

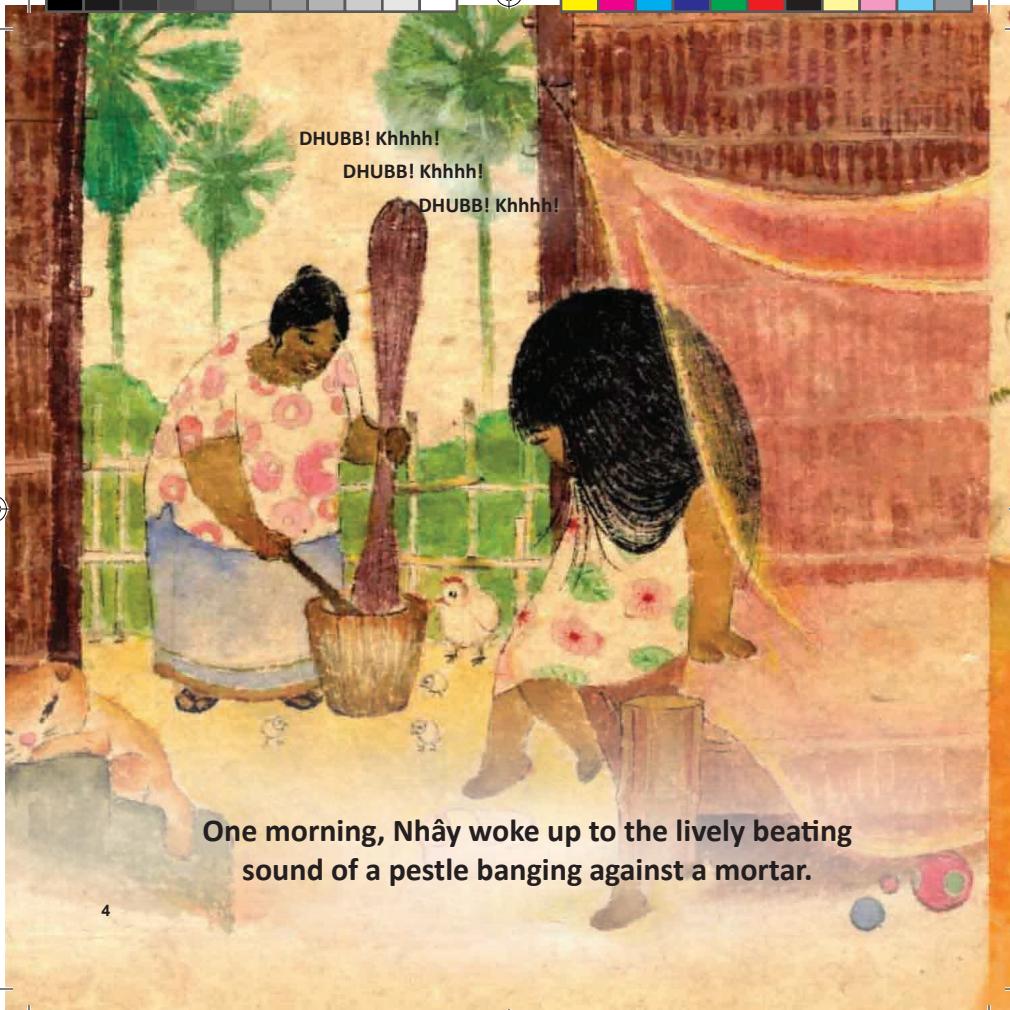


The Ok Om Bok Festival

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DHUBB! Khhhh!

