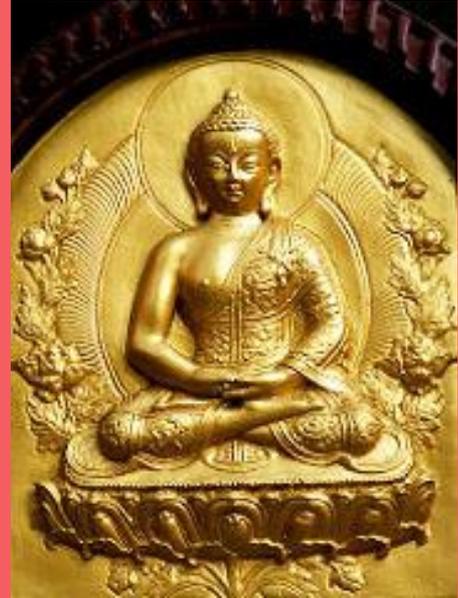
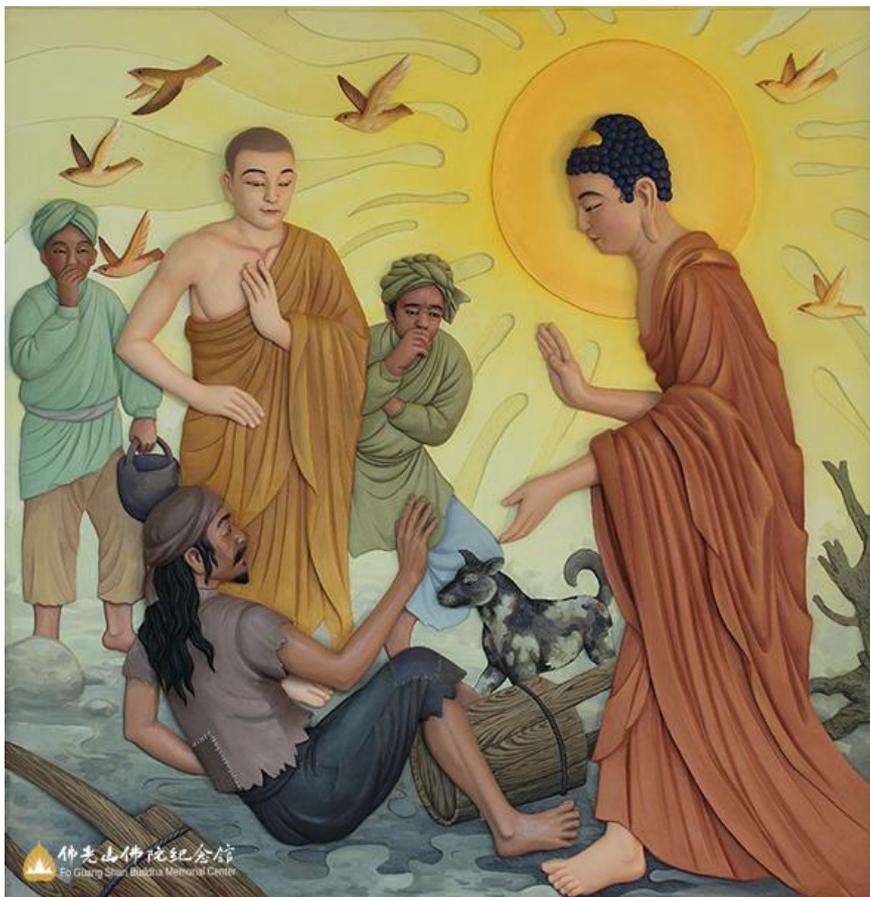


# Stories of the Buddha



by FGS Buddha Memorial Center



## The Buddha's Sense of Equality

One day, the Buddha went for a walk with Ananda. When the two reached the outskirts of the city of Sravasti, they saw an untouchable coming toward them carrying a bucket full of excrement.

The untouchable, whose name was Nidhi, saw the Buddha and Ananda at the same time they saw him. Deep in his heart, Nidhi had immense reverence and love for the Buddha. However, he also had very little respect for himself, and thus he believed he was completely unworthy of the Buddha's attention. Though Nidhi loved the Buddha very much, when he saw that he was coming his way, he turned down a side road to avoid meeting him. The Buddha knew what Nidhi was feeling and why he wanted to avoid him, so he asked Ananda to continue walking straight ahead while he followed another path that would lead him right to the untouchable.

When Nidhi saw that his attempt to avoid the Buddha had failed and that the Buddha was coming straight toward him, he turned this way and that, looking for some last place to conceal himself. In his confusion, his bucket of excrement tipped over and the foul slop spilled across the road. By the time Nidhi had realized what he had done, the Buddha was so close to him, he could no longer even attempt to run and hide. All he could do was kneel by the mess, press his palms together and say, “Lord Buddha, I am sorry!”

With great gentleness, the Buddha said, “Nidhi, please stand up.”

When Nidhi heard him say that, he stayed on his knees and wondered, “How can he know my name? I never would have imagined the Buddha would ever call me by my name!”

The Buddha continued speaking, “Nidhi, will you come and be one of my monks?”

Nidhi was shocked by what he thought he had heard. He said, “I am a low and filthy person, and I am not good enough to be one of your monks. I know your monks are all of the warrior and Brahmin castes. I am not good enough to be among people like that!”

The Buddha only smiled when he heard Nidhi say that. Then he said, “Nidhi, we don’t think like that at all. My Dharma is like clean water. It can wash the defilements away from anyone and anything. My Dharma is like fire, and it can burn away all ignorance. My Dharma is like the ocean, which can hold anything in it. Among us monks, there is no distinction between class or caste, high or low, better or worse. All such distinctions are the merest of illusions.

“Even our bodies are mere illusions. With wisdom alone will we learn to see beyond them. Free yourself from delusion, Nidhi, and come with me now.”

By the time the Buddha was finished speaking, Nidhi was so moved, he immediately agreed to cast away his old life and follow the Dharma with the Buddha and his Sangha.

-- *Where is Your Buddha Nature? Stories to Instruct and Inspire (by Venerable Master Hsing Yun)*

(Source: [FGS Buddha Memorial Center](#))