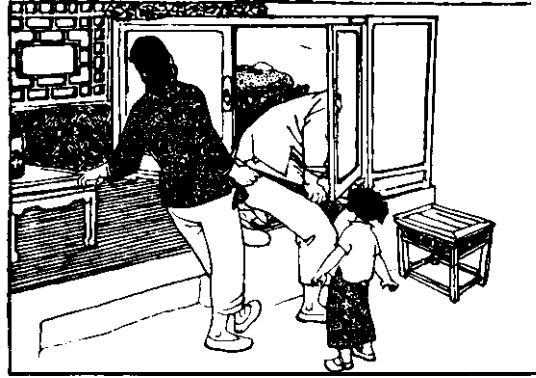
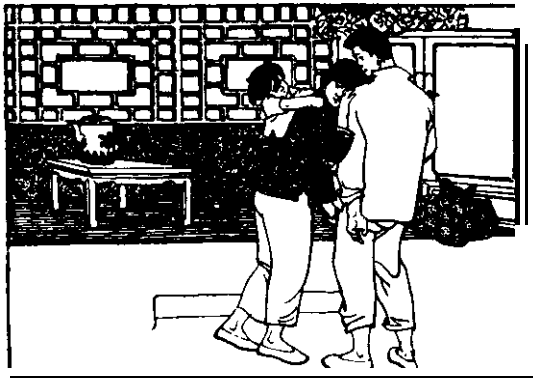


95. Shuangshuang was stunned. Xiwang looked hard at her. "From now on our paths won't cross again. You will have fewer big-character posters to write and I will suffer less criticism. Even if you tread on everyone's toes, it won't be my responsibility."



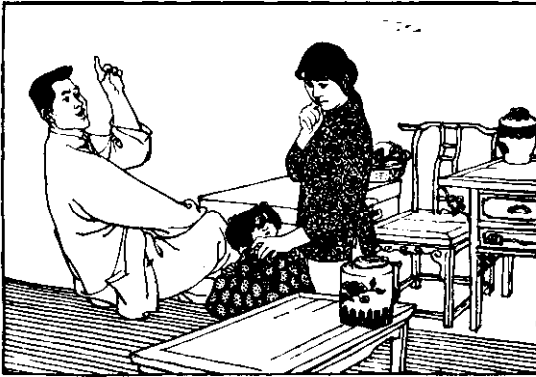
96. Shuangshuang frowned deeply and looked at Xiwang sadly. All he did was to urge her to pack his things. But Shuangshuang did not appear to have heard. Xiwang angrily rolled up his sleeves and packed a blanket and a few clothes into a bundle.



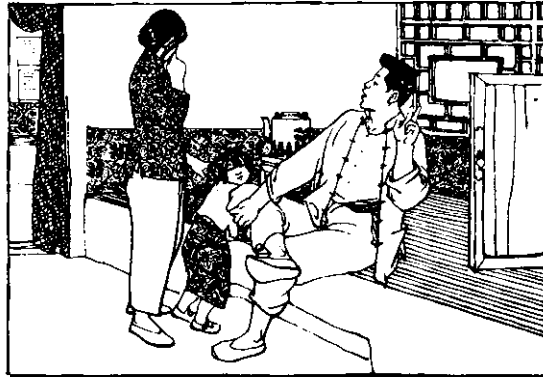
97. Shuangshuang whipped the bundle away and said, "You can't go! Now that I'm team leader, I really need your help. Look at it from my point of view. I can't. ." She put her head on Xiwang's shoulder and began to cry.



98. Xiwang softened. "If I'm staying, we must establish a few rules." Surprisingly, Shuangshuang agreed.



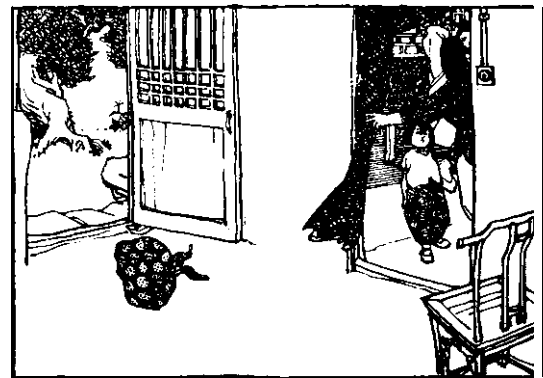
99. Pleased with himself, Xiwang sat down on the kang, crossed his legs, and said, "Now that you are a cadre, you must use your head before you open your mouth. Don't chatter like a machine gun. From now on, only say what you have to say and don't say anything you shouldn't." Shuangshuang nodded and said, "All right, that's one rule."



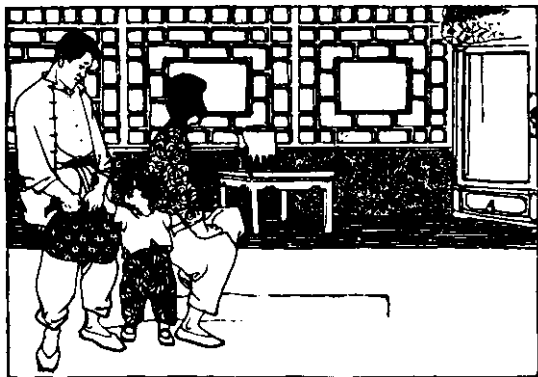
100. Raising a second finger, Xiwang said, "You are the leader of the women's team; just concern yourself with matters affecting production." Shuangshuang thought a bit and said, "That's all right as well; whatever happens I'll look after whatever I ought to do."



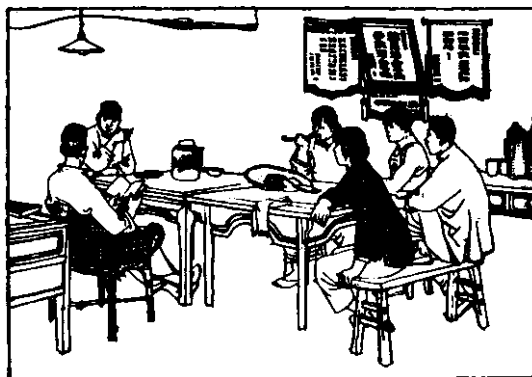
101. "As for the last rule, when you are dealing with people, give them some leeway and don't make so many proposals to the cadres." Before he had finished. Shuangshuang's expression suddenly changed and she snapped at him, "What?"



