

The Color of Pure Gold

“If, when I attain Buddhahood, humans and devas in my land should not all be the color of pure gold, may I not attain perfect Enlightenment.

— *Larger Sutra of Immeasurable Life*

Our world today faces racial tension and racism that tears at our humanity and society.

We watched in horror as George Floyd was choked to death by a policeman. People have marched in our cities — both large and small — throughout the world to protest racism, police brutality and injustice. It almost feels like we haven’t made any progress since the 1960s and the days of the Civil Rights Movement.

It is my hope and wish that progress can be made, that there will be a day when we won’t have to protest for equality and justice.

Such an aspiration is at the heart of the Buddha, as is expressed in the above quote, which is the third of the 48 vows in the Larger Sutra.

We don’t interpret this vow literally. It is not saying that we all have to have the same golden tan and color of skin. This vow is expressing what is at the heart of a Buddha, the heart of an Enlightened One that sees “beyond” the color of our skin, such that all beings reflect the “color of gold.”

May we strive to create a society and world that is based on that kind of aspiration, a world of oneness, an interdependent world that is made up of all sentient beings, a world beyond discrimination and distinctions, a world in which all beings reflect the color of gold.

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