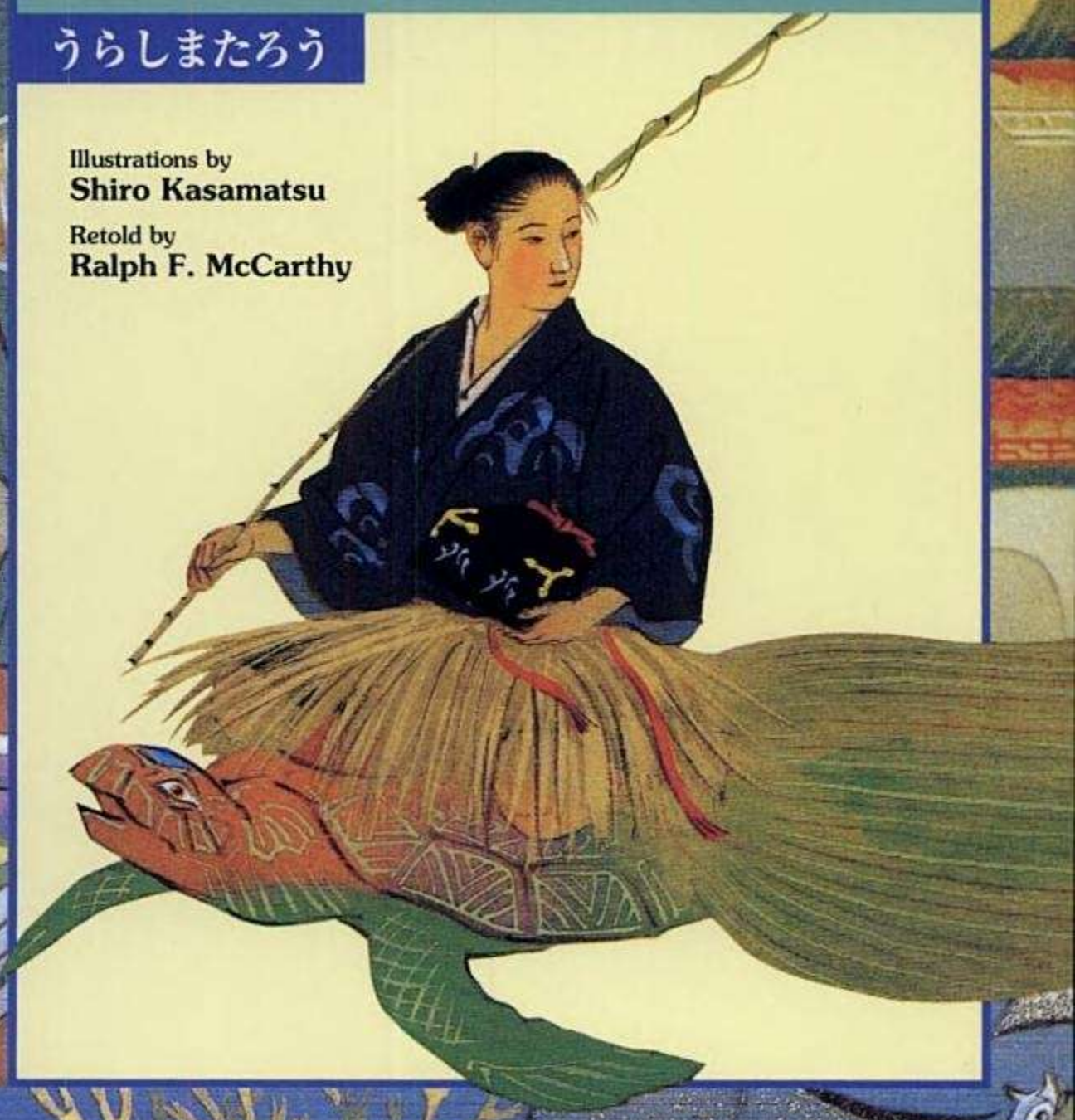


URASHIMA AND THE KINGDOM BENEATH THE SEA

うらしまたろう

Illustrations by
Shiro Kasamatsu

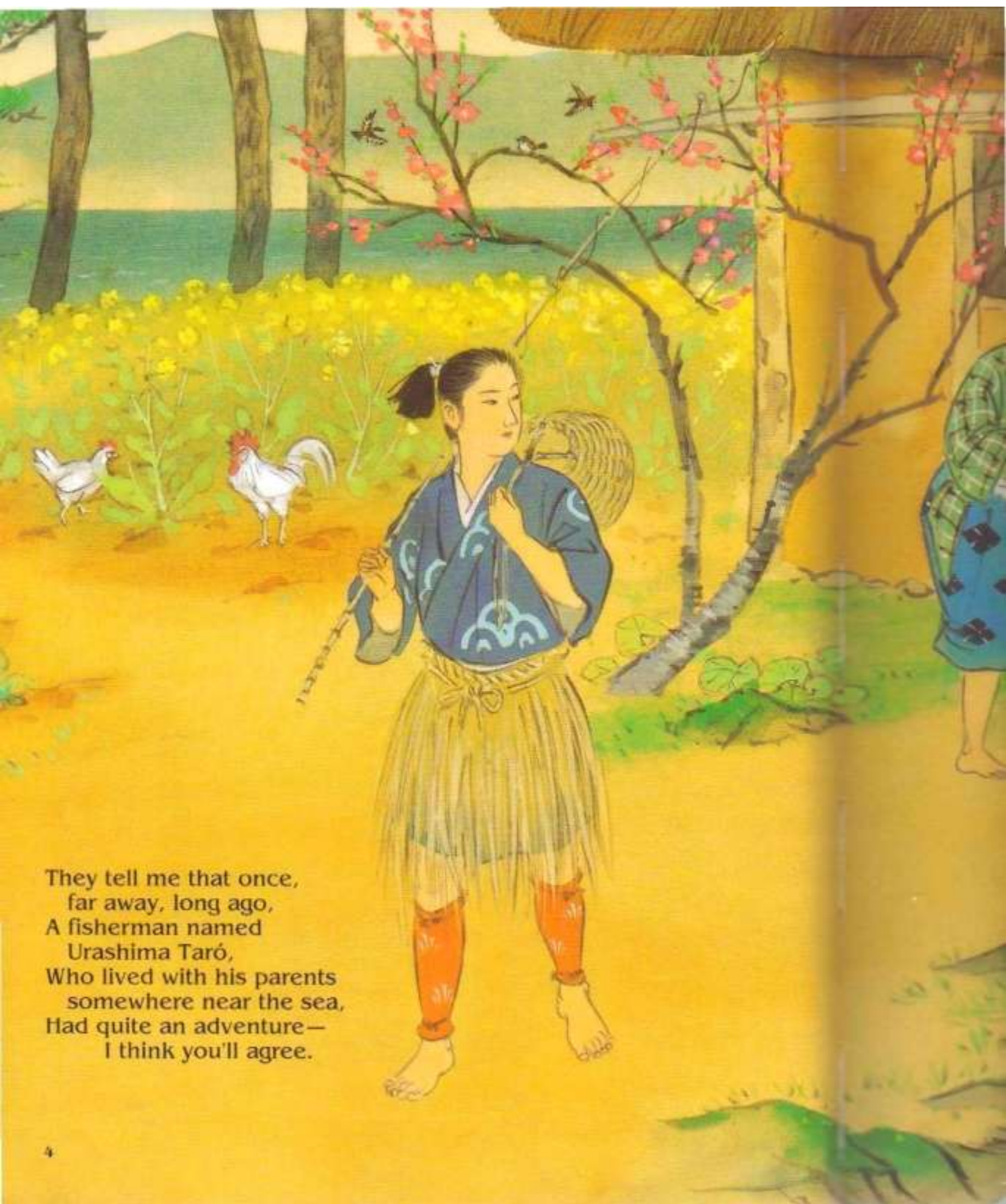
Retold by
Ralph F. McCarthy



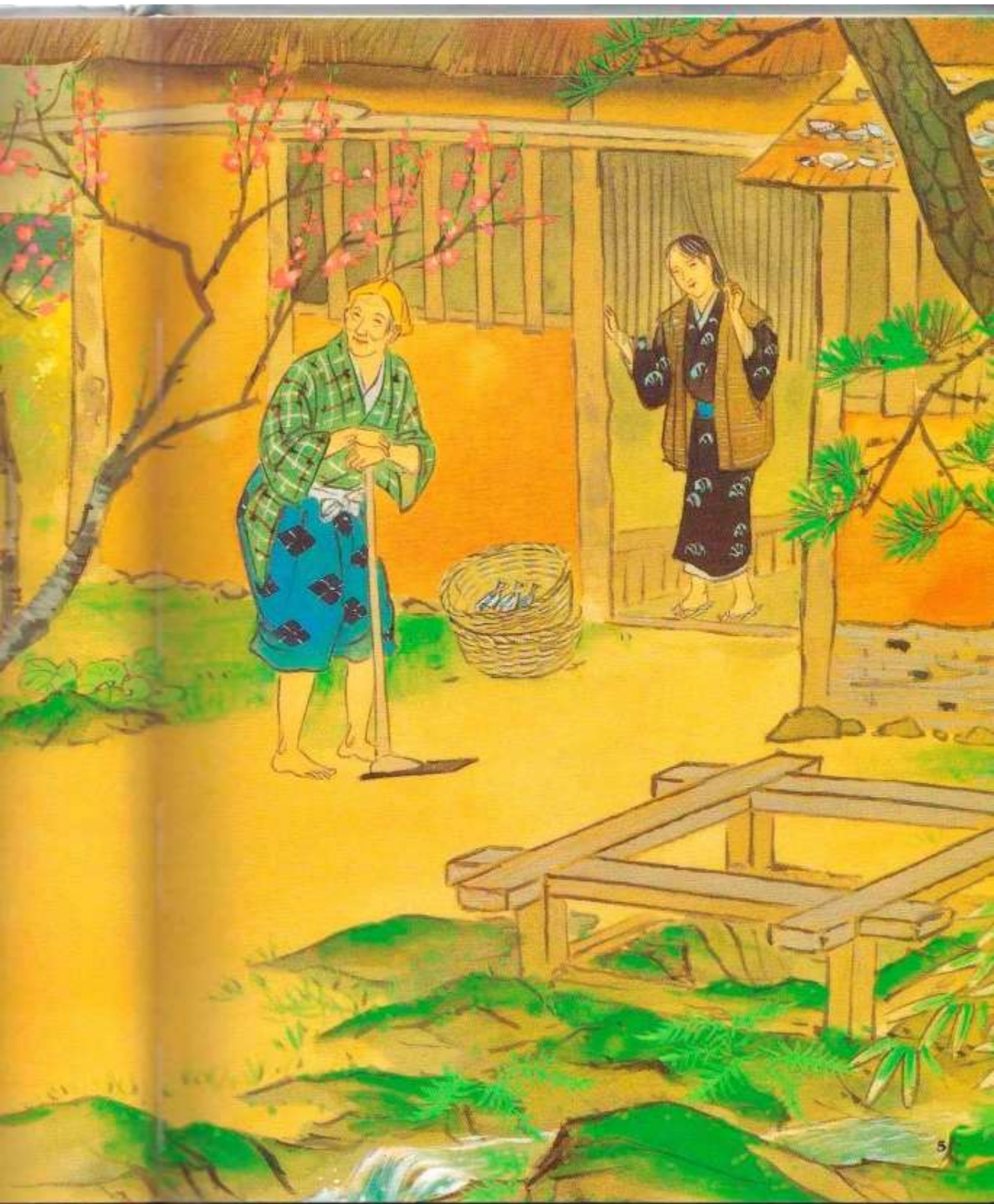
龙宫传奇

很久以前，有一个叫做浦岛太郎的年青人，他是个心地善良的渔夫，他和年老的母亲住在一起，两个人过着幸快乐的日子。有一天，浦岛太郎和平常一样，到海边去捕鱼；当他走到海边的时候，发现一群顽皮的小孩子，正在欺侮一只大海龟。他们拿着木棒和石头不断的打着可怜的大海龟。“小朋友，你们不要再欺负它了，你们和它那么可怜的样子，就放了它吧！”“不行，这是我们的海龟！”“要不然，你们就把它卖给我好了！”浦岛太郎又说。“嗯！好吧！”于是，浦岛太郎就用钱向他们买下这只可怜的海龟；把它带到海边，对它说：“你赶快回海里去吧！小心不要再被别人捉到了唷！”过了几天，浦岛太郎正在船上钓鱼时，又遇见了那只大海龟。大海龟说：“浦岛太郎，上次承蒙你的搭救，真是非失的感谢，因此，我想带你去龙宫玩，以报答你的恩惠。”但是……我妈妈还在家里等我呢。”浦岛太郎回答说。“不用担心，我还会送你回来的。”于是，海龟就背着浦岛太郎，向深海潜去。“哇啊……，好美哦……，真是太美了……。”浦岛太郎看见海底的景色，不禁叫了出来。太阳光照进海中，就像是一条条金链子似的。鱼儿们也像是在跳舞般地在珊瑚间游来游去。不久以后，浦岛太郎就发现海里，有个东西在闪闪发光。“浦岛太郎，那里就是龙宫了。”海龟说。当浦岛太郎看到这个由珍珠，珊瑚等装饰而成的龙宫之后，更是惊奇万分。“浦岛太郎，欢迎你到龙宫来玩。”美丽的龙王公主亲自到龙宫的门口，来迎接浦岛太郎。公主说：“浦岛太郎，上次你救了我们的海龟，我非常的感激你，希望你能在龙宫多住几天，接受我们的招待。”于是，龙王公主就办了一桌最上等的酒席，而且都是浦岛太郎没吃过的，甚至没看过的丰盛菜肴。“别客气，请多用菜。”龙王公主也陪着他一起高兴的用餐。站在旁边的美丽宫女，开始唱起悦耳的歌，鲷鱼和比目鱼们，也随着歌声翩翩起舞，真是好看极了。这时候，浦岛太郎觉得自己就好像来到天堂一样，一切都太美了。吃过饭后，龙王公主带着浦岛太郎参观华丽的龙宫，他们来到了四扇神奇的大门前。“这是春之门。”龙王公主打开第一扇蓝色的大门。在房子里面，开满了樱花及其他各式珍奇的花草，蝴蝶在衣丛里飞舞，小鸟们也在枝头上轻快的唱歌，一切的景象，就好像春天的大地，充满着

