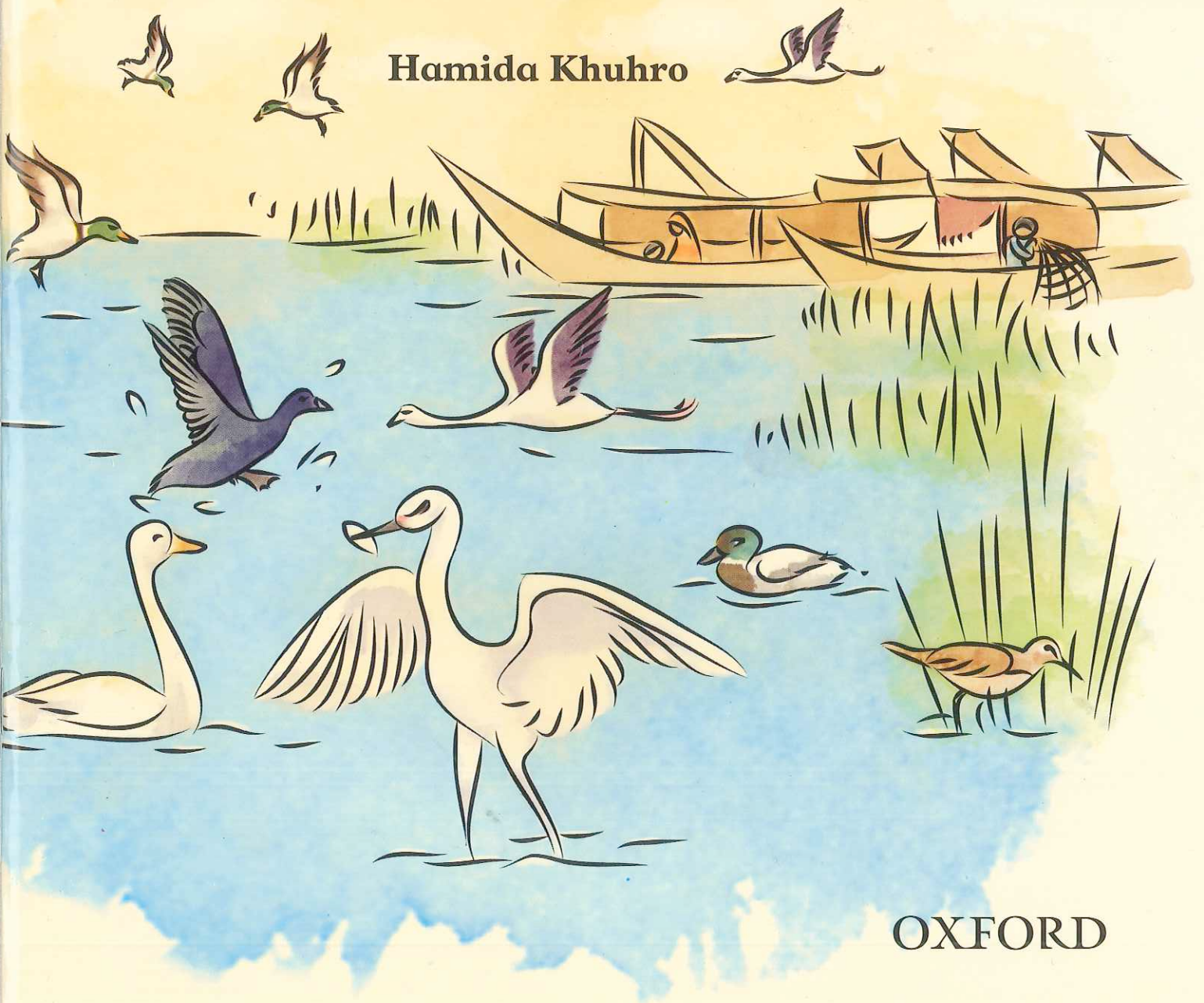


A Children's History of Sindh

Hamida Khuhro



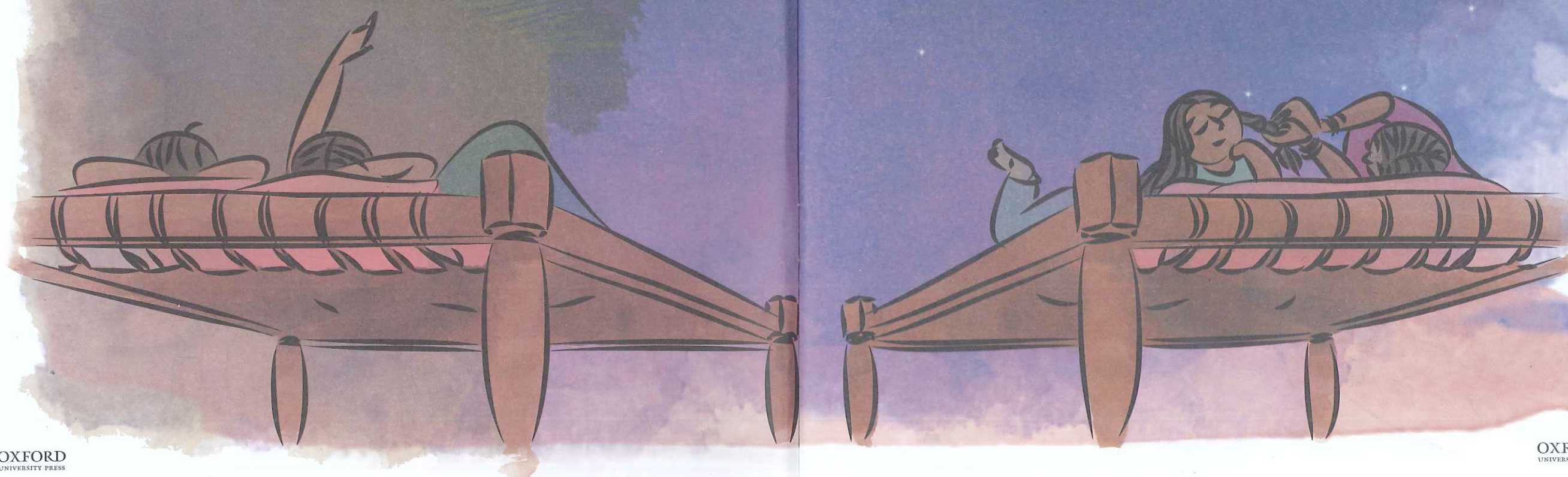
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Introduction

I was born in a small village called Akil on the banks of the River Indus, near the town of Larkana. On summer nights we slept on charpoys with the lovely starlit sky as our ceiling. The night sky in Sindh is always ablaze with stars which seem brighter than anywhere in the world.

I lived in Akil till I was eight years old. I went to school there and learnt the Sindhi alphabet on a wooden board called a *takhti* on which I wrote with a reed pen.

