

*Selections from the
Avataṃsaka Sūtra
The Flower Garland Sutra*

[*The Flower Garland Sutra is most known for the notion of the mutual interpenetration of all phenomena which is the distinctive teaching of the Hua-yen school of Chinese Buddhism. The teaching is expressed through the metaphor of jeweled net of Indra: "Far away in the heavenly abode of the great god Indra, there is a wonderful net that has been hung by some cunning artificer in such a manner that it stretches out infinitely in all directions. In accordance with the extravagant tastes of deities, the artificer has hung a single glittering jewel in each 'eye' of the net, and since the net itself is infinite in all dimensions, the jewels are infinite in number. There hang the jewels, glittering like stars of the first magnitude, a wonderful sight to behold. If we now arbitrarily select one of these jewels for inspection and look closely at it, we will discover that in its polished surface there are reflected all the other jewels in the net, infinite in number. Not only that, but each of the jewels reflected in this one jewel is also reflecting all the other jewels, so that there is an infinite reflecting process occurring."*¹]

Book One

The Wonderful Adornments of the Leaders of the Worlds

THUS HAVE I HEARD. At one rime the Buddha was in the land of Magadha, in a state of purity, at the site of enlightenment, having just realized true awareness. The ground was solid and firm, made of diamond, adorned with exquisite jewel discs and myriad precious flowers, with pure dear crystals. The ocean of characteristics of the various colors appeared over an infinite extent; There were banners of precious stones, constantly emitting shining light and producing beautiful sounds. Nets of myriad gems and garlands of exquisitely scented flowers hung all around. The finest jewels appeared spontaneously, raining inexhaustible quantities of gems and beautiful flowers all over the earth. There were rows of jewel trees, their branches and foliage lustrous and luxuriant. By the Buddha's spiritual power, he caused all the adornments of this



Illustration from the Avataṃsaka Sūtra, Korea, 13th century,

enlightenment site to be reflected therein.

The tree of enlightenment was tall and outstanding. Its trunk was diamond, its main boughs were lapis lazuli, its branches and twigs were of various precious elements. The leaves, spreading in all directions, provided shade, like clouds. The precious blossoms were of various colors, the branching twigs spread out their shadows. Also the fruits were jewels containing a blazing radiance. They were together with the flowers in great arrays. The entire circumference of the tree emanated light; within the light there rained precious

¹ Francis H. Cook, *Hua-yen Buddhism: The Jewel Net of Indra* (University Park and London: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1977), p.2.

stones, and within each gem were enlightening beings, in great hosts like clouds, simultaneously appearing.

Also, by virtue of the awesome spiritual power of the Buddha, the tree of enlightenment constantly gave forth sublime sounds speaking various truths without end.

The palace chamber in which the Buddha was situated was spacious and beautifully adorned. It extended throughout the ten directions. It was made of jewels of various colors and was decorated with all kinds of precious flowers. The various adornments emanated lights like clouds; the masses of their reflections from within the palace formed banners.

A boundless host of enlightening beings (*bodhisattvas*), the congregation at the site of enlightenment, were all gathered there: by means of the ability to manifest the lights and inconceivable sounds of the Buddhas, they fashioned nets of the finest jewels, from which came forth all the realms of action of the spiritual powers of the Buddhas, and in which were reflected images of the abodes of all beings.

Also, by virtue of the aid of the spiritual power of the Buddha, they embraced the entire cosmos in a single thought.

Their lion seats were high, wide, and beautiful. The bases were made of jewels, their nets of lotus blossoms, their tableaux of pure, exquisite gemstones. They were adorned with various flowers of all colors. Their roofs, chambers, steps, and doors were adorned by the images of all things. The branches and fruits of jewel trees surrounded them, arrayed at intervals.

Clouds of radiance of jewels reflected each other: the Buddhas of the ten directions conjured regal pearls, and the exquisite jewels in the topknots of all the enlightening beings all emanated light, which came and illuminated them.

Furthermore, sustained by the spiritual power of all Buddhas, they expounded the vast perspective of the Enlightened Ones, their subtle tones extending afar, there being no place they did not reach.

At that time, the Buddha, the World Honored One, in this setting, attained to supreme, correct awareness of all things. His knowledge entered into all times with complete equanimity; his body filled all worlds; his voice universally accorded with all lands in the ten directions. Like space, which contains all forms, he made no discrimination among all objects. And, as space extends everywhere, he entered all lands with equanimity. His body forever sat omnipresent in all sites of enlightenment. Among the host of enlightening

beings, his awesome light shone clearly, like the sun emerging, illumining the world. The ocean of myriad virtues which he practiced in all times was thoroughly pure, and he constantly demonstrated the production of all the buddha-lands, their boundless forms and spheres of light extending throughout the entire cosmos, equally and impartially.

He expounded all truths, like spreading great clouds. Each of his hairtips was able to contain all worlds without interference, in each manifesting immeasurable spiritual powers, teaching and civilizing all sentient beings. His body extended throughout the ten directions, yet without coming or going. His knowledge entered into all forms and realized the emptiness of things. All the miraculous displays of the Buddhas of past, present, and future, were all seen in his light, and all the adornments of inconceivable eons were revealed. . . .

[*What follows is a long series of discourses by various bodhisattvas describing the Buddhas and all their miraculous displays. Now towards the end of the book the central metaphor of the text, the net of jewels, returns in the following discourse.*]

Then the great enlightening being Bold Intelligence of the Sun of Knowledge, empowered by the Buddha, looked over all the multitudes assembled on the scene and said in verse,

Buddha sits in the hall of truth with steady gaze,
Brilliantly lighting up the palace.
In accordance with the dispositions of all beings
His body appears throughout all lands.

The Buddha's palace is beyond conception,
Adorned with stores of precious jewels,
Each decoration shining with light;
Sitting there, the Buddha is most conspicuous of all.

With pillars of jewels of various hues,
Chimes of real gold hanging like clouds,
Jewel stairways in rows on four sides,
The gates open in every direction.

Arrays of banners of flowery silk,
Jewel trees with decorated branches and boughs,
Garlands of pearls draped on all sides;
The Ocean of Wisdom sits calmly therein.

Nets of jewels, exquisite fragrant banners,
Brilliant lamps hung like clouds;
Covered with various decorations,
The world-transcending true knower sits within.

Everywhere he manifests clouds of mystic displays,
Those clouds teaching throughout the world,
Harmonizing and calming down all sentient beings:
All this appears from the Buddha's palace.

Trees of gems bloom with fine flowers
Having no peer in all the world;
The embellishments of the lands of all times
Reveal their reflections therein.

Everywhere there are heaps of jewels;
Their light blazes in countless hues.
Gates and doors open at intervals all around;
The beams and ceiling are especially beautiful.

The Buddha's palace is inconceivable;
Its pure radiance contains every form—

In it appear all palaces
A Buddha sitting in each,

The Buddha's palace is boundless;
The Naturally Awakened One abides therein.
All the masses from all ten directions
Come gather around the Buddha.

