



57. Dharmakara's 48 Vows Categorization

Gary discussed his recent work categorizing Dharmakara's 48 vows into three groups: Group 1 covers vows about Dharmakara's Buddhahood (vows 12, 13, and 17), Group 2 covers his land (vows 31 and 32), and Group 3 covers the salvation of living beings (the remaining 43 vows). Gary explained that Group 3 is further divided into two subcategories concerning our salvation and beings in the Pure Land.

See PLN weblog entry 40.

58. Other Worlds

The study group looked at the concept of other 'worlds' in Buddhist philosophy, with Gary clarifying that while we can speak of worlds like the 'entertainment world' or the 'animal world', these don't necessarily represent separate physical realms but rather different contexts or planes of existence.

59. Buddhist Cosmology and Multiverse Discussion

The group discussed the challenges of interpreting Buddhist cosmology and the multiverse theory, with Gary expressing concern about straying too far from Buddhist teachings when exploring such concepts. Gordon emphasized that different masters convey similar messages through different stories and expressions, while Matthew viewed fictional storytelling as having artistic value that helps humans understand complex concepts.

60. Buddhist Nembutsu and Teachings Discussion

The group discussed Buddhist concepts including the evolution of Nembutsu from a prayer to Amida Buddha to a practice of seeking other power rather than self-power. Gary and Matthew explored how Shinran clarified that any benefits from chanting Nembutsu come through Amida rather than personal effort. The discussion also covered Shakyamuni Buddha's life span from birth to age 80 and his 45-year period of teaching different levels of Dharma to various audiences, with the goal of eventually leading people to other power teachings after addressing their reliance on self-power practices.