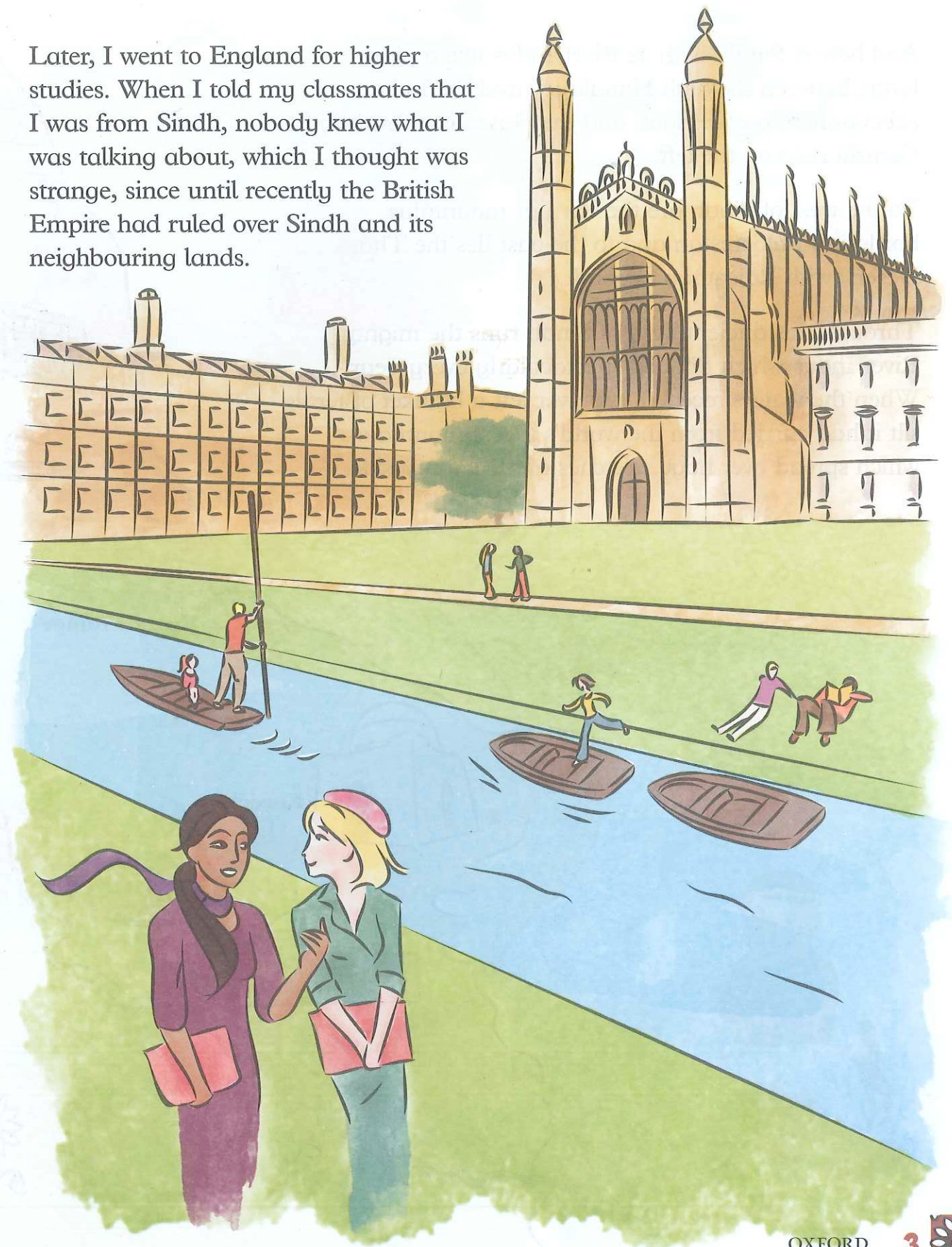


Children in Sindh today do many of the same things that they have done for generations. They play with toys made from clay like those that were found at the ancient city of the Indus Valley Civilization, known as Moen-jo-Daro. They watch the river flood its banks from the protective embankments or *bund*, just outside the village.

Sindh must be one of the rarest places on earth where, for thousands of years, people have led contented and fulfilled lives, nurtured and sustained by the less material things of life like poetry, music, and mysticism. Our land is rich and prosperous and for thousands of years we did not exploit our natural resources; we lived most of the time in harmony with the rhythms of the natural world.