Then the great enlightening being Seal of Knowledge
Made of Jewels of Inconceivable Qualities, empowered
by the Buddha, looked over all the oceans of beings
gathered at the scene of enlightenment and said in
verse,

The Buddha cultivated an ocean of blessings,
Many as the atoms in all lands;
Produced by the powers of his mind and will,
The enlightenment site is pure, without any taint.

Wish-fulfilling jewels are the roots of the trees,
Diamond are their trunks;
Nets of jewels cover them
And a rich fragrance surrounds.

The tree branches are adorned by all kinds of gems,
The limbs are of precious stone, soaring high;
The branches and twigs hang thickly, like heavy clouds:
Underneath sits Buddha on the enlightenment site.

The site of enlightenment is unthinkable vast:
The trees surround it, covering all;
The dense foliage and luxurious flowers mutually cover
and reflect,
While in the flowers grow gemstone fruits.

From among all the branches emanate beautiful lights
Illuminating the whole enlightenment scene;
Pure, bright, inexhaustible,
This appears by the power of Buddha's vows.

Banks of precious stones are the flowers,
Reflections shining like patterned clouds;
The encircling trees perfume all around:
The enlightenment site's adorned everywhere.

See in the site of the Buddha's enlightenment
Lotuses and jewel nets, all pure;
Flames of light in whorls appear from here,
Music of bells and chimes comes from the clouds.

All the wonderfully adorned trees
Existing in all lands
Appear in the enlightenment tree;
Buddha, beneath it, sheds all defilement.

The site of enlightenment is made of vast blessings;
The tree branches rain jewels without end.
In the jewels appear enlightening beings,
Going everywhere to serve the Buddhas.

The realm of the Buddhas is inconceivable;
They cause all the trees there to produce music—
In accord with the enlightened way developed by
Buddha,
The hosts of beings, hearing the music, can see it all.

Then the great enlightening being Hundred Eyes
Lotus Topknot, empowered by the Buddha, surveyed
all the assemblies at the scene of enlightenment and
said,

All the jewels emit wondrous sounds
Extolling the names of Buddhas of all times.
The deeds of those Buddhas' mystical powers
Can all be viewed in this enlightenment scene.

Flowers bloom in profusion, like parti-colored cloth;
Clouds of light flow in all directions:
The spirits of enlightenment trees bring these to the
Buddha,
With single-minded devotion making offerings of them.

Flames of jewel light all form banners;
From the banners burst forth sublime fragrances,
The fragrances perfuming all the congregations—
Therefore the place is all beautifully pure.

Lotuses hang down, with light of golden hue,
The light intoning clouds of Buddha's wondrous voice,
Covering all the lands in all directions,
Extinguishing the fires of sentient beings' torments.

The independent power of Enlightenment Tree King
Constantly radiates light extremely pure;
The assembled masses in the ten directions have no
bounds,
Yet all of them appear reflected in the enlightenment
scene.

The light flames of the jewel branches are like bright
lamps;
Their light emanates sound declaring the great vow—
What the Buddha practiced of yore in all states of being
Is fully expounded therein.

Under the tree are spirits, as many as atoms in the land,
All staying together at this enlightenment site,
Each before the Buddha's enlightenment tree
Continuously expounding the liberation doors.

Buddha practiced many deeds of yore,
Making offerings to all the enlightened:
His practices as well as his fame
All appear within the jewels.

Everything in the scene produces wonderful sound—
The sound is vast, pervading the ten directions;
If any beings can hear the teaching,
It civilizes them and makes them pure.

The Buddha in the past cultivated
Infinite embellishments, all;
All the adornments, innumerable kinds,
Of every enlightenment tree. . . .

. . . Then the great enlightening being Cloud Sound
Pure Moon, empowered by the Buddha, looked Over
all the beings gathered at the enlightenment site and
said,

The realm of his spiritual powers is equal to space—
No beings do not perceive them.
The stages he perfected in his past practice
Are fully explained in the jewels.

Striving purely for countless eons,
He entered the first stage, that of extreme joy;
Producing the vast knowledge of the cosmos,
He saw countless Buddhas of the ten directions.

In the stage of purity amidst all things
He observed standards of purity numerous as beings;
Having practiced extensively for many eons,
He served the boundless ocean of Buddhas.

Accumulating virtue in the stage of radiance,
His store of calm was firm and enduring;
The vast cloud of teachings he had already learned:
So it is told in the gemstone fruits.

The incomparable stage of clear intellect like an ocean
of flames—
Comprehending situations, he gave rise to compassion,
With an equal physical presence in all lands:
These accomplishments of the Buddha are all
expounded.

Universal store of equanimity—the difficult to conquer
stage;
According with action and stillness, without
contradiction,
The realm of the Buddhist teaching is completely
impartial;
How the Buddha purified it, the jewels can tell.

Far-reaching practice—the stage of oceanic wisdom,
Totally comprehending all aspects of the teachings,
Appearing in all lands like space:
The voice of these teachings comes from the trees.

The body of space, pervading the cosmos,
The lamp of wisdom, shining on all beings,
All practical methods completely purified:
His past long journey he causes to be told.

Adorned by execution of all vows,
Infinite oceans of lands are all pure;
Undisturbed by any discrimination,
This peerless stage is fully explained.

Mystic powers of infinite scope
Enter the illumining power of the teachings;
This pure stage of beneficent wisdom
And its eons of practice are fully revealed.

The far-reaching tenth stage of clouds of teaching
Engulfs everything, pervading all space;
The realm of the Buddha is told in the voice,
This voice is the Buddha's spiritual power.

Then the great enlightening being Banner of Light of
Benevolent Courage, empowered by the Buddha,
surveyed the ten directions and said,

Innumerable sentient beings are in the congregation;
Their various minds of faith are all pure;
All can enter into understanding of Buddha's wisdom,
And understand all states which adorn it.

Each initiates pure vows and puts them into practice;
All have made offerings to innumerable beings.
They are able to see the real true body of Buddha
As well as all his mystical displays.

Some can see the Buddha's reality-body,
Incomparable, unhindered, pervading everywhere:
The nature of all the infinity of things
Is in that body completely.

Some see the Buddha's sublime body of form,
Its boundless physical characteristics blazing with light;
According to the different understandings of various
beings,
It transforms into various appearances, everywhere.

Some see the body of unobstructed knowledge,
Equal in all times, like space;
According to the changes in beings' inclinations,
It causes them to see all kinds of differences.

Some can understand the Buddha's voice
Pervading all lands in the ten directions;
According to sentient beings' abilities to understand,
It produces verbal sounds for them, without any
hindrance.

Some see the Buddha's various lights,
Variously shining throughout the world;
And some see too, in the Buddha's light,
Buddhas displaying their mystic powers.

