

Guidelines for Travelling Responsibly in the Kailash Sacred Landscape

Contributing Partners

India



Nepal



China



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Guidelines for Travelling Responsibly in the Kailash Sacred Landscape

Our ancestors have
protected Mount Kailash and
Lake Manasarovar for us.

Now we must preserve
it for the generations to come.

Welcome to the Kailash Sacred Landscape!

I, Shiva, reside in the divine Mount Kailash, also known as Kang Rinpoche. With Lake Manasarovar in my lap, I have created all of nature. Kailash is the origin of four eternal rivers – Bhramaputra, Indus, Karnali, and Sutlej – that sustain millions of lives. It also supports a vast ecosystem with unique wildlife and rare plants. I welcome everyone in my holy abode, and ask that all visitors respect each other and the land and creatures in this landscape.

As you know, my life-giving powers shall only protect you as long as you respect my creation. Therefore, I ask you to enrich this holy land with your footprints. Do not defile this holy land, lake, or rivers with garbage. I shall bless only those who move through this pristine landscape without disturbing the harmony I have created.

If you follow these guidelines, your journey will become more spiritual!



There are many ways in which you can contribute to the harmony that I have created among the people, animals, and plants in the landscape.

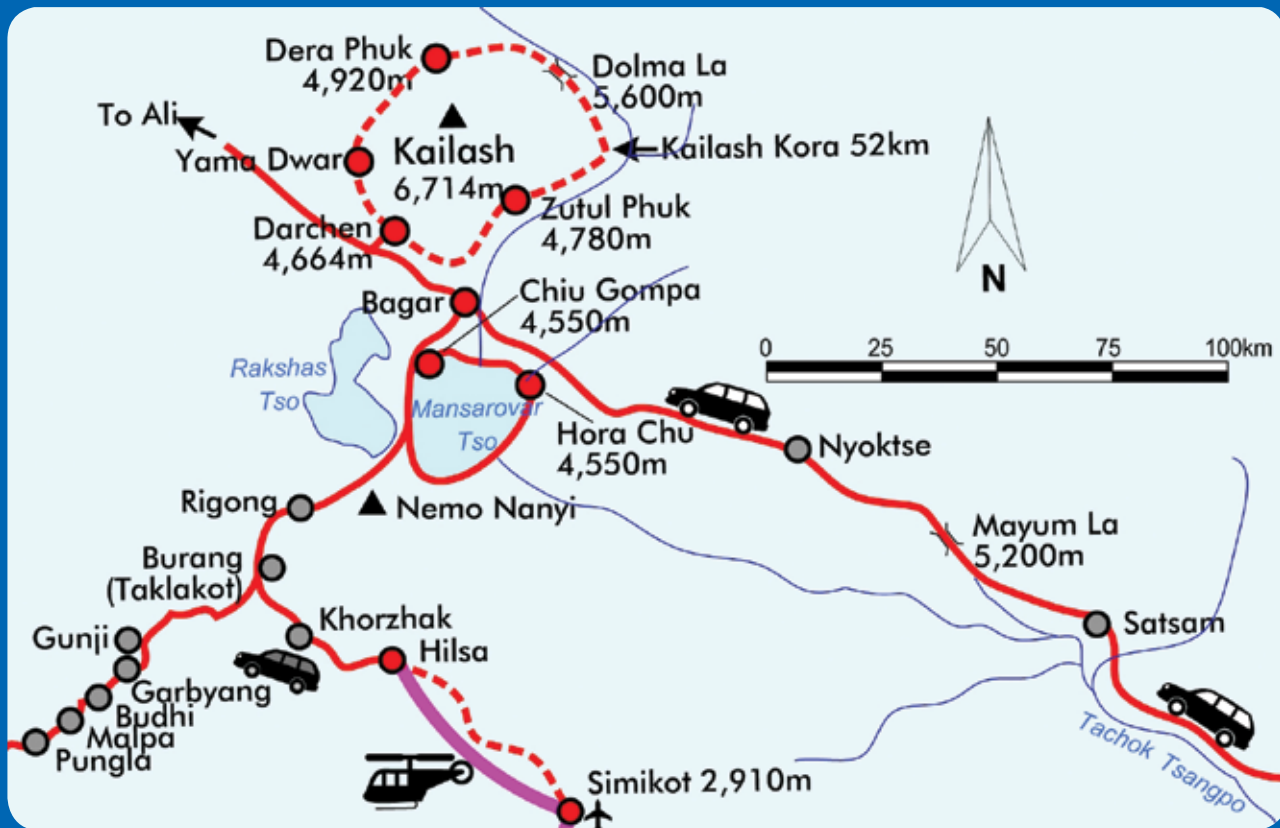


This image indicates a good practice.