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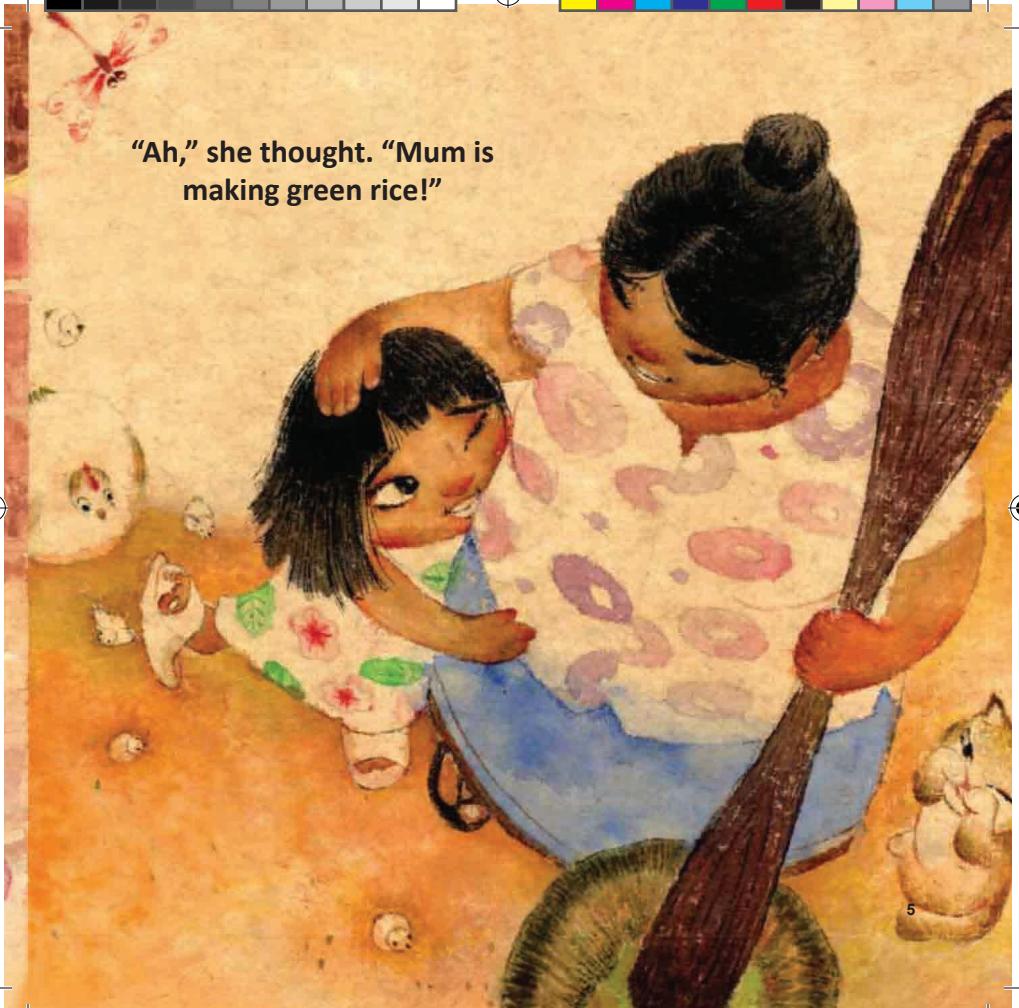
DHUBB! Khhhh!

One morning, Nhây woke up to the lively beating sound of a pestle banging against a mortar.





“Ah,” she thought. “Mum is making green rice!”





Father says, “Today is the Ok Om Bok festival, don’t you remember? Granny and Grandpa are arriving soon.”





Now it's afternoon.
Nhây runs to meet her grandparents.

“What have you bought
from the market?”
she asks eagerly.



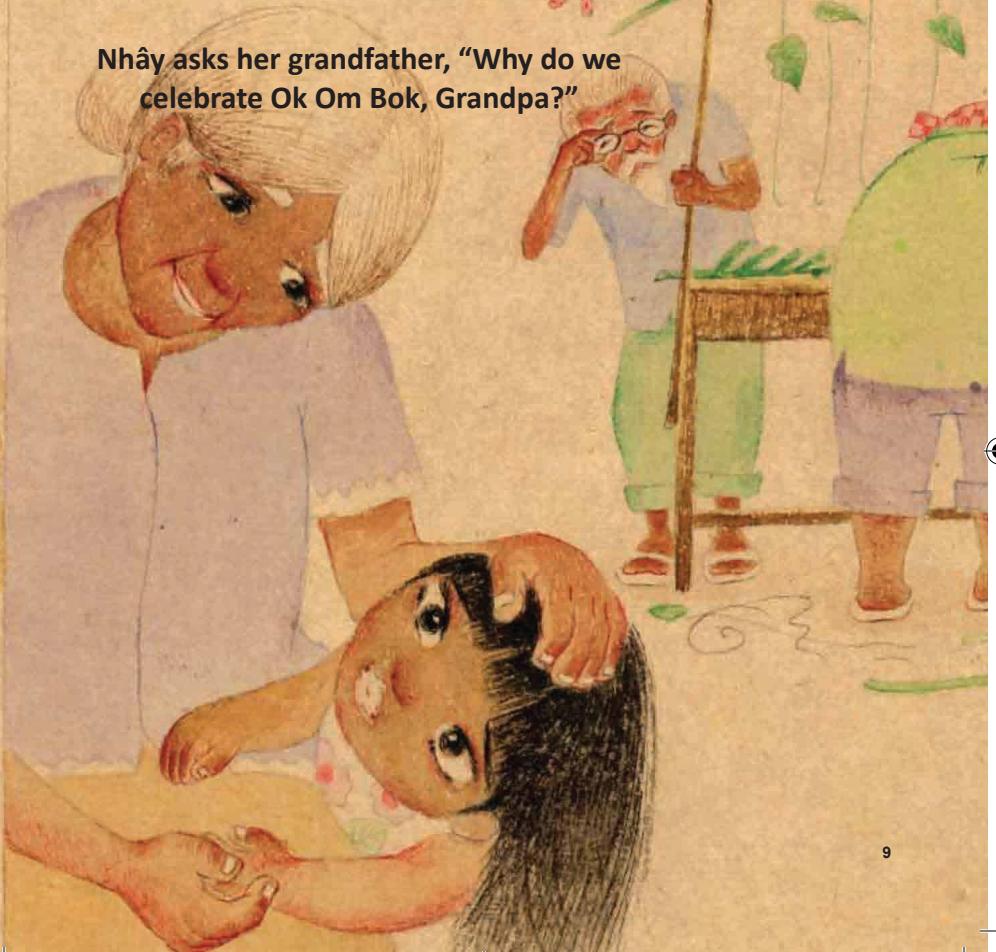
Grandmother shows Nhây the special food in her basket.