Some see Buddha's oceans of clouds of light
Issuing from his pores, of radiant hues,
Showing the paths he practiced of yore,
Causing beings to deeply believe and enter Buddha's
knowledge.

Some see the Buddha's adorning marks and blessings
And see where the blessings come from
The oceans of transcendent means he practiced of old
Are clearly seen in the Buddha's marks.

Buddha's qualities cannot be measured;
They fill the cosmos, without any bounds.
These and the ranges of psychic powers
These beings can expound through Buddha's power.

Then the ocean of worlds of arrays of flower banks,
by the power of the Buddha, all shook in six ways, in
eighteen manners: that is, they trembled, trembled all
over, trembled all over in all directions; they welled up,
welled up all over, welled up all over in all directions;
they surged, surged all over, surged all over in all
directions; they quaked, quaked all over, quaked all
over in all directions; they roared, roared all over,
roared all over in all directions; they crashed, crashed
all over, crashed all over in all directions.

These various world leaders each caused clouds of
inconceivable offerings to appear, raining on the ocean
of beings at the site of enlightenment: clouds of
ornaments of all fragrant flowers; clouds of decorations
of all precious stones; clouds of flower nets of all jewel
flames; clouds of spheres of light of jewels of boundless
varieties; clouds of treasuries of pearls of all colors;
clouds of all precious sandalwood scents; clouds of
umbrellas made of all kinds of precious substances;
clouds of diamonds with pure resonance; clouds of
necklaces of jewels shining like the sun; clouds of banks
of lights of all gemstones; clouds of all sorts of

decorations. These clouds of adornments were infinite, inconceivably numerous. These world leaders each produced such clouds of offerings, showering upon the ocean of beings at the Buddha's site of enlightenment, all reaching everywhere.

As in this world the world leaders joyfully produced such offerings, so did all the world leaders in all worlds of the ocean of worlds of arrays of flower banks make such offerings. In each of their worlds there was a Buddha sitting on the site of enlightenment. The individual world leaders' various resolutions of faith, foci of concentration, methods of meditation, practice of methods assisting enlightenment; accomplishments, joys, approaches, understandings of the teachings, access to the realm of Buddha's spiritual powers, access to the realms of Buddha's abilities, entryways into the Buddha's liberation, were the same as in the flower bank ocean of worlds in all the oceans of worlds in the entire space of the whole cosmos.

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[The following is from the famous book twenty-six of the Avataṃsaka Sūtra. This book contains the teachings of the ten stages of enlightenment, presented here as the foundation of all Buddhist teachings. This is perhaps the oldest book of the Avataṃsaka Sūtra and exists in Sanskrit as a separate sūtra, the Daśabhūmika Sūtra ("The Ten Stages Sutra"). The selection here begins with the description of the tenth stage.]

Book 26
The Ten Stages

. . . Having spoken thousands of such sweet words, the goddesses, looking at the Buddha, became silent and remained quiet. Knowing the assembly was settled, the fearless Moon of Liberation asked Diamond Matrix, the dauntless enlightenment being (*bodhisattva*), "Tell us, in order, all the characteristics, qualities, and sphere of those who come to the tenth stage, as well as their marks and miracles."

Diamond Matrix said, "Those enlightening beings who, having wisely reflected on the possibilities of knowledge up to the ninth stage, have made a thorough and discerning investigation, have thoroughly fulfilled pure practices, have gathered inexhaustible provisions, have acquired great stores of virtue and knowledge, have attained great, far reaching compassion, are familiar with the distinctions and differentiations of worldly realms, have gone into the thickets of the

realms of sentient beings, focus their perception and attention on approaching entry into the sphere of buddhas, and are intent on the powers, expertises, and other qualities of buddhahood, are said to have reached the stage of coronation with omniscience in all its aspects.

"Furthermore, enlightening beings who accord with this knowledge and have reached the stage of coronation realize a concentration called undefiled, one called entry into the analysis of differentiations of the cosmos, one called array of adornments of the pinnacle of enlightenment, one called flower of lights of all appearances, one called oceanic container, one called oceanic plenitude, one called vast as space, once called ascertainment of the intrinsic essence of all things, one called adjusting to the mental behavior of all beings, and one called appearing in the presence of all buddhas. Beginning with these, they realize incalculable millions of concentrations.

"They enter and emerge from all these concentrations, and, having attained skill in concentration, they experience all the effects of concentration. At the end of the incalculable millions of concentrations, one realizes a concentration of enlightening beings called bearing coronation by the special property of omniscient knowledge. At the moment one realizes this concentration, there appears an immeasurable lotus made of the finest jewels, as large as ten billion world universes, inlaid with all kinds of jewels, beyond the range of all worlds, arisen from transmudane roots of goodness, existing in the realm of the essence, of illusoriness, appearing based on the cosmos, beyond the range of the heavens, with a jewel stem, a pericarp of incomparable sandalwood, a fringe of huge emeralds, leaves of shining gold, its body flowering with innumerable rays of light, its interior filled with all the finest jewels, covered with a boundlessly vast net of jewels, surrounded by as many great jewel lotuses as atoms in ten billion-world universes.

"The enlightening being, in a corresponding form, stands by and, immediately upon attainment of the concentration bearing coronation with the special qualities of omniscience, appears seated on the great jewel lotus. As soon as the enlightening being is seated on this great jewel lotus, as many enlightening beings as there are surrounding jewel lotuses come from the ten directions, circle that enlightening being, and sit on those great surrounding jewel lotuses, and each of them

enter a million concentrations, while gazing on the central enlightening being. Immediately upon everyone's entry into concentration, all worlds quake, all ills cease, all universes are pervaded with revealing light, all worlds are purified, the names of all buddha-lands are voiced, all enlightening beings of the same practice gather, all celestial and human music and song sound forth, all beings become blissful, the inconceivable honoring and attendance of all the perfectly enlightened ones commence, and the circles of all the buddhas are made known.

"What is the reason for that? As soon as the enlightening being sits on this great jewel lotus, from the soles of the enlightening being's feet emerge countless millions of light rays, which illumine the uninterrupted great hells in the ten directions and extinguish the torments of the beings in the hells. From the circles on the knees of the enlightening being emerge countless millions of light rays which illumine all the animal realms in the ten directions and extinguish the sufferings of all the animals. From the sphere of the navel emerge countless millions of rays of light which illumine all the ghost realms in the ten directions and extinguish all the pains of all the beings in the ghost realms. From the left and right sides of the enlightening being emerge countless millions of rays of light which illumine the humans in the ten directions and extinguish human sufferings. From both hands emerge countless millions of light rays which illumine the abodes of celestials and titans, extinguishing their pains. From the shoulders emerge countless millions of rays of light which illumine all those in the vehicle of listeners, followers of the elementary teachings in the ten directions, and present to them a way of entry into the light of the Teaching. From the back of the neck emerge countless millions of rays of light which illumine all the individually awakened ones in the ten directions and present to them a method for quiescent concentration. From the face emerge countless millions of light rays which illumine all the enlightening beings in the ten directions, from those who have just been inspired for the first time up to those who have reached the ninth stage, and present to them the principle of wisdom and skill in means. From the circle of hair between the brows of the enlightening being emerge countless millions of rays of light which shine on the abodes of demons in the ten directions and eclipse them, and then illumine the enlightening beings who have reached the stage of coronation and disappear into

their bodies. From the top of the head emerge as many rays of light as atoms in countless millions of billion-world universes, illumining the sites of congregation of all buddhas throughout the reaches of the space of the cosmos, then circling the world to the right in ten ways, then stopping in the sky and forming a great circular network of lights, and then proceeding to make a great offering called 'blazing light' to all buddhas. That offering is such that the offerings of all enlightening beings from the first inspiration up to the ninth stage cannot compare even to the smallest fraction of it.

