なめとご山は、それはそれは大きな山で、山頂は一年中、 があって、山頂は一年中、 があって、山頂は一年中、 があって、 からとこ山は、それはそれは大きな山で、山頂は一年中、

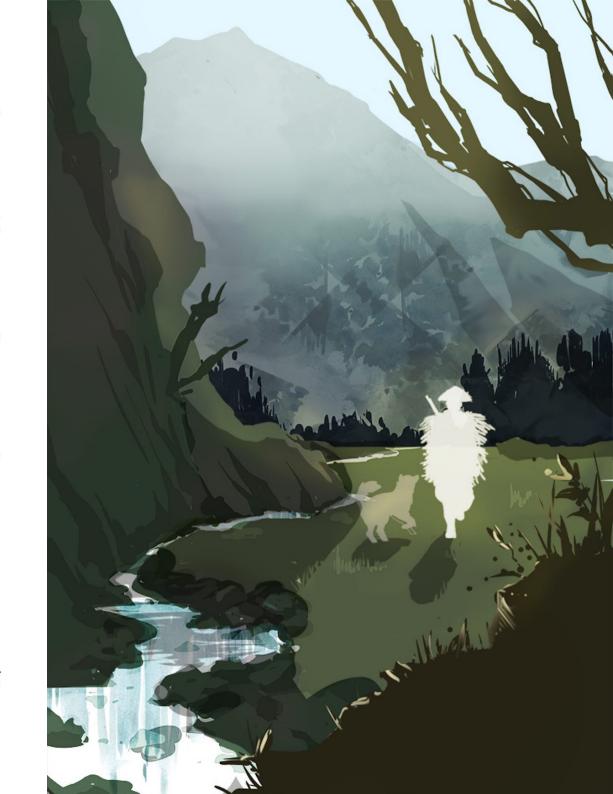
業後り名人の小十郎は、熊を獲って、その毛皮と胆を売って暮らしを立てていました。

小十郎は、大きな体に、木の皮で作ったみのと、丈夫なすね当てを身につけ、鉄砲を担いで、たくましい犬を連れて、 毎日なめとこ山に入っていきました。

なめとこ山の熊たちは、木の上から、険しい山道を歩く ^{**}
^{**}
小十郎をながめていました。

その日、小十郎は、熊を一頭しとめました。

小十郎はしとめた熊に注意深く近寄り、刃物を使って、ていねいに熊をばらしました。



「ああ、麓よ。おれはお前が憎くて殺したわけじゃないんだ。 おれも本当は、こんなことをしたくないんだ。だが、うちには畑もないし、童に降りても、他に仕事もない。お前が熊に生まれたのが因果なら、おれも、こんな商売が因果だ。やい、麓よ。お前も今度は、熊なんかに生まれてくるんじゃないぞ」

小十郎は、熊をばらしながら、いつもこんなことをつぶやいていました。熊たちも、小十郎の気持ちを良く理解していましたから、この山の熊たちは、だれも小十郎を憎んではいませんでした。

小十郎は、恨みも憎しみもない自分に殺されていく熊たちに深く同情し、いつしか、熊の言葉さえもわかるようになった気がしていました。

その年の春も、まだ木の葉が青くならないうちに、小十郎 は犬を連れて、なめとご山に入りました。



Mt. Nametoko was a very huge mountain, and there were always thick clouds or cold layers of fog at the summit throughout the year.

Halfway up the mountain, there was a big waterfall and there had lived many bears a long time ago. A gall of a bear in Mt. Nametoko was considered very useful for good medicine at that time.

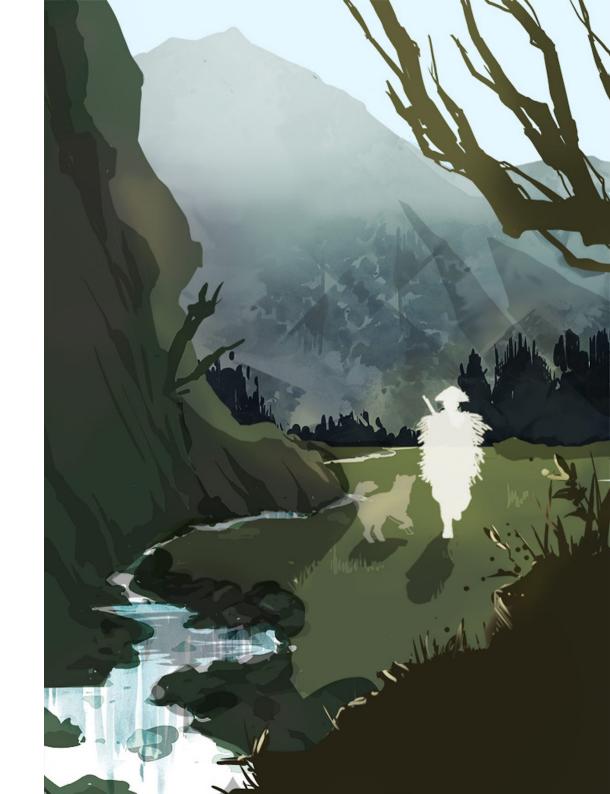
A master at bear-hunting, Kojuro, was making his living from selling galls and furs of the bears he hunted.

Kojuro wore a rain-cape made from bark and tough shin pad, carried a gun and entered the mountain everyday with his burly dog.

Bears in the mountains observed Kojuro and his dog climbing up a rocky road from on top of the trees.

That day, Kojuro had killed a bear.

He carefully approached a bear that he had shot, and respectfully cut his body parts apart using a sharp knife.



"Oh, dear bear, I didn't kill you because I hated you.

To be honest, I did not want to do this. However, I don't own any land to grow crops and have no other jobs even if I go to the village. If it was a fate that you were born as a bear, then same goes around for me, it was a fate of mine that I had to do kill you as my job. So dear bear, don't be born as a bear in your next lifetime."

Kojuro always said the same thing after killing a bear. The bears understood Kojuro's feeling so no bears held strong hatred against him.

Kojuro felt sorry and had sympathy for the innocent bears that were murdered by himself. Before he noticed, he had felt like he could understand the bears' language.

On the same year when spring came, he went to the mountain with his dog before the leaves on the trees turned green.

