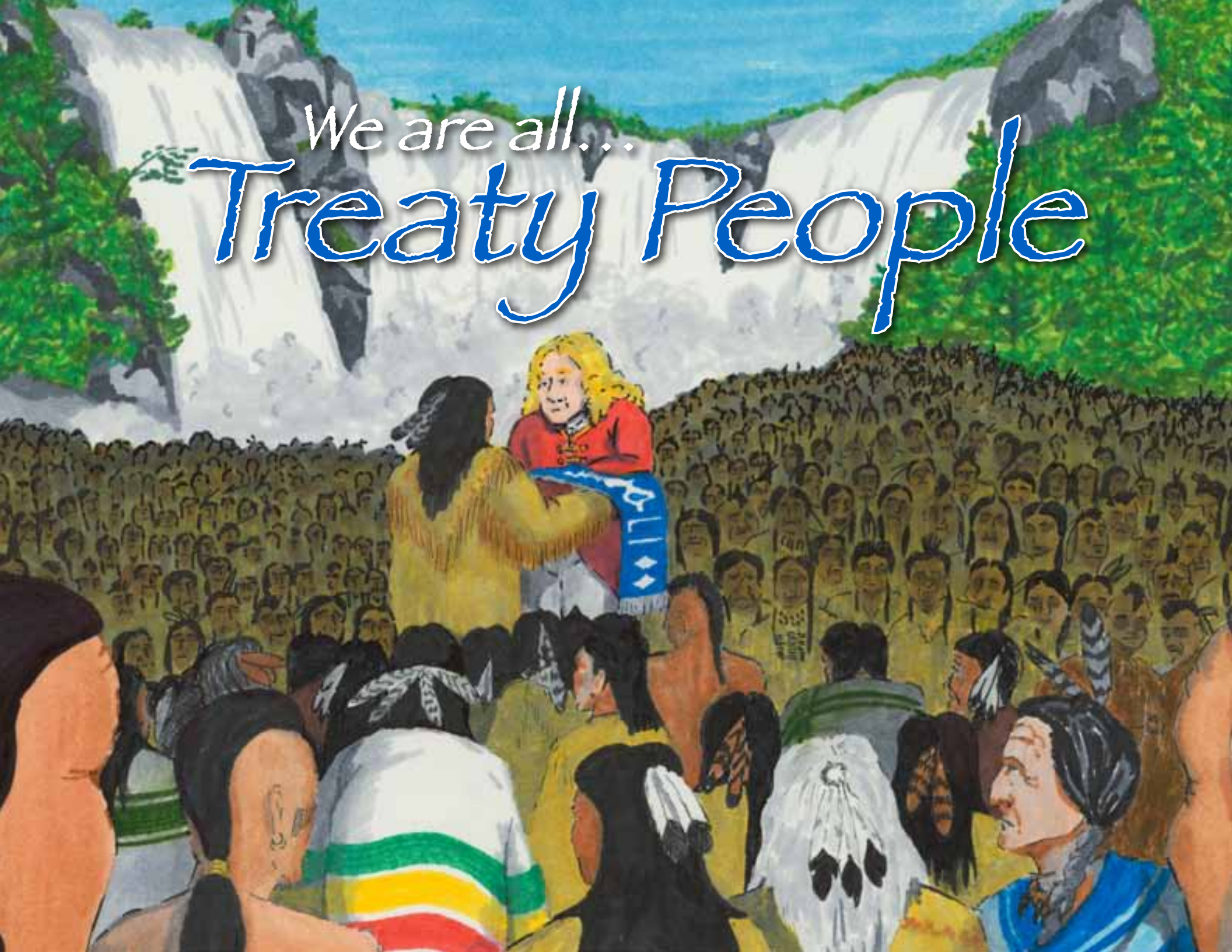


We are all...

