

## A Surprise Encounter

Part Three of a Nine Part Series by Reverend Shindo Nishiyama

Shindo and Buddha are sitting in Kamehameha Park in the early morning.

Shindo: Master, did you sleep well last night?

Buddha: Yes, Shindo. Namaste! I slept well. I really enjoyed the cool Hawaiian night.

Shindo: Master, I have several questions about your life. After you left your palace and your family, what did you do?

Buddha: I went to find different teachers in search for a way to liberate myself from my ties to the material world. I studied Cosmology, Yogic Exercises, Medicine, Disciplines of Self-Control and Self-Denial. After I studied these many subjects, I sat and gave up all worldly attachments to clear my self-centered mind. However, my ego was still alive. I continued in these rigorous practices. I did not eat. I lost weight and I became ill. I was frustrated and confused.

Shindo: Then what happened?

Buddha: These extremely harsh practices brought me near death. But a young woman, named Sujata, found me, and gave me some rice and milk. Her compassion saved my life. After I recovered, I reflected on my experience. It was then I realized that I would never reach my goal through severe ascetic practices.

Shindo: I see. So what did you do next?

Buddha: After my recovery, I went to the Bodhi Trees to meditate and it was there that I entered the final stage of becoming Buddha, the Awakened One. I was awakened to "The Middle Way."

Shindo: What is "The Middle Way?"

Buddha: "The Middle Way" is like preparing a good "furo." We do not want it to be too hot and we do not want it to be too cold. We have to make it just right and comfortable for EVERYONE. That is what we do in walking "The Middle Way." We practice non-judgment and non-discrimination for all. We follow the Universal Law of saving all living things unconditionally, the weak and the strong, the small and the large, the poor and the rich, the high and the low, and the good and the bad. We embrace all just as they are. Then we help them to awaken to their endless desires, blind passions, and the darkness of their sufferings.

Shindo: Thank you, Master, for your sharing "The Middle Way." Master, I understand that you were born on April 8 over 2,500 years ago in the Lumbini Garden. Let's celebrate your birthday at Zippys? I will buy Loco Moco for you! It's the best!

Buddha: What ? Loco Moco? Okay, I will follow you Shindo and you show me!

Shindo: Come with me, Master, I am sure you will like it!

Buddha: I really appreciate your kindness and caring!

Shindo: Don't worry! I am so glad that I met you here in Hawaii to learn about your life and teachings. I am a very lucky person!

Master: Namaste.

End of Part Three