"Furthermore, from that great circular network of lights there rain, in all universes in the ten directions, manifestations of flowers, incenses, garlands, perfumes, aromatic powders, robes, parasols, banners, pennants, clothing, ornaments, jewels, and more, all beyond the scope of all worlds, produced by the influence of stores of transmudane roots of goodness, complete in all their features and qualities, sustained by the inconceivable power of nirvana—rains of various arrays of great riches pour as from a great cloud on the places of assembly of each and every buddha. And whoever perceives those offerings becomes assured of perfect enlightenment.

"Then the lights, having made these offerings, again illumine the circles of assembly of all buddhas, then circle the world to the right in ten ways, and disappear into the soles of the feet of those buddhas. Thence it is known to those buddhas and those enlightening beings that in this world, this realm, this place, the enlightening being following such a practice has reached the time of coronation. Then, from incalculable lands in the ten directions, enlightening beings up to the ninth stage come to that enlightening being, encircle the enlightening being, make great offerings, and, while gazing on that enlightening being, enter a million concentrations.

"From the gloriously adorned thunderbolt symbols of well-being on the bodies of enlightening beings who have attained the stage of coronation emerges a great light ray called demon-conqueror, each ray accompanied by countless millions of light rays; having illumined the ten directions and shown countless miracles, the light rays again disappear into the enlightening beings' thunderbolt symbols of well-being. As soon as those light rays of a hundred thousand higher qualities disappear, there appears an increase in the power and strength of the enlightening being.

"Then there emerges from the circle of hair between the eyebrows of the buddhas beams of light called possessors of omniscient superknowledge, accompanied by countless light beams; illumining all worlds in the ten directions, circling the worlds in ten ways to the right, inspiring many hundreds of quadrillions of enlightening beings, causing all buddhalands to quake in six ways, stopping all death and rebirth in bad conditions, eclipsing all abodes of demons, showing the settings of enlightenment of all buddhas, and illuminating all worlds throughout the cosmos to the furthest reaches of space, then returning again, circling all assemblies of enlightening beings to the right and manifesting an immense array, those beams of light disappear into the top of the enlightening being's head. The accompanying light beams in the same way enter into the heads of the enlightening beings assembled around that enlightening being who has reached the tenth stage, whereupon they attain a million concentrations that they have never attained before.

"At the same time as those light beams enter the enlightening being's head, the enlightening being is said to be coronated; in the realm of perfectly completely enlightened ones, having fulfilled the ten powers, the enlightening being enters the ranks of the perfect buddhas. It is like the son of a universal ruler, the crown prince, borne by the principal wife, becoming imbued with the characteristics of a universal ruler: the universal ruler seats him on a magnificent golden elephant throne and, bringing water from the four seas, setting over the palace great arrays of flowers, incenses, lamps, garlands, perfumes, aromatic powders, cloths, parasols, banners, pennants, music and song, he takes the golden pitcher containing water from the four oceans and anoints the head of his son with the water, whereupon the son joins the ranks of the consecrated rulers. Then, when he has fulfilled the tenfold path of good action, he gains the name of universal ruler, the one who turns the wheel of the law. In the same way, as soon as the enlightening being is coronated by those blessed buddhas, the enlightening being is said to be anointed with great knowledge. And having fulfilled the ten powers by the anointment of complete buddhas, the enlightening being enters the ranks of the truly consummately enlightened ones. This is the enlightening being's anointment, or coronation, with great knowledge, in quest of which the enlightening being undertakes many hundreds of thousands of

difficult practices. Thus coronated, matured in immeasurable virtue and knowledge, the enlightening being is said to be established in the tenth stage, which is called Cloud of Teaching.

"Enlightening beings in this stage have accurate knowledge of the totality of the realm of reality, the realm of desire, the realm of form, the formless realm, the realm of worlds, the realm of all beings, the realm of consciousness, the realms of the created and the uncreated, the realm of space, and the teaching of being and non being; they have accurate knowledge of the totality of the realm of nirvana, and of afflictions created by views; they have accurate knowledge of the totality of the becoming and decay of worlds, of the practice of followers of the elementary Buddhist teachings, of the practice of individual illuminates, of the practice of enlightening beings, of the buddhas' powers, expertises, unique qualities of buddhahood, and material and spiritual bodies, of omniscience in all its aspects, of demonstration of attainment of enlightenment and turning the wheel of teaching—in sum, they have accurate knowledge of accomplishment of all the different ways of access to truth. They also have accurate knowledge of the projection of the world, the projection of the cosmos, the projection of Buddhist followers, the projection of individual illuminates, the projection of enlightening beings, the projection of buddhas, and the feasibility or unfeasibility of all projections.

"They also know the basis of all buddhas as it really is; they know, too, the basis of the Teaching, the basis of the Community, the basis of action, the basis of affliction, the basis of time, the basis of commitment, the basis of reverence, the basis of conduct, the basis of ages, and the basis of knowledge, all as they truly are.

"Also, all knowledge of the buddhas entering into subtleties—knowledge of details of practice, of death in heaven and rebirth on earth, of birth, of leaving home, of attaining enlightenment, of miracles, of setting the wheel of the Teaching in motion, of preaching the truth, of the full details of the Teaching, of the support of the life span, of the manifestation of the body of glorified form, of the orderly guidance of all beings, of manifestation in all worlds, of observing the mental behavior of all beings, of observing past, present, and future in a single instant, of the entire past and future, of the totality of mental actions of beings in all their variety, of the inconceivable powers, expertises, and special qualities of the enlightened, of the ultimate

nirvana of the buddhas, of the lasting of the true Teaching based on instruction—beginning with these, they accurately know all the incalculable knowledges of buddhas entering into subtleties.