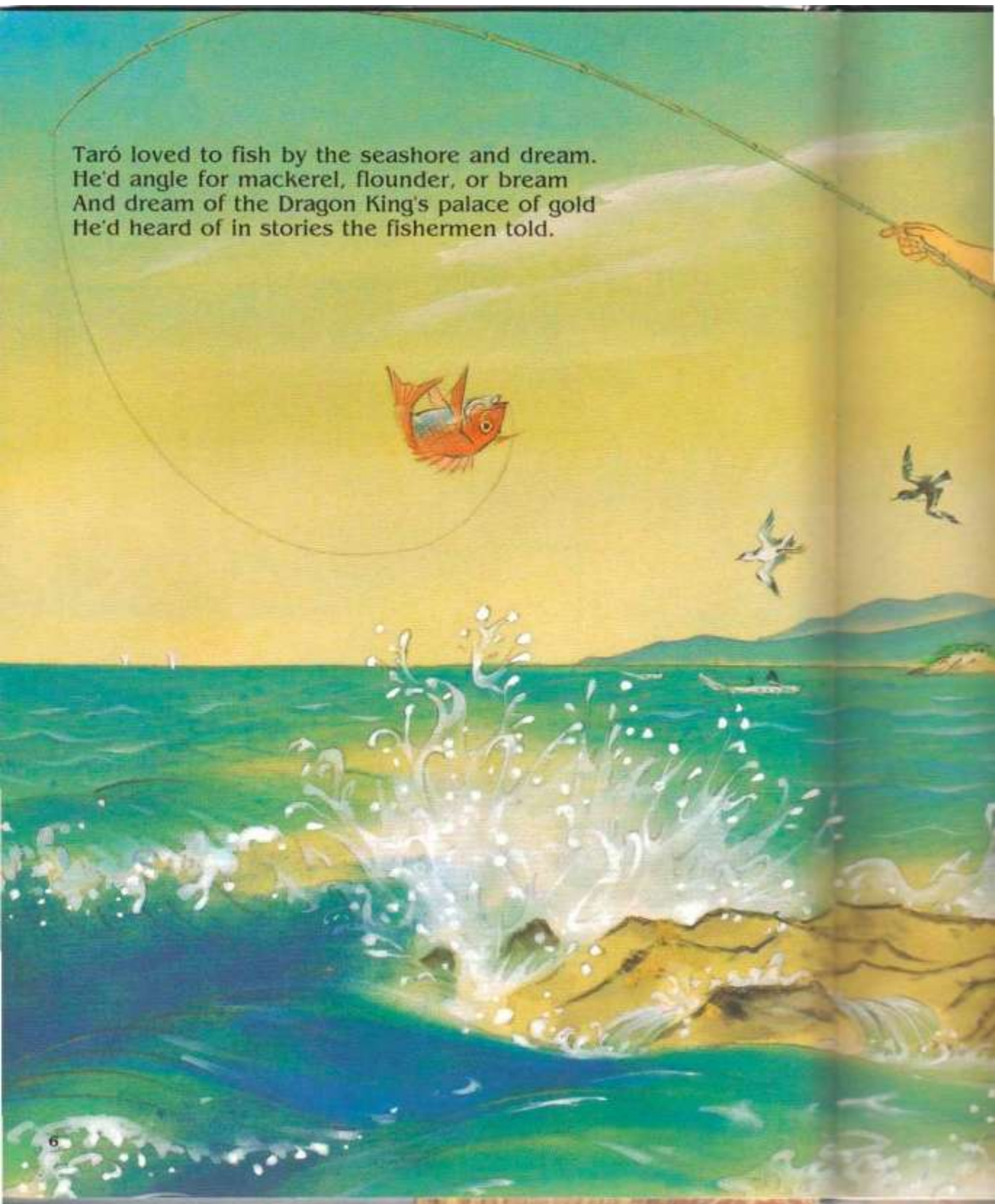
朝气。龙王公主接着打开第二扇红色的“夏之门”；盛夏的阳光就从屋里射出刺眼的光芒来。屋子里到处呈现一片绿意盎然的景色，蝉儿也在树上快乐的唱歌。“这是秋之门”龙王公主又打开了第三扇金色的大门。屋子里，金色的稻穗正随风摇摆，蟋蟀也悠哉的唱着歌。当龙王公主打开最后一扇白色大门的时候，屋里竟是一幅美丽的雪景。参观过这四扇奇异的门后，浦岛太郎觉得自己好像置身于梦中。从此以后，浦岛太郎就每天吃着山珍海味，穿着华丽的衣裳，舒舒服服的在宫里住了下来。一天接着一天，不觉得已经过了三年，浦岛太郎开始想家了。“妈妈现在不知怎么样了，她一定很替我担心。”想到这里，浦岛太郎恨不得能赶快回家。浦岛太郎就对龙王公主说：“公主，我想：我该回家了。我母亲还在家里等我呢！”“你真的想回家吗……？好吧！你走之前我送你一个玉匣，不过，你要记得，在你年老之前绝对不能打开它。”说完龙王公主就送给他一个美丽的盒子。于是，浦岛太郎又坐在海龟的背上，回到想念已久的故乡。但是，究竟是出了什么事？村子的景象和以前完全不同了。到处都是陌生人，没有一个熟人；而且，不管浦岛太郎再怎么找，就是找不到自己的家，和年老的母亲。“我的家……，我的家到那儿去了……。”浦岛太郎问一位坐在路旁的老公公，请问，你知道浦岛太郎的房子在哪里吗？”“啊！我曾经听过关于浦岛太郎的传说，不过，自从三百年前他去了龙宫之后，就再也没有回到村子了。”老公公回答。“已经过了三百年了，那么我的母亲也早就去世了……。”浦岛太郎沮丧的坐在路旁的石头上。这时候，他突然想到了手上拿着龙王公主送给他的玉匣子。“里面到底装了什么东西呢？”浦岛太郎忘记了龙王公主的叮咛，把玉匣子的盖子打开了。突然间，里面冒出了白色的烟幕。更奇怪的是，当白烟碰到浦岛太郎的时候，他一下子就变成一个白胡子，白头发的老公公了。



They tell me that once,
far away, long ago,
A fisherman named
Urashima Taró,
Who lived with his parents
somewhere near the sea,
Had quite an adventure—
I think you'll agree.

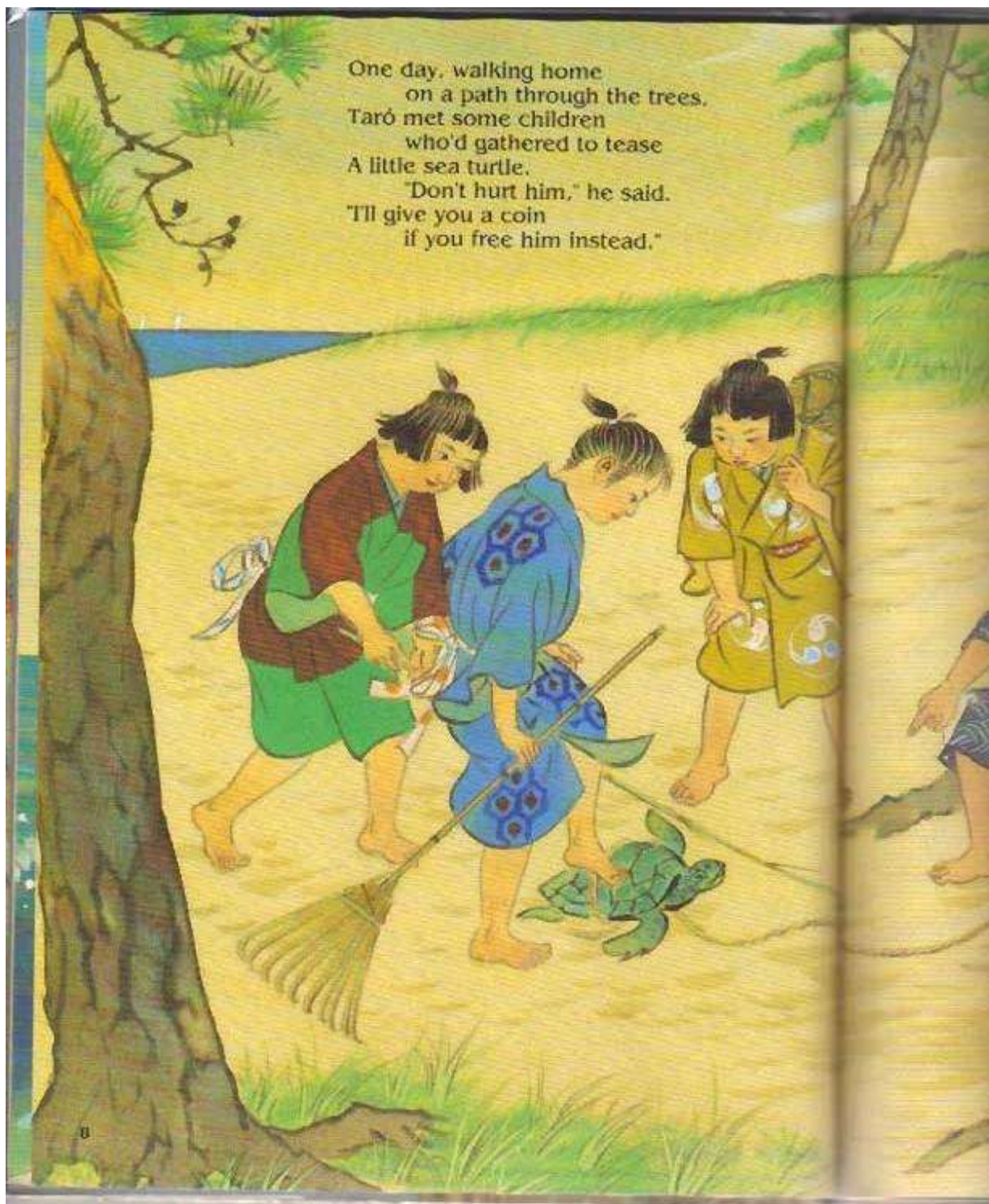


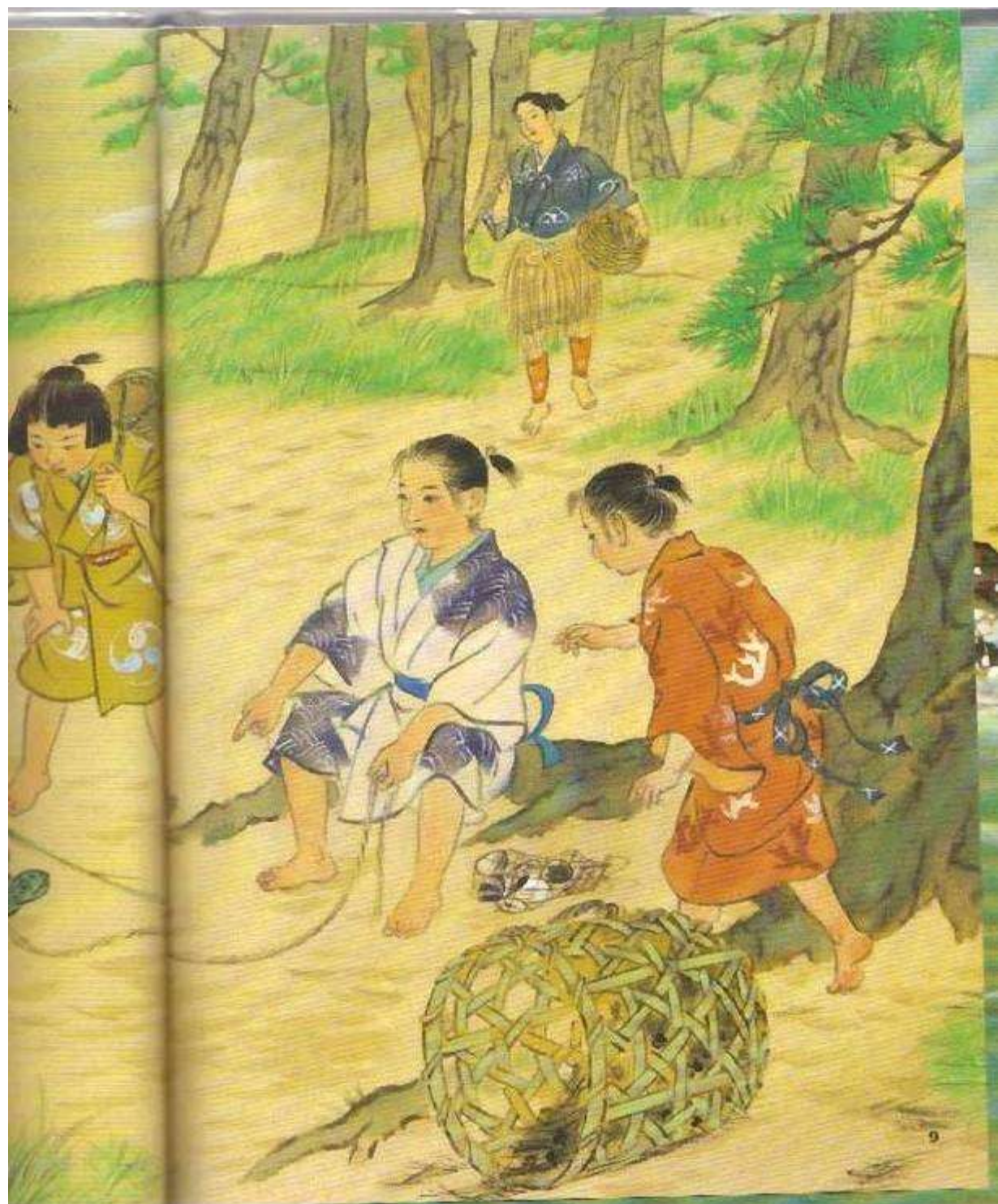
Taró loved to fish by the seashore and dream.
He'd angle for mackerel, flounder, or bream
And dream of the Dragon King's palace of gold
He'd heard of in stories the fishermen told.