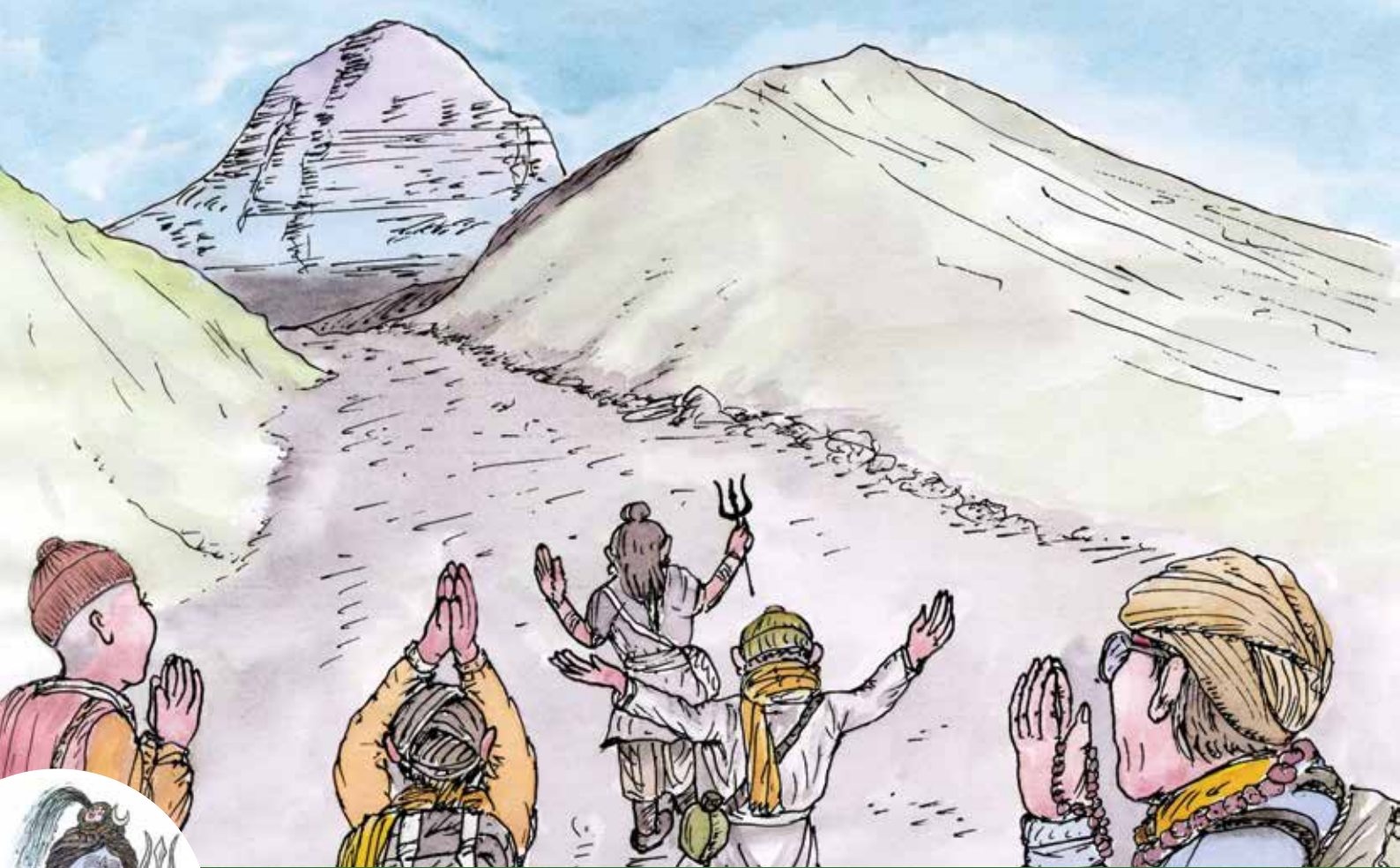
Certain actions during your trip to the Kailash Sacred Landscape can cause harm to yourself, others, and the landscape's flora and fauna. These actions can negatively affect the landscape for generations to come.



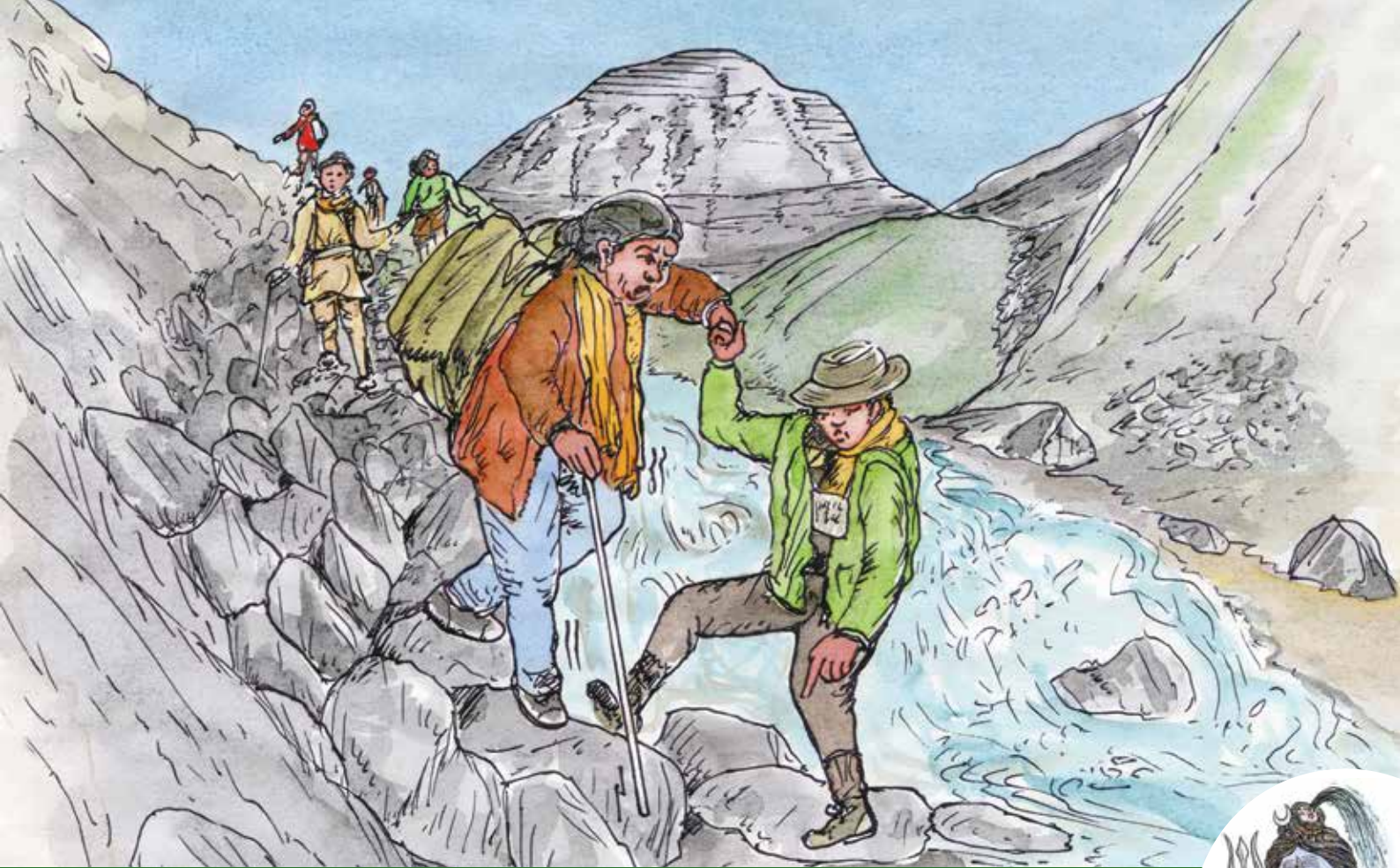
This image indicates a bad practice.