102. Unable to control her anger any more, Shuangshuang threw his bundle out of the door and said furiously, "Out you go!"



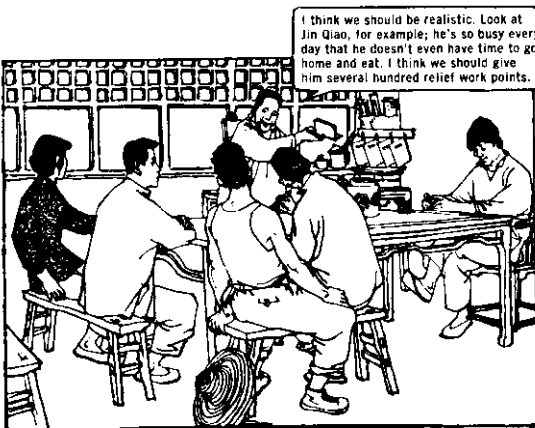
103. Originally Xiwang had only wanted to scare Shuangshuang; he had had no idea that she would react like this. He picked up the bundle and stood there dumbly, waiting. After a long time he said slowly, "There's no need for you to be angry. Let's say there are only two rules. I'll never mention the third one, all right!"



104. But the domestic storm did not die down. The next day, the team committee held a meeting to discuss the distribution of extra points to needy households. After this matter had been dealt with, the chairman of the meeting, Jin Qiao, wanted to raise the question of cadres who needed extra work points because they couldn't spend all their time in production.



105. Shuangshuang's opinion was that cadres already had compensatory work points and therefore should not receive extra relief work points. But the team accountant thought otherwise. He said, "Compensatory and relief work points are two different things. Look at Xiwang's household, for example. Now that Shuangshuang is the team leader, it's bound to be affected."



I think we should be realistic. Look at Jin Qiao, for example; he's so busy every day that he doesn't even have time to go home and eat. I think we should give him several hundred relief work points.

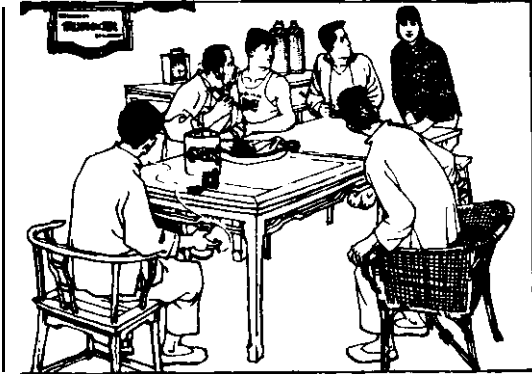
106. Shuangshuang burst out, "My family should not be a candidate for relief. A cadre should also be engaged in production." Er Chun agreed with her and also thought that cadre families should not qualify for relief work points. The accountant, on seeing that his first point met with little response, proposed a second one.



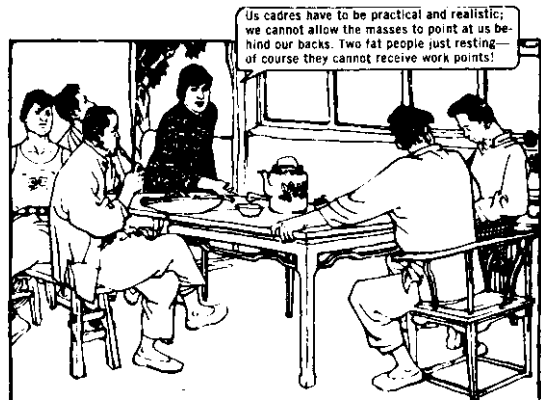
107. Shuangshuang frowned and thought to herself, "The farmer branch secretary is busier than anybody else and he manages. DaFeng is young and unmarried--why can't she manage a living? If she can't, it's time she learned." She was just about to stand up to speak when Xiwang restrained her.



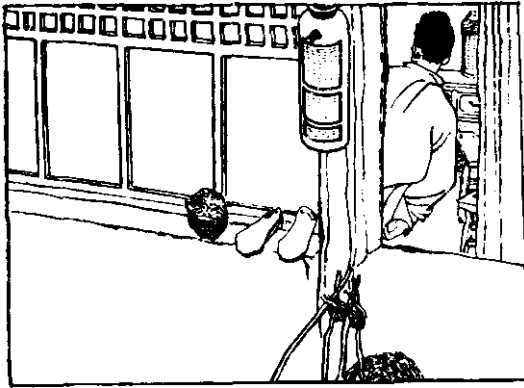
108. Jin Qiao wanted to avoid a stalemate so he craftily proposed that from then on he would do more labor. The team accountant, seeing the way things were going, joined in and said, "That's right. Whoever doesn't want to do labor work is a nobody. Shall we estimate Jin Qiao's household at several hundred work points?"



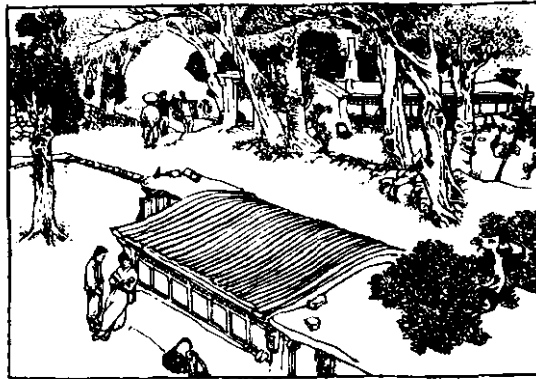
109. Shuangshuang could not bear it any longer. She jumped up and Xiwang hurriedly kicked her again. Shuangshuang returned a fierce hick and said in a loud voice, "I still have something to say."



