



李双双

LI SHUANGSHUANG

Size 12.5 x 10 cm

Original story by Li Jun

Adapted by He You-zhi

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1. Sun Xiwang was well known in the village as a good fellow; he had never caused anyone any embarrassment and everyone said he was a regular guy. On this day he was returning from the reservoir work site with Er Chun and some others and boasting about his old woman as they walked along.



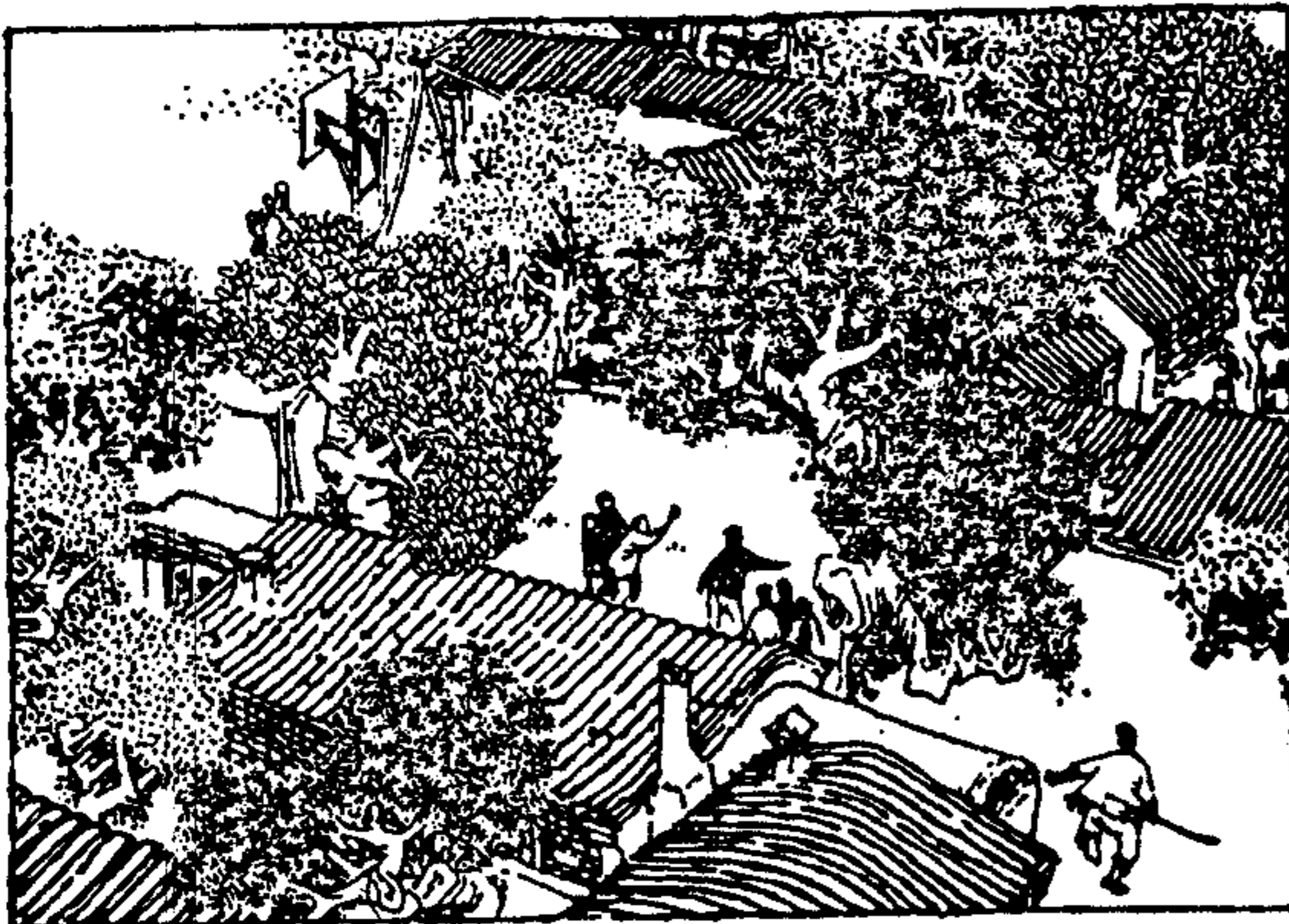
2. Er Chun kidded him, "Elder Brother Xiwang, everybody knows your wife waits on you hand and foot!" Xiwang replied in a self-satisfied tone, "While the commune has been so busy repairing the irrigation works, I've worn out all my old shoes, but as soon as one pair wears out, she's already made a new pair. And there's nothing special about that. My wife and I have always been like that. I'm not joking."



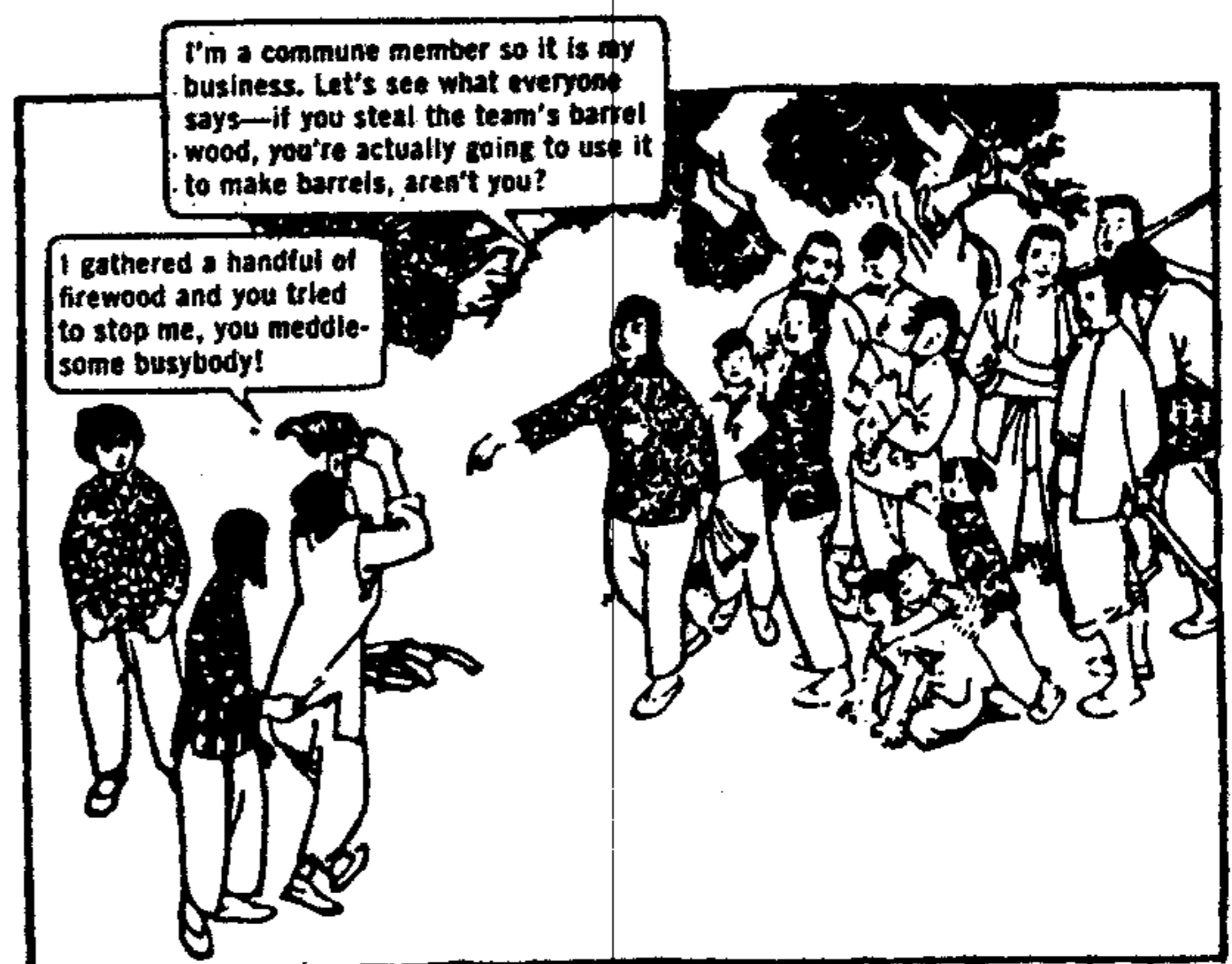
3. Er Chun quickly said, "That shows how capable your wife is and is nothing for you to boast about." Xiwang shook his head, "What do you understand? If a man can't get his wife to do what he wants, what sort of a fellow is that?" Er Chun snorted, "That's feudal thinking, it's no good!"



4. As they were talking, a child suddenly came dashing up and shouted, "Uncle Xiwang, your wife is having a shouting match with Sun Youpo in the street!"



5. "Huh," sighed Xiwang as he left Er Chun and ran off toward the village street.



I'm a commune member so it is my business. Let's see what everyone says—if you steal the team's barrel wood, you're actually going to use it to make barrels, aren't you?

I gathered a handful of firewood and you tried to stop me, you meddling busybody!

6. There was a crowd of people gathered on the street. Sun Youpo was shouting and gesticulating and Li Shuangshuang, holding back her anger, was asking in an accusing tone why she wanted to steal the team's barrel wood.

That's not stealing! The day you walked off with a broom, that wasn't stealing either? As long as it's public property you can take it, is that it?



7. Xiwang broke into the group and tugged at Shuangshuang. "Enough said, stop getting on the bad side of people! Let's go home." Shuangshuang paid no attention but pointing at Sun Youpo continued to expose her, and the more she spoke, the more furious she became.



8. Sun Youpo was fairly hopping with rage and shouting, when by good fortune her husband Sun You came by and dragged his better half away. As she left, Sun Youpo continued to curse Li Shuangshuang over her shoulder.



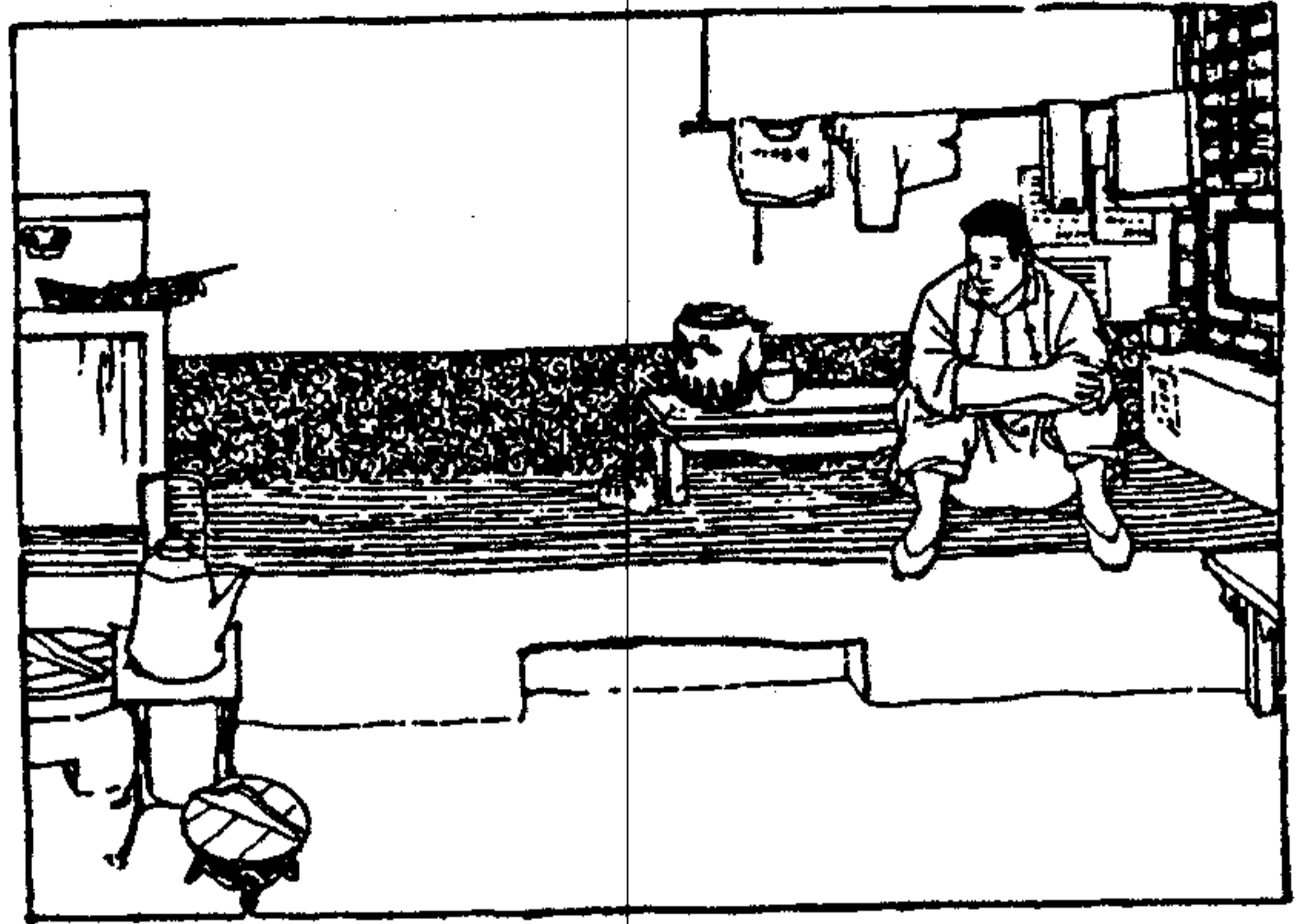
9. Shuangshuang wanted to go after her but Xiwang firmly held her back. "That's enough out of you. There aren't all that many pieces of barrel wood here!" Shuangshuang angrily replied, "That may sound reasonable, but if everyone stole like her, there would not be enough to go around."



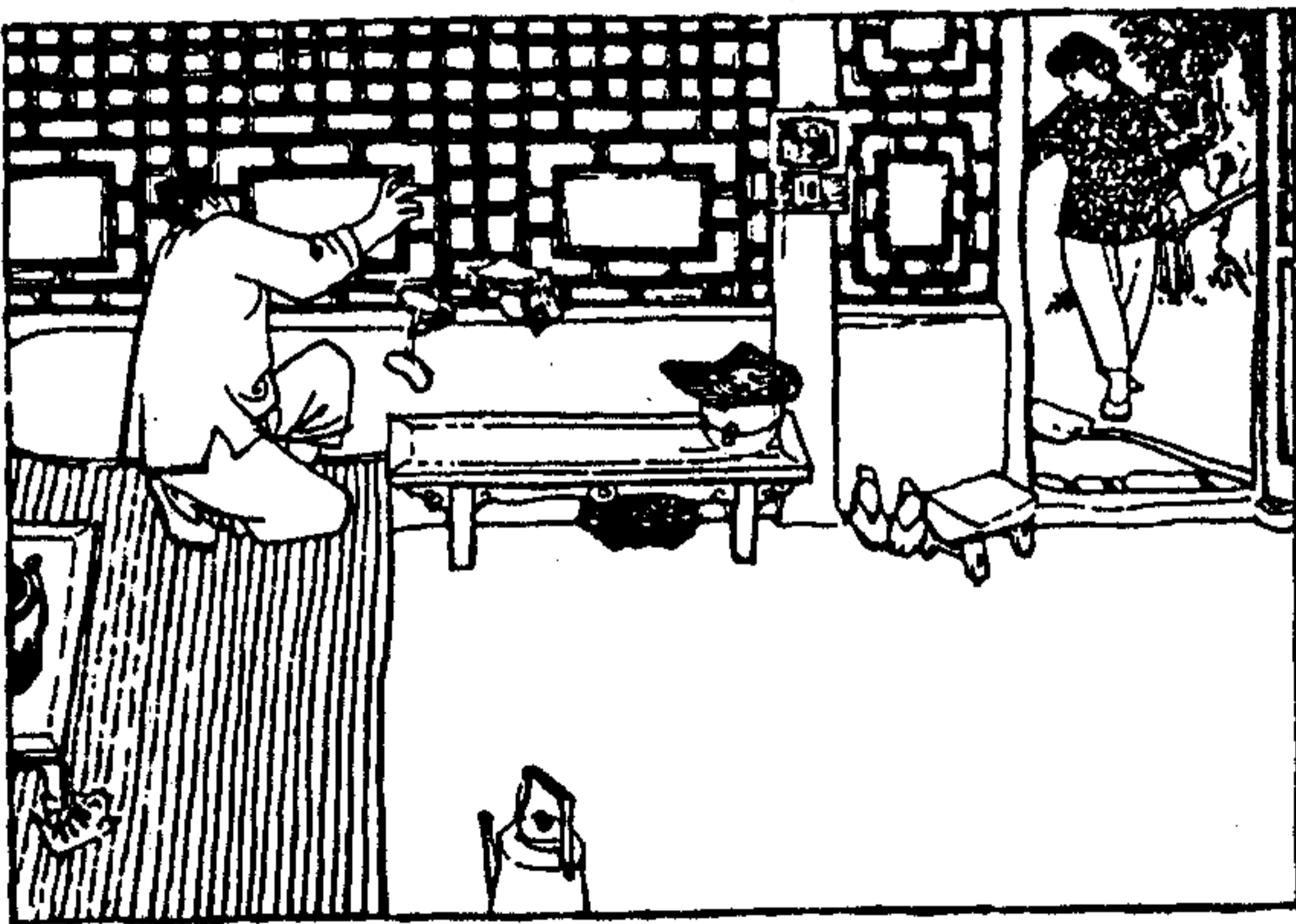
10. So saying, she gathered up the barrel slats and hurried off to the carpenter's team.



11. Xiwang quickly went back home. The door was padlocked and there were several sentences chalked up on it: "Key is in usual place. Xiao Ju is at her auntie's home. When you get back, first light the fire."



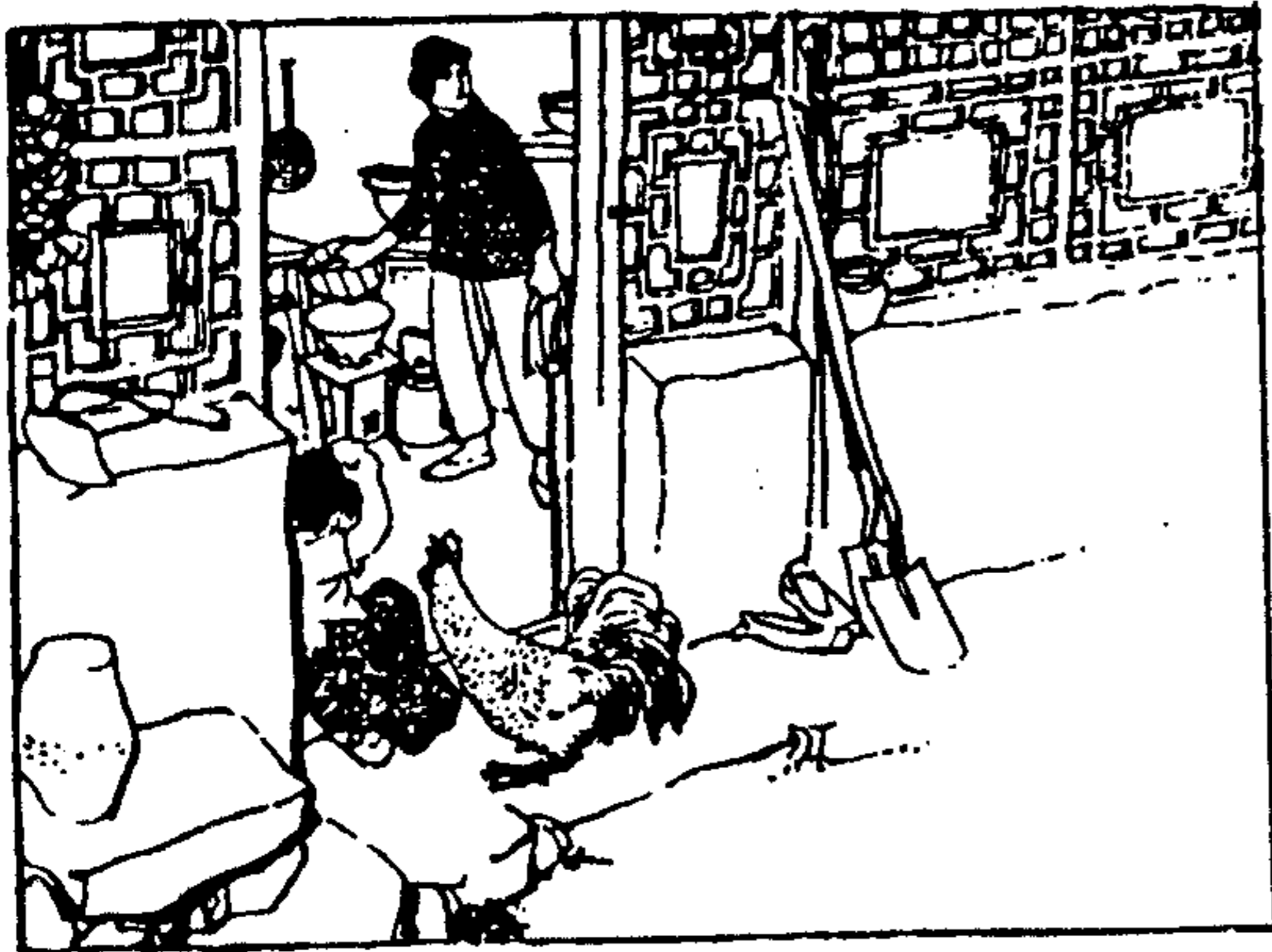
12. As soon as Xiwang saw the words "When you get back, first light the fire," he felt even more angry. He immediately ripped down the penciled note, took the key from the window ledge, opened the door, and stormed into the room, going straight over to lie down on the kang.



13. It was already noon and still Shuangshuang had not returned. Xiwang was very hungry and was just thinking of getting up when he heard someone at the door and Shuangshuang came in, leading their daughter Xiao Ju.



14. Xiwang quickly lay down again and turned his face to the wall. Shuangshuang took no notice of him but handed Xiao Ju a cold steamed bread roll and told her to go outside.



15. Next she raked out the stove and looked into the cooking pot. There was no water in it and she said angrily, "When you came home, why didn't you rake out the stove and put on the water and get a move on! . . ."



16. Xiwang abruptly sat up. "I can't accept this tyranny. If I start cooking for you, next thing I'll be washing your underpants!" Shuangshuang was furious. "You don't seem to be doing much while here I am as busy as anything; haven't you got eyes in your head?"



17. So saying, Shuangshuang began slicing the noodles. Xiwang jumped off the kang and said, "That's your own fault! You're an activist, but who gives you anything for that?"



18. The more Shuangshuang listened, the more impatient she became. Stamping her foot, she slapped the knife down on the table and said, "Eat it, you won't like it!"



19. While Shuangshuang angrily sat on the sill wiping the tears from her eyes, Xiwang began to feel better and picking up the already sliced noodles said, "This is enough for me. I'll cook it myself."



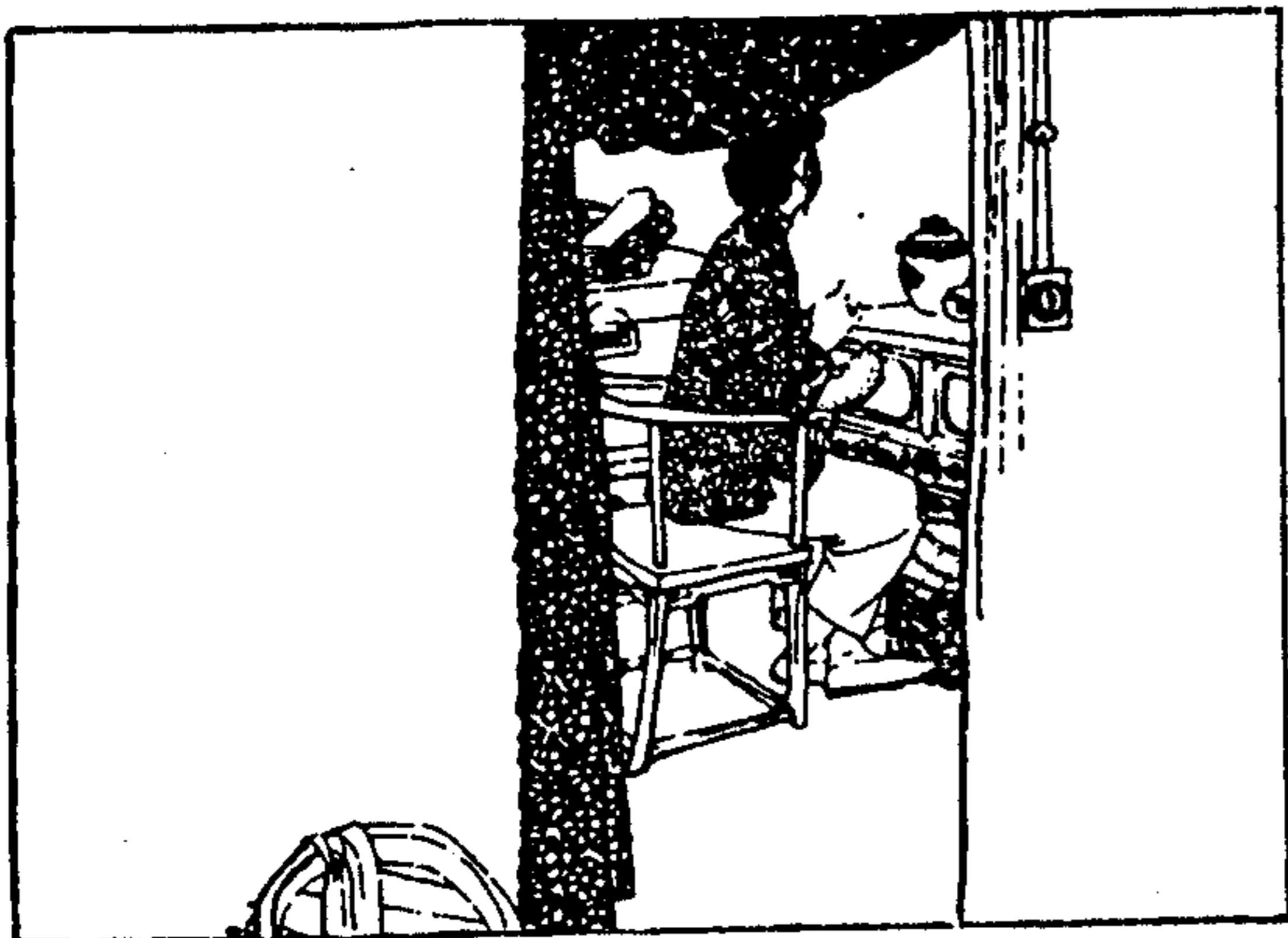
20. He took two cloves of garlic and began to pound them with a mortar. The more Shuangshuang cried, the louder Xiwang pounded, and then Shuangshuang became really angry. She jumped up and began pummeling Xiwang on his back with her two fists.



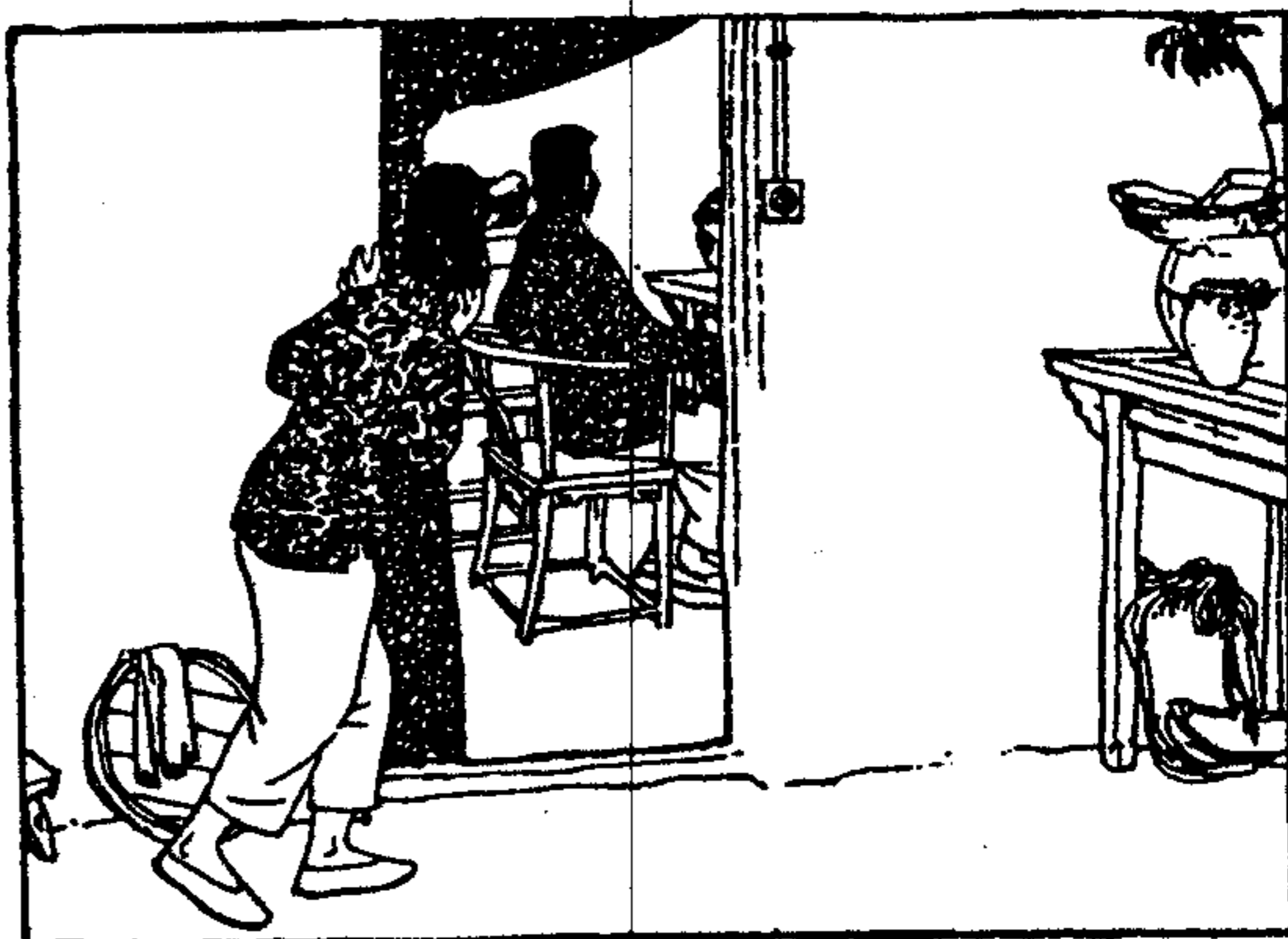
21. "Right, you are rebelling against your husband," muttered Xiwang and he took off one of his shoes to beat her; but Shuangshuang grabbed him by his wrist and said, "Let's go. We'll ask the Party branch secretary to adjudicate!"



22. At mention of going to see the Party secretary, Xiwang knew that he would come off worse, so he quickly broke free and leaped out through the gateway, turning to shout, "Let's go. You follow me; I'll go first!" and then he dashed off back to work.



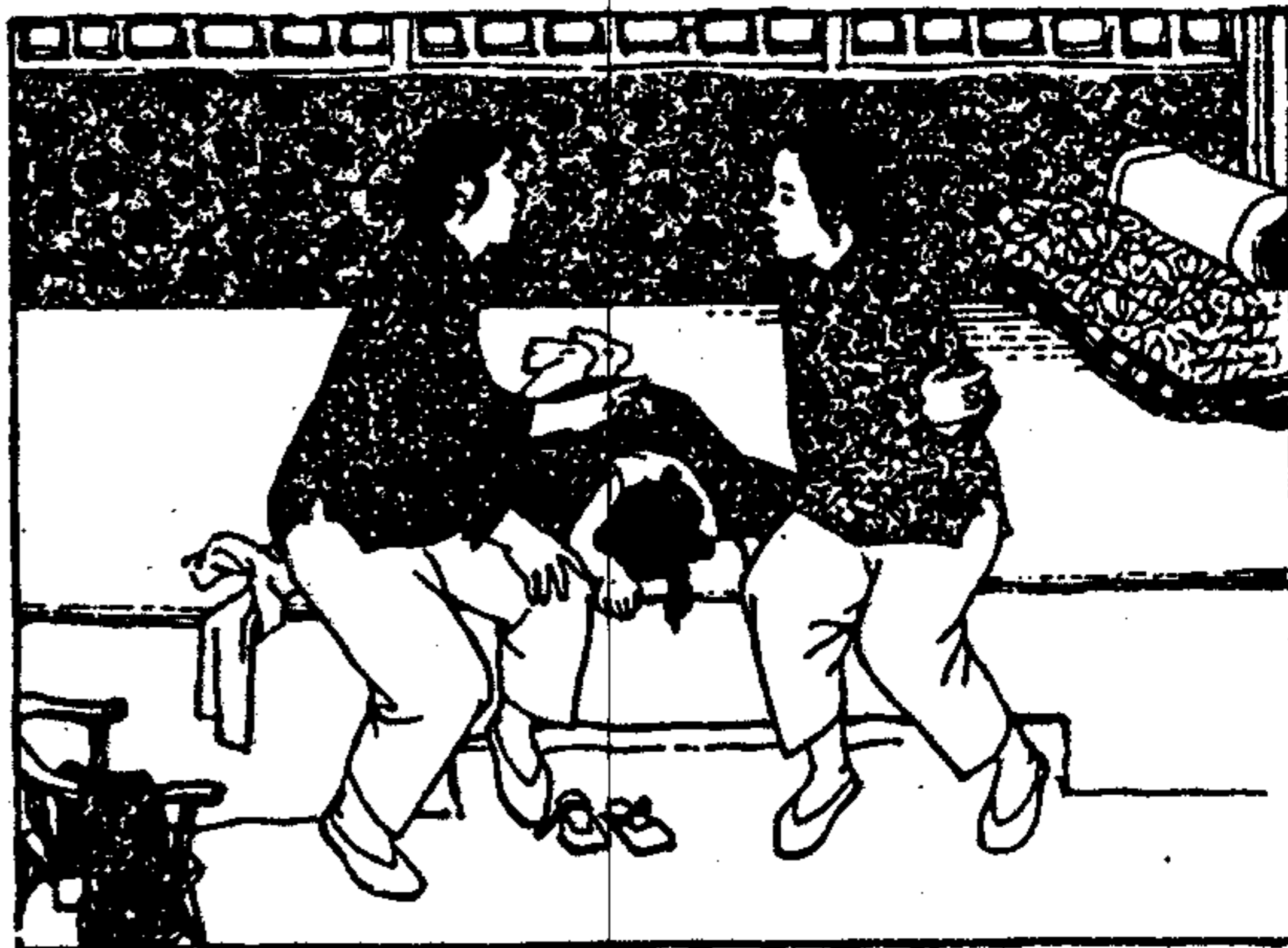
23. By evening Xiwang had not returned home. After eating supper, Shuangshuang put the child to bed and sat alone by the window, sewing the sole of a shoe. She was thinking about her argument with Xiwang and also about why the production spirit of the women was so low.



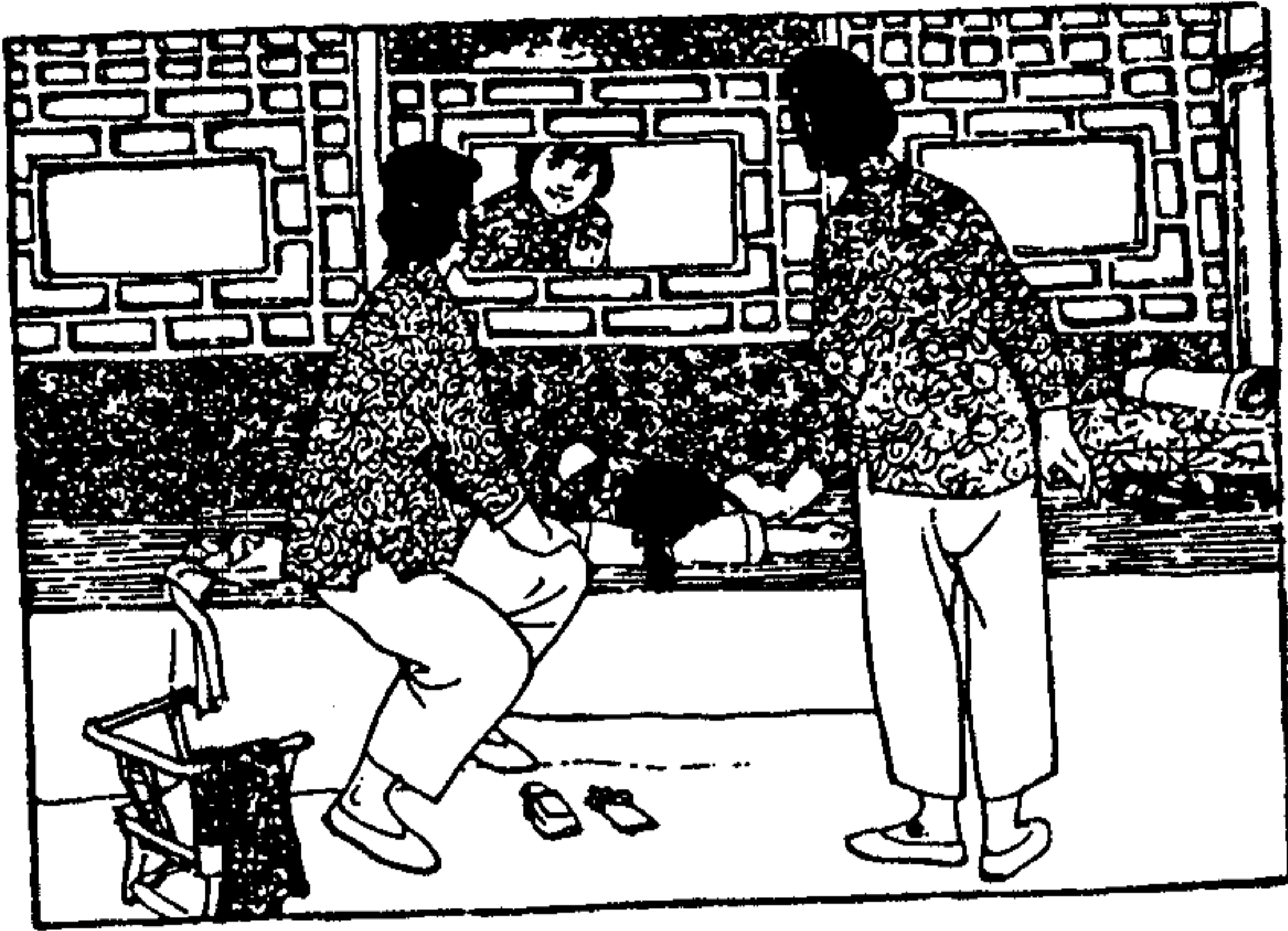
24. Suddenly there was a slight cough at the door and somebody walked in. Shuangshuang, thinking it was Xiwang, did not turn to look, but it was in fact the wife of the team leader, You Fang.



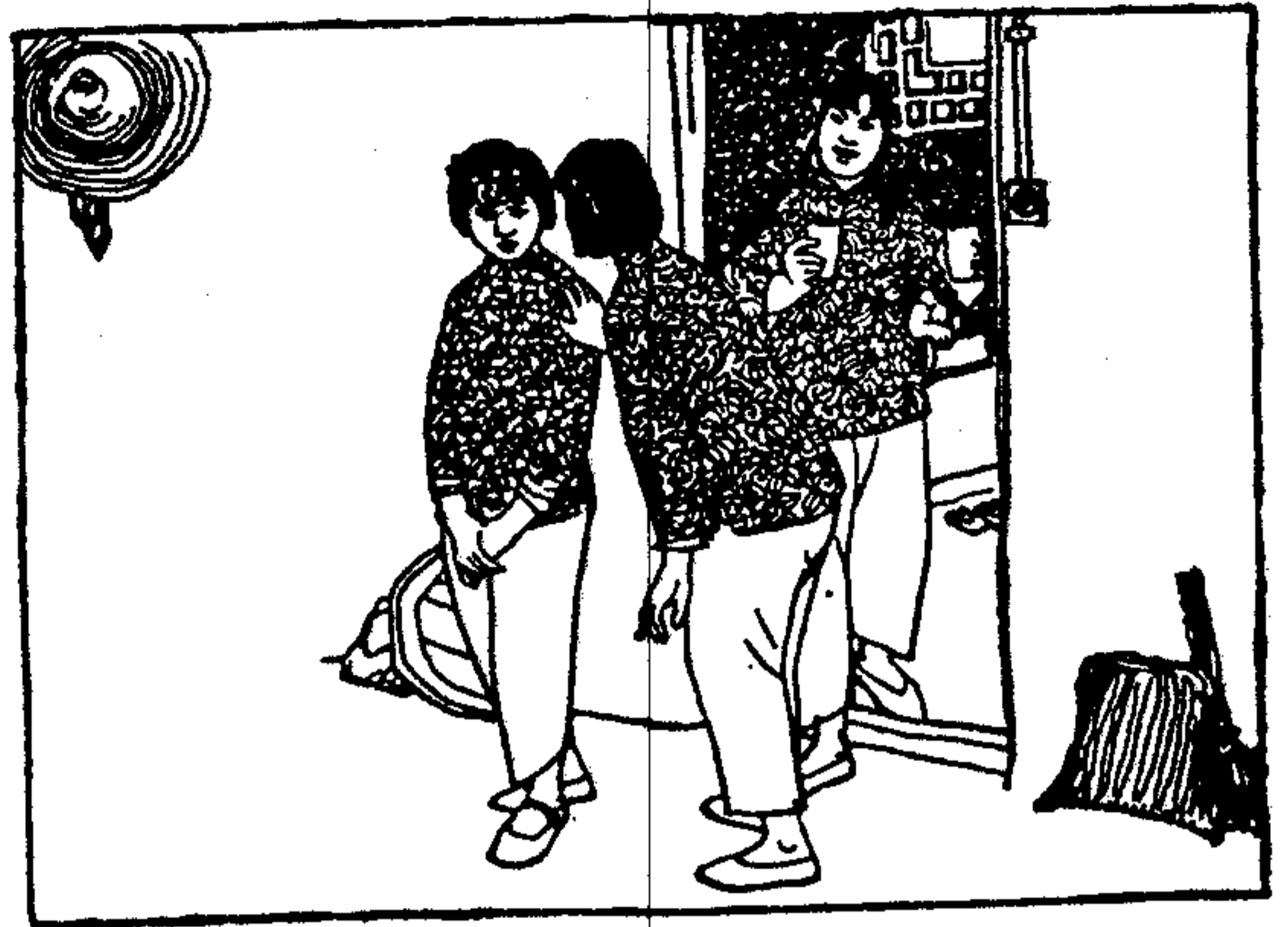
25. You Fang's wife knew that the two of them had been arguing and said persuasively, "Call it a day! There's a proverb: 'A young couple bears no malice after an argument, for by day they eat from the same pot and at night they share the same pillow!'" Shuangshuang couldn't help smiling. "But we can't even eat together!"



