

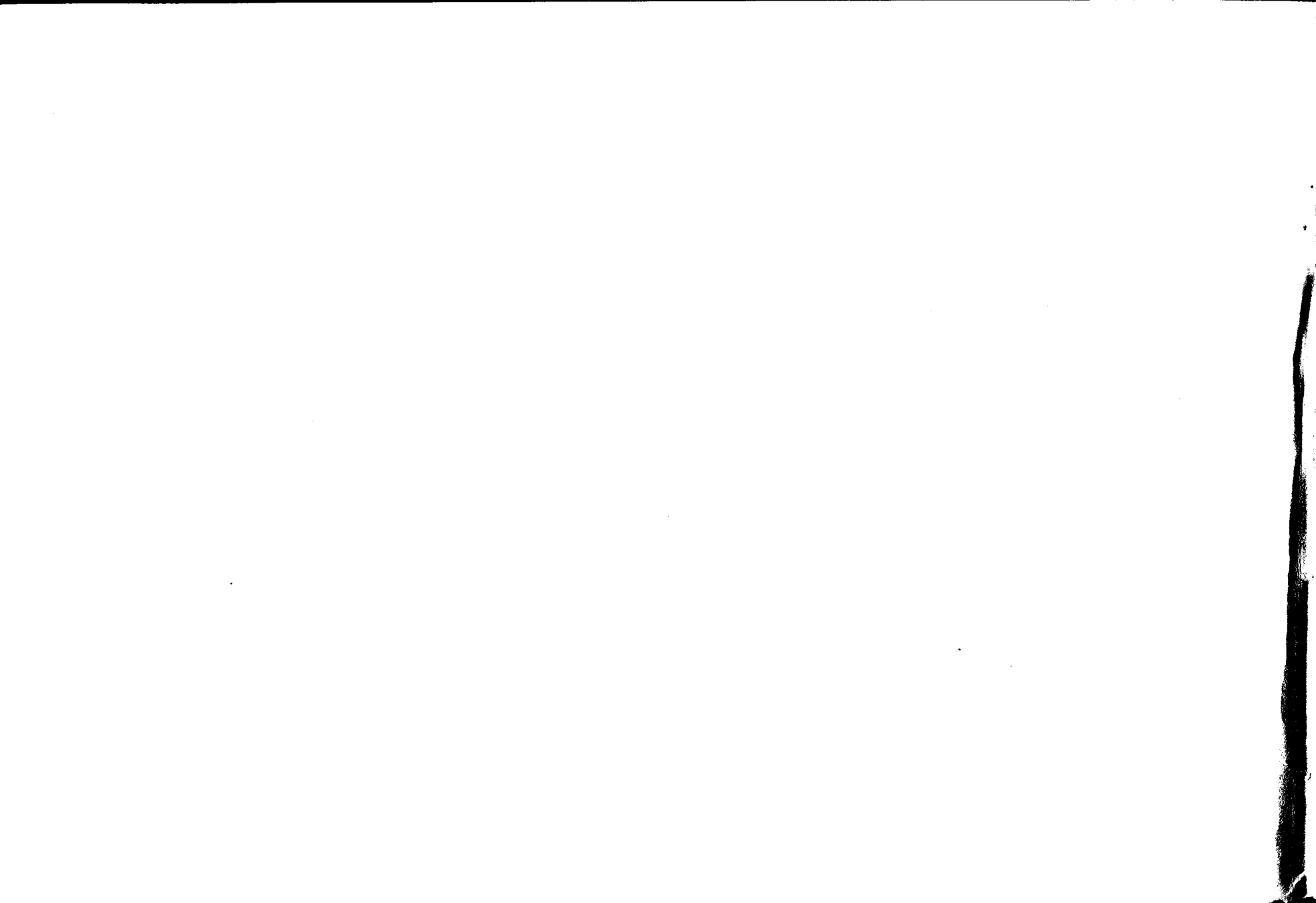
Little Sisters of the Grassland



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Little Sisters of the Grassland

Foreign Languages Press
Peking 1973

Printed in the People's Republic of China

Publisher's Note

A picture-story book by the "Little Sisters of the Grassland" compiling and drawing group of the Shanghai film studios, based on the animated cartoon of the same title. It tells the story of two little Mongolian sisters of the Inner Mongolia grassland. In order to protect commune sheep, eleven-year-old Lungmei and her nine-year-old sister, Yujung, battle a blizzard for a whole day and night with the temperature at 37°C below zero.