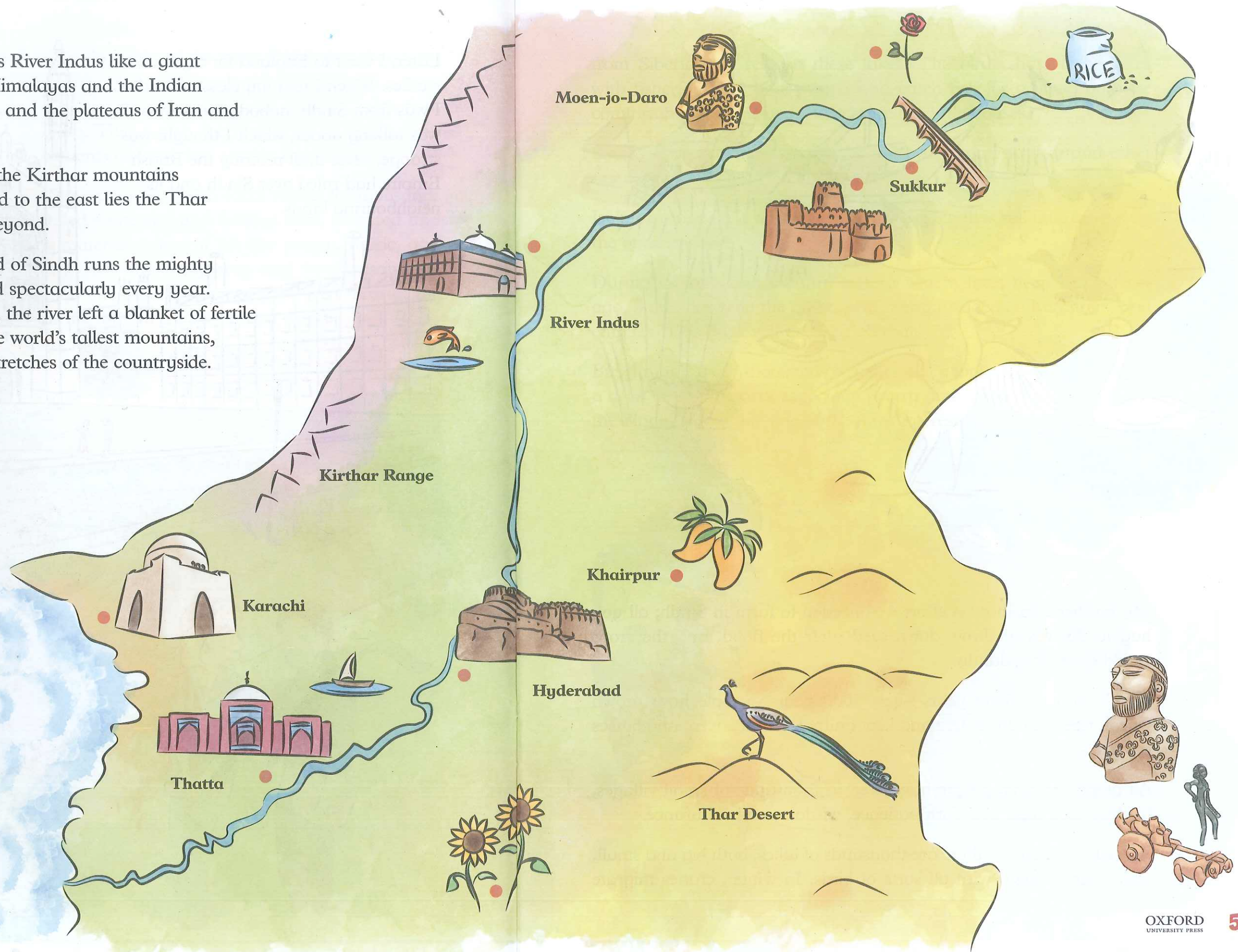
Later, I went to England for higher studies. When I told my classmates that I was from Sindh, nobody knew what I was talking about, which I thought was strange, since until recently the British Empire had ruled over Sindh and its neighbouring lands.