"They know all the secret matters of the buddhas, such as the secret of the body, the secret of speech, the secret of mind, the secret of consideration of right and wrong timing, the secret of giving enlightening beings predictions of enlightenment, the secret of taking care of sentient beings, the secret of encouragement and censure as means of guidance, the secret of impartiality in timely admonition and instruction, the secret of establishing a variety of vehicles of liberation, the secret of distinction of beings' conduct and faculties, the secret of penetrating beings' acts and deeds, the secret of distinction of enlightening beings' practices and faculties, the secret of enlightenment through practice and realization of inherent power, the secret of the basis of realization of intrinsic essence, the secret of manifestation and liberation, the secret of attraction and expulsion, the secret of showing the attitudes of standing, walking, sitting, and reclining, the secret of provision of food and physical necessities, the secret of showing speech, silence, meditation, liberation, concentration, and attainment; they know all such secret matters of the buddhas as they really are.

"They also accurately realize all the buddhas' knowledges of interpenetration of ages, such as one age as containing incalculable ages, incalculable ages as containing one age, calculable ages as containing all incalculable ages, incalculable ages as containing calculable ages, a moment of thought as containing ages, ages as containing moments of thought, ages as containing nonages, nonages as containing ages, ages with buddhas as containing ages without buddhas, ages without buddhas as containing ages with buddhas, past ages as containing future and present ages, present ages as containing past and future ages, future ages as containing past and present ages, long ages as containing short ages, short ages as containing long ages, the containment of what is made of perceptions in all ages, the containment of ages in all that is made perceptions.

"They also accurately know all the complete buddhas' penetrating knowledges, such as knowledge penetrating a point the size of a hairtip, knowledge penetrating atomic particles, knowledge penetrating realization of enlightenment in the body and land of a buddha, knowledge penetrating realization of

enlightenment with the body and mind of a sentient being, knowledge penetrating the realization of enlightenment in all places, knowledge penetrating demonstration of preposterous actions, knowledge penetrating demonstration of conformist behavior, knowledge penetrating demonstration of unconventional behavior, knowledge penetrating demonstration of conceivable and inconceivable acts, acts that can be recognized by the world and acts that cannot be recognized, knowledge penetrating demonstration of acts that can be understood by buddhas' disciples, acts that can be understood by self-enlightened people, acts that can be understood by enlightening beings, and acts that can be understood by buddhas. Just as such vast extent of knowledge of the buddhas is immeasurable, so also the penetrating knowledge of enlightening beings in this stage is infinite.

"Furthermore, the enlightening beings following this stage attain the liberation of enlightening beings that is called inconceivable, and the liberations called unobstructed, pure discernment, all-sided illumination, treasury of realization of thusness, following the unhindered wheel, comprehending past, present, and future, matrix of the cosmos, radiance of the circle of liberation, and attainment of the realm of totality. Beginning with these, enlightening beings in the tenth stage attain countless hundreds of thousands of doors of liberation, and in the same way they attain hundreds of thousands of concentrations, mental controls, superknowledges, and spiritual powers; they attain hundreds of thousands of lights of knowledge, mystical transformations, accomplishments of analytic knowledge, masteries of means and wisdom, floods of great compassion, and entries into the controlling powers of enlightening beings.

"By means of intellect in accord with such knowledge, they become imbued with infinite ability to recollect anything. They are able to receive, take in, and hold infinite great revelations, clarifications, and clouds of teachings from the buddhas of the ten directions in a single instant. Just as no place on earth except the ocean can bear, can receive, can take in, can hold the great mass of water showered by the clouds of the oceanic water spirit, in the same way the entries into the mysteries of the buddhas—great revelations, great clarifications, great clouds of teachings—cannot be born, received, taken in, or held by all sentient beings, listeners, or self-enlightened ones, or even by

enlightening beings from the first to the ninth stages. It is the enlightening beings in the tenth stage, cloud of teaching, who bear, receive, take in, and hold it all. It is as the ocean bears, receives, takes in, and holds the great clouds of one water spirit, or two, or three, up to the innumerable great clouds of innumerable water spirits in a single moment, because of the immeasurable vast breadth of the ocean. In the same way, enlightening beings in this tenth stage, Cloud of Teaching, bear, receive, take in, and hold, in a single instant, immeasurable great revelations, clarifications, and clouds of great teachings from two, three, up to infinitely many buddhas. Thus this stage is called Cloud of Teaching."

The enlightening being Moon of Liberation said, "Is it possible to count how many buddhas the enlightening beings receive and hold the great revelations, clarifications, and clouds of teachings from in a single instant?"

Diamond Matrix said, "It is not possible to give a numerical account of how many buddhas enlightening beings receive teachings from in a single instant. I will, however, make a simile. Suppose that in each ten directions, in worlds as numerous as atoms in untold quintillions of buddha-lands, and all the realms of beings found therein, there were one being with the mental command to retain whatever he heard, an attendant of buddhas, a great disciple, foremost of the holders of learning, and that being were endowed with such power of skill in learning. Now suppose all the beings in all those worlds were similarly endowed, and what was learned by each one was not learned by another. What do you think—would the learning ability of all those beings be immeasurable?" Moon of Liberation said, "Great, immeasurable would be the learning ability of those beings." Diamond Matrix said, "I tell you, in an instant the enlightening beings in this stage of Cloud of Teaching bear, receive, take in, and hold from a buddha a great cloud of lights of revelation of teaching called 'treasury of past, present, and future of the cosmos'—the aforementioned ability in learning cannot compare to the minutest fraction of this ability to hold the cloud of light of revelation of the teaching. And just as they receive this from one buddha, so also do they receive and hold the cloud of lights of revelation of great teaching called 'treasury of the past, present, and future of the cosmos' from as many buddhas as atoms in all the worlds of the ten directions,

and from yet more, from infinite buddhas, all in a single instant. Hence this stage is called Cloud of Teaching.

"Furthermore, enlightening beings in this stage, by the power of their own vows, cause great clouds of compassion to arise, manifesting the thunder of the great Teaching, flashing the lightning of mystic knowledge, science, and expertise, whipping up a great wind of radiance, covering all with a dense cloud of virtue and knowledge, showing a dense swirl of various bodies, uttering the proclamation of the great Teaching, routing the horde of demons; and, in one instant, throughout as many quadrillions of worlds as atoms in the worlds in the ten directions mentioned above, and throughout yet more worlds, incalculable hundreds of quadrillions of worlds, they show great rains of goodness-bearing elixir of immortality and settle and extinguish all the dust and flames of afflictions of beings produced by ignorance. Hence this stage is called Cloud of Teaching.