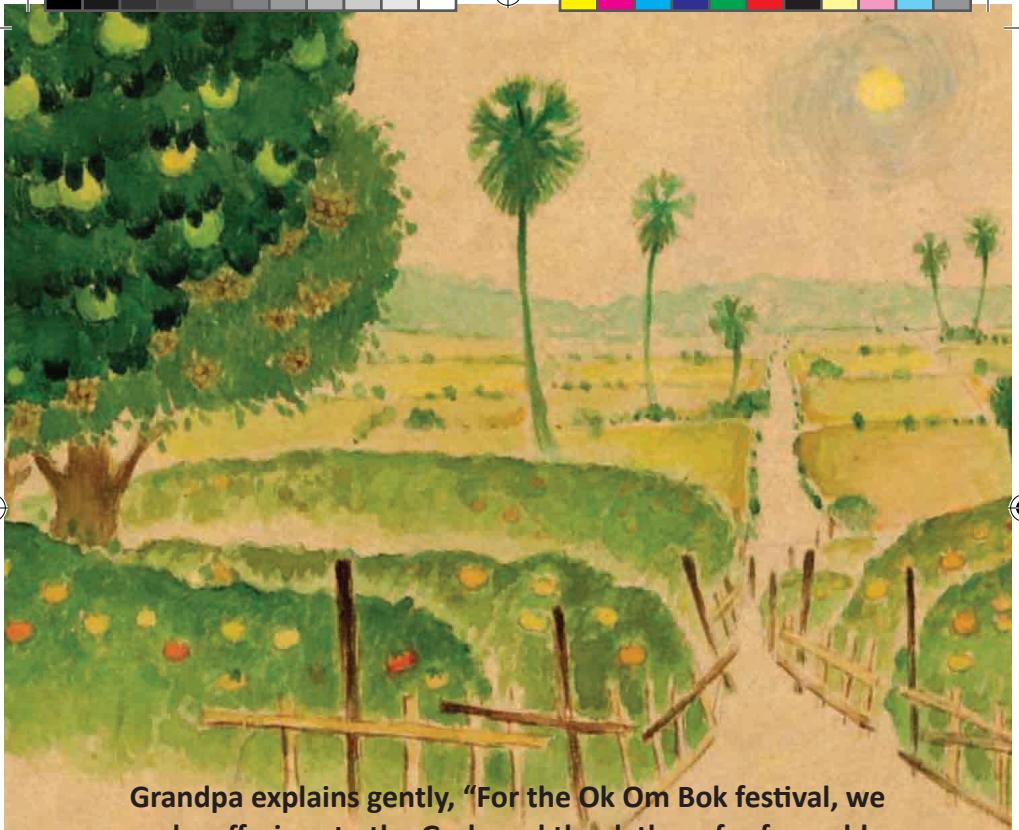
“I bought these for the Ok Om Bok offerings,” Granny says.