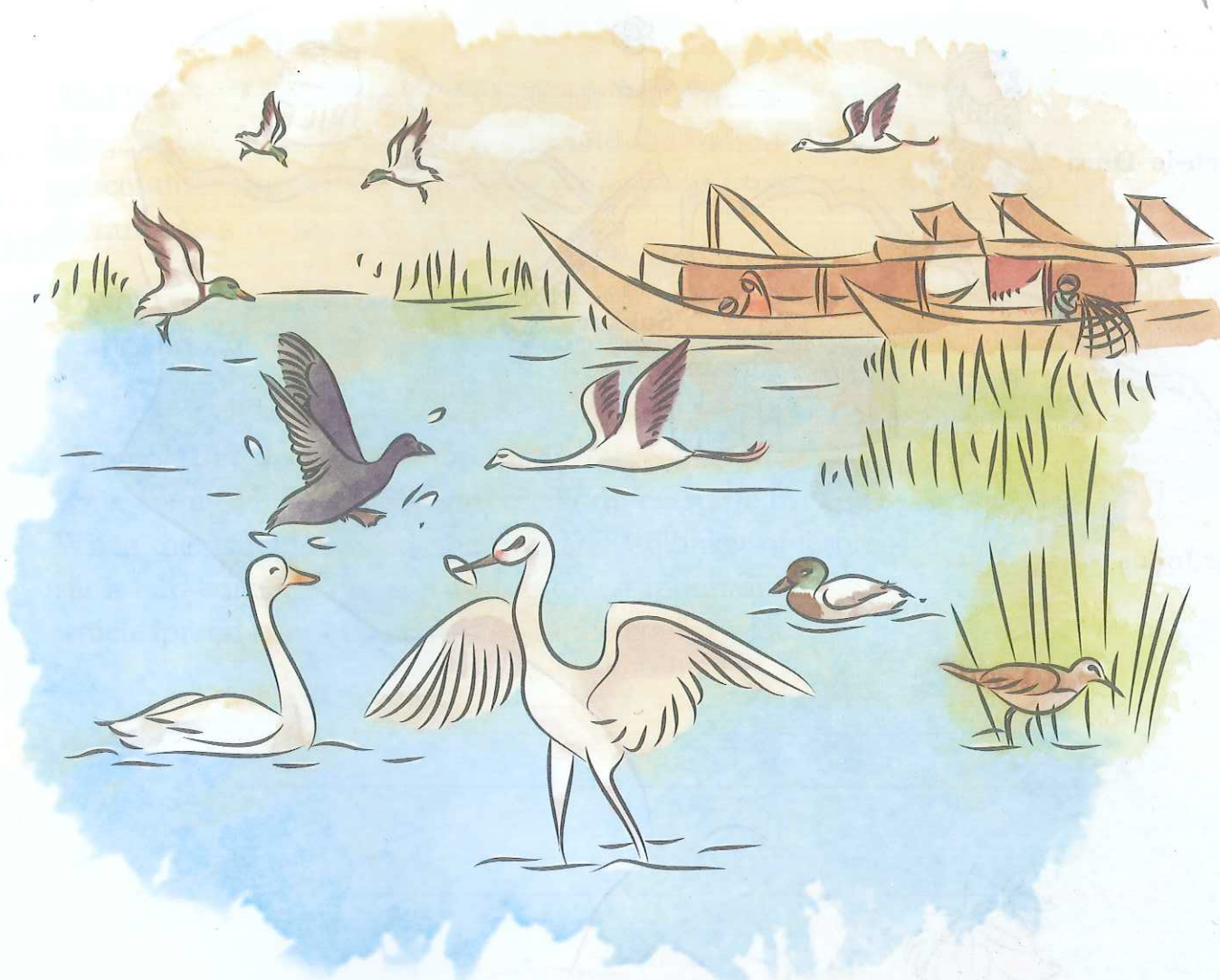


And here is Sindh, with its River Indus like a giant hinge between the high Himalayas and the Indian subcontinent on the right, and the plateaus of Iran and Central Asia on the left.

To the west of Sindh are the Kirthar mountains bordering Balochistan and to the east lies the Thar Desert, with Rajasthan beyond.

Through this ancient land of Sindh runs the mighty River Indus which flooded spectacularly every year. When the waters receded, the river left a blanket of fertile silt it had carried from the world's tallest mountains, which spread over huge stretches of the countryside.





My brother said that no effort was needed to farm in Sindh; all you had to do was to throw down seed after the flood, and the crops would grow abundantly.

That's why for 5000 years—yes, 5000 years—people have grown wheat, rice, and dates here and kept animals, cattle, oxen, and horses as well.

All along the river, people have lived in thousands of small villages, leading their busy lives with patience, wisdom, and endurance.