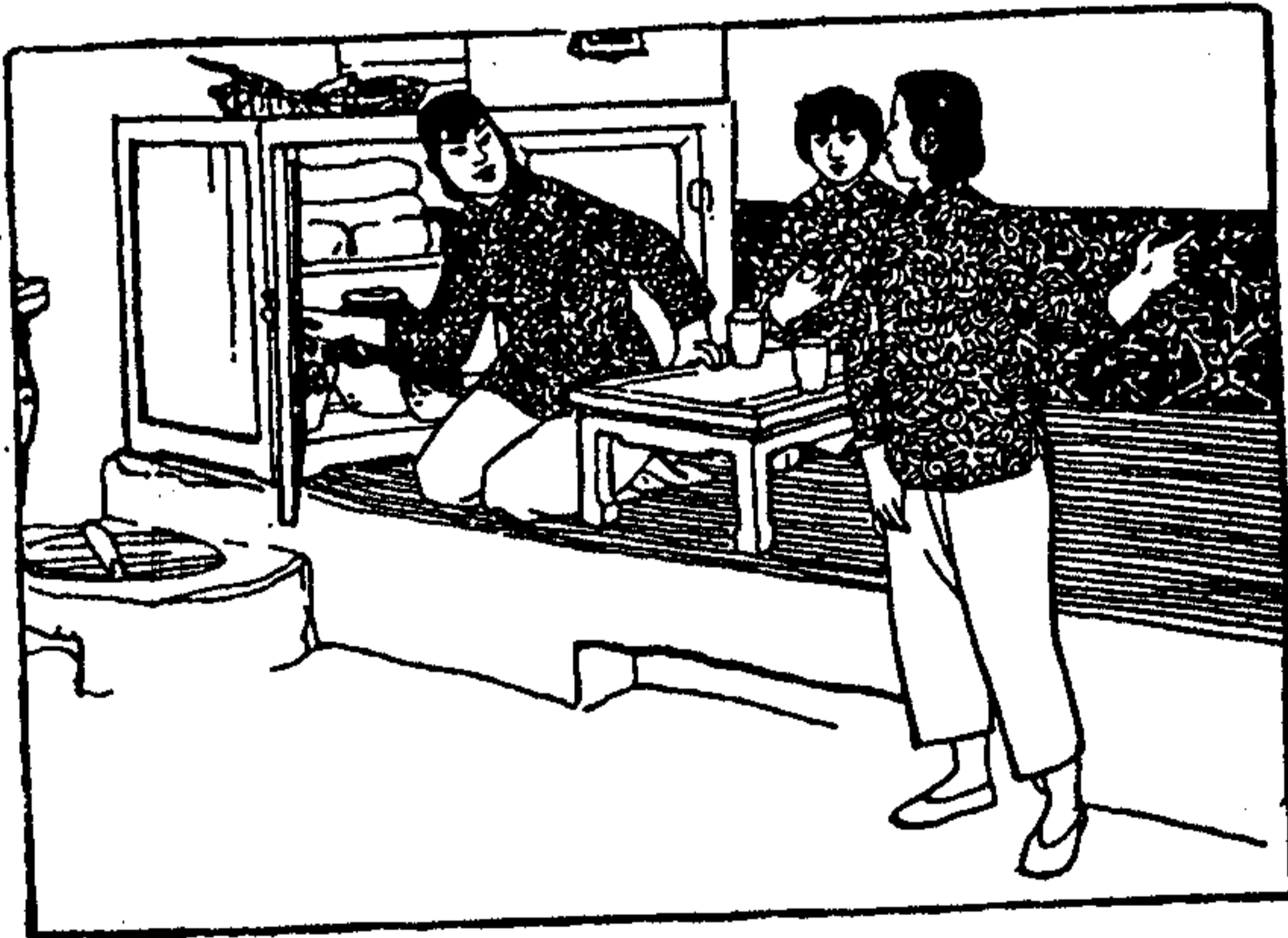
26. Shuangshuang said, "You see, he's gone running off to take an active part in the irrigation works. If irrigation is so important, why are we buried at home?" You Fang's wife said to her, "My mother-in-law has been ticking me off again. She says there's absolutely no point in going. We don't get any extra work points so what's the point in going there and working like an ox?"



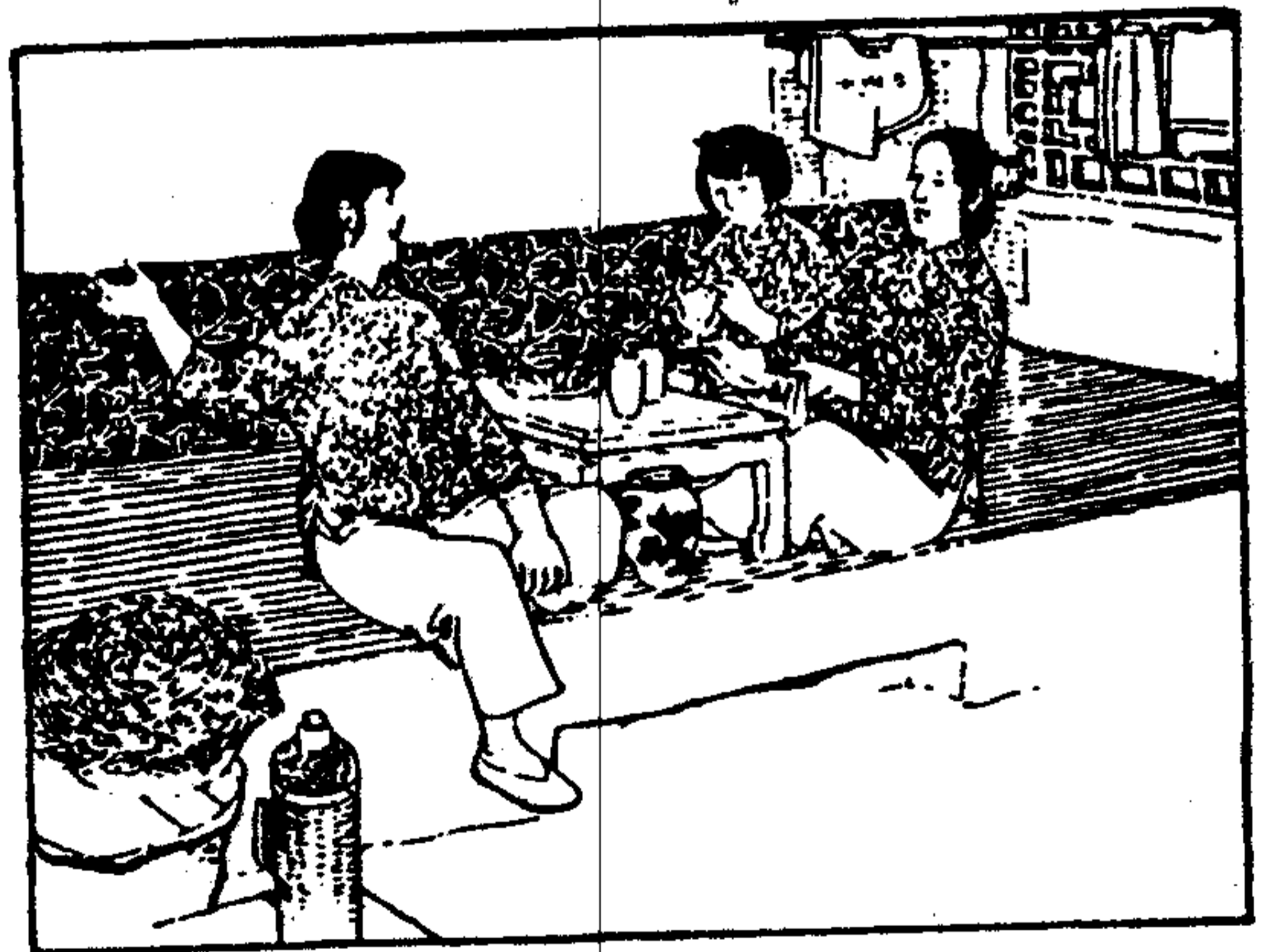
27. They were chatting merrily away when they heard someone giggling at the window. It was Sun Youpo's daughter, Gui Ying.



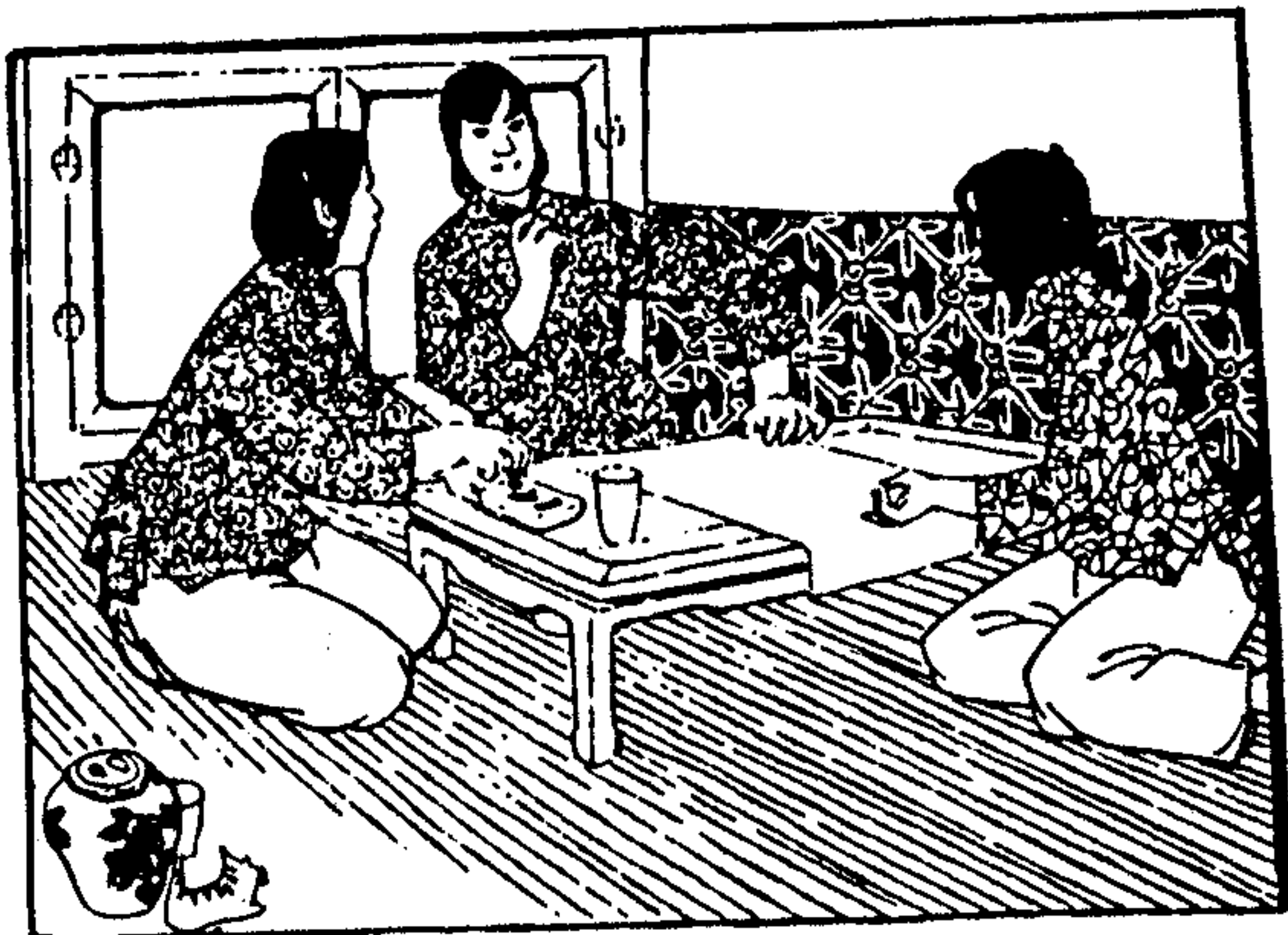
28. Gui Ying had just left lower middle school, and Shuangshuang was her best friend. Smiling, she came in and said, "Same with me. My mother often says to me, 'Why don't you hurry up and go to the town and find work there. There's no point in taking part in the labor here.' You must agree, that talk is pretty unpleasant!"



29. Why did none of the households send their women out to work? Shuangshuang felt that it was connected with the fact that the recording of work points was slack. As soon as she brought this up, You Fang's wife added, "Yes, and it's Assistant Team Leader Jin Qiao who is to blame for doing away with the recording of work points; in other villages they still make settlements to everyone—according to their work points!"



30. Shuangshuang slapped her thigh. "Ha, didn't the Party secretary say the other day that everybody should express their opinions? Let's bring this out and write a big-character poster!" When You Fang's wife and Gui Ying heard the idea of putting up a big-character poster, they began to hesitate; one said she couldn't write characters and the other said she feared a scolding from her grandfather.



31. Shuangshuang boldly said, "I'll write it. This matter is too important to be passed over!" And You Fang's wife added, "That's for sure. As soon as work points are issued according to the work done, whoever is free will want to go and win some points." They all smiled.

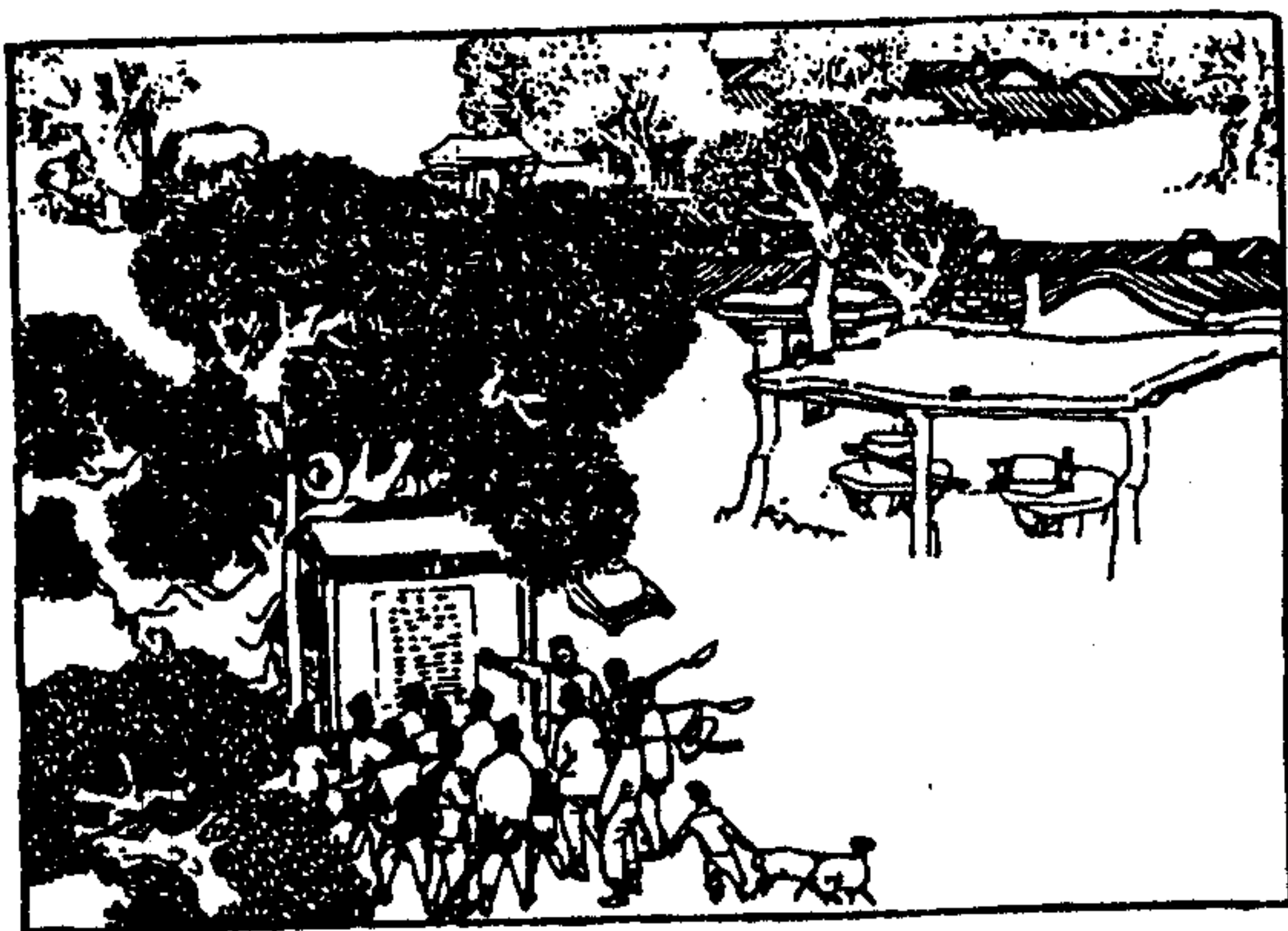


32. Two days later, early in the morning in the most striking position in the village street, a big-character poster appeared. Although the characters were not written too well, the content was fresh and lively and it instantly aroused everybody's interest:

Big-character Poster

The harvest is over and the sickles have been put away; now the irrigation works are being repaired and the fields are being planted. There isn't enough labor to go around, but the women stay at home with nothing to do. Why is there a shortage of people going out to join the labor force? It's all because the cadres are lazy so the work points are recorded slackly. Don't you know who is the work-point recorder? I hope he will hurry up and start recording work points. The women can work half the day.

Li Shuangshuang



33. Just at this moment Secretary Liu of the commune committee, the Party secretary, and You Fang were passing by. When Secretary Liu had read the big-character poster, he said to You Fang, "An excellent criticism! This is an important problem in your team. I think you should do some research into it straightaway."



34. Secretary Liu then asked, "Li Shuangshuang . . . whose wife is that?" The former secretary You Fang was not too certain but thought it was the wife of Xiwang. They asked around and someone explained that it was Xiwang's wife and that Li Shuangshuang was the new name she had chosen for herself when she had gone to the people's school the previous year.



35. While they were discussing this, Xiwang arrived on his way back from the work site, pushing a wheelbarrow. When everyone saw him they shouted, "Xiwang, come over here! Was this big-character poster written by your old woman or not?"



36. Xiwang got quite a fright as he thought to himself, "Let's hope it's not the business of my argument which has come out!" He was in something of a panic as he read the big-character poster, humphing all the while, and it was only when he had read it through that he felt relieved.



37. Secretary Liu said to the branch secretary, "This big-character poster is well written." Turning around, Xiwang said with a smile, "Uncle Progressive, the poster was written by the woman in my house."



38. No sooner had he said this than they all burst out laughing. Xiwang thought they were laughing at him because they thought he was boasting, so he quickly tried to explain. "What? Really it was she who wrote it! That one that cooks for me can write. Not only does she write big-character posters but she also writes lots of little-character posters in the house!"



39. Secretary Liu said with a smile, "Young man, in the future you must change your old habits; how can you still call your wife 'the woman in my house' or 'the one that cooks for me'? And as for the small-character posters only appearing inside your house, surely that's slightly undemocratic." Only half understanding, Xiwang began laughing again.



40. It never occurred to Xiwang that the Secretary of the Party Committee of the Commune would attach such importance to the poster. When he got home he sat looking at Shuangshuang, laughing and giggling at her. Shuangshuang began to lose her patience and finally said, "So you've decided to come back to eat, have you?"



41. It was only then that Xiwang said seriously, "Mother of Xiao Ju, you're no fool! Writing a big-character poster for Commune Secretary Liu to see. He said your opinions were extremely good and that the commune committee would have to do special research into the whole matter." Both happy and worried, Shuangshuang asked, "Are you sure? Is that really true?"



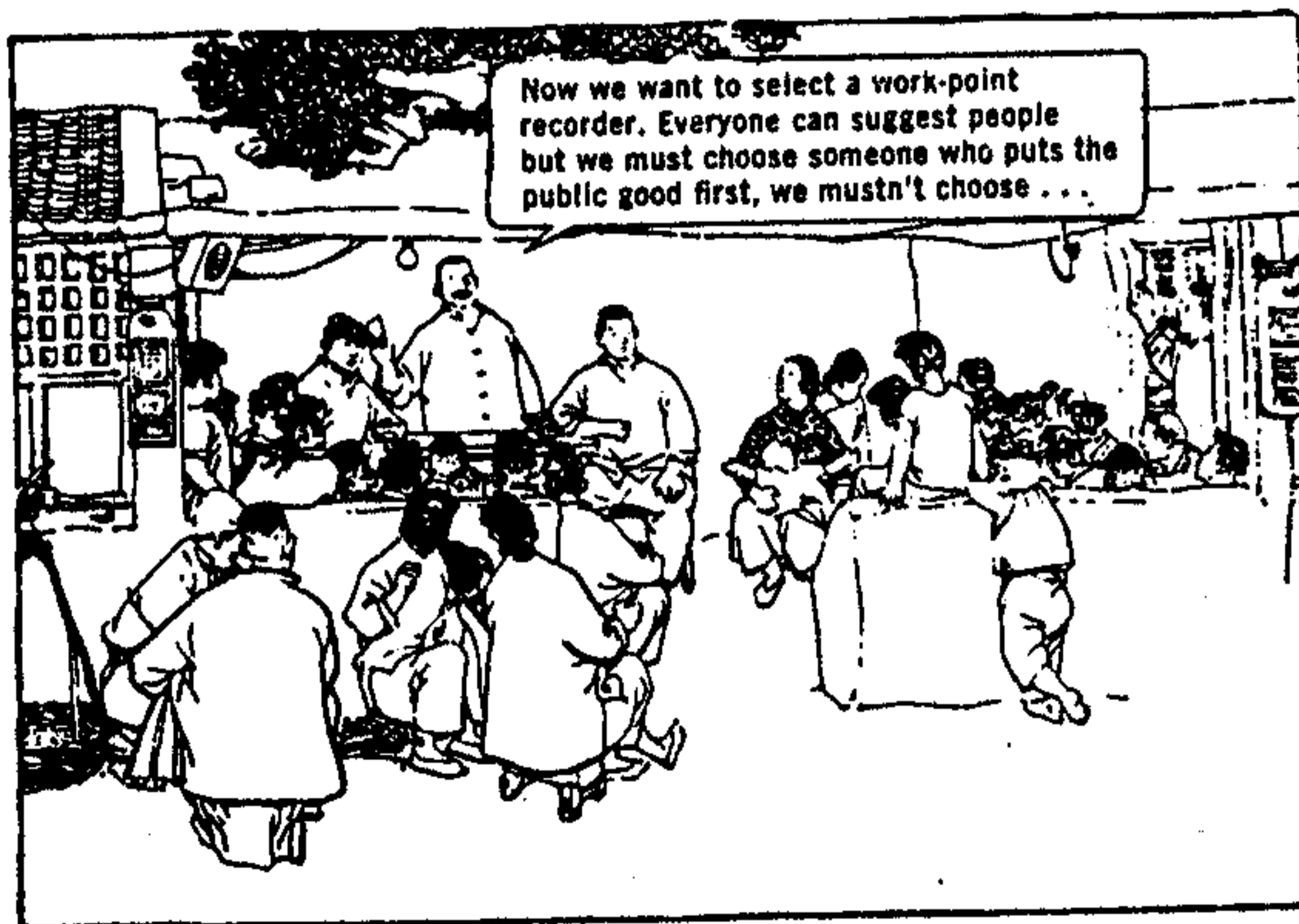
42. Smiling from ear to ear, Xiwang said, "How could it be otherwise? If you really can go to earn a few work points, from now on I'll give you a hand with the food."



43. Xiwang thought for a moment and added, "But in the future, you shouldn't just write the first thing that comes into your head. You know what policy means. If you write any old nonsense, washing our dirty linen in public, then what are we to do?"



44. Shuangshuang's eyebrows shot up as she said, "You must be a coward. The Party leadership saw the poster today, so what are you afraid of? If there is something on one's mind, one should tell it to the Party. I can't stand the type of person who every time he rakes out the cinders is frightened of burning himself."



Now we want to select a work-point recorder. Everyone can suggest people but we must choose someone who puts the public good first, we mustn't choose . . .

45. On the next day the team called a commune members' meeting. The Party branch secretary, holding up a work-point book, said a few words. "From today, we want to record work points conscientiously. As I see it, this should help cure some people's faults." As he said this, he fixed his eye on Sun Youpo.



46. Everyone began to join in a lively discussion. Some nominated Gui Ying, others Shuangshuang. At this point Sun Youpo stood up and said, "It's no small matter to be work-point recorder. It should be someone friendly. I think Xiwang fits the bill!"



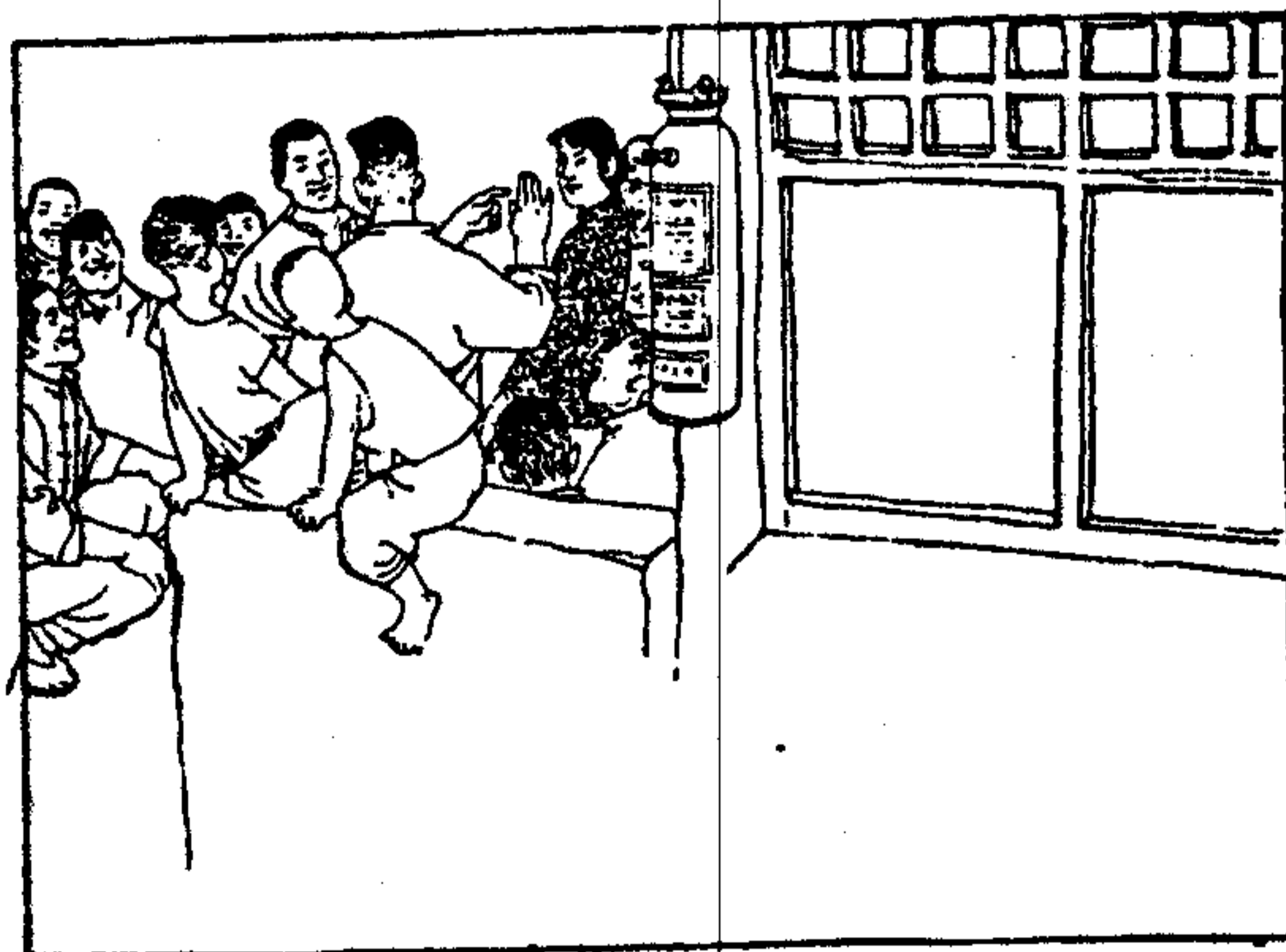
47. Assistant Team Leader Jin Qiao quickly seconded him. Several people also said, "Yes, let's choose Xiwang." Xiwang quickly stepped forward and said, "I couldn't do this job. I can't write account figures, nor can I use an abacus. I would muddle everybody's points, so how could I possibly take it on?"



48. Suddenly Shuangshuang jumped up. "He can keep accounts and he can write account figures—he taught me!" Seeing that she had let the cat out of the bag, Xiwang embarrassedly said, "Stop talking! There's no need for you to say any more! When did I ever teach you to write account figures!"



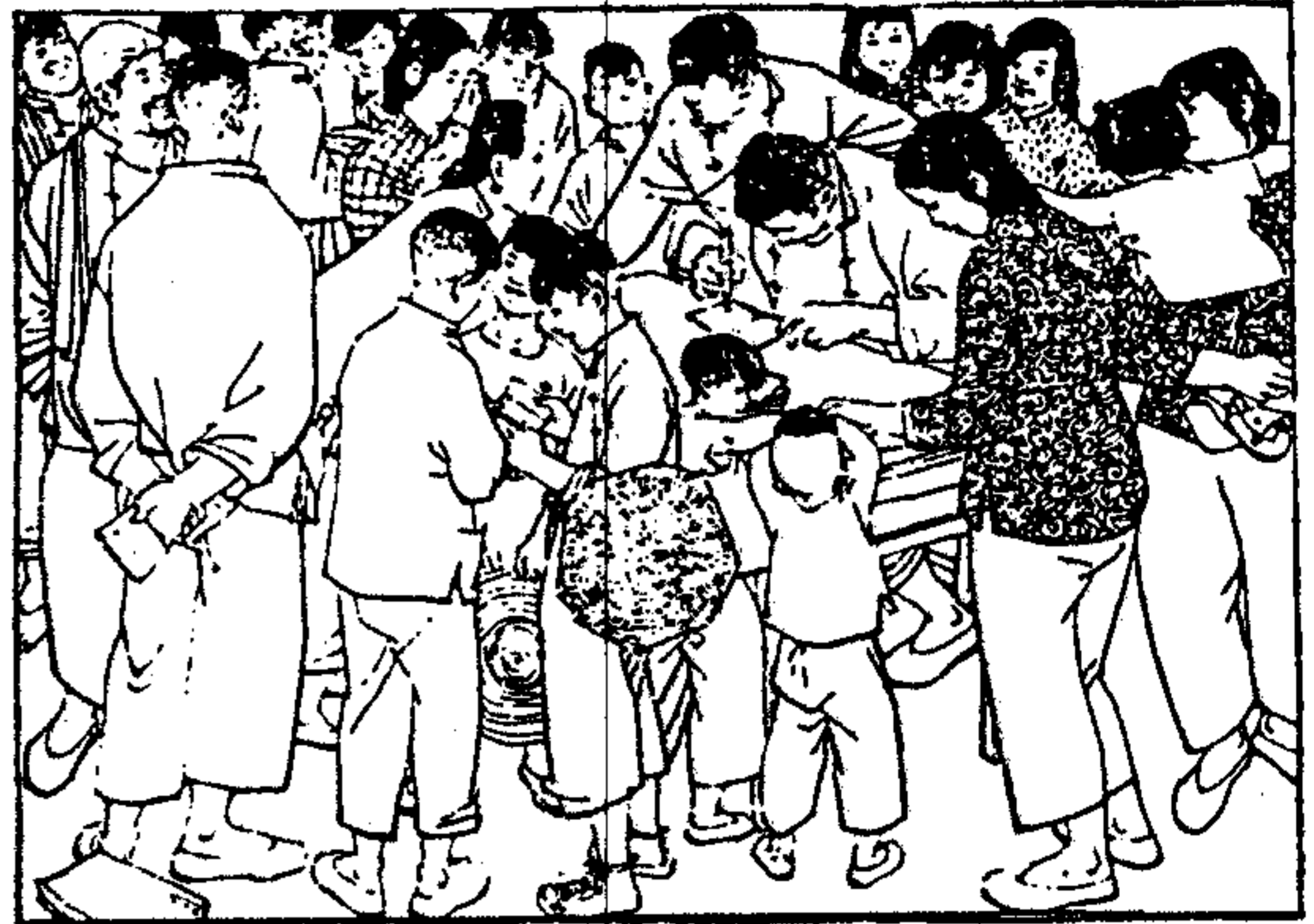
49. Shuangshuang pointed a finger directly at him. "This spring! Do you dare deny it? Whether or not he's done something to distinguish himself, we'll never drag this donkey along. The more you try to force him, the more stubborn he gets."



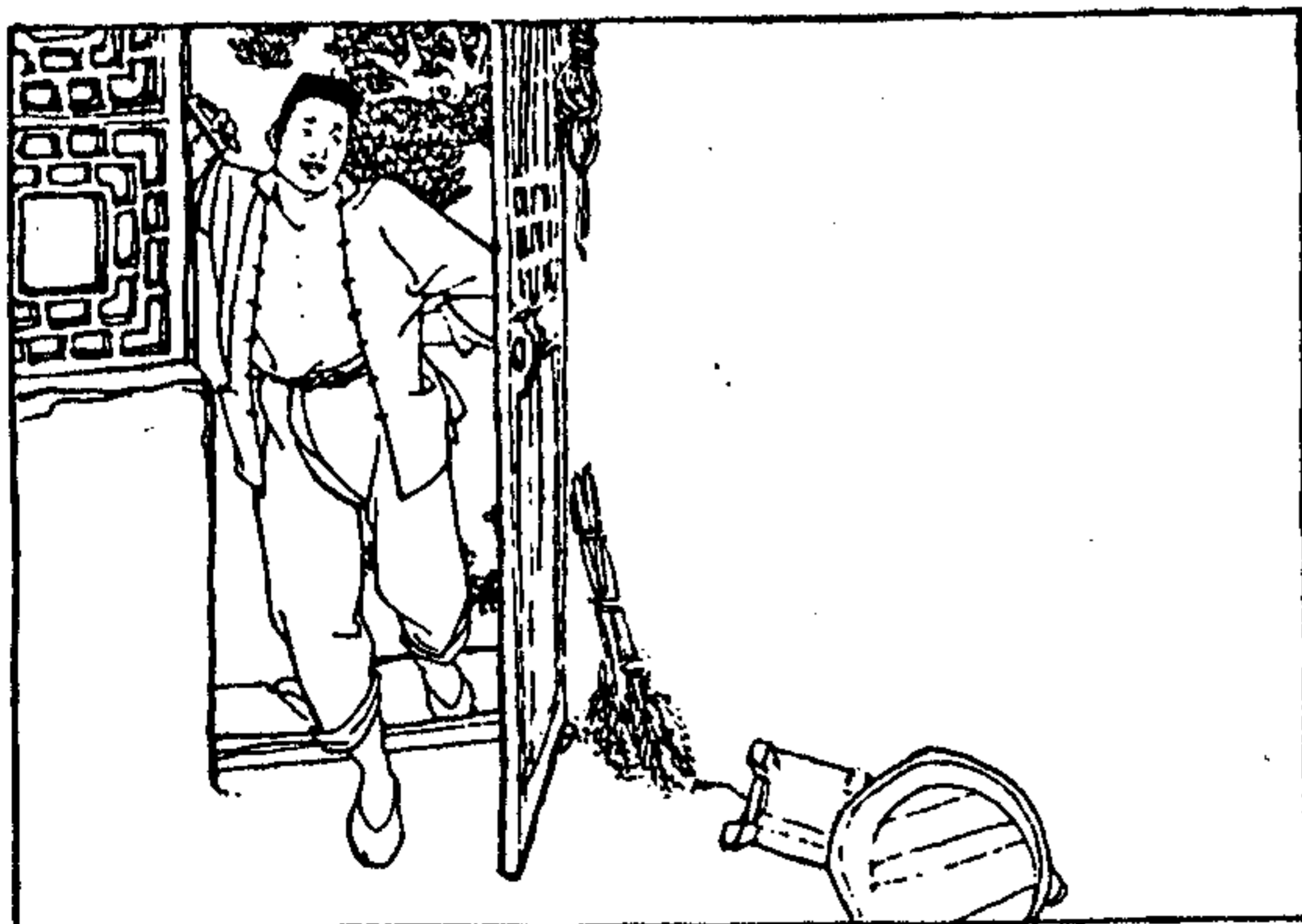
50. Seeing that Xiwang was speechless, You Fang found a way out of the impasse by saying, "All right—if Xiwang really isn't willing, how about electing Shuangshuang?" Xiwang got a terrific shock and hurriedly said, "What? Let her do it? That . . . I'm still a bit better than her. Let me do it."



51. The meeting ended with roars of laughter. The Party branch secretary handed over the pile of work-point books to Xiwang. Seeing that everybody was taking the matter of work-point books very seriously, without realizing it, he regained his composure, rolled up his sleeves, and called everybody to come and collect their books.



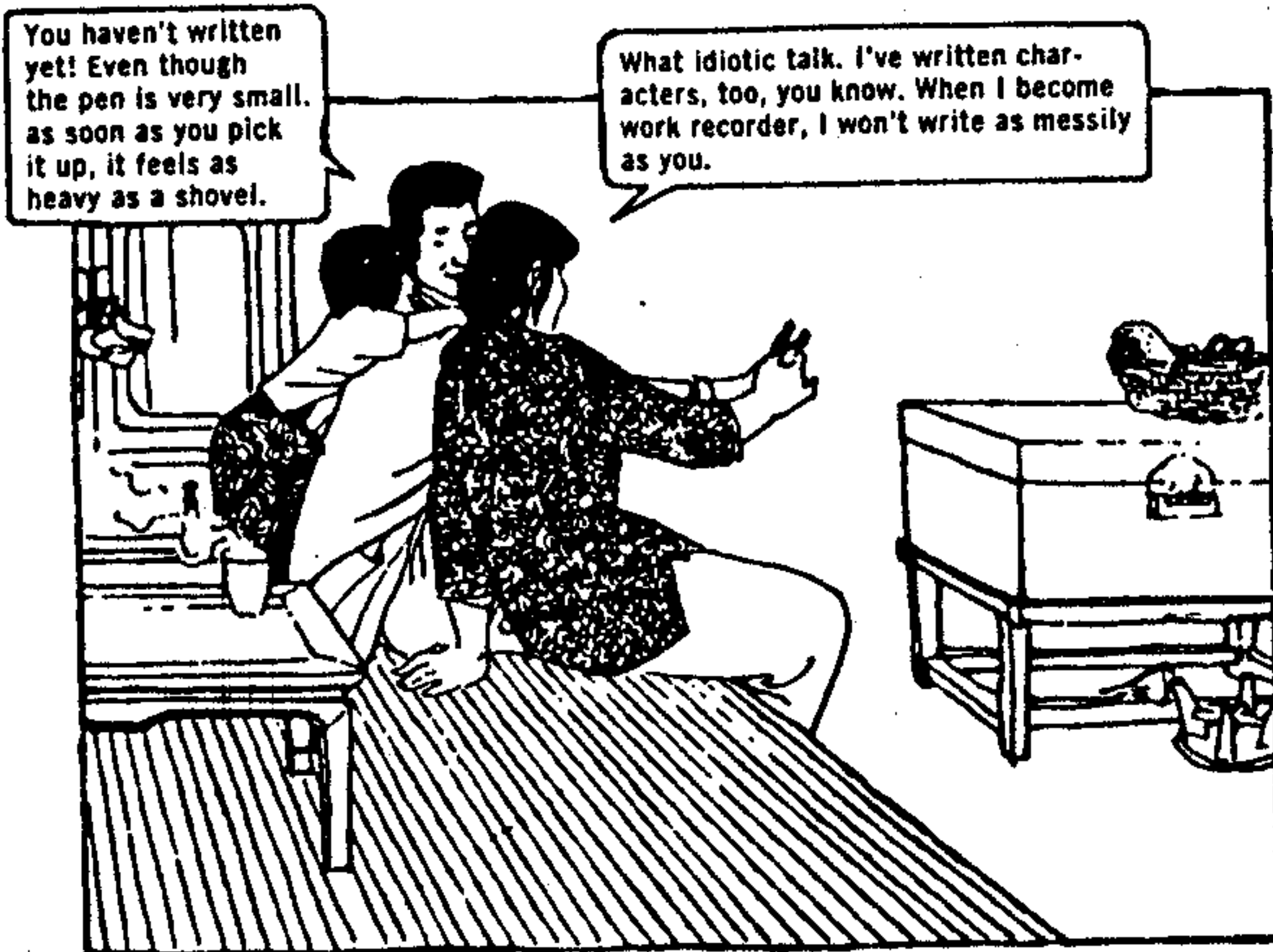
52. He carefully wrote the owner's name on each work-point book as he gave them out to everyone. Shuangshuang also received one and the ever-quarrelsome Sun Youpo and Da Feng, who were rarely seen in the fields, also grabbed theirs.



