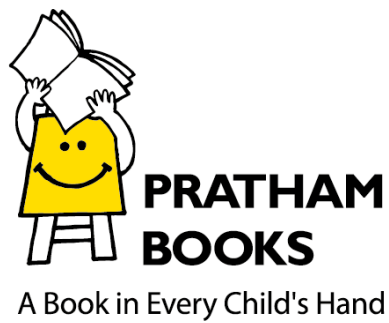




First House

Long, long ago, when people lived in caves, two brothers in the northeastern part of India, now called Arunachal Pradesh, decided to build their own house. In a folktale that refers to the rich fauna of this region, we learn how the first house was built.



First House

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Phidi Pulu



The first house was built in a faraway land of the East, long, long ago by two friends, Kindru-Lalim and Kincha Lali-Dam. In those days, people still lived in caves and did not know what a house was.

One day, Kindru-Lalim remarked, “O Lali, I’m so tired of living in a dark cave. Why don’t we build a house in the forest?”

“That’s a fantastic idea, Kindru!” exclaimed Kincha Lali-Dam. “Let’s go and ask our friends- the birds, beasts and reptiles how to build a house!”



So Kincha Lali-Dam and Kindru-Lalim came out of their caves and entered a dense forest. The first animal they saw was an elephant standing under a tree, flapping his large ears.

“Can you tell us how to build a house, O mighty one?” they asked. The elephant trumpeted loudly and said, “Cut logs to make pillars as strong and thick as my legs!”



The two friends chopped down a tree and made thick pillars out of it. A snake suddenly slithered past them on the forest floor. “Fetch poles as long and thin as I am,” hissed the snake, so off went Kindru-Lalim and Kincha Lali-Dam to cut bamboos from a nearby grove.