As well as the Indus, there are thousands of lakes, both big and small, which are teeming with all sorts of birds. In winter, cranes migrate



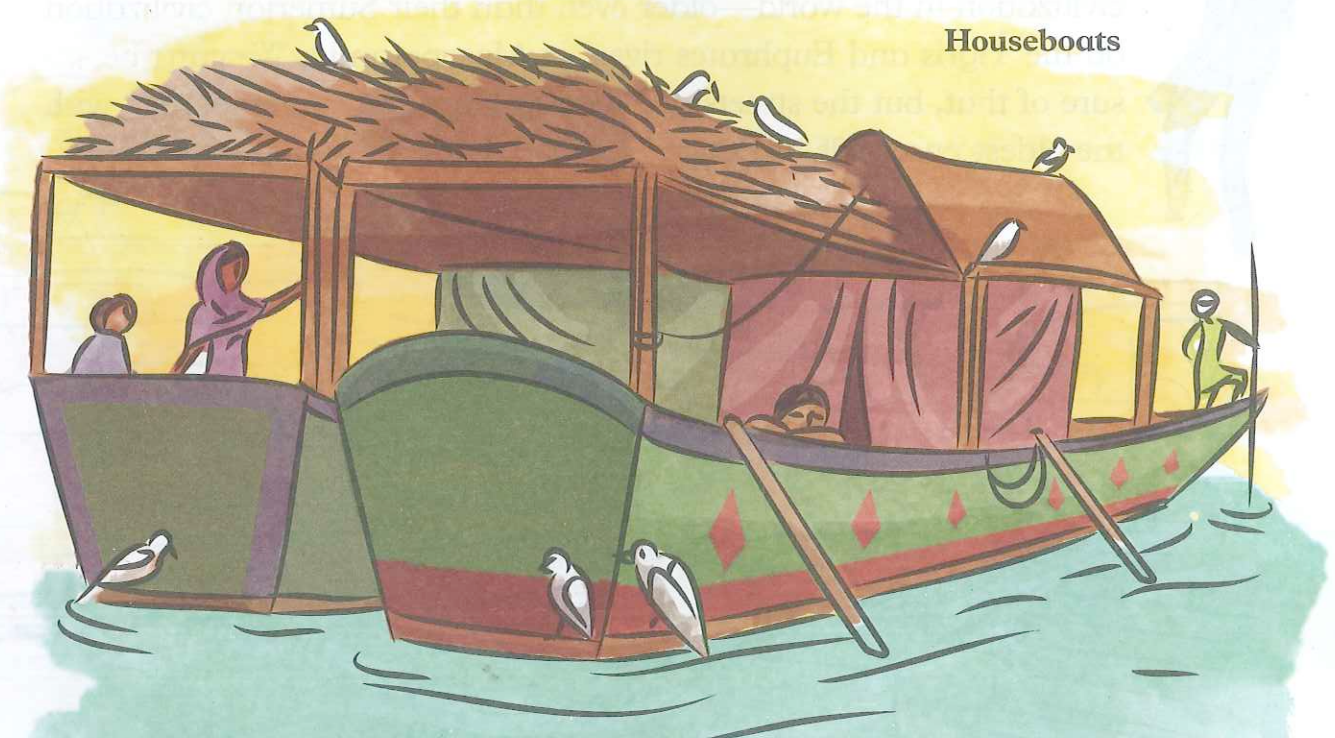
from Siberia and rest on these lakes. The birds share these lakes with fisherfolk and boat-people who catch fish for a living and live comfortably on their boats which are like little houses.

Sindh is filled with acacia forests which are home to deer and other animals.

Isn't it strange, that with so much to offer, Sindh is still little known by the outside world?

During its long and eventful history which dates from 5000 years ago, Sindh has seen the passage of many invaders, adventurers, and empires. This book will describe all that.

But through those thousands of years, the people of Sindh developed a deep love of the arts, especially poetry and music, which has made the Sindhi way of life one of the most interesting in the world.



Houseboats