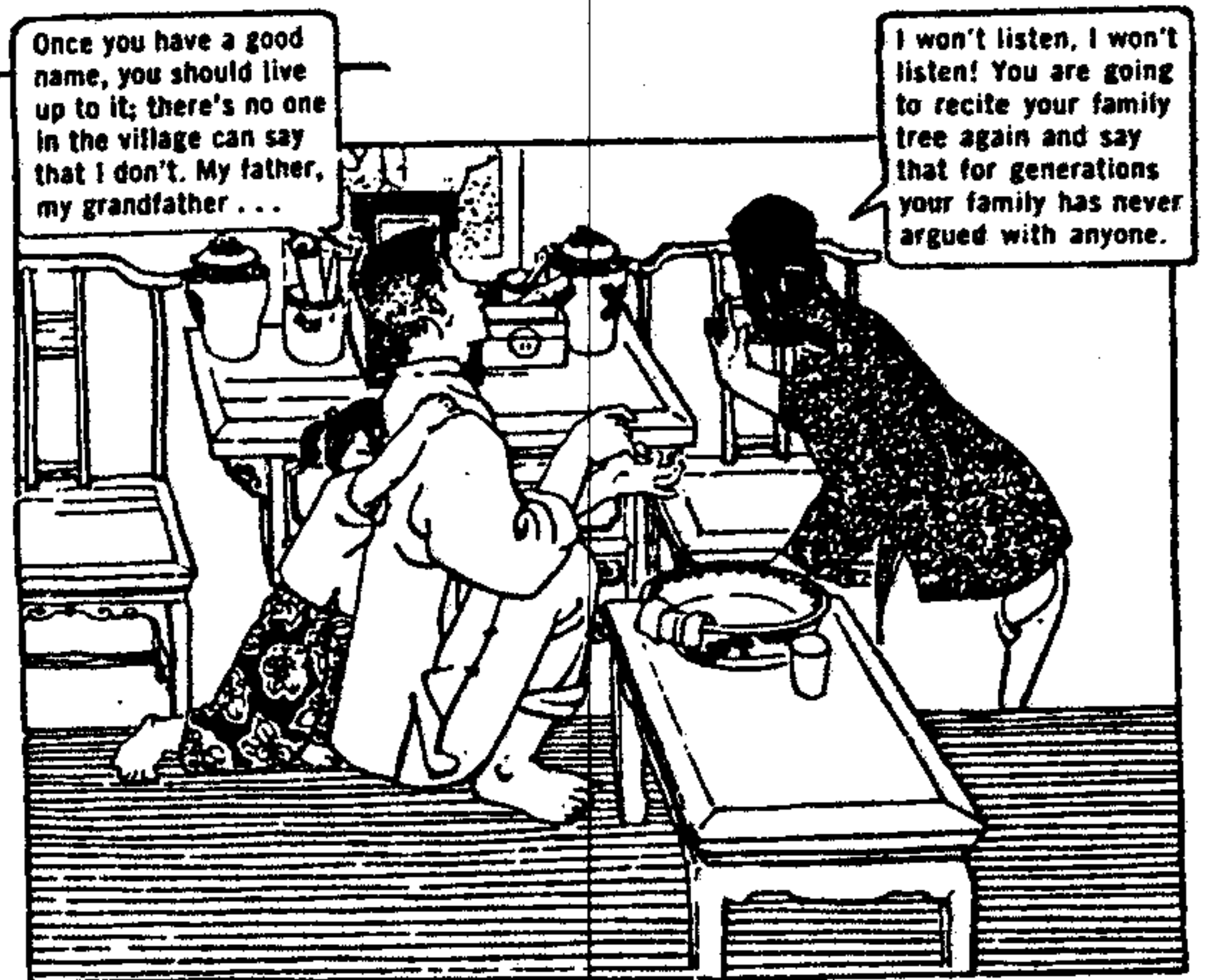
53. Xiwang worked for a long time before he had finished handing out the work-point books and when he returned home he stood in the doorway and let out a long sigh.



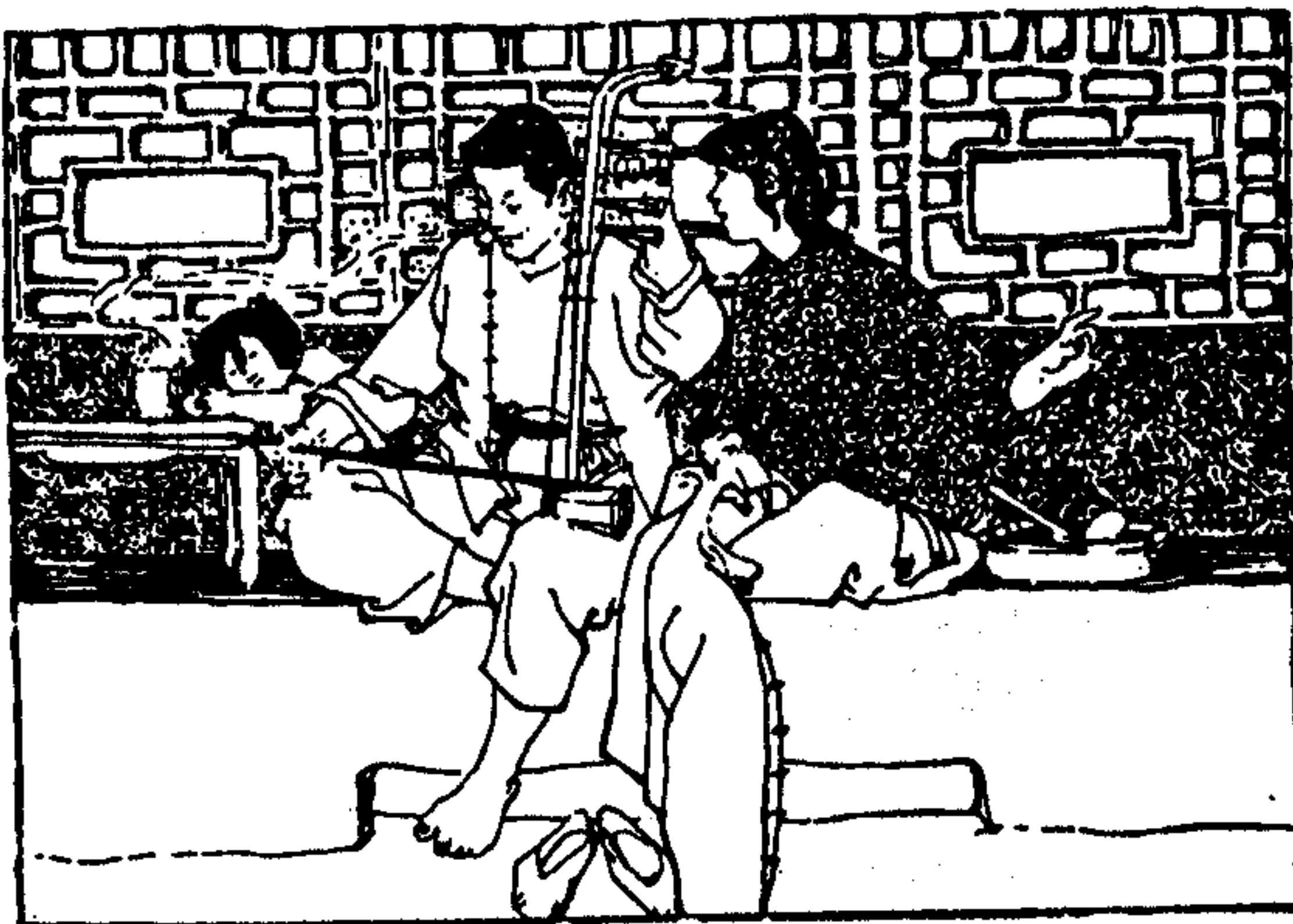
54. Shuangshuang smilingly said, "Hello! What's the matter with you?" Xiwang slapped his head with his hand several times. "Ugh! I feel as if I'm coming apart. I'm tired out. I'm no good for this brain work!"



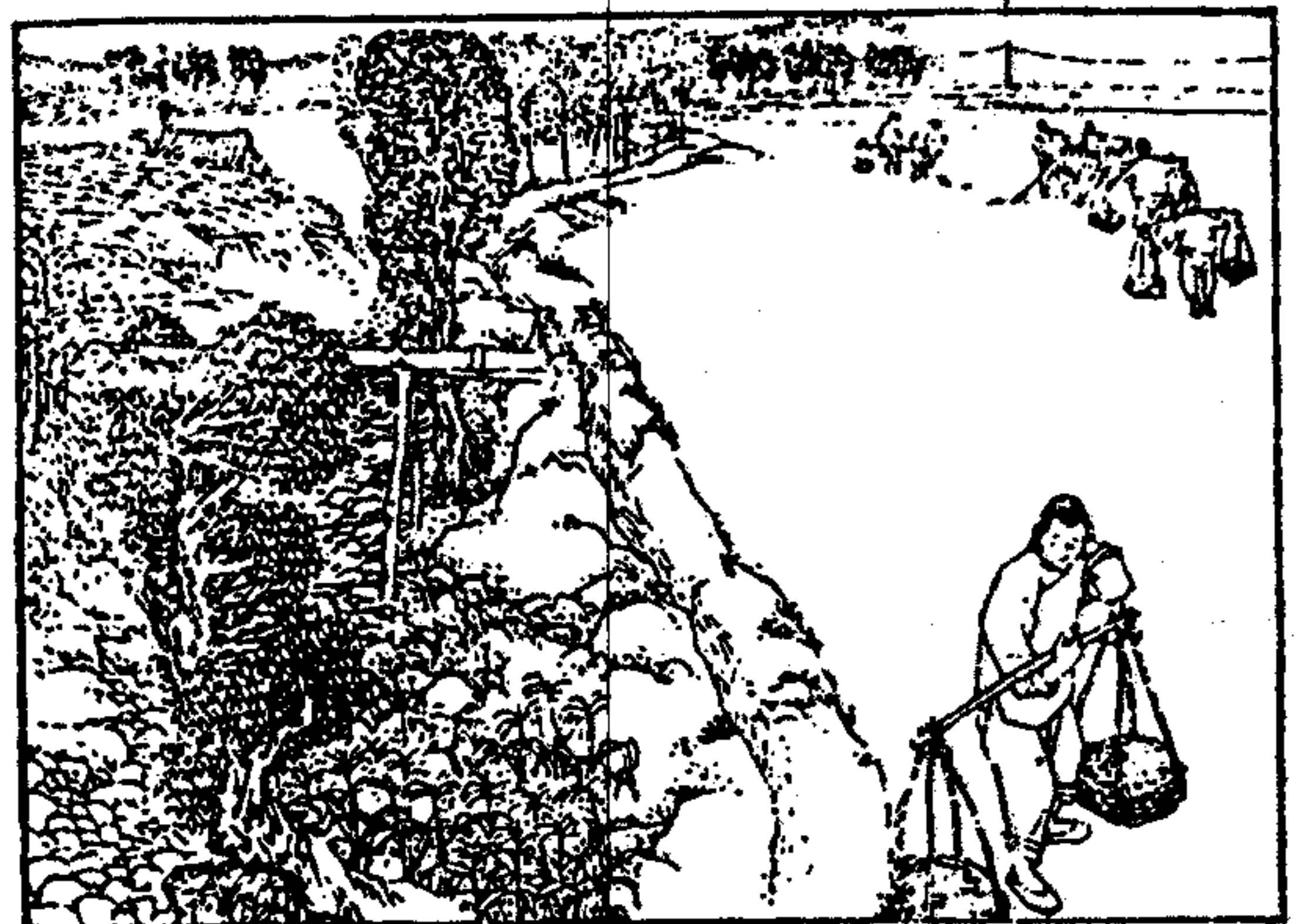
55. Shuangshuang caught sight of his hand as he stretched to take a drink and said, "Hm. People usually write characters on paper—how come you write them on your hand!"



56. Xiwang washed his hands, swallowed hard, and said, "You know, if you're the work-points recorder you have to be making apologies to everyone all the time." Shuangshuang didn't agree. "How come? Depending on how much work someone does, you just record the points. If you set it up right and keep it going strictly without bias, who can say anything against you?"



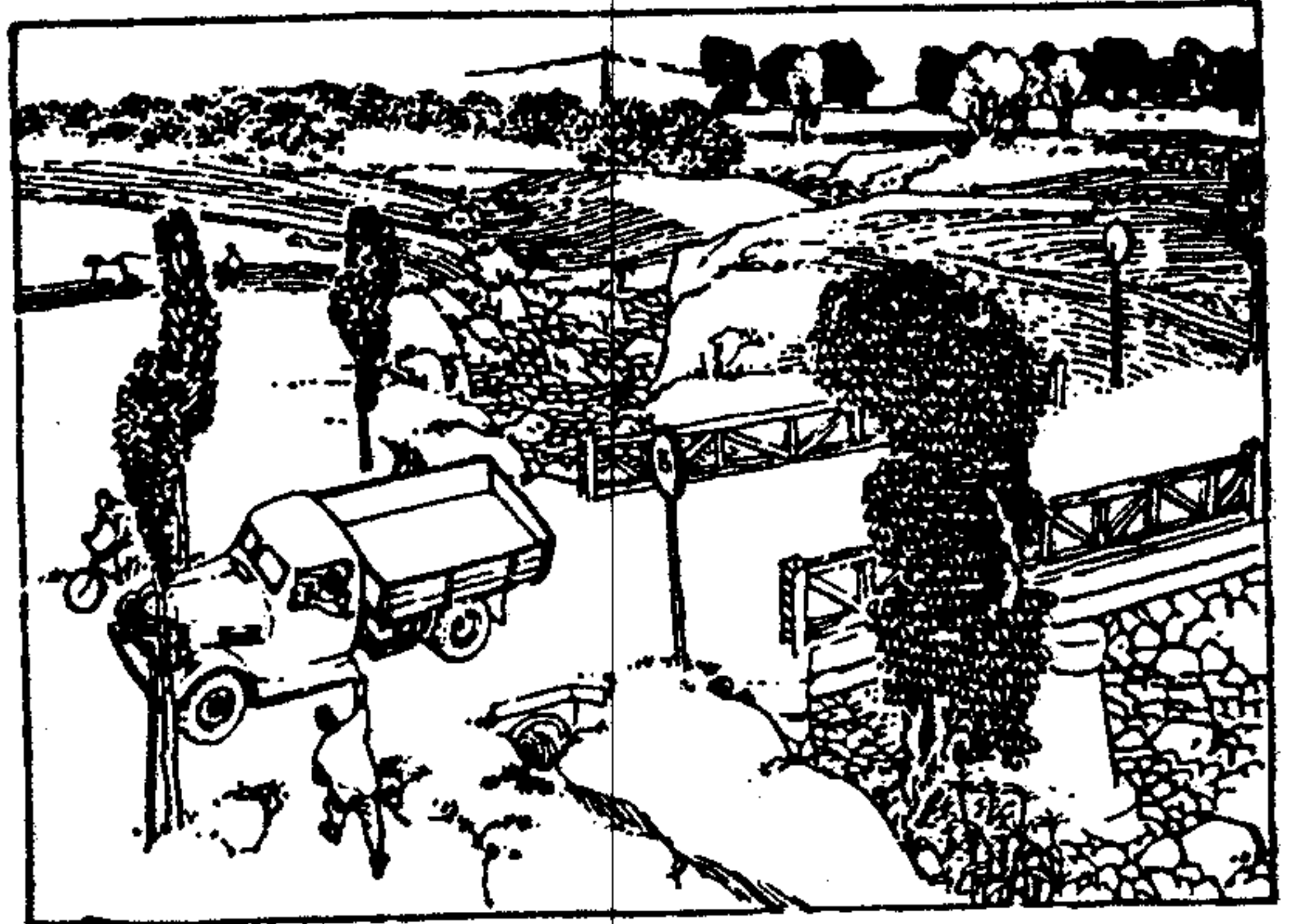
57. Xiwang was somewhat dejected. Shuangshuang urged him to put the public good before his own while working for the masses; to conscientiously put into operation the work-point system and then there would certainly be a lot of people turning out to join the work. When Xiwang remembered that Sun Youpo and Da Feng had also just taken work-point books, he couldn't help nodding in agreement.



58. That very day the team put into operation the system of work assignments and work points. Xiwang, Sun You, and several others undertook the work of spreading manure on eight mu of freshly planted wheat. Because the manure was some distance from the field they had to fetch it as well as spread it. Sun You kept muttering as he carried the manure.



59. Just at this moment Jin Qiao came along. As soon as he saw the manure they had laid on the field he asked, "Still so much to do! How much have you spread?" Sun You looked very displeased. "It's a big field. The tools are not up to much. We certainly got the worst of it when we undertook to do this work."



60. Just at this moment an empty truck came by. Jin Qiao immediately recognized the driver as Xiao Wang, a long-distance truck driver, and waving and shouting, he ran to the road. "Xiao Wang, where are you going? Stop and have a rest—have a drink of water."



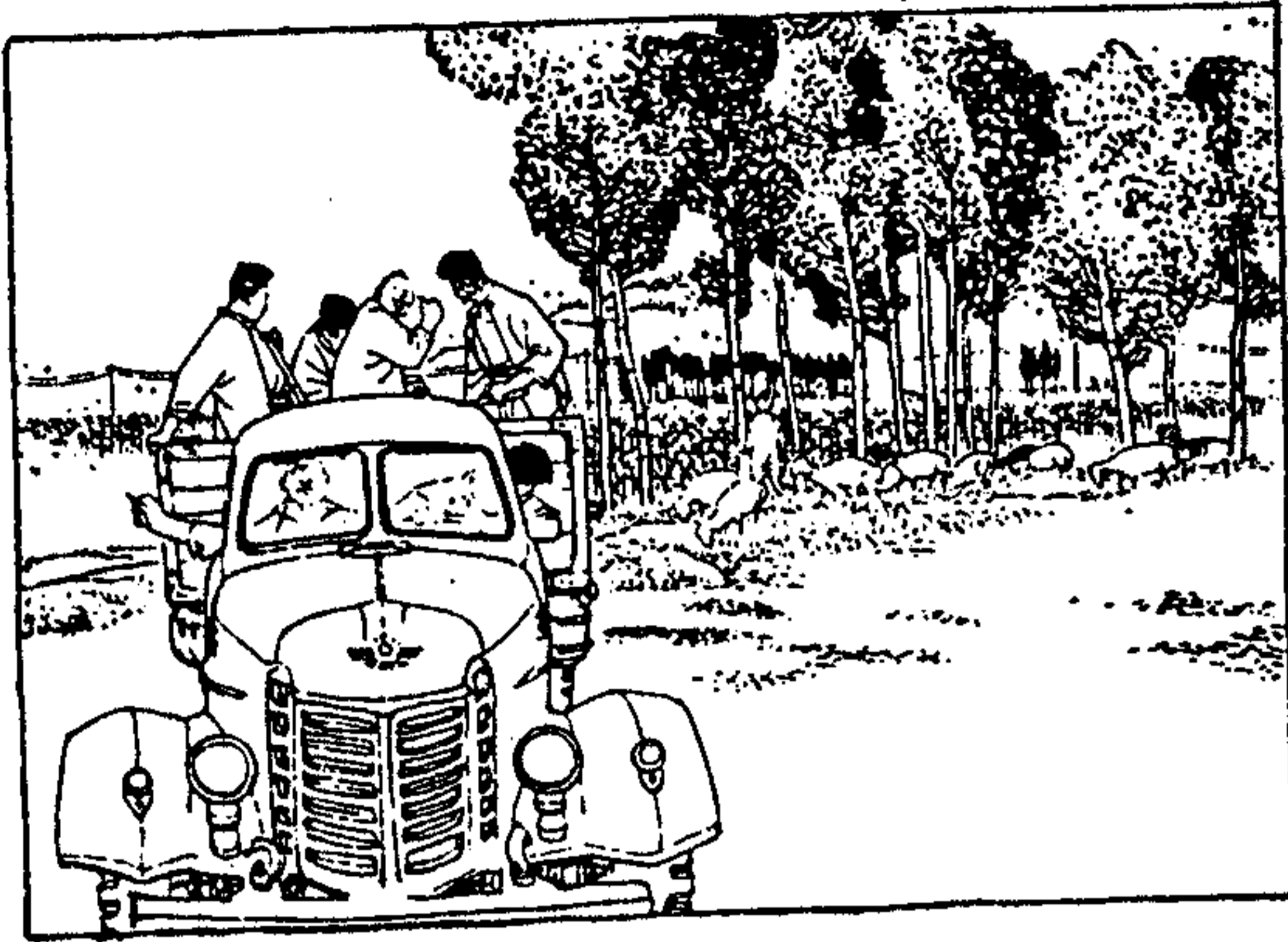
61. The truck stopped at the side of the road beside the pile of manure. Jin Qiao poured out a bowl of water and led Xiao Wang to a shady spot and began chatting. Sun You came up behind the truck and took a look and thought to himself that if the driver would help, they could have the manure spread in no time.



But . . . but . . . I'll bring it to the field but I have no way of spreading it!

All you have to do is drive the truck to the field and go around once. We'll spread the manure from the back; you don't have to spread it, we'll do that.

62. He then told this excellent idea to Jin Qiao who said, with some embarrassment, as soon as he'd thought it over, "Right away! Xiao Wang, how about bringing the manure to the field on the truck for us?" At first Xiao Wang was unwilling, but later he was unable to withstand Jin Qiao's mixture of pleading and threats; he could only agree.



63. They had the manure on the truck in no time. The truck slowly drove around the field. Sun You and the others stood on the back scattering the manure.



64. The assigned eight mu were completed in the twinkling of an eye. Sun You and the rest took out their work-point books for Xiwang to mark in the work points. Xiwang generously recorded ten points for each of them, even putting ten points down in Sun You's book.



65. At this moment Shuangshuang and the other women were in the cotton fields deciding on their work points. Finally they came to Da Feng, and Sun Youpo was the first to express an opinion. "She spent the whole afternoon clearing up six rows. Give her five points."



66. "I don't agree!" interrupted Shuangshuang immediately. "We shouldn't only take into account speed, but also consider quality." So saying, she pointed to a row of cotton flowers. "Look, she did those rows without getting rid of all the weeds, which means that later on there will be fewer bolls!"



67. One of the team members came forward to solve the situation. "Give four points!" "Four points is all right," said Shuangshuang, "as long as she comes back in the afternoon to do the rows over again." Da Feng couldn't restrain her anger. "I don't need the work points—I've still got my parents!" and turning on her heel, she left.



68. Neither Gui Ying nor You Fang's wife were content with Da Feng and they hurriedly returned home to eat. Shuangshuang was furious as she stayed behind to redo the rows which Da Feng had done.



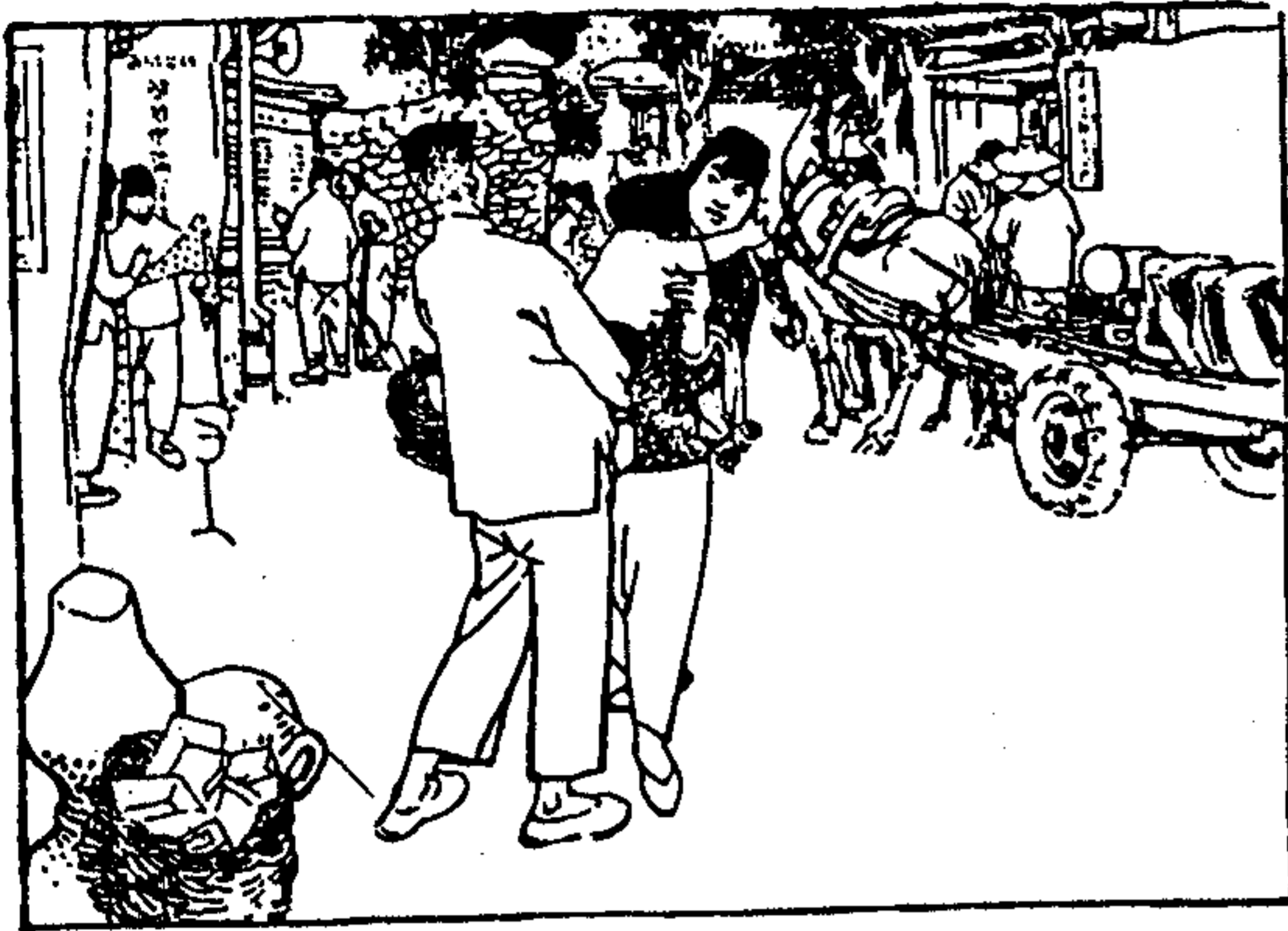
The ox is ready enough to work but look at the way they've spread the manure—in piles! How can I plow? Work points, work points, all they can think of is gaining work points.

Old Gengpo, can't you get the ox to work?

69. When she had finished she set off for home, and on the way she passed the wheat field where she saw old Gengpo, who was plowing and grumbling to himself, "Ha! Is this supposed to be a job of work? I've never seen anything like it!" Shuangshuang stopped to ask what the trouble was.



70. Shuangshuang glanced over the field and asked, "Who was it who spread the manure?" Old Gengpo snorted, "Who? You'll know when you get home!" Shuangshuang asked no more questions but hurried back to the village.



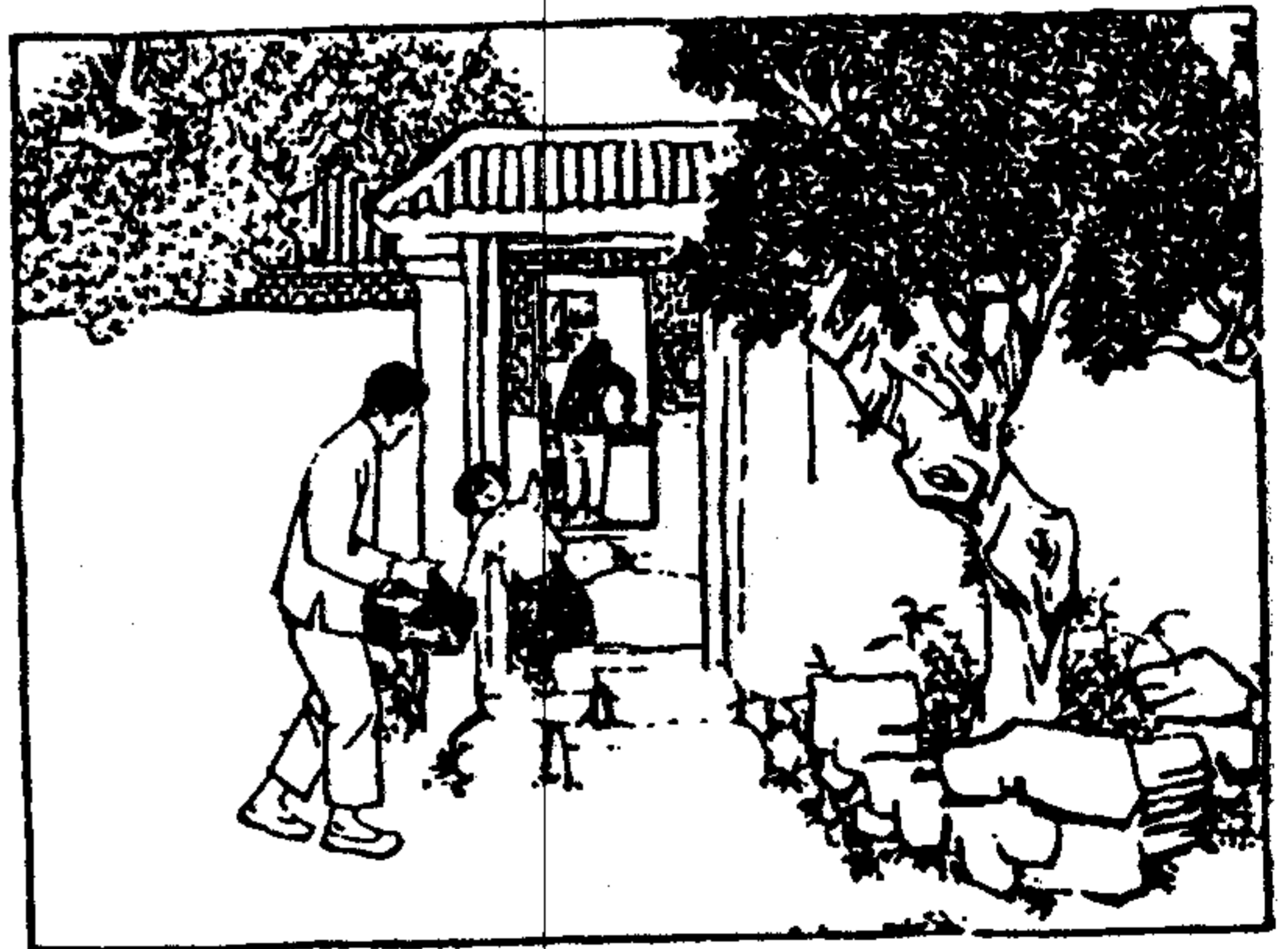
71. When she got to the village street, she ran into Xiwang who was bringing Xiao Ju to meet her. As soon as he saw her, Xiwang, full of smiles, asked, "Knocked off so late? Busy half the day? How many work points did you get?" Shuangshuang said, "Five points. And you?"



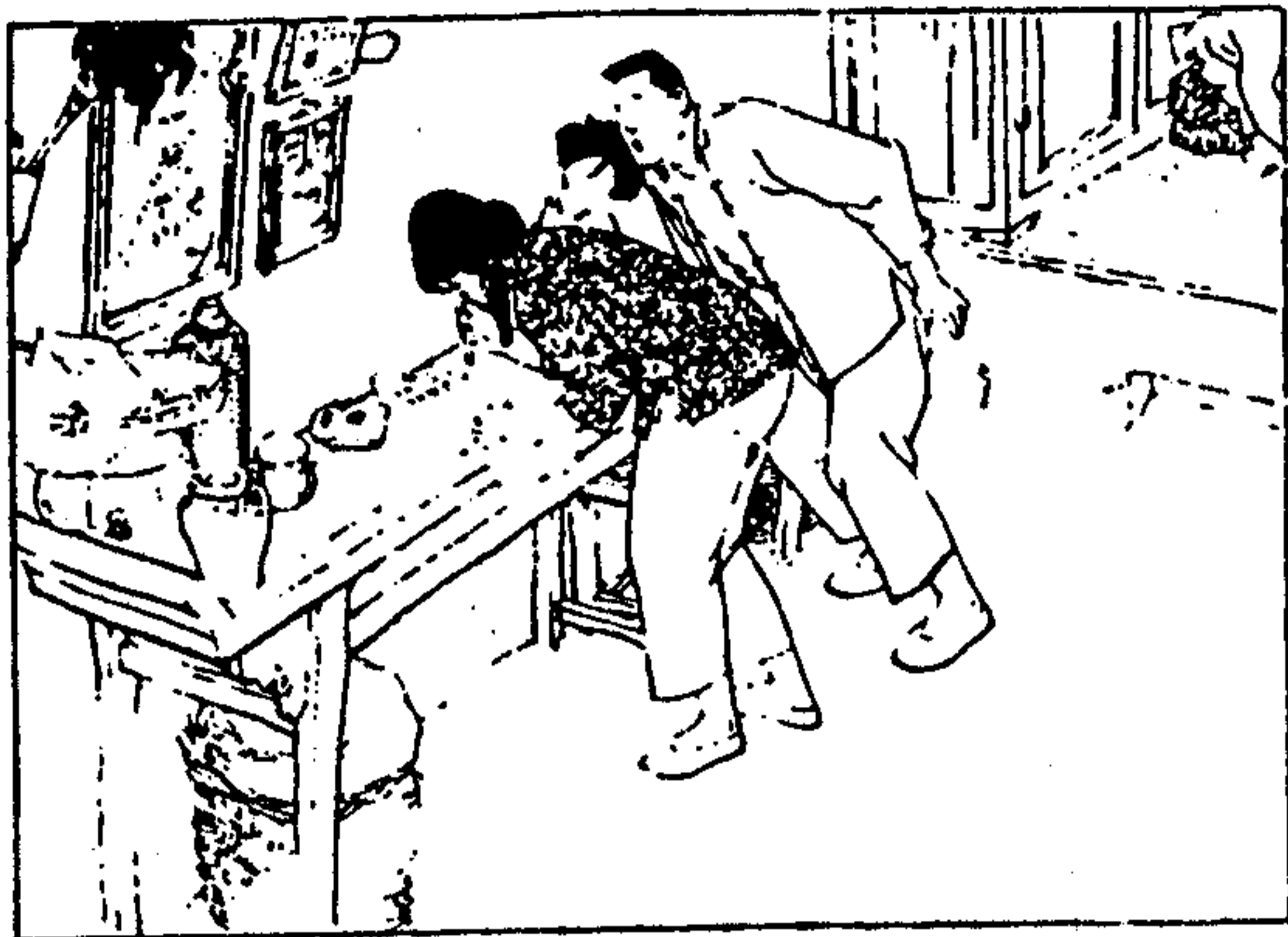
72. Xiwang laughed and said, self-satisfied, "You're asking about us? Well, Sun You, in no more time than it takes to smoke a few pipes, had earned ten points and as for Jin Qiao, with a few strokes of his spade he had also earned ten points." Shuangshuang questioned him further and discovered that their assigned work was none other than the field which Old Gengpo was plowing.



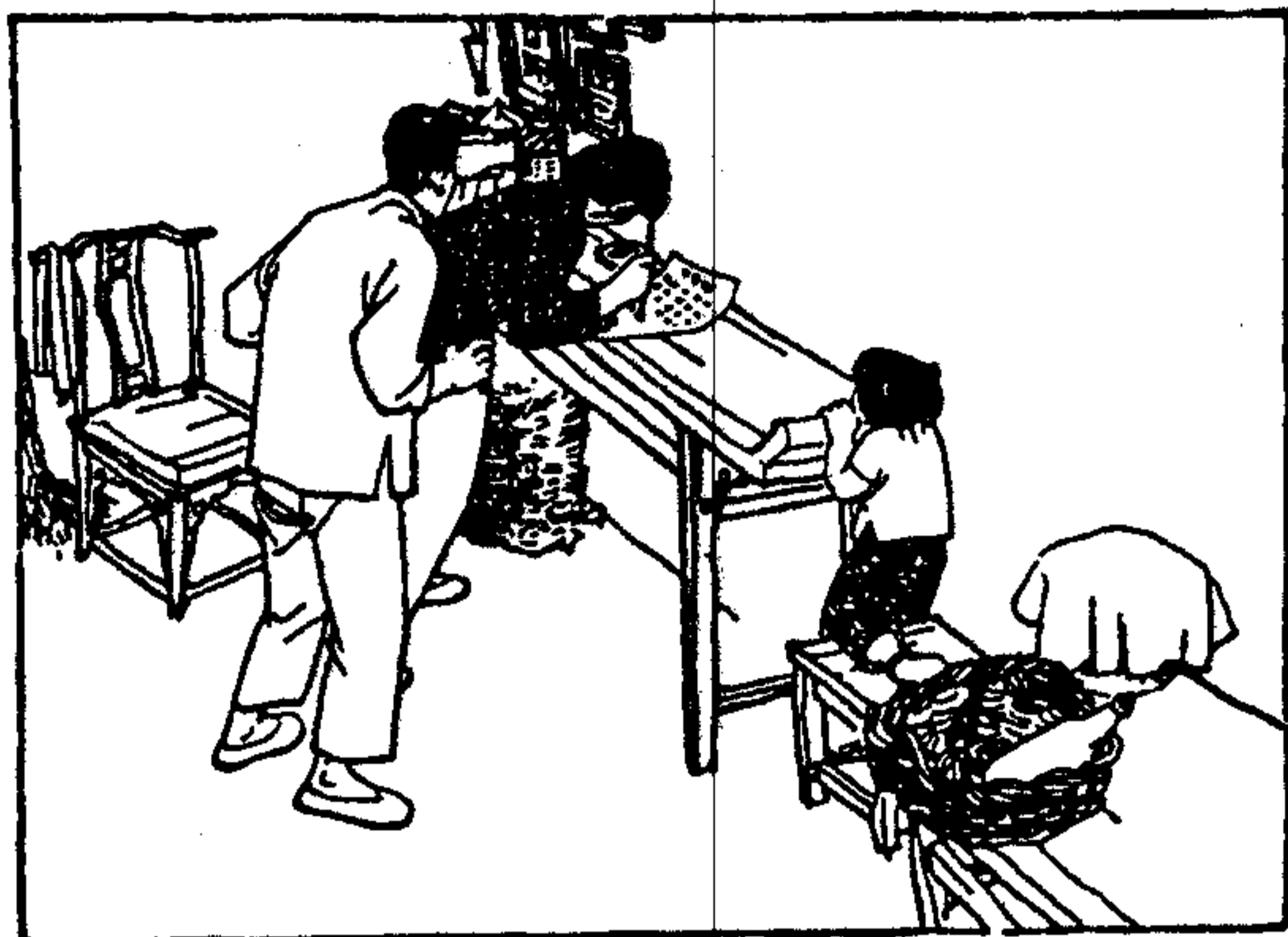
73. Xiwang had no idea that Shuangshuang was angry and he continued to put on airs. "That's why they say if you want to earn work points, you have to be smart in choosing the work you do. It's written in the disappointed look in your eyes!" He hadn't finished when Shuangshuang broke in with a change of mood. "You really know how to cheat—working without a thought for the quality of the work! That won't do!"