Lungmei and Yujung are sisters who live on the grassland of Inner Mongolia. The story of their heroic fight in a blizzard to protect commune sheep is told over the whole country.



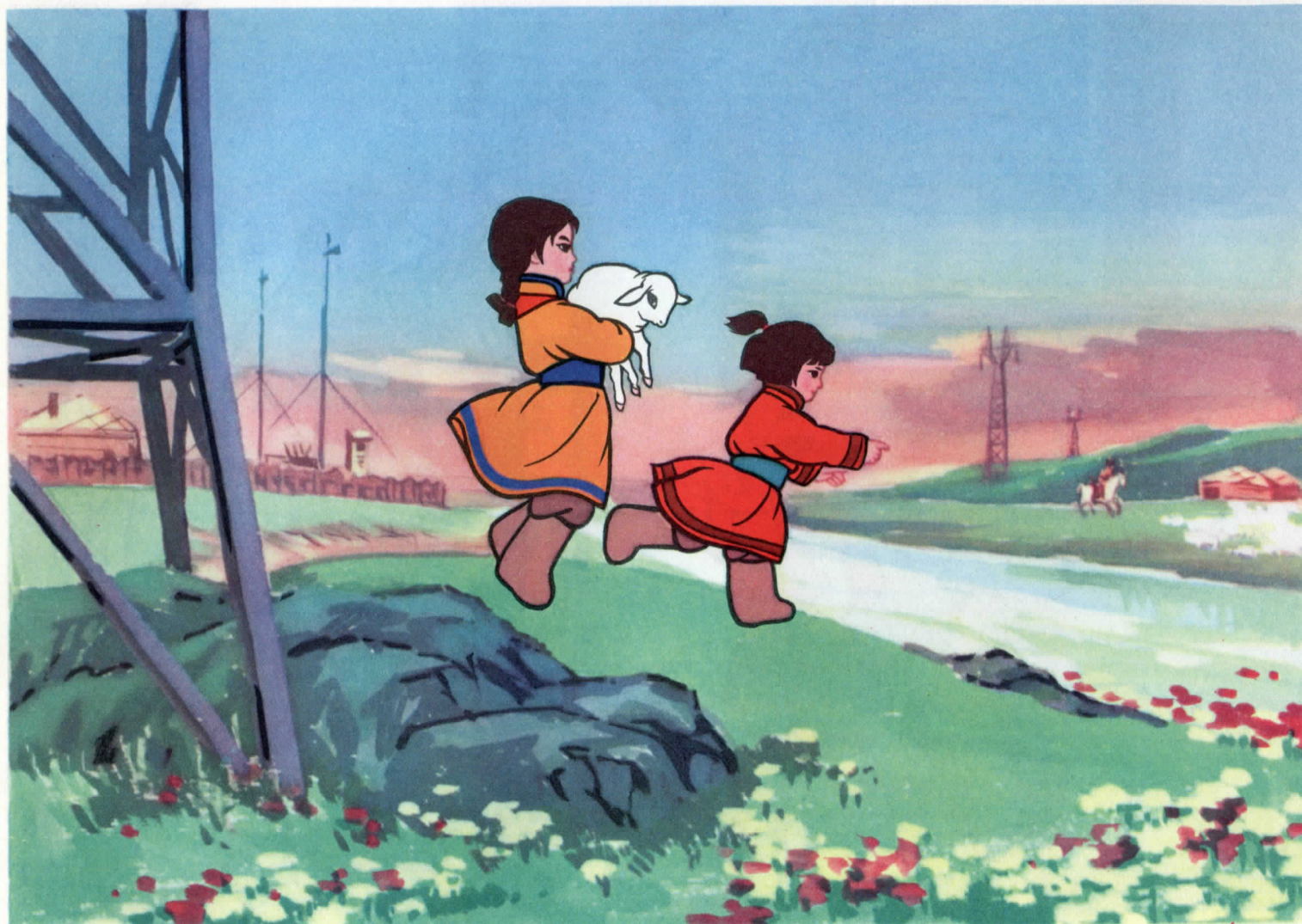
Eleven-year-old Lungmei and her nine-year-old sister, Yujung, are daughters of the herdsman Sugel, a Mongolian member of Hsinpaolike Commune.



Lungmei and Yujung often hear their father say: "Chairman Mao is our great deliverer. He shows us the way forward. We should always listen to what Chairman Mao says."



So the sisters make up their minds to be Chairman Mao's good children, successors to the revolutionary cause. They say with full confidence: "Though we are still young, we also want to do our bit to build socialism."