Route map to Mount Kailash and Lake Mansarovar

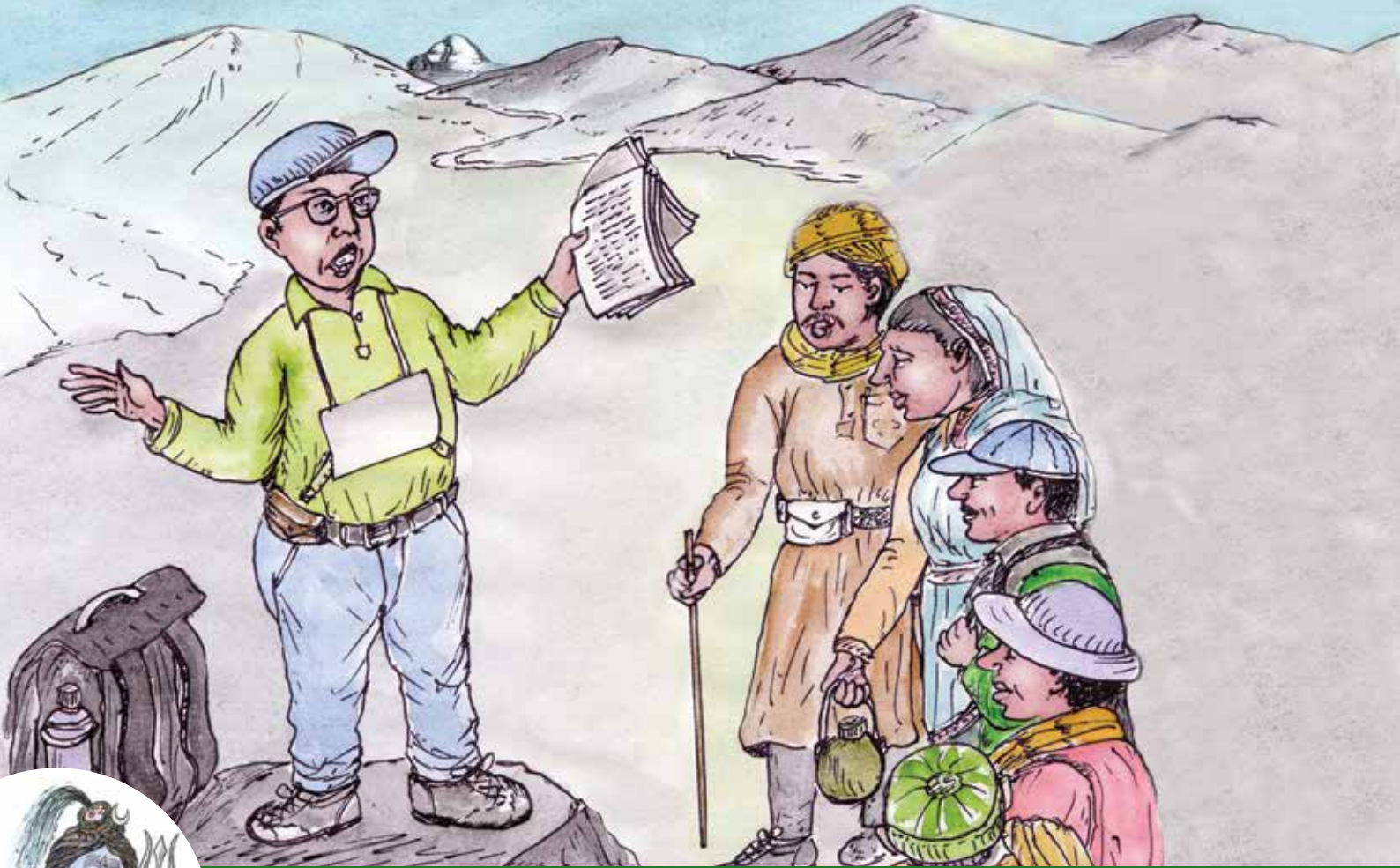


Maintain the group spirit – stay positive throughout the tour.

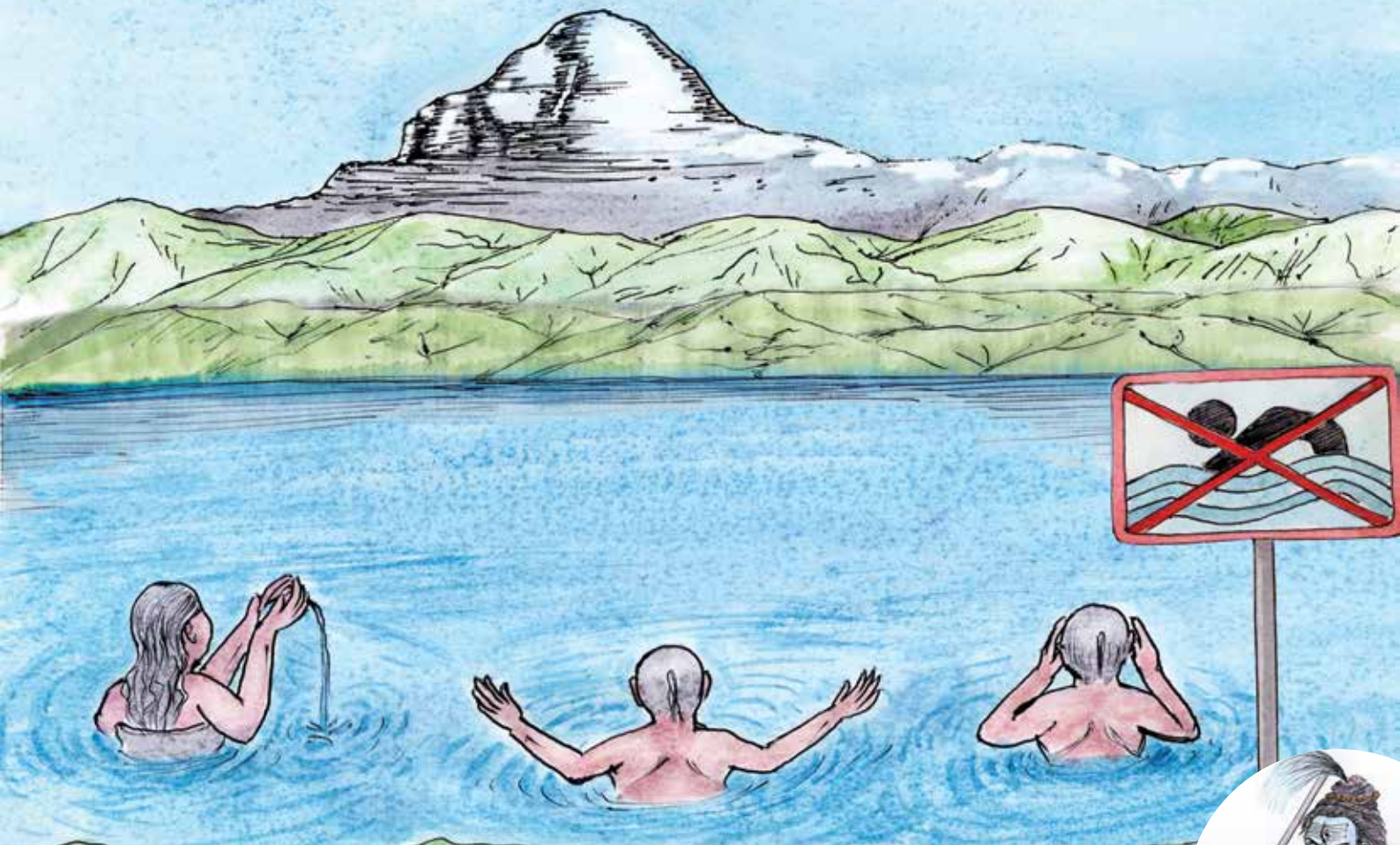


Help each other when needed.





