

The Turtles

A turtle family decided to go on a picnic. The turtles, being naturally slow about things, took seven years to prepare for their outing. Finally the turtle family left home looking for a suitable place.

During the second year of their journey they found a place ideal for them at last! For about six months they cleaned the area, unpacked the picnic basket, and completed the arrangements.

Then they discovered they had forgotten the salt. A picnic without salt would be a disaster, they all agreed. After a lengthy discussion, the youngest turtle was chosen to retrieve the salt from home.

Although he was the fastest of the slow moving turtles, the little turtle whined, cried, and wobbled in his shell. He agreed to go on one condition: that no one would eat until he returned. The family consented and the little turtle left.

Three years passed and the little turtle had not returned.

Five years...six years... then on the seventh year of his absence, the oldest turtle could no longer contain his hunger. He announced that he was going to eat and begun to unwrap a sandwich.

At that point the little turtle suddenly popped out from behind a tree shouting, 'See! I knew you wouldn't wait. Now I am not going to go get the salt.'

[Some of us waste our time waiting for people to live up to our expectations. We are so concerned about what others are doing that we don't do anything ourselves.]

The Frogs

A farmer came into town and asked the owner of a restaurant if he could use a million frog legs. The restaurant owner was shocked and asked the man where he could get so many frog legs!

The farmer replied, 'There is a pond near my house that is full of frogs - millions of them. They all croak all night long and they are about to make me crazy!'

So the restaurant owner and the farmer made an agreement that the farmer would deliver frogs to the restaurant, five hundred at a time for the next several weeks.

The first week, the farmer returned to the restaurant looking rather sheepish, with two scrawny little frogs. The restaurant owner said, 'Well... where are all the frogs?' The farmer said, 'I was mistaken. There were only these two frogs in the pond. But they sure were making a lot of noise!'

[Next time you hear somebody criticizing or making fun of you, remember, it's probably just a couple of noisy frogs. Also remember that problems always seem bigger in the dark. Have you ever laid in your bed at night worrying about things which seem almost overwhelming like a million frogs croaking? Chances are pretty good that when the morning comes, and you take a closer look, you'll wonder what all the fuss was about.]

The Pretty Lady

Once upon a time a big monk and a little monk were traveling together. They came to the bank of a river and found the bridge was damaged. They had to wade across the river. There was a pretty lady who was stuck at the damaged bridge and couldn't cross the river.

The big monk offered to carry her across the river on his back. The lady accepted. The little monk was shocked by the move of the big monk. 'How can big brother carry a lady when we are supposed to avoid all intimacy with females?' thought the little monk.

But he kept quiet. The big monk carried the lady across the river and the small monk followed unhappily. When they crossed the river, the big monk let the lady down and they parted ways with her.

All along the way for several miles, the little monk was very unhappy with the act of the big monk. He was making up all kinds of accusations about big monk in his head. This got him madder and madder.

But he still kept quiet. And the big monk had no inclination to explain his situation. Finally, at a rest point many hours later, the little monk could not stand it any further, he burst out angrily at the big monk. 'How can you claim yourself a devout monk, when you seize the first opportunity to touch a female, especially when she is very pretty? All your teachings to me make you a big hypocrite'

The big monk looked surprised and said, 'I had put down the pretty lady at the river bank many hours ago, how come you are still carrying her along?'

[This very old Chinese Zen story reflects the thinking of many people today. We encounter many unpleasant things in our life, they irritate us and they make us angry. Sometimes, they cause us a lot of hurt, sometimes they cause us to be bitter or jealous. But like the little monk, we are not willing to let them go away. We keep on carrying the baggage of the 'pretty lady' with us. We let them keep on coming back to hurt us, make us angry, make us bitter and cause us a lot of agony. Why? Simply because we are not willing to put down or let go of the baggage of the 'pretty lady'. We should let go of the pretty lady immediately after crossing the river, that is after the unpleasant event is over. This will immediately remove all our agonies. There is no need to be further hurt by the unpleasant event after it is over.]