One day, they find a stray lamb from the neighbouring production brigade. They know very well that it belongs to the collective and that everyone has the duty to protect it. So they carry it back to the brigade where it belongs, even though it is far away, and it will soon be dark.



The Party branch secretary, Uncle Batu, is pleased and comes to see the little girls. He praises them for their good deed and gives them each a copy of Chairman Mao's article *Serve the People* and also *The Story of Lei Feng*.



Uncle Batu says: "You should study Chairman Mao's works conscientiously, do as he teaches and learn from Uncle Lei Feng, the People's Liberation Army man who gave his young life while serving the people."



The sisters always carry *Serve the People* with them and read it over and over. They make up their minds to learn from Uncle Lei Feng.



One February morning in 1964, when Sugel is fetching water, a young herdsman from a nearby production brigade comes to say that one of their ewes is having difficulty lambing, and their vet is out. He asks Sugel urgently for help, and Sugel agrees at once to go.



As Sugel untethers his horse he asks the children to take the flock to Chihchi Ridge. "I'll fetch you there later," he says.



Lungmei and Yujung are very happy to do as their father says. "Don't worry, Daddy," Yujung promises. "It's not the first time we've looked after the flock." Lungmei adds, "We'll be sure to take good care of the commune sheep."



Before leaving, Sugel again reminds the children to watch the sheep carefully, then he rides off.



The sisters drive the flock to Chihchi Ridge, but most of it is covered over with snow, with only a little grass showing. Yujung suggests going to a pasture on the other side of the hill where there's little snow and a lot of grass. Lungmei agrees.



To give the flock a good feed, the sisters head straight for the pasture.



The place is far from home, but it is a fine pasture and the sheep run ahead, jumping and gambolling over the grassland like so many snowballs.



The sisters are so happy to be trusted with the sheep that they sing their favourite songs as they go.



Suddenly Yujung asks Lungmei a question: "How many sheep are there in the flock?" Lungmei remembers that there are 384. "That's wrong," comes back Yujung, laughing. "There are 300 ewes and each ewe is bearing a lamb. Isn't that really 684 sheep?"



Lungmei laughs too and admires Yujung's arithmetic. "In a few years our commune will have so many sheep that our flock will join the white clouds at the horizon," she says.



It's a fine day. While the sheep are grazing, the little sisters read Chairman Mao's *Serve the People*, and they learn to be the kind of person Lei Feng was from *The Story of Lei Feng*.



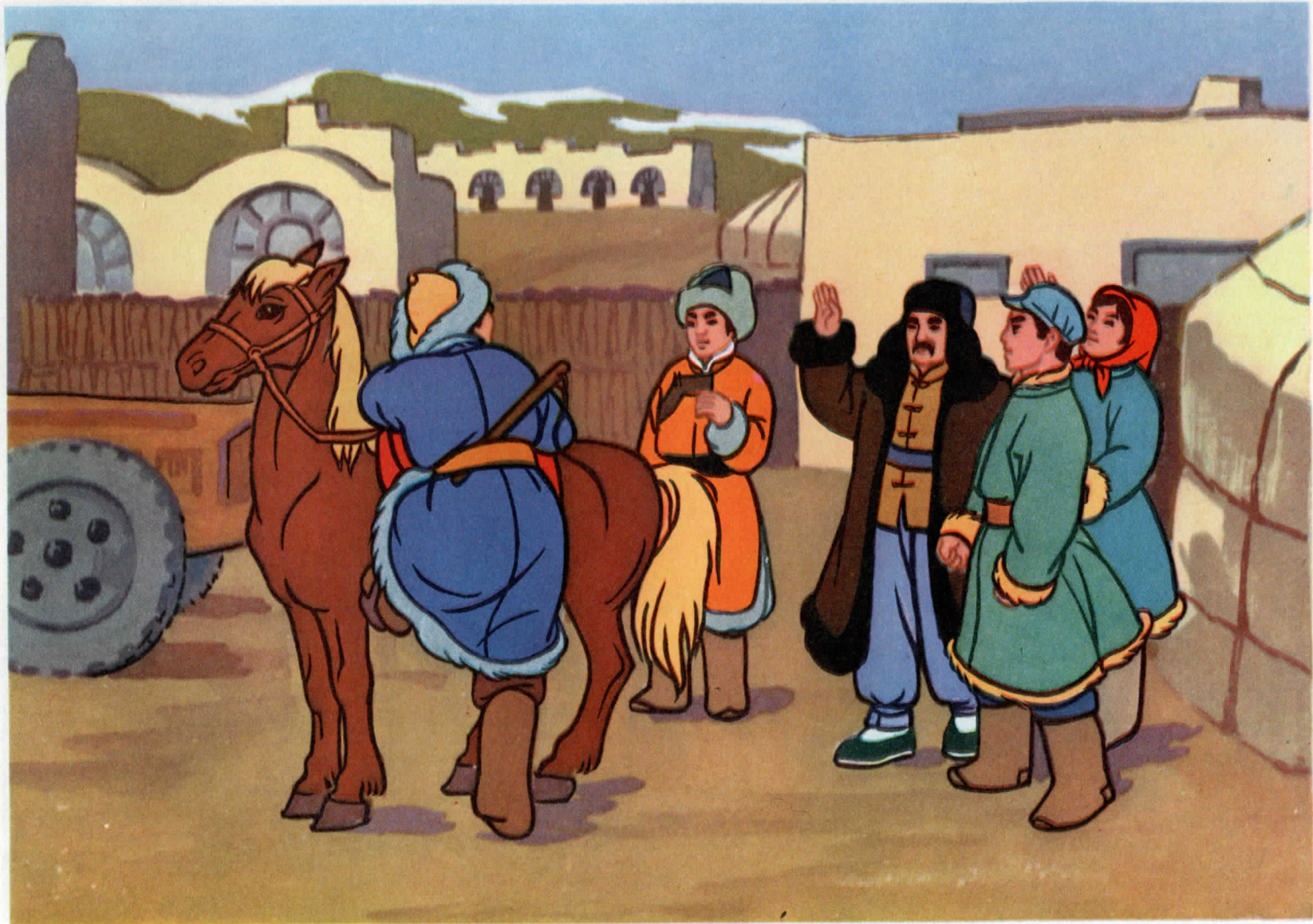
They also make and stage a battle with a snowman which they name "reaction."