Cooperate with your guide, follow their instructions, and be on time. Listen to your guide: they have valuable information that will help you make your trip a success.



Do not bathe in holy Lake Manasarovar. Other religions also consider the lake sacred, and for them it is impure to touch the water in the lake.

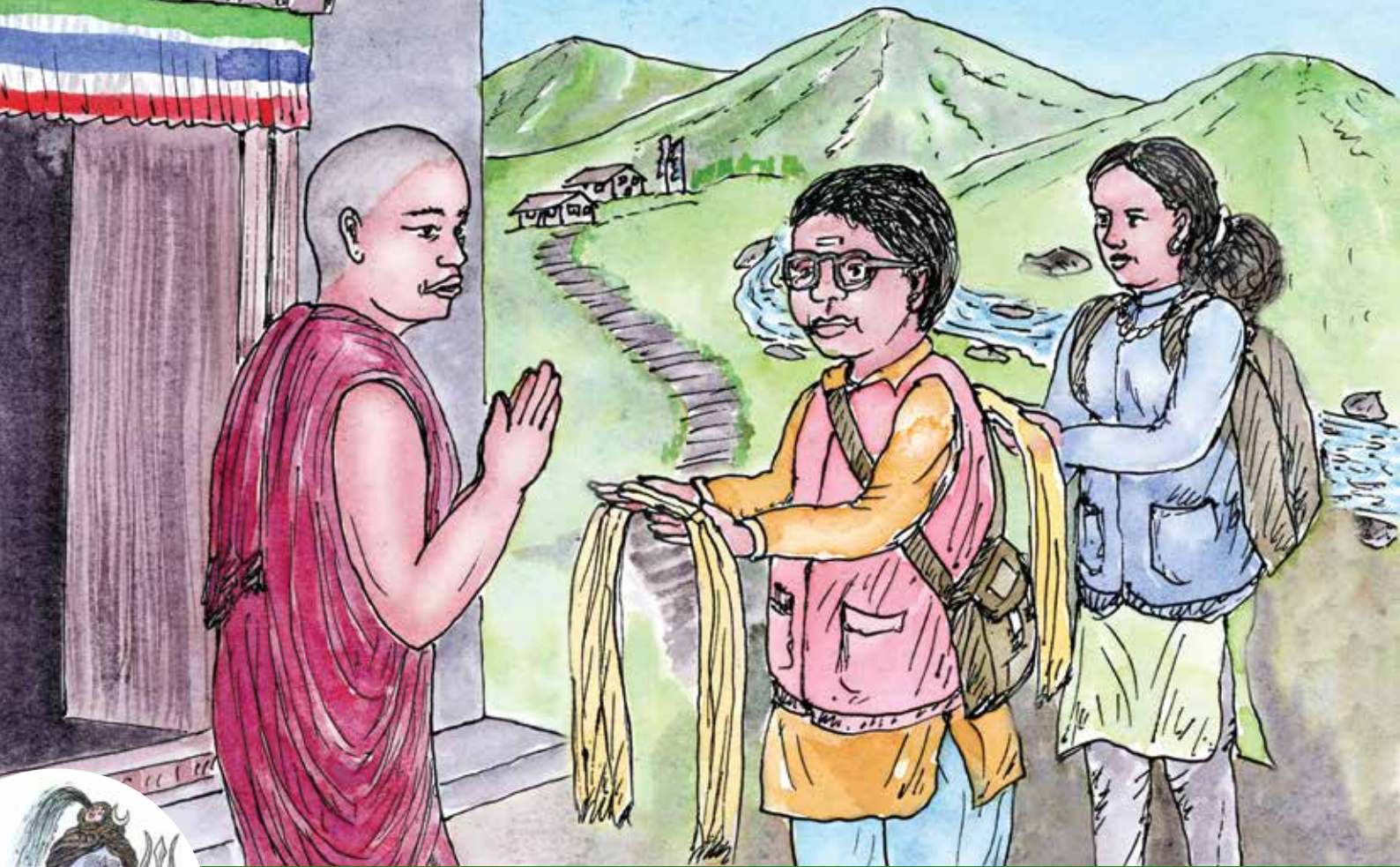


Be aware of the signs of altitude sickness. Tell your guide immediately if you or your fellow traveller has headaches, irritability, fatigue, loss of appetite, nausea, or is feeling disturbed.



Drink at least three litres of water every day. This will help you stay healthy so that you can complete your journey.