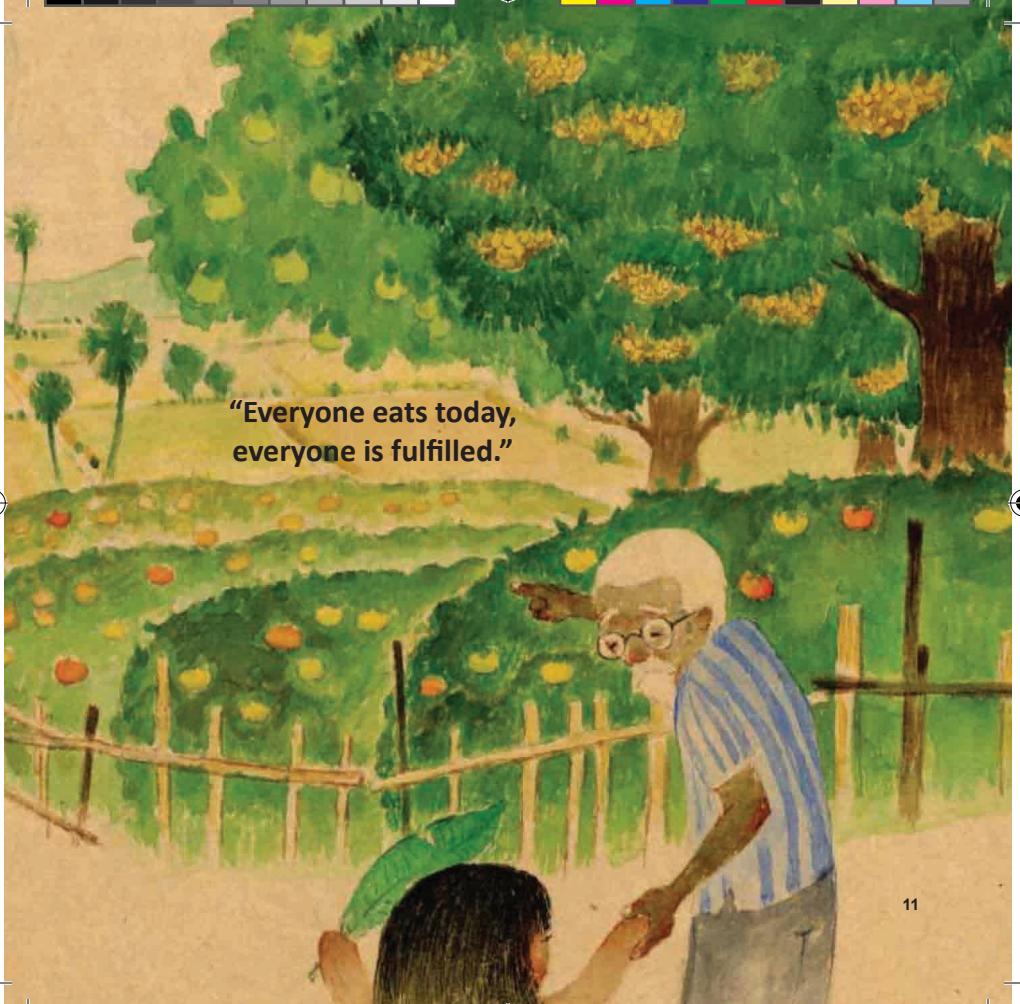
Nhây asks her grandfather, “Why do we celebrate Ok Om Bok, Grandpa?”





Grandpa explains gently, “For the Ok Om Bok festival, we make offerings to the Gods and thank them for favorable weather and bountiful crops.”





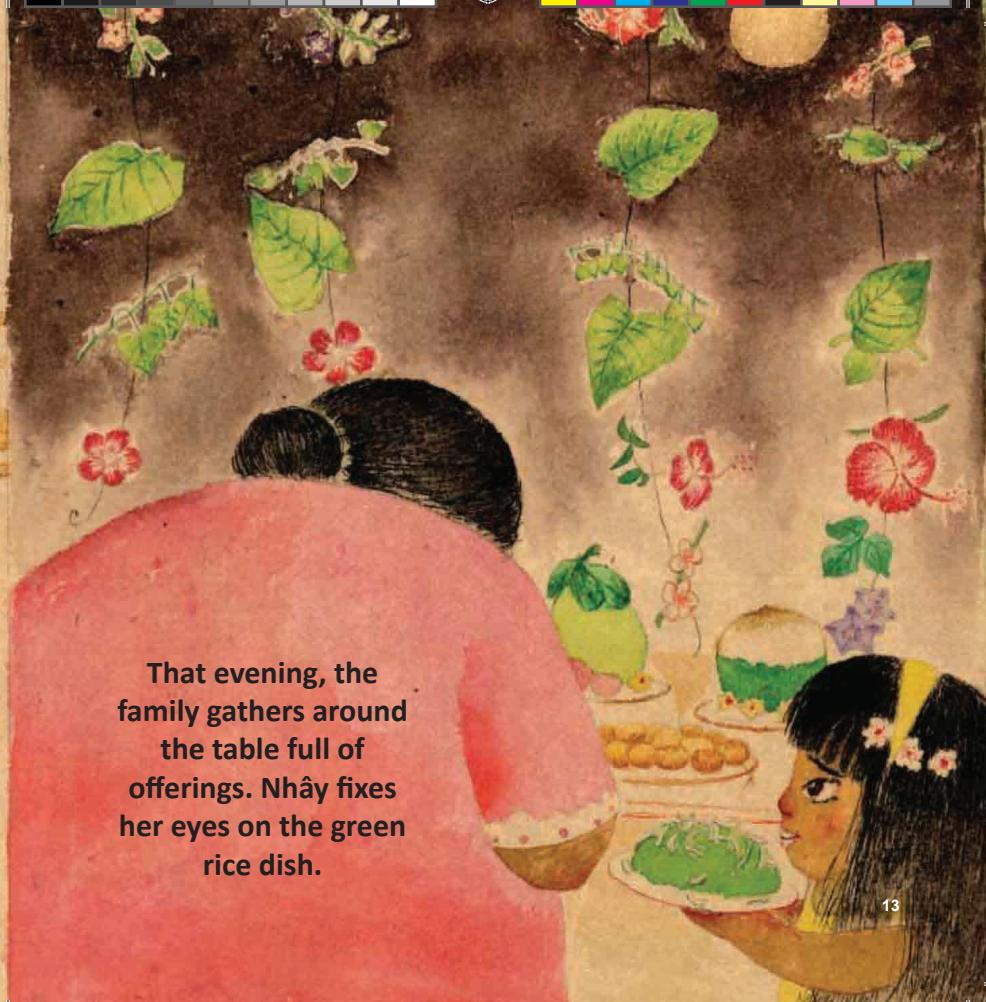
**“Everyone eats today,
everyone is fulfilled.”**