The weather in February on the grassland changes very suddenly. The commune weather station warns: Blizzard threatening. Production brigades should make preparations.



The Party branch secretary Batu immediately sends people to notify all community centres so that they can take emergency measures.



Having looked after the ewe's lambing, Sugel also hears of the change in weather. Anxious about his children out with the flock, he hurries home.



How quickly the weather changes! He is on his way home when dark clouds gather in the northwest. The wind soon rises and the air is filled with flying snowflakes.



Seeing the clouds, the sisters round up the flock and start to drive them home.



But the snow is heavy, and the wind roars against them. The sheep are frightened. They stumble, turn and run with the wind.



Lungmei takes the bellwether by the horns. She shouts to Yujung: "Hurry up! Stop the other sheep. I'm trying to calm the bellwether down."



Lungmei struggles up the slope with the lead sheep and the others follow. But the blizzard is overpowering, and the flock stampedes.



• Lungmei asks Yujung to go home quickly to call their father to help. Yujung sets off at once against the gale.



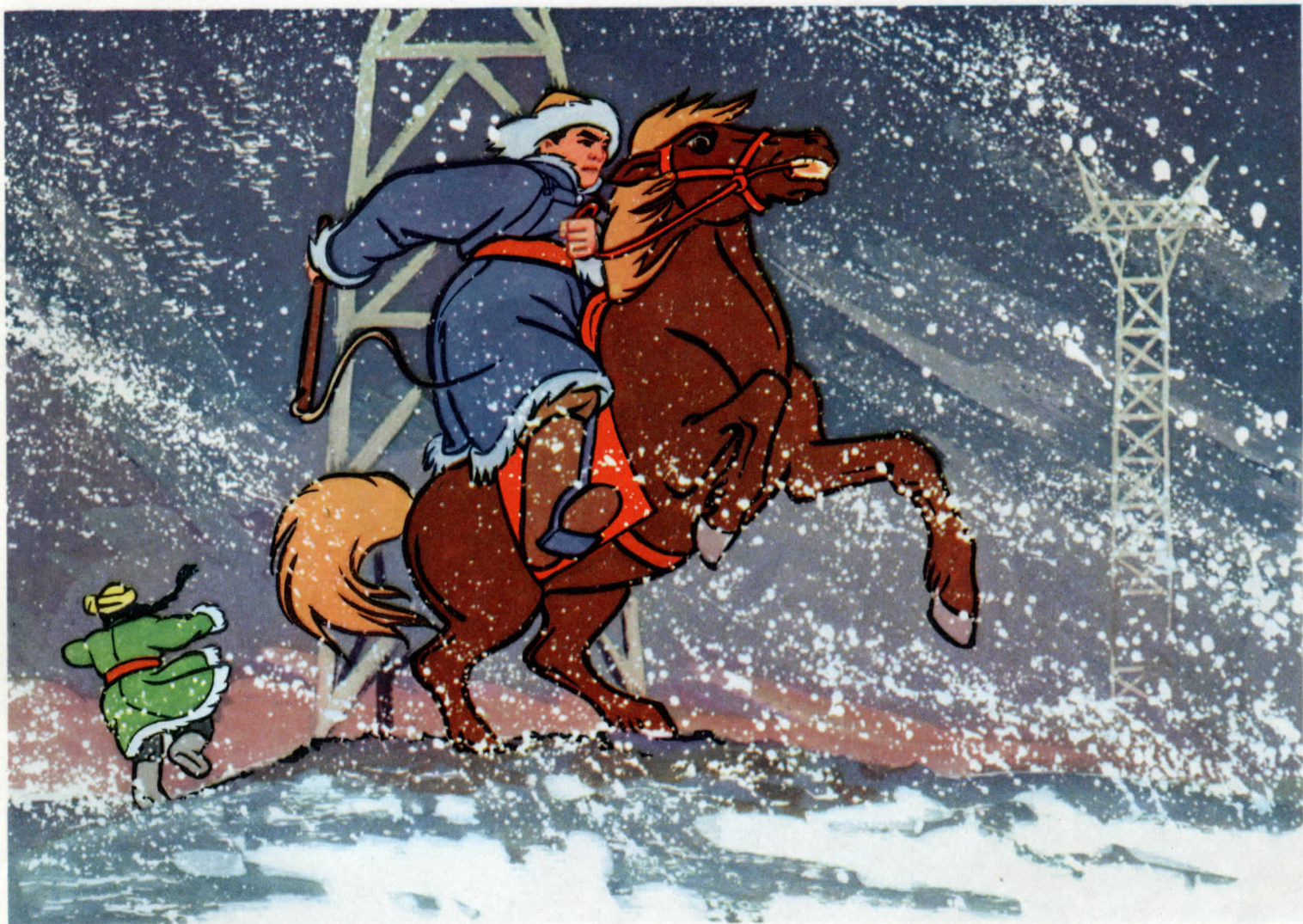
Yujung climbs the first slope with great effort. There, she looks back and sees her sister trying hard to keep the flock together. The sheep are in great danger of being lost.



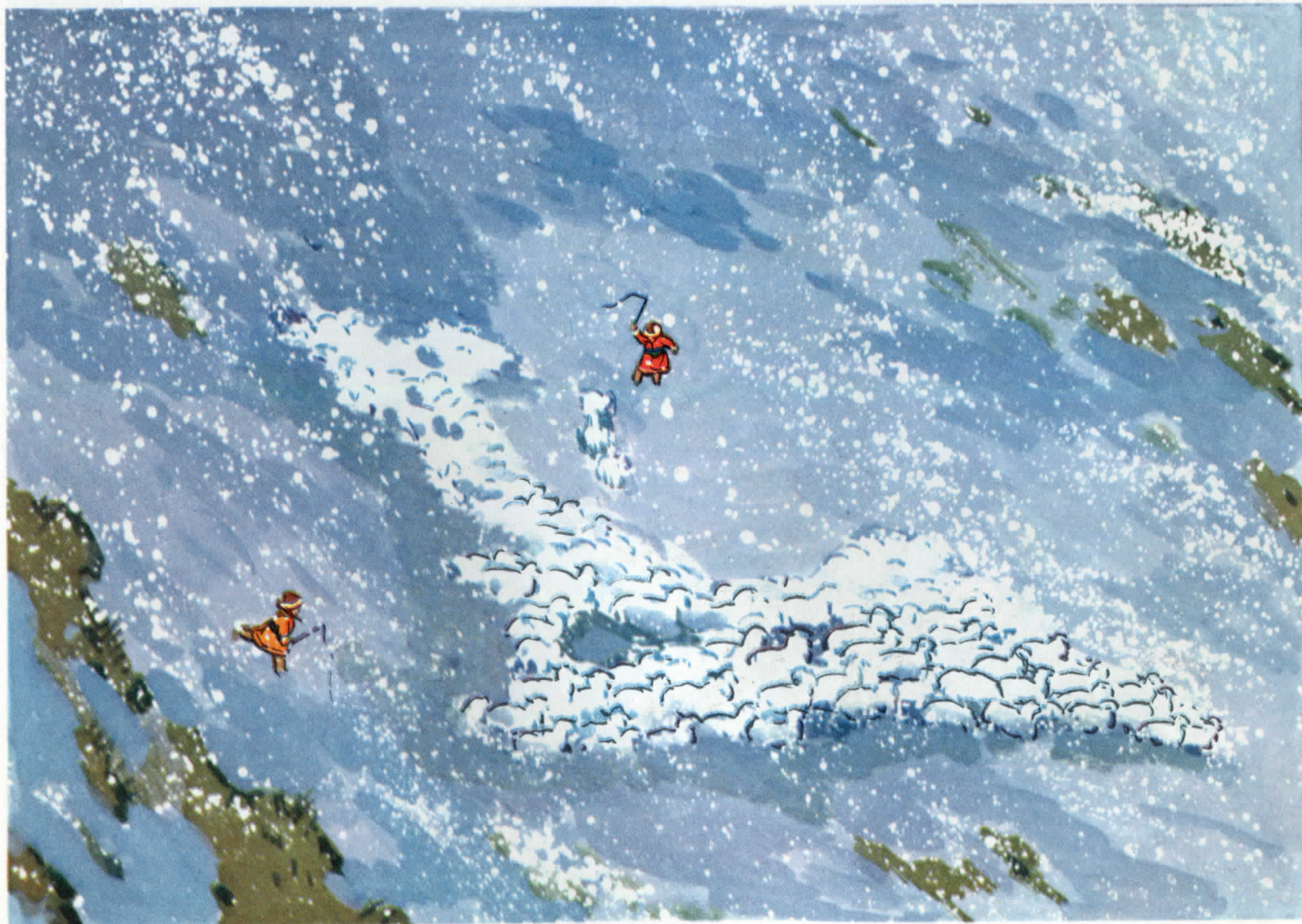
Thinking about the flock being collective property, and that not one must be lost, she runs back.



