

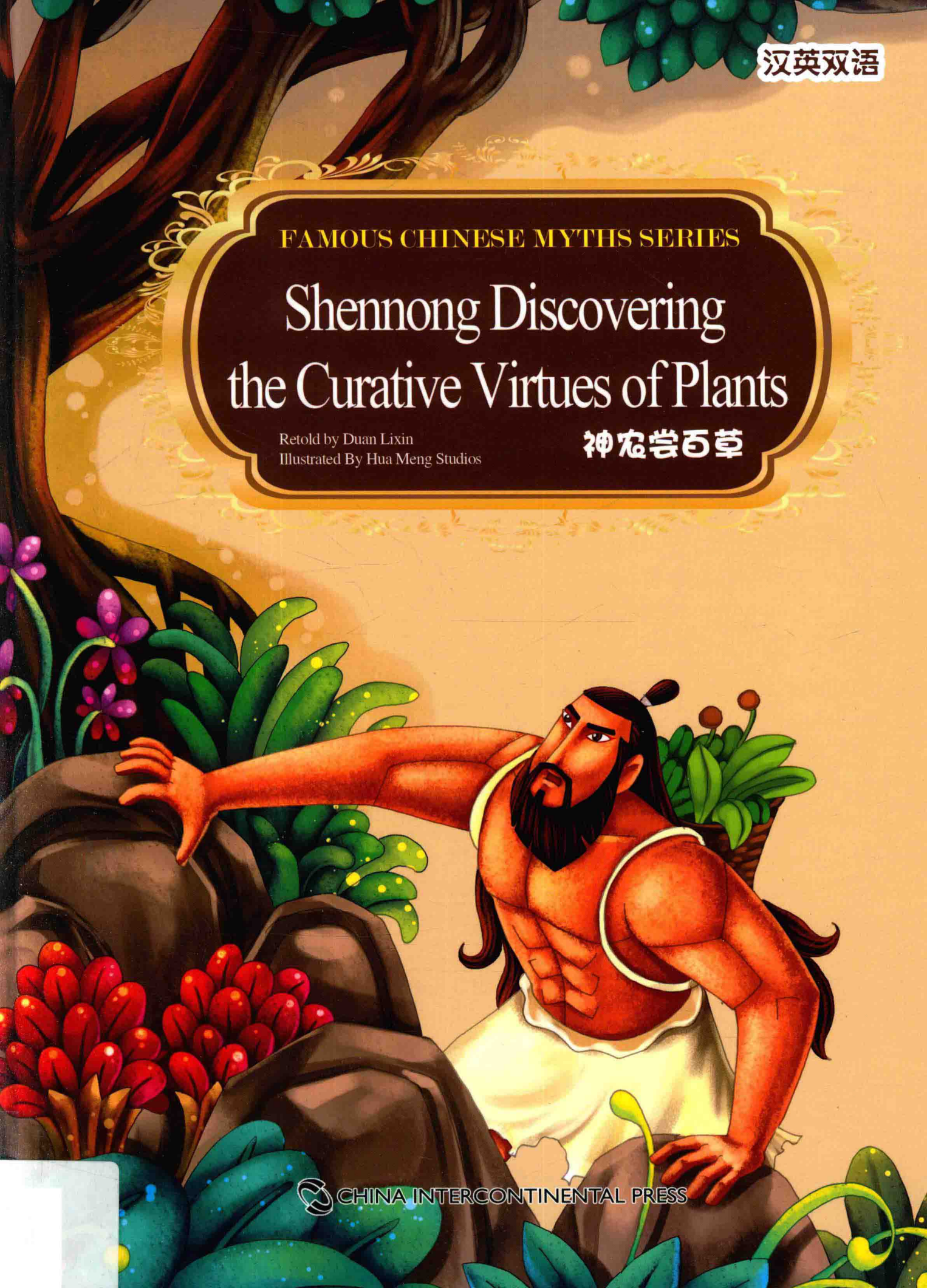
汉英双语

FAMOUS CHINESE MYTHS SERIES

Shennong Discovering the Curative Virtues of Plants

Retold by Duan Lixin