**“I want to help too!” Nhâ says.
“I’ll get some flowers for the village gate.”**





That evening, the family gathers around the table full of offerings. Nhâỵ fixes her eyes on the green rice dish.





Mum asks, “Nhây, do you remember how to make this delicious green rice?”

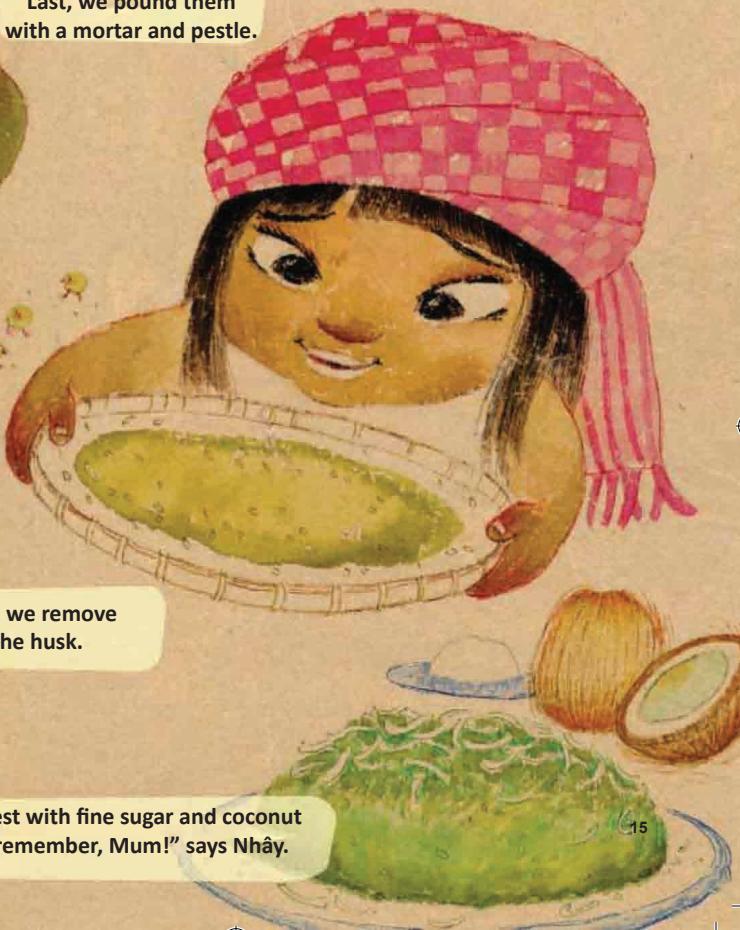
Second, we roast them over straw fire until they soften.

First, we must select the best rice kernels.