"Furthermore, the enlightening beings in this stage of Cloud of Teaching manifest all the works of buddhas in one world, beginning with abiding in the heaven of satisfaction, then descending to earth, abiding in the womb, birth, leaving home, attaining enlightenment, being requested to teach, setting in motion the wheel of the Teaching, and the stage of great ultimate nirvana, manifesting these to beings according to their dispositions and capacities for being guided. As they do this in one world, so also do they do the same in two worlds, up to unspeakable, untold numbers of worlds. Having attained such control of knowledge, with absolutely certain great knowledge and mystic knowledge, at will they show a defiled world as pure, show a pure world as defiled, show a narrow world as broad, show a broad world as narrow; in this way, by mystic power, they show magical transformations of all worlds—vast, measureless, minute, erroneous, deranged, inverted, upright, and so on. If they want they can put a whole world, including its peripheral mountains and seas, into a single atom, yet without expanding the atom or shrinking the world, displaying all functions therein. They put two, three, four, five, up to untold numbers of worlds into one atom, yet without expanding the atom, and still displaying all the functions in the worlds. At will they show in one world the arrays of two worlds or, as they wish, show the arrays of up to an untold number of worlds. As they wish, they show the array of one world in two worlds, or in up to an unspeakable number of worlds. As they

wish they show in one world the beings in up to an unspeakable number of worlds yet without injuring or troubling those beings. As they wish they show the beings of one world in an unspeakable number of worlds, without injuring or disturbing the beings. As they wish they show the full array of a buddha-realm in a point the size of a hairtip; if they wish they show the full arrays of untold buddha-realms in one point. As they wish they instantly emanate as many bodies as atoms in untold worlds, manifest that many hands on each individual body, and make offerings to the buddhas of the ten directions with those hands; with each hand they sprinkle as many baskets of flowers on those buddhas as there are grains of sand in the Ganges River, and do likewise with fragrances, garlands, perfumes, aromatic powders, robes, parasols, banners, and pennants. They also manifest that many heads on each body, and manifest that many tongues in each head, telling of the glory of the buddhas.

"In the arising of a thought they go throughout the ten directions, in each moment of thought causing the appearance of infinite sets of the process of attainment of enlightenment up to great ultimate nirvana. They also manifest infinite embodiments in all times, and also cause to appear in their own bodies the immeasurable arrays of qualities of lands of infinite buddhas. They also cause the appearance of all worlds becoming and disintegrating in their own bodies. They also emit all whirlwinds from a single pore, yet without hurting or troubling sentient beings. And, if they wish, they can make endless worlds a single body of water and set a great lotus thereon; the array of lights of that great lotus pervades endless worlds, showing therein the branches of the trees of enlightenment and all aspects of omniscience.

"In their own bodies they manifest the lights of the ten directions, including the lusters of jewels, lightning, the lights of the sun and moon, and the lights of all deities of light. With each breath they shake endless worlds, yet without frightening the sentient beings therein. They also manifest the destruction of gales, fires, and floods in the ten directions. Also they cause the appearance of physical adornments according to wishes of beings: they manifest the body of Buddha in their own body; they manifest their own body in the body of Buddha; they manifest own buddha-land in the body of Buddha; they manifest the Buddha in their own buddha-land.

"Thus do enlightening beings in this stage of Cloud of Teaching show these and infinitely more magical transformations." . . .

[The final section of the book contains this description of the meaning of the ten stages of the bodhisattva path by the bodhisattva Diamond Matrix. The book ends with a typical exposition of the inestimable value of reading even one line of the sutra.]

Then the enlightening being Diamond Matrix, having looked over the ten directions and the congregations everywhere, observing the cosmos, by way of praising the determination for omniscience, revealing the sphere of enlightening beings, purifying the power of practice, expounding the absorption of omniscience, removing all the defilements of the world, presenting omniscient knowledge, showing the crest of inconceivable knowledge, and revealing the qualities of enlightening beings, spoke these verses by the power of Buddha, describing the meaning of the stages:

Listen to the excellent practices of enlightening beings,
Who practice calmness and self-control, are tranquil
and peaceful in mind,
Who are like the sky, similar to space,
Who have shed all defilement and abide in knowledge
of the Way.

Having cultivated good for countless eons
And served hundreds of thousands of buddhas
And honored many self-conquerors and saints,
The will for enlightenment is born for the good of the
world.

Born is the will for enlightenment, equal to the
Enlightened,
In those refined by discipline and austerity, who have
reached ultimate patience,
Who act with modesty and dignity, born of virtue and
knowledge,
Who are broad-minded and intent on enlightened
knowledge.

To honor all the buddhas of past, present, and future,
Purify all lands throughout space,
Truly comprehend all truths and liberate beings,
The will for enlightenment is born.

To do good for all is the will for enlightenment born
In the joyful and benevolent who practice giving,
Who are always determined to benefit all beings,
Who apply the virtues of buddhas and pledge to protect
the living.

Born is the will for enlightenment, for the weal of all
beings,
In those divorced from evil, whose conduct is pure,
Who practice self-control, whose senses are calm and
cool,
Who have taken refuge in Buddha, intent on
enlightening practice.

Born is the will for enlightenment, for the benefit of all,
In those who practice good, vessels of patience and
coolness,
Who know the flavor of virtue, have abandoned
arrogance and insolence,
With minds detached and pure, calm and cool.

Initiating pure action, enduring with firmness and
vigor,
Human lions striving for the welfare of all people,
Having conquered afflictions by persistence in virtue,
In this state of mind the will for enlightenment is born.

With well-concentrated minds, the darkness of delusion
dissolved,
Arrogance gone, they have abandoned defiled paths;
Enjoying the bliss of peace, they have given up
attachments to routine life—
In this state of mind the will for enlightenment is born.

With minds clear as the sky, with knowledge, abstract
and applied,
Having killed the demons, dropped afflictions and
conceit,
Abiding in the refuge of Buddha, finding the truth,
their desire,
In this state of mind their will for enlightenment is
born.

Firm in means and intelligence to achieve liberation
from the realms of being,
Endowed with technique, science, and spiritual power
to escape the force of evil,
Seeking the qualities of buddhas, desirous of virtue,

In this state of mind their will for enlightenment is
born.

Wishing all beings well, having fulfilled the provisions
for enlightenment,
With determined minds, they do even what may be
difficult,
Enlightening beings never giving up their intent to do
good;
In this state of mind their will for enlightenment is
born.

Thus they should carry out enlightenment practices of
multifold virtues;
Vowing to follow Buddha's footsteps, they should
attain truth and spiritual power;
Having purified the three realms of being, they should
attain the will for enlightenment;
Having purified the three refuges, they should become
enlightening beings.

This will be reiterated in sum, so listen;
When the will for enlightenment is attained, those who
practice giving
Then, having reached Extreme Joy, will become lords of
the land.

There, protecting beings by providing what they
require,
Having established their own giving, they can get
others to do so.

Having settled all in enlightenment, they will have
perfected giving;
By following this principle they will arrive at discipline.
Having achieved right conduct, they will become well
behaved;
Thence having reached Purity, they will become lords
of four continents.

Stationed there, protecting beings by stopping evil,
Abiding in their own moral conduct, they can get others
to do so too.

Having settled all in enlightenment, they will have
perfected morality;
By maturation of this practice, they will come to the
practice of forbearance.

Maintaining the practice of right forbearance, they will become good bearers of patience;
Thence having reached Refulgence, they will become lords of the thirty-three heavens.

There, protecting beings by stopping the courses of afflictions,
Abiding in their own practice of forbearance, they can get others to do so too.