Illustrated By Hua Meng Studios

神农尝百草

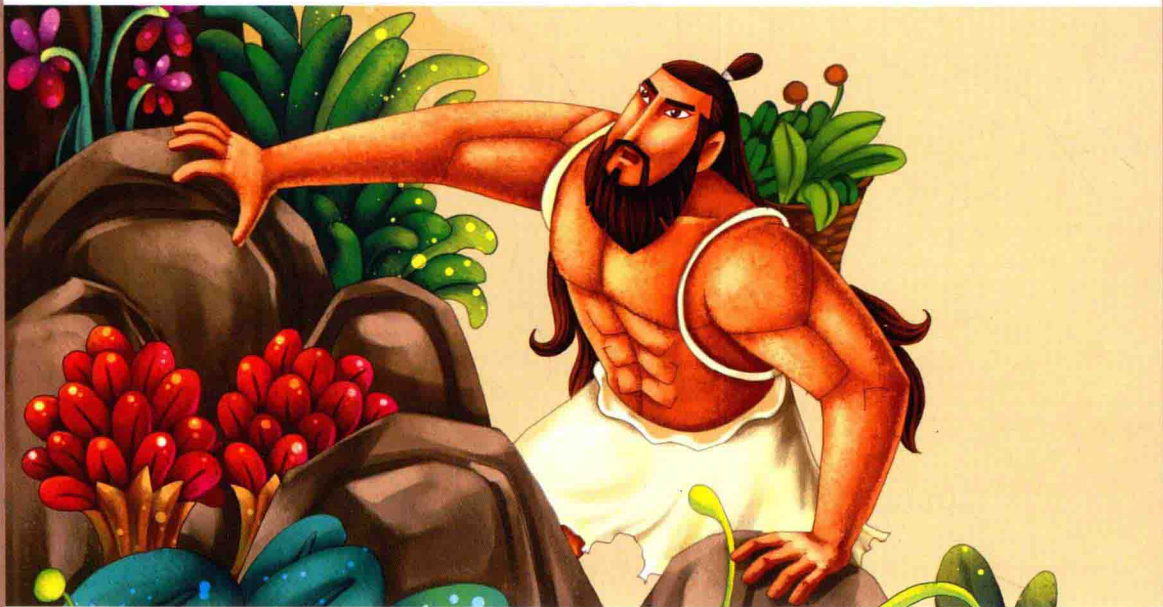


 CHINA INTERCONTINENTAL PRESS

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