

Two Peacocks



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Two Peacocks

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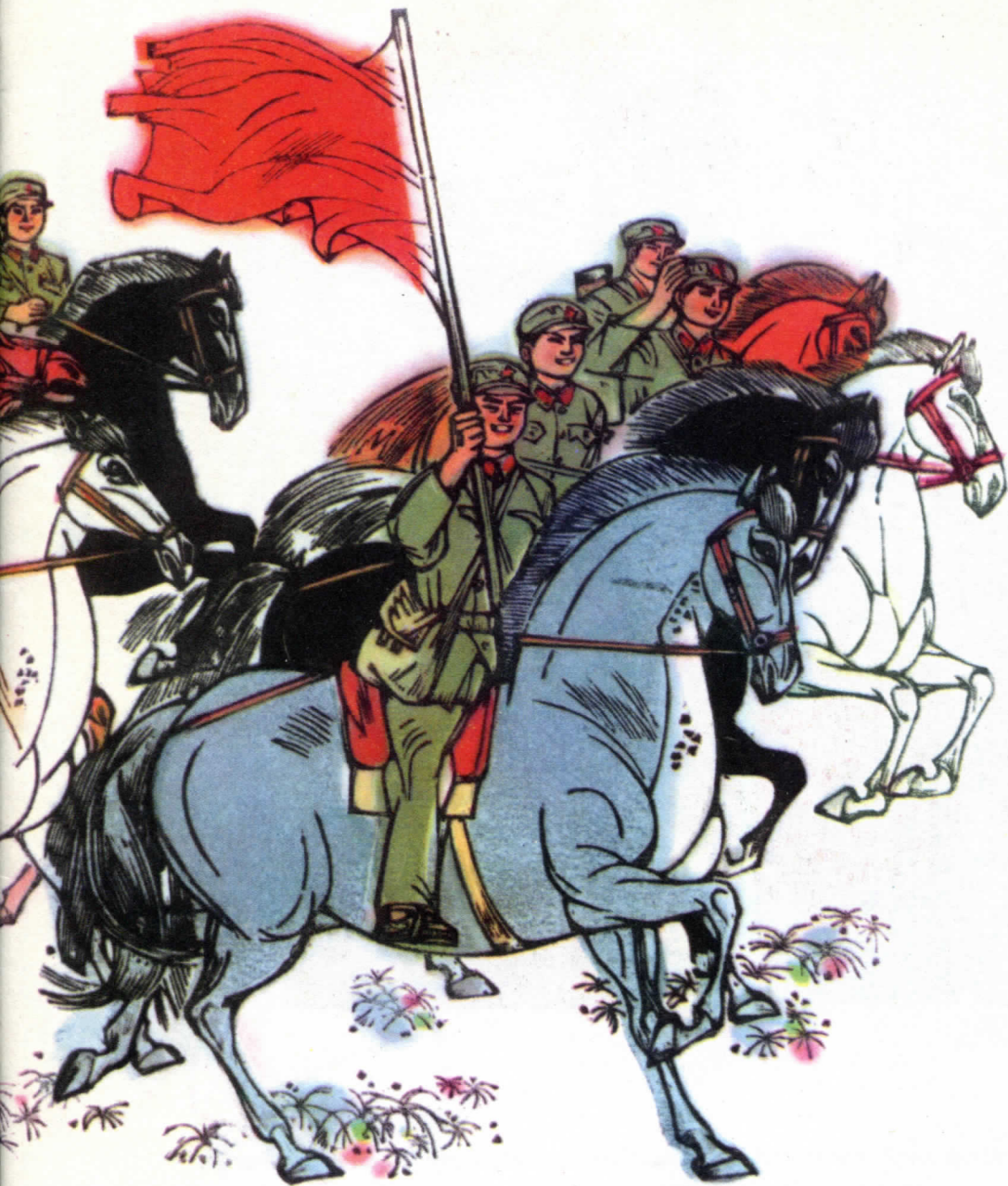
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*T*HE RICE fields along the Lantsang River in China's Yunnan Province are rich with golden harvest. While the grown-ups are busy in the fields, a Tai nationality Little Red Guard, Yenla, goes with his little brother Hsiaotuan to help Grandpa herd cattle every day after school.





ONE DAY as the two boys are driving the cows home from the hill they see a cloud of dust along the road. People's Liberation Army men on horseback are heading for the village.