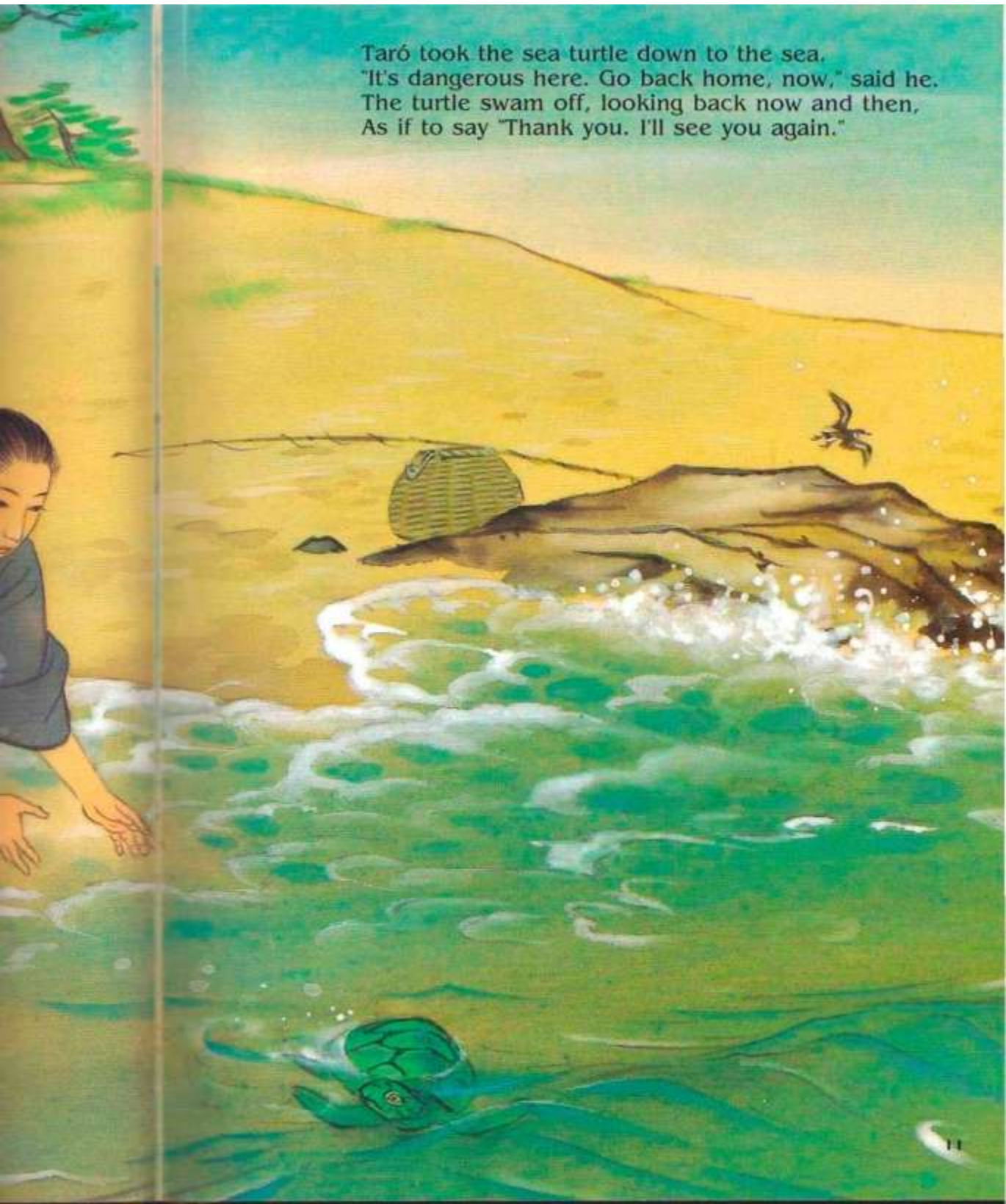
One day, walking home
on a path through the trees,
Tarō met some children
who'd gathered to tease
A little sea turtle.
"Don't hurt him," he said.
"I'll give you a coin
if you free him instead."



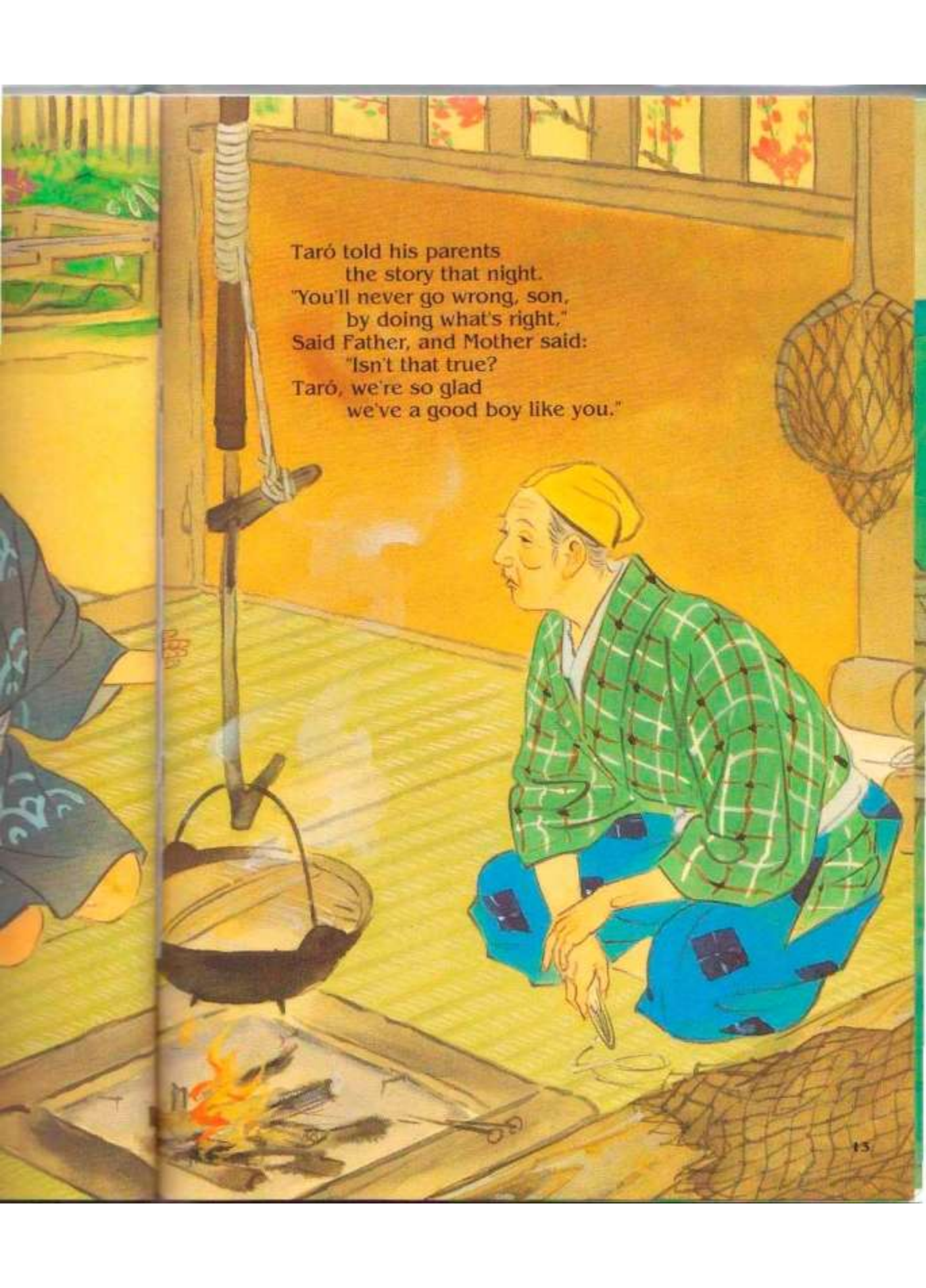




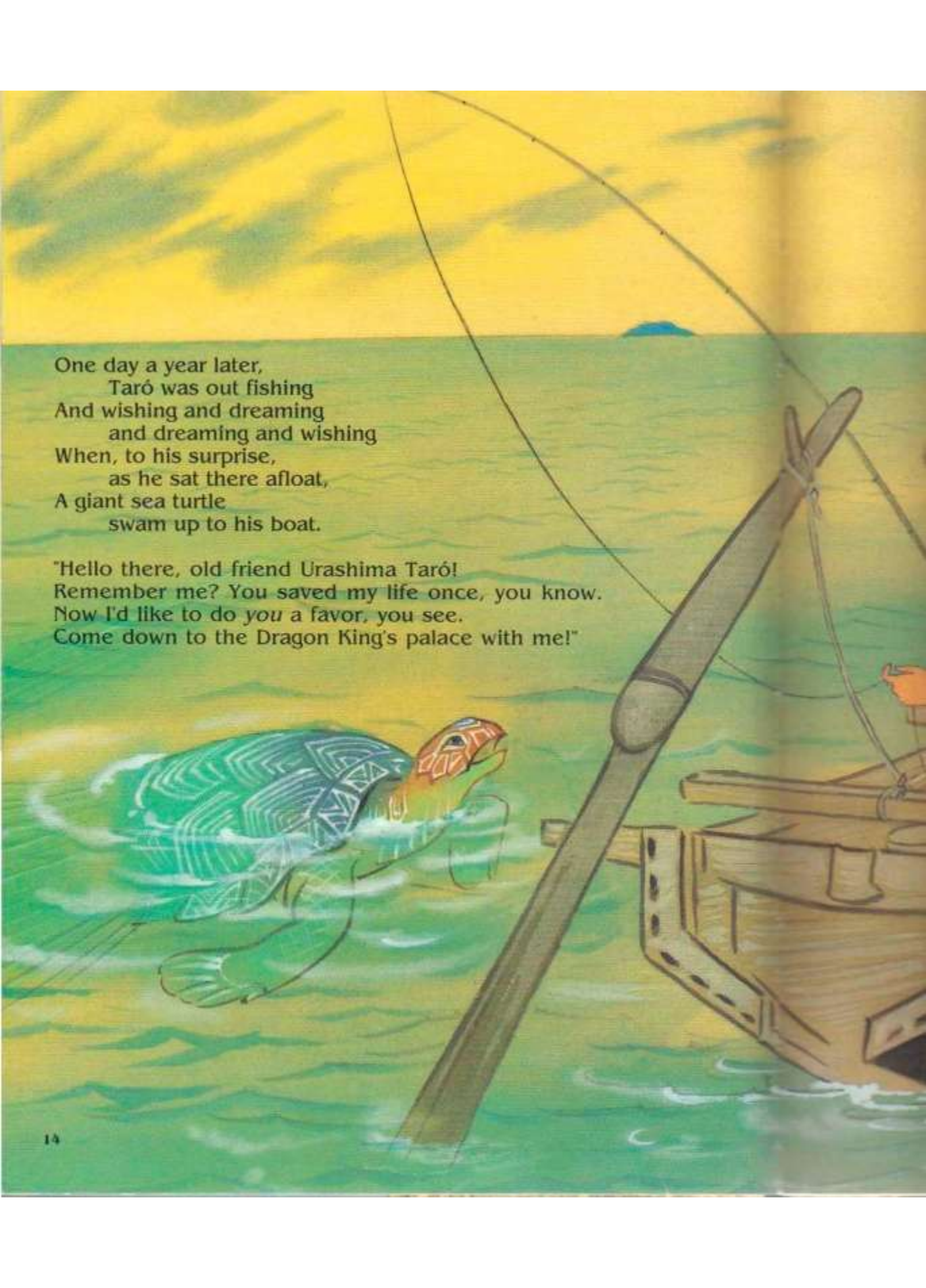
Taró took the sea turtle down to the sea.
"It's dangerous here. Go back home, now," said he.
The turtle swam off, looking back now and then,
As if to say "Thank you. I'll see you again."