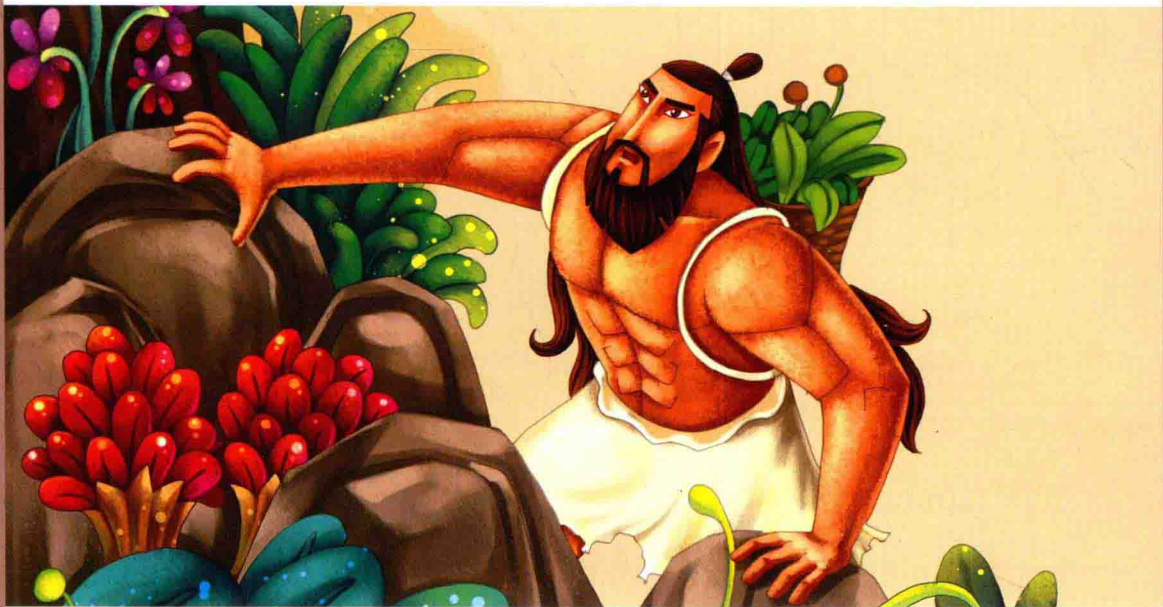
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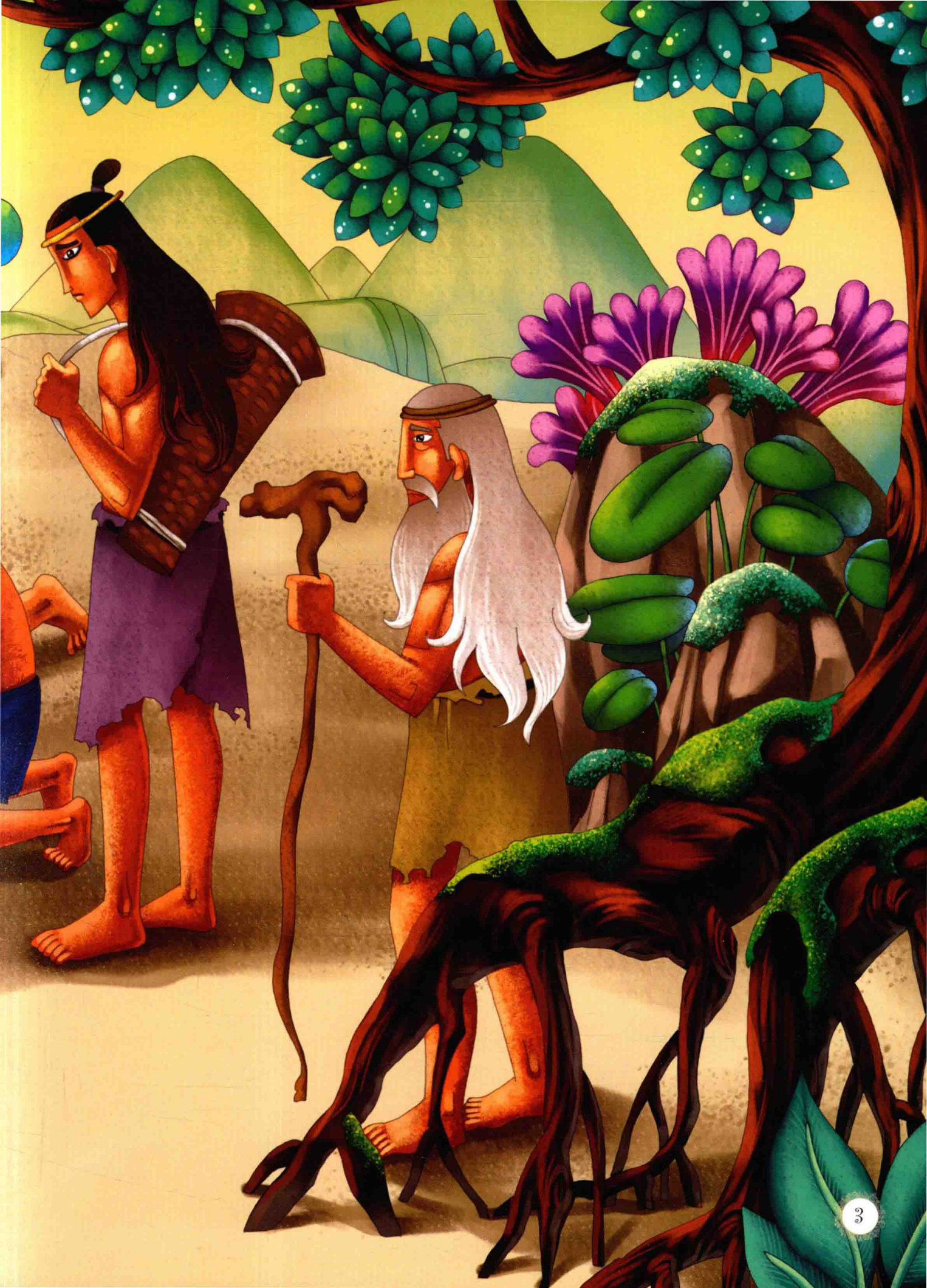