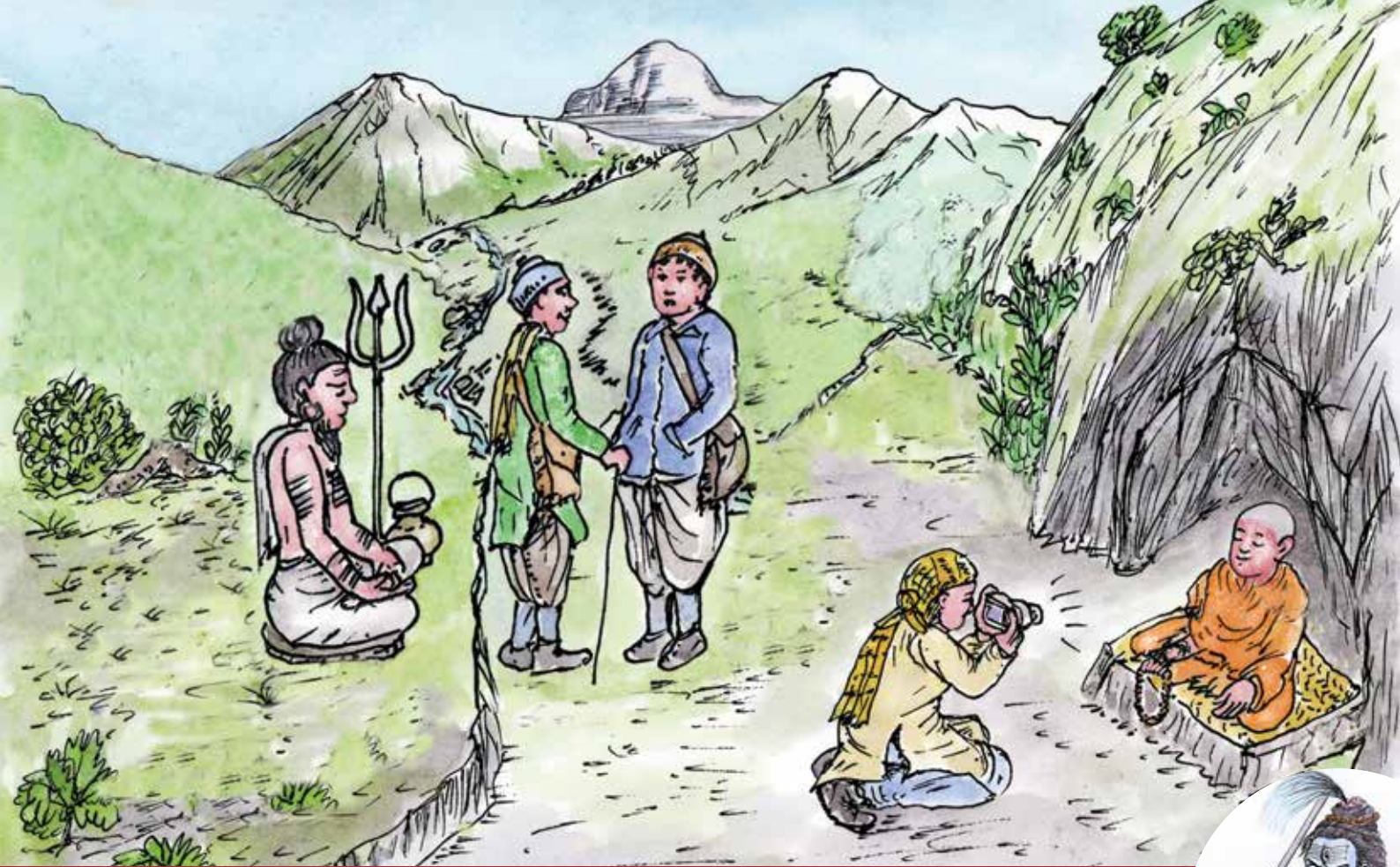
Respect lamas and the local rules and customs of gompas and monasteries.



Do not take pictures of prohibited areas, like government buildings and official offices, or of people in uniform.



Do not put your feet on the back of the chair or on the shoulders of the person in front of you



Do not take photographs or stand in front of a person who is praying or prostrating. Do not talk or make loud noises.





Dispose of your waste responsibly. Put waste in designated areas or use a sack to keep your own waste until a waste bin is available.



Keep the water pure and sacred. Do not throw litter, pooja offerings, soap, and other waste in rivers, lakes, or anywhere in nature.



Bring a reusable water bottle. Do not buy disposable bottles.



Do not urinate or defecate along the trail or in lakes or rivers. Use toilets if they are available. If there are no toilets, ask your guide where you should relieve yourself.



Respect local traditions, culture, and etiquette. Wear appropriate clothing and take off your hat while visiting monasteries, temples, and other sacred places. Do not wear short pants or transparent clothing.



Do not enter private areas, like courtyards, without being invited.

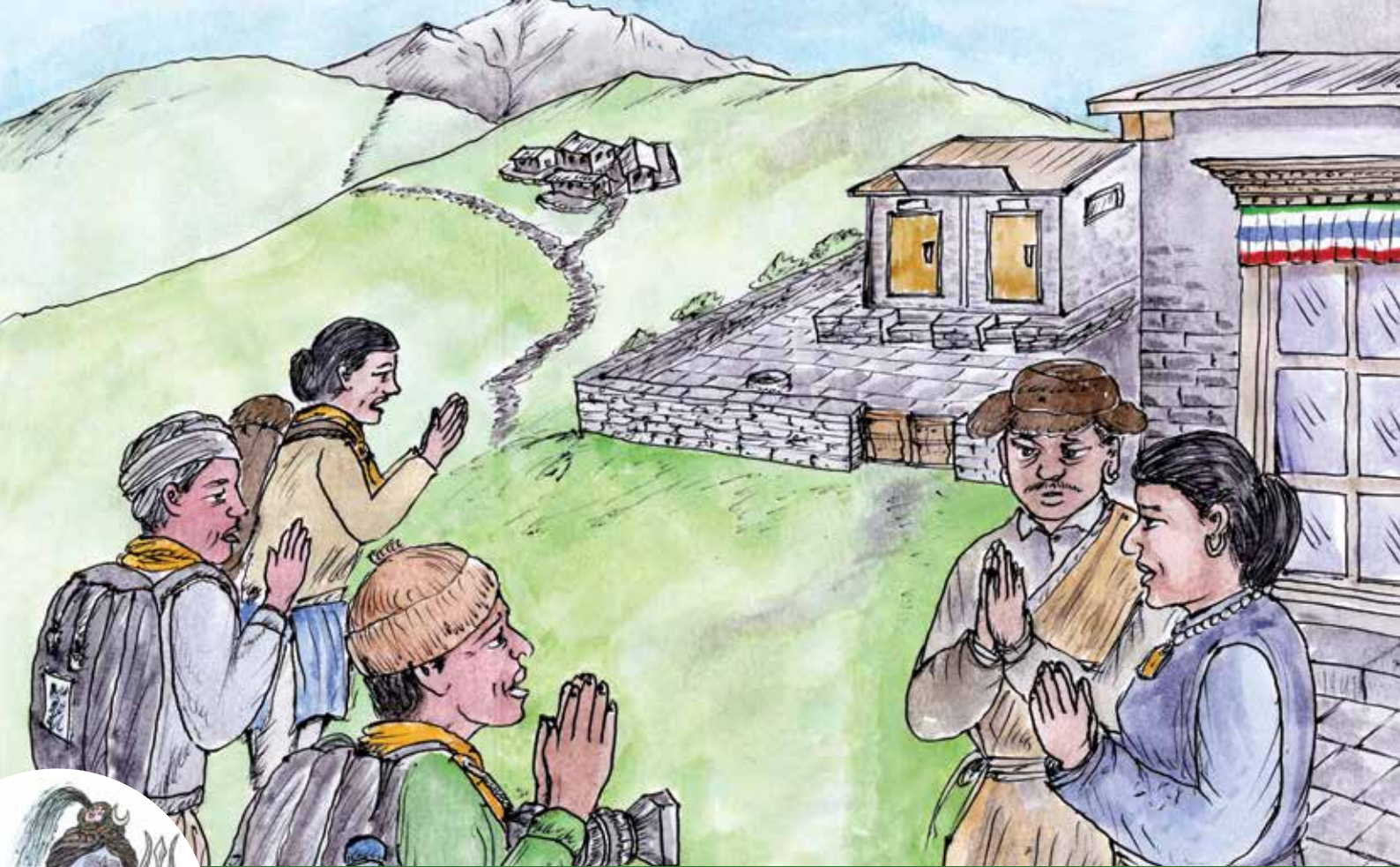




Offer things with both hands.