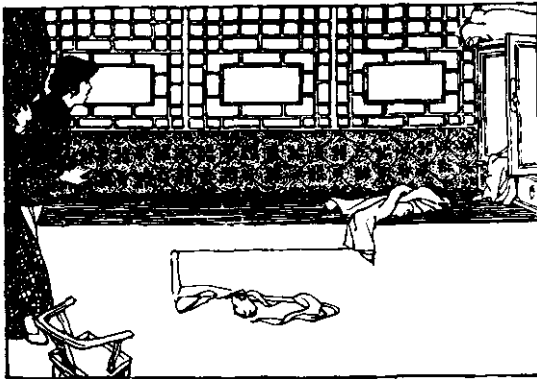
110. First she told them what she had been thinking and then she asked Jin Qiao why he didn't even pick up a spade or let his wife Oa Feng go down to the fields. Jin Qiao lowered his head without a word and could think of nothing to say.



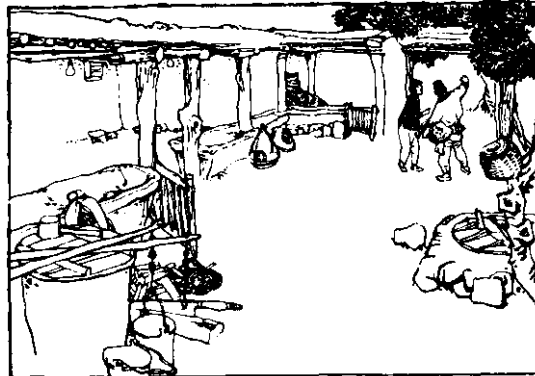
111. Xiwang tried to say a few words to resolve the impasse, but he was immediately rebuffed by Er Chun. Then, pulling at Shuangshuang's sleeve, Jin Qiao said, "All right, all right. After this, if I get work points, I'll eat, but if I don't get work points, I won't come to you!"



112. The meeting came to an unsatisfactory and unhappy conclusion. Xiwang looked at Shuangshuang angrily and pulled Jin Qiao into a corner to say something to him and then left the meeting furiously.



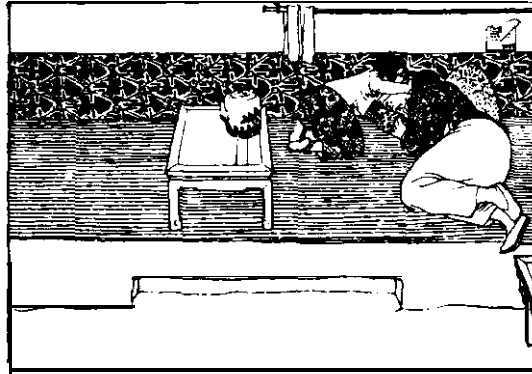
113. When Shuangshuang got home, she was startled to see that everything had been turned upside down in the house, and after a quick check she found that a blanket and a pillow were missing. Xiwang was gone.



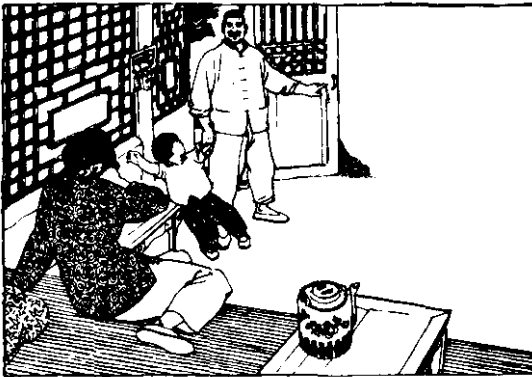
114. Hurriedly she looked for him all over the village but with no success. She rushed to the cart depot and found out from old Gengpo that Xiwang had just left the village with Jin Qiao and Sun You on a cart.



115. She went to the edge of the village and saw the cart disappearing rapidly in the distance. She stared ahead of her, overwhelmed with grief.



116. It was dusk and the bell marking the end of the day's work was ringing. Shuangshuang went home and threw herself on the kang.



117. Just at this unhappy moment of grief the branch secretary came in.



118. He sat down with a sigh. "What's the matter? Has Xiwang left you!" Shuangshuang shook her head. "Life goes on. Even if this work-point recorder leaves me, I, as a cadre, still have work to do."



119. The branch secretary said, "Oh, never mind if they've gone. During the past few days they said they would start working in side occupations. But we must not slacken our efforts. Agriculture is the basis; the livelihood of the commune members comes from the land."



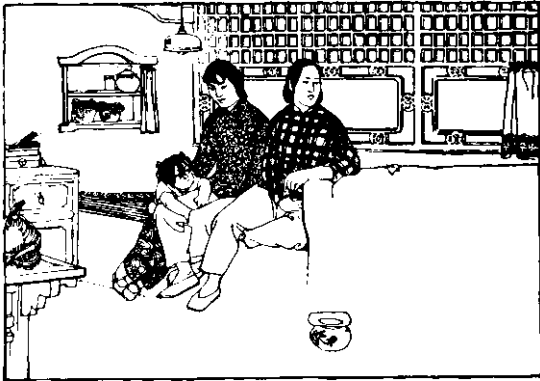
120. Shuangshuang nodded but, still unsettled, asked the branch secretary to judge who was right and who wrong. He said, "Your criticism of Jin Qiao was correct! Cadres should take part in production and in doing so lead production."



121. After he had left, Shuangshuang thought to herself that any negligence in the work of the team could affect the livelihood of several hundred people and that she must never be slack herself but should bring the women together to get on well with their work. After eating supper she took Xiao Ju with her and went over to Jin Qiao's house.



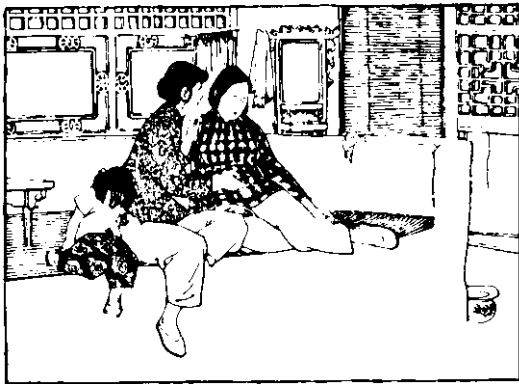
122. Da Feng was crying at the side of the kang. She heard a noise at the door and saw that it was Shuangshuang. She gave her an angry glance and then quickly turned away. Sizing up the situation, Shuangshuang paused a second and then, plucking up her courage, went forward towards the kang.