Treaty People



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Anishinabek

Illustrations by Charley Hebert

Text by Maurice Switzer

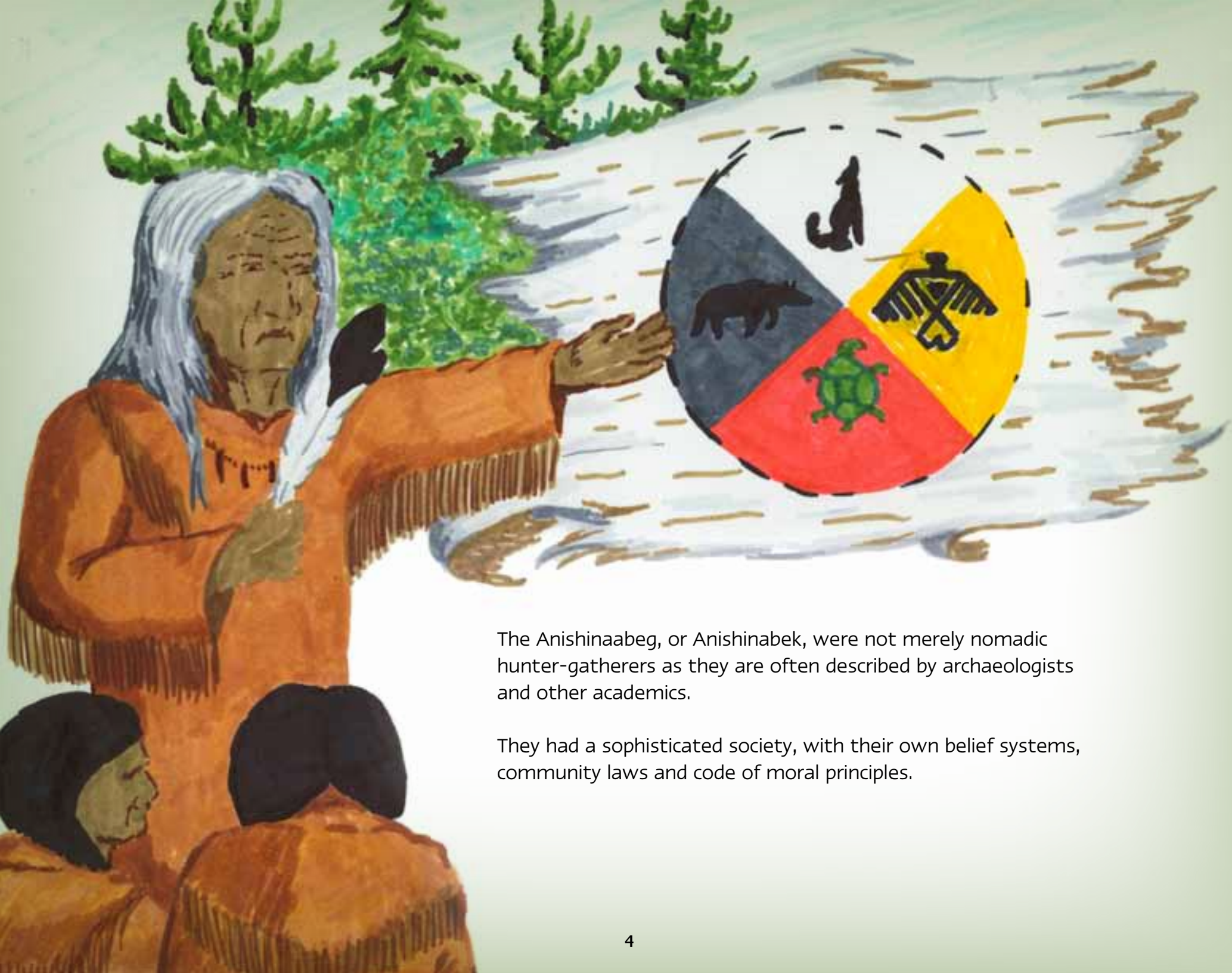
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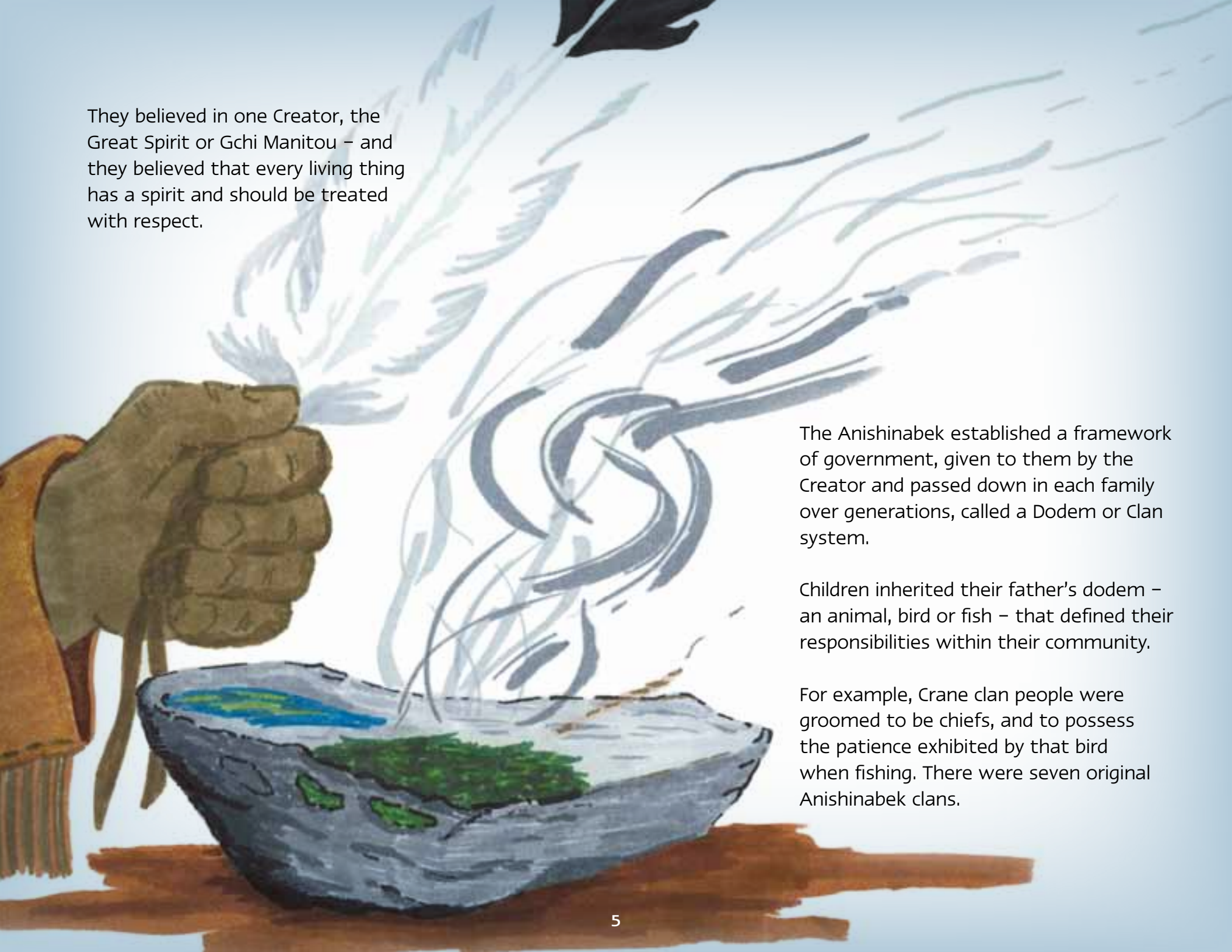
The Anishinaabeg, or Anishinabek comprise of one of the oldest nations in North America, or Turtle Island. Over 1,000 years ago, the Anishinaabeg migrated from the Atlantic coast to the centre of the continent, and their communities of Ojibwa, Chippewa, Odawa, Mississauga, Potawatomi, Algonquin and Delaware peoples populated and controlled the Great Lakes Basin by the late 1600s.