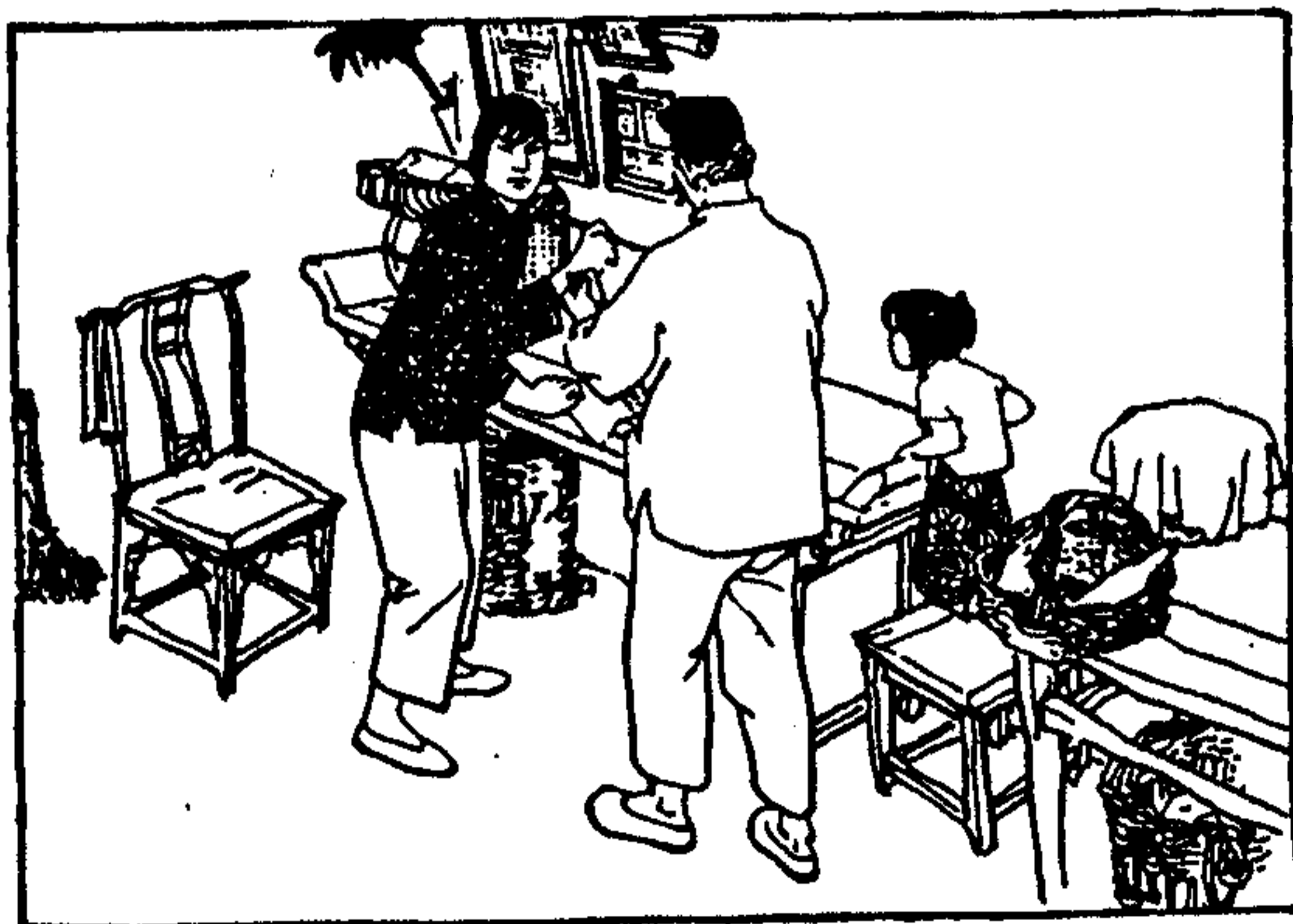
74. She shook her head and, with a snort, ran into the house and furiously took up the brush which was on the table and started quickly writing characters on a sheet of paper.



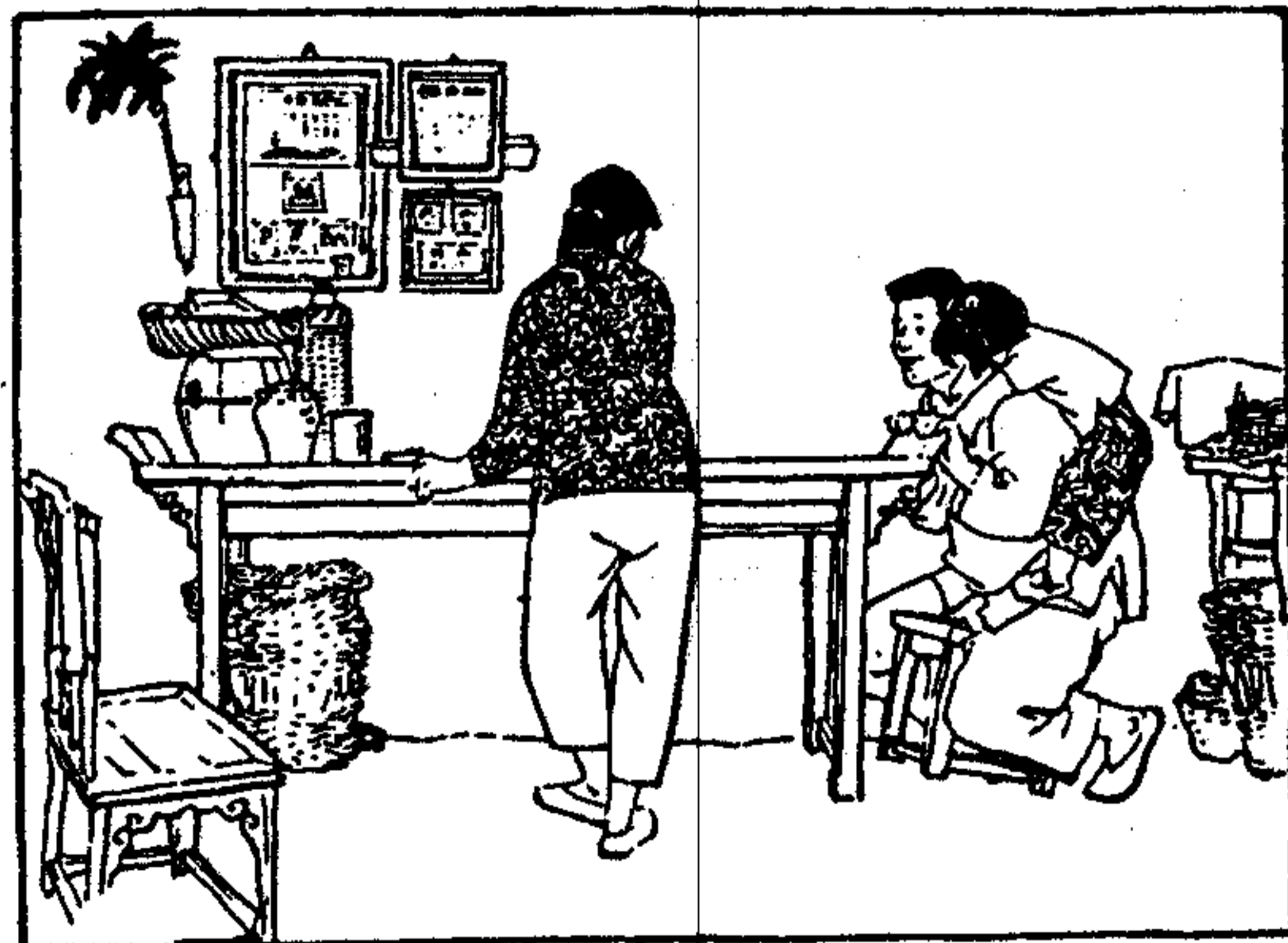
75. Xiwang followed her in to see what she was doing and saw that she had written several rows of large characters: "Some of the commune members are not so good; they don't take work points seriously, paying no attention to quality but just taking into account speed, doing their work opportunistically." Xiwang said shocked, "You. . . . You're writing a big-character poster again?"



76. Shuangshuang said bitterly, "I won't tolerate spreading manure like that, and I won't tolerate clearing up the cotton stems like that either." Xiwang was so upset he started shifting from foot to foot. "You're always poking your nose in other people's affairs; you'll get yourself into trouble."



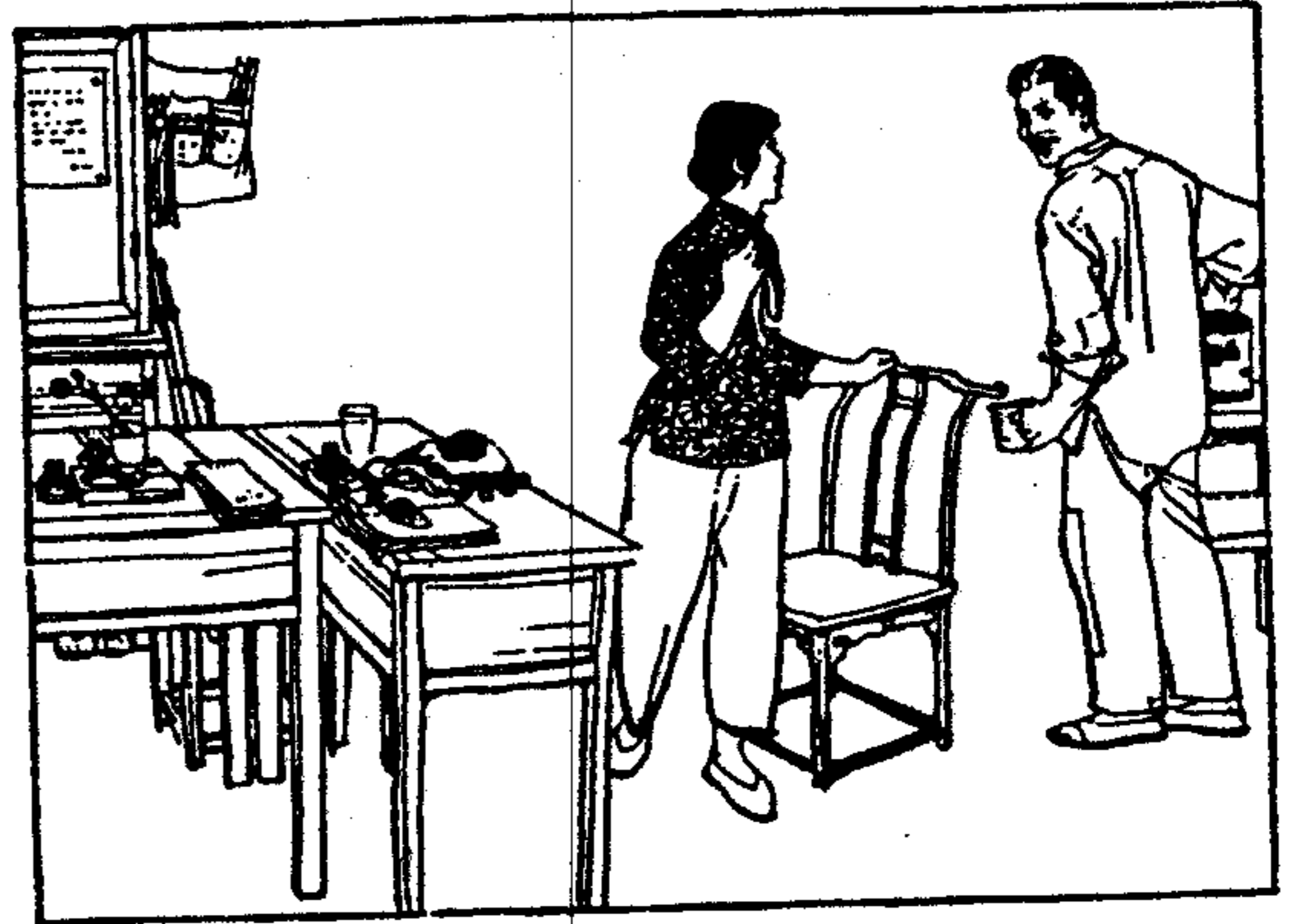
77. He whipped out some work-point tickets and said, "If you think you earned too few work points today, I'll give you two of mine." Shuangshuang pushed his hand away. "I'm not after your work points. It is not work points I'm after at all."



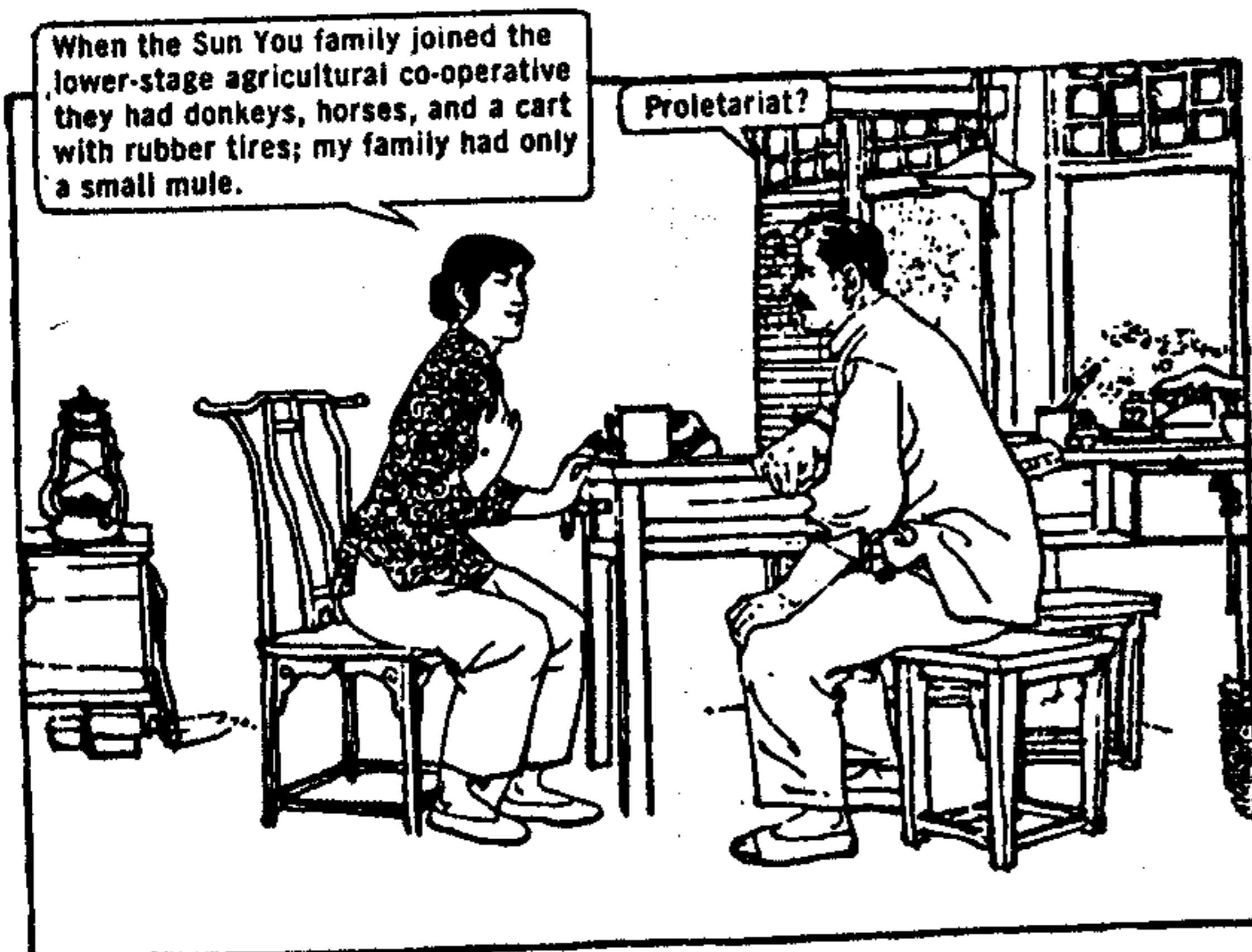
78. Xiwang pleaded with her, "Mother of Xiao Ju, I'm involved in this. Even if they took more work points than they should have, I was the work-point recorder. I wasn't going to record the extra points but they began to kick up a fuss and I got all confused."



79. Shuangshuang was so angry that she began to tremble all over. "If you hadn't been involved in this, I would have exposed it in a big-character wall poster, but since it does involve you, I'll go to the commune to accuse you." So saying, she threw down her pen and like a gust of wind rushed out of the house.



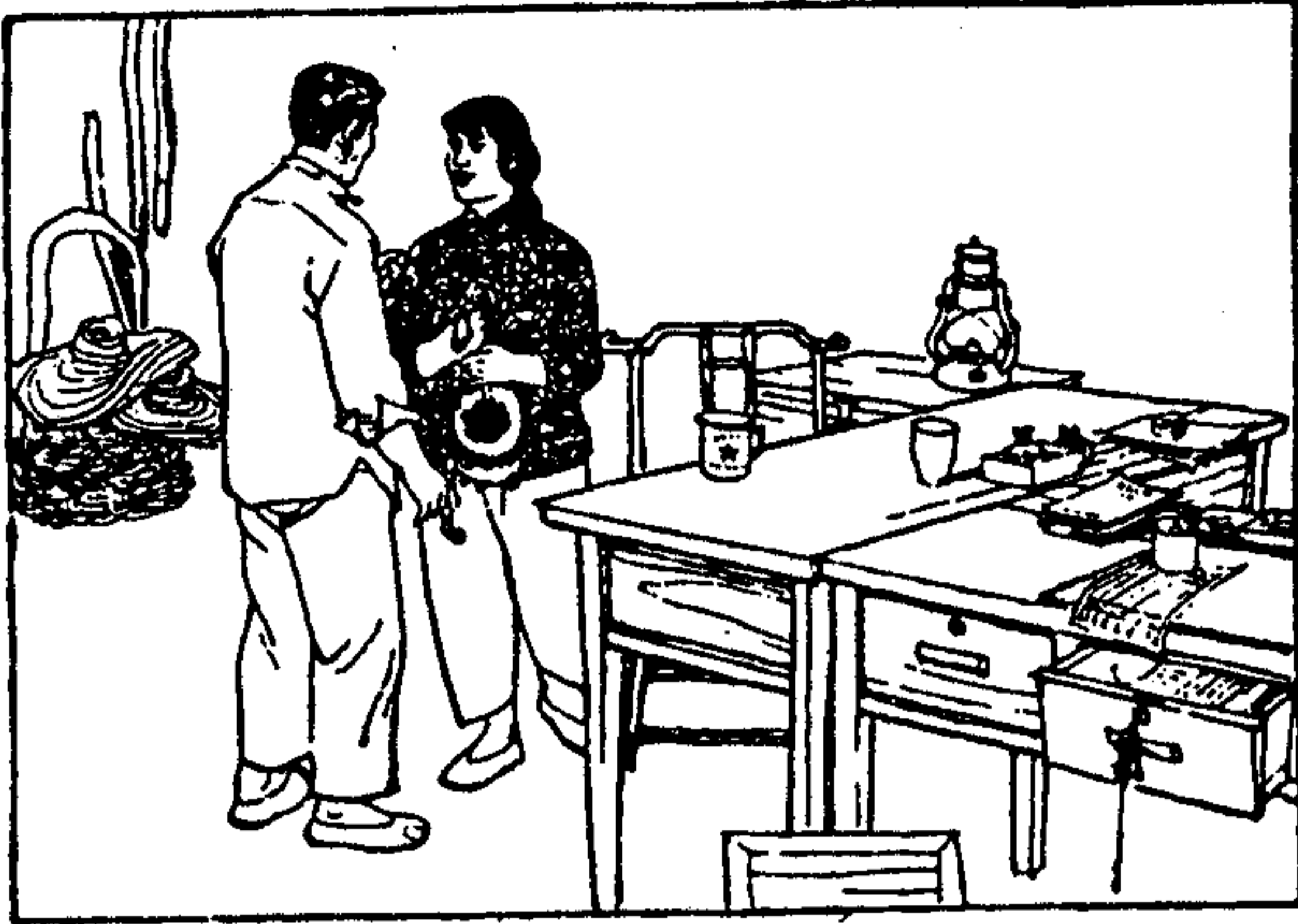
80. She reached the commune office in no time and reported the whole thing to Secretary Liu. He said with a smile, "This includes Xiwang. Isn't he your husband?"



81. Shuangshuang explained, "My husband has no sense of right or wrong and he has no definite principles and he's easily swayed. But Sun You is not like that; he's full of bad ideas. He's not a member of the proletariat. Our family is."



82. Secretary Liu now understood everything. He asked Shuangshuang what she thought was the best way to guarantee quality. Shuangshuang did not know. He said, "For example, we should strengthen political education as well as making sure that assignments are properly fulfilled. What do you think of that?" Shuangshuang nodded in full agreement.



83. Secretary Liu also asked Shuangshuang whether she was a woman cadre. She shook her head. "No, people said my tongue was too sharp." Secretary Liu smiled and said, "If you are impartial and genuinely responsible, your tongue should be sharp. But at the same time, if something comes up we should consult with the masses."



84. The next day, the Party branch secretary called a meeting of all the team members near the field of wheat stubble. Sun You, Jin Qiao, and Xiwang all made a self-criticism and the secretary said, "Let's consider the matter now closed. In the future we should put into operation the system of group responsibility."



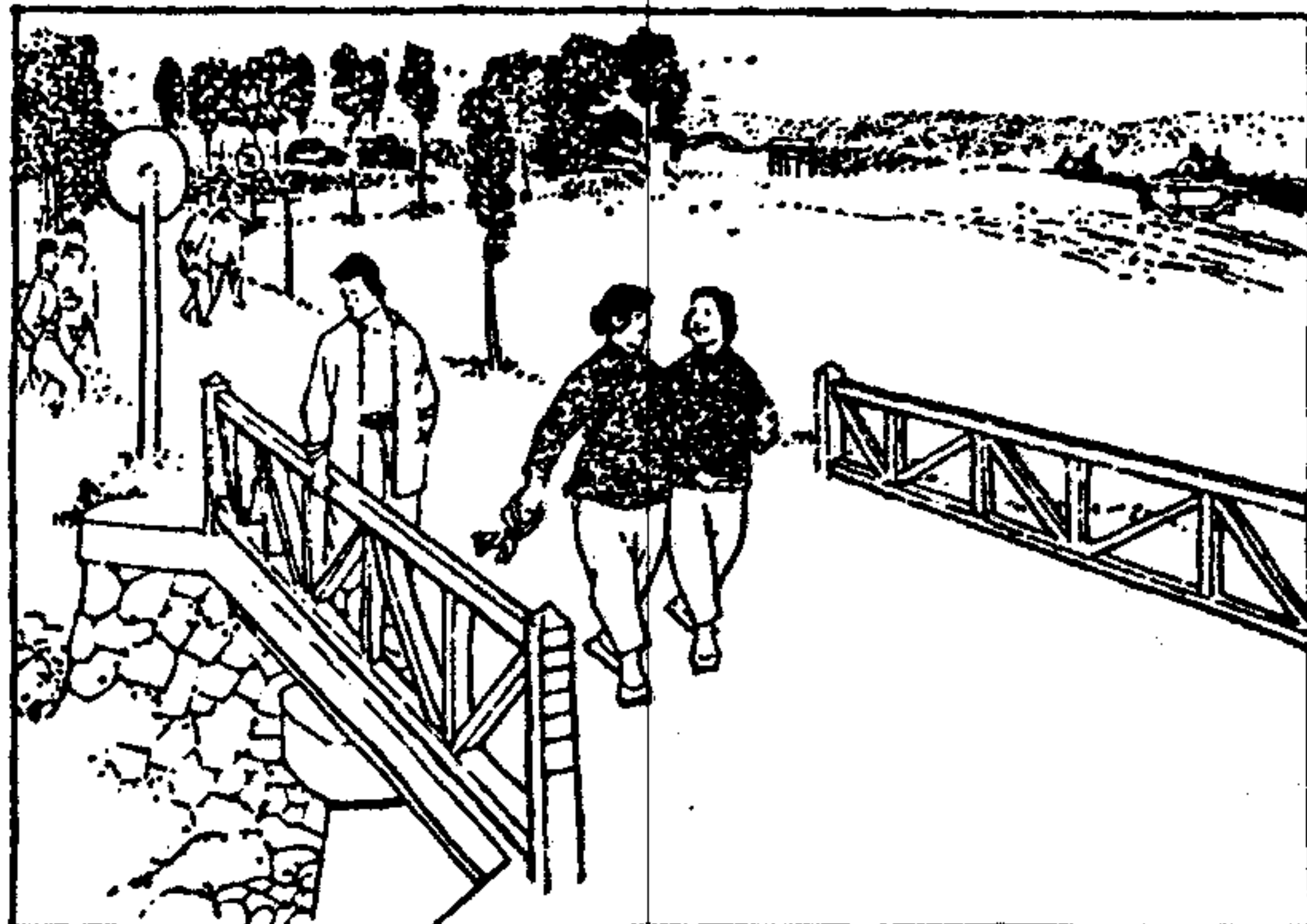
85. The Party secretary continued, "Today our team has to elect a women's team leader. The Party branch opinion is to let Li Shuangshuang try it. What does everyone think of that?" No sooner had he finished than everybody at the meeting raised their hands and shouted, "Agreed! Agreed!"



86. Everybody wanted Shuangshuang to say what she thought, but she only smiled to herself and refused. The branch secretary said, "In that case, I'll say something. Since we elected Shuangshuang, from now on we must listen to her instructions and that applies especially to us men laborers."



87. The Party branch secretary faced Shuangshuang and said, "As for you, Shuangshuang, you must also take great care." Xiwang glanced quickly at Shuangshuang and she pouted her lips at him and everybody exploded into laughter.



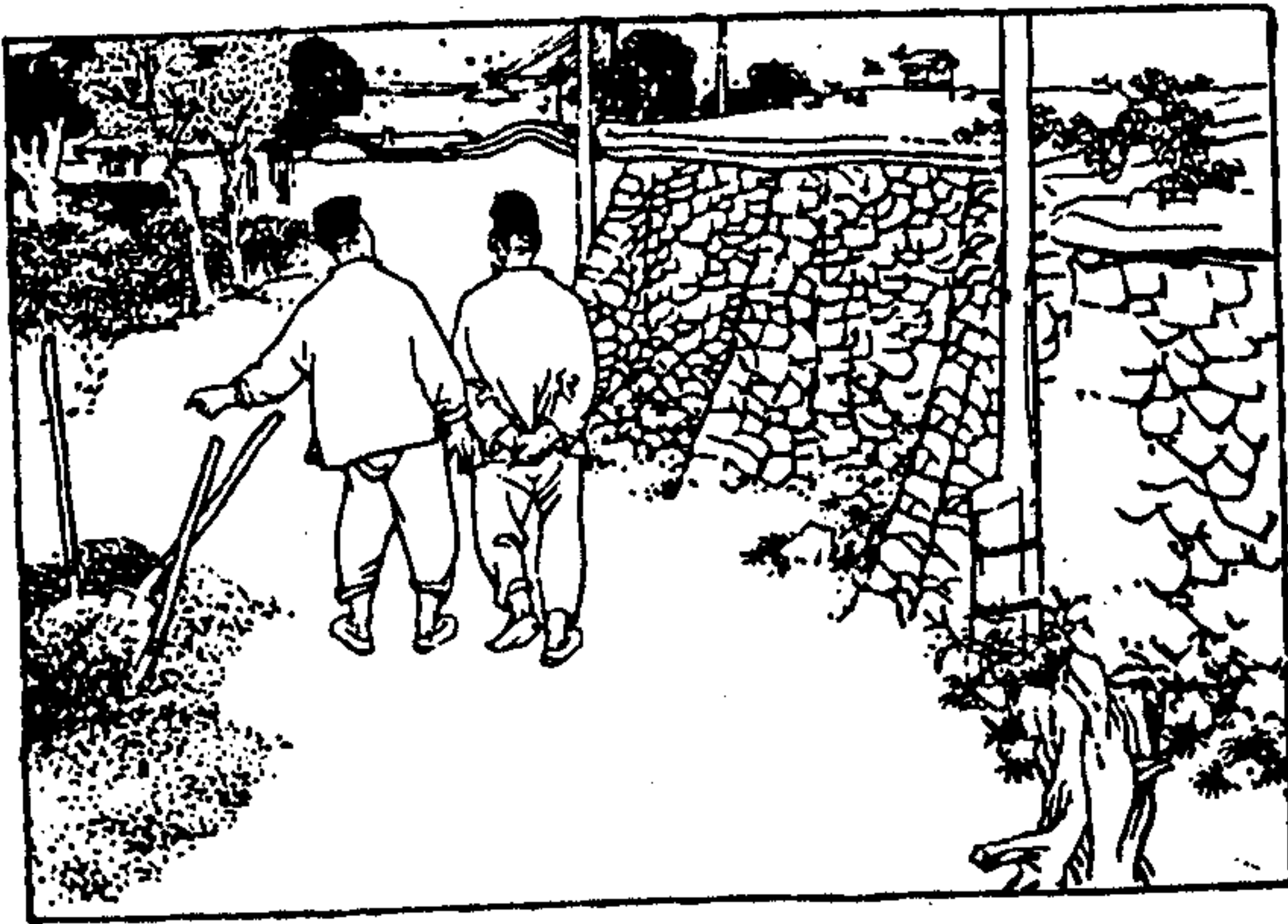
88. After the meeting had broken up, Xiwang followed behind Shuangshuang, embarrassed and silent.



89. On the way, Shuangshuang suddenly discovered a pig eating the maize. She picked up a stone and cried out, "Shoo!" and ran off to chase the pig away. Xiwang, startled, raised his head and saw Jin Qiao walking along the path alone, his head lowered.



90. Xiwang ran up to Jin Qiao and quietly offered his apologies. Jin Qiao nonchalantly said, "What Shuangshuang proposed was correct and I accept it. However, Xiwang, old fellow, you should keep a rein on that wife of yours. If she carries on like this, she will step on everybody's toes in the village."



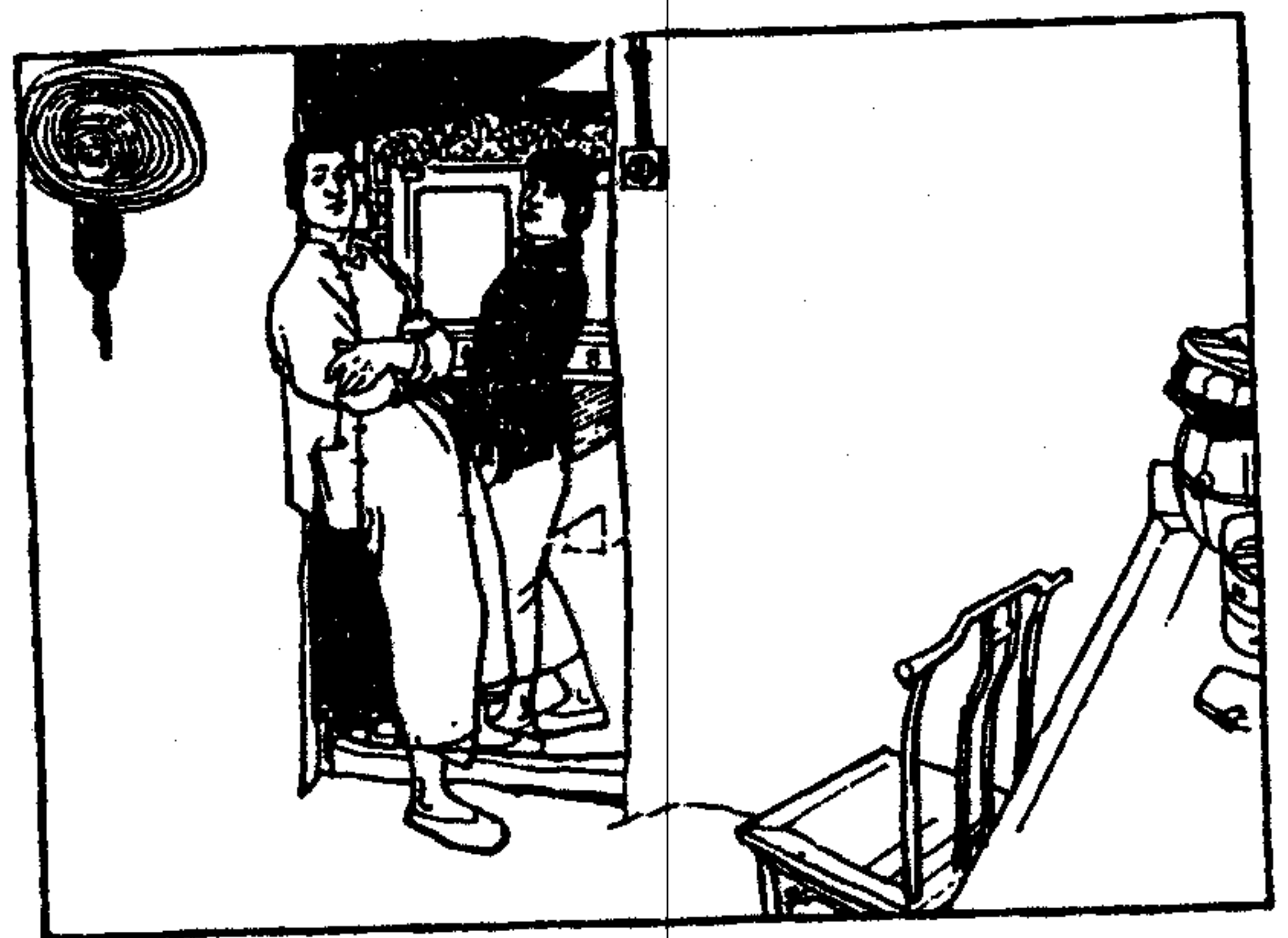
91. These words of Jin Qiao struck home. Xiwang hurriedly said, "Of course, of course, you just wait and see. If I can't tame her this time, then I'll . . . I'll . . ." He swallowed hard and ran off.



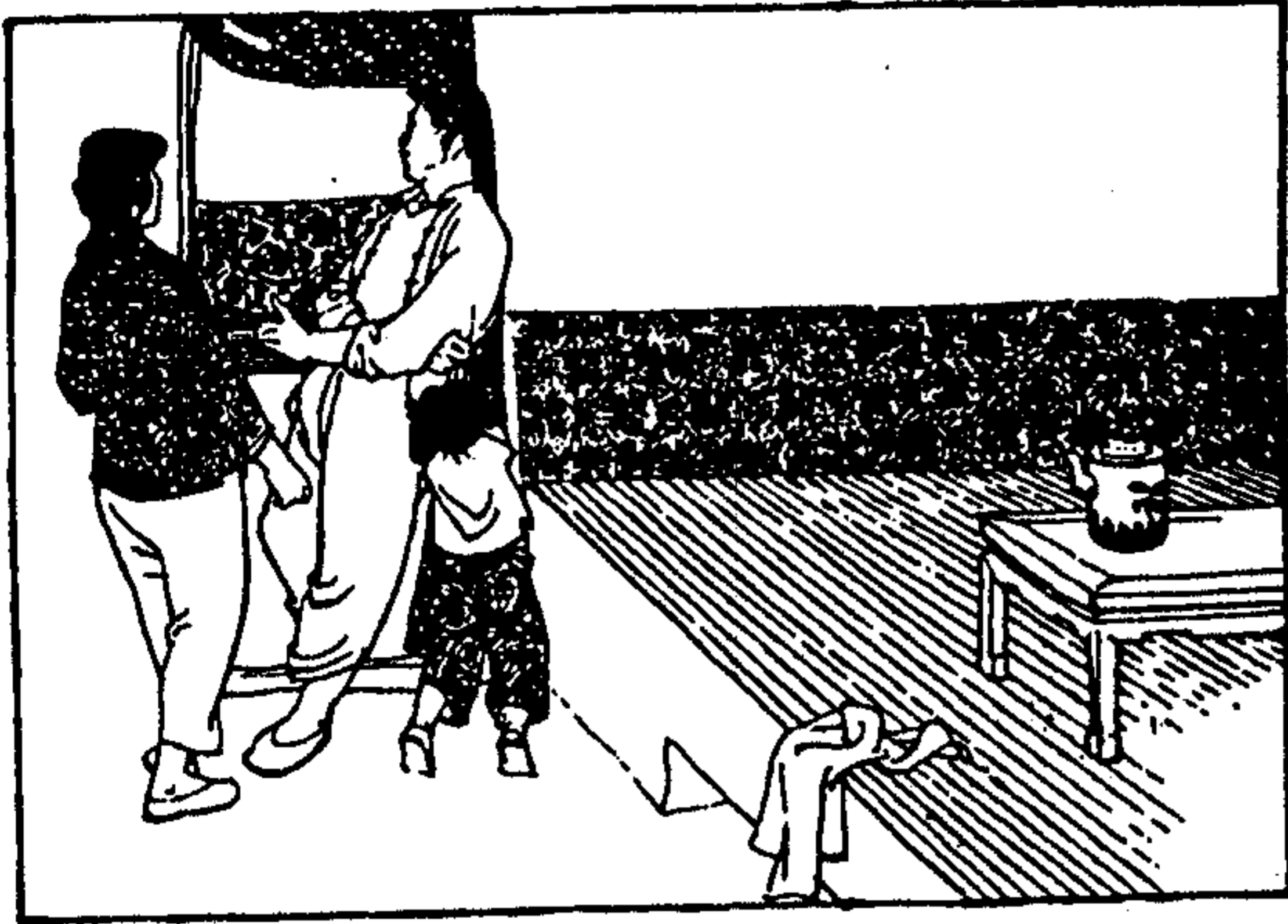
92. When Xiwang got home, Shuangshuang was discussing with old Gengpo the question of using animal power for the water wheel. She had her back to Xiwang and he coughed twice impatiently as he went in.



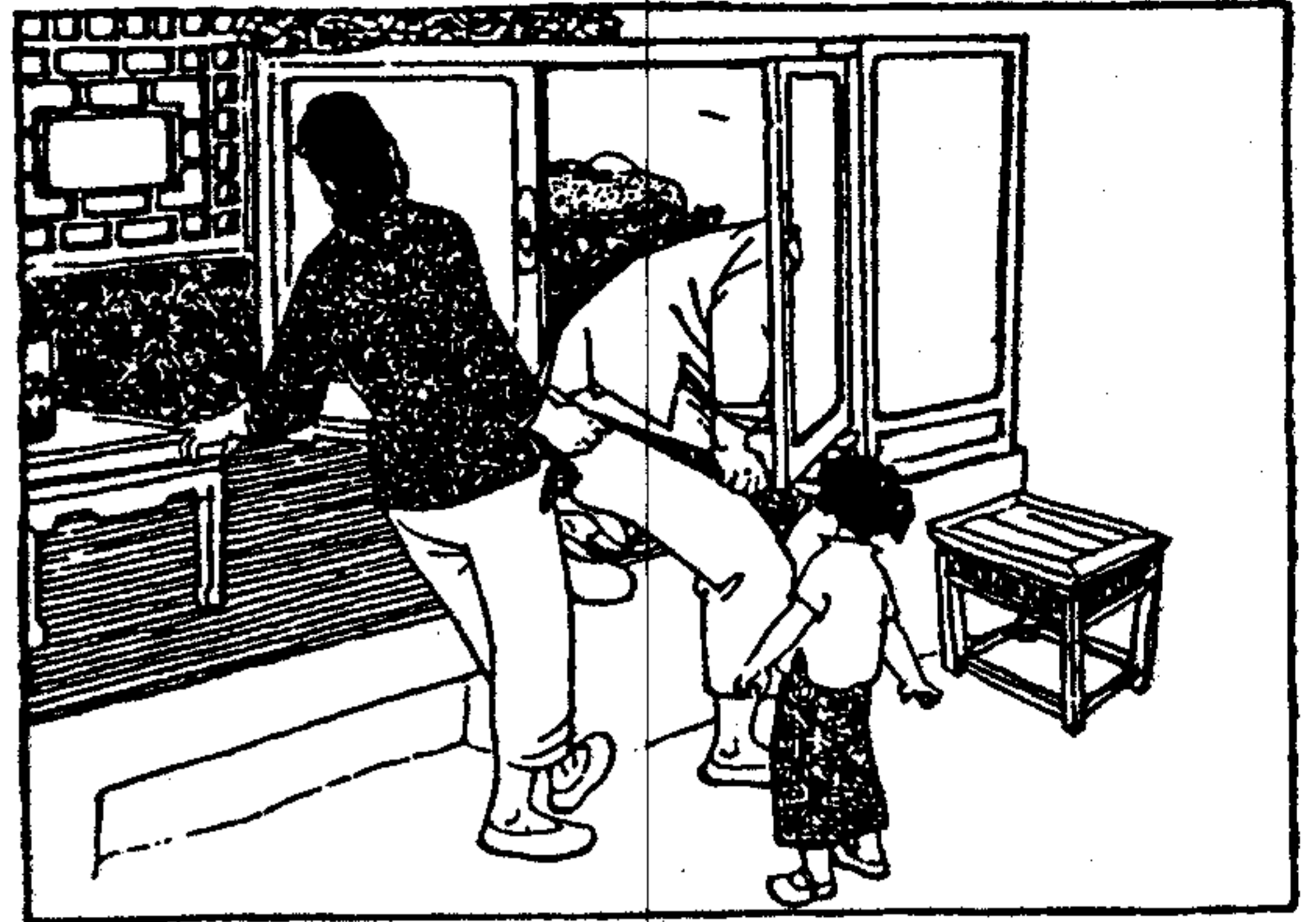
93. Shuangshuang turned around and said gently, "Are you back?" Xiwang put on a stern face. "Hm, team leader. Now that your public duties are over, could you come and do some private business for me?" Shuangshuang thought he was still joking and rolling her eyes at him said, "Oh, look at you."