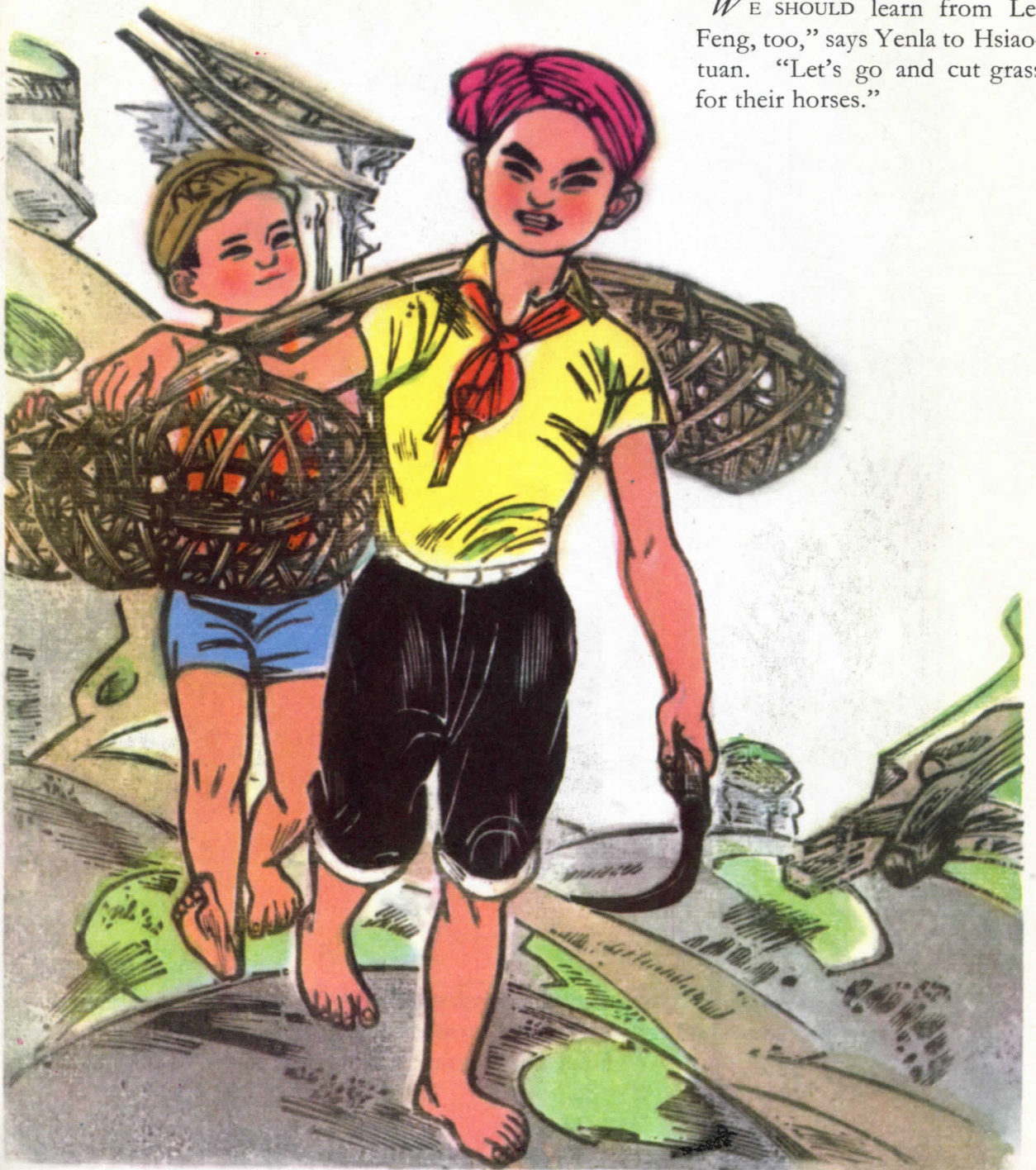


As YENLA and Hsiaotuan watch the mounted PLA uncles race by, they give a happy shout and urge Grandpa to hurry home so as to see them at once.



*W*HEN THEY get home, Grandma smiles and says, "These PLA comrades are just like Lei Feng. They no sooner come to camp for the night than they're out in the fields cutting rice. Why, they haven't even fed their horses."

"*W*E SHOULD learn from Lei Feng, too," says Yenla to Hsiao-tuan. "Let's go and cut grass for their horses."





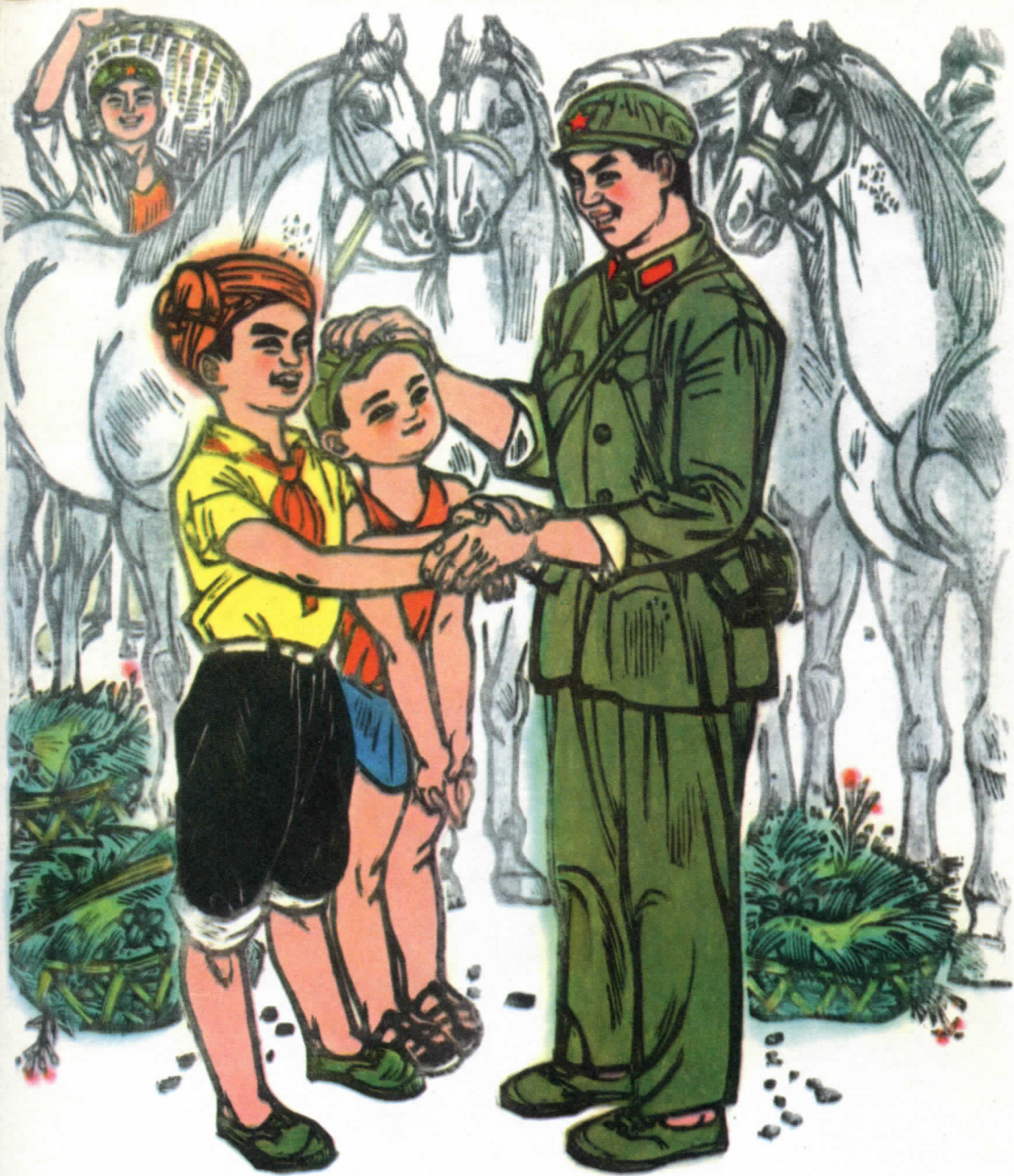
*T*HE MEADOW is like a thick green carpet. As they swing their sickles through the grass, drops of sweat fall into it. Their baskets will soon be filled.