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In ancient times, people lived in caves in mountains and hunted animals for food. If they couldn't catch any animals, they relied on the plants, mushrooms and fruits that grew in the wilderness for food. Food poisoning, hunting wounds and illnesses became man's biggest enemy. There were no doctors back then and nobody knew how to cure sickness. People could only watch as their loved ones passed away from these illnesses.

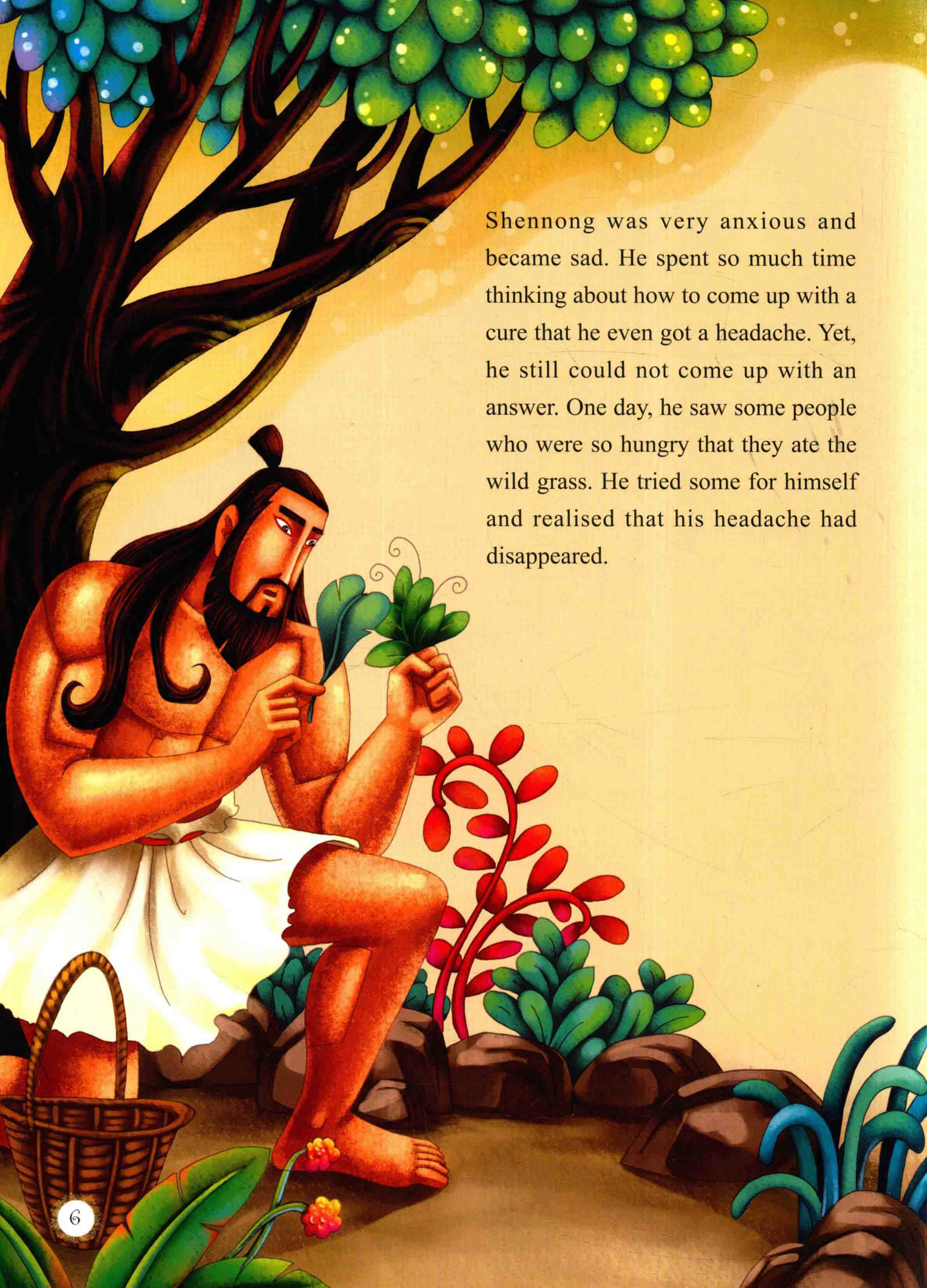




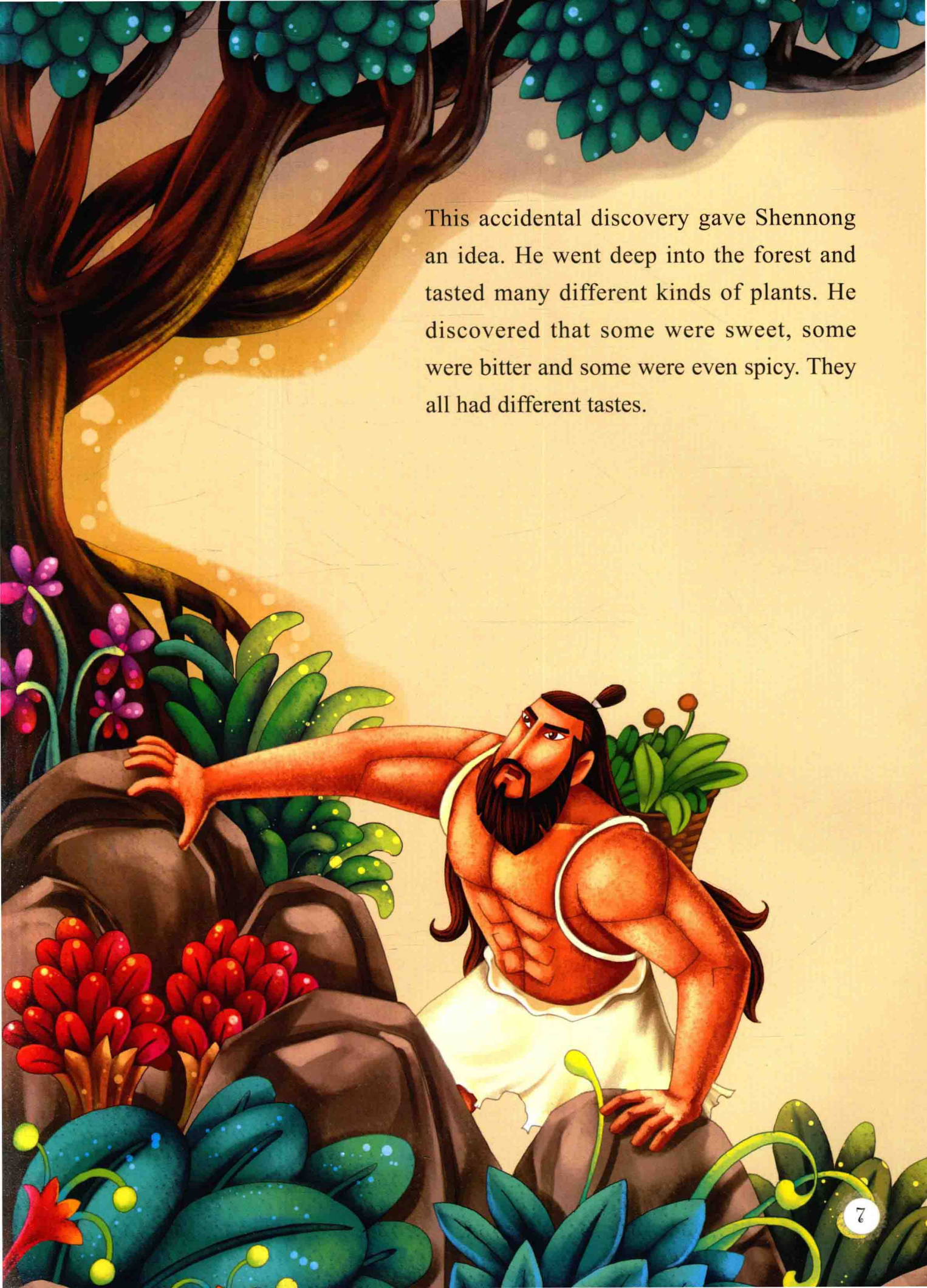
In heaven, there lived a god called Shennong, the divine farmer. He was very kind-hearted and while he had the body of a man, a bull's horns grew from his head. He was very strong and had immense power. He was saddened by the daily suffering of the people on earth. One day, he decided to leave heaven to descend to earth and help the people as best he could.



