

## A Surprise Encounter

Part Nine of a Nine Part Series by Reverend Shindo Nishiyama

Buddha and Shindo are sitting in Starbucks in Kalihi

Shindo: Buddha, I am so happy that you enjoyed your Caffe Latte!

Buddha: Yes, I love this drink. Tastes like Chai in India. Thank you Shindo!

Shindo: You're welcome! It's my pleasure. And thank you for sharing your wisdom. I hope you don't mind but I have another question. I've been wondering about the meaning of Nirvana. Can you explain it to me?

Buddha: Okay. But, it is very difficult to understand the concept of Nirvana. Many people imagine Nirvana as a beautiful garden with gentle breezes, colorful flowers and a perfectly blue sky where there is peace and love for all. But Nirvana is not a place. It is not somewhere you go, such as heaven or the next life.

Nirvana is here all the time; however it is very hard to realize it due to our ego and blinded passions

Shindo: So, what does Nirvana mean?

Buddha: Nirvana, literally means "extinguishing or blowing out the Fires of Desire." It is difficult to explain, but I can say that Nirvana is completely opposite of your life right now. It is living with no discrimination, hatred, jealousy, blind passions, and anger. It is living without judgment of good or bad, beautiful or not beautiful, young or old, strong or weak, smart or not smart, rich or poor. In these ways, Nirvana is the opposite of this life you live in.

Shindo: So how can I realize Nirvana?

Buddha: The path to Nirvana begins with listening to the Buddha Dharma and hearing the name of the Buddha, Namu Amida Butsu, arising from your heart. It is the path of expressing your joy and gratitude for the precious gift of your life. By listening to the Dharma you have the opportunity to see beyond your blind passions and awaken to the sound of Namu Amida Butsu. So, Shindo, please continue to walk on the path of awakening and open your heart to the Buddha Dharma. It leads you to the Name That Calls, Namu Amida Butsu.

Shindo: I will keep your guidance in my mind. Thank you, Buddha.

Buddha: You're welcome. Well, Shindo, the time has come. I need to leave Hawaii and travel to meet future generations to share the Dharma.

Shindo: I understand. We must say goodbye. Buddha, I am so glad to have encountered the Buddha Dharma. Now I know that it has no hidden meaning. It clearly shows us how to live in this unrepeatable life! I am so lucky!

Buddha: Shindo, remember that your life is not only yours. You are connected to all other life in this moment. Not because of you, but because of others, you are living in this moment. Please don't forget that you are not alone. The Dharma and the calling name of Amida Buddha, Namo Amida Butsu, are always with you, always embracing you with unconditional love. Please recite the name in joy and gratitude for every moment you grasp the preciousness of your life.

Shindo: Yes, I will keep it in my mind always. I am not alone because of Namo Amida Butsu.

Buddha: I will leave tonight. Thank you so much for everything! I had a very nice time and learned lots of things in Hawaii with you and Pieper. Please tell him to listen to the Dharma and stay on the path to a meaningful life.

Shindo: Yes, I will tell him that. Are you able to return to Hawaii again in the future?

Buddha: Maybe, but you can meet me in the Buddha Dharma anytime and anywhere through the sound of Namo Amida Butsu.

Shindo: Yes, I understand. Thank you so much!

Buddha: Mahalo and Arigato for your help during my stay in Hawaii. Hawaii is a very unique place in the universe. It is so beautiful. And I loved the ono food! I love it here! I shall never forget!

Shindo: Namaste and Mahalo!

End of Part Nine of a Nine Part Series