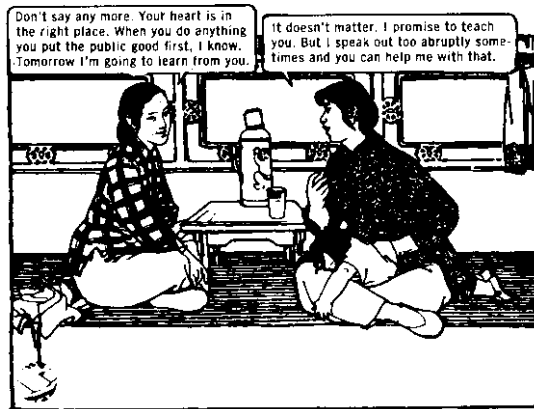
123. Da Feng raised her head angrily and stared straight at Shuangshuang. "What have you come for? Aren't you content with driving my man away?" Shuangshuang shook her head and said gently, "No, I've come to see you. I tell you, Xiaa Ju's father has also gone!"



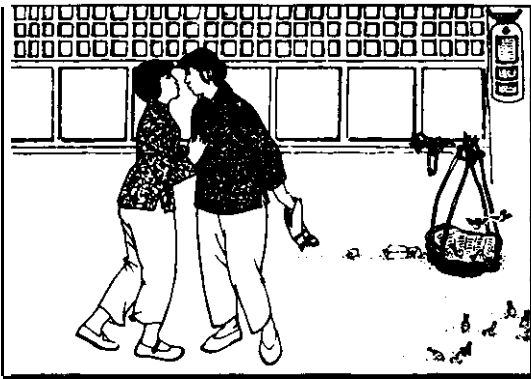
124. When she heard this, Da Feng became more friendly and said with a sigh, "What's the use of pressing them SO hard? Men are all the same; if you don't do as they say, they give up their family and run off."



125. Shuangshuang quickly turned the conversation onto the right track. "Da Feng, don't worry! We women have two hands as well! With them we can grow crops and cultivate cotton. Is it not right and glorious that we should eat the fruits of OUR labor and wear the clothes that we ourselves have produced?"



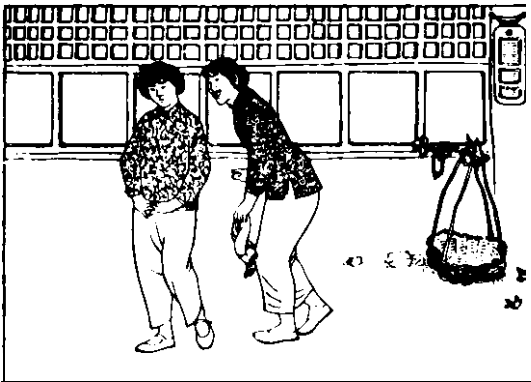
126. Then Da Feng, nodding, started to say what was on her mind. She said that it was not that she did not want to go down to the fields but that there were certain agricultural tasks she couldn't do. Shuangshuang saw that she had understood and quietly encouraged her. The two continued laughing and talking until late at night.



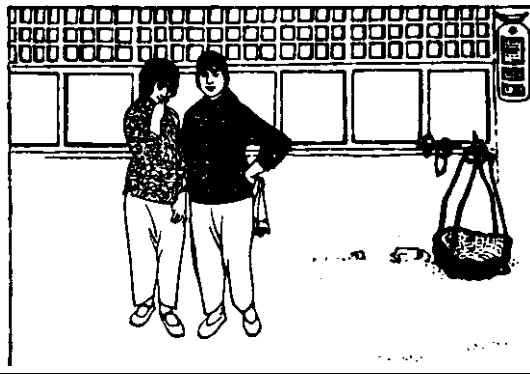
127. The more Shuangshuang went around to the women in their homes, the more they rallied round to follow her. On this particular day Shuangshuang bumped into Gui Ying just as she was leaving the office. Gui Ying held on to Shuangshuang's arm and said, "Auntie, I was just looking for you! Hurry up, hurry up?"



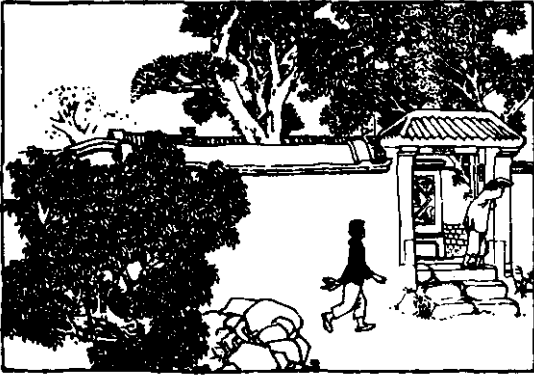
128. Shuangshuang hurriedly asked, "What's the matter? What's made you so flustered?" Gui Ying explained that her mother had told Jin Qiao to find a fiancé for her in the town and that today he was coming to ask her hand. Shuangshuang asked her what she intended to do about Er Chun. Gui Ying blushed. "I don't know."



129. "Silly, this is no time for hemming and hawing! Hurry up and say what you think of Er Chun." Shuangshuang began laughing and Gui Ying quickly replied, "I've never thought of him! How can you laugh when someone's in such a state? ."



130. Shuangshuang stopped laughing and said, "Really—what time does the man come?" Gui Ying said, "Right now!" Shuangshuang thought for a moment and then asked what his name was and then said, thinking aloud, "It looks as if I'd better go and see what's going on!"



131. She rushed straight off to Sun You's gateway. Sun Youpo, wearing new clothes and brilliant make-up, was standing by the gateway looking up and down waiting for somebody. As soon as she saw this scene, Shuangshuang realized that the prospective husband had not yet arrived and she quickly went on towards the edge of the village.



132. After a while a man appeared, coming along the main road, and asked an old woman the way. Shuangshuang heard that he was asking the way to Sun You's and guessed that it was the prospective husband. She called out, "Aren't you Xiao Wang, the truck driver?"



133. Xiao Wang, dressed in his best suit, responded with surprise and started to get uneasy. Shuangshuang smiled and said, "I knew you were going to come today!" Xiao Wang felt even more uneasy and was speechless for a long while before inquiring, "Ah, is auntie in good health?"