Shennong tried many different ways to cure the people's illnesses. He used fire, water and sunshine but without any success. Sometimes, the people were sicker even after his help.

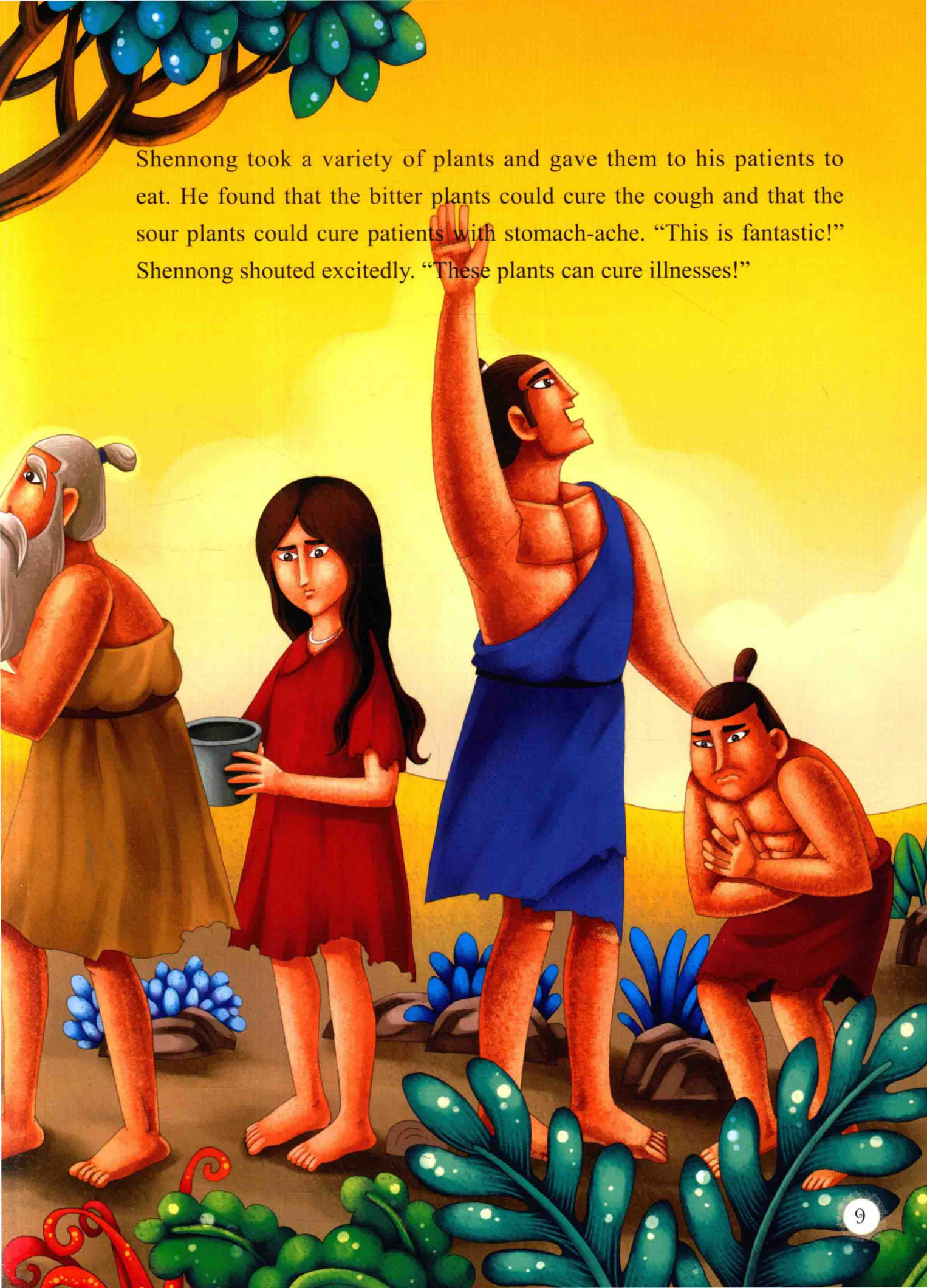


Shennong was very anxious and became sad. He spent so much time thinking about how to come up with a cure that he even got a headache. Yet, he still could not come up with an answer. One day, he saw some people who were so hungry that they ate the wild grass. He tried some for himself and realised that his headache had disappeared.

A colorful illustration of a man with a long black beard and hair, wearing a white loincloth, standing in a lush forest. He is leaning forward, reaching out with his right hand towards a large, dark rock. A basket filled with green leafy plants is on his back. The forest is filled with various plants, including large green leaves with yellow spots, red flowers, and purple flowers. A large tree with thick, gnarled branches and green leaves is on the left. The background is a warm, golden-yellow color with soft, glowing light spots.

This accidental discovery gave Shennong an idea. He went deep into the forest and tasted many different kinds of plants. He discovered that some were sweet, some were bitter and some were even spicy. They all had different tastes.





Shennong took a variety of plants and gave them to his patients to eat. He found that the bitter plants could cure the cough and that the sour plants could cure patients with stomach-ache. "This is fantastic!" Shennong shouted excitedly. "These plants can cure illnesses!"