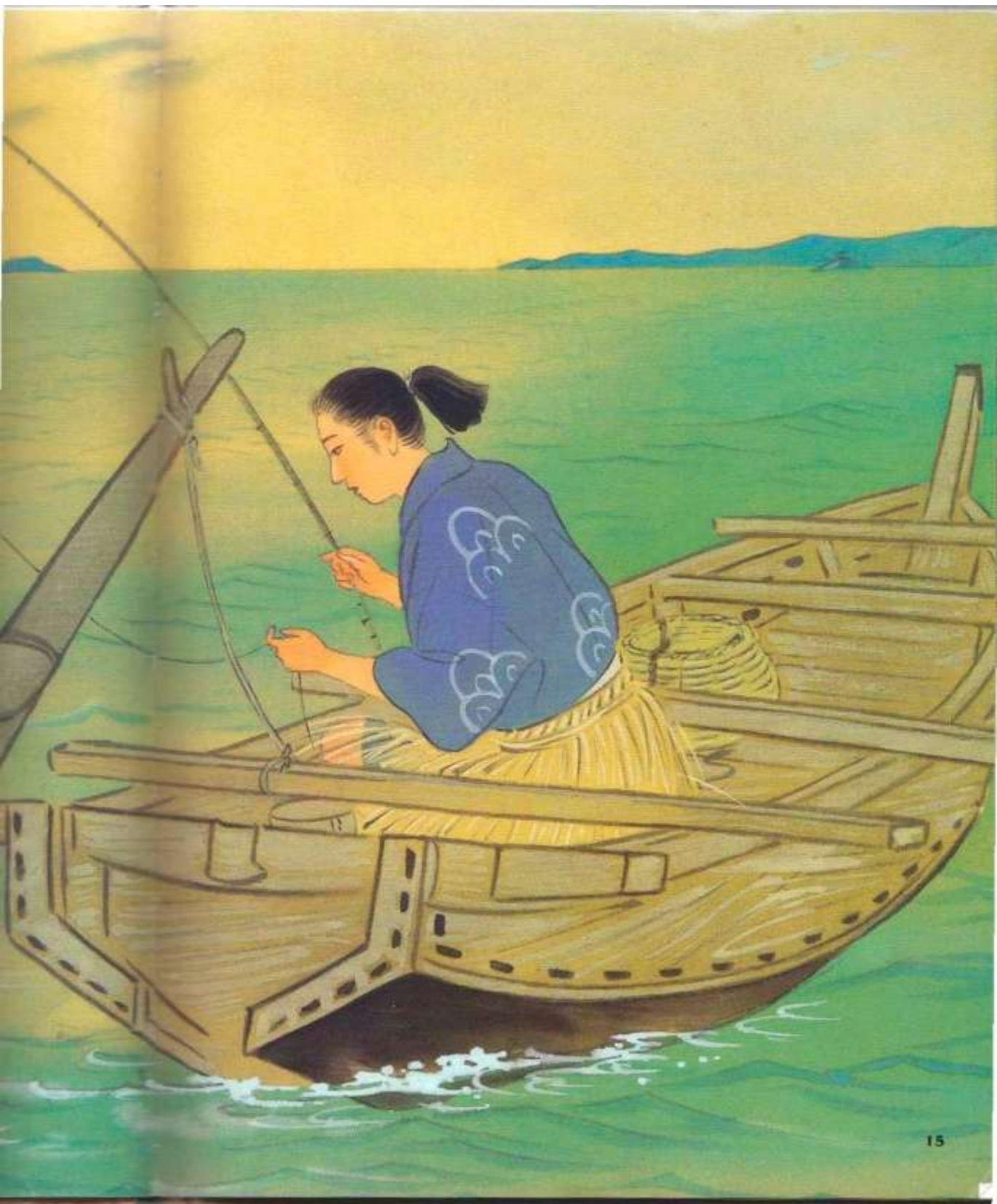
An illustration of a traditional Japanese interior. A woman with a yellow headscarf, wearing a green plaid kimono over a blue patterned undergarment, is kneeling on a tatami floor. She is looking towards the left. In the foreground, a small fire burns in a square hearth. A large black pot hangs from a wooden frame above the hearth. To the left, the lower part of another person in a grey kimono is visible. The background features a wall with a window showing a garden scene. A woven basket hangs on the wall to the right.

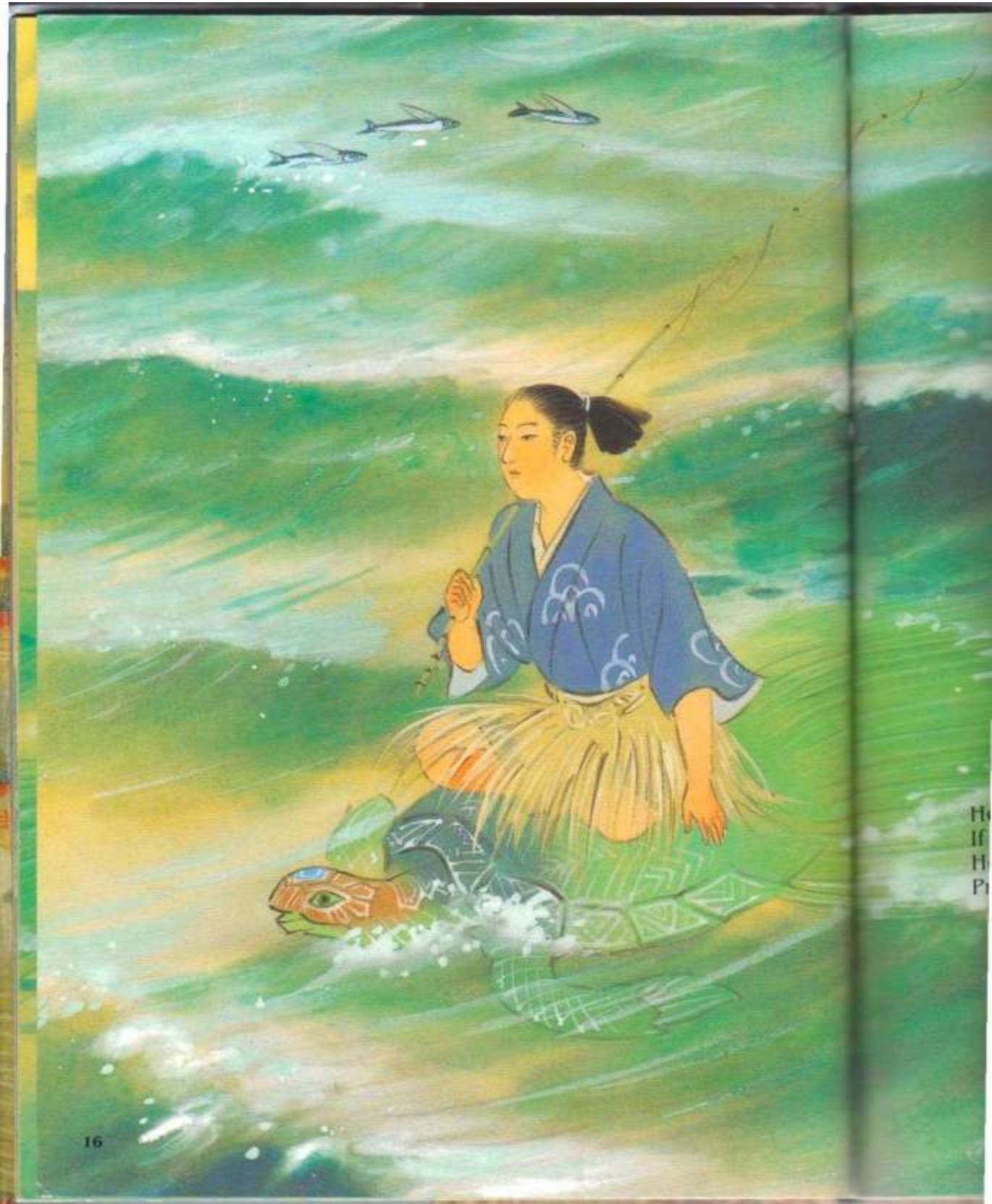
Taró told his parents
the story that night.
"You'll never go wrong, son,
by doing what's right,"
Said Father, and Mother said:
"Isn't that true?"
Taró, we're so glad
we've a good boy like you."

An illustration of a sea turtle swimming towards a boat. The turtle has a green and white patterned shell and a reddish-brown head. It is swimming in green water. A wooden boat is partially visible on the right, with a long wooden pole extending into the water. The background is a yellow sky with a small blue mountain on the horizon.

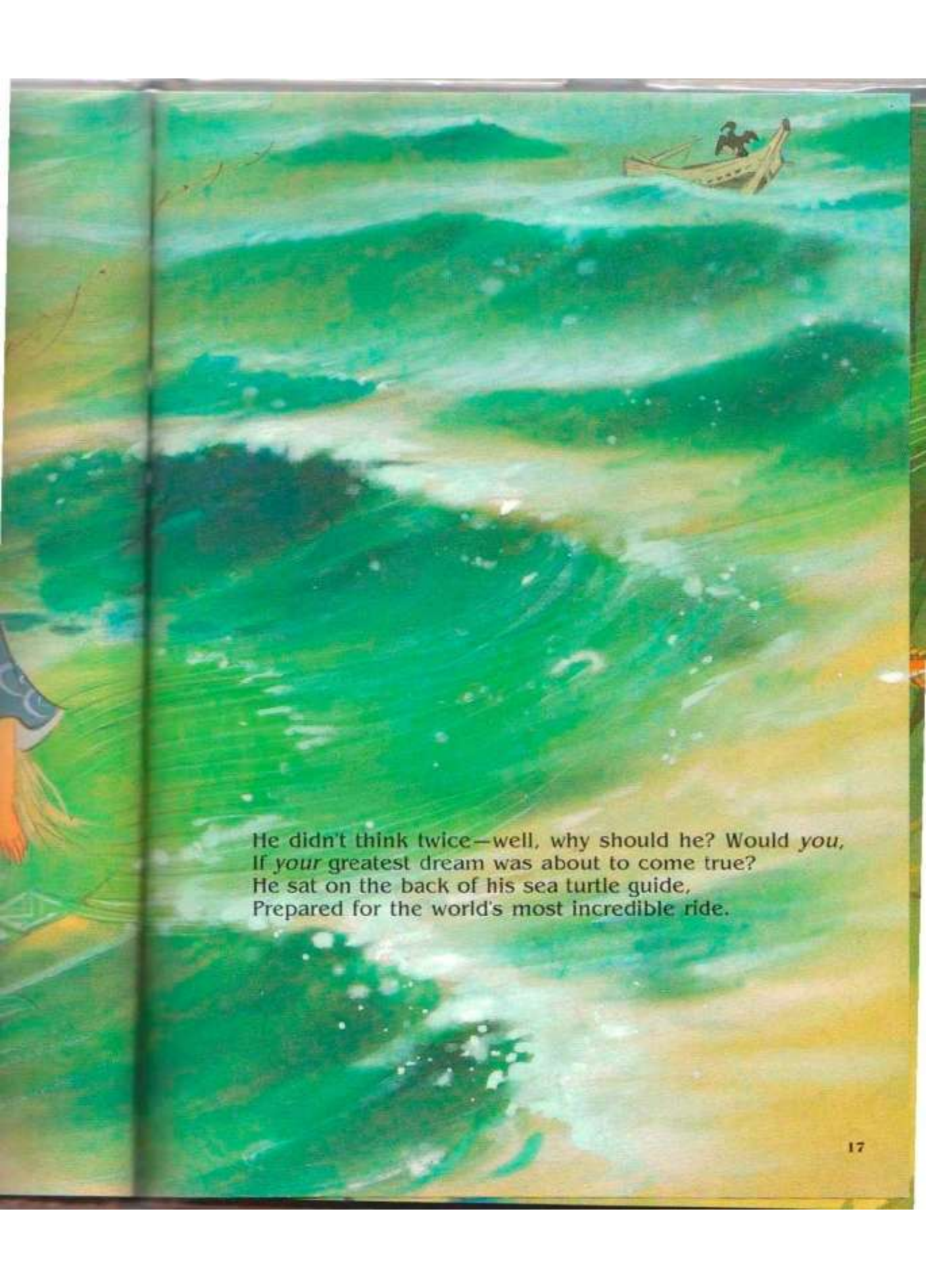
One day a year later,
Taró was out fishing
And wishing and dreaming
and dreaming and wishing
When, to his surprise,
as he sat there afloat,
A giant sea turtle
swam up to his boat.

"Hello there, old friend Urashima Taró!
Remember me? You saved my life once, you know.
Now I'd like to do *you* a favor, you see.
Come down to the Dragon King's palace with me!"



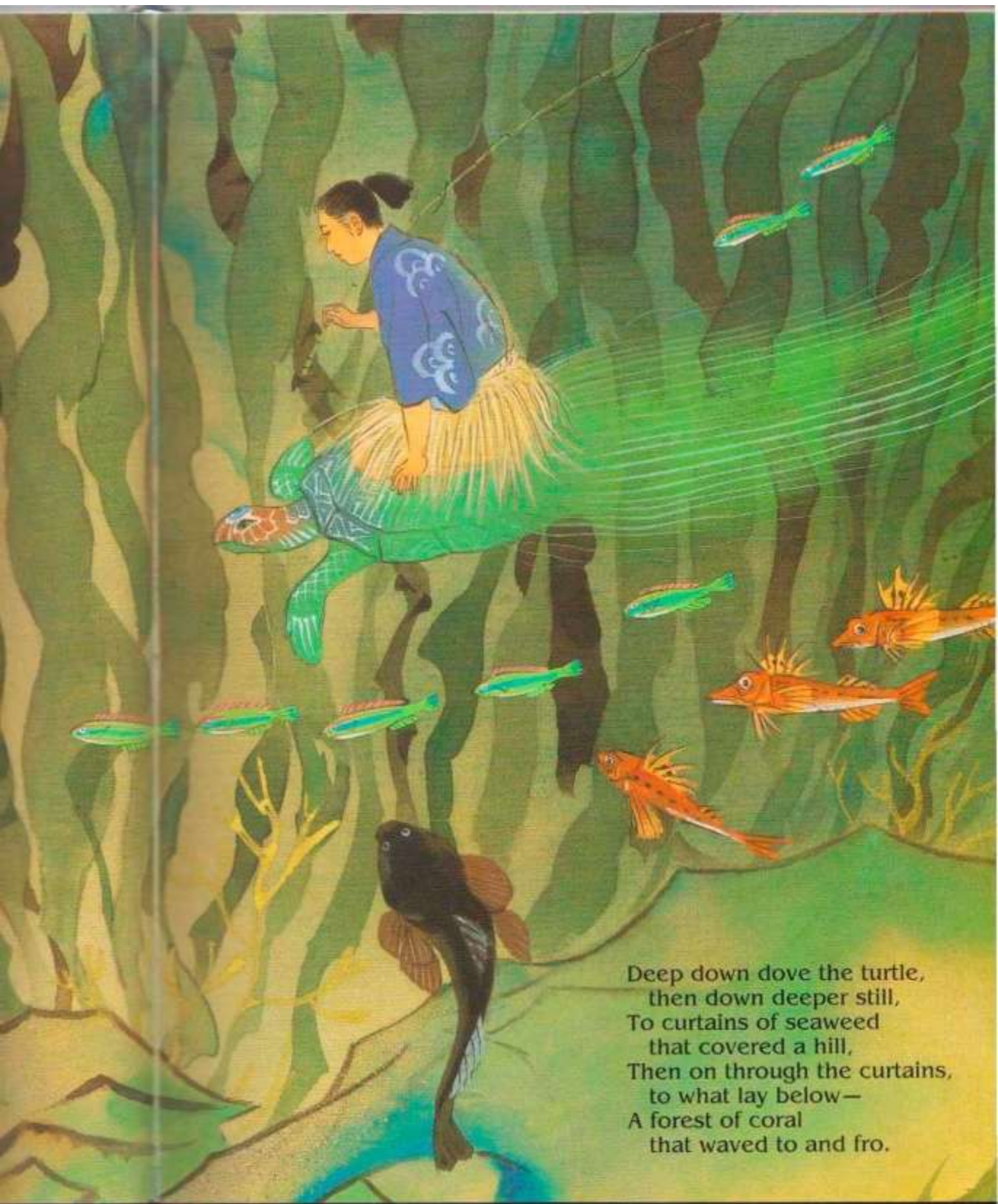


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A painting of a boat on a stormy sea. The sea is depicted with vibrant green and blue waves, and white foam from the breaking waves. In the upper right, a small wooden boat with a single figure is navigating the rough waters. The overall style is expressive and somewhat abstract, with visible brushstrokes and a rich color palette. The text is overlaid on the lower portion of the painting.