Having settled all in enlightenment, they will have perfected patience;
By maturation of this virtue, they will come to the practice of vigor.

Having concentrated right energy, they will become good at maintaining vigor;
Thence having reached Blazing, they will become lords of the heaven of timely portion.

There protecting beings by stopping wrong views,
They will establish right insight and foster enlightenment by effort.

Stable in their own practice of vigor, they can exhort others as well;
Having settled all in enlightenment, they will have perfected vigor.

By the results of this virtue they will come to the practice of meditation;
Having conquered all afflictions they will become stabilized in concentration.

Having concentrated on right meditation, they will become skilled in concentration;
Thence having reached the Difficult to Conquer, they will become lords of the heaven of the satisfied,

There protecting beings by stopping wrong paths,
Having established right teaching and fostered enlightenment by effort.

Abiding in their own practice of meditation, they can urge others to do so too;
Having established all in enlightenment, they will have perfected meditation.

By the results of this virtue they will come to the practice of wisdom;
Having conquered all demons, they will possess wisdom, higher knowledge, and spiritual power.

Having accomplished true wisdom, they will become skilled in mystic knowledge;
Having thence attained Presence, they will become lords of the heaven of pleasant emanations,

There protecting beings by stopping conceit,
Having settled them in emptiness and fostered enlightenment diligently.

Abiding in their own practice of wisdom, they can induce others to do so too;
Having settled all in enlightenment, they will have perfected wisdom.

By the results of this virtue they will practice right means;
Having conquered all views, they will be skilled in right teaching.

By the exercise of right means they will lead beings into enlightenment;
Thence having reached Far-Going, they will become lords of the heaven of control,

There protecting beings by awakening realization,
Enlightening them after having set them in the way of enlightening beings.

Abiding in their own skill in means, they will also exhort others;
Having settled all in enlightenment, they will have perfected means.

By the powers of this virtue they will come to good vows;
Having conquered false views, they will be wise, having attained right insight.

Settled in true enlightenment by a rightly resolved mind,
Thence having attained Immovability, they will become Brahma lords of a thousand worlds,

There protecting beings by teaching the Three Vehicles,

Enlightening them by establishing them in comprehension of the world.

Abiding by their own vows, they can also induce others;

Having settled all in enlightenment, they will have perfected commitment.

By the power of this virtue, they will come to the practice of power,

Certain of perfect enlightenment, once all views are conquered.

By the combined exertions of right power, they will overcome all those in error;

Thence having attained Good Mind, they will become Great Brahmas, powerful.

There they will protect beings by teaching the Buddha Vehicle,

Enlightening them by establishing them in the knowledge of beings' minds.

Steadfast in their own power, they can also induce others;

Having settled all in enlightenment, they will have perfected power.

By the results of this virtue they will come to the practice of knowledge,

Enlightening beings, mines of virtue, having conquered the four demons.

Having attained right knowledge, they will be skilled in true teaching;

Having thence reached Cloud of Teaching, they will become great lords, adept.

There they will protect beings by enlightening them in all ways,

Enlightening them by establishing them in highest omniscience.

Stable in their own knowledge, they will also guide others;

When they have settled all in enlightenment, they will have perfected knowledge.

By the powers of this virtue, they will be victors, lords of the ten powers,

Imbued with all virtues, omniscient, in the course of nature.

Having contemplated this, the noble should practice with concentrated minds,

To attain the state of perfect enlightenment, having fulfilled the ten ways of transcendence.

Thus having attained enlightenment and liberation, and conquered the four demons,

Having settled all in enlightenment, you will attain perfect peace.

Having heard this and thoroughly known the means and accomplishment of enlightening beings,

You will attain unobstructed enlightenment, the state of the Felicitous.

“This has been a summary exposition of the ten stages of enlightening beings, to be seen in accord with omniscience complete in all aspects.”

At that point the billion-world universe quaked in six ways, all kinds of flowers rained steadily, celestial and human music played, and the intoxicating sound was heard to the very summit of existence.

Then the Buddha said, addressing Moon of Liberation and all the other enlightening beings, "Good people, this complete perfect enlightenment, developed over countless eons, I commend to you, entrusting it to you, with the ultimate charge that you will yourselves hold this teaching and also fully elucidate it for others. To put it succinctly, if the Buddha were to remain alive for an eon expounding the glories of this teaching day and night, neither would the glory of this teaching be ended nor would the eloquence of the Buddha be exhausted. Just as the Buddha's conduct, concentration, wisdom, liberation, knowledge, and vision are measureless and endless, likewise is the case of those who will take up this teaching, preserve it, recite it, write it down, cause it to be written down, master it, put it into action, and fully expound it in the community, who will tell it to people faithfully and respectfully with consideration of how these people might attain the lofty teaching, and get, them to reflect on it reasonably, who will write it down in a book and have it kept, respected, taken seriously, and honored in the home, who will tell the glories of this teaching

without envy and speak it so it may be written, told, recited, honored, and revealed: their virtue also has no end."

Then the Buddha, to again make the bequest of this teaching, spoke these verses:

If the beings I see by my enlightened vision
Were saints equal to Shariputra,
And one should honor them for millions of ages,
As many as the sands of the Ganges River;
And if someone honored an individual illuminate
Day and night, cheerful,
With the finest garlands and such,
And thereby created excellent virtue;
And if all were individual illuminates,
If one honored them diligently
With flowers and incense, food and drink;
For many eons,
Still if one made even one bow to one buddha
And with a pure mind declared obeisance,
The virtue would be greater than all that.

If all beings were to become buddhas,
And someone would honor them as mentioned before,
With celestial and human flowers of many kinds for many eons,
One who, at the time of the extinction of the true teaching,
Having relinquished body and life, would give this scripture, day and night,
Would be superior in virtue.

Whoever wants to honor the buddhas,
Or individual illuminates or Buddhist disciples,
Should rouse firm determination for enlightenment
And always give this lofty scripture.

For this is the king of all good messages;
It has emerged from all the buddhas.
The Buddha is in the house
Where this scripture-jewel is placed.

Who passes on even one line from this scripture
Will attain pure and endless light;
One who gives this scripture to others
Will not be deprived of a syllable, of a meaning.

Supreme is that one among guides of humanity;
No being can be found like this one;

Having heard and accomplished this teaching,
One will be inexhaustible as the ocean.

When the Buddha said this, Moon of Liberation and all the enlightening beings, the celestials, the disciples and other people, and the whole assembly were all transported with joy at the Buddha approving what Diamond Matrix said.

* * *

[This last section is from the last book of the Avataṃsaka Sūtra. This famous book, which also exists in Sanskrit as an independent Sūtra, the Gaṇḍavyūha Sūtra ("World-Array Sutra"), describes the spiritual pilgrimage of a youth named Sudhana who visits more than fifty different teachers in his search for enlightenment. Again, the theme of the mutual interpenetration of all phenomena is prominent. In this selection Sudhana learns from Maitreya, the future Buddha, about the practice of the bodhisattva path.]