Do not touch local people on the head or shoulders.



Local people are friendly and helpful. Speak softly and be polite to them.



Do not spit in public areas.





Smoking and drinking are impure. Have a more spiritual journey by not smoking and drinking.



Do not use any open fire inside of your tent. Do not disturb other members of your tour group.



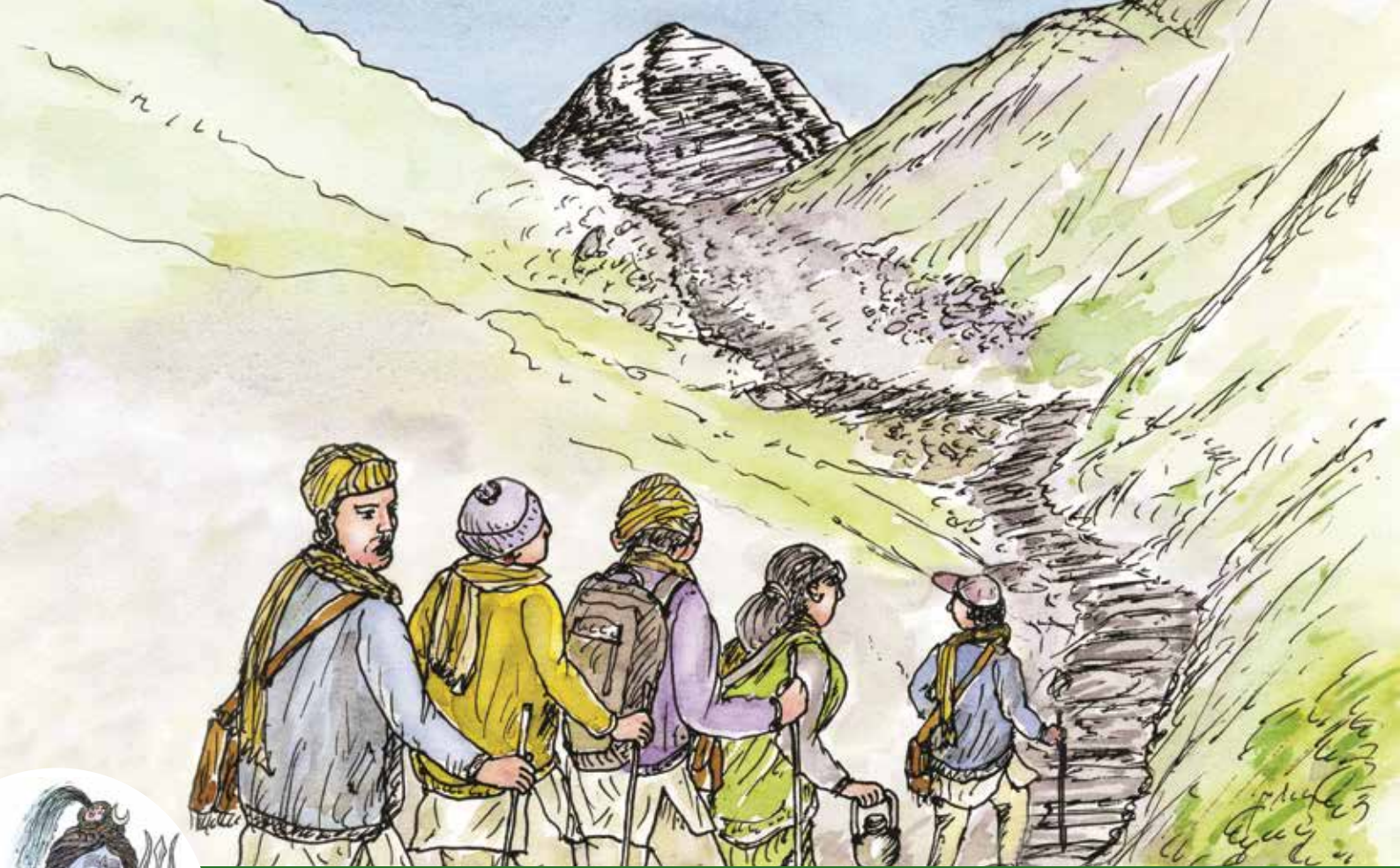


Do not put your feet on tables.