He didn't think twice—well, why should he? Would *you*,
If *your* greatest dream was about to come true?
He sat on the back of his sea turtle guide,
Prepared for the world's most incredible ride.





Deep down dove the turtle,
then down deeper still,
To curtains of seaweed
that covered a hill,
Then on through the curtains,
to what lay below—
A forest of coral
that waved to and fro.

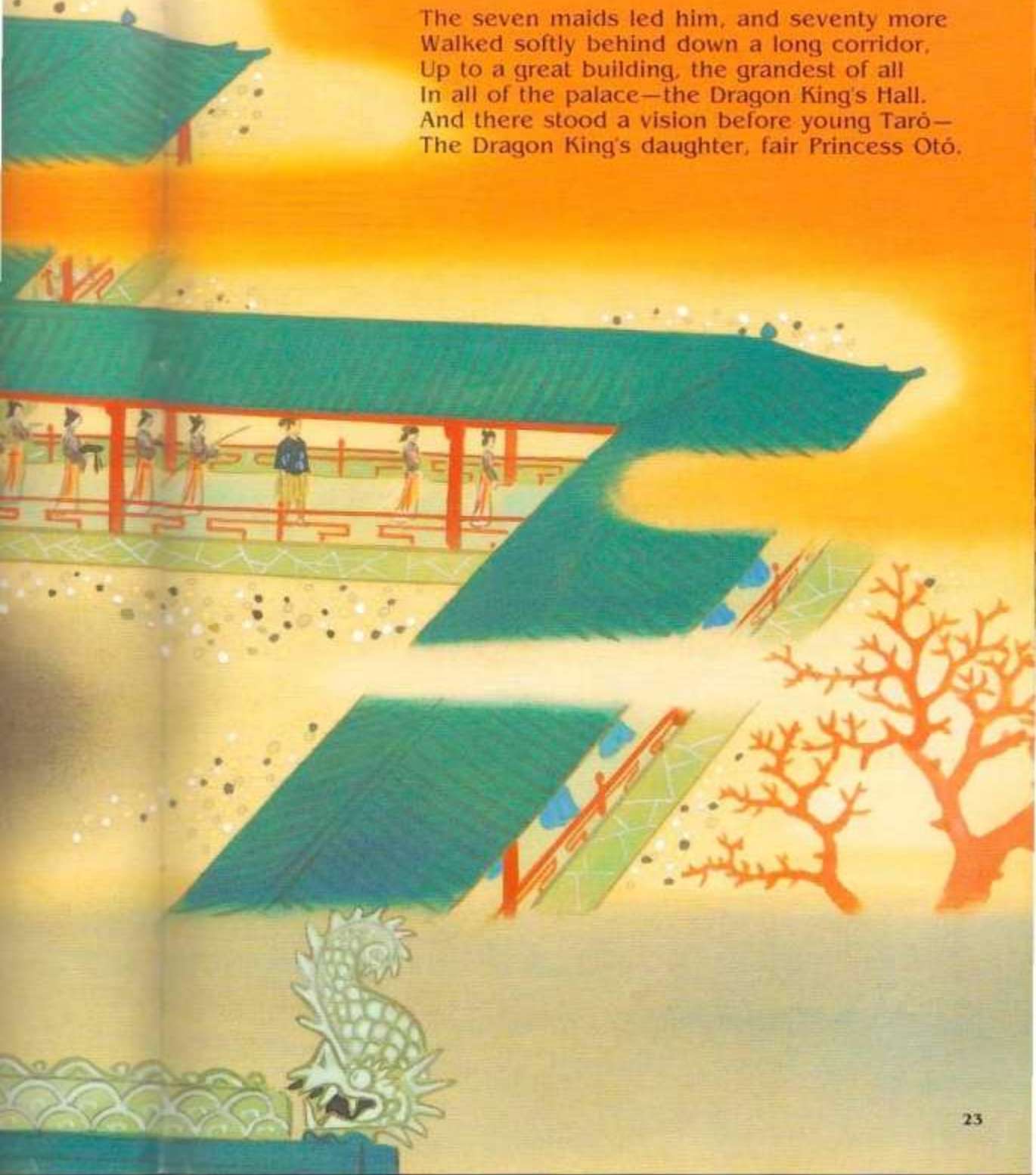


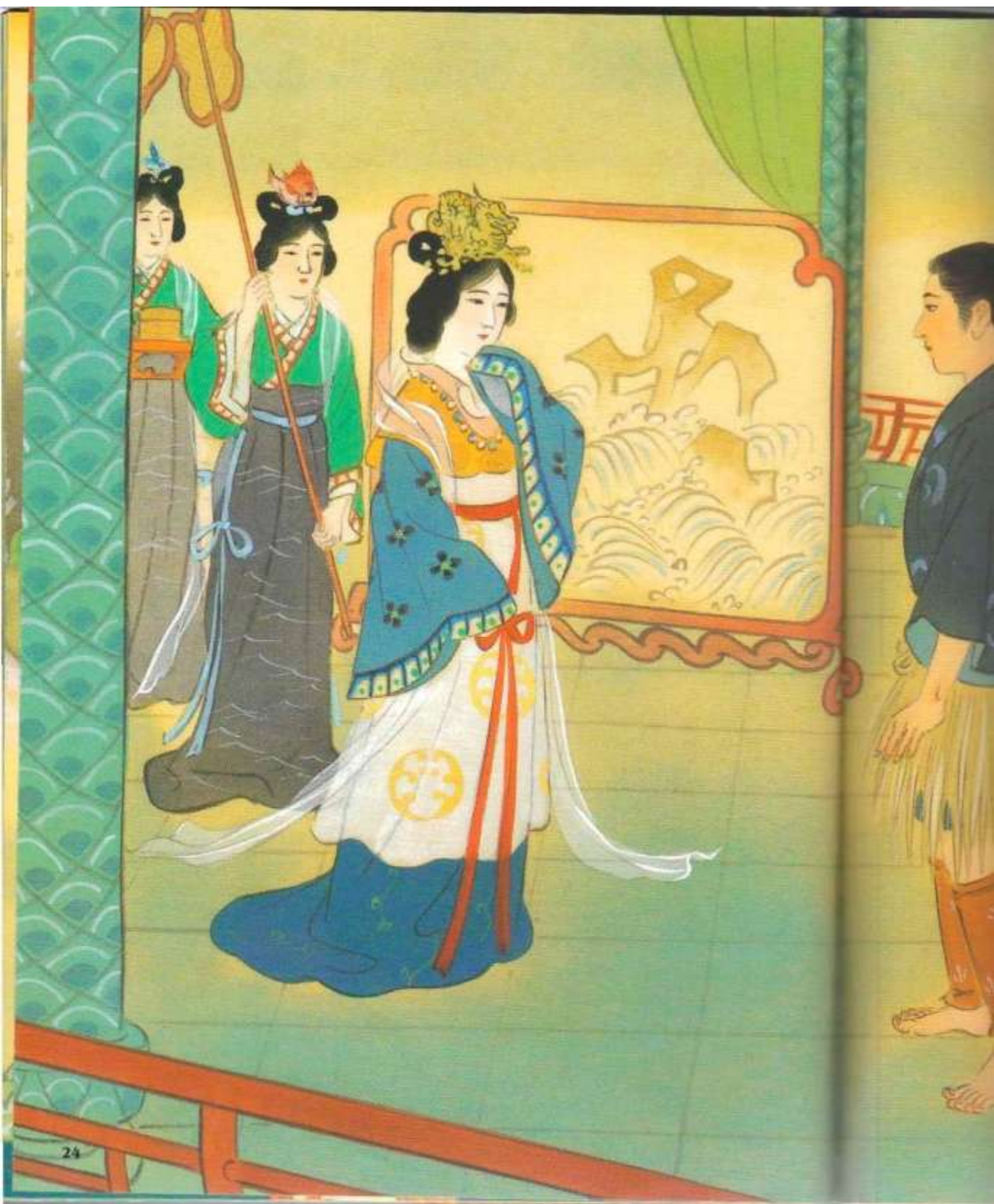
Then on through the forest, and lo and behold:
The Dragon King's palace, all emerald and gold!
And there at the gate, seven beautiful maids
Awaited Taró with their hair up in braids.



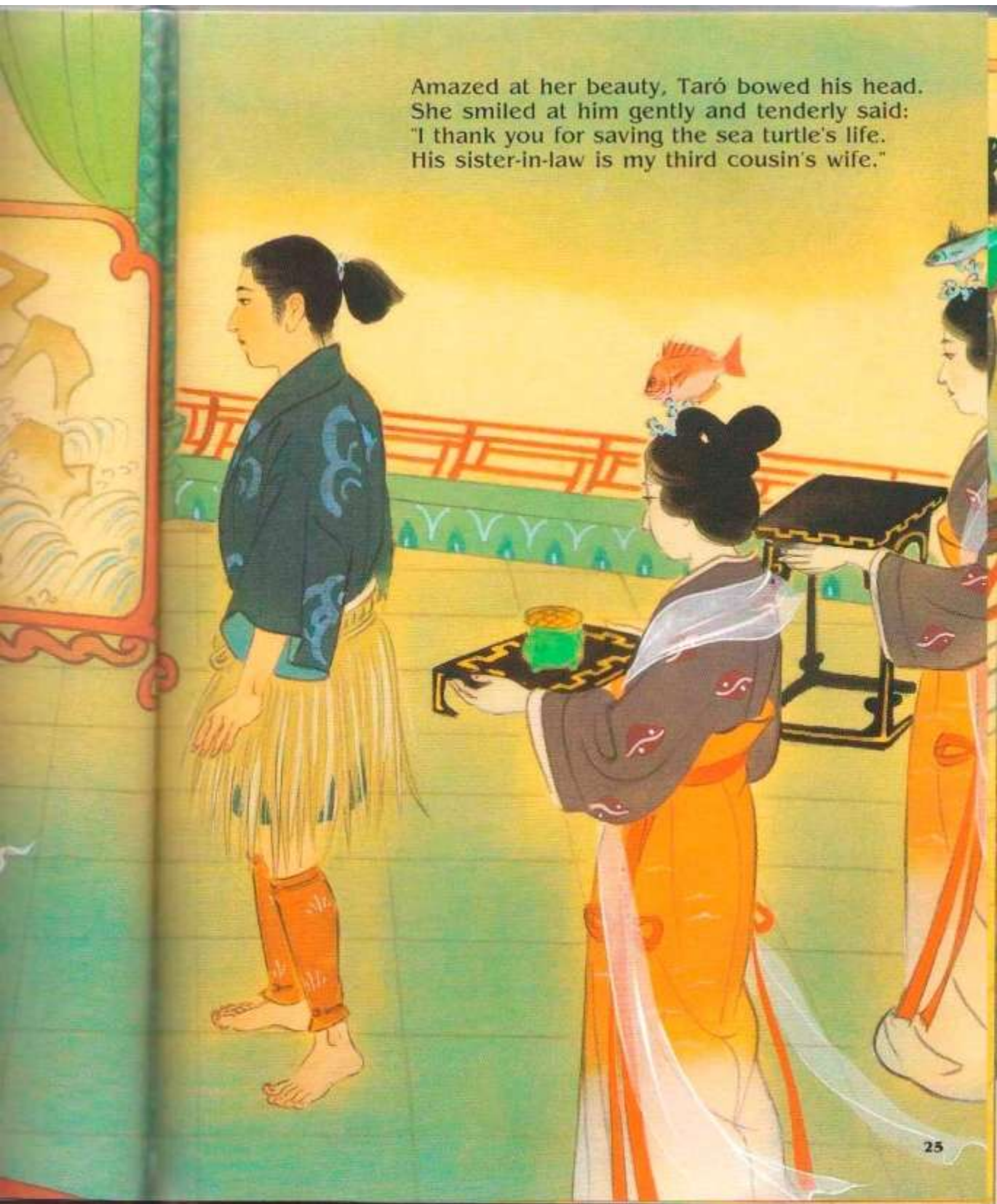


The seven maids led him, and seventy more
Walked softly behind down a long corridor,
Up to a great building, the grandest of all
In all of the palace—the Dragon King's Hall.
And there stood a vision before young Taró—
The Dragon King's daughter, fair Princess Otó.