SUDDENLY Hsiaotuan cries out. He has discovered two large eggs in the grass. "Look, duck eggs!" he exclaims.





*W*HAT WILL they do with the eggs? The two boys can't decide. Then Yenla says, "Better hatch them. When the ducklings grow up, they'll lay a lot more eggs and when the PLA uncles come next time we'll give them a good treat."



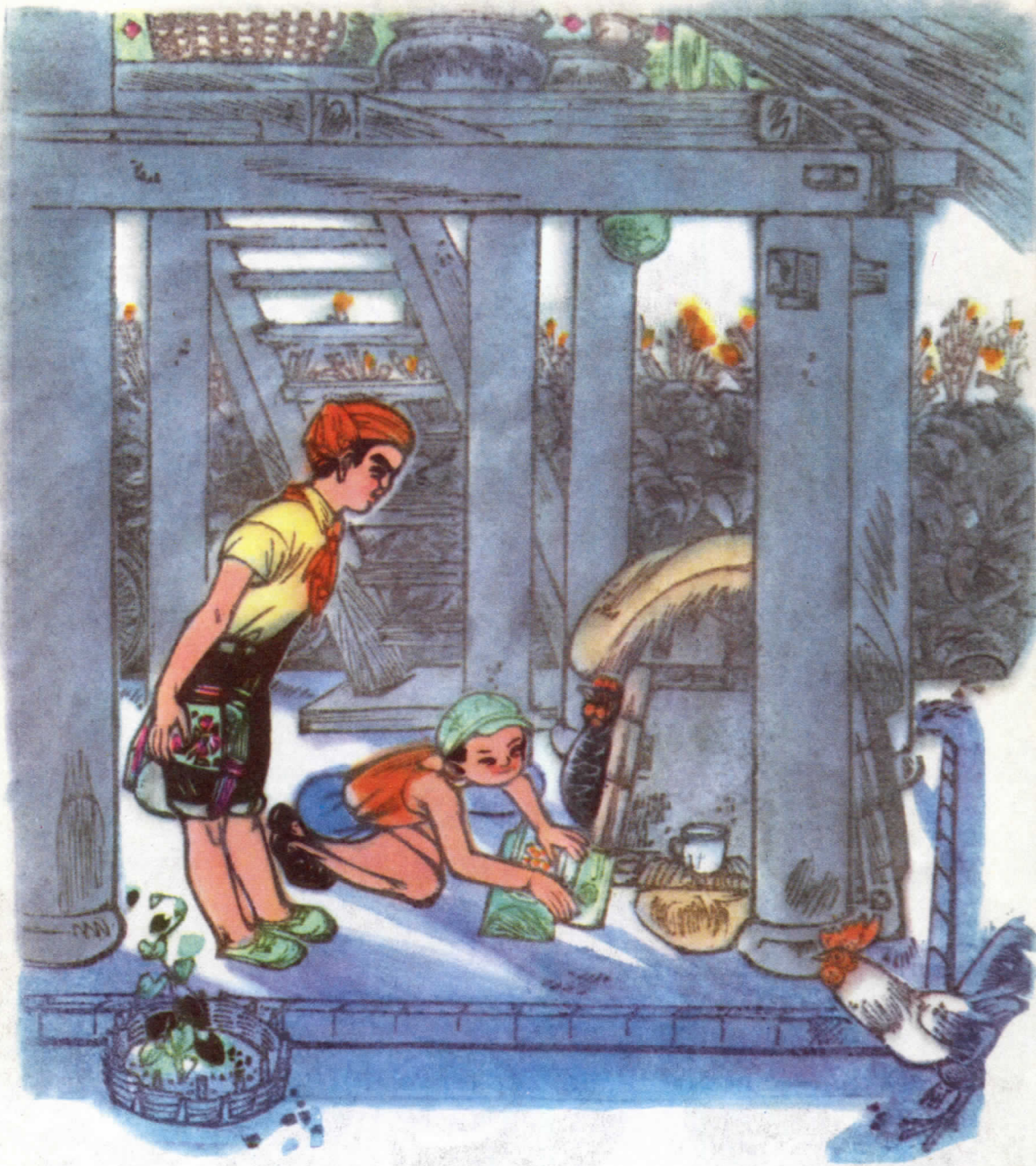
WHEN THE brothers take the grass to the PLA uncles for their horses, the company commander shakes their hands and praises them.



