

A Surprise Encounter

Part One of a Nine Part Series by Reverend Shindo Nishiyama

One afternoon, Reverend Shindo Nishiyama went for his daily walk in Kamehameha Park, near Jikoen Temple in Kalihi. He saw a man sitting under one of the Hawaiian shower trees. When Shindo passed in front of him, the man called, “Hello, I need your help”. Shindo then stopped to talk with him.

Buddha: Thank you for stopping to talk to me. Can I ask what is your name?

Shindo: Aloha! My name is Shindo Nishiyama. And what is your name? How can I help you?

Buddha: My original name is Siddhartha Gautama, but now people call me Buddha.

Shindo: What? Are you Shakyamuni Buddha?

Buddha: Yes, I am. I was born in Lumbini Garden over 2,500 years ago.

Shindo: I know you were born around 566 B.C.E., but why are you here in Hawaii?

Buddha: I came to see what the world is like today and how people are living. Are there any of my followers here in Hawaii?

Shindo: Yes! Yes!

Buddha: Oh, how nice! Are you one of my followers?

Shindo: Yes! I am a Jodo Shinshu Buddhist minister. We have many Buddhist temples here in Hawaii and all over the world!

Buddha: I see, but you do not look like a monk. What kind of practice do Jodo Shinshu Buddhist ministers do every day?

Chanting? Meditation? Learning from your master? Begging for food offerings? Sharing the Dharma with whoever needs to hear it?

Shindo: Well, Master Shakyamuni. Many things have changed since your time in monastery life over 2,500 years ago. As Jodo Shinshu Buddhists, we don't practice meditation and beg for food now. However, we do chant sutras such as the Larger Sutra, Meditation Sutra, and the Amida Sutra, which you preached over 2,500 years ago.

Buddha: Oh, I am so glad to hear that! Sensei, can you be my friend while I am here in Hawaii? I need your help me to live here for a while.

Shindoi: Yes!! Do you have a place to sleep tonight?

Buddha: No, I don't.

Shindo: If you don't mind, I would like to offer you food and a place to sleep. Please follow me?

Buddha: Namaste!

End of Part One