

A Surprise Encounter

Part Five of a Nine Part Series by Reverend Shindo Nishiyama

Shindo and Shakyamuni Buddha are sitting in Kapiolani Park after celebrating Shakyamuni's birthday at Zippy's.

Shindo: Master, how was the Loco Moco ? Did you like it?

Buddha: Yes, Shindo! It was a great. I have never tasted such a tasty food before! Thank you. Namaste!

Shindo: I am happy that you enjoyed it! Today, I want you to meet my Dharma friend. I already called him this morning to meet us here. His name is Pieper Toyama. He is a member of the Jikoen Temple Sangha. When I told him that you are here as a time traveler who traveled here from over 2,500 years ago from India, he was excited and asked if he could meet you. Is it okay with you?

Buddha: Oh, how nice! I am happy to meet him! Shindo, is that him? That man who is walking toward to us. He looks like a samurai!

Shindo: Yes. That is him. Hi, Pieper! Over here!

Pieper: Oh, my Buddha! You are really Master Shakyamuni Buddha! I am honored to meet you!

Buddha: And I am very happy to meet you! Shindo told me that you are one of his best Dharma friends! How wonderful!

Pieper: Yes, Shindo and I are learning the Buddha Dharma to help us in living our daily lives. I am so grateful to have this rare opportunity to talk with you.

Buddha: Life is impermanent thus our meeting today is a very precious moment. Thank you very much for coming to see me today!

Pieper: Buddha, I have many questions for you about the Buddha Dharma but time is short, so I want to ask just one question today: **What is the first thing I should do to live a happy life?**

Buddha: That is an important question for all of us, Pieper. There are many answers to your question, but I would like to share a Universal Truth with you as my answer. And that Truth is simply this. Our lives are impermanent. Everything is changing. Nothing remains the same. Even for me. People call me the "Enlightened One," but I too will live my last day sometime in the future. I cannot escape from my

life of impermanence. Our lives are unstable and everchanging. However, most people do not recognize this truth. They think that they are living every moment and they don't realize that they are also dying every moment.

How about you, Pieper? Do you realize that you are getting closer to your last moment day by day? When we awaken to this Truth of our Life of Impermanence, we can live happier and more meaningful lives. Awakening to my life as impermanent, momentary, and changing, I can embrace my unrepeatable life and those of others as well.

So, my answer for your question, "What is the first thing I should do to live a happy life?" is to awaken to the Truth that everything is changing and will not remain the same. When you do this, you will respect your life with no negative feelings for dying. Death becomes a part of your life. Once you are settled into this awakening, you will be free from delusions, confusion, and anxiety. You will be an awakened one to live your life in joy, gratitude, and respect with no regrets. Your life is impermanent, thus every meeting with your family and friends is to be treasured! When you accept the impermanence of your life, then aging, sickness, and death become part of the reality of your life.

Pieper: I see. So Master Shakyamuni, without understanding or accepting the impermanence of my life, I can't live a truly happy life. This Truth is a very important part of Buddhism.

Buddha: Yes, you are right! There is nothing that should surprise us in our lives due to the Universal Truth of Impermanence.

Pieper: Thank you so much for your answer to my question. Now I understand that there are no good moments or bad moments. There are only changing moments.

Shindo: Pieper, I am sure you had a great time with Buddha today! He will be at Jikoen for a little while, so please come and see him again!

Pieper: Sensei, thank you so much! Yes, I will come to see him again with more questions! And I want my wife, Lois to meet him someday!

Buddha: Pieper, you have become one of my Dharma Friends today. I am so happy to meet you in Hawaii! Namaste.

Peiper: Namaste and Aloha! Please take care and enjoy you stay here in Hawaii!

Buddha: I will!

End of Part Five