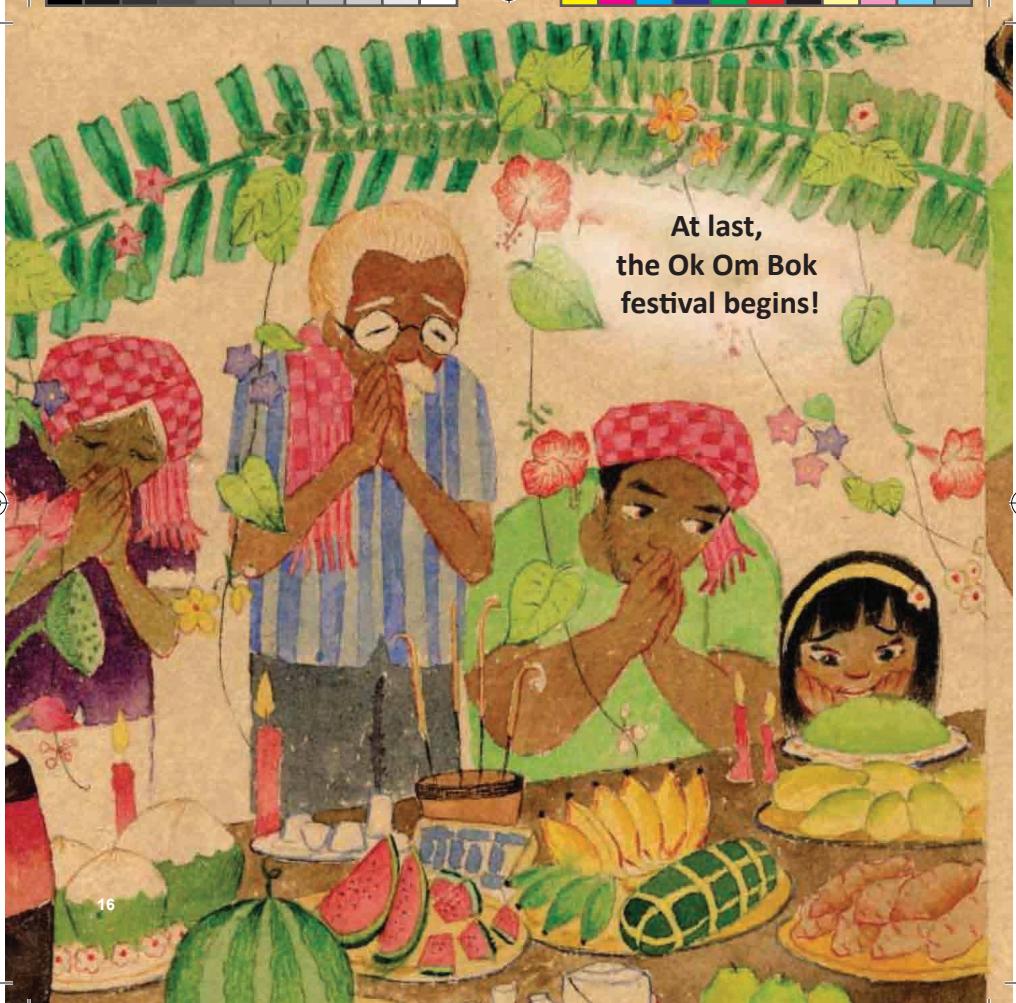
Last, we pound them
with a mortar and pestle.



Fourth, we remove
all the husk.

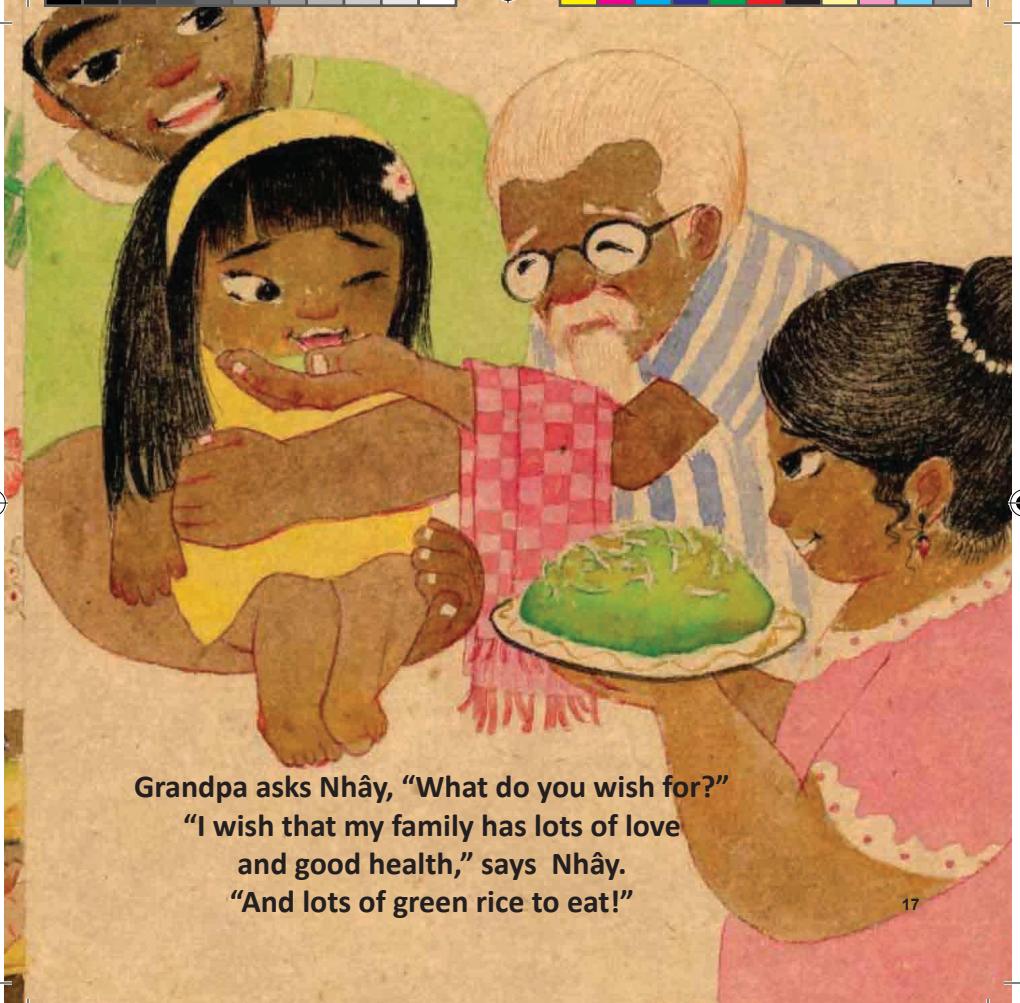
Fifth, we mix the rest with fine sugar and coconut
shavings. "Now I remember, Mum!" says Nhâ.