134. Shuangshuang asked, "You've come to get engaged, haven't you? Do you know Gui Yig?" Xiao Wang blushed and said, "I haven't met her yet but as soon as we meet, I'll know her. I'm a very open type of person."



135. Shuangshuang laughed and said, "I'm Gui Ving's aunt and Gui Ving has asked me to tell you that she doesn't know you, doesn't understand you, and moreover she's already got a fiancé in the village. ."



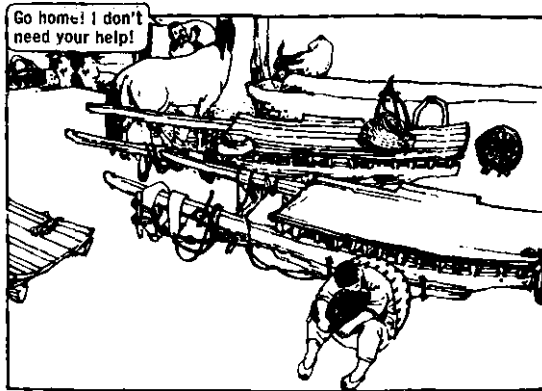
136. Xiao Wang looked as if a pail of cold water had been tipped over him, and Shuangshuang said, "Comrade, it's not your fault. It is Gui Ving's mother who wants to marry her to you so that you will take Gui Ving with you to live in the town." Xiao Wang waved his arm vigorously. "That's no good. Today marriage is freely entered into by principles!"



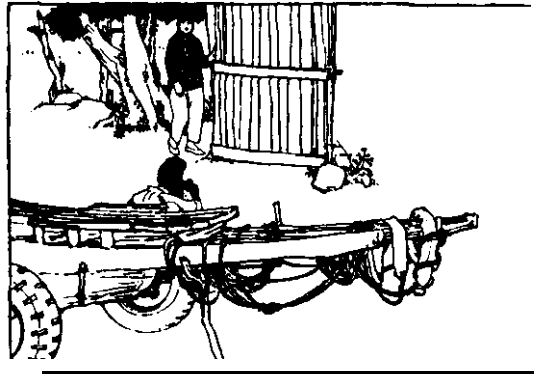
137. Shuangshuang then pressed him to go and see Gui Ying, but he hurriedly said, "Oh no, there's been a slight misunderstanding! Please tell Comrade Gui Ving that I wish to apologize to her." With this he left.



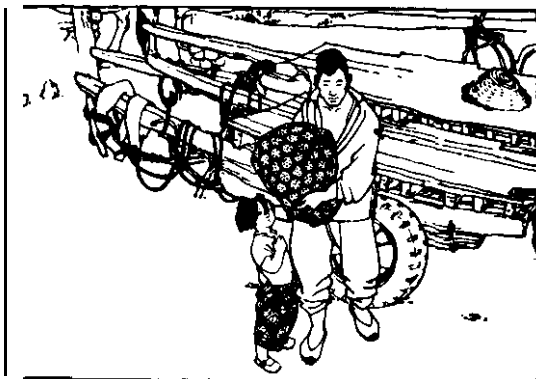
138. Not long after Xiao Wang had left, a cloud of dust appeared on the road outside the village and Jin Qiao, Sun You, and Xiwang, each driving a large cart, came hurrying into sight. When Xiwang saw the men and women all happily at work he couldn't help remembering his own worries.



139. The carts drew into the cart depot and old Gengpo helped them unharness the horses. Sun You and Jin Qiao both hurried off to their homes. Hugging his bundle. Xiwang hesitated a second and then, as if he had come to some decision, sat down.



140. Just at that moment Xiao Ju came running towards him, her arms held wide, shouting, "Papa!" He quickly threw his bundle to one side in order to hug Xiao Ju, and then he suddenly saw Shuangshuang standing by the gate watching him, her eyes wide open and her lips firmly pursed shut.



141. Many words surged through Xiwang's mind. He wanted to speak but his own pride held him back, so he put down the child and picked up his bundle again.



142. When Shuangshuang saw that he was about to walk off towards the stable, she ran forward and wrenched the bundle from his arms, saying, "I see your bundle is dirty. We are wiping out the four pests at the moment; it'll soon be the five pests, unless we get rid of you soon!" And she walked out of the depot.



143. Xiwang, embarrassed, was hesitating when old Gengpo gave him a shove and said, "Go home! Don't hang around here." Xiwang picked up Xiao Ju and dashed after Shuangshuang.



144. When he got to the gate of his own home he unexpectedly ran into her again. There was a large group of people in the courtyard surrounding Shuangshuang and Sun You was painting an accusing finger while blurting out, "I've been waiting all this time! I've waited to this moment and who would have thought that you would have frightened our family's guest away! Breaking up somebody else's marriage is a wicked thing to do!"



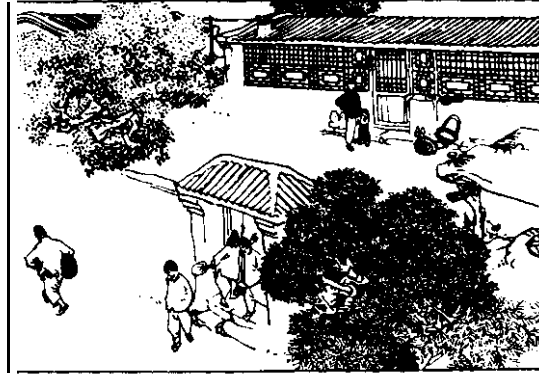
145. Xiwang felt quite numb and couldn't budge an inch. He watched Shuangshuang say firmly, "That is not right. Guiying already has a fiancé. Now we have free choice in marriage; they can't be arranged any more. You can't only have your eyes fixed on the town.."



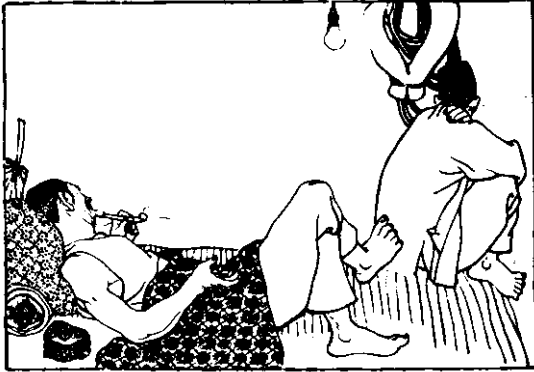
146. Jin Qiao stared at Xiwang and then patted him on the arm, asking him to go outside for a few words around the corner. Xiwang was still standing irresolutely when Shuangshuang started arguing with Sun Youpo at the top of her voice.