Meanwhile Sugel gallops to Chihchi Ridge to look for his daughters and the flock. But they are not there, and the heavy snow blots out any trail. He guesses that the little girls must have gone home, so he turns back.



On his way home he meets his wife, who tells him that the girls have not returned with the flock and that she's afraid they've been swept away in the blizzard. Sugel asks his wife to report this to brigade headquarters, then gallops off to look for the children.



The temperature drops to 37°C below zero. Up the hills and over gullies the two little girls struggle against the storm, trying to protect the flock. They feel they must by no means allow the commune to suffer any loss.



The mother hurries to headquarters where the Party branch secretary Batu comforts her. "We have reported the situation to the commune Party committee and they have instructed that the children and the flock must be found."



The commune members gather. Batu tells them briefly what the situation is, then they mount their horses and spread over the grassland to search for the children.



It's dark now, and more difficult for the girls to protect the flock. But still they try. They herd the sheep into line, one behind the other, and shout to each other to keep in touch.



Suddenly, Lungmei does not hear her younger sister's voice. She hurries round the flock, but there is no Yujung. Then she goes back looking and calling to her little sister.



After many anxious moments Lungmei discovers that Yujung has fallen into a deep pit and cannot climb up the steep and icy sides.



Yujung hacks steps up the side, and Lungmei uses all her strength to pull her out. "Are you hurt?" Lungmei asks her anxiously. Yujung shakes her head. "Never mind! Go after the flock."



By now the sheep are far away. The sisters join hands and run after them, stumbling and falling again and again in the chase.



It is late at night when they catch up with the flock. The blizzard becomes fiercer, and the snow falls thicker and faster. Where are they? Suddenly a light gleams in the distance. How happy the little girls are! They will drive the flock towards the light.



But in the blizzard the sheep won't move an inch in that direction. Lungmei is worried and says to Yujung: "Go find the people with that light. I'll watch the flock by myself."



Yujung starts out but, on second thoughts, turns back. She knows it is too hard for her sister to keep the sheep alone.



Yujung is right. The flock is stampeding in spite of all Lungmei can do when Yujung runs back to help.



The sisters have had nothing to eat or drink for a whole day and night. They are hungry and cold. How good it would be to rest for a while in a warm place! But they keep close on the tail of the flock even though it goes away from the gleam of light.



Batu and his party of herdsman continue their search in the blizzard. Suddenly one of them sees someone on horseback in the distance.



It is Sugel coming to look for his children too. Batu says to Sugel: "Our children are a new generation brought up with Mao Tsetung Thought.