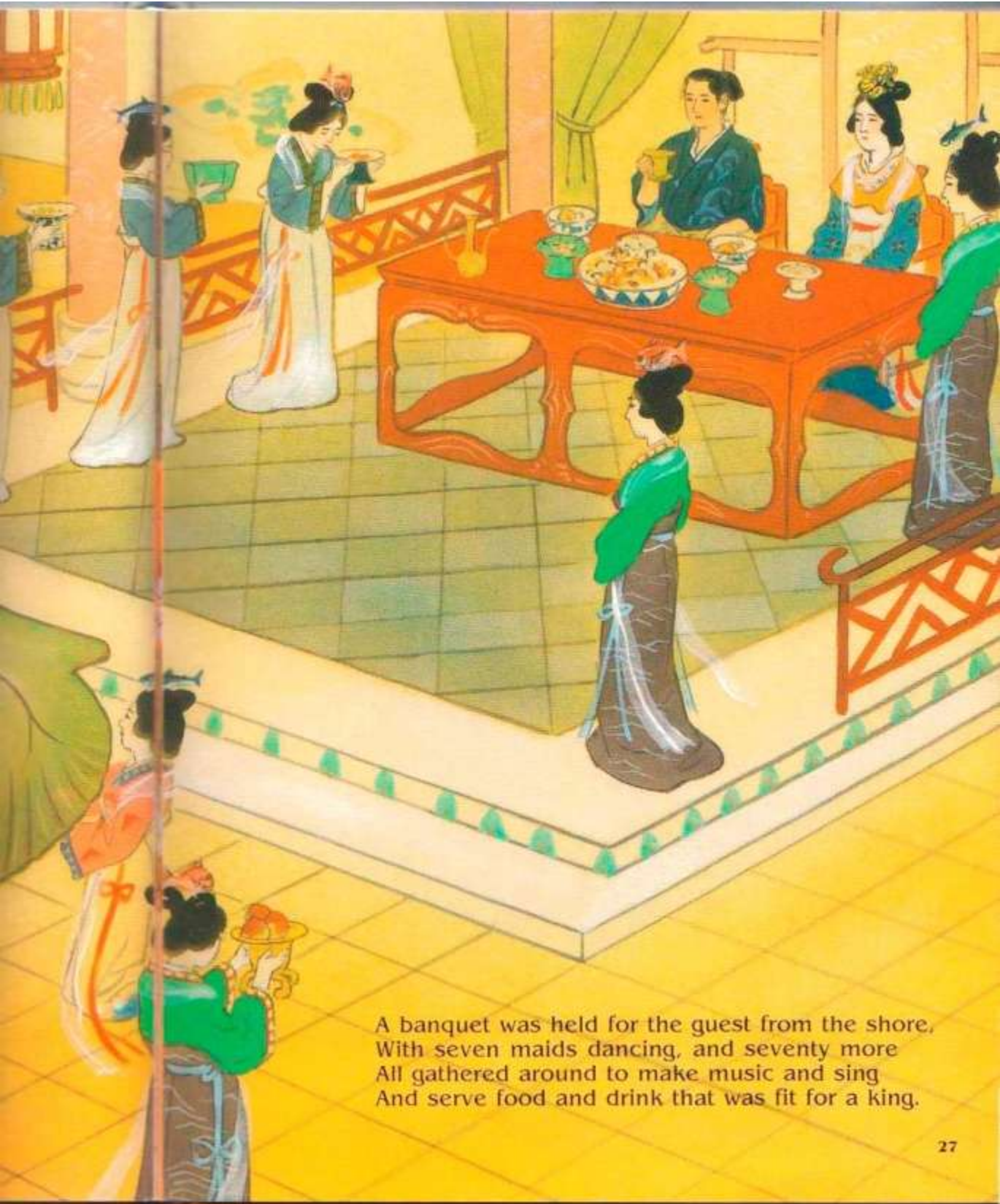




Amazed at her beauty, Taró bowed his head.
She smiled at him gently and tenderly said:
"I thank you for saving the sea turtle's life.
His sister-in-law is my third cousin's wife."

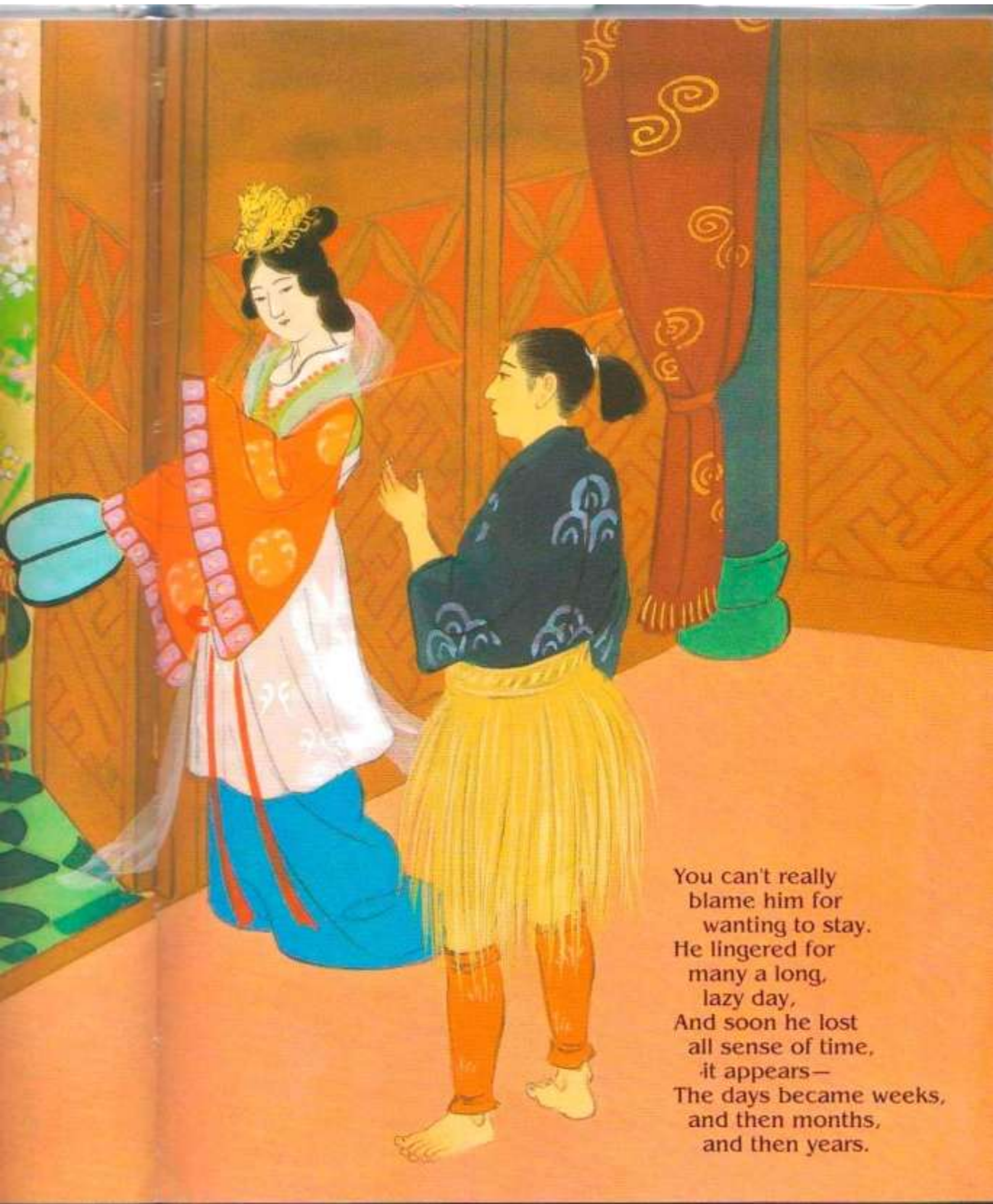




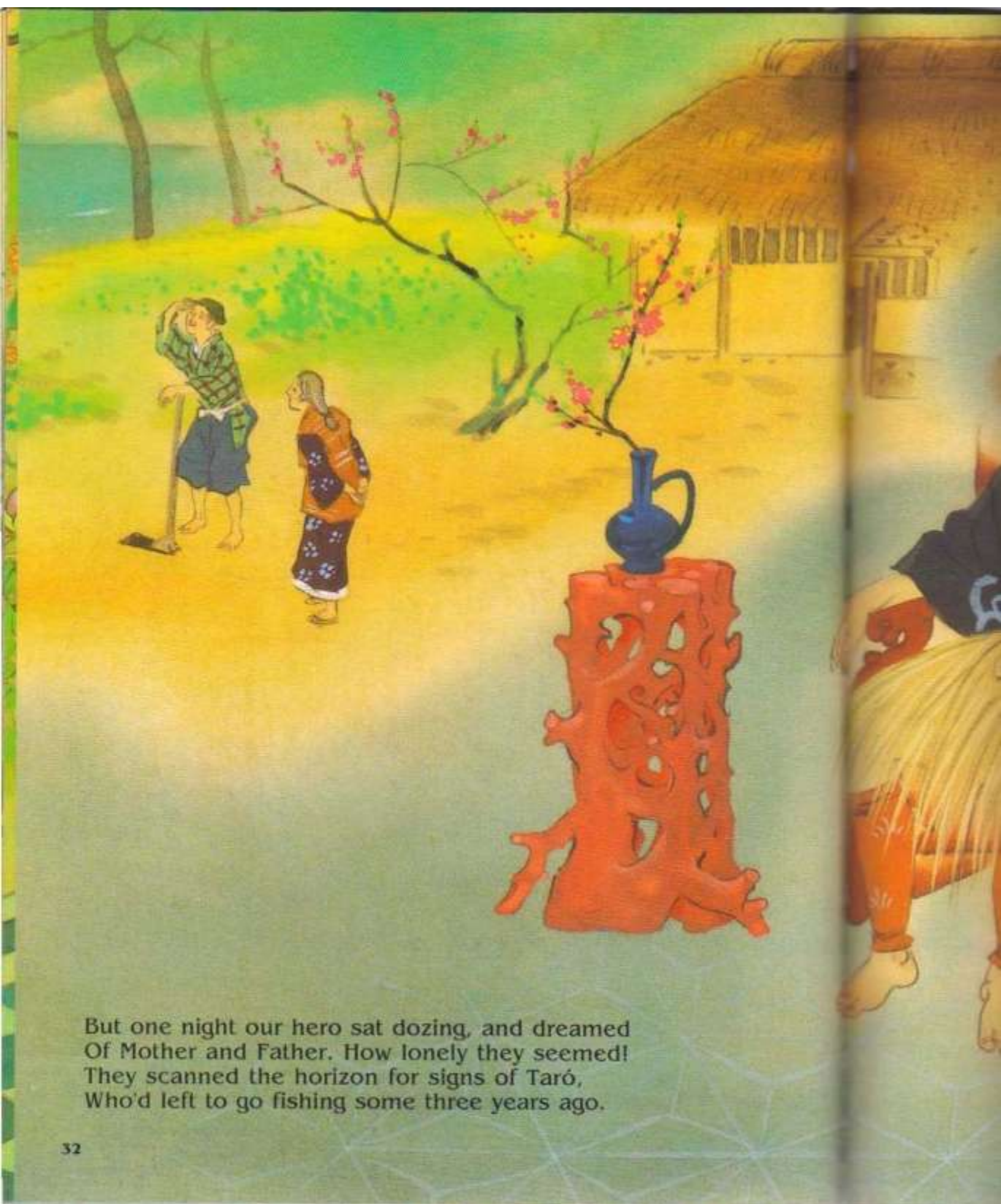


A banquet was held for the guest from the shore,
With seven maids dancing, and seventy more
All gathered around to make music and sing
And serve food and drink that was fit for a king.





You can't really
blame him for
wanting to stay.
He lingered for
many a long,
lazy day,
And soon he lost
all sense of time,
it appears—
The days became weeks,
and then months,
and then years.



But one night our hero sat dozing, and dreamed
Of Mother and Father. How lonely they seemed!
They scanned the horizon for signs of Taró,
Who'd left to go fishing some three years ago.



The next day Taró told the princess, his love,
He had to go back to the land up above.
"It grieves me to think of my parents alone.
I'll miss you, but I have a home of my own."

