

## A Surprise Encounter

Part Four of a Nine Part Series by Reverend Shindo Nishiyama

Shindo and Buddha are sitting in Vineyard Zippy's, celebrating Buddha's Birthday.

Shindo: Buddha, how is the Loco Moco? Do you like it?

Buddha: It tastes delicious! I enjoy it very much! Thank you for bringing me to this place that serves such good food.

Shindo: You are very welcome. Buddha, I have several more questions for you. Can you explain the Four Noble Truths you talked about at your first sermon? I understand that it was at Deer Park and you spoke to your five followers.

Buddha: I will be happy to share the teachings from my sermon. It was after I was awakened to the Universal Truth that I went to see my followers to give my first sermon.

The true nature of the world is in the Four Noble Truths:

1. The Truth of Duhkha is that we all experience suffering in our lives.
2. The Truth of the Cause of Suffering is that unreasonable desires and attachments cause our suffering.
3. The Truth of the Cessation of Suffering happens when we become awakened to these desires and attachments.
4. The Truth of the Path is that when we follow the Eightfold Path we become awakened. The path leads to Enlightenment and Nirvana.

Shindo, the Four Noble Truth is like a getting a diagnosis and prescription from your doctor. When you have something wrong physically, you go to see a doctor. This is the truth of Suffering. The doctor diagnoses the problem looking for the cause of your illness. This is the truth of the Cause of Suffering. Then the doctor prescribes the best medicine for your illness. This is the truth of the Cessation of Suffering. Finally, you take the medicine which treats your illness. This is the truth of walking the Eightfold Path, of following the Dharma, to relieve your suffering.

Shindo: Oh, now I understand. The Dharma is like the medicine that helps all living things to become happy and well, right?

Buddha: Yes, the Dharma, the Universal Truths, help us see ourselves just as we are and our lives just as it is. The Dharma makes no distinction between good or bad,

small or big, short or high, young or old, rich or poor, ignorance or not, and believing or not. The Dharma is for everyone. The Dharma does not judge.

Shindo: Thank you very much. I have another question. What does the Dharma Wheel mean?

Buddha: The Turning Wheel symbolizes the sharing of the Dharma. The Wheel began to turn when I stood up enlightened from my meditation, when I became the Awakened One under the Bodhi Tree. The Wheel of Dharma is turning as the Dharma is shared with everyone. Thus, the Dharma is living.

Shindo: So, the Dharma Wheel symbolizes that the Dharma is working on us, right?

Buddha: Yes, that's right. The Dharma is made up of Universal Truths. It tells us that everything is changing and nothing remains the same. Shindo, you are living in this moment but you are also dying in this moment. You do not know when you will cease to exist.

Shindo: I see. I need to realize that my life is unique and is made up of unrepeatable moments. I am very special just as others are special. But in today's world, there are so many issues of discrimination and racism. Buddha, do you have a message for us?

Buddha: Yes, Shindo, I do have a message. First of all, we must remember that we all discriminate and judge others. We must realize that we are part of this world of discrimination. And we should also realize that many are suffering from discrimination, racism, and our judgmental society. We need to practice seeing each person's precious life, his life history, and his cultural values. If we see another's life as the same as our life, we will not be so judgmental and we will not discriminate against others. We will respect each other's unrepeatable life.

Shindo: You are right! I do judge others and disrespect their lives sometimes. I understand that my judgmental mind is part of my ego and my ignorance.

Buddha: Yes, our ego disappears only when we die. However, we can become less judgmental when we are awakened to the equality of all lives. When we are awakened to the equality of all sentient beings, we can control our desires, attachments, and our ignorant and self-centered mind. Shindo, if you truly respect your life, if you appreciate who you are, then you can respect and appreciate others just as you do yourself. This is how we change racism and discrimination into respect and appreciation.

Shindo: Thank you, Buddha, for your guidance! We must remember that we are all trying to be respectful and valued beings who live in joy and gratitude. We must be mindful that our lives are impermanent, momentary and precious!

Buddha: Yes, to respect others and allow them to live their lives in joy and gratitude just as we live our lives in joy and gratitude is a Universal Law. It is the Buddha Dharma.

Shindo: Thank you Buddha! Okay, let's go to Waikiki Beach and enjoy the ocean and Hawaiian sunshine!!

Buddha: What? Beach? Okay, sounds good!

End of Part Four