



33. Infinite Light

The group discussed the concept of the idea of light representing wisdom and compassion in Pure Land teachings. The discussion explored the concept of "infinite light" and "infinite life" associated with Amida Buddha, including the challenge of understanding vast time periods like kalpas, which were described using analogies like how long it would take to empty a huge barn of mustard seeds, one at a time; and how long it would take a butterfly's wings would take to erode away a mountain – when it brushed against it just one a year!. The conversation also touched on the Pure Land sutras and the role of Lord Lokeshvaraja, though limited information was available about this figure who was described as the 54th Buddha.

34. Bombu

This week, our discussion touched on themes of acceptance rather than striving for enlightenment, and the concept of being "bombu" (unenlightened), and the three bodies of Buddha. The group reflected on how Pure Land Buddhism emphasizes acceptance and gradual understanding rather than achieving enlightenment.

Bombyu: Japanese term meaning foolish being, common mortal, passion-ridden being; the object of Amida's compassion.

Source: *Living in Amida's Universal Vow: Essays in Shin Buddhism*, by Alfred Bloom

35. Amida Buddha Name and Meaning

The group discussed the meaning and etymology of the name "Amida" (Amitabha), with Matthew explaining that it derives from the Sanskrit meter "MITA" meaning measure, translating to concepts like limitless, boundless, and infinite. Gary and Gordon read from a text about Amida Buddha's qualities, including his infinite life and light, which represent essential qualities of Dharmakaya and manifest as pure activities in the form of light. The discussion touched on the vast numbers described in Buddhist texts, with references to lotus flowers, jewels, and the concept of countless Buddhas being as numerous as grains of sand on the Ganges banks.

36. Persistent Effort

Gary led a discussion on the Larger Sutra, focusing on how Dharmakara learned about pure lands of other Buddhas and his resolve to establish his own. Gary emphasized the importance of humility and dedication in spiritual practice, using the metaphor of moving a pile of gravel from one place to another, one shovel full at a time to illustrate the concept of persistent effort leading to fulfillment of aspirations.