The Anishinaabeg, or Anishinabek, were not merely nomadic hunter-gatherers as they are often described by archaeologists and other academics.

They had a sophisticated society, with their own belief systems, community laws and code of moral principles.

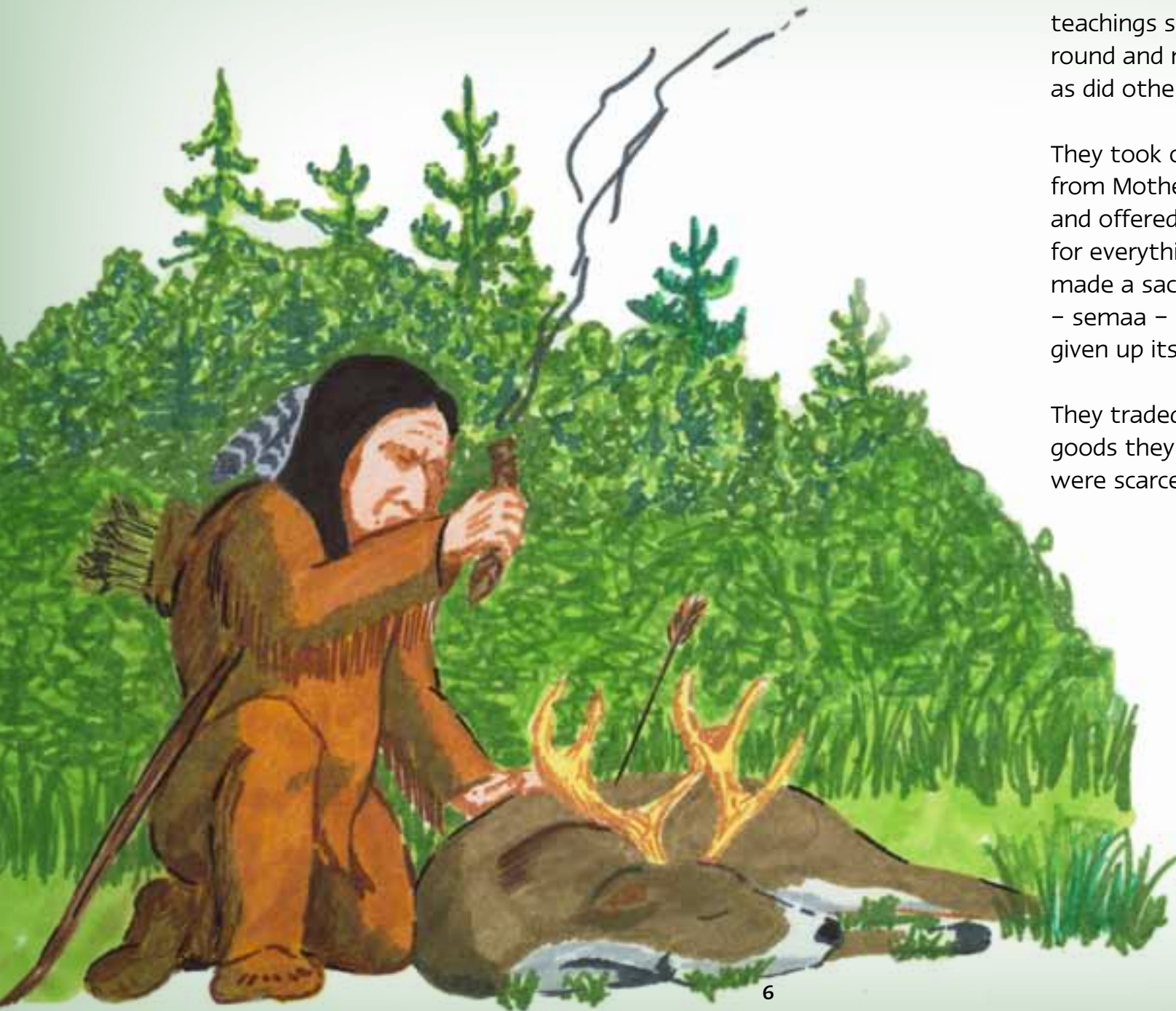
They believed in one Creator, the Great Spirit or Gchi Manitou – and they believed that every living thing has a spirit and should be treated with respect.



The Anishinabek established a framework of government, given to them by the Creator and passed down in each family over generations, called a Dodem or Clan system.

Children inherited their father's dodem – an animal, bird or fish – that defined their responsibilities within their community.

For example, Crane clan people were groomed to be chiefs, and to possess the patience exhibited by that bird when fishing. There were seven original Anishinabek clans.



The people were knowledgeable about their environment. Their teachings said the earth was round and moved around the sun, as did other planets.

They took only what they needed from Mother Earth to survive, and offered something in return for everything they took. They made a sacred offering of tobacco – semaa – to an animal who had given up its life for their food.

They traded with other tribes for goods they did not have or which were scarce in their territories.