YENLA AND Hsiaotuan call at several houses looking for a brood hen, but can't find one. Finally they go to Meihan's house and find Meihan feeding a speckled brood hen. The two boys shout for joy.



THEY RUSH home to get the duck eggs. When they tell Meihan their plan, she is delighted. The three carefully place the eggs among the others under the hen.



YENLA AND Hsiao-tuan can hardly wait for the eggs to hatch and go every day after school to watch the nest.

ONE DAY they see Meihan squatting before her new little chicks, looking worried. The speckled mother hen is clucking merrily with her chicks pecking around her.





MEIHAN SAYS to Yenla and Hsiaotuan, "Too bad, the chicks have hatched and now the hen won't stay on the nest. What shall we do?"



MEIHAN AND *Hsiao Tuan* shut the hen and her chicks up on the nest so the eggs won't get cold. *Yenla* runs home while they do this.



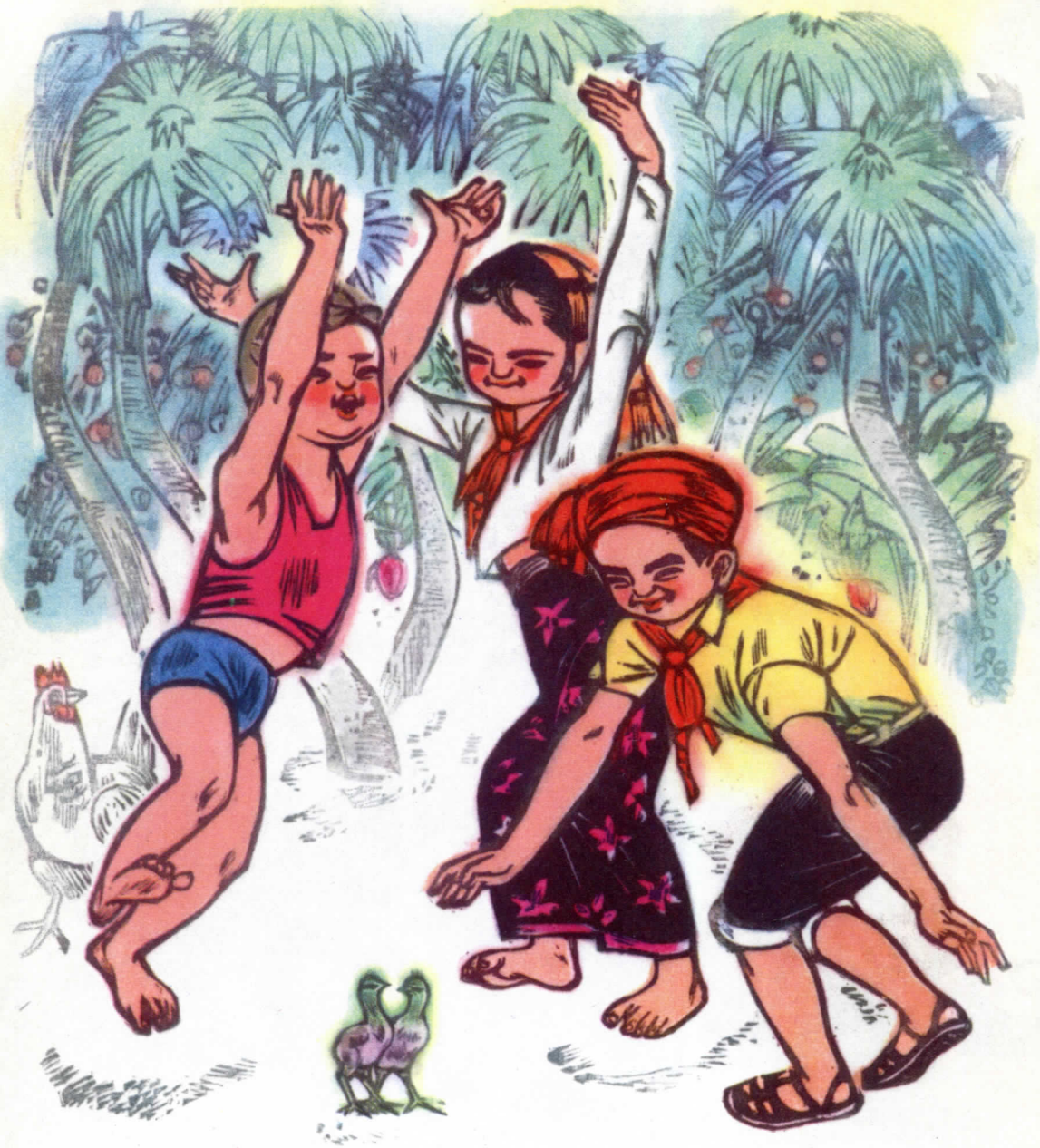
HE HAS suddenly remembered that his mother went to see Granny yesterday and may know if Granny has a setting hen. Yenla's mother says she did in fact see one at Granny's.



YENLA AND his brother go to Granny's at once and soon return with the hen.



