

THE THREE DOLLS

Once there lived a king famed for his wisdom and encouragement of scholars and artists. Many flocked to his court to exhibit their skills and be rewarded. Some would also come to test the king and engage in scholarly debates, more to enjoy his intelligence than to outwit him.

One day a craftsman brought three beautiful dolls to the court. All the dolls looked alike. He placed them before the king and said, "O King, please examine them well and pick the best, the worst and the one in between."

The king held the dolls and looked at them very carefully. They looked exactly the same. Suddenly the king noticed that one doll had holes in both ears. He put a thin wire through one hole. The wire came out through the other hole.

In the next doll, the king found a hole in one ear and a hole in the mouth. When he inserted the wire through the hole in the ear, it came out through the mouth.

In the last doll, the king found a hole only in the ear and nowhere else. When he put the wire into that hole, it went in and remained there.

The king thought for a while. He then congratulated the craftsman saying, "You are very clever. Your art spreads a wise message to the people. These three dolls represent three types of friends. Every man needs a friend to help him in difficulties, listen to him with kindness and keep his secrets. The first doll stands for the worst kind of friend. If you pour out your troubles to him, he only pretends to listen. But he does not. What he hears passes out of his head without leaving any impression on his mind. He cannot help anyone. With him, there is no love and no trust.

The second doll stands for the second-rate friend. He may listen to you kindly but he could be dangerous because your secrets will soon reach others. That is why the wire went in through the ear and came out through the mouth. With this friend there is love but no trust because he cannot keep secrets.

The third doll stands for the best kind of friend. Whatever you tell such a friend, he will listen carefully and kindly. He will try to help you and never talk about what you say to others. You are safe with him because in such a friendship there is both love and trust."

The king rewarded the craftsman for his beautiful dolls and the craftsman praised the king for his wisdom.

"Friendship must serve as lids for the eye, as sandals for the feet. The friend must be "another Me". He must experience, in equal depth, the joy and the grief of the other. Friends must be like milk and water. Let Me elaborate this example. When milk, into which some quantity of water is poured, is placed on a burning stove, the water goes off as steam. The milk laments the separation and boils over. Then, the only way to keep it calm is to sprinkle a spoon or two of water; its friend is back and it is happy. Milk cannot tolerate separation from its friend."

1008 Gems

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