At last,
the Ok Om Bok
festival begins!





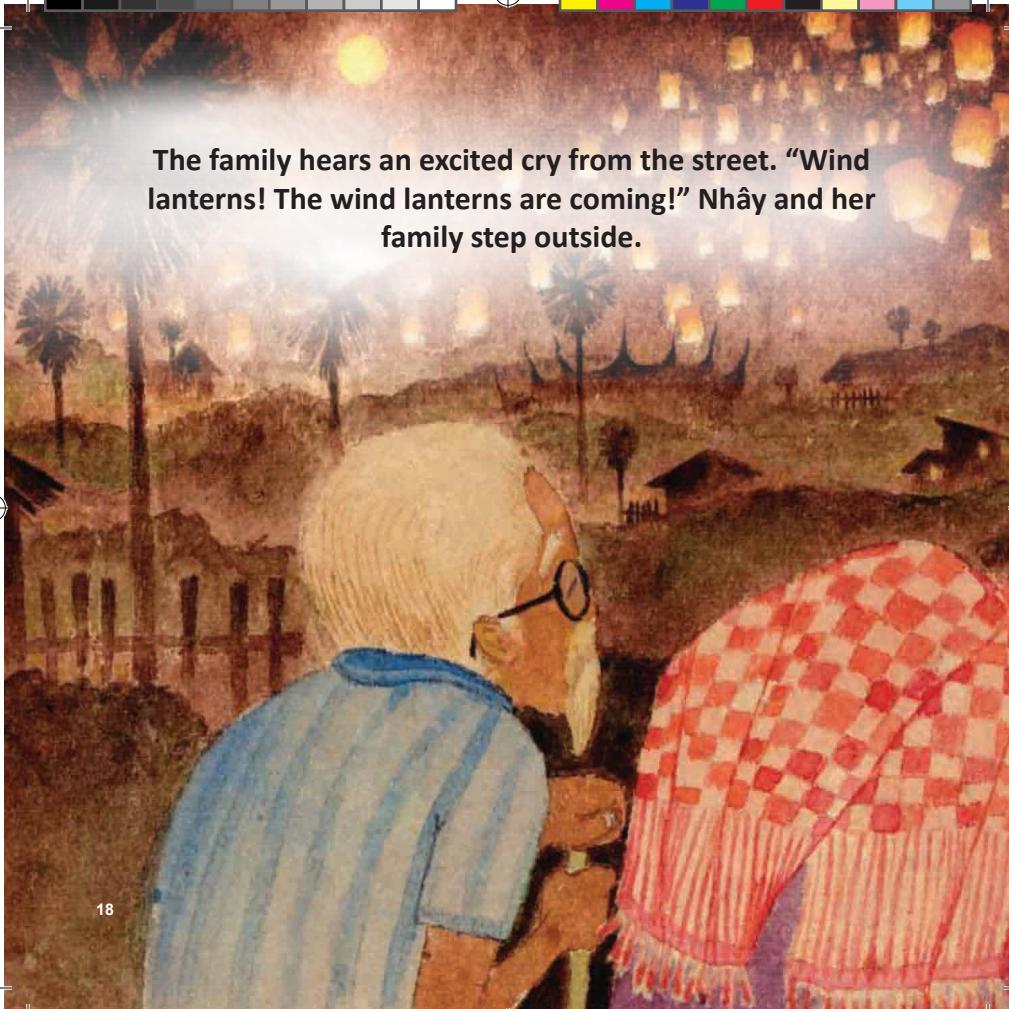
Grandpa asks Nhâ, “What do you wish for?”
“I wish that my family has lots of love
and good health,” says Nhâ.
“And lots of green rice to eat!”