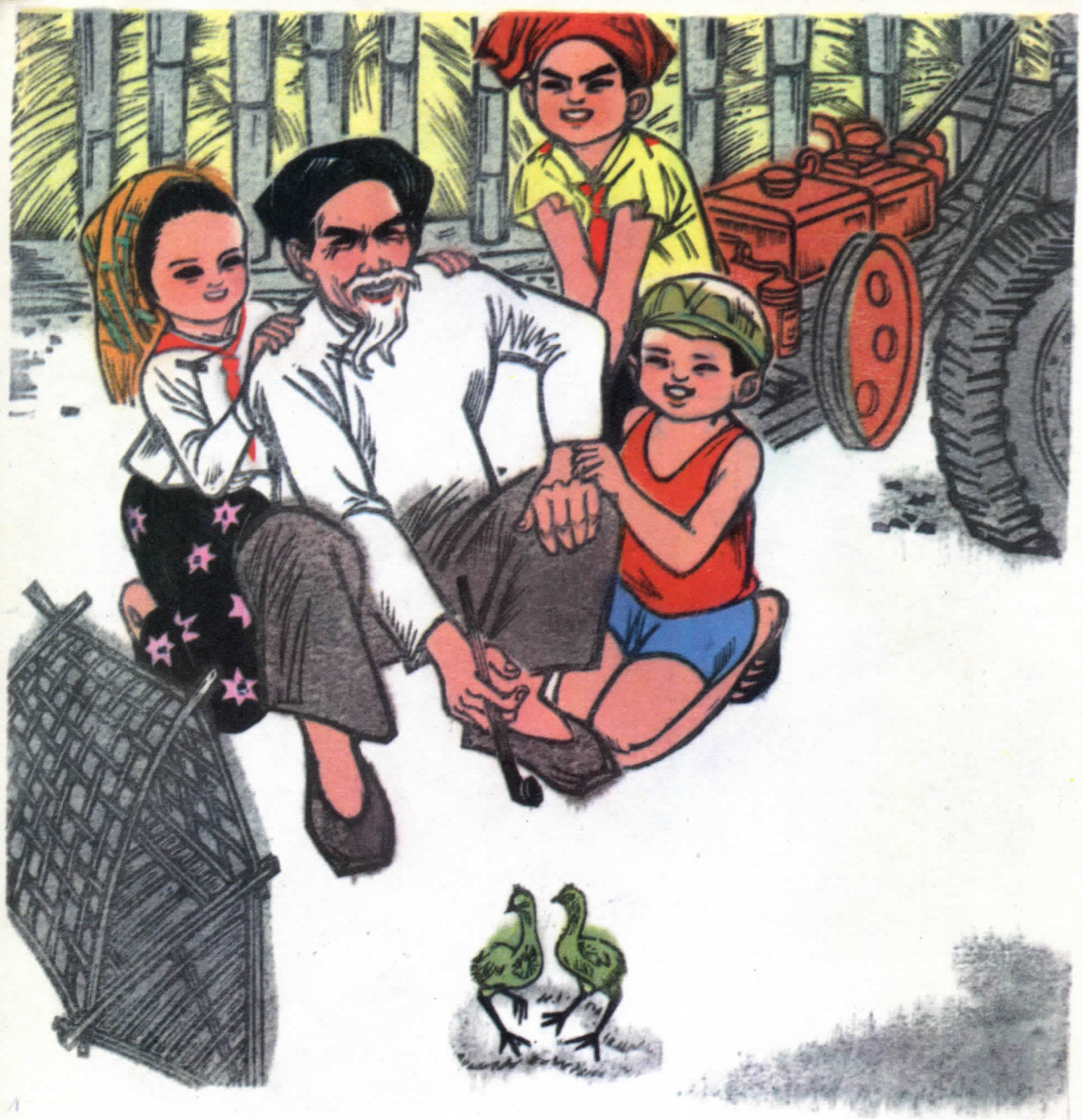
THEY GO to Meihan's and the three take the eggs to the boy's home. They keep their coop shut tight and only let the hen out to feed her when they come home from school.



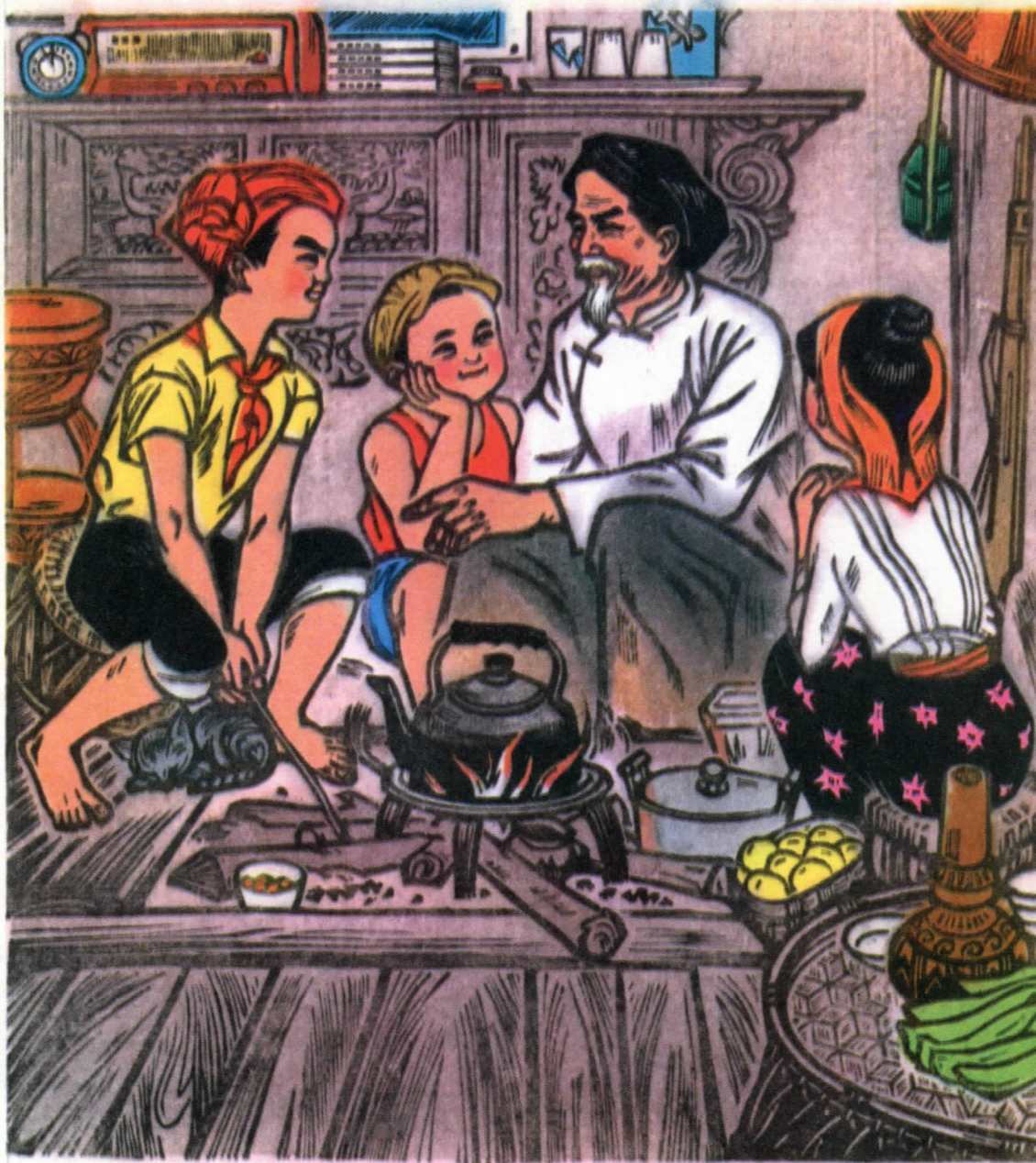
AFTER SOME days the eggs hatch. The children are so excited that they keep picking up the little creatures, letting them stand on their palms and then putting them down again, while the worried hen circles round and round.



