

TWO WAYS TO DROP A LADY

There were two monks of middle age, each of whom had many years of study and training in a Buddhist monastery. One day they were travelling on foot. It was late afternoon when they arrived at a river. There was no bridge or ferry, but the river was shallow and they believed they would have no difficulty in walking across it. Suddenly they saw a young lady who was attempting to cross the river too, but was hesitating to step into water. She was in trouble. So one of the monks went to her and offered his assistance to carry her on his back and walk across the river. The other monk was very much surprised by what his brother monk did. Puzzled and frustrated he was very unhappy as he followed them to the other shore of the river. The first monk put down the lady who thanked him and left. The two monks continued their journey. While walking the second monk could not forget the incident. He wondered how his brother could violate the precepts that they had observed for so many years. What a grave sin he had committed even in another's presence! Could it possibly be that he violated other important precepts when he was alone? It was about dark now and they found an abandoned temple. They were tired and went to the temple and lay down. The first monk immediately fell asleep but the second one could not. First he was frustrated, then he felt pity for his brother monk for committing such a grave sin. He tried to pray for him to reduce his sin but imagined all kinds of things. He tossed fretfully and could not go to sleep. It was about dawn, and he became very angry when he heard the snore of sound sleep from his brother monk. "What happened to you my brother? Why didn't you sleep?" The second monk answered angrily: "Do you know what you have done? What are our precepts? How could you hold a girl on your back to walk across the river? I could not sleep because I was trying my best to pray to minimize your sin, but you simply didn't care and slept soundly." The first monk said, "Oh you are talking about that lady. I dropped her a long time ago as soon as we crossed the river, but why do you, my brother, still carry her on your back?"

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A Glimpse of Buddhism.