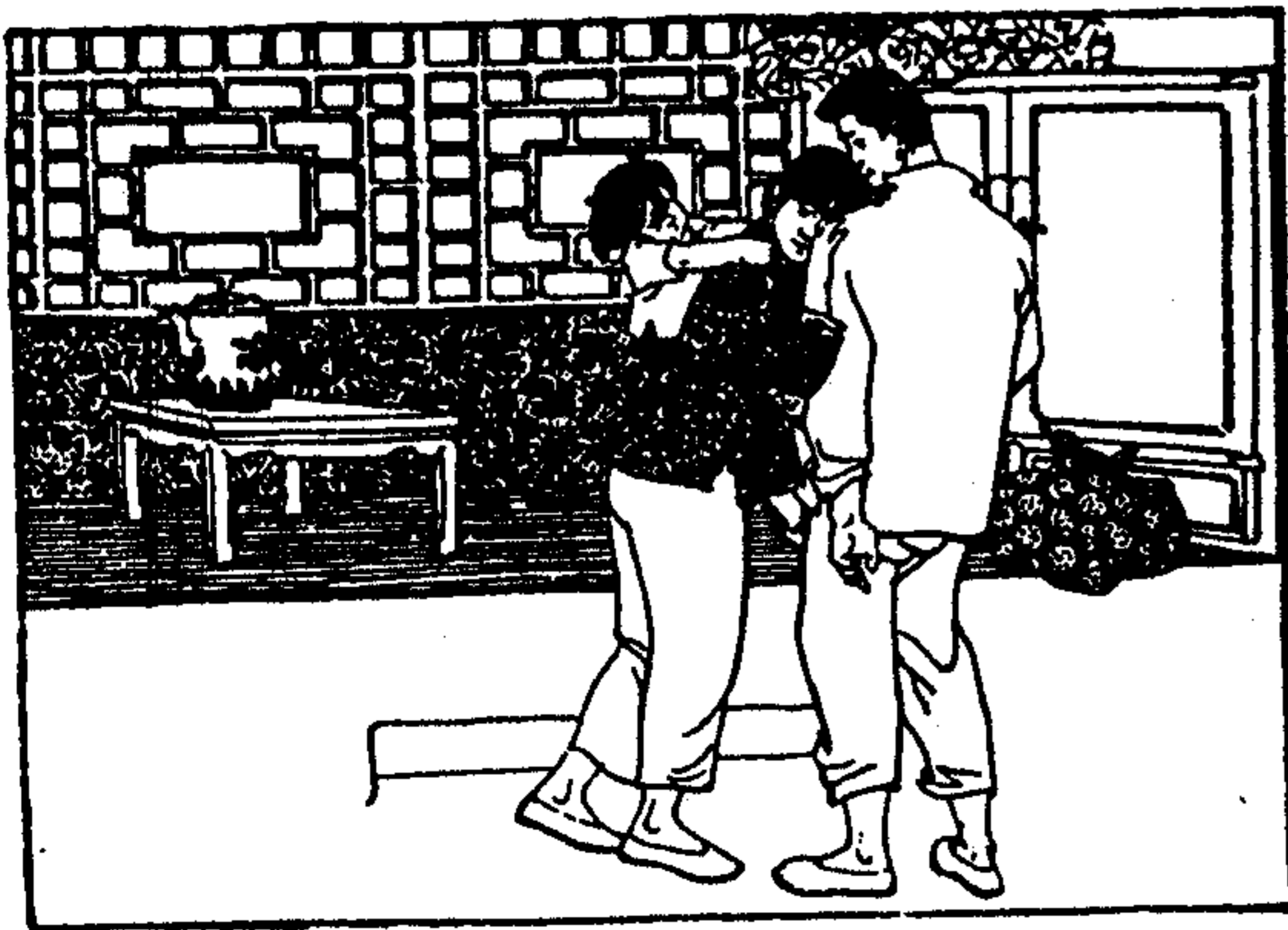
94. Xiwang was completely serious. "Nobody's joking with you. Go and pack my things." Shuangshuang was suddenly worried. "What, are you going on a trip?" Xiwang stared at the ceiling. "Huh! I'm going to do transportation. I won't rot any more in this house."



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."



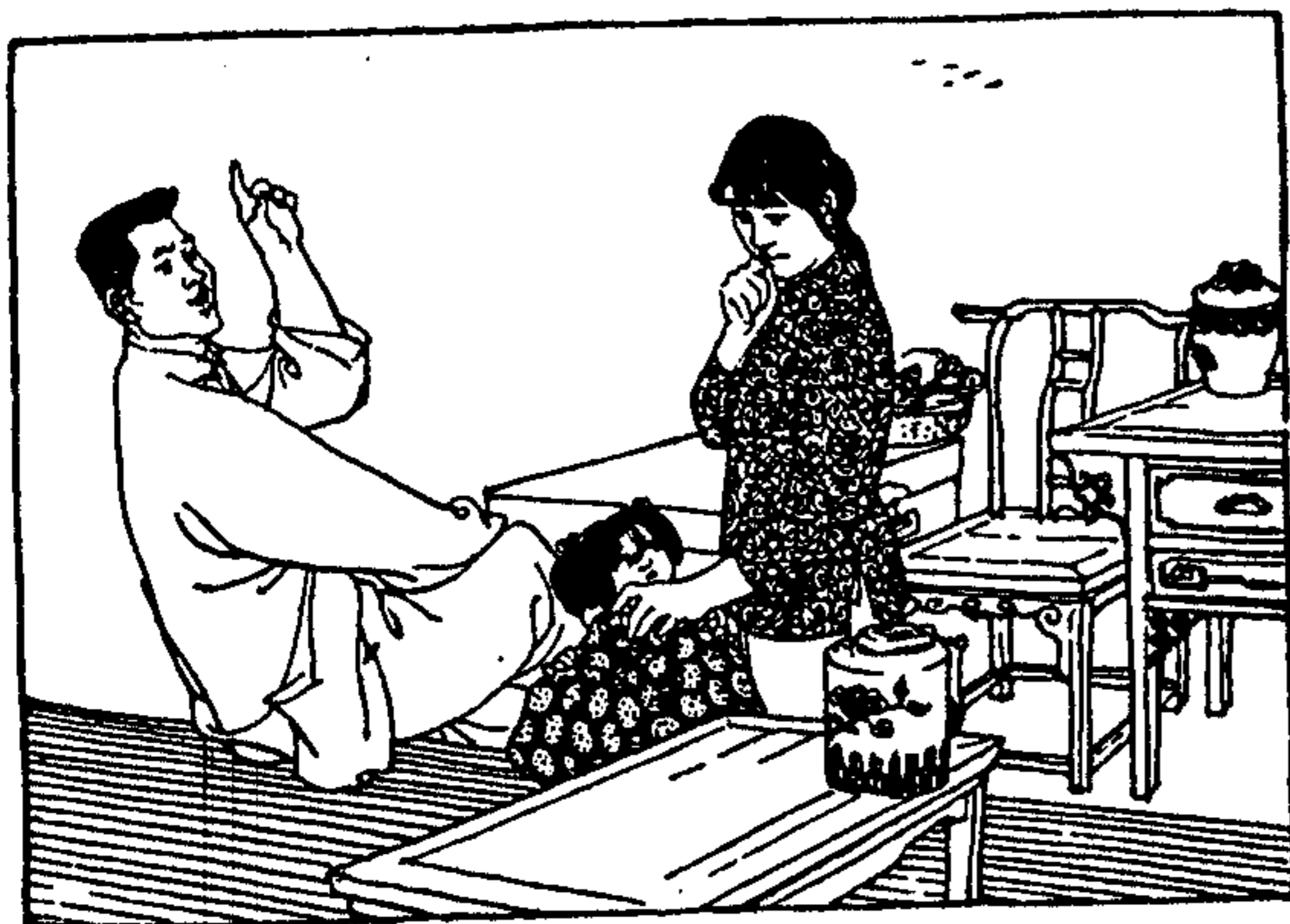
96. Shuangshuang frowned deeply and looked at Xiwang sadly. All he did was to urge her to pack his things. But Shuangshuang did not appear to have heard. Xiwang angrily rolled up his sleeves and packed a blanket and a few clothes into a bundle.



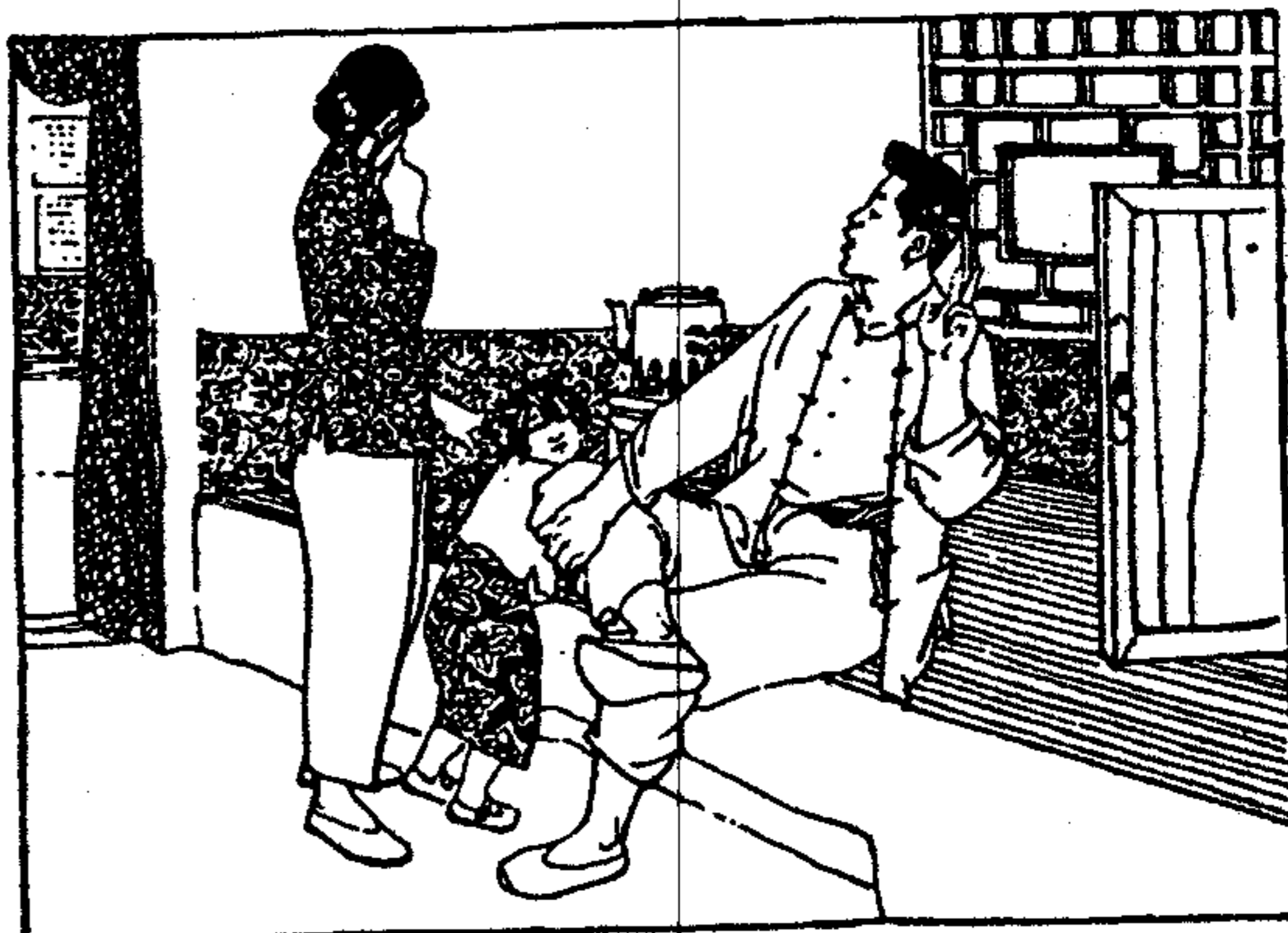
97. Shuangshuang whipped the bundle away and said, "You can't go! Now that I'm team leader, I really need your help. Look at it from my point of view. I can't. . . ." She put her head on Xiwang's shoulder and began to cry.



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."

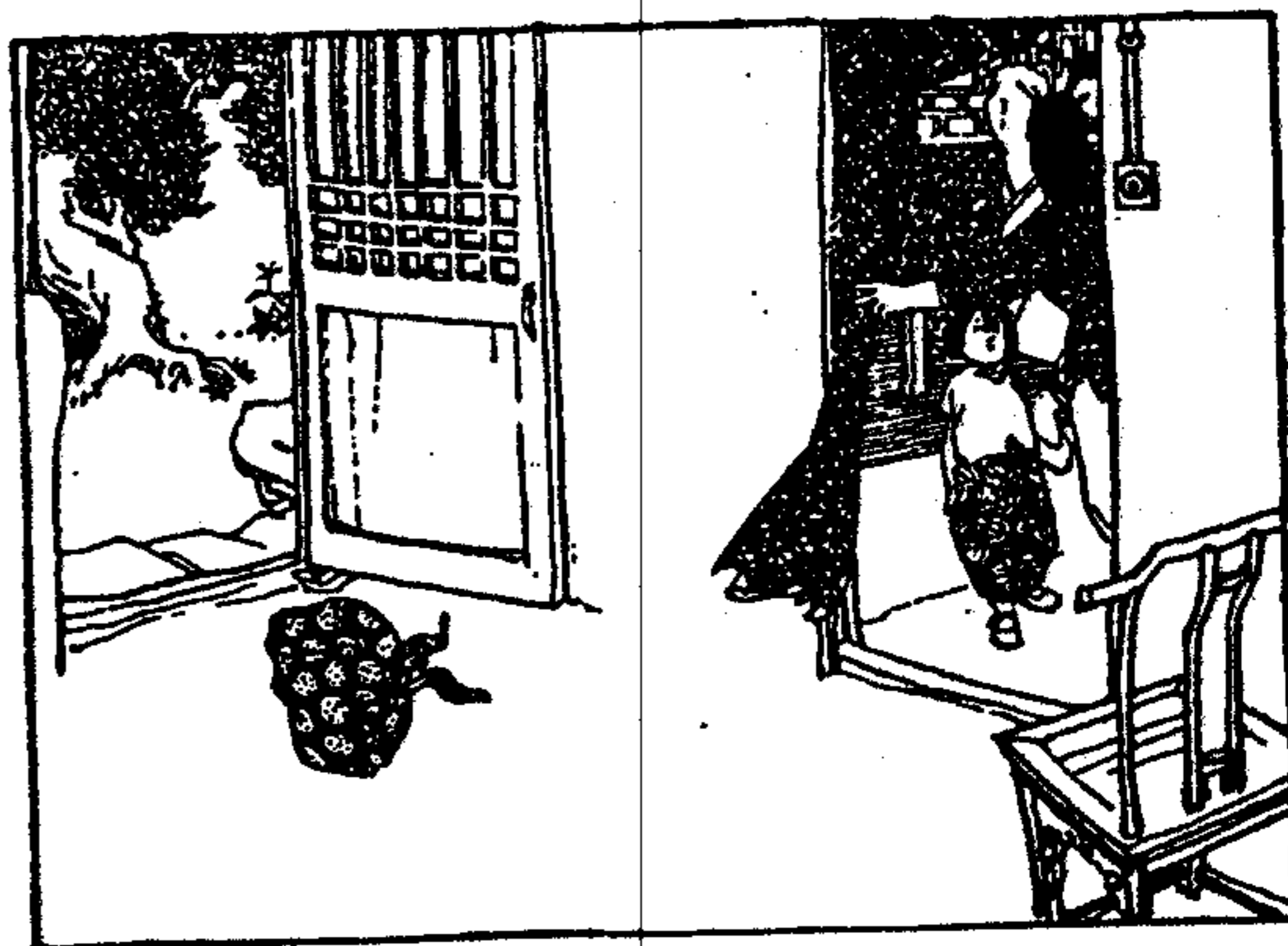


100. Raising a second finger, Xiwang said, "You are the leader of the women's team; just concern yourself with matters affecting production." Shuangshuang thought a bit and said, "That's all right as well; whatever happens I'll look after whatever I ought to do."

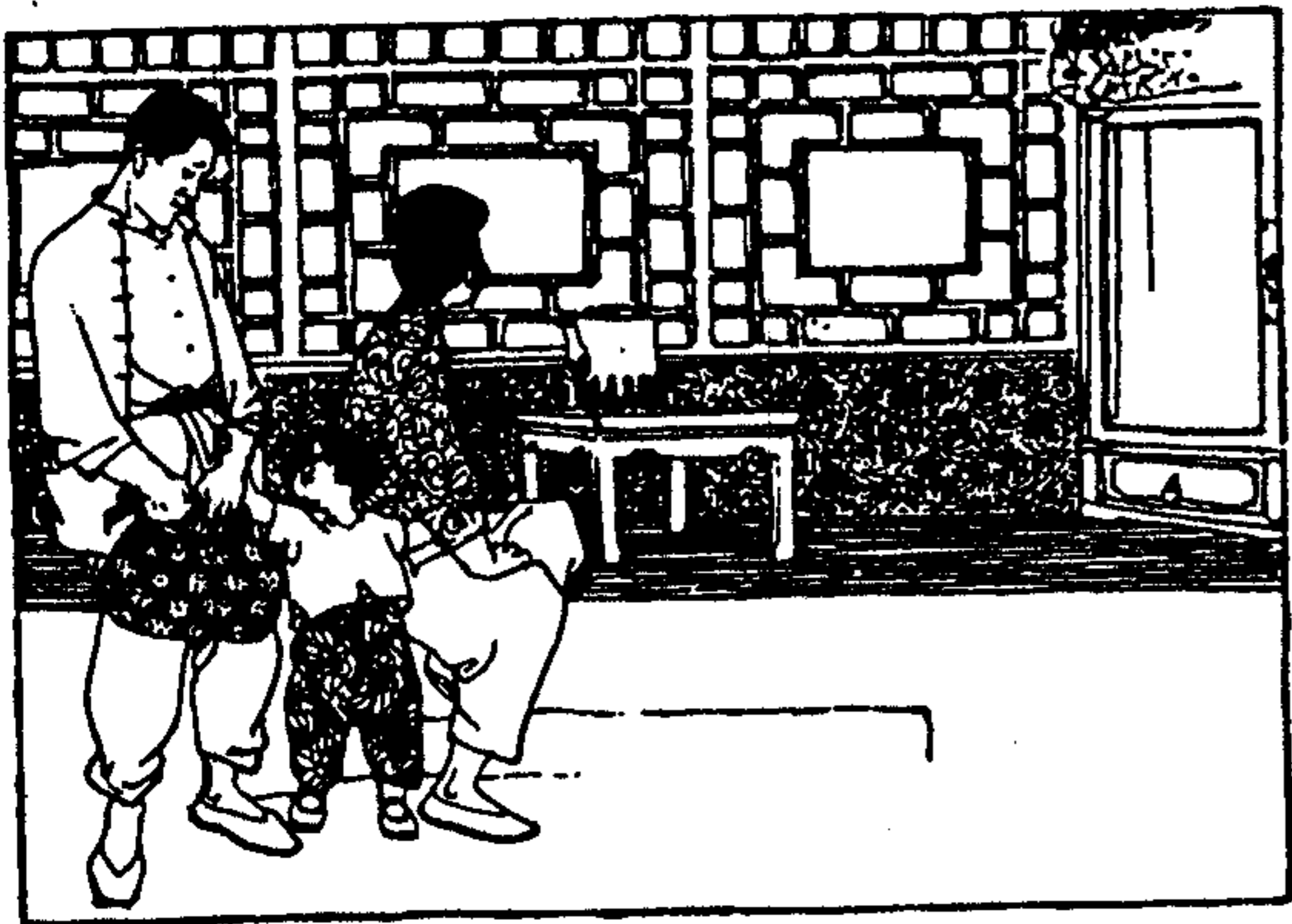
Take Jin Qiao, for example, he's an assistant team leader; you've got to learn to get along with him.



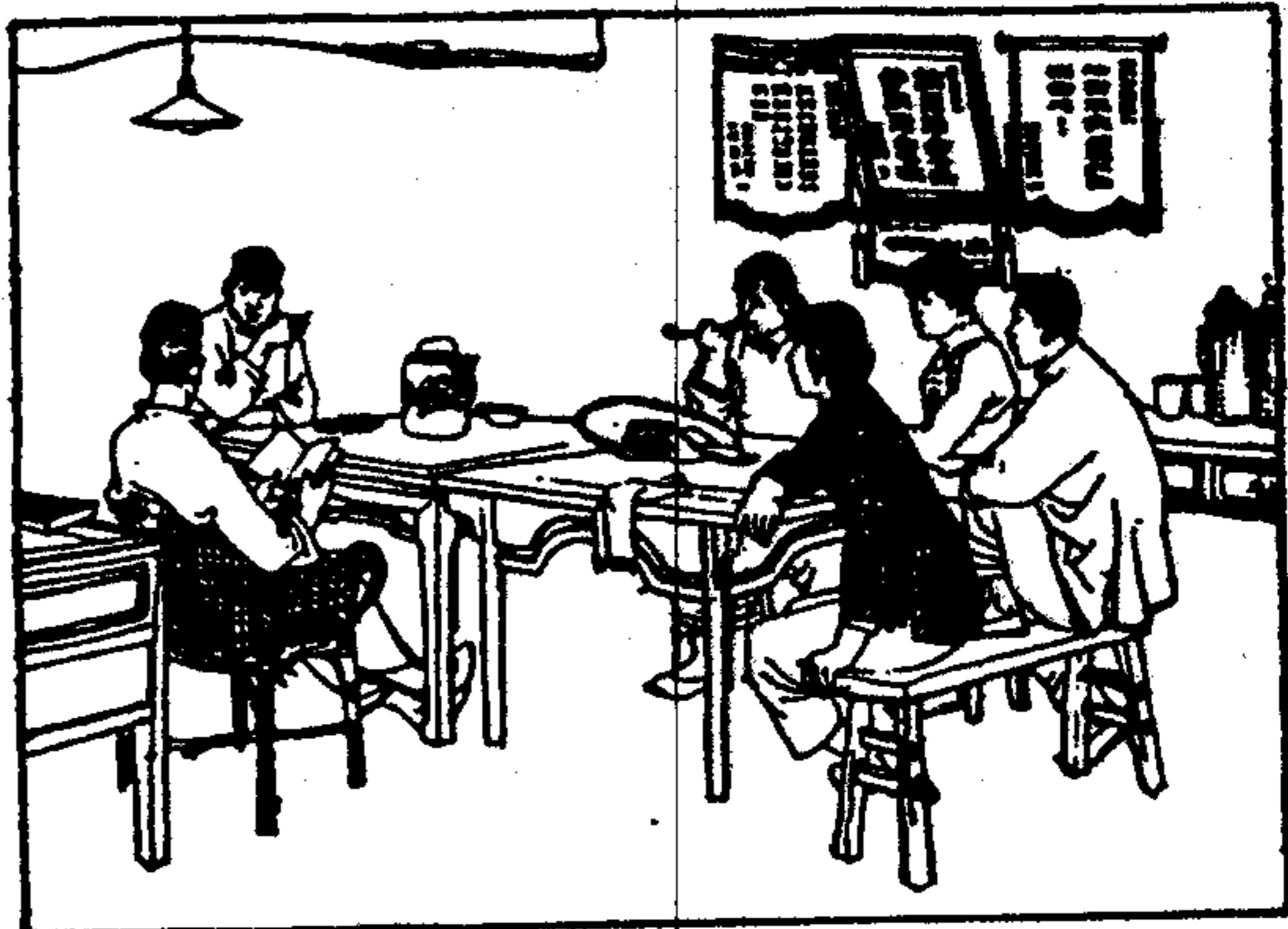
101. "As for the last rule, when you are dealing with people, give them some leeway and don't make so many proposals to the cadres. . . ." Before he had finished, Shuangshuang's expression suddenly changed and she snapped at him, "What?"



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



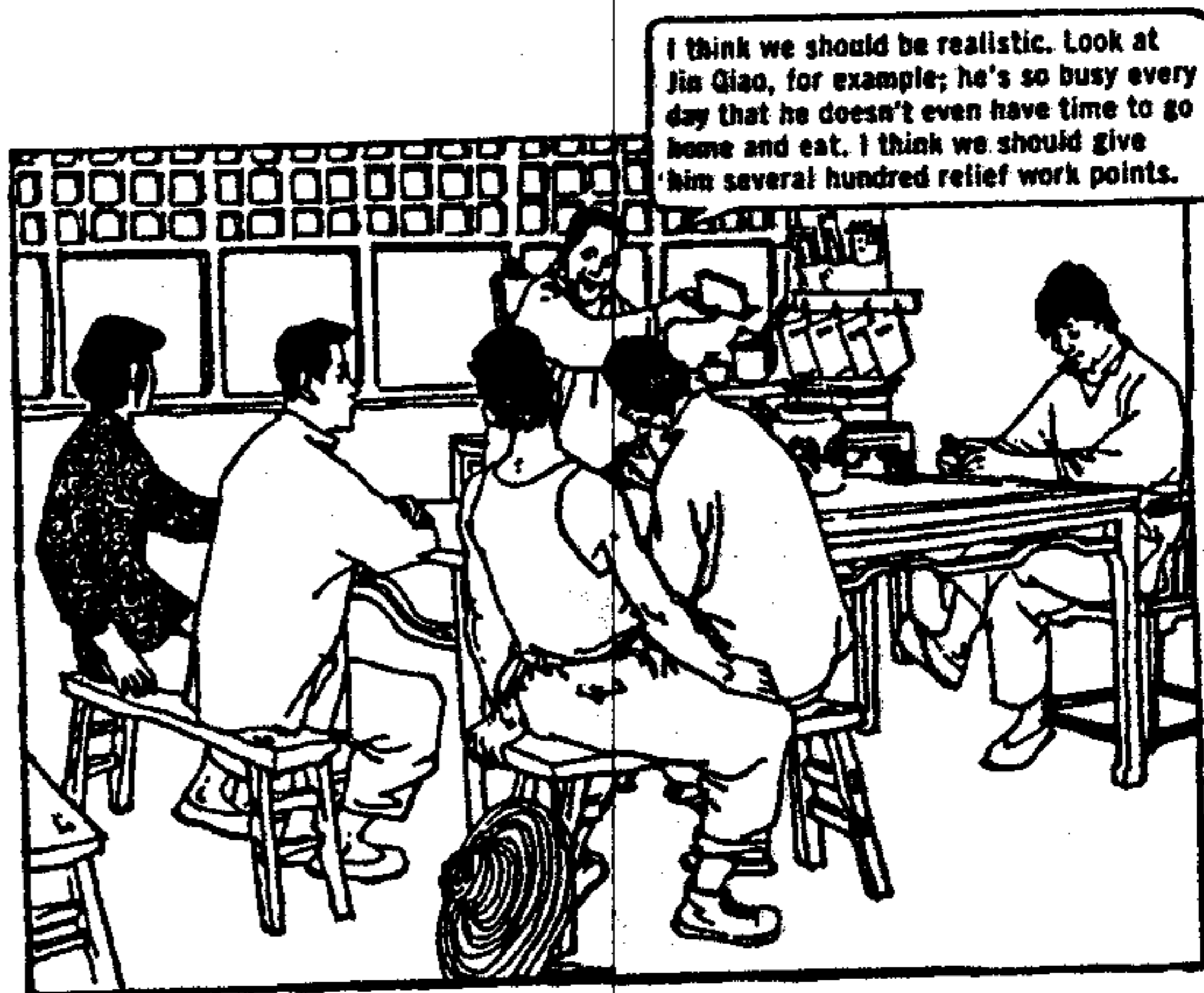
103. Originally Xiwang had only wanted to scare Shuangshuang; he had had no idea that she would react like this. He picked up the bundle and stood there dumbly, waiting. After a long time he said slowly, "There's no need for you to be angry. Let's say there are only two rules. I'll never mention the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

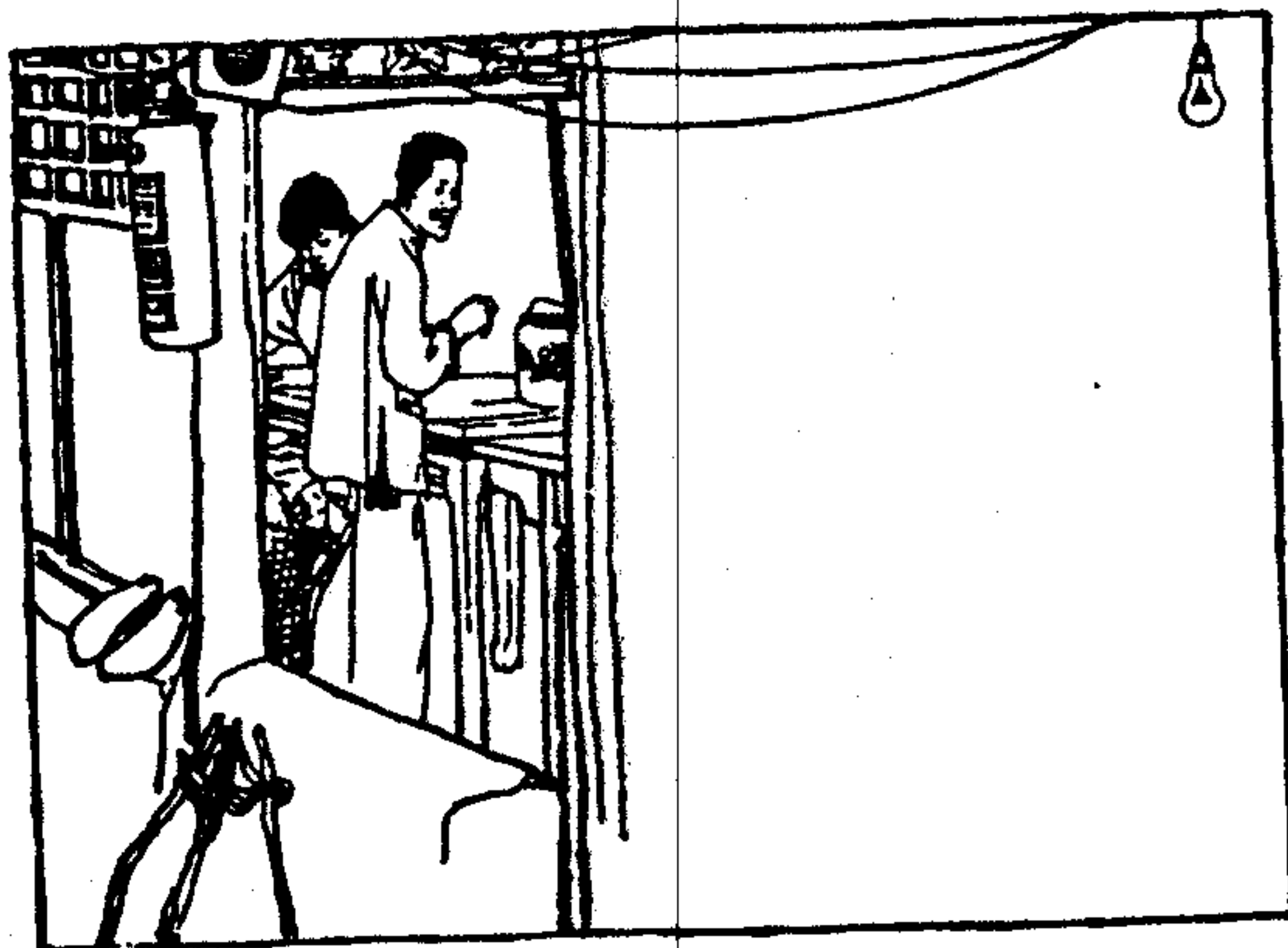


I think we should be realistic. Look at Jin Qiao, for example; he's so busy every day that he doesn't even have time to go home and eat. I think we should give him several hundred relief work points.

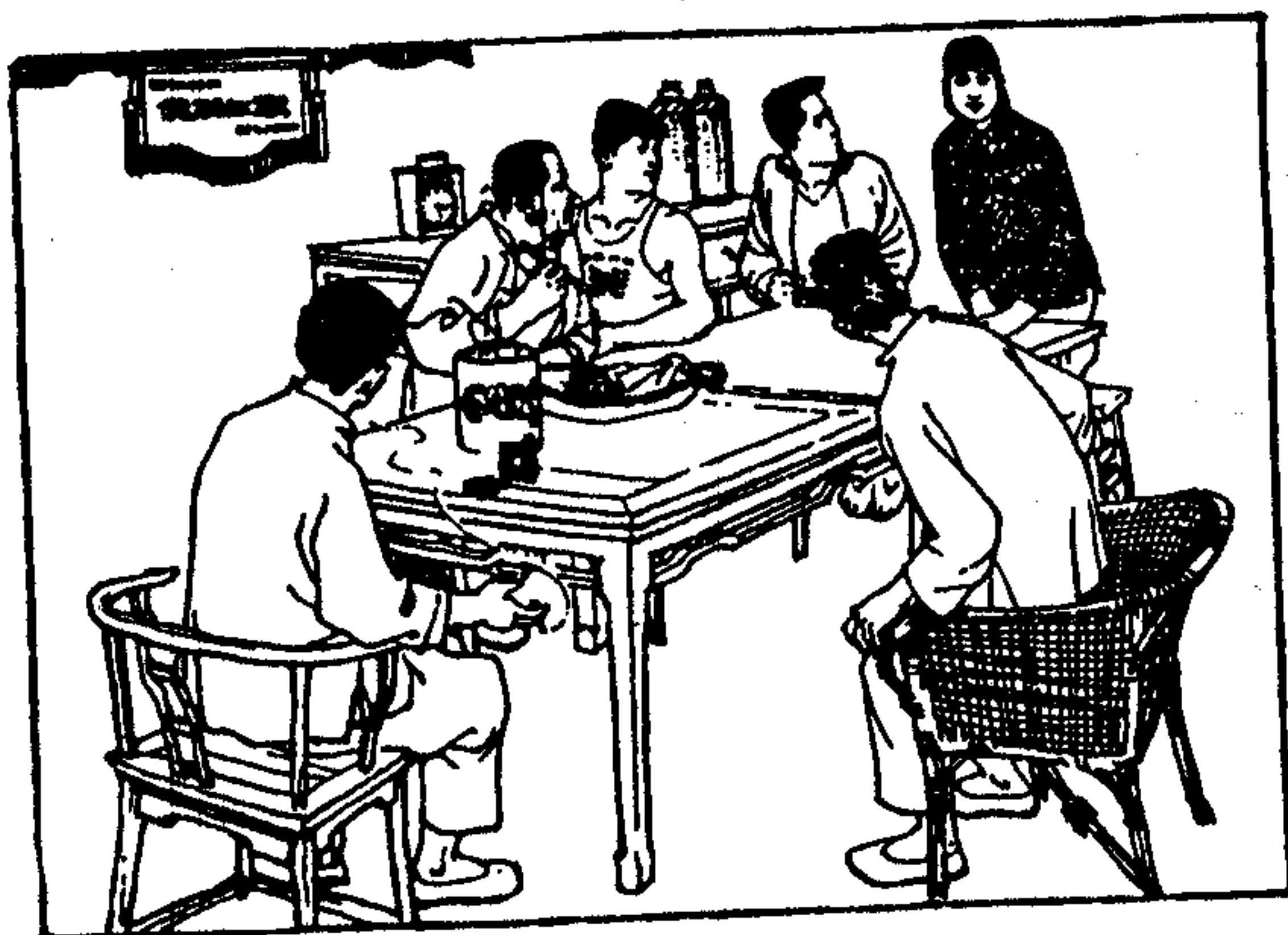
106. Shuangshuang burst out, "My family should not be a candidate for relief. A cadre should also be engaged in production." Er Chun agreed with her and also thought that cadre families should not qualify for relief work points. The accountant, on seeing that his first point met with little response,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



107. Shuangshuang frowned and thought to herself, "The former branch secretary is busier than anybody else and he manages. Da Feng 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.



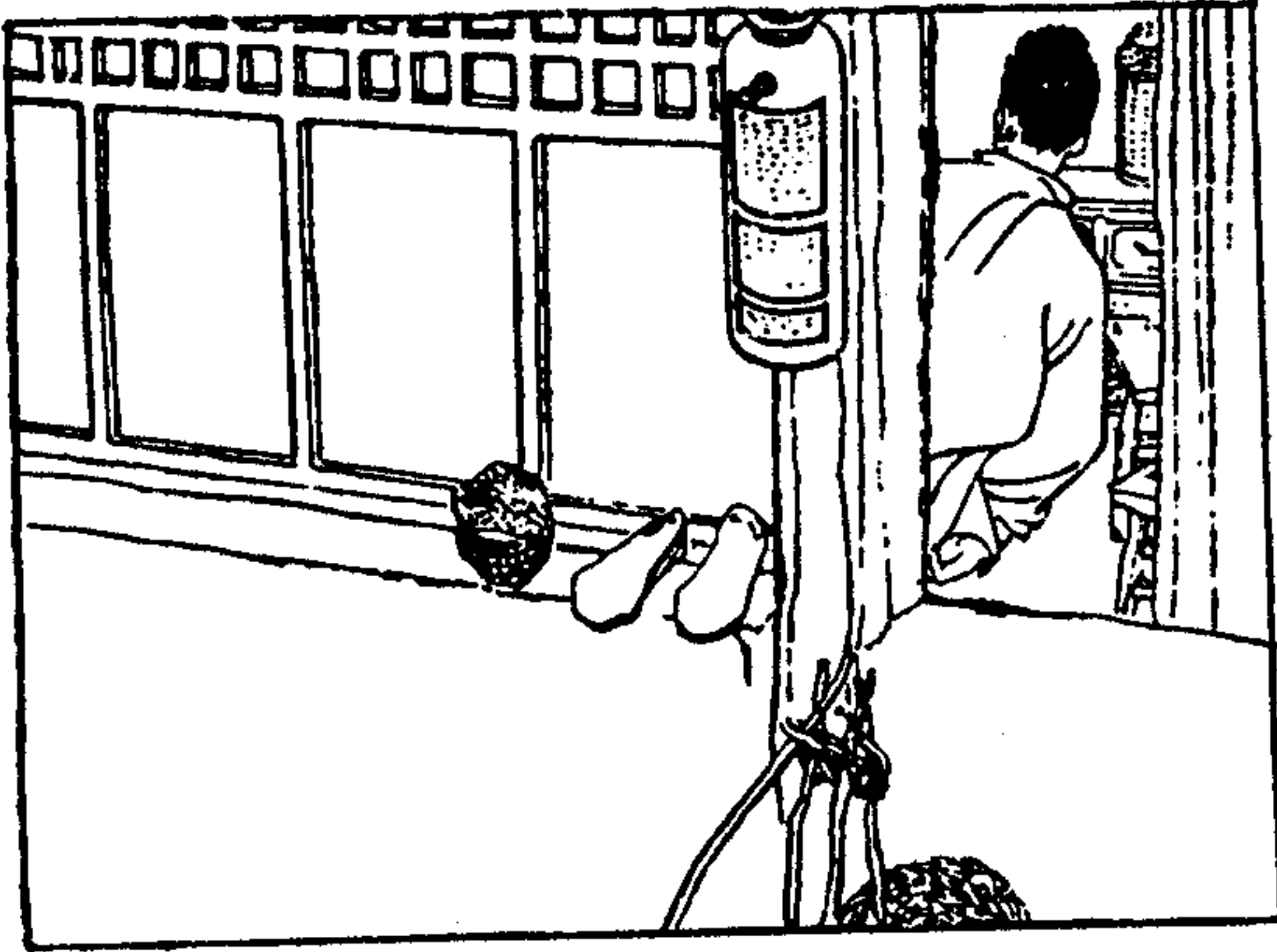
108. Jin Qiao wanted to avoid a stalemate so he craftily proposed that from then on he would do more labor. The team accountant, seeing the way things were going, joined in and said, "That's right. Whoever doesn't want to do labor work is a nobody. Shall we estimate Jin Qiao's household at several hundred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



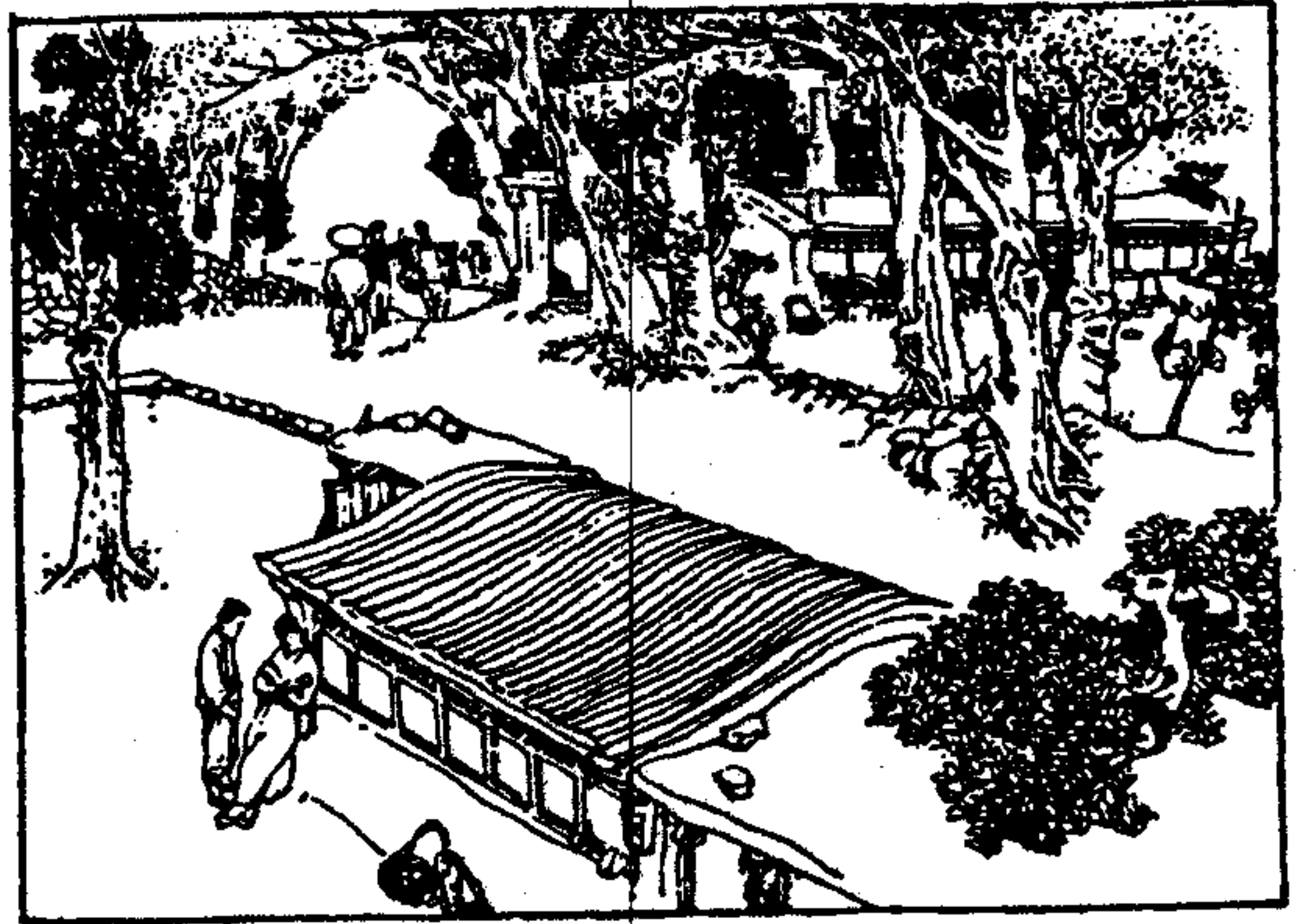
109. Shuangshuang could not bear it any longer. She jumped up and Xiwang hurriedly kicked her again. Shuangshuang returned a fierce kick and said in a loud voice, "I still have something to say."



