



## The Twelve Lights and Twelve Names of Amida Buddha

A central pillar of Shin Buddhism, the *Ojo Raisan* was composed by the Chinese Pure Land Master Shantao (613-681). It became a widely chanted text during Japan's Kamakura period (12th–13th century). Within it, Shantao refers to T'an-luan (476-554) and his description of twelve individual lights that correspond to the twelve names attributed to Amida Buddha.

**1. The Buddha of immeasurable light:** The immeasurable light cannot be measured or calculated. It permeates all times: the past, the present and the future, and goes beyond any idea and any concept of time.

**2. The Buddha of limitless light:** The limitless light shines eternally everywhere. It fills all space and goes beyond our concept of space. It permeates all levels of being, even those we do not know.

**3. The Buddha of all-permeating light:** The all-permeating light cannot be stopped. No matter how far we are away from this light, how bad we might be, this light reaches us even in the worst situations.

**4. The Buddha of light:** The incomparable light is the greatest light ever. It comes directly from reality, directly from the freedom of awakening. Normal light can never be compared with it.

**5. The Buddha of ... the light of wisdom** lets us see with crystal clarity. With the help of its brightness, we can realise everything clearly. With the eyes of our hearts, we see clearly the reality of being.

**6. The Buddha of ... the eternal light** never ceases to exist. It is always there, regardless of whether we can sense it or not. Amida Buddha never sleeps, he shines on all living beings, who are open to reality – this is the light of Amida that protects all life.

**7. The Buddha of ... the pure light** is absolutely pure and has a purifying effect. It supports an internal purification process. It dissolves barriers, old patterns, lack of clarity and confusion. No matter how big problems may seem, everything returns to the simple state of being, where everything is interconnected.

**8. The Buddha of ... the light of bliss** is pure joy. Not a usual pleasure, but bliss. It is always there and not tied to any external circumstances. We are free, open, relaxed, full of vitality and joy. There are no problems.

**9. The Buddha of ... the light of liberation** means freedom. This light liberates us not only from our everyday problems, suffering and distress, it can first and foremost, guide us beyond death. With its help we overcome even the worst situations.



**10. The Buddha of ... the light of inner peace** stops the activity of the ego that creates anxiety. The ego with its patterns and barriers cannot disturb us anymore and we may enter into the state of inner peace that is our true nature.

**11. The Buddha of ... the incredible light** is inconceivably multifaceted; it will always surprise us. No matter, what light we imagine, what light we have seen or experienced, it is at most a small part of the whole. The light of Amida is beyond our imagination.

**12. The Buddha of ... the light outshining thousands of suns and moons** is a summary. It shows how incredibly powerful this light is. A master from the Amitābha\* tradition once said, if you can imagine ten thousand suns at once, you can surmise how powerful this light is.

\***Amitābha** (Sanskrit pronunciation: "Measureless" or "Limitless" Light), also known as **Amitufo** in Chinese, **Amida Butsu** in Japanese, **Amita-bul** in Korean, **Avid** in Mongolian, **A Di Đà Phật** in Vietnamese, and **Öpakmé** in Tibetan. One of the main Buddhas of Mahayana Buddhism and the most widely venerated Buddhist figure in East Asian Buddhism. Amitābha is also known by the name **Amitāyus** ("Measureless Life").