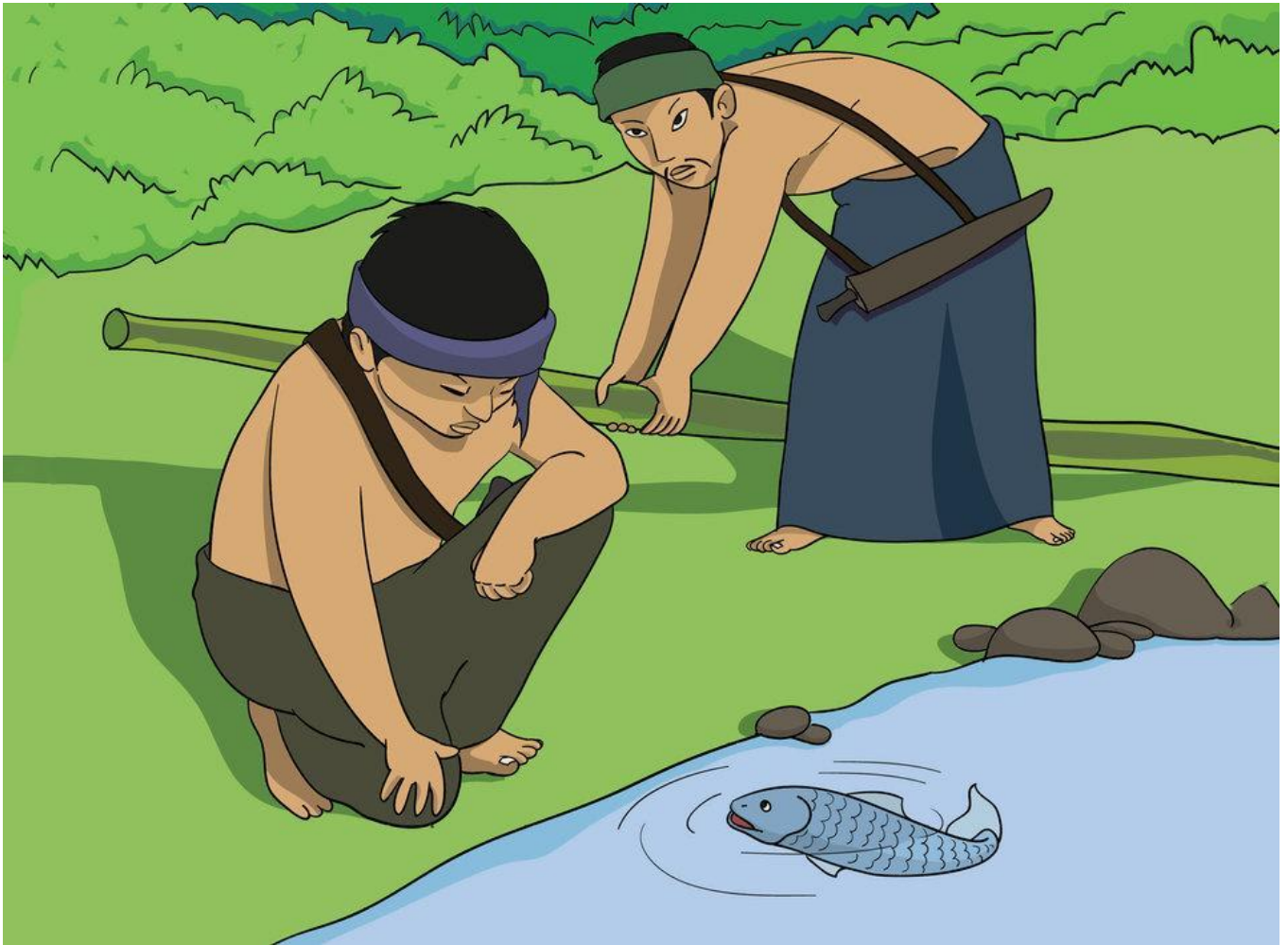


As they returned, carrying the bamboo on their backs, they heard a mournful 'moo'. It was a mithun, a large buffalo-like creature who lives in those areas and she was bending over the carcass of an animal. "Can you tell us how to build a house please?" asked Kincha Lali-Dam.



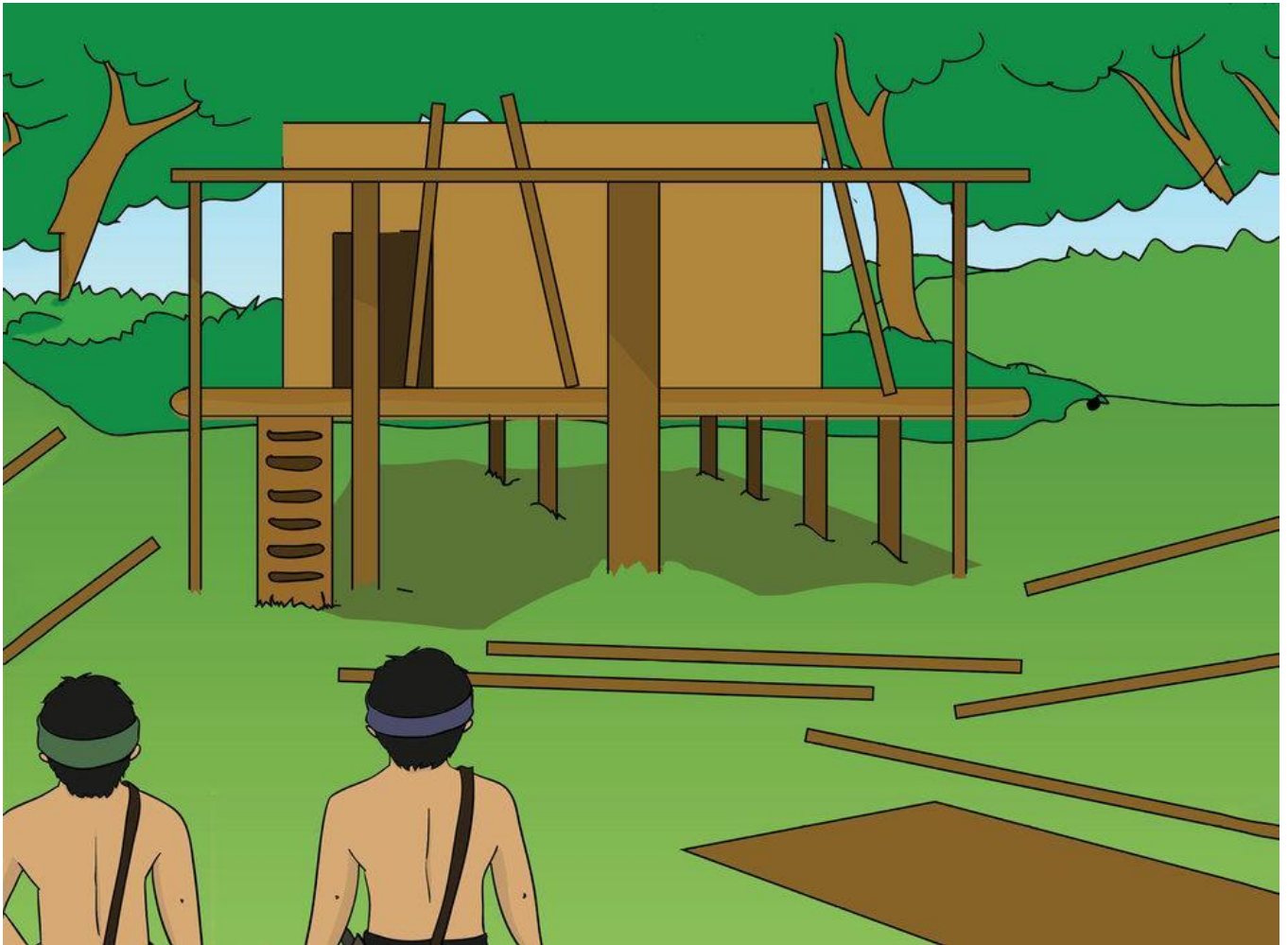
“I’m much too sad to talk now,” said the mithun sadly, “but I’ll help you all the same. You see, a tiger has killed my husband, so make a roof with cross poles, like the bones of his skeleton,” added the mithun, pointing at her dead mate.