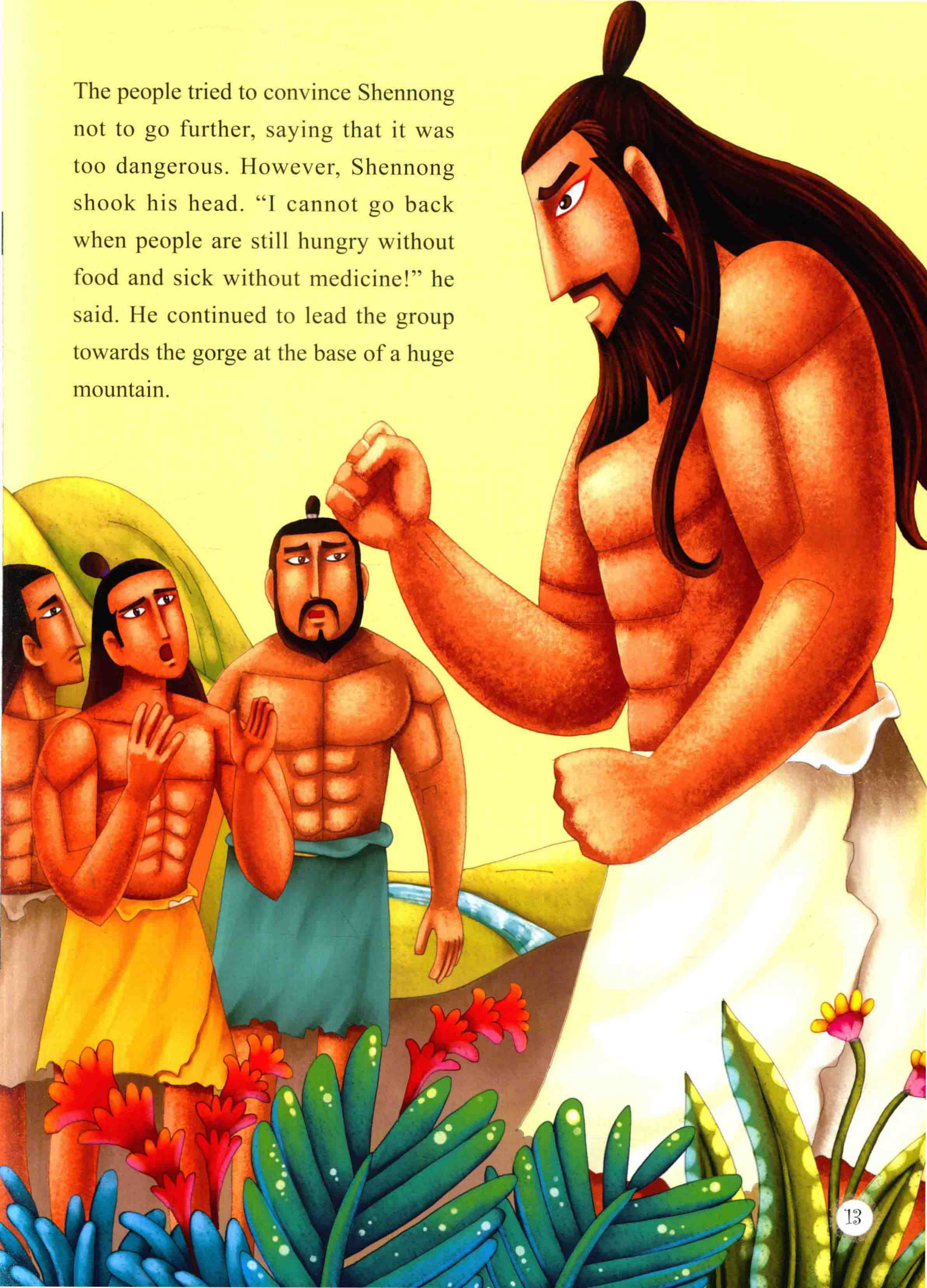
In order to find more of these healing plants, Shennong took a number of people with him to the mountain in the northwest. He knew that a lot of rare flowers and plants grew in that area. The people followed Shennong and walked for so long and so far that their feet became swollen and full of blisters. After 49 days of walking, they finally reached the large mountain range.





One day, a group of lions, panthers and pythons suddenly appeared and began to surround the people. Shennong immediately brandished his divine whip and wielded it fiercely to fend off the animals. From that day onwards, those animals bore long stripe marks from his whip on their bodies.

The people tried to convince Shennong not to go further, saying that it was too dangerous. However, Shennong shook his head. "I cannot go back when people are still hungry without food and sick without medicine!" he said. He continued to lead the group towards the gorge at the base of a huge mountain.



A colourful ring of clouds surrounded the middle of the mountain. The mountain was so tall that nobody could see its peak. Sharp cliffs surrounded the mountain and waterfalls rushed down the edge of the cliffs. Thick moss grew on the rocks and the slope was as slippery as ice. When the people saw the dangerous conditions, they tried again to convince Shennong to give up and return. Shennong shook his head and pressed on.