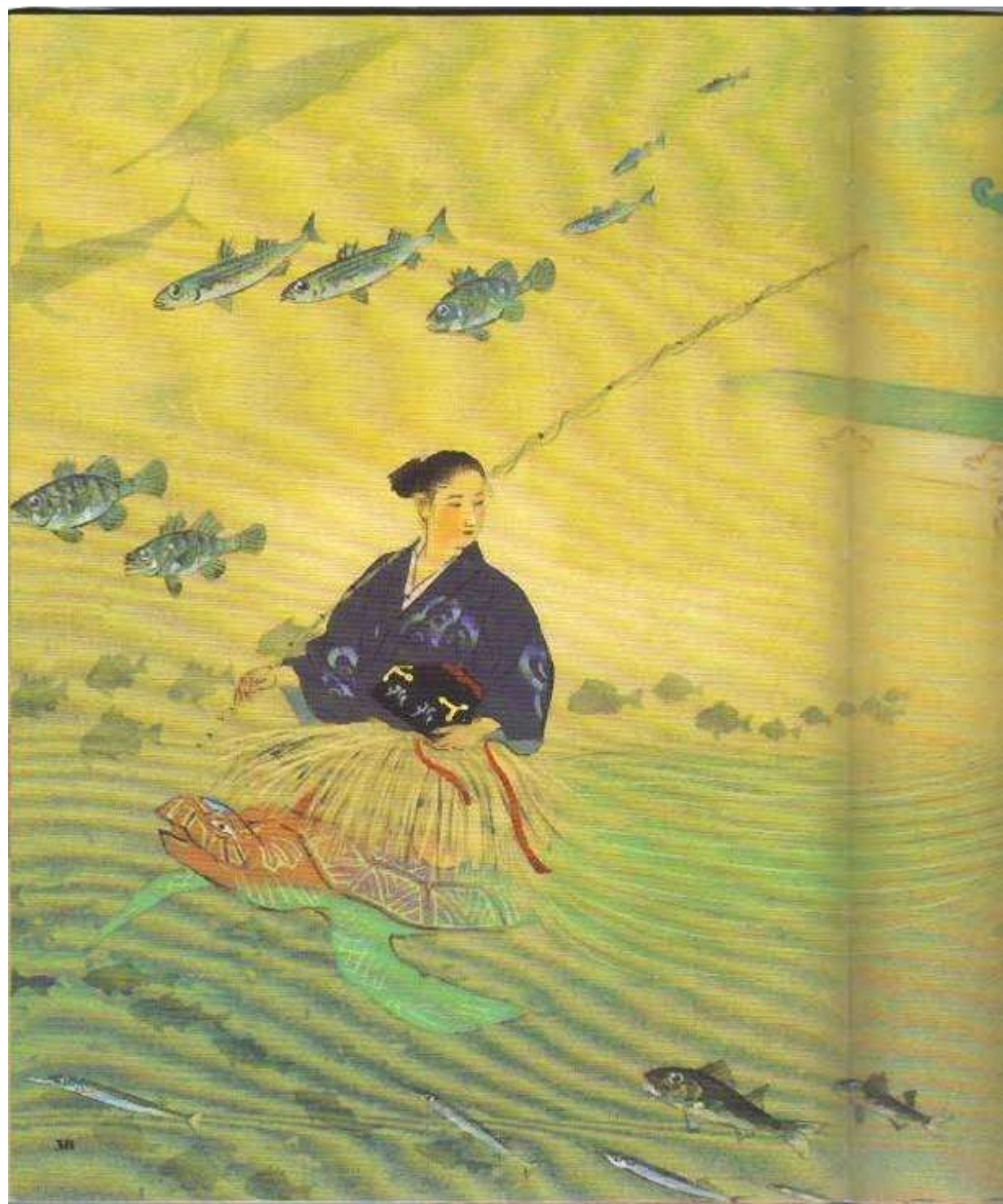


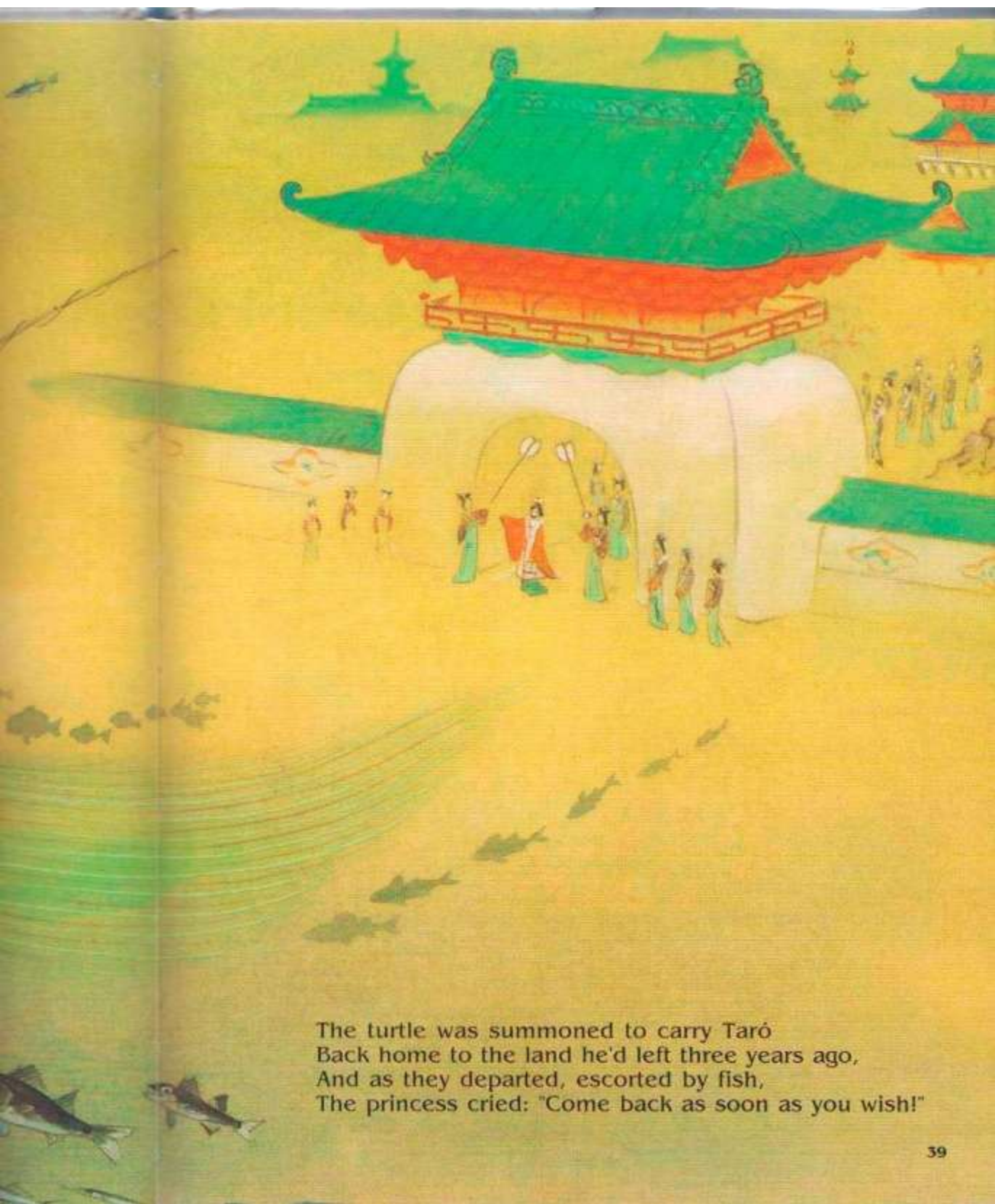






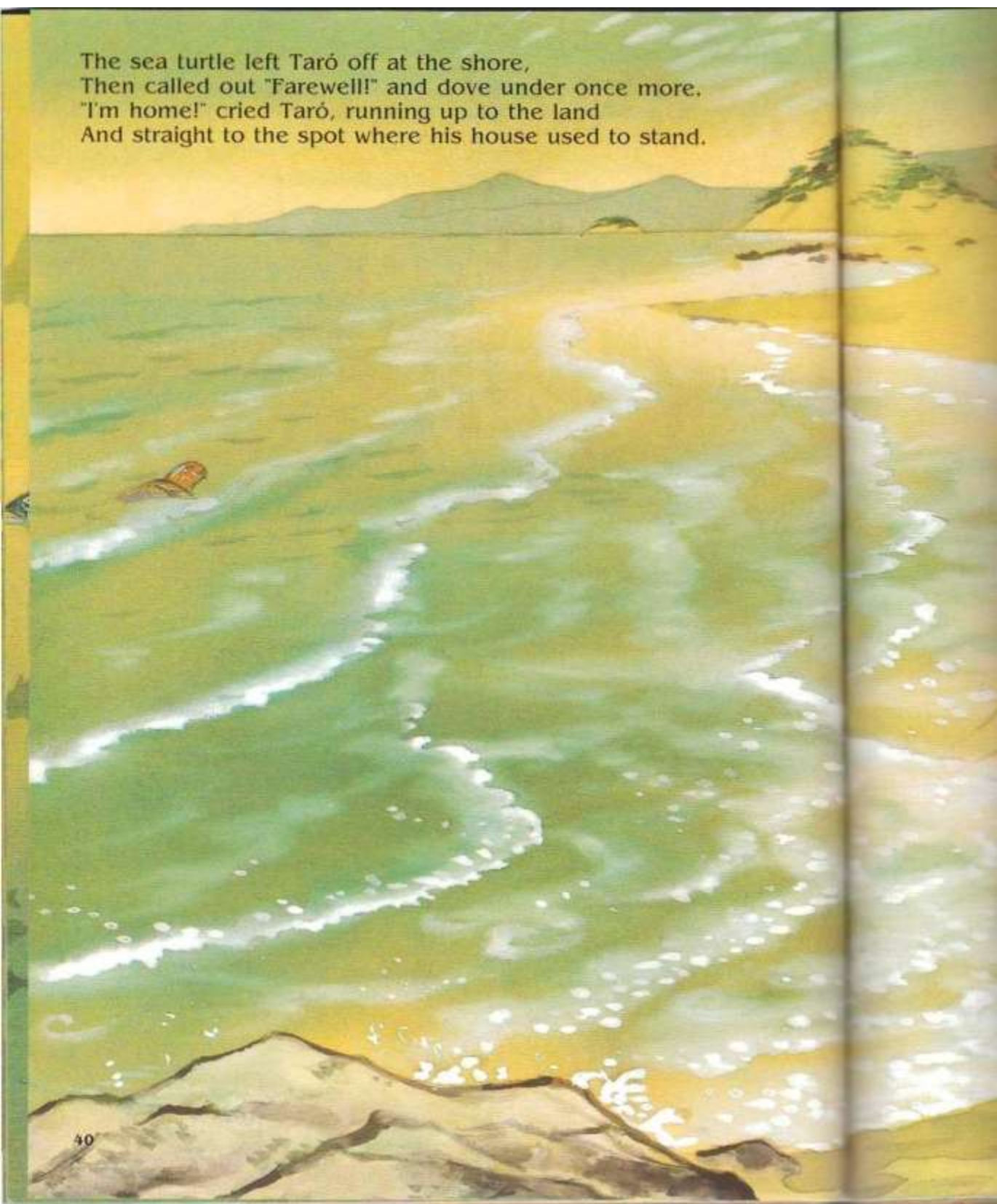
"So be it," she said with a tear in her eye,
And gave him a gift to remember her by—
A box decorated with ivory and gold.
"Don't lose it," she said, "and you'll never grow old.
Return with it someday to make me your bride.
But don't ever open it—*don't look inside!*"