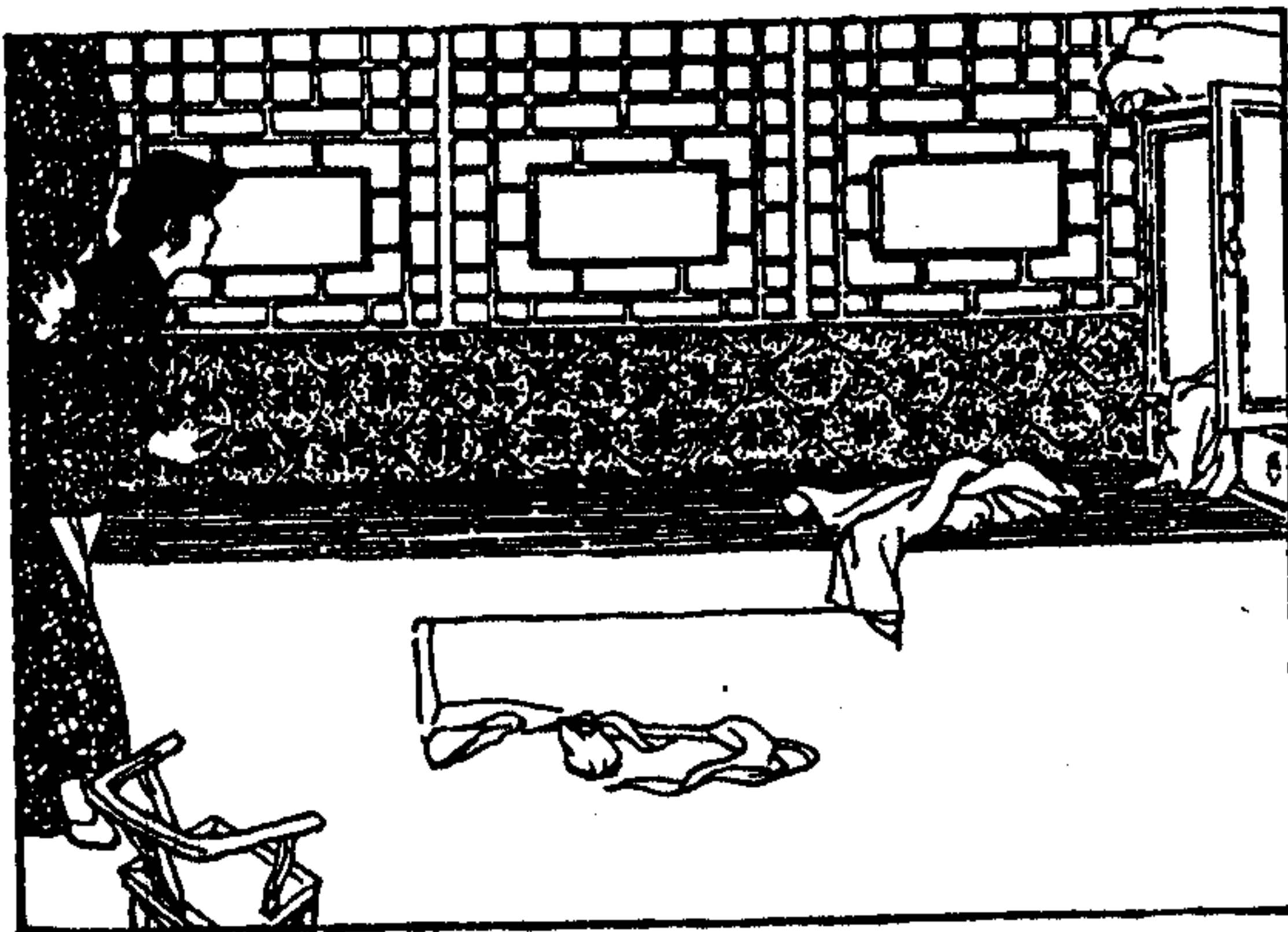
110. First she told them what she had been thinking and then she asked Jin Qiao why he didn't even pick up a spade or let his wife Da Feng go down to the fields. Jin Qiao lowered his head without a word and could think of nothing to say.



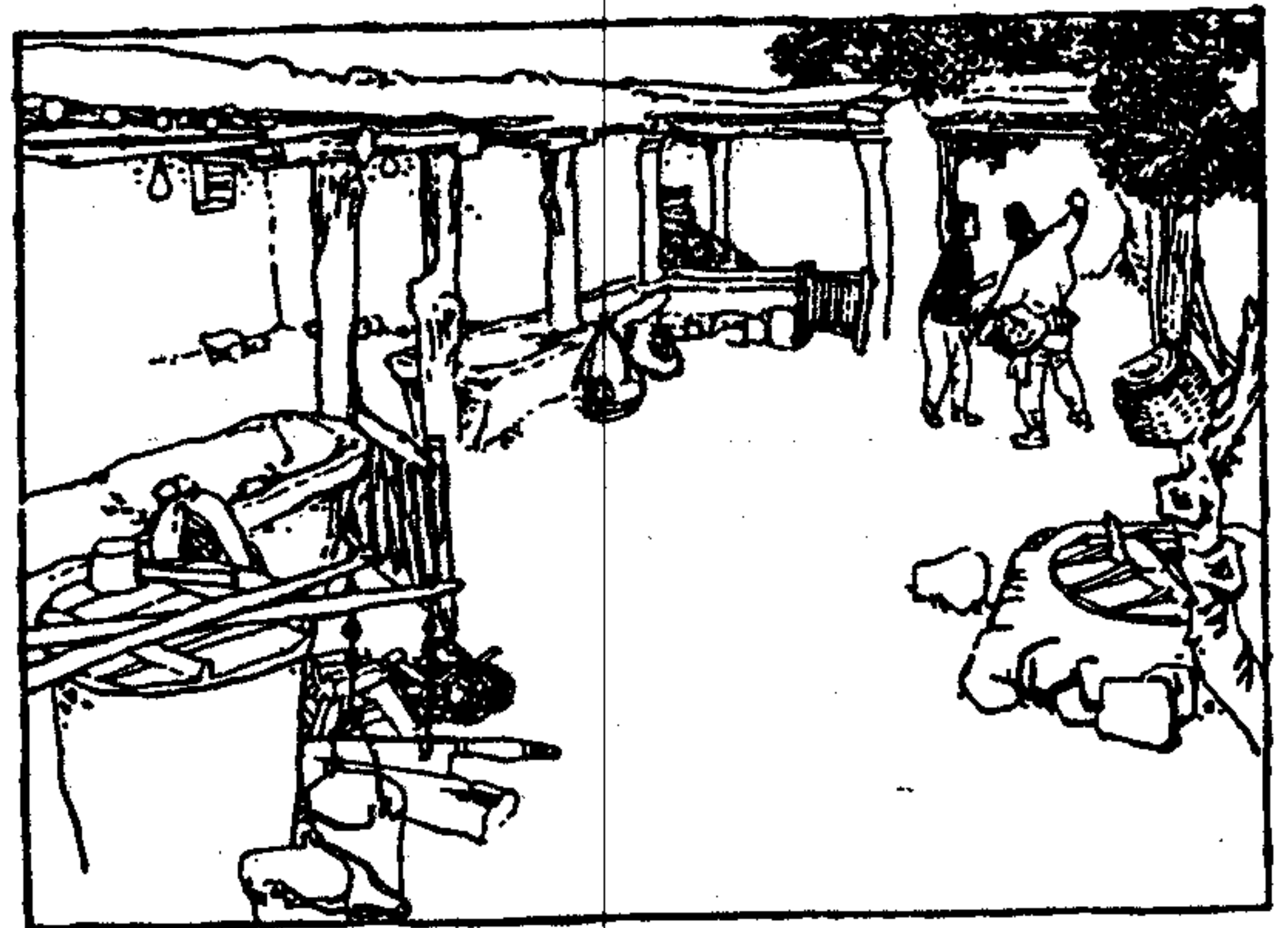
111. Xiwang tried to say a few words to resolve the impasse, but he was immediately rebuffed by Er Chun. Then, pulling at Shuangshuang's sleeve, Jin Qiao said, "All right, all right. After this, if I get work points, I'll eat, but if I don't get work points, I won't come to you!"



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.



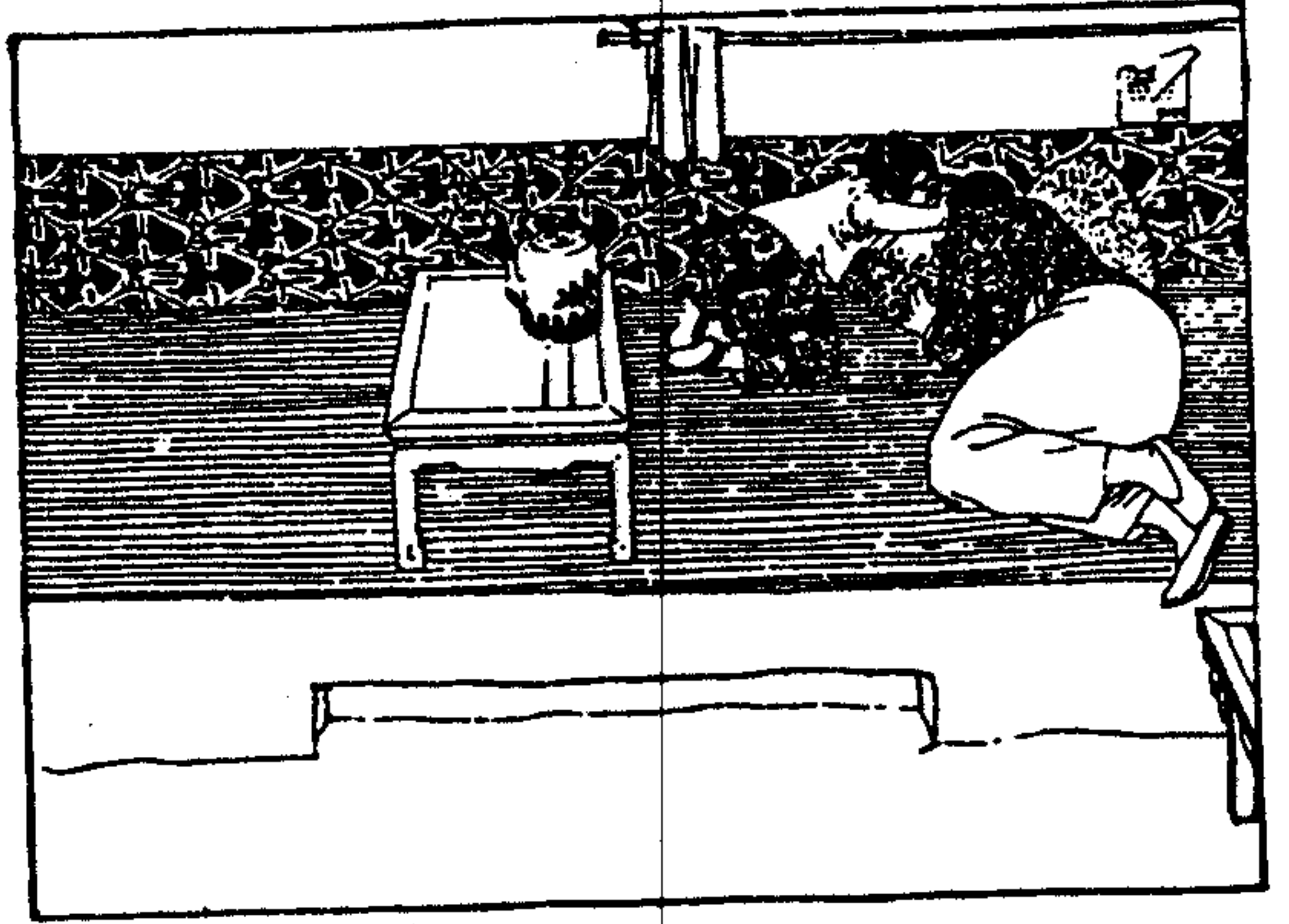
113. When Shuangshuang got home, she was startled to see that everything had been turned upside down in the house, and after a quick check she found that a blanket and a pillow were missing. Xiwang was gone.



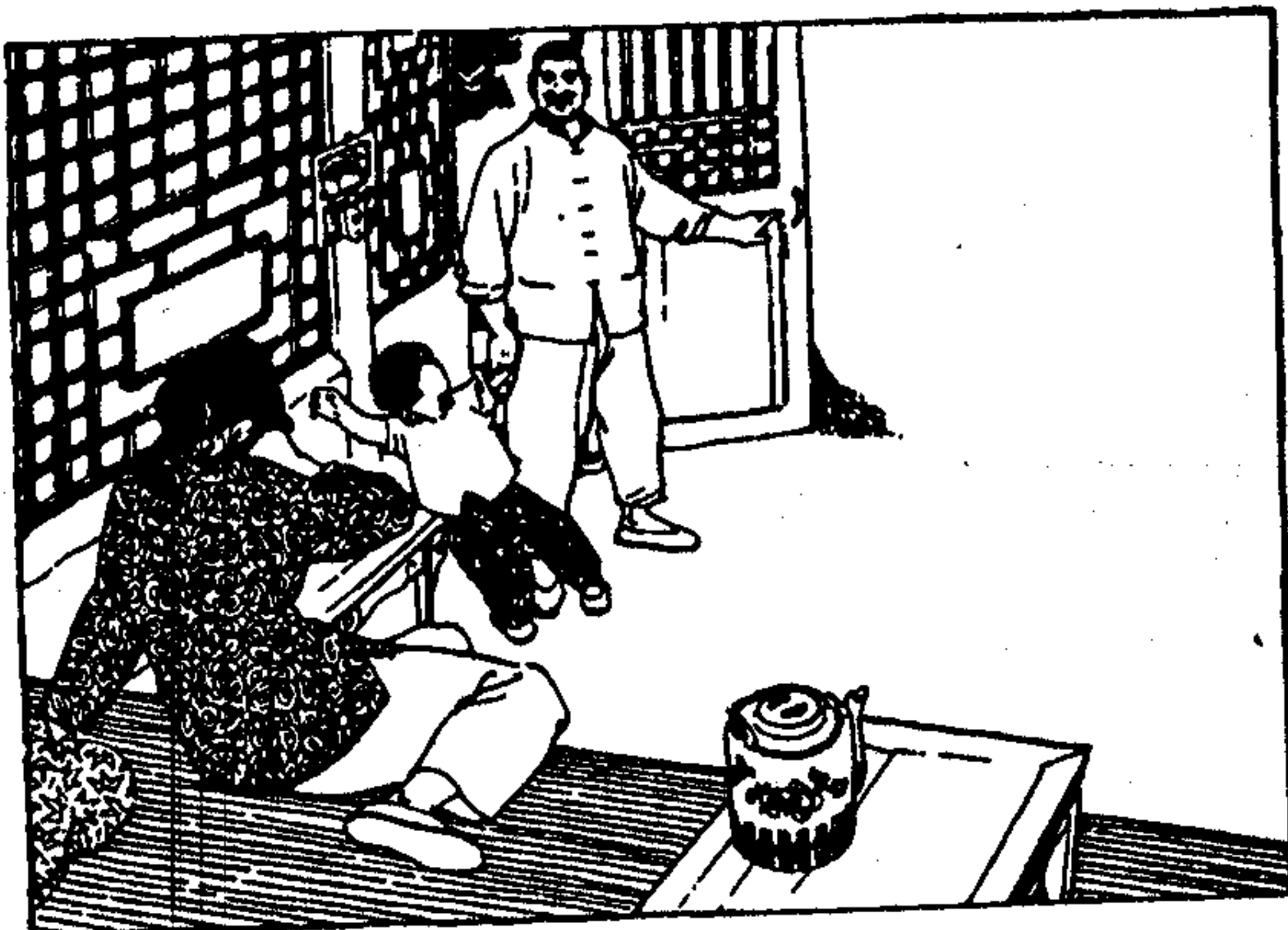
114. Hurriedly she looked for him all over the village but with no success. She rushed to the cart depot and found out from old Gengpo that Xiwang had just left the village with Jin Qiao and Sun You on a cart.



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.



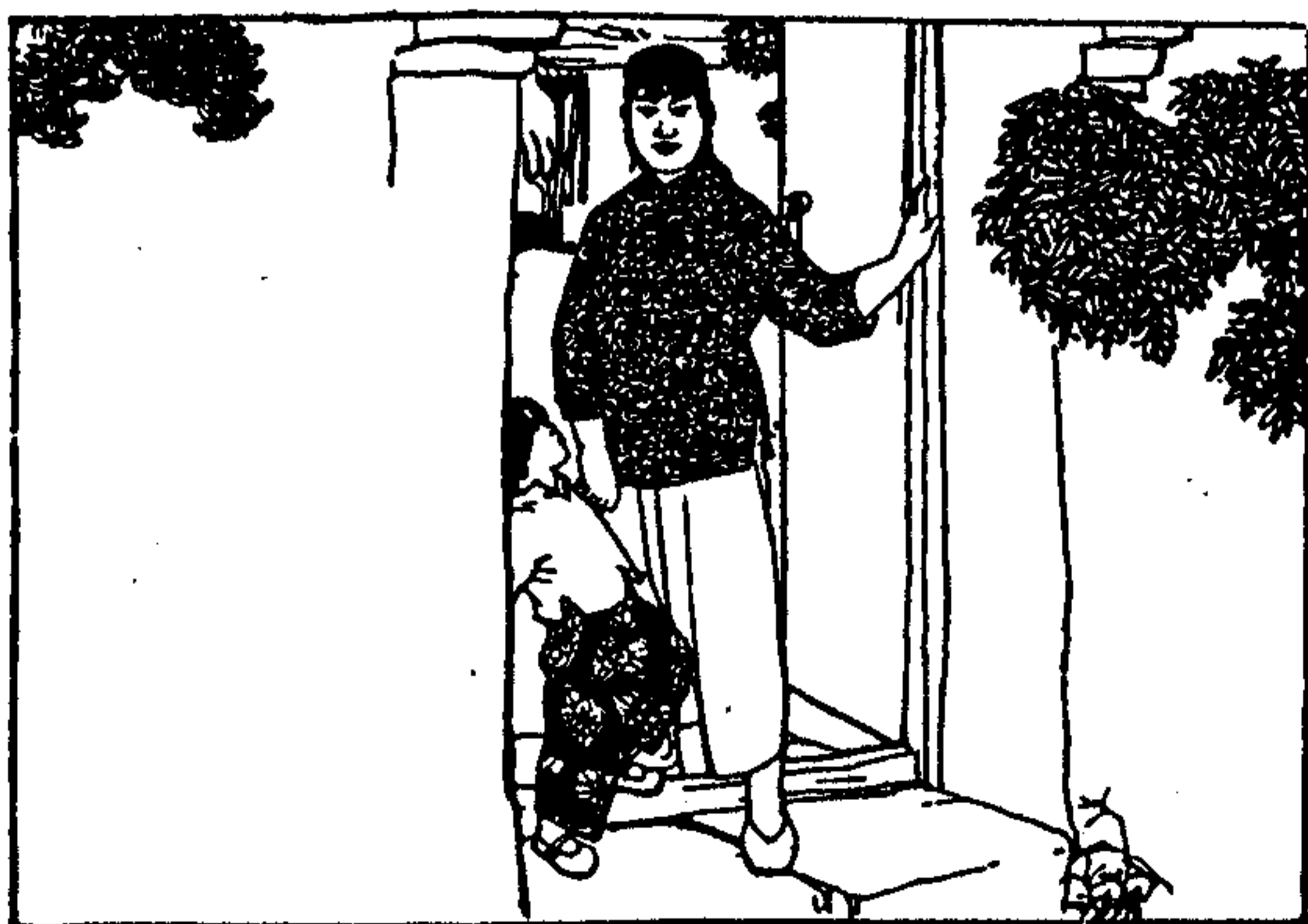
118. He sat down with a sigh. "What's the matter? Has Xiwang left you?" Shuangshuang shook her head. "Life goes on. Even if this work-point recorder leaves me, I, as a cadre, still have work to do."



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."



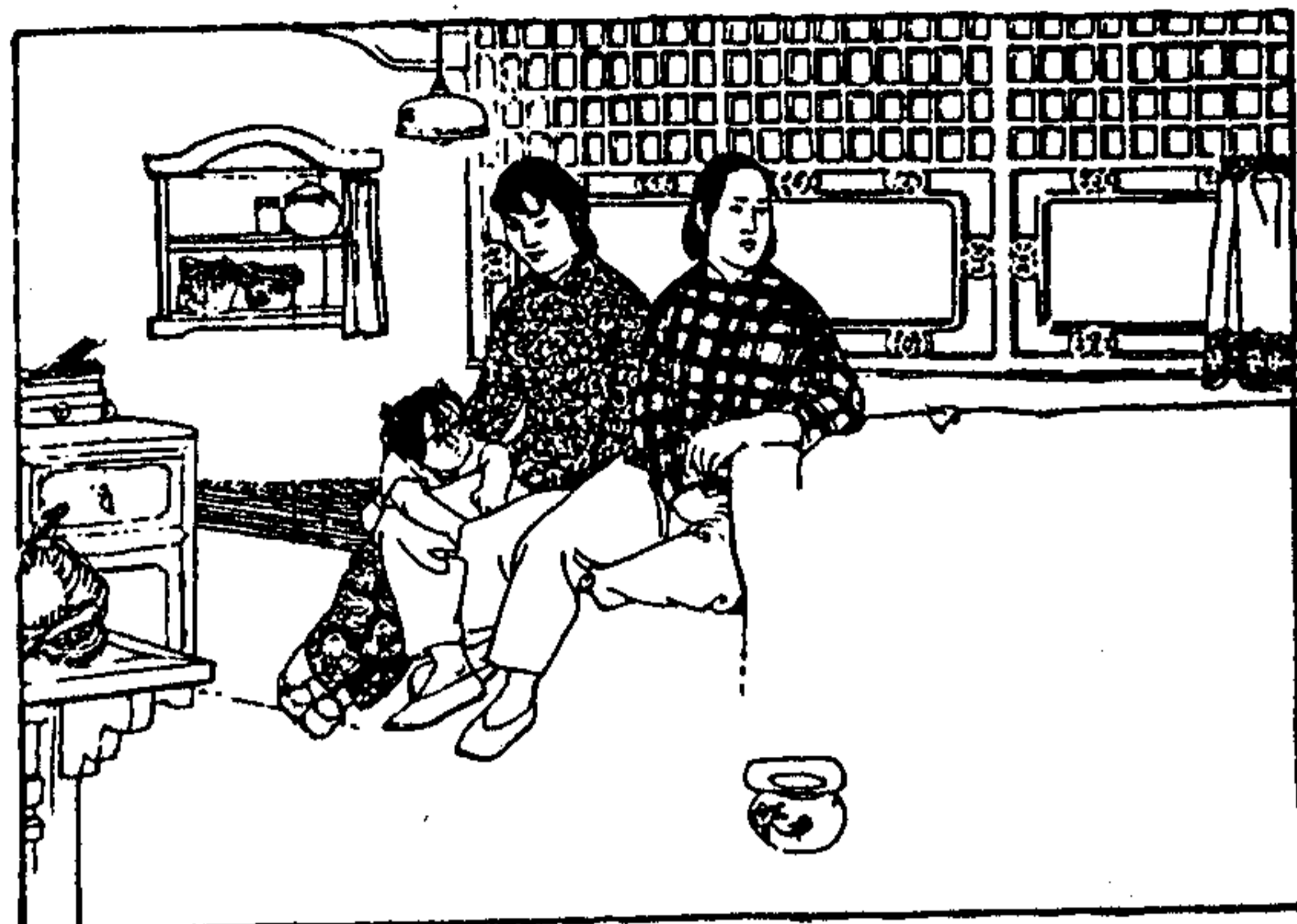
120. Shuangshuang nodded but, still unsettled, asked the branch secretary to judge who was right and who wrong. He said, "Your criticism of Jin Qiao was correct! Cadres should take part in production and in doing so lead production..."



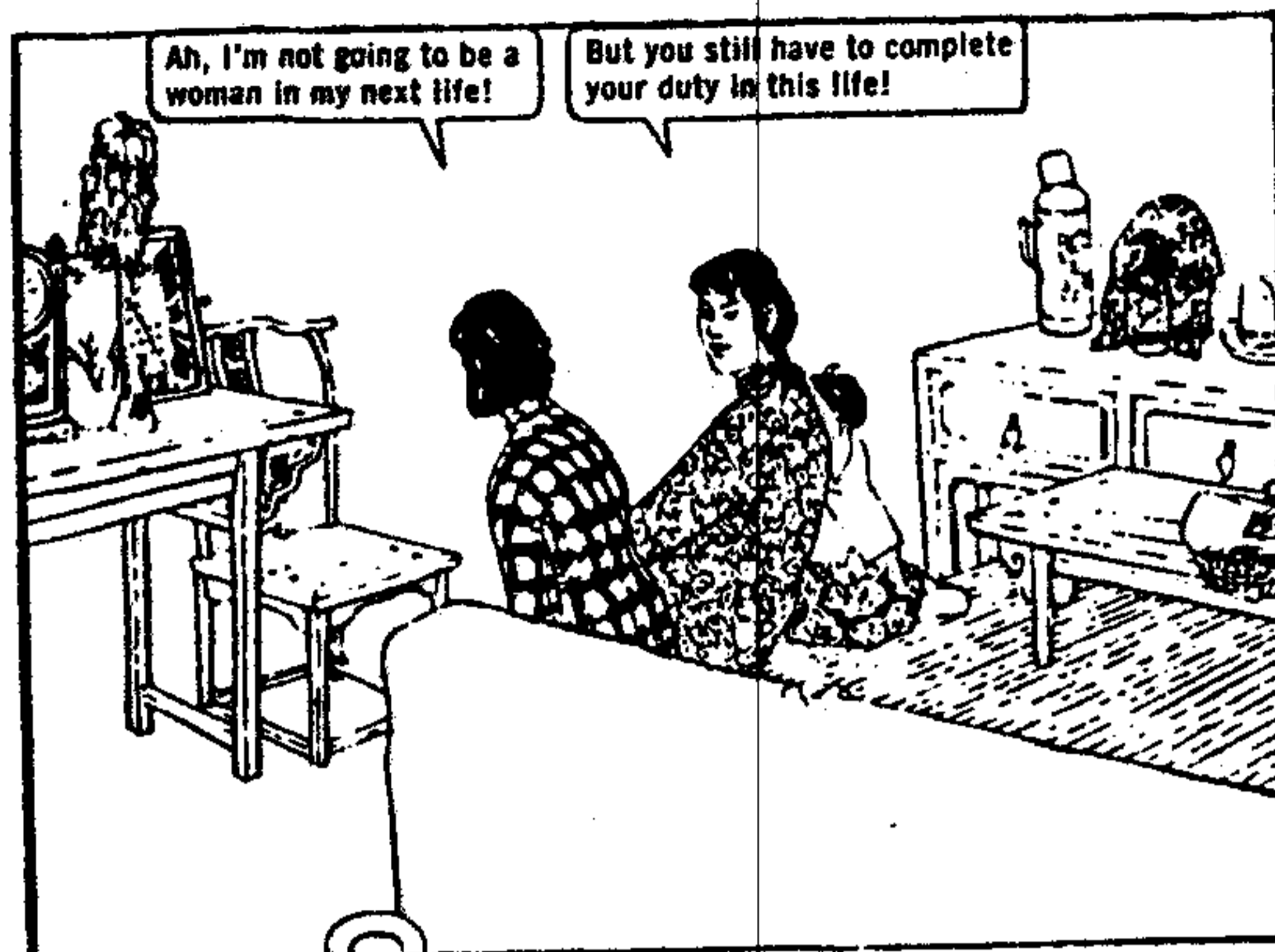
121. After he had left, Shuangshuang thought to herself that any negligence in the work of the team could affect the livelihood of several hundred people and that she must never be slack herself but should bring the women together to get on well with their work. After eating supper she took Xiao Ju with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



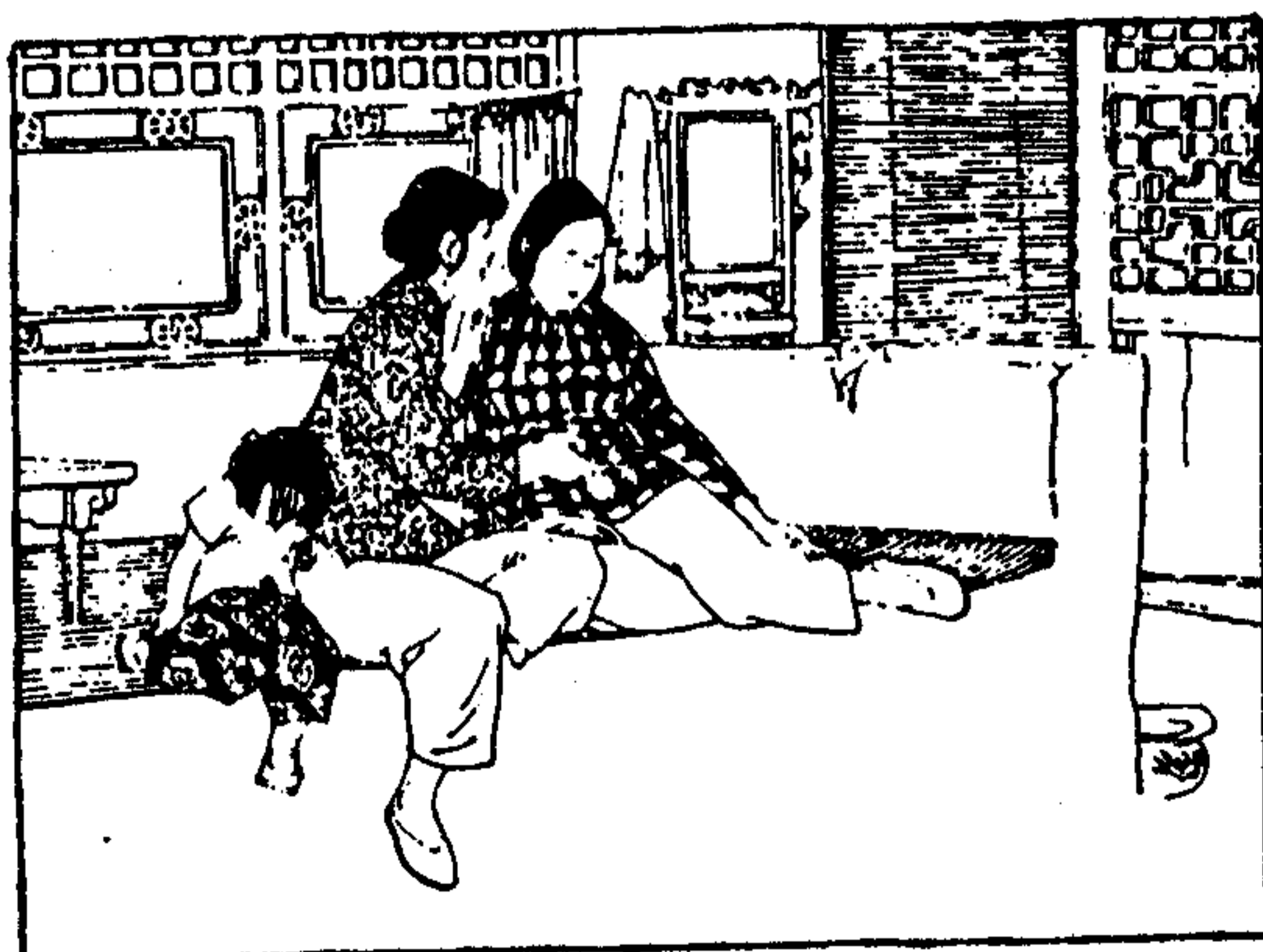
122. Da Feng was crying at the side of the kang. She heard a noise at the door and saw that it was Shuangshuang. She gave her an angry glance and then quickly turned away. Sizing up the situation, Shuangshuang paused a second and then, plucking up her courage, went forward towards the kang.



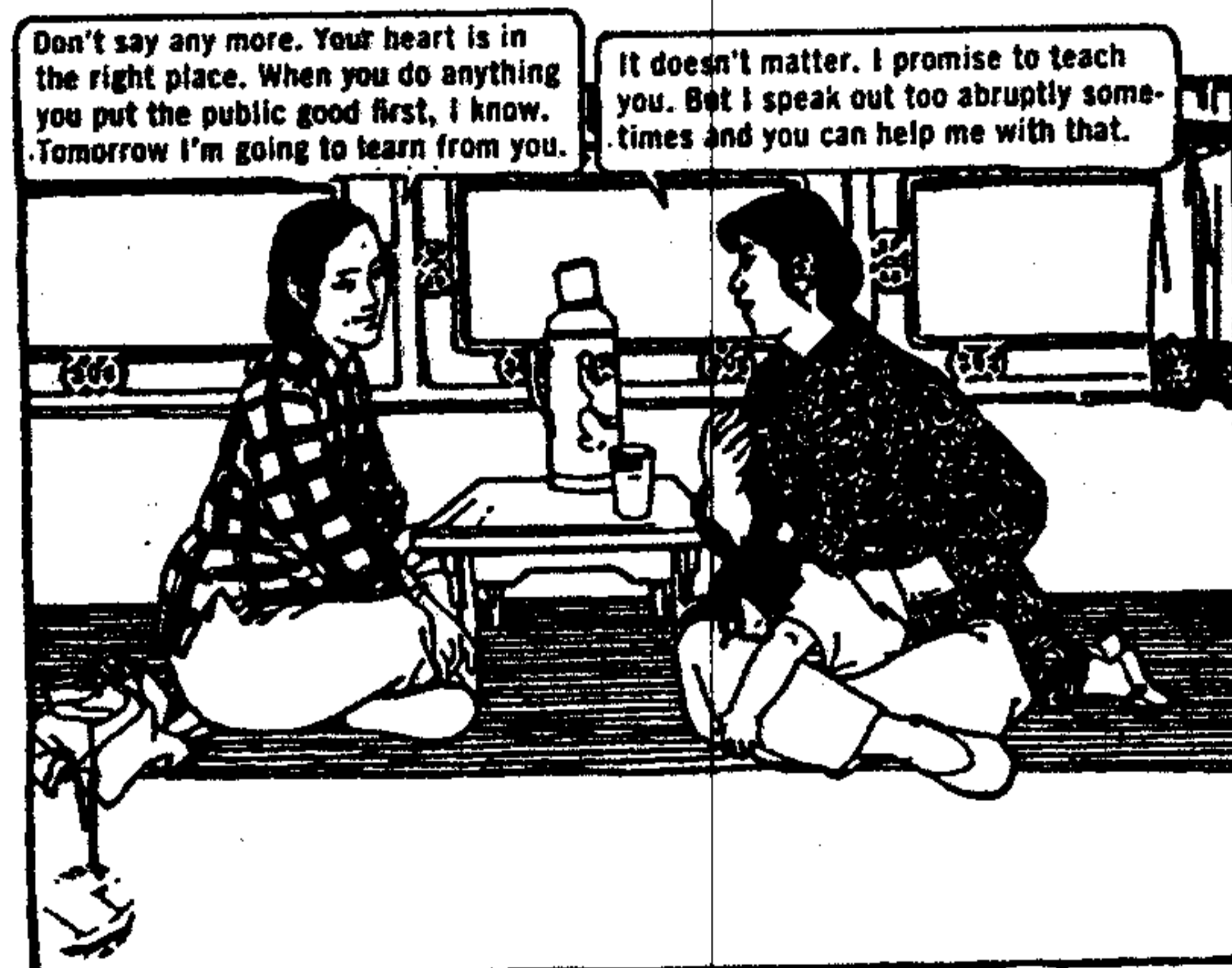
123. Da Feng raised her head angrily and stared straight at Shuangshuang. "What have you come for? Aren't you content with driving my man away?" Shuangshuang shook her head and said gently, "No, I've come to see you. I tell you, Xiao Ju's father has also gone!"



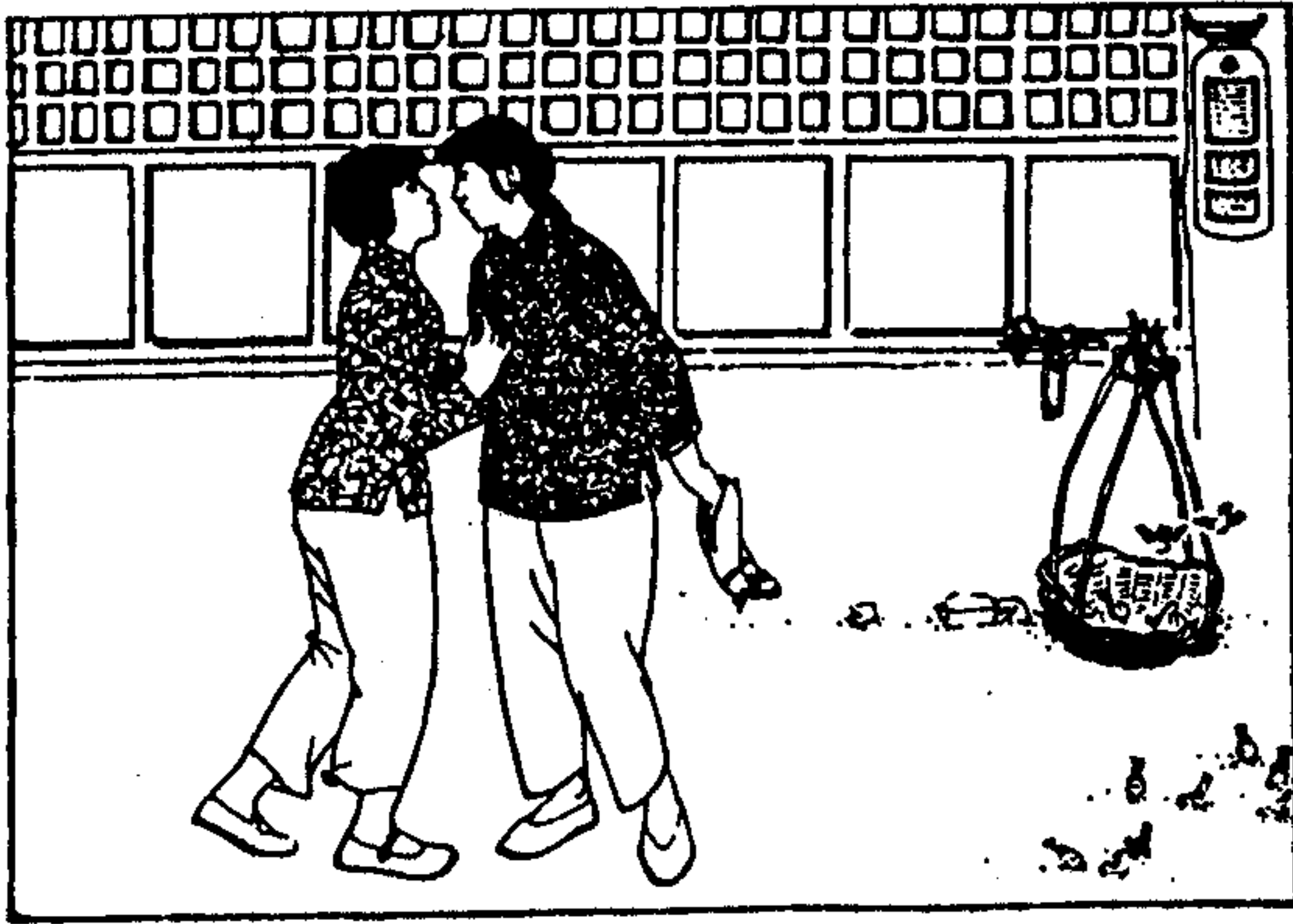
124. When she heard this, Da Feng became more friendly and said with a sigh, "What's the use of pressing them so hard? Men are all the same; if you don't do as they say, they give up their family and run off."