They will never leave their flock."



Lungmei and Yujung bravely follow the flock in the storm, trying only to protect them, with no idea of distance. When the wind has gone down a little, the sisters drive the sheep into a cave for shelter.



How tired the little girls are! But when they think of their responsibility they perk up and keep their eyes on the flock.



The thought of serving the people and the heroic image of Uncle Lei Feng fill Lungmei's mind, giving her strength to conquer the blizzard.



Suddenly, a gale loosens the snow above, frightening the sheep so that they stampede out of the shelter.



Lungmei and Yujung closely follow them.



Then Lungmei hears the bleating of a sheep from behind and fears one may be lost. She asks her sister to keep up with the flock while she goes back to round up the stray sheep.



A sheep has fallen into a hole. Lungmei jumps in and pushes the sheep up. It has been hurt.



The lost sheep has been retrieved, but Lungmei's little sister has gone far away with the flock. She presses forward to catch up with them, carrying the injured sheep.



Meanwhile, Yujung keeps on and on. Her legs will scarcely carry her, but still she does not stop.



While shoving several sheep out of a ditch, Yujung loses one of her felt boots in the snow without knowing it.



The news of the children lost with the sheep shocks the production brigades. Concerned for the children, more and more people set out to look for them.



Batu encourages these people who have such strong class feeling. "More people, more strength," he says. "We'll surely find the children and the flock."



Batu has given the directions, and the men on their mounts spread out to comb the grassland.



Yujung trudges on till she can go no farther and collapses in the snow. One foot, without the boot, has frozen and is like a lump of ice.



Raising her head and gathering all her strength, Yujung crawls on, remembering what Chairman Mao says about overcoming difficulties to win victory.



The snowstorm dies down again, and the sheep stop at the foot of a hill. Yujung climbs the hill and slides down the other side, following the sheep.



Yujung gets to her feet and stands leaning against a rock while she counts the sheep carefully as they flock around her.



Lungmei, with the sheep she has rescued, overtakes Yujung. Overjoyed to see her little sister safe with the flock, she gives a happy shout.



Yujung, too, is so excited at seeing her sister with the stray sheep that she flings herself into Lungmei's arms. "All the sheep are here," she says. Lungmei warmly embraces Yujung and calls her "good little sister."



Lungmei is alarmed when she finds that Yujung has lost one of her felt boots.



Lungmei demands anxiously: "Where is your boot, Yujung?" But Yujung is puzzled and answers: "It's on my foot, isn't it?"



Heart-broken, her eyes brimming with tears, Lungmei embraces Yujung's foot. "How can this be your boot! It's all ice!"



Lungmei tries to take off her own boot to give to her sister, but she cannot. Her boots have frozen to her feet, and she cannot get it off, even by stamping her foot and hitting it with a stone.



Yujung tells her sister not to take off her boot. "How can you protect the flock if your feet are frozen?"



The storm picks up force, and the flock start running again. Lungmei quickly wraps Yujung's foot in fur torn from her own clothes.



The gale whips at the flock and the sheep run with it faster and faster. Lungmei follows after them with Yujung on her back. Yujung asks to be put down so that her sister can run and catch up with the sheep, but Lungmei refuses.



Yujung slides from her sister's back. "See," she says, "I can walk!"



But after going a few steps she falls flat on her face.



Lungmei picks her up and lifts her onto her back again. And so they continue bravely on after the sheep.



Bang! Bang! One of the young herdsmen fires two shots in the air to summon Batu, Sugel and the others to assemble. He has found a small felt boot in the snow.



Batu shows the boot to Sugel, who says immediately that it is Yujung's. Batu says, "We're on their trail, all right. The children have run after the flock a good 35 kilometres in this weather!"



Lungmei stumbles along, carrying her sister. They are exhausted, hungry and cold. Still Lungmei presses forward confidently.



It is dawn when Lungmei, with her sister on her back, follows the flock to a railway station. Batu and the herdsmen are searching for them there too.



Suddenly Lungmei hears people's voices. How familiar they are! She recognizes them as the voices of her father and Uncle Batu. She stops short.



Some railway workers also see the children wandering with a flock in the bitter weather and rush towards them.



Lungmei looks back and sees Uncle Batu and his fellow herdsmen coming.



Party branch secretary Batu, Sugel and the others gallop up to the children. They are so excited at the sight of the sisters safe with the flock that tears come to their eyes.



