

Summary of a Dharma Message on October 24th, 2021

The Buddha said to Ananda and Vaidehi, “When you have accomplished this visualization, next contemplate on the physical features and the light of the Buddha of immeasurable Life.

Ananda, you should know that the Buddha’s body is a thousand million kotis times as brilliant as the Jambunada gold of Yama Heaven and that his height is six hundred thousand kotis of nayutas of yojanas multiplied by the number of sands of Ganges. The white tuft of hair curling to the right between his eyebrows is five times as big as Mount Sumeru. The Buddha’s eyes are as large as the four great oceans; their blue and white parts are clearly distinct. All the pores of his body emit rays of light, as magnificent as Mount Sumeru. That Buddha’s aureole is as broad as a hundred kotis of the triple-thousand great thousand worlds.”

The Contemplation Sutra

Have you ever thought of the height of Amida Buddha? According to *The Contemplation Sutra*, this Buddha’s height is six hundred thousand kotis of nayutas of yojanas multiplied by the number of sands of Ganges. Seeing the footnote regarding this number unit, it says a numerical unit in ancient India said to be equal to ten million or one hundred billion. When we compare the height of Amida versus the observable entire universe, it seems that this Buddha is actually larger than our universe! In the ancient Indian scriptures, proposing some large numbers is a cliché to state infinite, so this sentence wants to address that Amida has the immeasurable scale of height. How come is Amida big so much? The sutra explains its body’s detail saying, “*each ray of light shines over the worlds of the ten quarters, embracing and never abandoning those beings who are mindful of the Buddha.*” To have the light embracing the people who are mindful of the Buddha reach edge to edge of all over the world, its body got to expand not to miss anybody.

Have you ever also wondered why the BCA churches and temples’ architecture is flat? Indeed, most of the churches and temples are low rather than multi floors inside the building. When we see the roof of the main hall (hondo), doesn’t it remind you of the shape of gassho (putting palms together)? The main hall occupies most of the site to have many congregations into the building. I’m not sure why the gassho roof is applied to many Japanese Buddhist temples. However, this roof enables the building to have enough capacity for providing more opportunities to listen to the Buddha Dharma.

Amida's body represents space, and this space for a thousand kotis of nayutas, this space is infinite. Infinite space enables to let the light shine and embrace the beings. I think infinite space expounds the compassion of Amida, which is the mind never abandons people.

In Gassho,
Rev. Murakami