Kincha Lali-Dam and Kindru-Lalim thanked the mithun for her advice and began making cross poles out of the bamboo, but they soon began to tire.



They put down the bamboo poles and walked to a nearby river to have a drink.

Suddenly, a graceful fish swam up to them and whispered, "I saw from afar that you were building a house! Have a look at the scales on my back. Collect plenty of leaves and put them on the roof, one on top of the other, like my scales. That will protect your house from sun and rain," said the fish and she gently swam away.



Kindru-Lalim and Kincha Lali-Dam now had all the advice they needed to build a house and they worked very hard to complete it. When it was finally done, they called the creatures of the forest to come and have a look.

“What a wonderful house you’ve built!” cried everyone. “And now it’s all yours to live in!”



“It’s not only ours but yours as well, because you’ve helped us build it!” cried Kindru-Lalim and Kincha Lali-Dam happily. The sun shone brightly in the sky, a breeze whistled softly and the trees swayed gently as Kindru-Lalim and Kincha Lali-Dam stepped into their new house. And this is how the first house was built in that faraway land in northeastern India known today as Arunachal Pradesh!

The

Singphos

The Singphos live in the Lohit and the Changlang districts of Arunachal Pradesh. Their tribe is divided into a number of clans each ruled by a chief known as Gam. Unlike other hill people who are involved in jhum (shifting) cultivation, the Singphos grow tea.

Singpho women wear bright woollen skirts and black jackets with silver decorations during a festival called Munao Poi. The Singpho men wear colourful lungis with or without a white shirt and cover their heads with turbans.

Singpho houses are usually double storied and made of wood or bamboo. They are oval in shape and the lower storey is used as a stable or for storing food while the upper storey becomes the family's living quarters.



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is written by

Nabanita Deshmukh

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First House
(English)

Long, long ago, when people lived in caves, two brothers in the northeastern part of India, now called Arunachal Pradesh, decided to build their own house. In a folktale that refers to the rich fauna of this region, we learn how the first house was built.

This is a Level 3 book for children who are ready to read on their own.

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