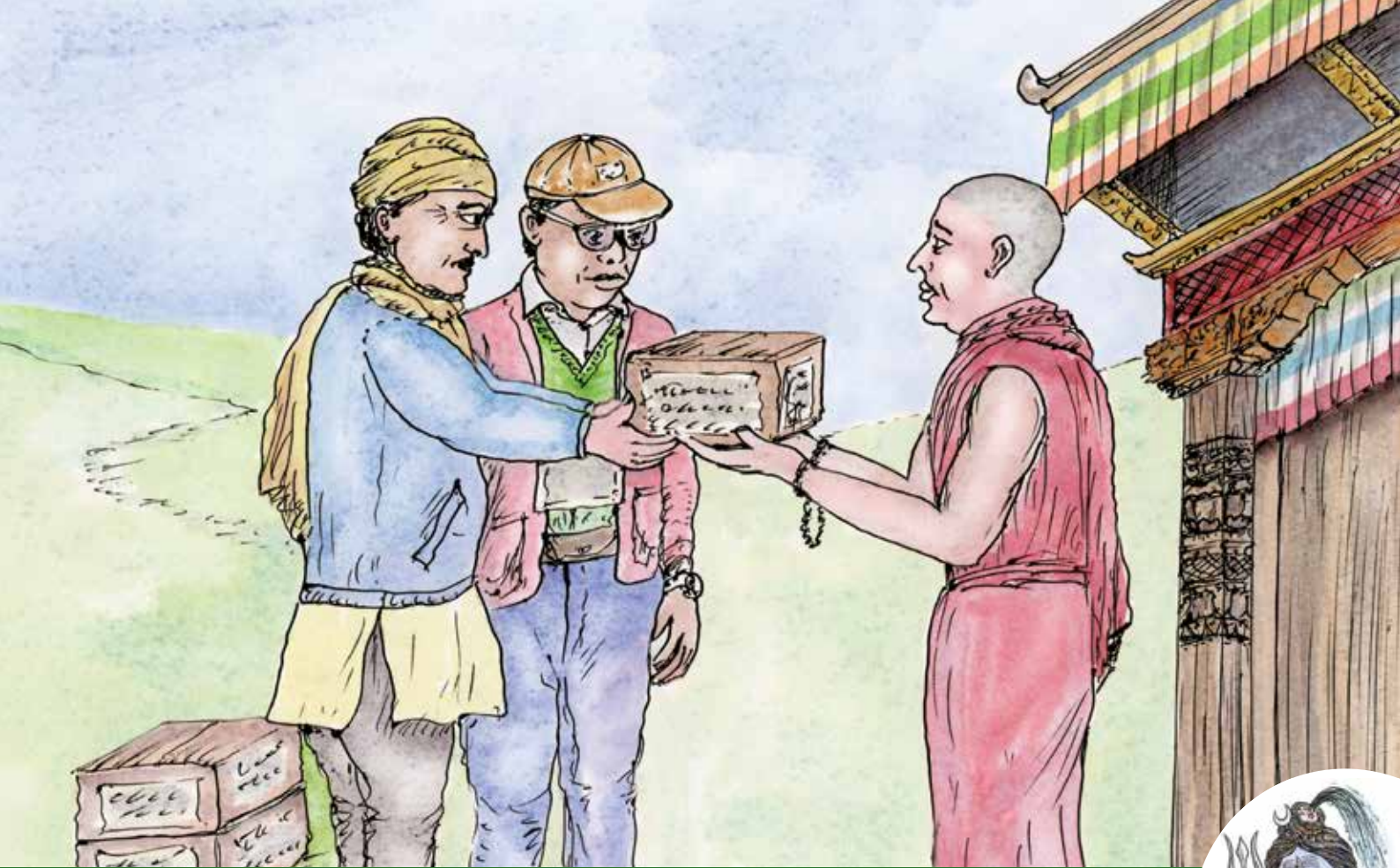


Support local artisans by buying local handicrafts. Make sure you do not buy illegal items like mani stones, yak horns, or idols. If you are unsure, ask your guide.



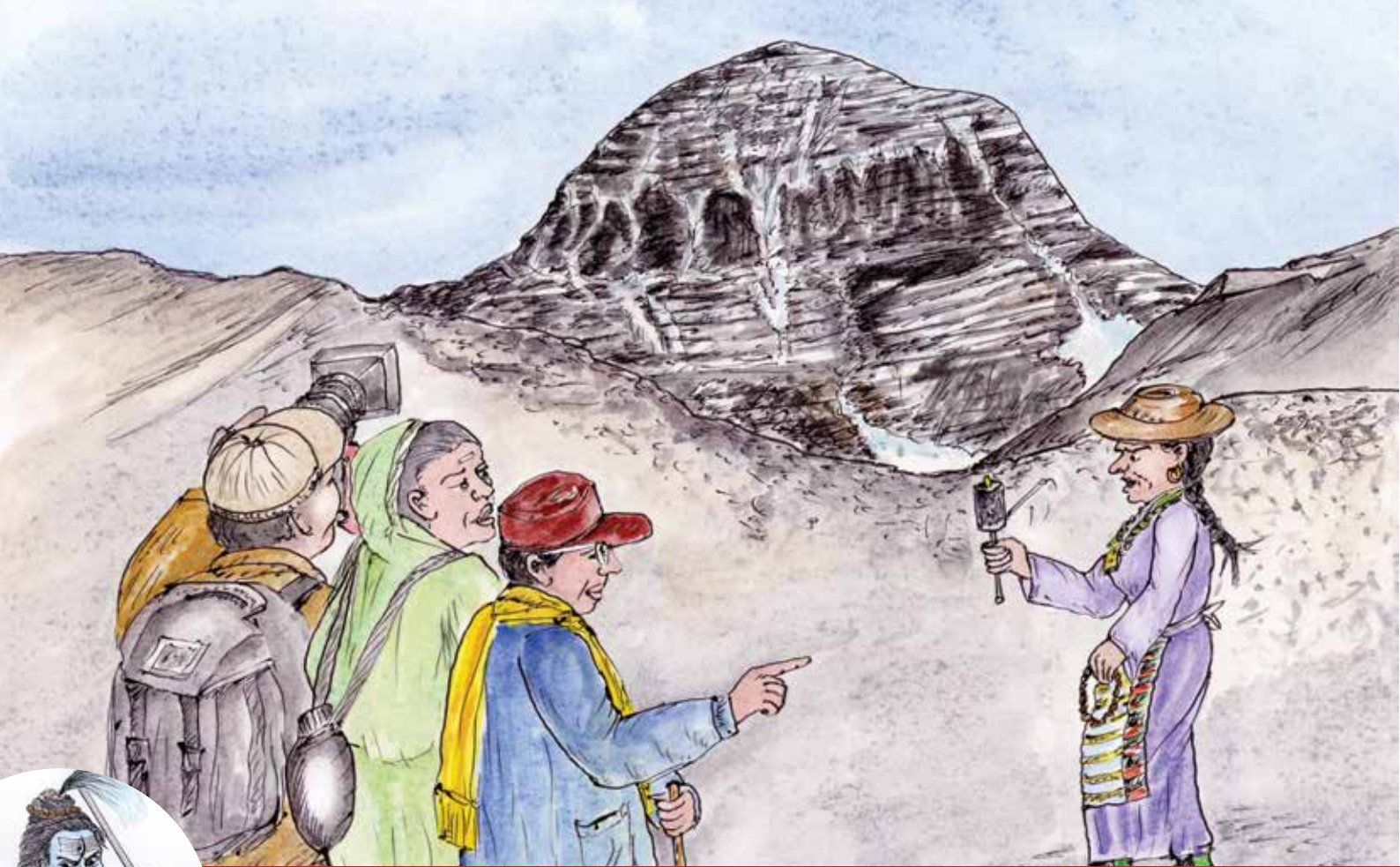


Always stay with your group.



It is good to donate to monasteries, ashrams, and schools. If you want to make a donation, discuss with your guide about the best way to do this.





Do not point at people or things with a single finger. It is very disrespectful.



Do not walk near the edge of the trail. It is dangerous and you could fall.





Respect the privacy of others. Ask people for permission before taking their photographs.



Never walk alone. Walking alone is dangerous: if you get lost or injured while walking alone, no one will be there to help you.