*B*UT THE two little birds do not look quite like ducklings. And they are certainly not chickens. The children are puzzled. Finally they ask Grandpa.



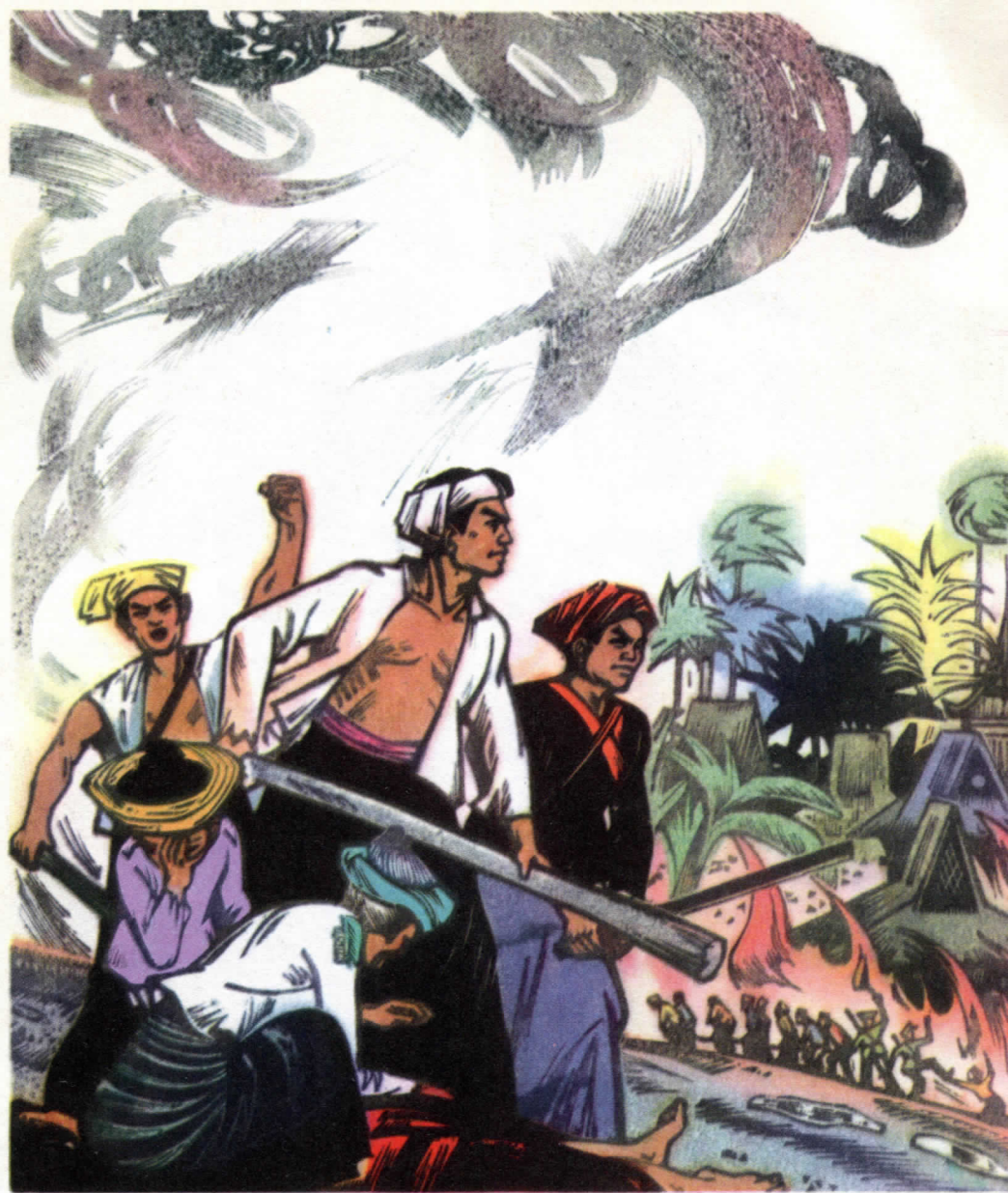
GRANDPA LOOKS at the little birds closely, smiles and says, "Why, these are peacocks, my children! Birds of good fortune for us Tai people!"