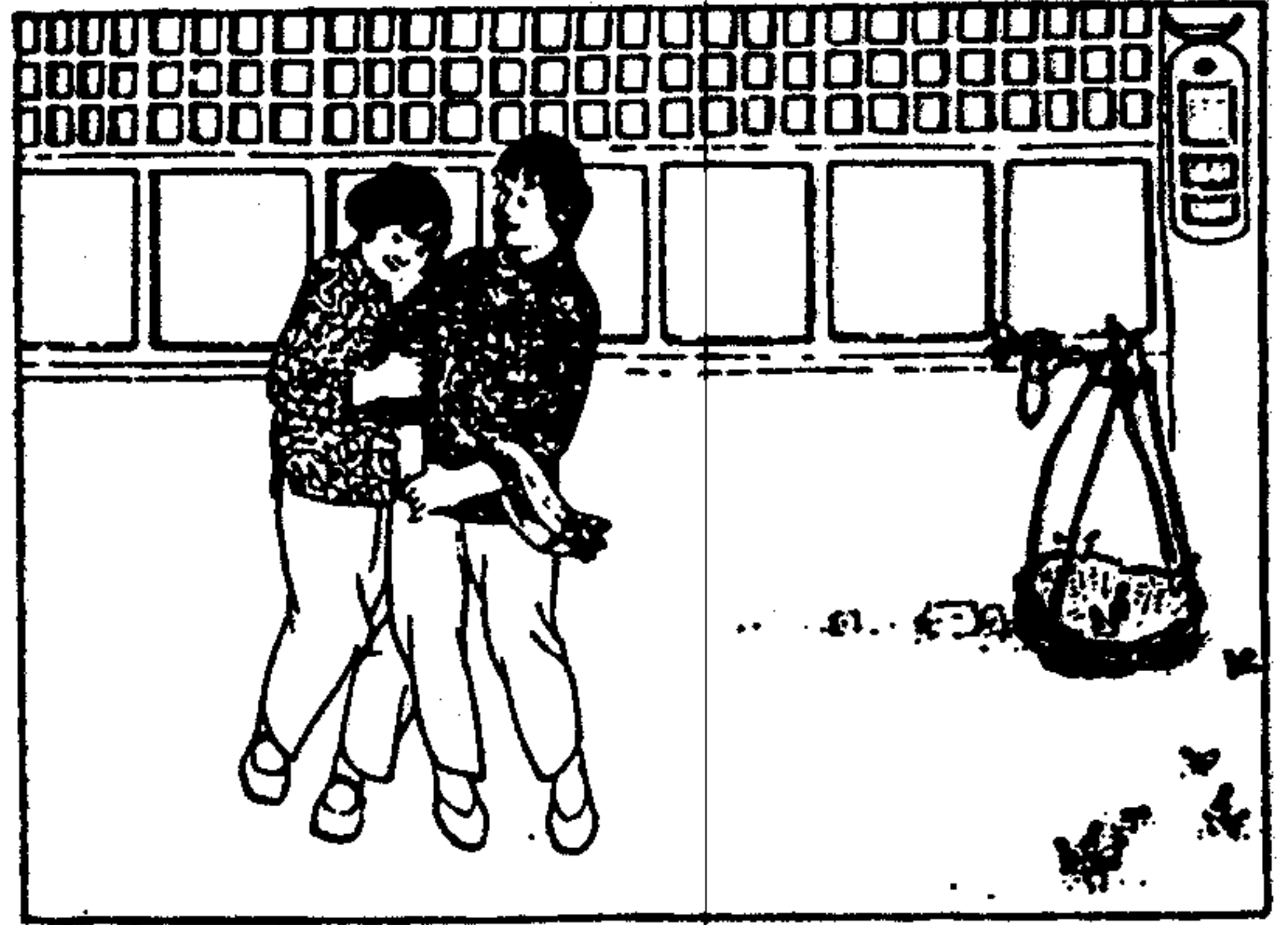
125. Shuangshuang quickly turned the conversation onto the right track. "Da Feng, don't worry! We women have two hands as well! With them we can grow crops and cultivate cotton. Is it not right and glorious that we should eat the fruits of our labor and wear the clothes that we ourselves have produced?"



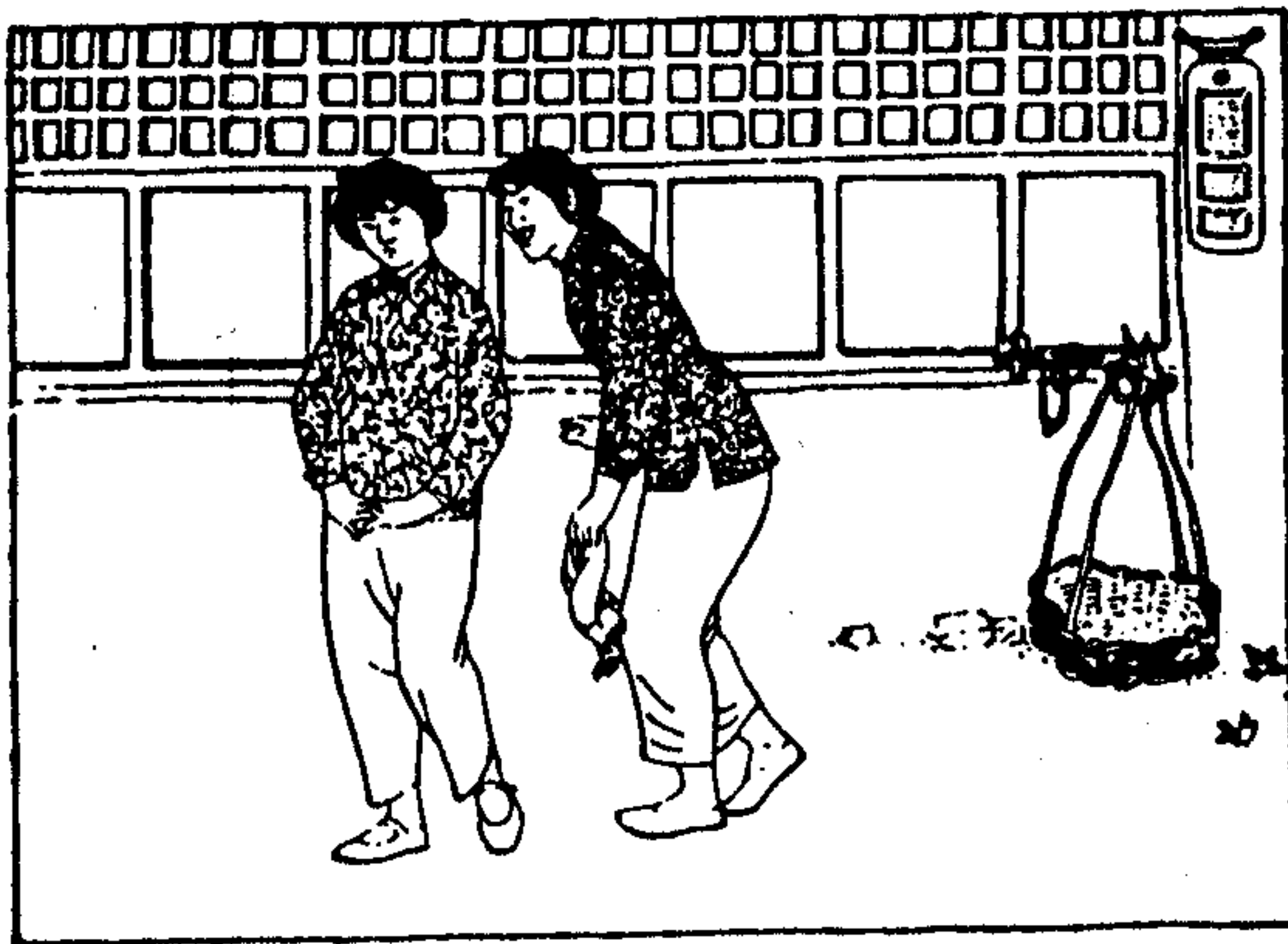
126. Then Da Feng, nodding, started to say what was on her mind. She said that it was not that she did not want to go down to the fields but that there were certain agricultural tasks she couldn't do. Shuangshuang saw that she had understood and quietly encouraged her. The two continued laughing and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



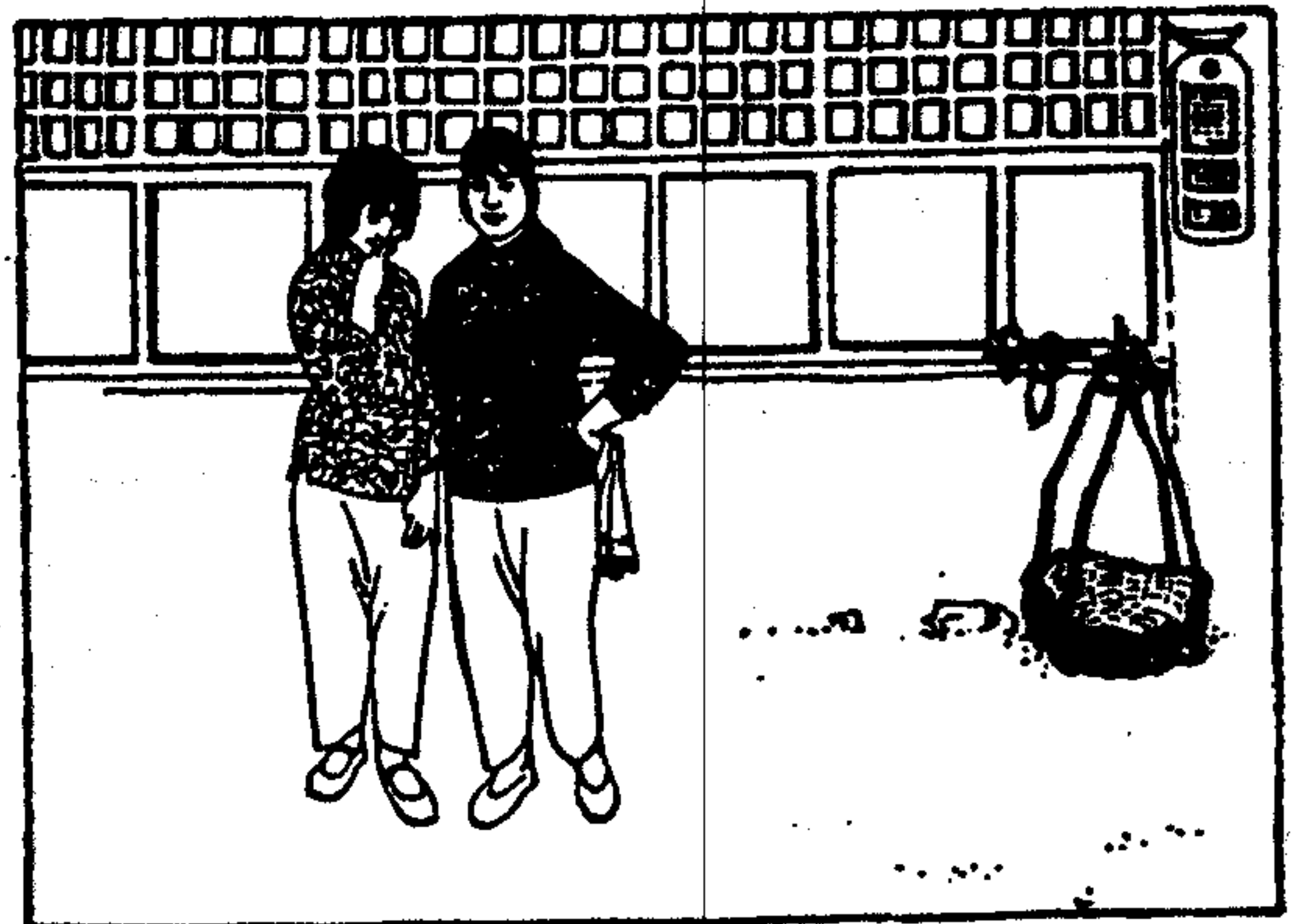
127. The more Shuangshuang went around to the women in their homes, the more they rallied round to follow her. On this particular day Shuangshuang bumped into Gui Ying just as she was leaving the office. Gui Ying held on to Shuangshuang's arm and said, "Auntie, I was just looking for you! Hurry up, hurry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



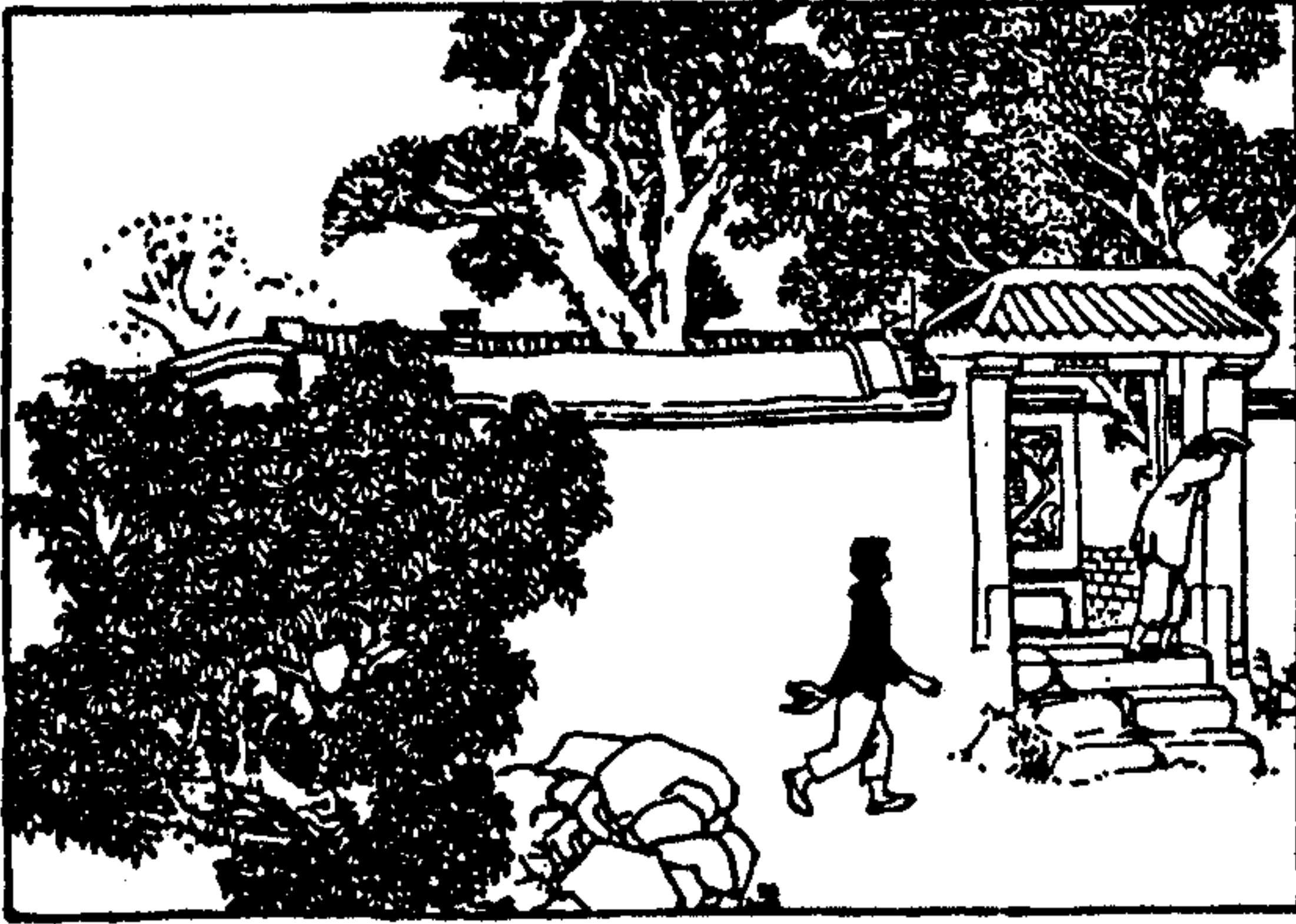
128. Shuangshuang hurriedly asked, "What's the matter? What's made you so flustered?" Gui Ying explained that her mother had told Jin Qiao to find a fiancé for her in the town and that today he was coming to ask her hand. Shuangshuang asked her what she intended to do about Er Chun. Gui Ying blushed. "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?"



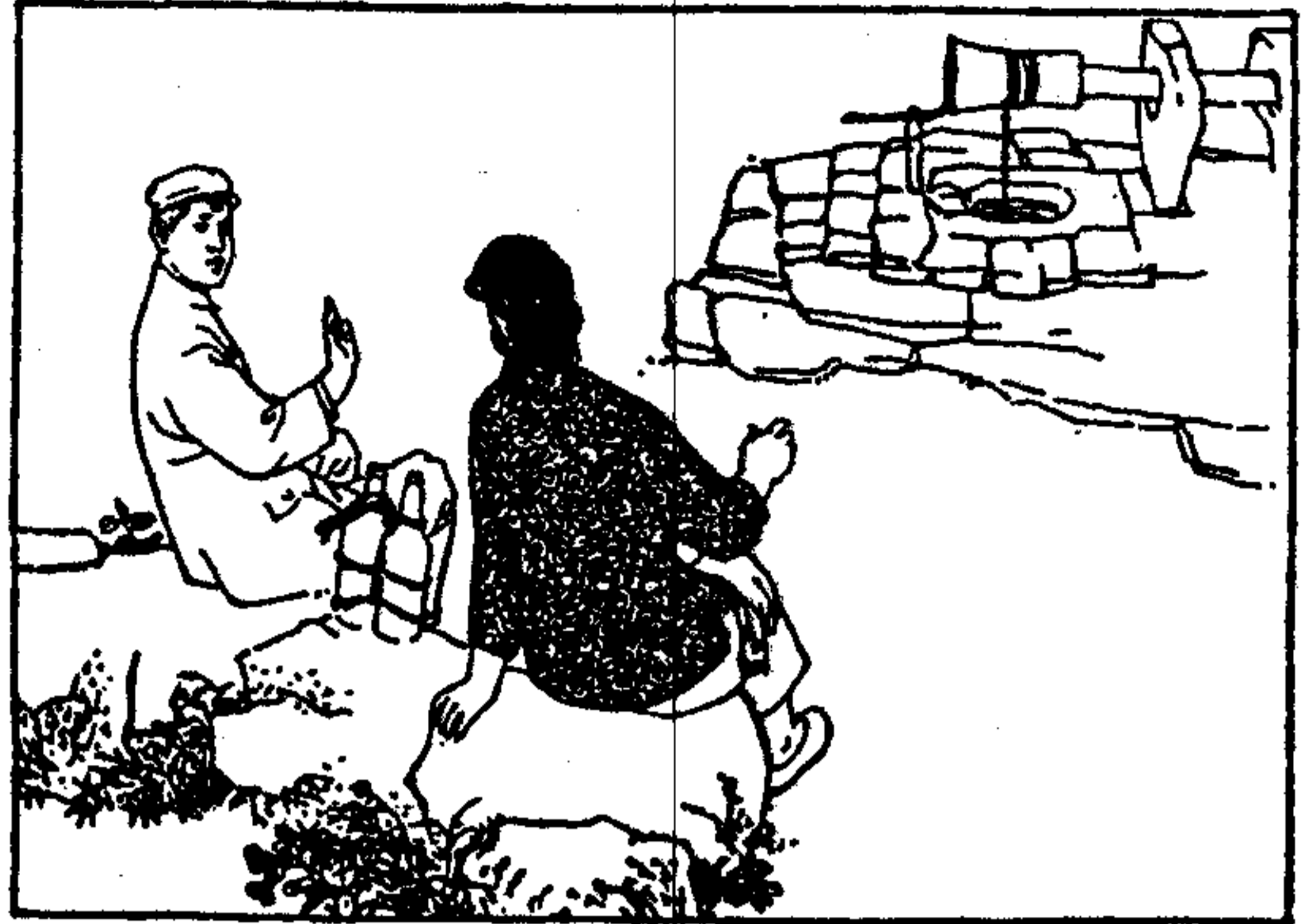
133. Xiao Wang, dressed in his best suit, responded with surprise and started to get uneasy. Shuangshuang smiled and said, "I knew you were going to come today!" Xiao Wang felt even more uneasy and was speechless for a long while before inquiring, "Ah, is auntie in good health?"



134. Shuangshuang asked, "You've come to get engaged, haven't you? Do you know Gui Ying?" 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 Ying's aunt and Gui Ying 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. . . ."



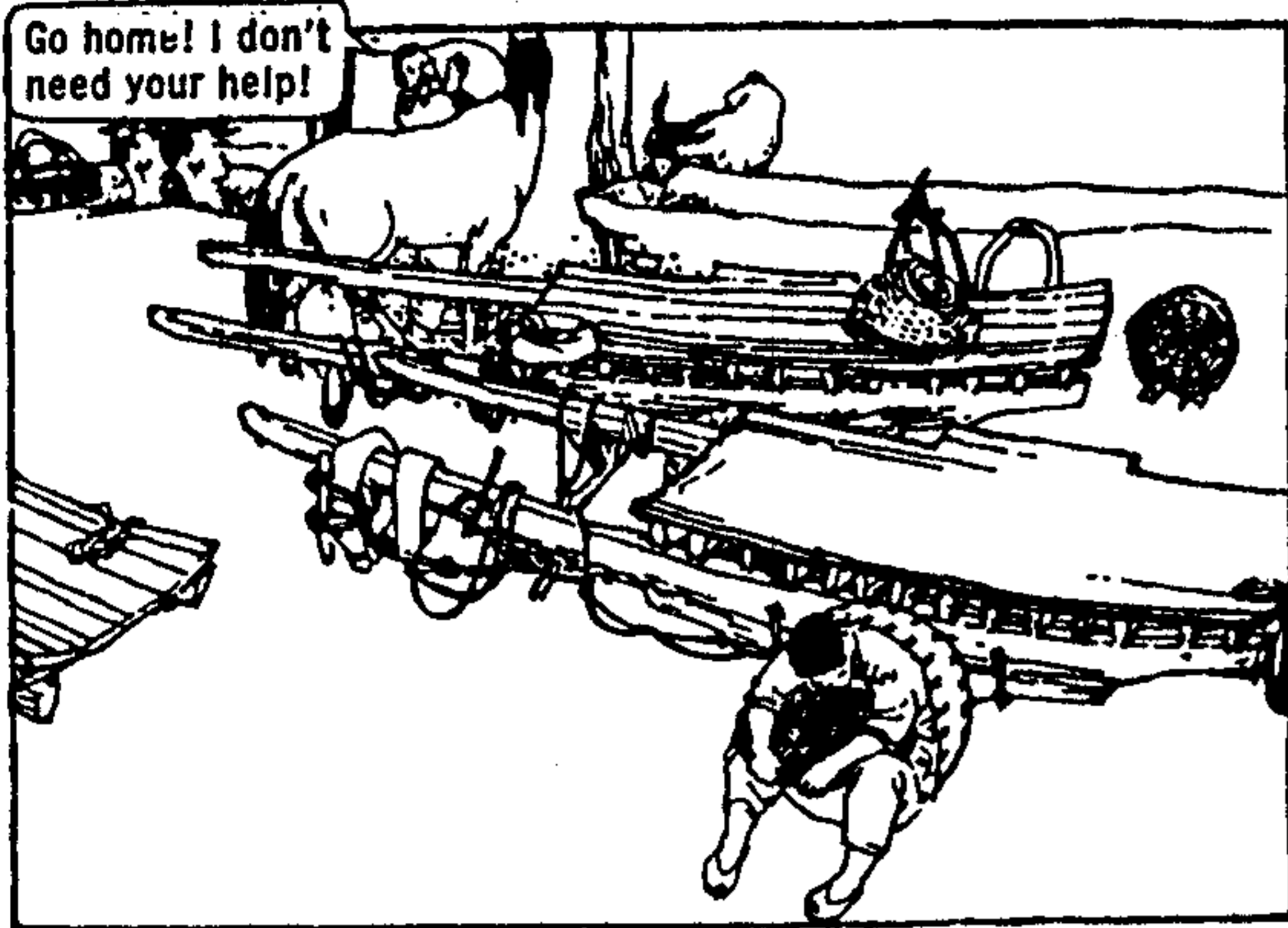
136. Xiao Wang looked as if a pail of cold water had been tipped over him, and Shuangshuang said, "Comrade, it's not your fault. It is Gui Ying's mother who wants to marry her to you so that you will take Gui Ying with you to live in the town." Xiao Wang waved his arm vigorously. "That's no good. Today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



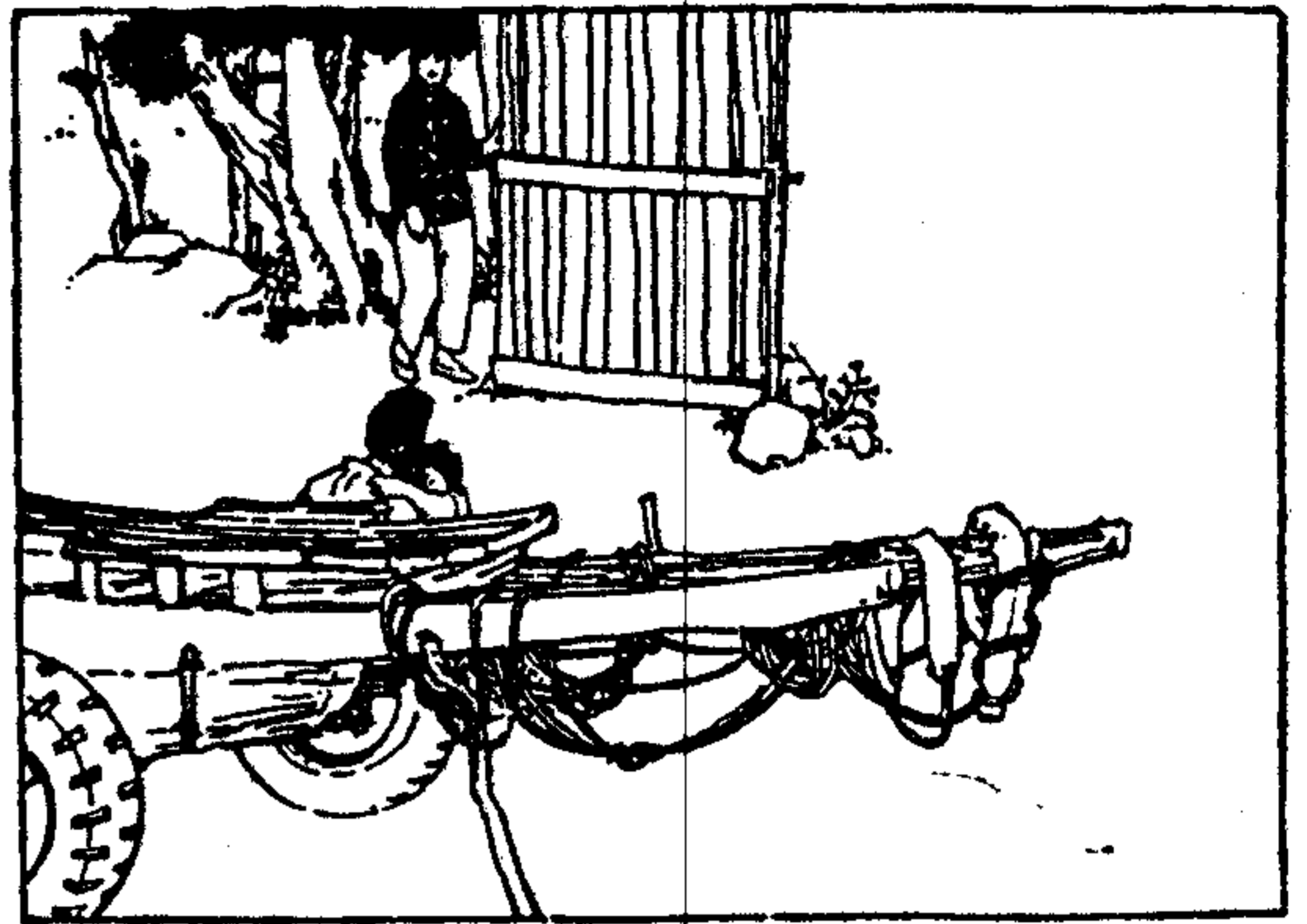
137. Shuangshuang then pressed him to go and see Gui Ying, but he hurriedly said, "Oh no, there's been a slight misunderstanding! Please tell Comrade Gui Ying that I wish to apologize to her." With this he left.



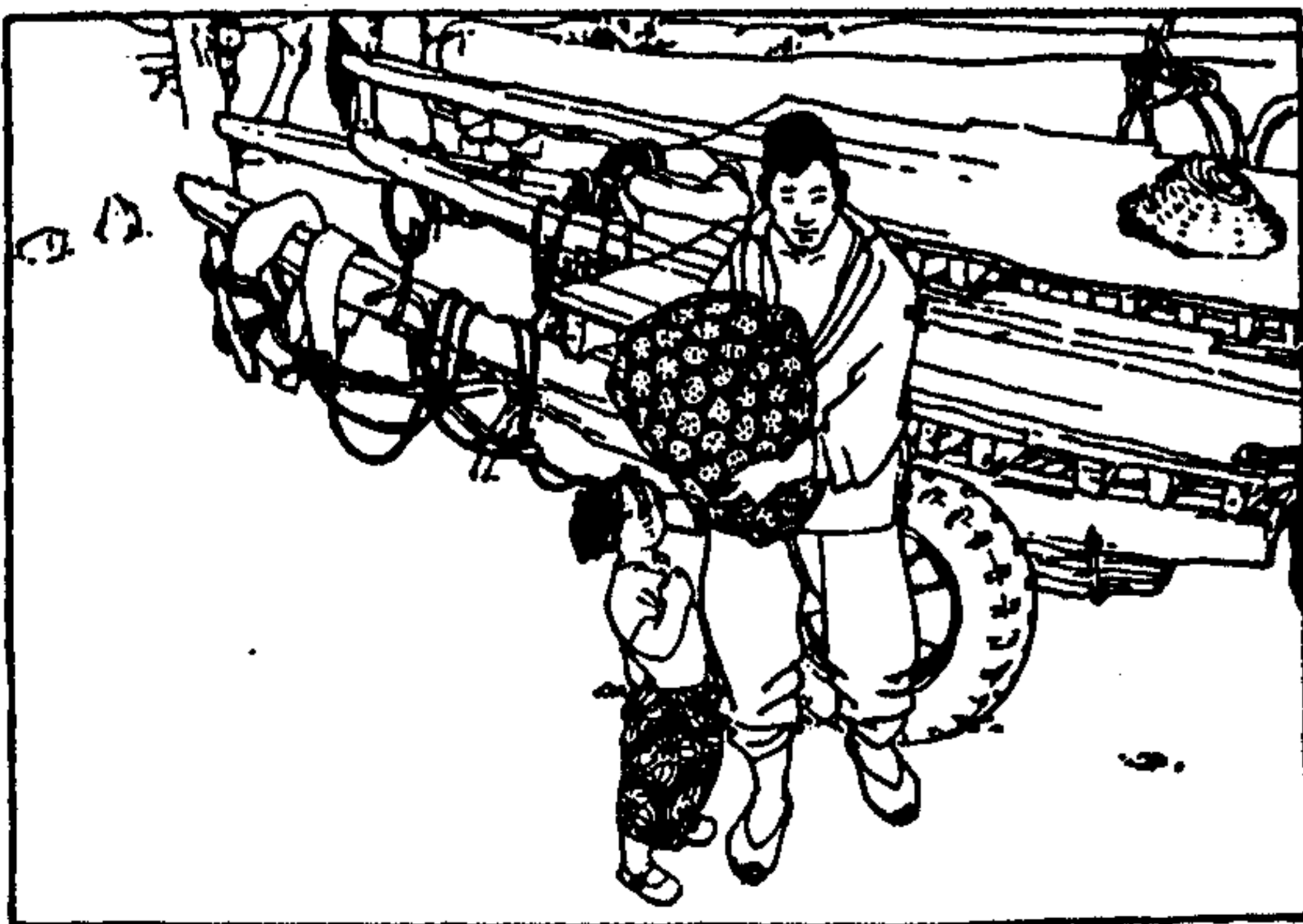
138. Not long after Xiao Wang had left, a cloud of dust appeared on the road outside the village and Jin Qiao, Sun You, and Xiwang, each driving a large cart, came hurrying into sight. When Xiwang saw the men and women all happily at work he couldn't help remembering his own worries.



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.



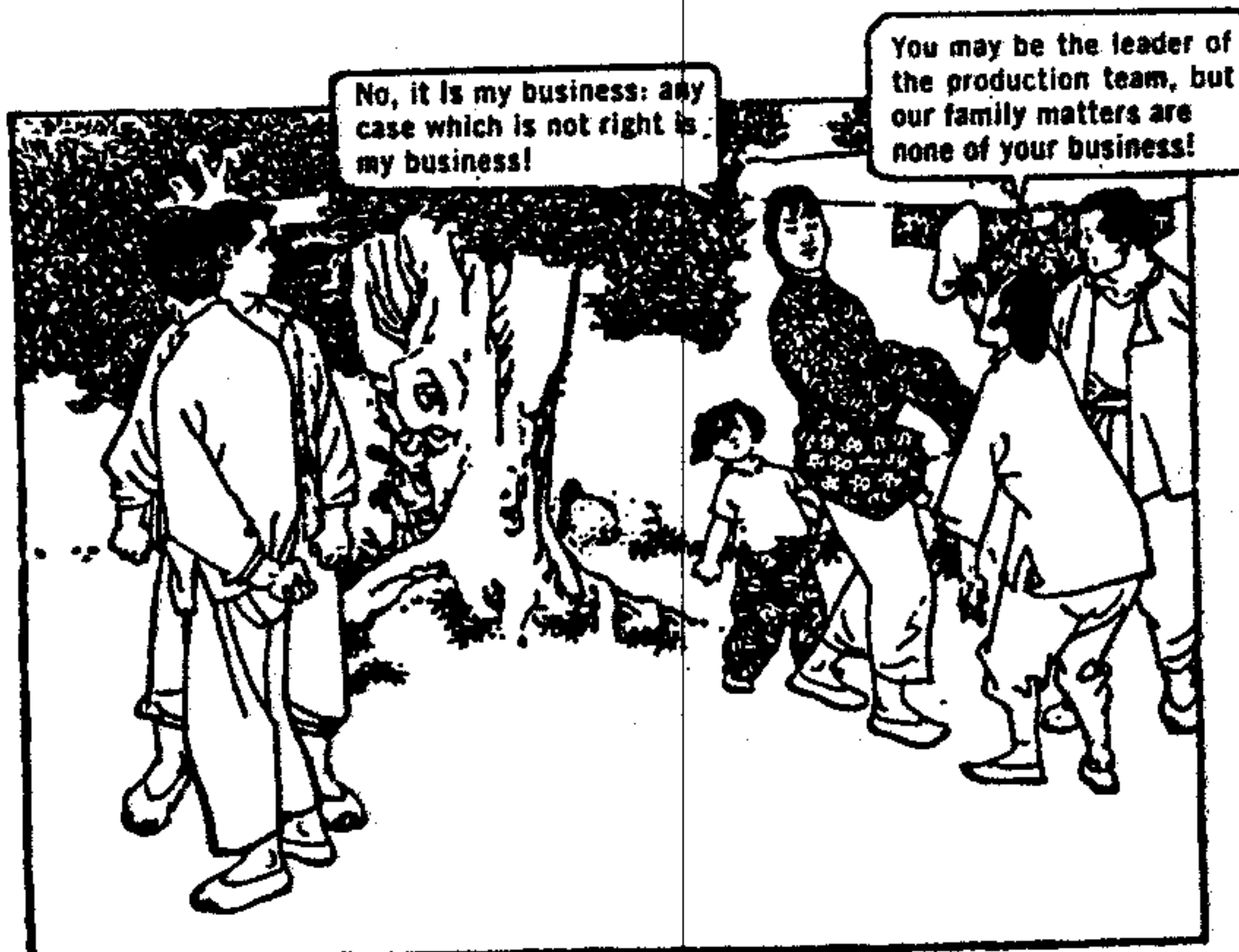
143. Xiwang, embarrassed, was hesitating when old Gengpo gave him a shove and said, "Go home! Don't hang around here." Xiwang picked up Xiao Ju and dashed after Shuangshuang.



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 pointing 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. Gui Ying 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. . . ."



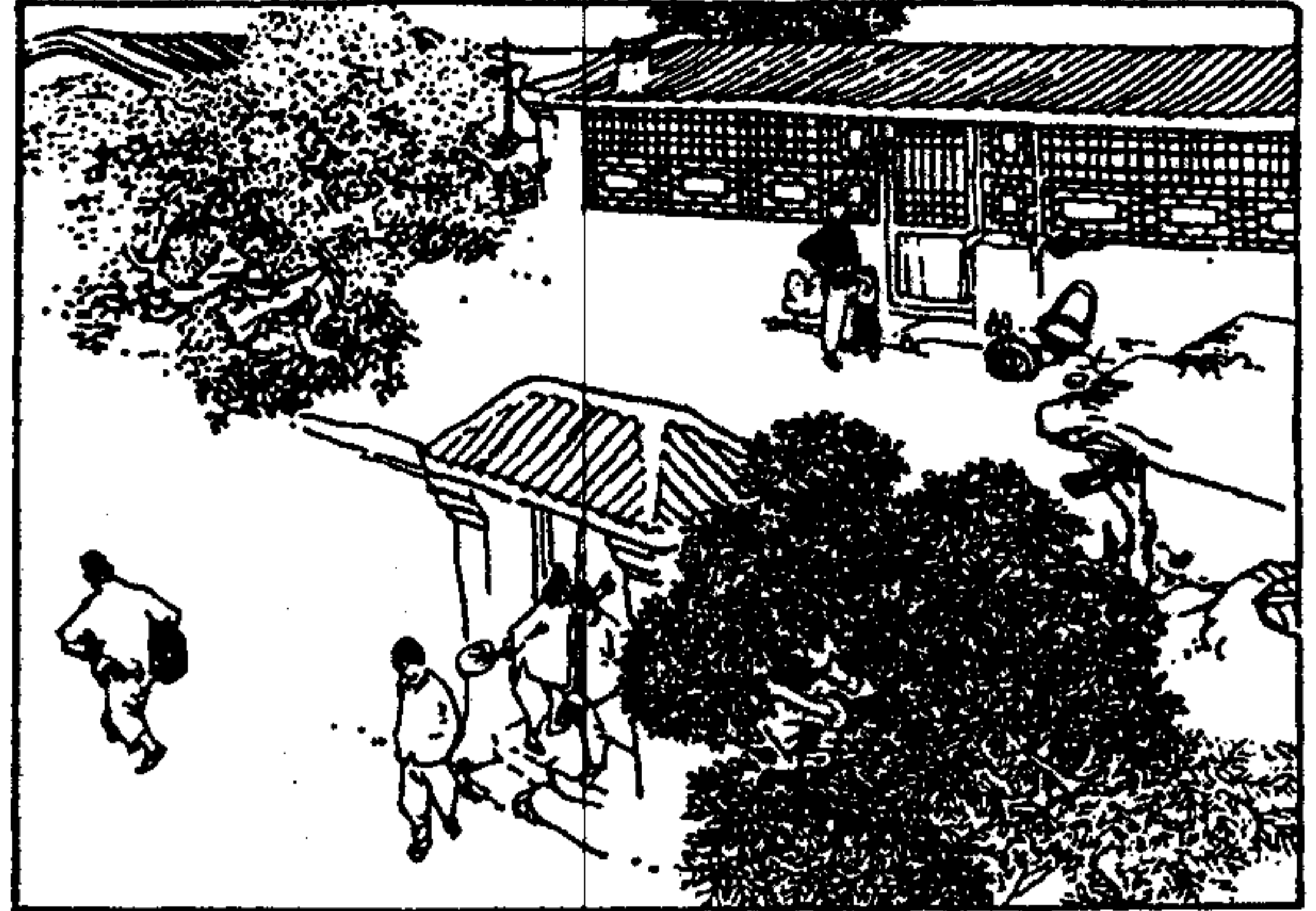
146. Jin Qiao stared at Xiwang and then patted him on the arm, asking him to go outside for a few words around the corner. Xiwang was still standing irresolutely when Shuangshuang started arguing with Sun Youpo at the top of her voice.

No, it is my business: any case which is not right is my business!

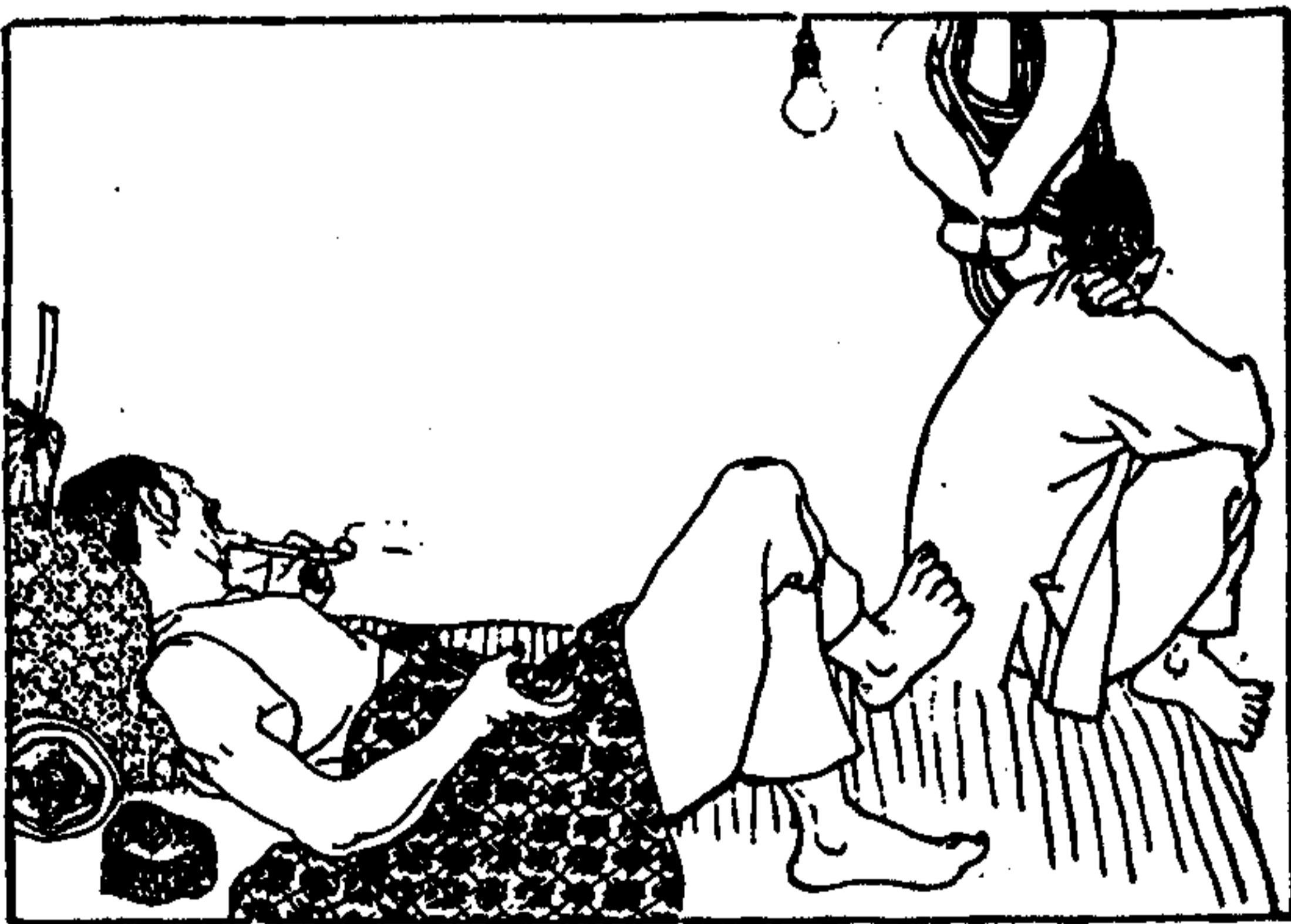
You may be the leader of the production team, but our family matters are none of your business!