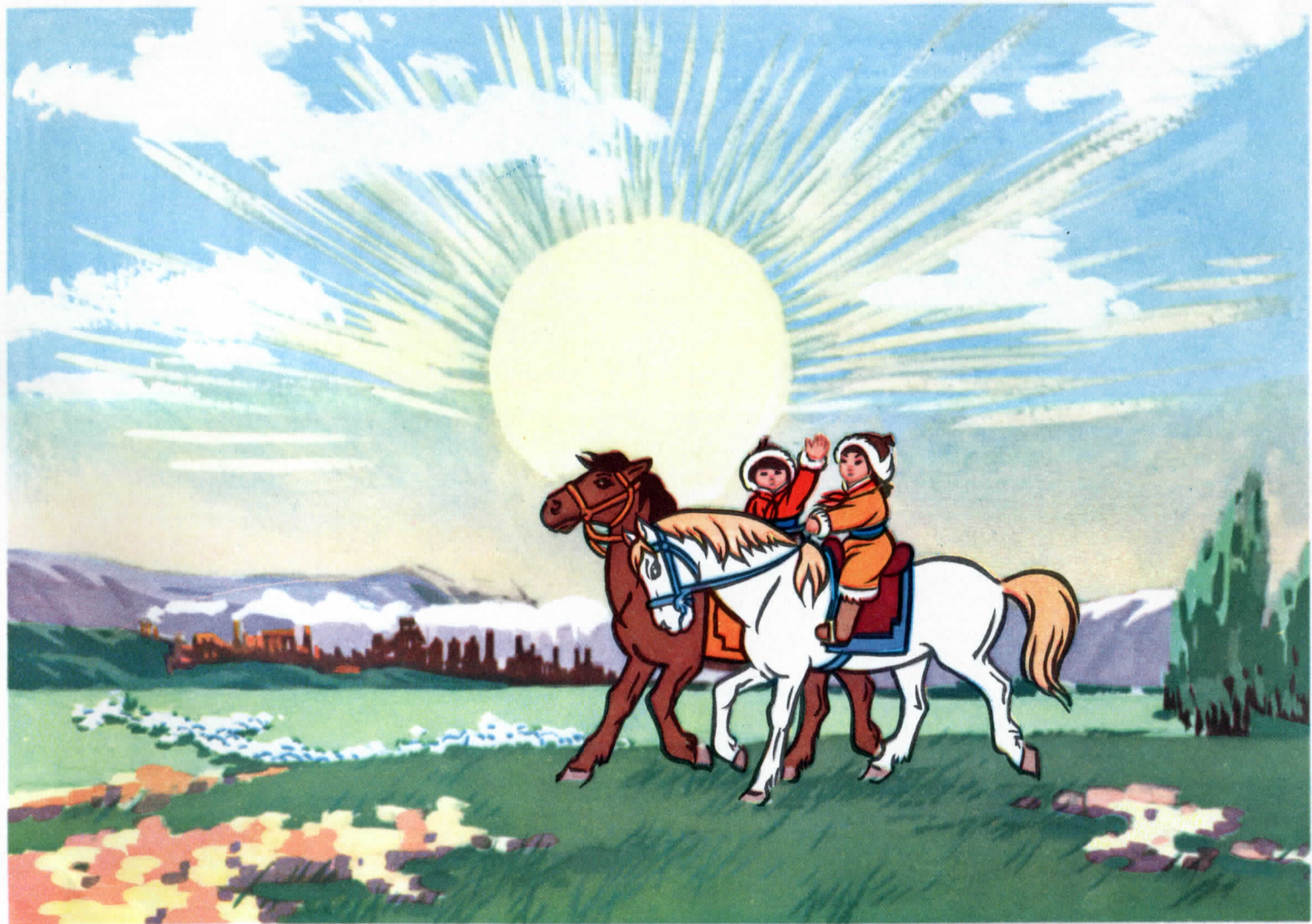
The little girls, too, are overjoyed, and want to tell the whole story. But they are exhausted and faint dead away on the ground. Batu and the herdsmen pick them up and send them to the nearest hospital.



After rescue measures, the sisters revive, and the first thing Lungmei says is: “What about the flock?” The people around are moved and say they are certainly Chairman Mao’s good children!



The story of the two little sisters spreads over the grassland and throughout the country. Thousands of letters and gifts pour in from far and near, expressing the desire to learn from the little girls' revolutionary spirit of fearing neither hardship nor death.



Golden sunshine fills the grassland. Lungmei and Yujung have recovered and grow up wholesomely, nurtured by Mao Tsetung Thought.



草原英雄小姐妹

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