

The Muddy Road

Two wandering monks, Tanzan and Ekido, were traveling together down a muddy road. A heavy rain was still falling.

Coming around a bend, they met a lovely girl in a beautiful silk kimono and sash, unable to cross the intersection because of the river of mud.

“Come on, girl” said Tanzan at once. Lifting her in his arms he carried her through the mud. After putting her down on the other side, the two monks went on their way.

Ekido did not speak again until that night when they reached a lodging temple. Then he could no longer restrain himself, “We monks don’t go near females!” he told Tanzan. “Especially not young and lovely ones. It is dangerous. Why did you do that?”

“I left the girl back there,” said Tanzan. “Why are you still carrying her?”

*From Zen Flesh Zen Bones
by Paul Reys & Nyogen Senzaki*