147. Xiwang heard this and saw it all clearly: Shuangshuang had started meddling in the important matter of somebody else's marriage. He felt very angry; walked up to her, and said grimly, "I've had just about enough of you!" He grabbed his bundle and, without looking back, ran out of the gate.



148. Xiaa Ju began crying and shouting "Papa?" and struggled to break free from Shuangshuang to run after him. Shuangshuang was absolutely furious and stood in front of her holding her tightly by the hand. Seeing the awkward situation, Sun You and his wife and Jin Qiao left.



149. Xiwang sat all night in the stable attached to the cart depot and planned to join Jin Qiao and Sun You the following day to drive the carts into the district town again.



150. As soon as it was light, Xiwang left without uttering a sound. It was the hottest part of summer and the heat was exhausting. After the carts had gone about five miles, the horses were covered in sweat and breathing heavily, so Jin Qiao, Xiwang, and the others unharnessed the horses to cool them with a drink at a shady, grassy spot by the river.



151. Jin Qiao suddenly discovered that there was a melon field not far from where they were. He went over to take a closer look and then shouted to the others, "Come over here, quick! Come over here! Come and eat some melons!"



152. The melons were just being harvested and were piled high. The three of them bought a large one and praised it as they ate. "Pheew, this melon is really sweet!"



153. When the two men who were arranging the baskets of melons heard they were going to the town, they quickly asked, "You're going to town? What a stroke of luck; we've bought these melons but we were wondering how to get them to town since we have no transport! Could you take them to town for us?"

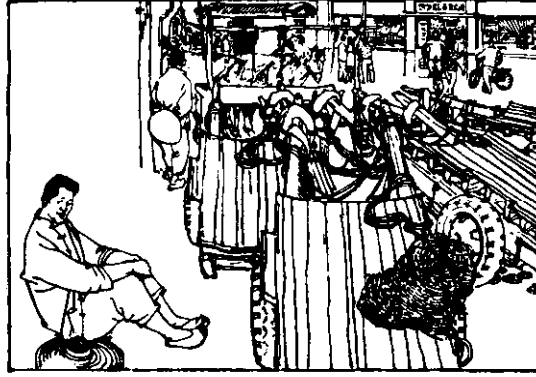


154. Jin Qiao asked them how much they were prepared to pay, and then took Xiwang and Sun You to one side and quietly began to discuss it with them. Sun You said, "As far as I'm concerned, let's take it an. As for the fee, there's no point in handing in a receipt; we'll just split it three ways and leave it at that?"





155. At first Xiwang felt that it would not be right to do this, but he was no match for the arguments of the other two and he finally gave up and said nothing more. But no matter what, he refused to accept his share of the fee. Once it was settled, the melons were loaded onto the carts.



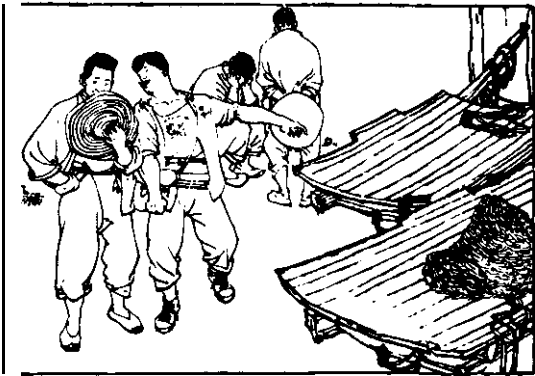
156. Summer passed and autumn came; in the twinkling of an eye, two months had gone by. They had transported the last load of timber and driven the carts back into the district town and were feeding the horses at the transport station. Xiwang sat to one side staring down the street and dully started to think of his family.



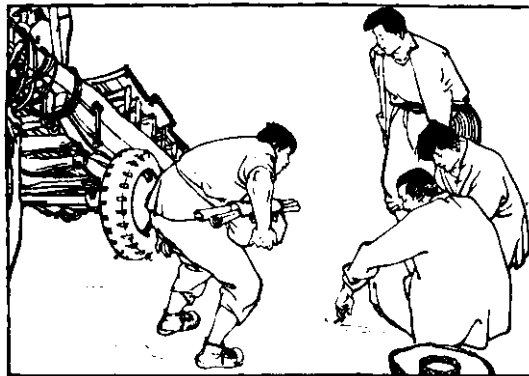
157. Suddenly the sound of an approaching bicycle bell could be heard and Er Chun came riding into sight. As soon as he saw him, Xiwang happily jumped forward and shouted, "Er Chun! Er Chun! So you've come to town! What've you come to buy?"



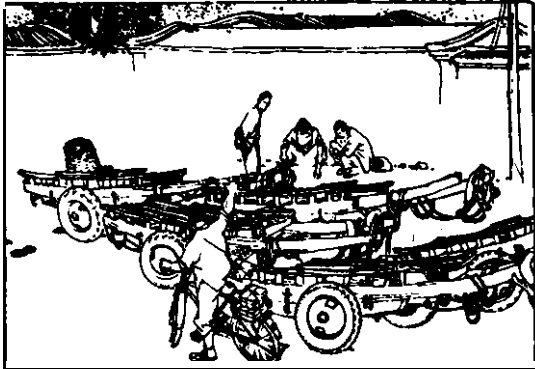
158. Er Chun had come to town to buy some work-paint books and had also brought some things for repair. Xiwang asked, "Is your family busy? How are our team's crops?"



159. Xiwang dragged Er Chun to one side and asked, "Your aunt hasn't been making trouble for people recently. has she?" Er Chun replied, "Ha! Made trouble! If she hadn't led the women through the mud and water, the crops wouldn't have grown as well as they have. All you have to do is go back and you'll see what I mean!"