GRANDPA TELLS the children the story. "Long, long ago a flock of golden peacocks flew here from the sun. They scattered their gorgeous feathers, making a paradise of silvery cotton and golden grain fields.



*T*HE PEACOCKS danced on the green grass and over the golden fields. Then they spread their tails like the lasses' flowered skirts and sang melodious songs to the accompaniment of the lads' flutes.



"THIS LEGEND expressed the hopes of the Tai people who were oppressed and exploited by landlords and bullies in the old days. They struggled on, always looking for the sunrise.

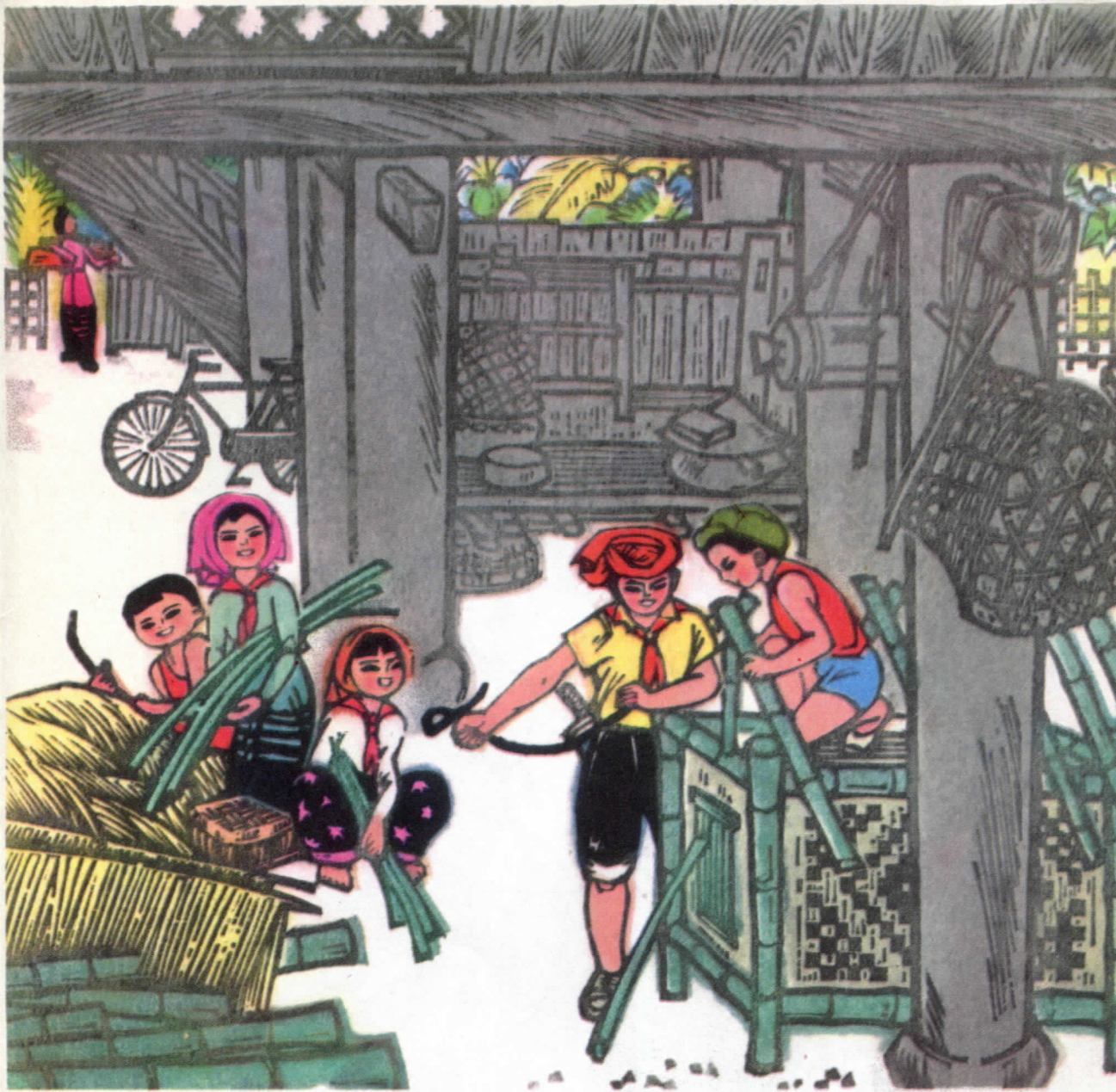




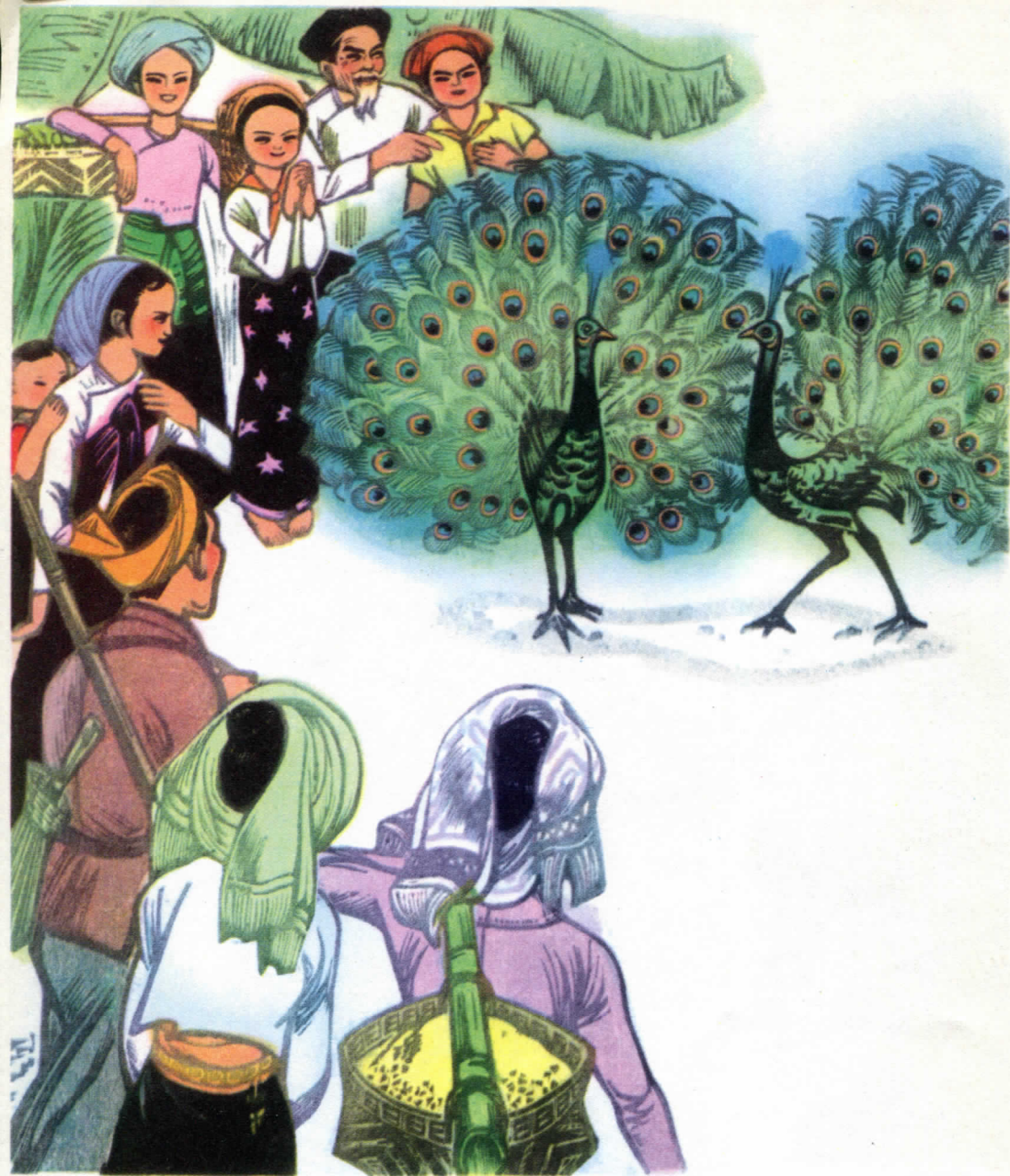
“*AT LAST* the sun drove the dark clouds away and the golden peacocks flew to the land of the Tai people. Chairman Mao sent the People’s Liberation Army, and together we overthrew the bullies and landlords. The Tai people stood up and took the broad socialist road pointed out by Chairman Mao. Now our life is better every day.”