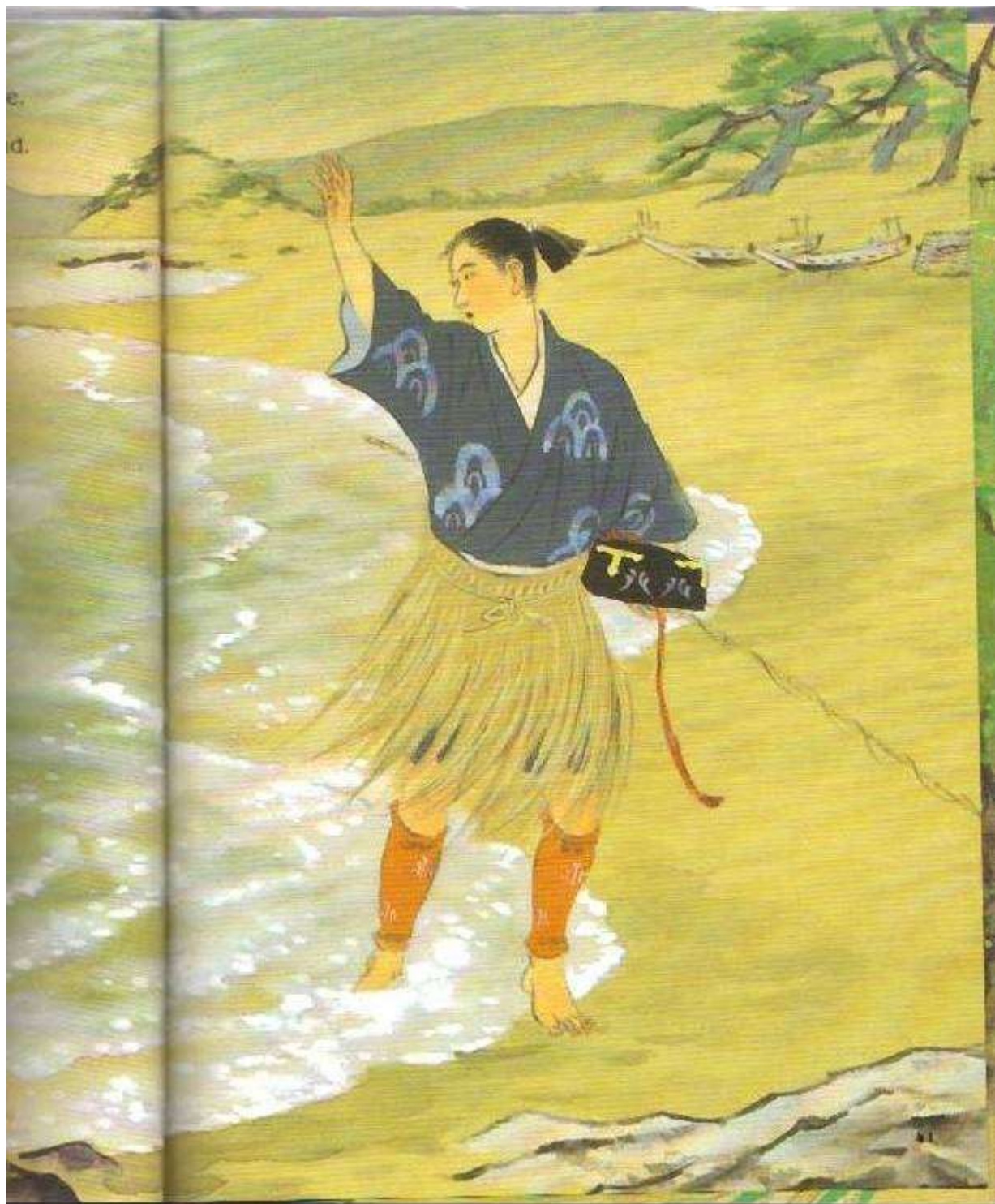


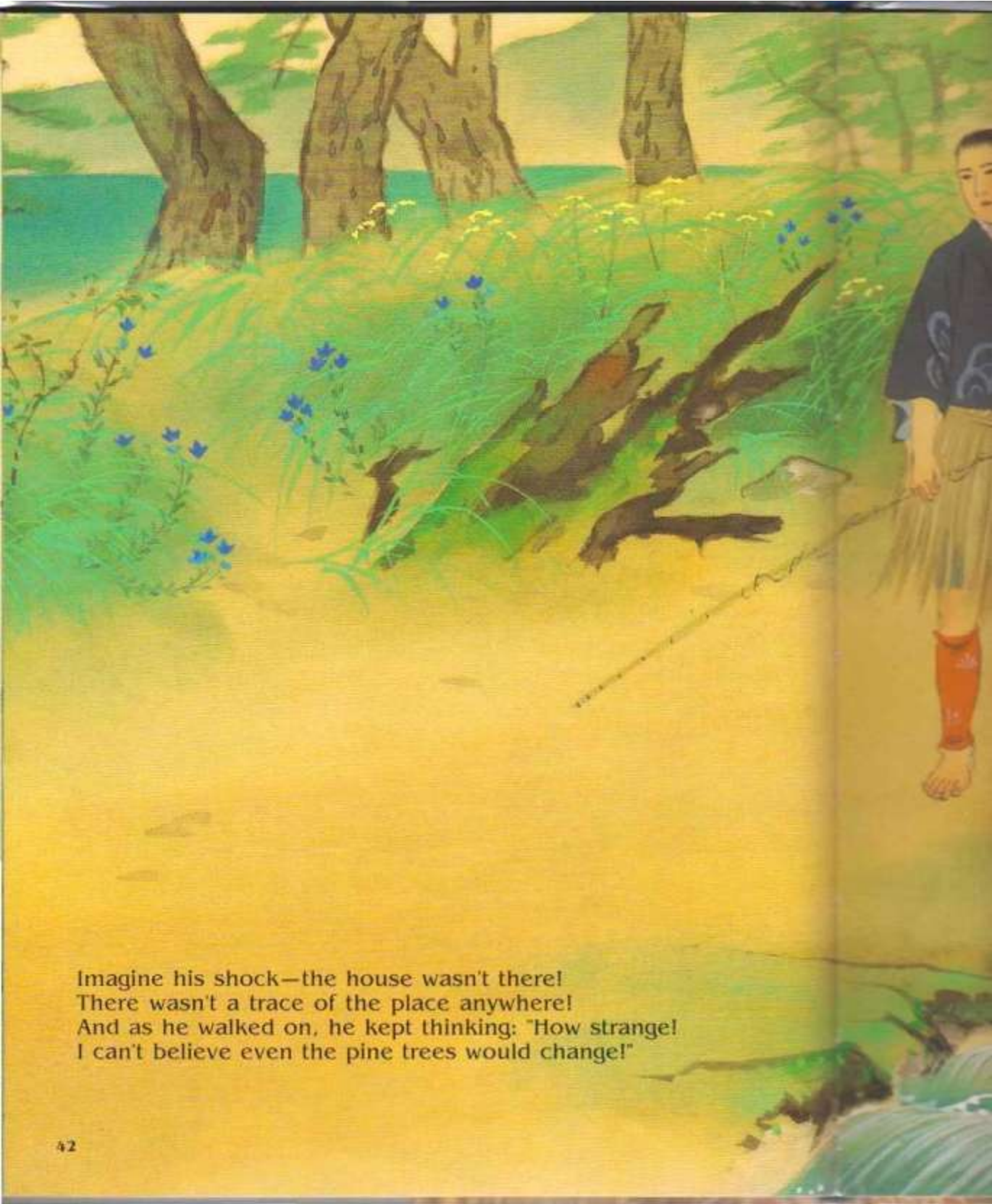


The turtle was summoned to carry Tarō
Back home to the land he'd left three years ago,
And as they departed, escorted by fish,
The princess cried: "Come back as soon as you wish!"

The sea turtle left Taró off at the shore,
Then called out "Farewell!" and dove under once more.
"I'm home!" cried Taró, running up to the land
And straight to the spot where his house used to stand.







Imagine his shock—the house wasn't there!
There wasn't a trace of the place anywhere!
And as he walked on, he kept thinking: "How strange!
I can't believe even the pine trees would change!"





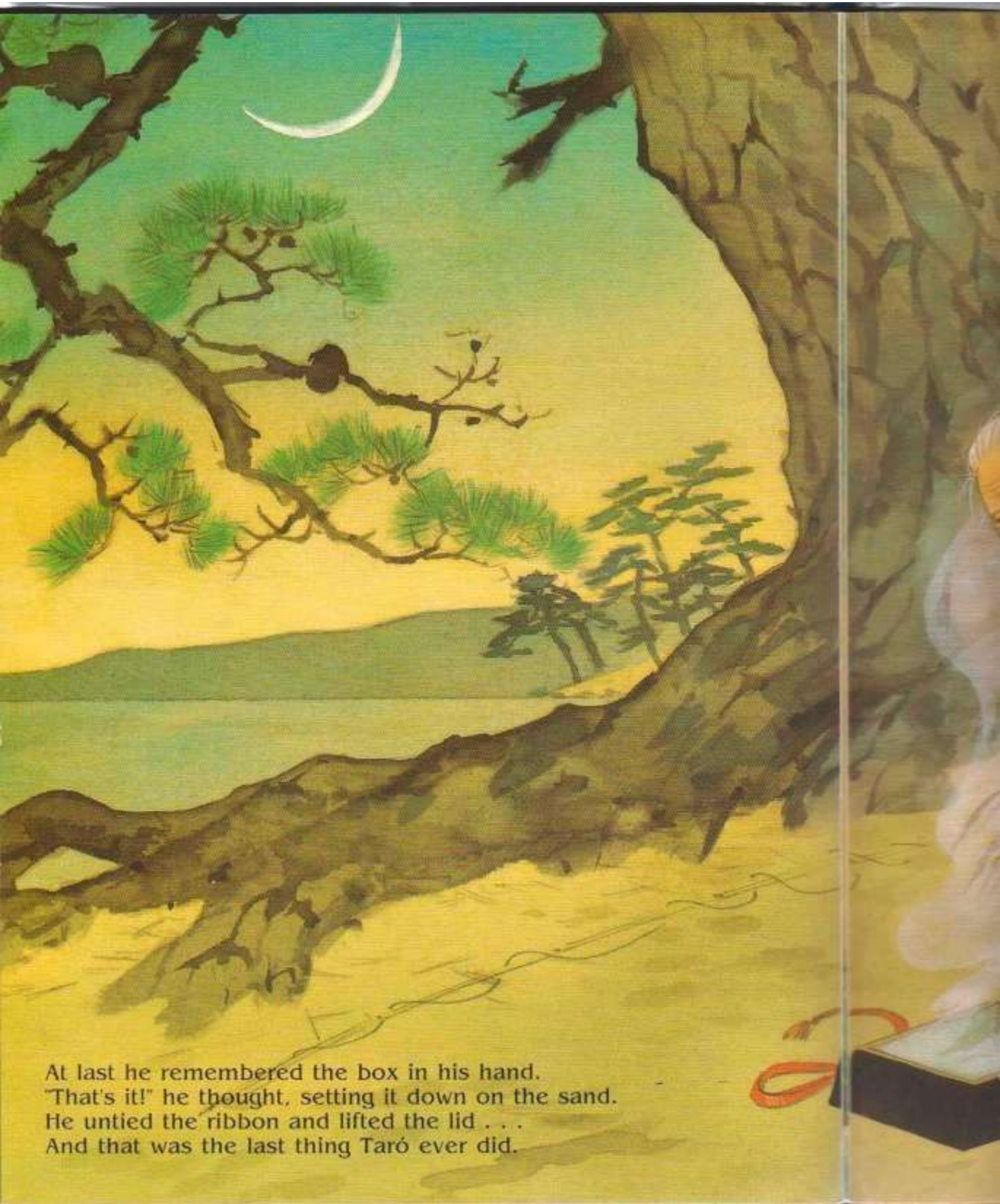
At last, around sunset,
he met an old man.
He stopped him and said:
"Tell me where, if you can,
The parents of young
Urashima Taró
Have moved to—
their house is gone!
Where did they go?"

"What's that? Urashima?" the man said and smiled.
"That name's from a legend I heard as a child—
A boy who rode off on a turtle one day
Some three hundred years ago, some people say."

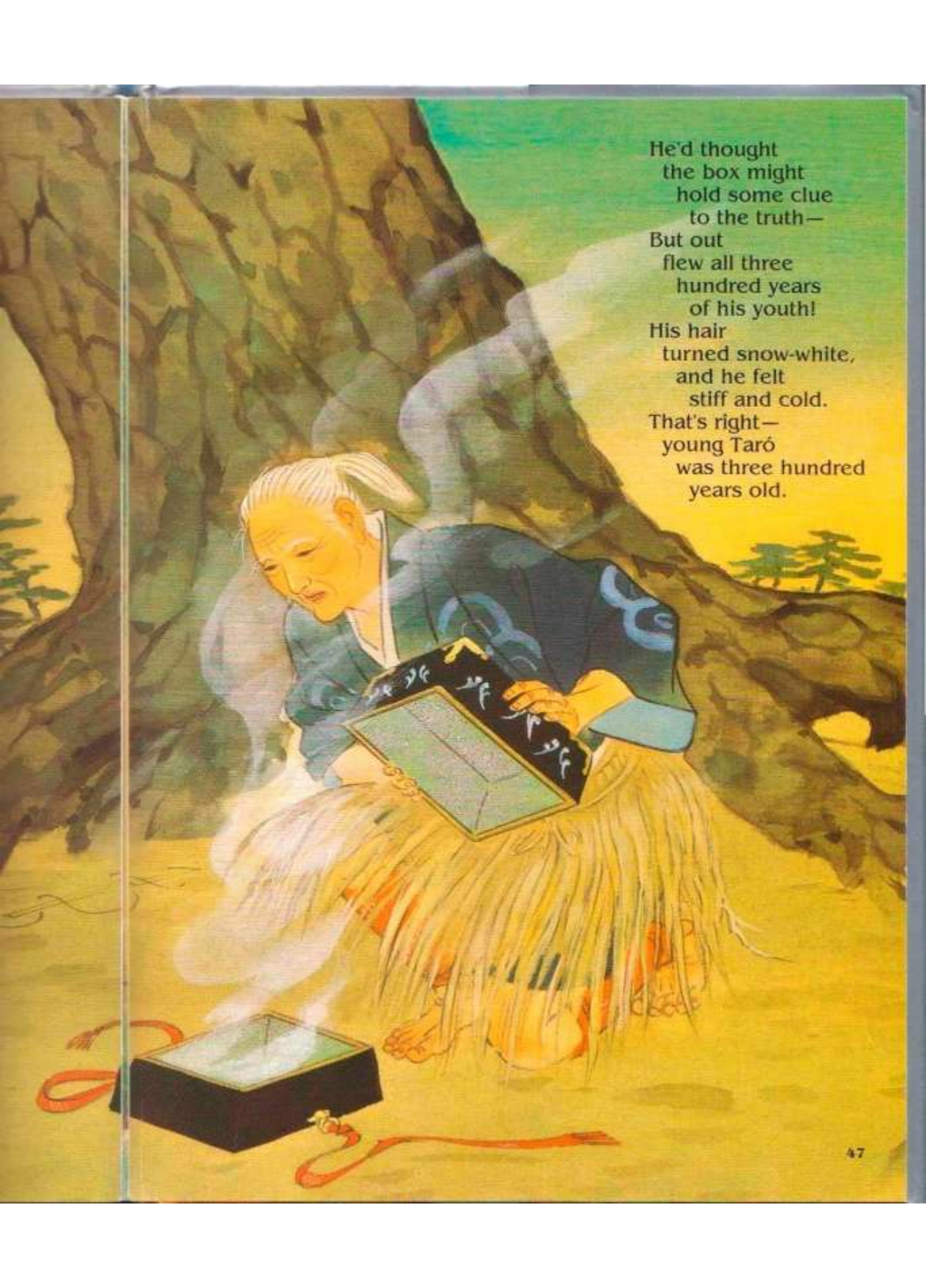
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It didn't



What? Three hundred years ago! How could that be?
It didn't make sense—he'd been gone only *three*.



At last he remembered the box in his hand.
"That's it!" he thought, setting it down on the sand.
He untied the ribbon and lifted the lid . . .
And that was the last thing Taró ever did.

An illustration of an elderly man with white hair, wearing a dark blue kimono with a light blue pattern and a long, light-colored straw skirt. He is kneeling on a sandy ground, reading a book with Japanese characters. A black box with a red ribbon lies on the ground in front of him. The background shows a large, gnarled tree trunk and a rocky outcrop under a green sky.

He'd thought
the box might
hold some clue
to the truth—

But out
flew all three
hundred years
of his youth!

His hair
turned snow-white,
and he felt
stiff and cold.

That's right—
young Taró
was three hundred
years old.



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