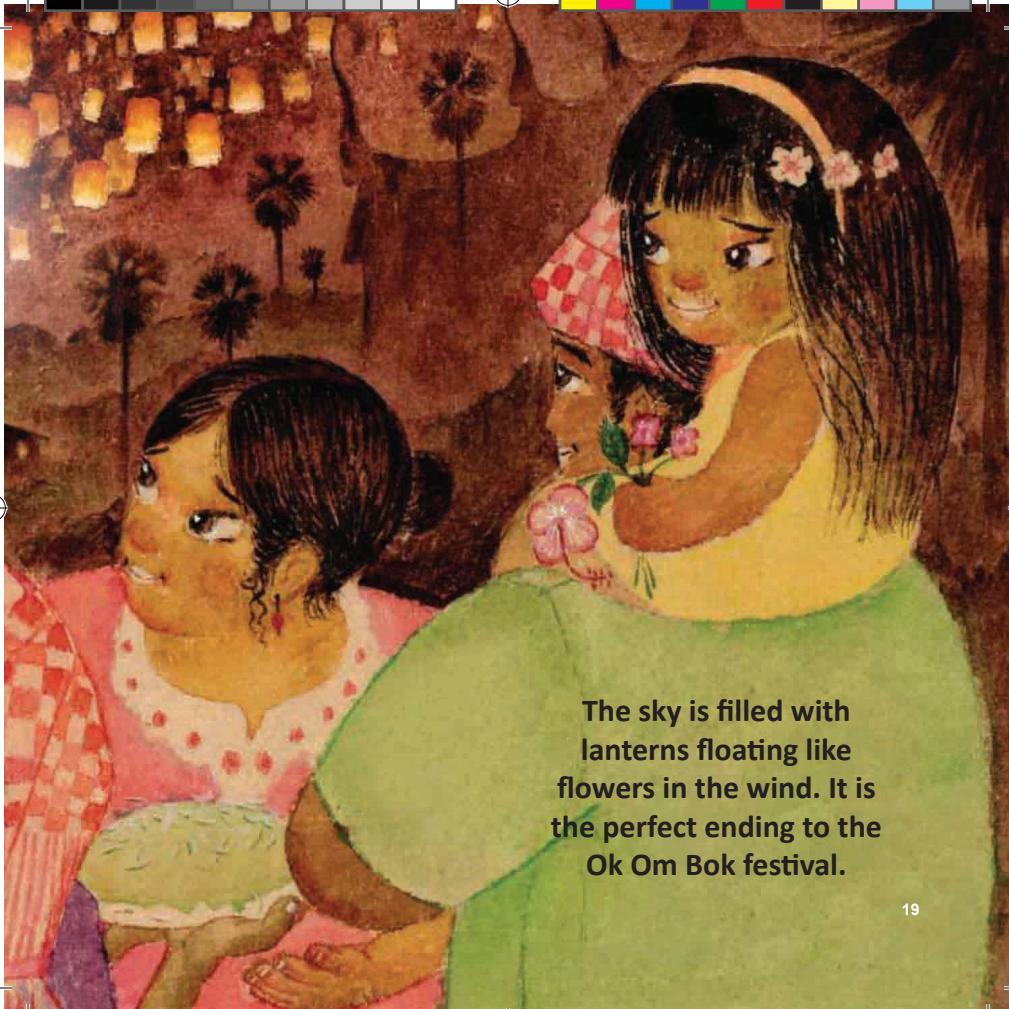
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The family hears an excited cry from the street. “Wind lanterns! The wind lanterns are coming!” Nhây and her family step outside.





The sky is filled with lanterns floating like flowers in the wind. It is the perfect ending to the Ok Om Bok festival.





NOTE:

Ok Om Bok Festival: A festival of worshipping the moon of the Khmer people, to give thanks to the Gods and pray for good crops. The festival is usually held on the 15th of the month | 10 lunar calendar every year. In Vietnam, Ok Om Bok festival takes place mainly in two provinces of Tra | Vinh and Soc Trang, where many Khmer people gather.

Green rice: A dish made of roasted young glutinous rice, pounded and peeled. Green rice is a popular food of Khmer people. Green rice is often mixed with white sugar and aged coconut.