THE THREE Little Red Guards love Chairman Mao and the PLA all the more after hearing Grandpa's story and decide to give the peacocks to the PLA uncles when they are full grown.



THE WHOLE village soon learns about the peacocks and everyone is concerned for the little birds. Yenla and his friends cut phoenix tail bamboo and build the peacocks a beautiful house.



THE PEACOCKS grow splendid, shining feathers and begin to sing and dance. Grown-ups and children in the village laugh happily at the lovely sight.



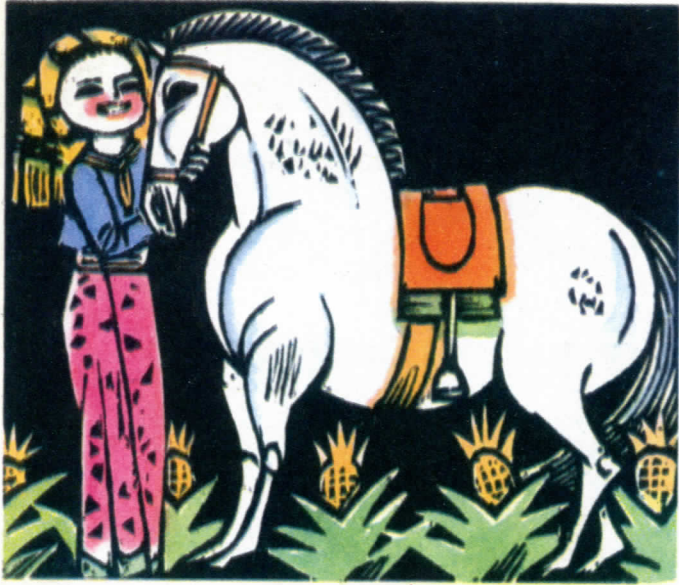
ON THE Tai people's New Year's Day the village Little Red Guards pay a visit to the PLA uncles, beating drums and gongs all the way. Meihan and Hsiaotuan carry the peacocks and, with Yenla, head the procession.

THE LITTLE Red Guards sing and dance with joy to express the frontier people's affection for their own army. Here is their song:

Magnificent peacocks fly in from the east,
Bringing the Tai people good fortune and joy.
Chairman Mao sends our own people's army
To guide us on the broad socialist road.









两只小孔雀

陈炜 彭华编

刘绮等改编

蒋铁锋 贾国中 万强麟绘制

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