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.



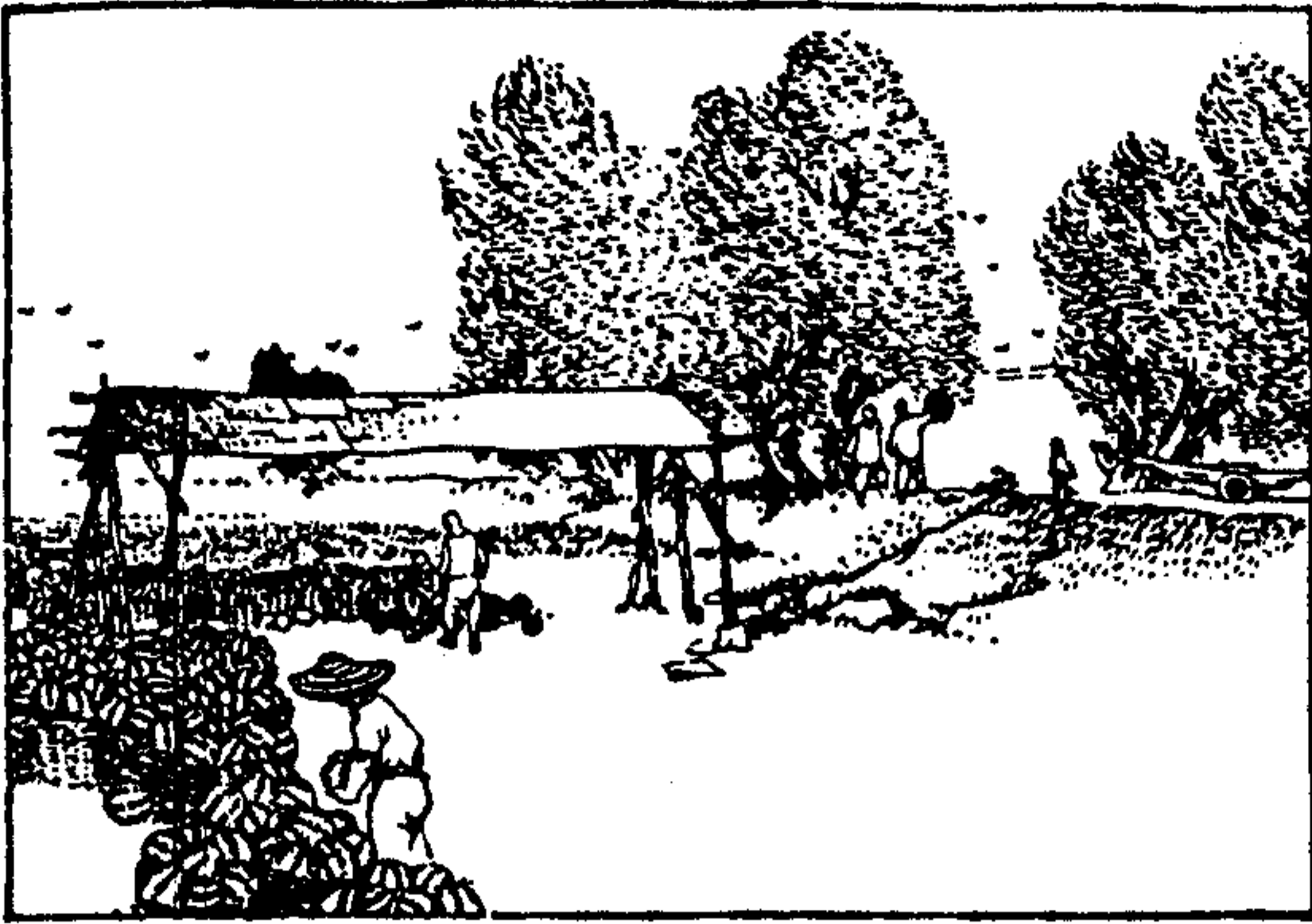
148. Xiao Ju began crying and shouting "Papa!" and struggled to break free from Shuangshuang to run after him. Shuangshuang was absolutely furious and stood in front of her holding her tightly by the hand. Seeing the awkward situation, Sun You and his wife and Jin Qiao left.



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.



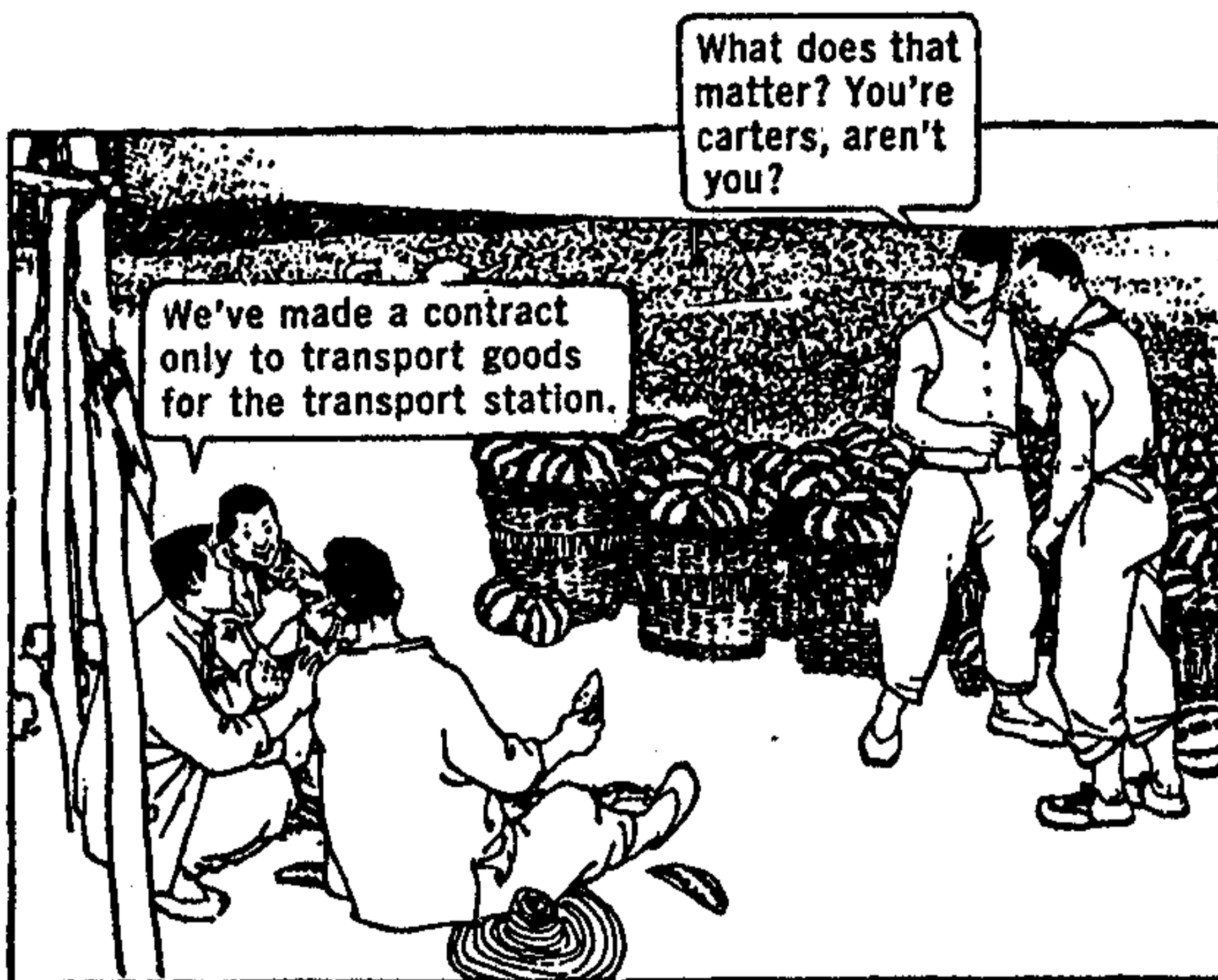
150. As soon as it was light, Xiwang left without uttering a sound. It was the hottest part of summer and the heat was exhausting. After the carts had gone about five miles, the horses were covered in sweat and breathing heavily, so Jin Qiao, Xiwang, and the others unharnessed the horses to cool them 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. "Phew, this melon is really sweet!"



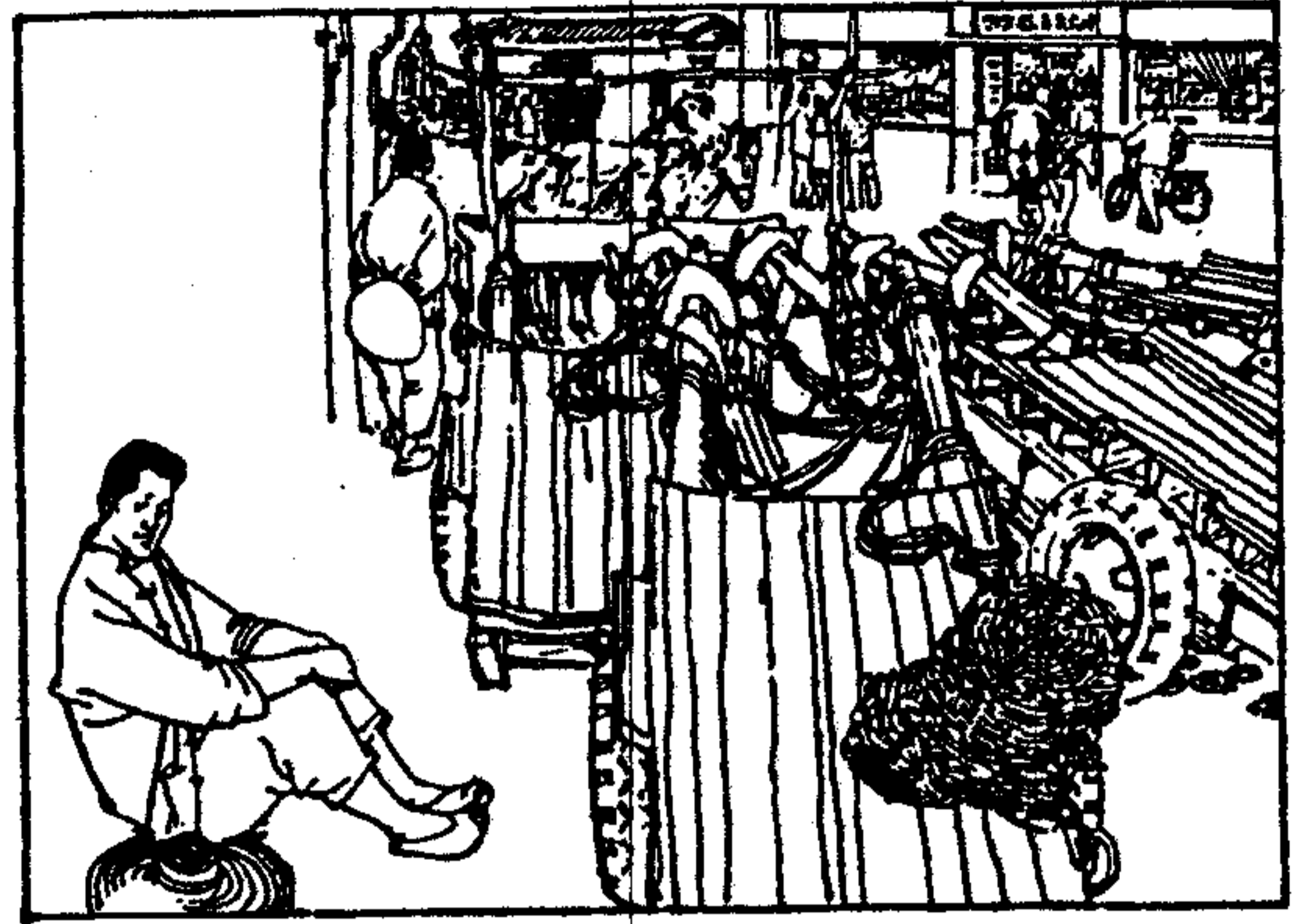
153. When the two men who were arranging the baskets of melons heard they were going to the town, they quickly asked, "You're going to town? What a stroke of luck; we've bought these melons but we were wondering how to get them to town since we have no transport! Could you take them to town for us?"



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 on. 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?"



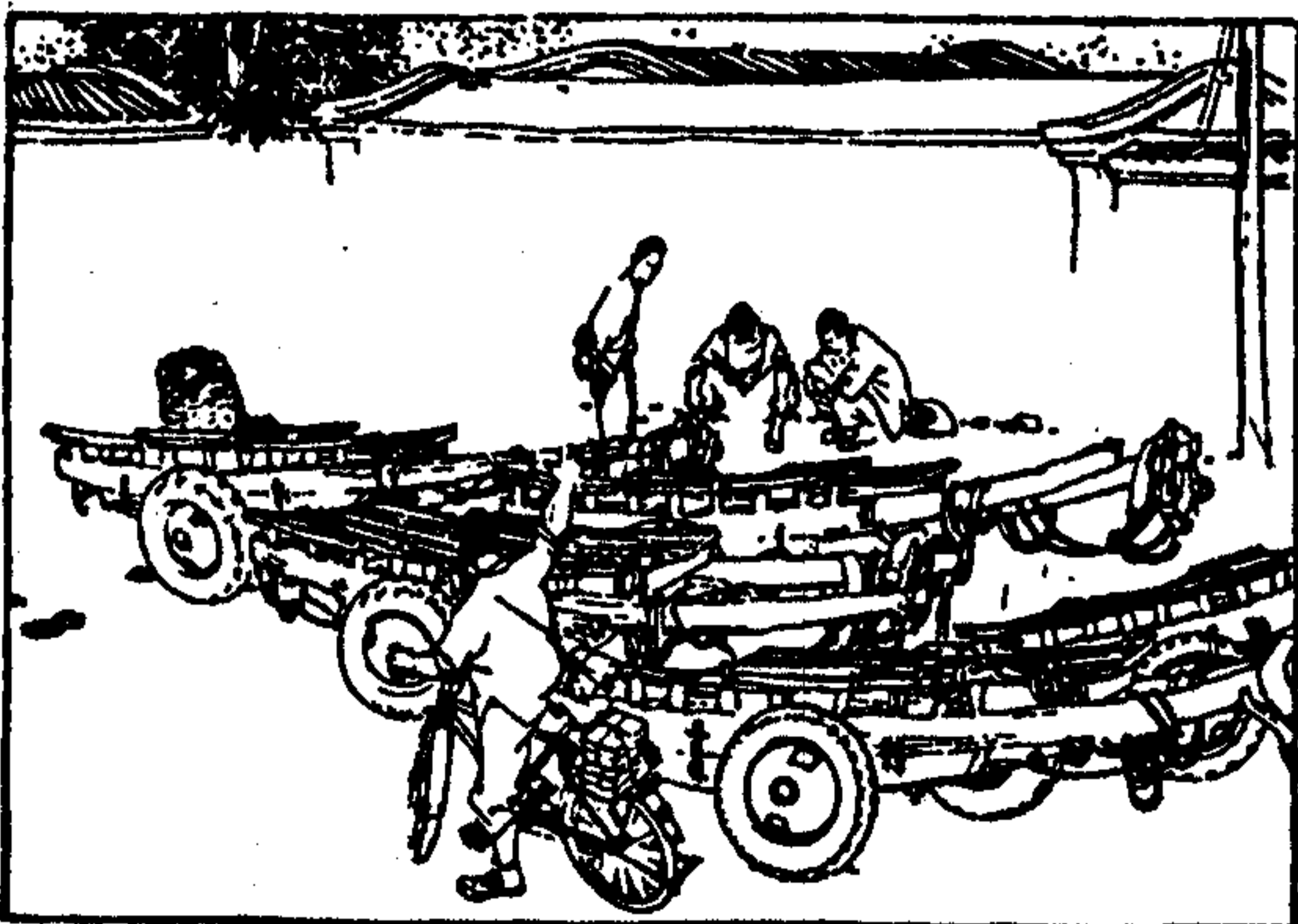
158. Er Chun had come to town to buy some work-point books and had also brought some things for repair. Xiwang asked, "Is your family busy? How are our team's crops?"



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!"



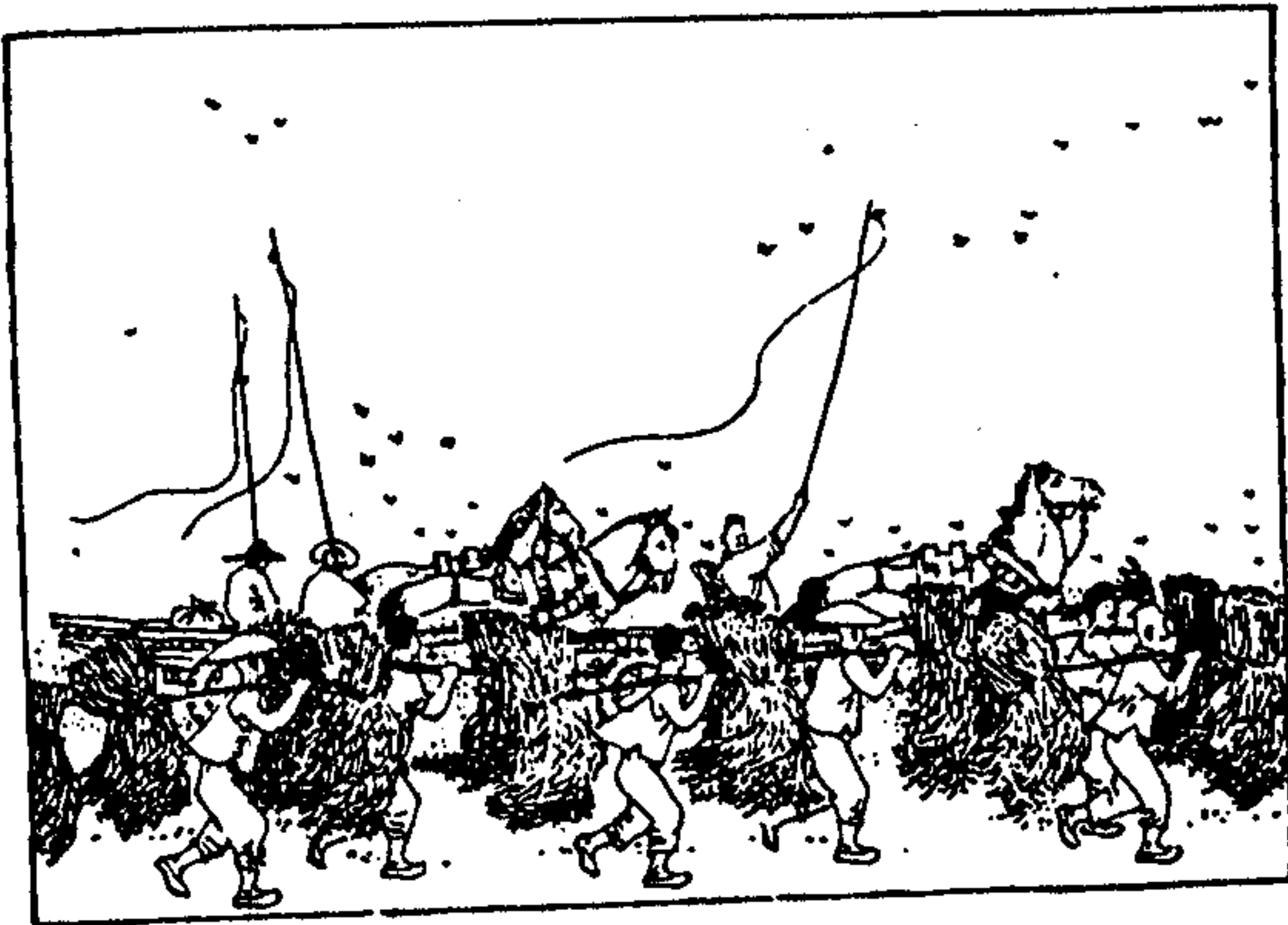
160. On hearing this, Xiwang said, "I would never have thought it! . . ." Er Chun couldn't help laughing. "You would never have thought it? All you have to do is take a look. Come back soon, Aunt Shuangshuang is thinking of you!"



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.



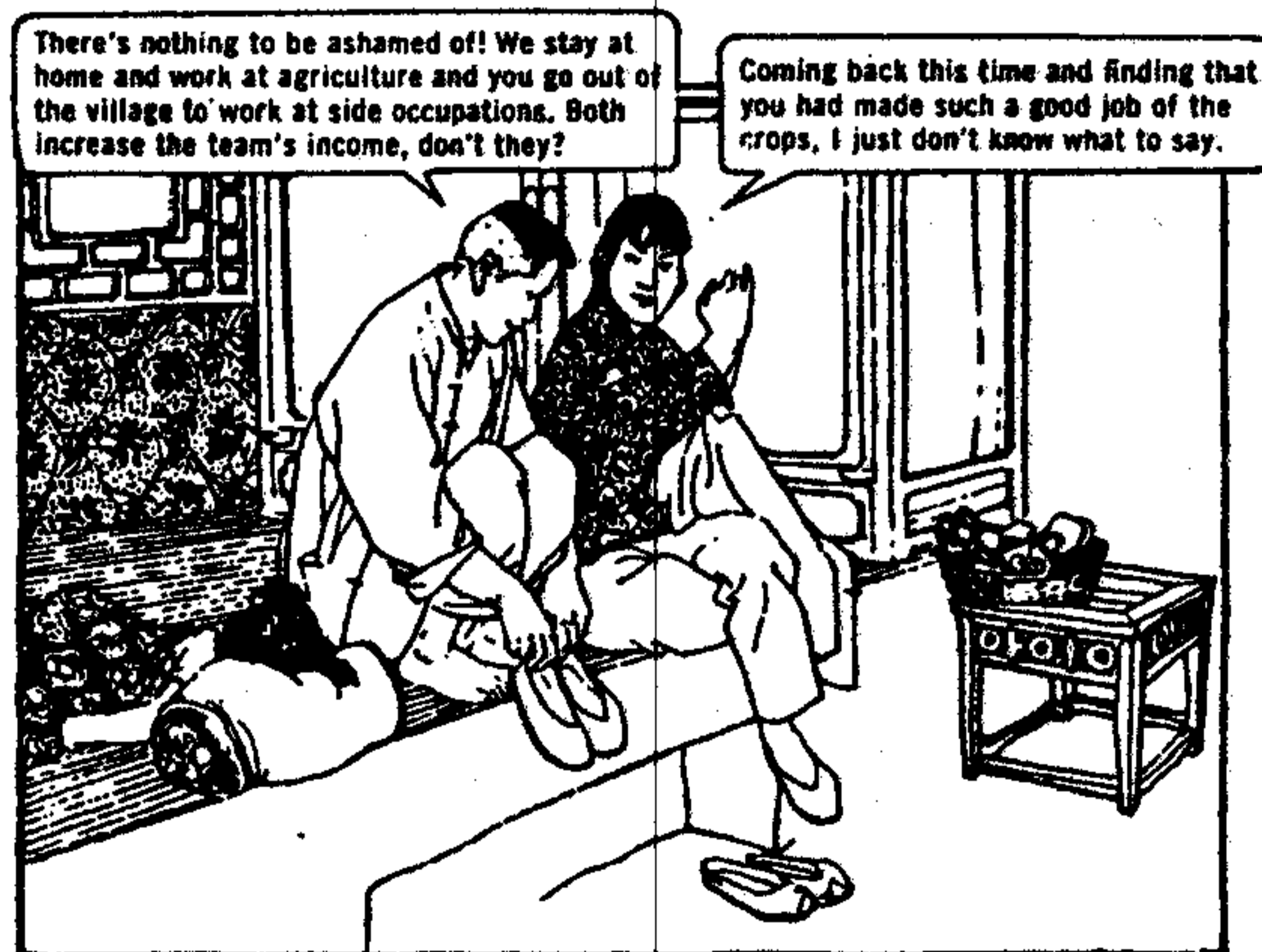
167. "Mama, mama! Papa's come back!" shouted Xiao Ju as soon as she caught sight of her mother. Xiwang looked up and as soon as he saw that it was Shuangshuang, he involuntarily lowered his head.



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



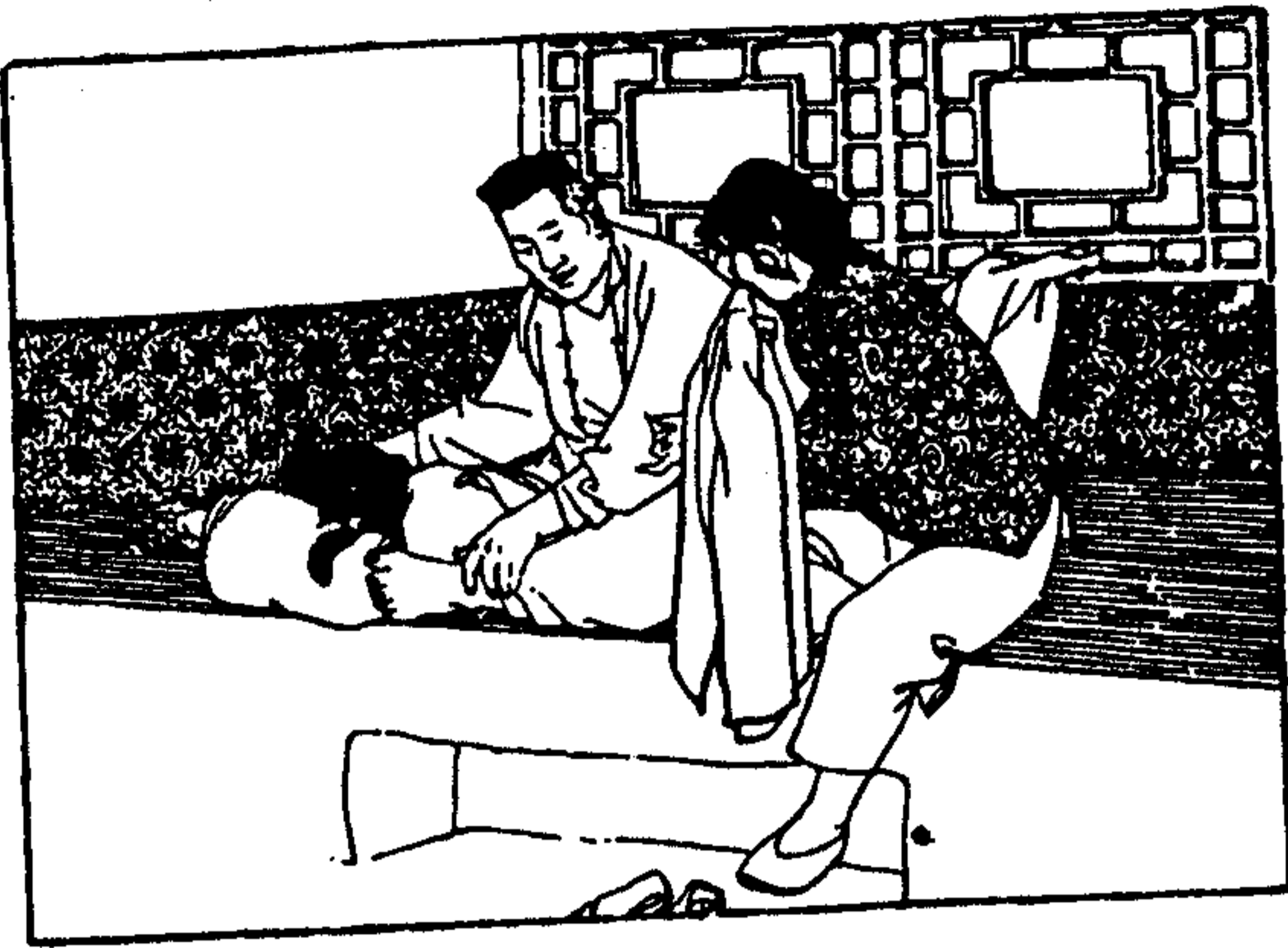
169. That night when Xiao Ju was fast asleep, Shuangshuang took out a new pair of cotton shoes and handed them to Xiwang. "Put them on and see if they fit." Xiwang put them on, looked at his new shoes and then at Shuangshuang, and smiled simply and honestly.



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?"

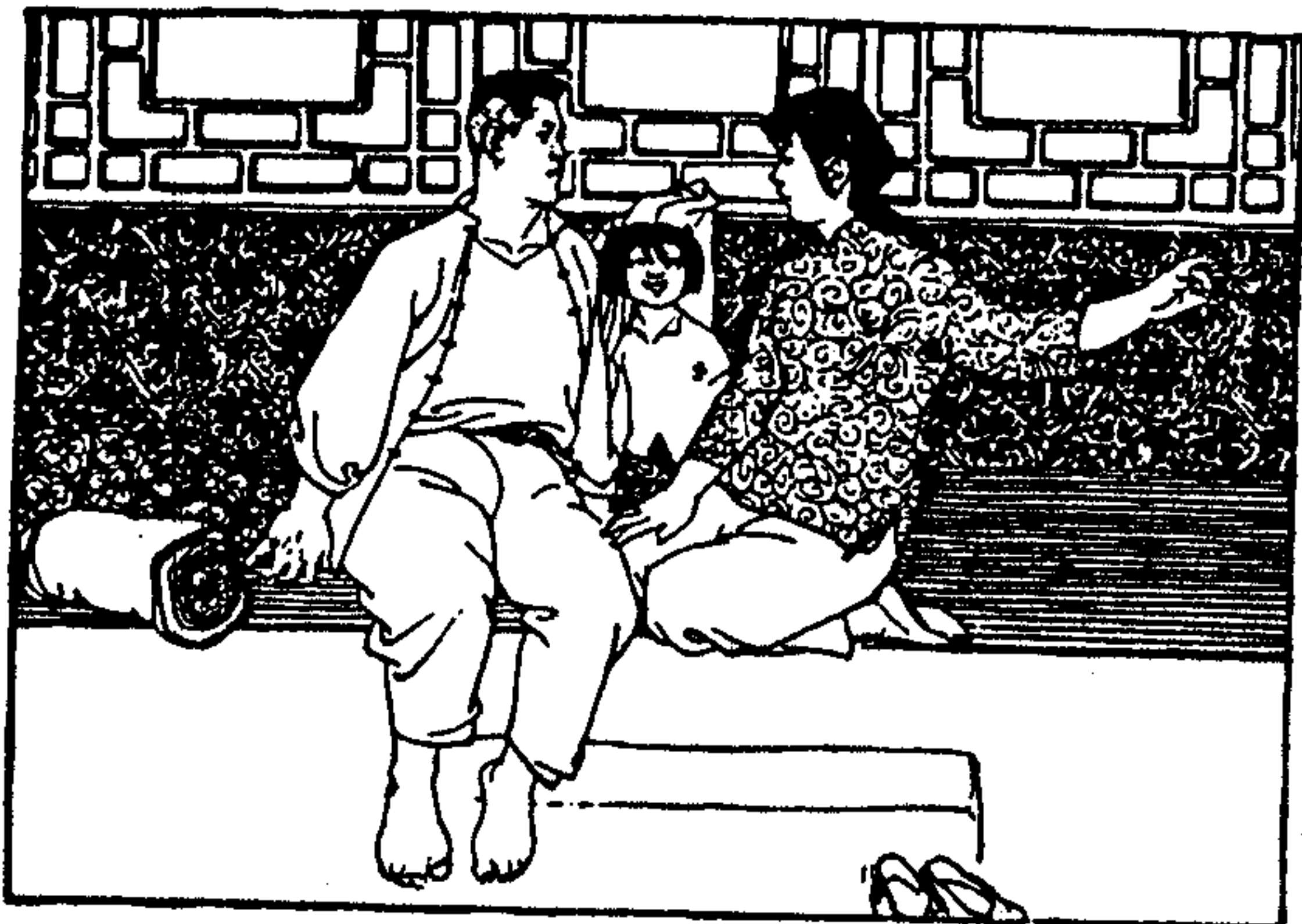


You're also good friends with Jin Qiao, which is all the more reason why you should have pointed out to him where he was wrong. That's not harming him, that's saving him. You are going to have to think it over very carefully. We must have nothing to be ashamed of in front of all the other commune members!

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

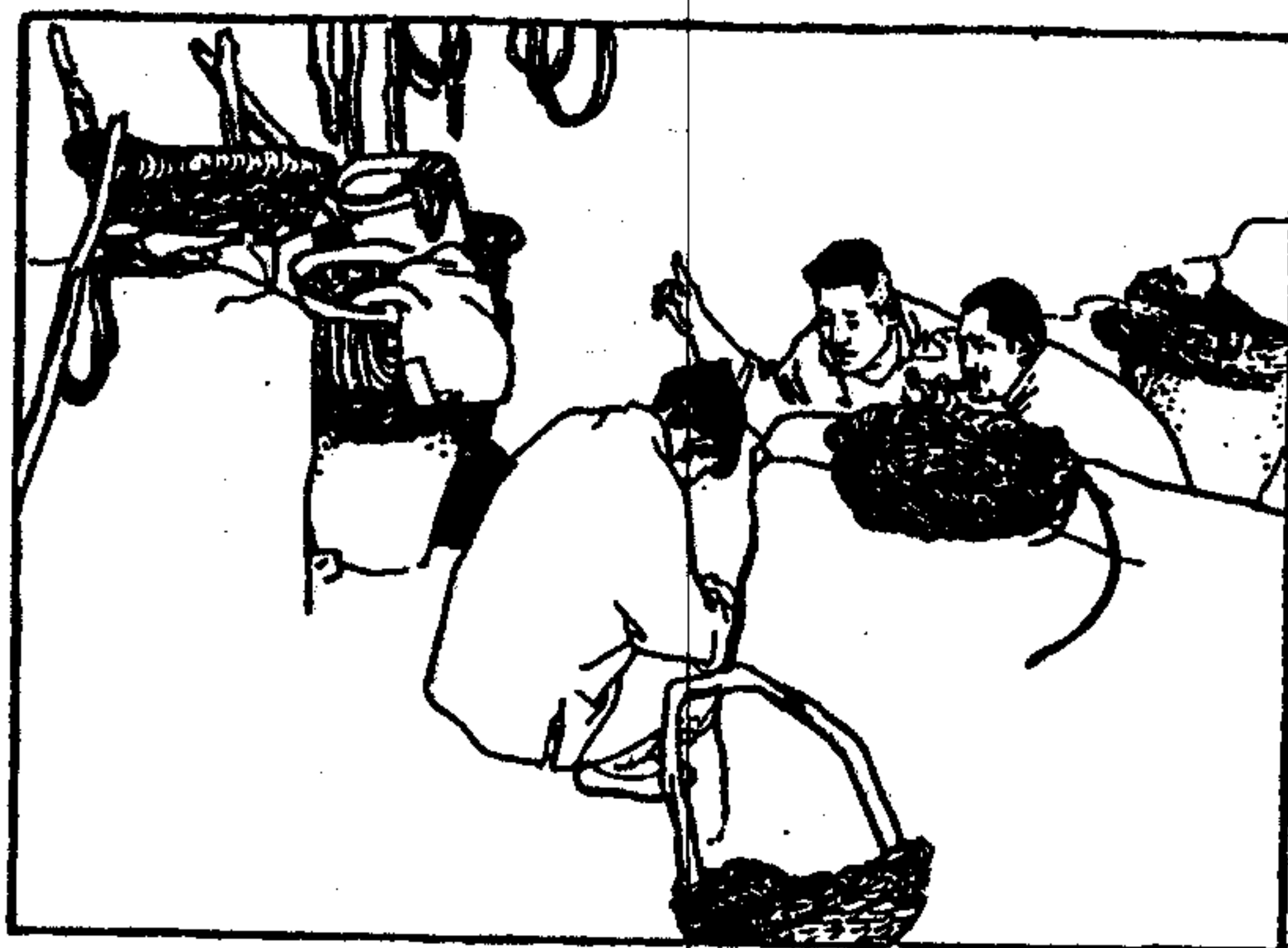
Uncle Sun You and younger brother Jin Qiao! Xiwang is not going to mince words with you today. It is not right. I can't go on covering for you about the business of the melons. If you don't make a clean breast of it, I'm going to bring it out into the open.

Sun Xiwang

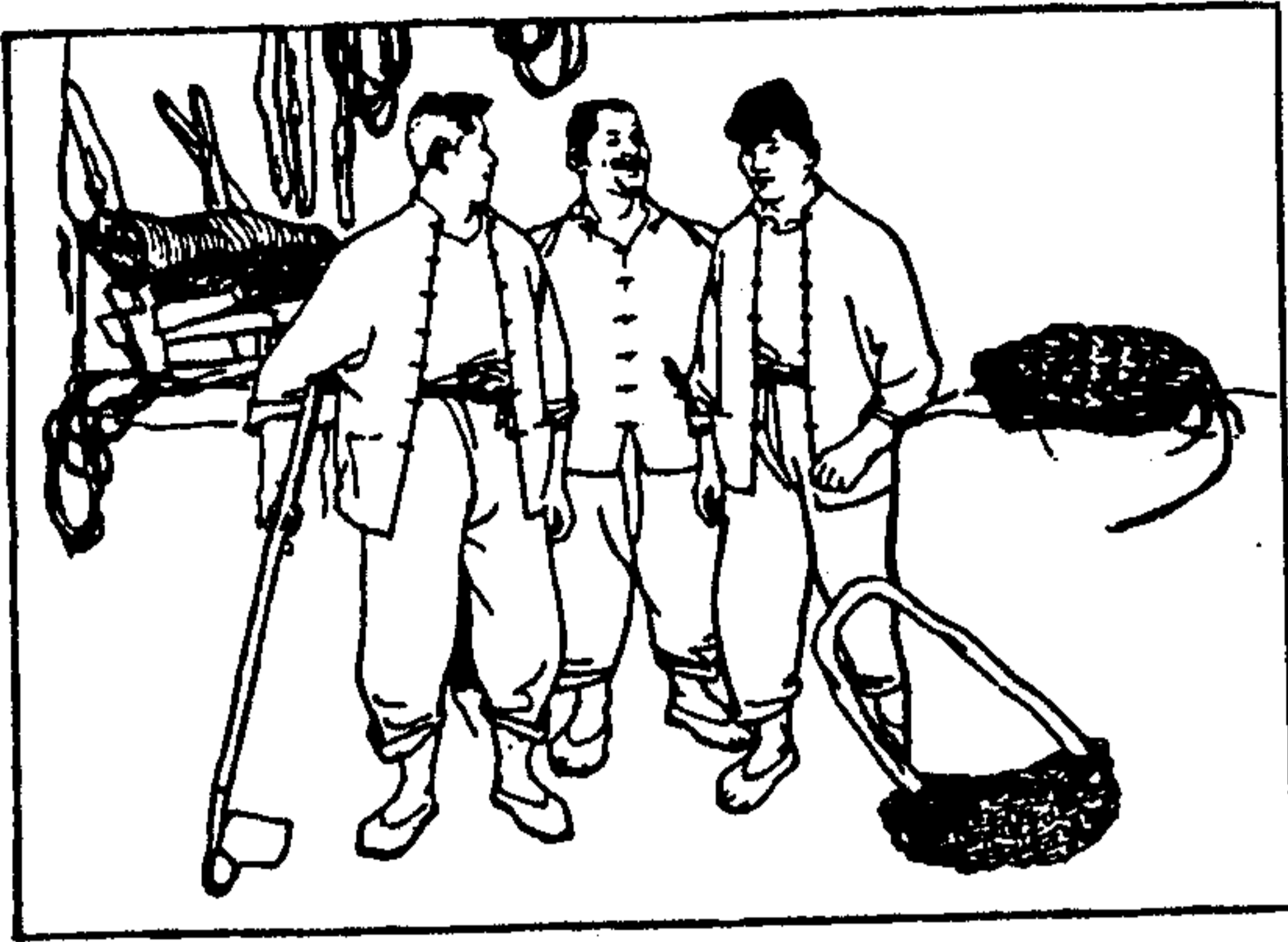
People gathered in front of it and began discussing it. Some said, "Oh, another fresh scandal is coming out!" Others said, "Ugh, Xiwang can express opinions too!"



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 confess 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!"