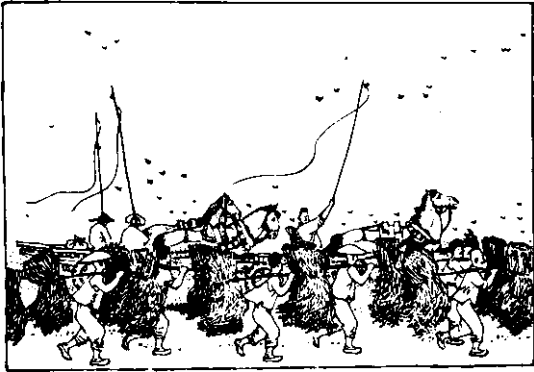
160. On hearing this, Xiwang said, "I would never have thought it! ." Er Chun couldn't help laughing. "You would never have thought it? All you have to do is take a look. Come back soon, Aunt Shuangshuang is thinking of you!"



161. Laughing as he said this, Er Chun jumped on his bicycle and rode off.



162. After a few days, Jin Qiao and the others drove their carts back to the village. Just at the edge of the village they saw Shuangshuang leading a group of people. They were singing as they carried the freshly cut maize. The more they sang, the happier they were, and the further they went, the quicker they walked.



163. Seeing the lively scene on either side of the road and hearing laughter from every direction, Xiwang heaved a deep sigh and began to crack his whip in the air to speed home.



164. With a thunder of hoofs the horses turned in to the cart depot. When the carts had been put in position, Xiwang hurried off back home without waiting for old Gengpo's urging.



165. In a flash the news that the men who had been doing long-distance transport had returned was around the village. As soon as her work was finished, Shuangshuang quickly ran home.



166. She ran up to the gate and saw Xiwang splitting firewood with the big ax. He was putting tremendous force behind each blow as if all the trouble and shame of the last few months were being dispersed in one fell swoop.



167. "Mama, mama! Papa's come back!" shouted Xiao Ju as soon as she caught sight of her mother. Xiwang looked up and as soon as he saw that it was Shuangshuang, he involuntarily lowered his head.



168. Shuangshuang picked up Xiao Ju and said quietly to Xiwang, "The family can't do without you!" Xiwang could not say a word.



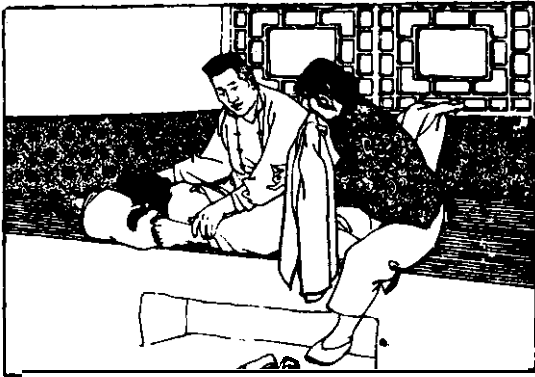
169. That night when Xiao Ju was fast asleep, Shuangshuang took out a new pair of cotton shoes and handed them to Xiwang. "Put them on and see if they fit." Xiwang put them on, looked at his new shoes and then at Shuangshuang, and smiled simply and honestly.



There's nothing to be ashamed of! We stay at home and work at agriculture and you go out of the village to work at side occupations. Both increase the team's income, don't they?

Coming back this time and finding that you had made such a good job of the crops. I just don't know what to say.

170. Shuangshuang sighed softly. "You fellows, as soon as you're out of the door you stay away several months. but as for us. not a day passed without our going to the edge of the village to see if you were returning!" Xiwang, staring at his new shoes, replied, "Don't say any more. I feel very bad about it. I want to apologize to you all!"



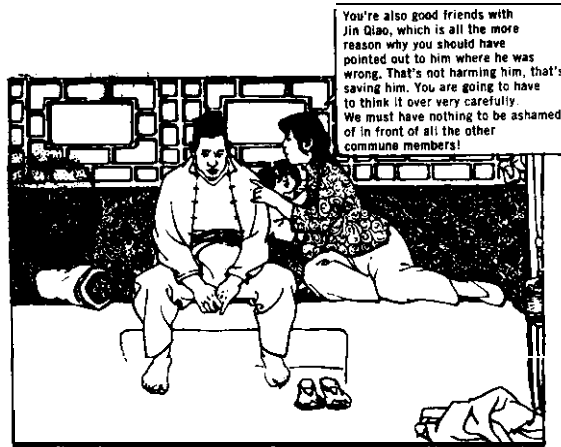
171. Shuangshuang's words struck home and Xiwang was lost in thought. Then he hesitantly asked, "Say, how long does it take before a man can finally get rid of his selfishness?" Shuangshuang replied, "That depends on how fast he raises his political consciousness; I guess there are quite a few people now who are not very selfish."



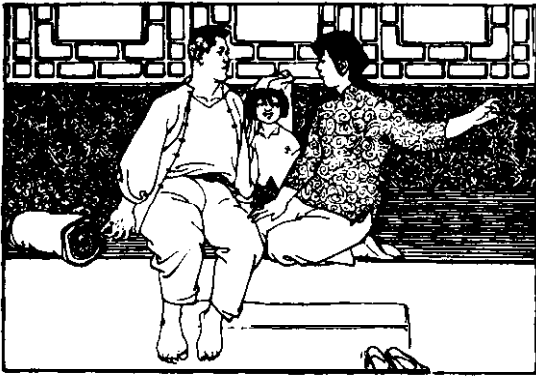
172. Xiwang shook his head. "It's not as simple as that; I've seen people who are still selfish stealthily making a profit out of the public." Shuangshuang realized that there was more to this than met the eye, and rather than offend him, she simply smiled and said, "Who stealthily makes a profit out of the public good!"



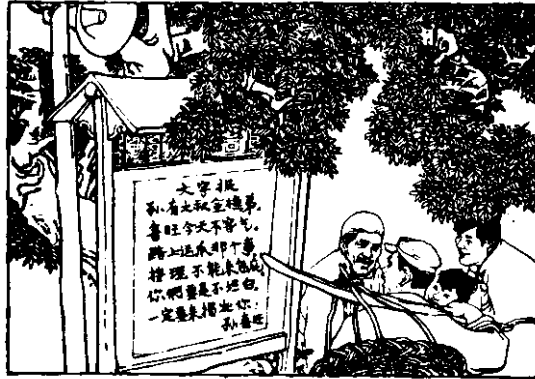
173. Xiwang was silent for a moment but in the end could not help but tell her how Jin Qiao and Sun You had transported the melons and divided the proceeds privately between themselves. Shuangshuang could not hide her irritation and shouted, "Huh! While the others were working their guts out at home, that's the sort of thing you were doing outside the village!"