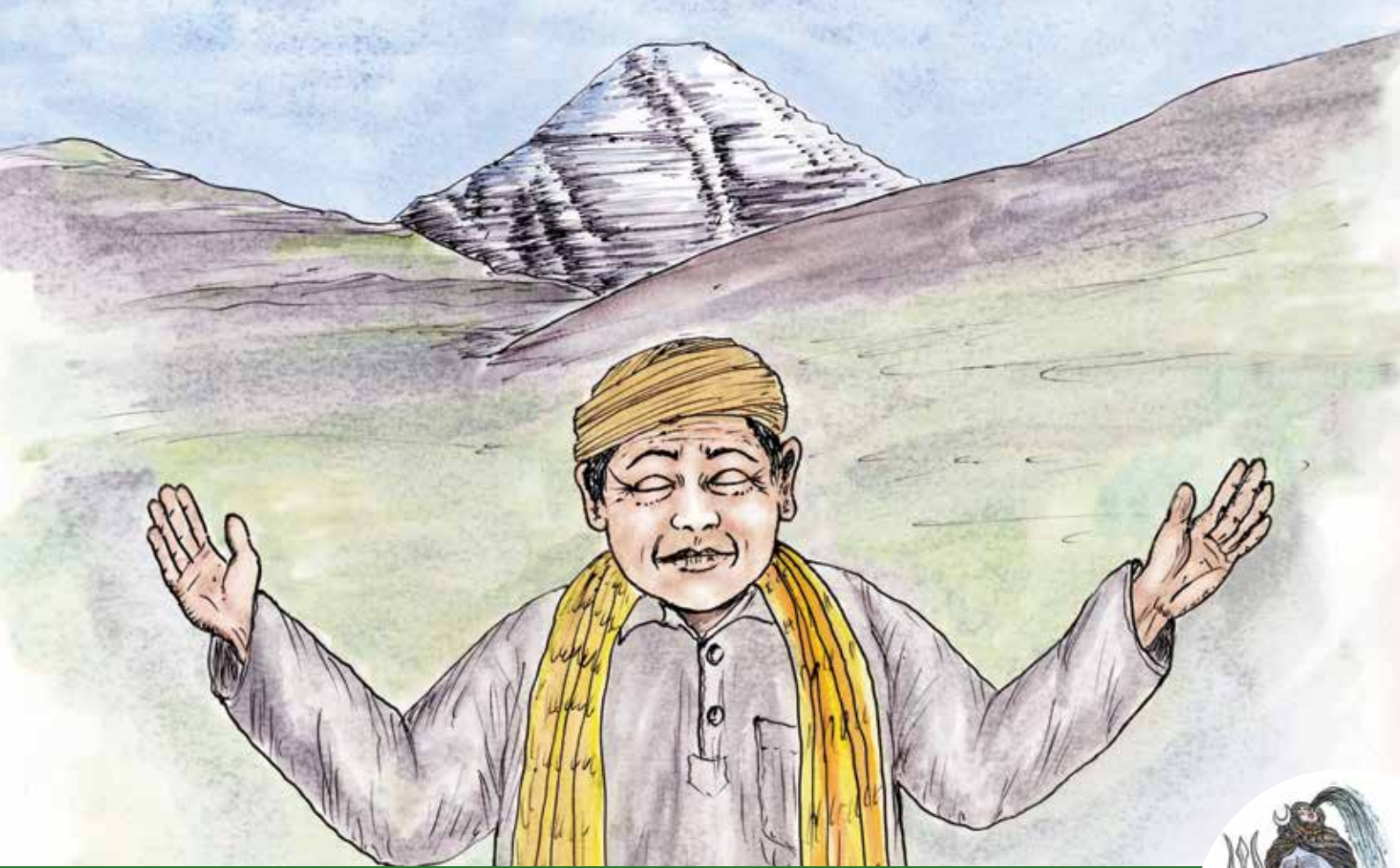
Keep your passport, money, and medicine secure at all times. The safest place to keep personal belongings is in your daypack.



Use protective sun cream (SPF 15 or higher is recommended). Apply sun cream multiple times every day.



Wear warm clothes at all times. This will help you stay healthy during your journey.



Enjoy your spiritual journey to Mount Kailash and Manasarovar. Use these guidelines to help make your trip a success.



Carry blessings from Mount Kailash and Lake Manasarovar to your near and dear ones.

Leave only your footprint and a smile,
and take only photos.



Promoting responsible tourism through the Kailash Sacred Landscape Conservation and Development Initiative (KSLCDI)

The remote southwestern portion of the Tibet Autonomous Region of China is a global 'cultural hotspot' of historical and spiritual significance. This area represents a sacred landscape significant to over a billion people around the globe, and is considered holy by various religions, including Hinduism, Buddhism, Bon Po, Jainism, and Sikhism. Its deep and rich cultural diversity has become threatened by the impacts of poverty, globalization, and unregulated development, which are also challenging local livelihoods and ecosystems. The impacts of climate change have further compounded these challenges, demanding immediate action in research, practice, and policy for adapting to impending changes and safeguarding the irreplaceable natural and cultural heritage of this vast mountain region. It is in this context that three countries – China, India and Nepal – together

with ICIMOD have outlined the transboundary Kailash Sacred Landscape as basis for a long-term initiative to enhance conservation and sustainable development.

Each year, thousands of religious and spiritual pilgrims and tourists from around the world undertake the arduous journey to this sacred landscape, travelling across ancient routes through India, Nepal, and the Tibetan Plateau of China. Through the Kailash Sacred Landscape Conservation and Development Initiative, ICIMOD is collaborating with partners to promote responsible tourism activities and enhance livelihood opportunities for local communities. The Kailash Sacred Landscape Conservation and Development Initiative provides a platform for tourism industry stakeholders and government representatives from China, India,

and Nepal to test innovations, share learning, and propose ways to leverage tourism activities for the sustainable development of the sacred landscape.

Visitors to the Kailash Sacred Landscape can play an important role in preserving the sanctity, culture, and nature of this unique landscape. These guidelines, prepared by ICIMOD through concrete inputs from tour operators and other partners, are especially meant to provide guidance for pilgrims coming from South Asia. Through the creative and challenging five-year Kailash Sacred Landscape Conservation and Development Initiative, an example of transboundary cooperation has been set that will inspire the rest of the region to improve conservation while benefiting local communities through responsible tourism activities.

KSLCDI Supporting Partners



Country Focal Ministries



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About ICIMOD

The International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development, ICIMOD, is a regional knowledge development and learning centre serving the eight regional member countries of the Hindu Kush Himalayas – Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, China, India, Myanmar, Nepal, and Pakistan – and based in Kathmandu, Nepal. Globalization and climate change have an increasing influence on the stability of fragile mountain ecosystems and the livelihoods of mountain people. ICIMOD aims to assist mountain people to understand these changes, adapt to them, and make the most of new opportunities, while addressing upstream-downstream issues. We support regional transboundary programmes through partnership with regional partner institutions, facilitate the exchange of experience, and serve as a regional knowledge hub. We strengthen networking among regional and global centres of excellence. Overall, we are working to develop an economically and environmentally sound mountain ecosystem to improve the living standards of mountain populations and to sustain vital ecosystem services for the billions of people living downstream – now, and for the future.



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