

The Shimmering Life

“Our little blue marble”, as Carl Sagan would put it, is a small place in comparison with the entire cosmos. Not that we can even fathom the entire cosmos. From the utterly amazing spring of organized life forms from the deep sea hydrothermal sulfur vents of dark smoke, to the breathtaking variety of lifeforms on the surface and air of this tiny planet, we, humans, with sentient minds, can seem almost desperate to experience ourselves as unique and separate, not only from the immensity of life, but also from one another. All fury to express what is ultimately universal. So much effort to identify, categorize, discern, collect, and possess. Like a small child building a mound of sand on an endless beach, to claim, if only until a wave comes to sweep it away, the child’s personal lump of sand.

I am reminded of some words written by Bodhisattva Nichiren. I believe it was in a letter written after his return from Sado island exile that he expressed his renewed vigor in his resolve to promulgate the Lotus teachings when he wrote that he was experiencing his life, in each moment, as an instant or experience of NaMuMyoHoRenGeKyo. This is what I would term the “Shimmering Life”. A life of full experience of the Engine of Life. A life experience shifted from Samsara to Buddha.

A Saha Realm analog would be the world’s economic engines. Money in all its forms has no value sitting in one place, whether it is a pocket, wallet or bank vault. Only when the money is moving from hand to hand does it “experience” or inculcate a value. Like the child with the sand in the above example, if one were to amass all the sand in the world, what value would it have? The value is in the sharing, the moving, the experience of sand. Economies are like this. Without momentum, economy is dead. When there is an exchange, the birth of value returns. Like the cycle of birth/death/rebirth, the economy emulates the Engine of Life. A dollar only has value in its motion, as in life, from moment to moment.

When our sentient minds identify, collect, own, we actually end, stop, interrupt, life. When we chant and open our Buddha eye, we experience life as a continuous flow of momentum, of constantly changing and fluctuating energy, karma, cause and effect, influences from moments of glory and amazement to stumbles and foibles of ignorance and poorly conceived ideas. Only upon reflection do we see the aftermath of our Samsaric machinations. To live in constant Buddha awareness, what an amazing idea, such a liberating thought, to live life in constant awareness of the momentum rather than the isolated moments. To see and experience our own life in this way is difficult and requires effort, confidence and consistent resolve. To also experience others’ lives of those around us in this way, well, that could be amazing. Can we dare to do it, to live a life in the constant shimmer of its instantiations, its momentum, its endless opportunity. To see the shimmer in our selves and all those around us must be the goal of Buddhahood, the goal of a life fully expressed and lived.

Sifu Sylvain