

## Learning the Buddha's Great Compassion

### –the Meditation Sutra (20)–

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#### “Amida's True Body”

*The Buddha said to Ananda and Vaidehi, "After you have succeeded in seeing these images, next envision the physical characteristics and the light of Amitayus (Amida). Ananda, you should realize that his body is as glorious as a thousand million kotis of nuggets of gold from the Jambu River of the Yama Heaven and that his height is six hundred thousand kotis of nayutas of yojanas multiplied by the number of the sands of the Ganges. The white tuft of hair curling to the right between his eyebrows is five times as big as Mount Sumeru. His eyes are clear and as broad as the four great oceans; their blue irises and whites are distinct. From all the pores of his body issues forth a flood of light, as magnificent as Mount Sumeru. His aureole is as broad as a hundred kotis of universes, each containing a thousand million worlds. In this aureole reside transformed Buddhas numbering as many as a million kotis of nayutas multiplied by the number of the sands of the Ganges. Each Buddha is attended by innumerable and uncountable transformed bodhisattvas." (translation by Hisao Inagaki)*

The ninth contemplation is meditation on the true body of Amida Buddha. This is, in a way, direct experience of Amida. If you read the above explanation, the Buddha's height is six hundred thousand kotis of nayuta of yojana multiplied by the number of the sands of the Ganges. It means:

600,000 x kotis (100,000,000) x nayuta (100,000,000,000) x sands of Ganges  
(numberless) x yajuna (120miles).

It is hard to translate numbers of “sands of Ganges,” yet, we can see the height of Amida is very tall (720,000,000,000,000,000,000,000 miles x sands of Ganges) - as tall as the galaxy. It is even beyond our imagination. No wonder the word “Amida” literally means immeasurable and inconceivable. Although a particular number is used, this number is equal to numberless. Various expressions of big numbers tell us that the world of Enlightenment is beyond our human calculation. The use of a concrete number makes us really feel that it is beyond our calculation.

Shinran Shonin describes two kinds of Dharma-body of Amida Buddha, saying “there are two kinds of dharma-body with regard to the Buddha. The first is called dharma-body as suchness and the second, dharma-body as compassionate means. Dharma-body as suchness has neither color nor form; thus, the mind cannot grasp it nor words describe it. From this oneness was manifested form, called dharma-body as compassionate means.” In this sense, the meditation sutra's description of Amida comes from Dharma-body as suchness without any color or form, and takes the form of various expressions of numbers as compassionate means, leading to suchness.

Through forms, we  
Realize the world beyond forms.  
Understanding the forms, we  
Enter the vast Dharma universe.

Buddha's forms  
Out of kindness and wisdom  
Direct me to go beyond my self-centered calculation.  
Yes, it is the world of immeasurable and inconceivable. (by Kenjitsu)