174. Xiwang hurriedly explained that he himself had had no part in it, but Shuangshuang harshly asked, "If you only look after your own actions and pay no attention to those of others, are you a commune member? We produce collectively—even a single blade of grass has all our sweat on it?"



175. At this Xiwang began to sweat all over. "Well, well, what am I supposed to do about it?" Shuangshuang said, "Do? Do the same as I did! Put up a big-character poster!"



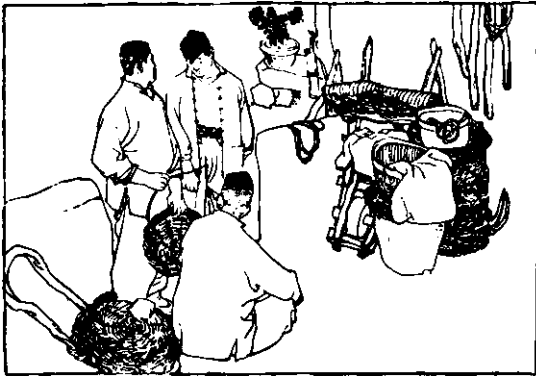
176. The next day, a new big-character poster appeared in the village street.

Big-character Poster

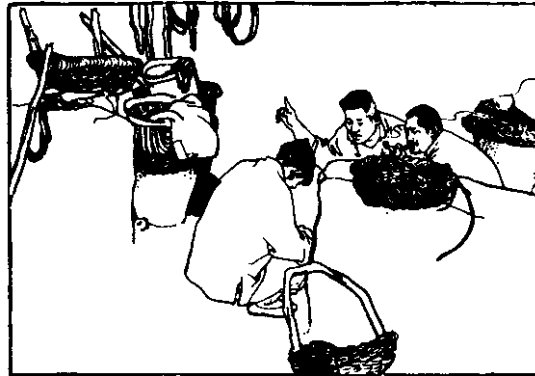
Uncle Sun You and younger brother Jin Qiao! Xiwang is not going to mince words with you today. It is not right. I can't go on covering for you about the business of the melons. If you don't make a clean breast of it, I'm going to bring it out into the open.

Sun Xiwang

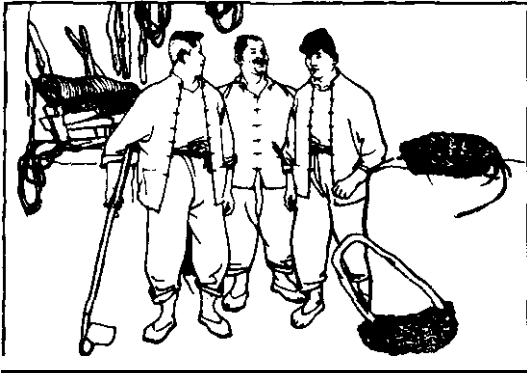
People gathered in front of it and began discussing it. Some said, "Oh, another fresh scandal is coming out!" Others said, "Ugh, Xiwang can express opinions too?"



177. The big-character poster had not been up long before the branch secretary found Xiwang to hear about the situation. As they were talking about it, Jin Qiao came running along and grasped the branch secretary by the hand. "Old Uncle Progressive, I'm covered with shame! I was wrong, wrong! I confers to the organization. ."



178. Jin Qiao then admitted their corruption. Xiwang felt a bit uneasy and so he said, "Younger Brother Jin Qiao, I exposed you for your own good. You probably loathe me for it but that's up to you! From now on I'm going to speak out!"



179. The branch secretary said warmly to Jin Qiao, "If you've done something wrong you must be brave enough to admit it. You'll have to return the money and also explain to the commune members what has happened!" Jin Qiao looked thankfully at Xiwang and Xiwang no longer felt uneasy.



180. He left the branch secretary's home feeling very happy and caught sight of Er Chun who was waving a newspaper. "Er Chun," he shouted, "what's happened?" Er Chun pointed to a photograph in the paper and asked, "Do you recognize who this is?"



181. Xiwang jumped forward and glanced at it and then cried out in surprise, "It's your aunt Shuangshuang! She's in the paper!" "Yes," said Er Chun, his eyes wide. "Our production team's hard work, the successful operating of each according to his work, the excellent harvest, it's all in the paper!"



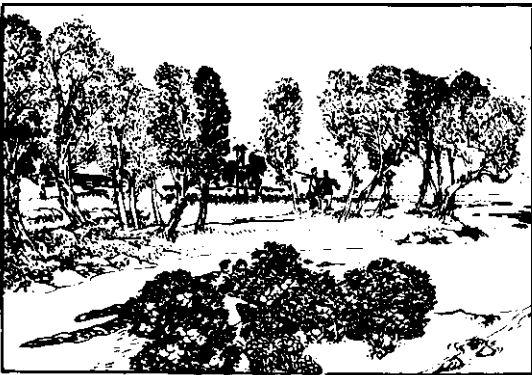
182. Xiwang said, "Ah, I was worried before about her quick tongue stirring up trouble, but now I know for sure what a good type she is!" Er Chun said, "Don't people also call you a 'good type'?" Xiwang threw back his head. "Me? I'm an old style 'good type'; she's a new style 'good type.' Politics takes command in the new style!"



183. "Er Chun, what tricks are you playing on your stupid uncle this time?" The two turned and saw that it was Shuangshuang. Er Chun, jumping up, said, "Aunt, you ask Xiwang-he was just boasting about how beautiful you'd become!"



184. Shuangshuang wanted to box his ears but Er Chun ran off with a laugh. She asked Xiwang what he had been bragging about. Xiwang thought for a long while and then mumbled, "Ah, I said that you were beautiful, and that's the truth! You've really become both clever and beautiful!"



185. Shuangshuang gave him a playful punch and smiled. "I'm not beautiful and I've got to spend the rest of my life with you!" Xiwang replied with unexpected seriousness, "As for me, one life time with you is not enough. It should be two!"