Book 39

Entry into the Realm of Reality

. . . Thus Maitreya, seeing Sudhana arrive, imbued with virtues, in the realm of nonobstruction, revealed him to the assembly, speaking of his treasury of qualities. Sudhana, hearing such supreme direction and instruction, was flooded with joy and burst into tears. His hair stood on end and he sighed with delight. He rose and paid his respects to Maitreya. Then, by the mental power of Manjushri, there appeared in his hands beautiful flower garlands and jewels, produced by the vows of enlightening beings; blissfully, Sudhana showered these on Maitreya. Then Maitreya patted him on the head and said, "It is good that you are so indefatigable, Sudhana; you will be a vessel of virtues, like Manjushri and me."

Hearing this, Sudhana disclosed the joy of his heart: "It is hard to find, even in hundreds of lifetimes, such Friends as these whom I have now met. It is good for me to have come here today. By the direction of the honorable Manjushri, perfect in true virtue, I have found this rare Friend. I should quickly meet Manjushri himself."

Then Sudhana stood respectfully before Maitreya and said, "Noble one, I have set out for supreme perfect enlightenment, but I do not know how an enlightening

being is to learn and carry out the practice of enlightening beings. It has been predicted by all the buddhas that noble Maitreya will become supremely perfectly enlightened in one lifetime; and one who is sure of supreme perfect enlightenment in one lifetime has gone beyond all the stations of enlightening beings, entered the certainty of enlightening beings, fulfilled all the transcendent ways, entered all doors of tolerance, attained all states of enlightening beings, mastered all ways of liberation, perfected all concentrations, reached the goal of all courses of action of enlightening beings, attained all powers of memory, intellect, and methods of elucidation, mastered all powers of enlightening beings, gathered all provisions of enlightening beings, mastered the methods of wisdom and skill in means, developed the illumination of higher knowledge, mastered all learning, purified all practices of enlightening beings, accomplished all methods of carrying out vows, received the directions of all buddhas, comprehended all vehicles of liberation, taken on the empowerment of all buddhas, embraced the enlightenment of all buddhas, preserved the treasures of all buddhas, stored the secrets of all buddhas, gained leadership of the esoteric circle of all enlightening beings. Such a one is a hero in all assaults against afflictions, a guide to those in the wilderness of the mundane whirl, a physician for those sick with afflictions, a chief of all beings, a leader, preeminent among all noble people, highest of all saints, a pilot for those in the sea of the mundane whirl; such a one draws the net of means to guide sentient beings, observes the faculties of people who have matured, is united with all sentient beings, is engaged in protecting all enlightening beings, is in concert with all the works of enlightening beings, is in the circles of all buddhas, is reflected in the abodes of all beings, is unstained by the things of the world, is beyond the reach of all demons, is in accord with the realm of all buddhas, has attained nonobstruction in the sphere of all enlightening beings, is engaged in the service of all buddhas, is one with all enlightened qualities, wears the turban of coronation, sits on the throne of spiritual sovereignty, is initiated into the realm of omniscience, is a source of all enlightened teachings, has attained enlightenment and mastery of omniscience.

"So please tell me, noble one, how an enlightening being is to learn and carry out the practice of enlightening beings, by which practice an enlightening being attains enlightenment and understands all

enlightened teachings, responds when called upon, rescues sentient beings, fulfills the commitment to carry out the practice of enlightenment, comforts and inspires people, keeps true to one's word, ascertains all the myriad buddha-teachings, sustains the lineage of buddhas and enlightening beings, and preserves the eye of enlightenment."

Then the enlightening being Maitreya, looking over the whole crowd, pointed out Sudhana and said, "Good people, look at this fine young man, who asks me about the perfection of the virtues of enlightening practice. With this diligence, this purposefulness, this zealous commitment, this steadfast will, this unflagging vigor, this thirst for enlightened teaching, this excellent questing, this burning urgency, this desire to meet spiritual friends and benefactors, this indefatigability in attendance on spiritual friends and benefactors, he left his city in search of spiritual benefactors at the direction of Manjushri and traveled south, inquiring of a hundred and ten spiritual benefactors, until finally he has come to me, his mind thoroughly unwearied.

"Good people, it is hard even to get to hear of the name of those like this who have set forth on the Great Vehicle of universal enlightenment, who have undertaken the great vow, who are resolute in the great endeavor, who are girt with great compassion, who are intent on saving sentient beings with great love, who act with transcendental energy, who are engaged in protecting the great caravan of beings, who are carrying beings across the ocean of the mundane whirl, who are on the road to omniscience, who are engaged in assembling the spiritual ark, who are determined to assemble the great wealth of the treasures of the Teaching, who are engaged in assembling the preparations for the great spiritual activity—it is hard to even hear their names, to see them in person, to associate with them, or to share in their practice.

'Why is this? This sincere good person has set out to save all beings, undertaken to liberate all beings from misery, to evaporate all bad tendencies, to put an end to all states that are inopportune for attaining enlightenment, to block off all perilous roads, to dispel all darkness of ignorance, to cross all the wastelands of the mundane whirl, to stop all vicious circles, to get beyond the reach of all demons, to remove all attachment and dependence, to rescue people from the mire of lust, to abandon passion for joy, to remove the fetters of views, stop attachment to the body as real, cut through the snare of conception, stop the pursuit of

error, to pluck out the thorns of delusion, to break through obstacles, to shatter the mountains of obstructions, to remove the net of craving, to dissolve the bonds of ignorance, to illuminate existence, to do away with guile and deceit, to clear mental disturbance, to remove doubt and confusion, to get out of the current of ignorance and delusion, to repel all the ills of the mundane whirl.

"Indeed, good people, this worthy wishes to assemble the ship of the Teaching, a precious gift, to rescue beings from the four torrents. He wishes to set up the great bridge of the Teaching for those sunk in the morass of views. He wishes to produce the light of knowledge for those in the darkness of delusion. He wishes to point out the path of sages to those lost in the wilderness of the mundane whirl. He wishes to dispense the medicine of the teaching to those suffering from the illness of afflictions. He wishes to give the element of immortality to those assailed by birth, old age, and death. He wishes to cool those burning with the three fires by means of the water of tranquillity. He wishes to give great comfort to those suffering from sorrow, grief, misery, and depression. He wishes to give those bound in the prison of existence the knowledge of how to break out. He wishes to give the sword of wisdom to those tied up in the bonds of views. He wishes to show the door of liberation to those locked in the city of the triple world. He wishes to show the direction of safety to those headed in dangerous directions. He wishes to comfort those suffering from the joint operation of afflictions. He wishes to lend a hand to those terrorized by the perils of falling into states of woe. He wishes to show the citadel of nirvana to those struck by the murderous clusters. He wishes to tell those surrounded by the serpents of the elements how to escape. To those loitering in the ghost town of the sense media, he wishes to show the way out by the light of wisdom. Those on wrong paths he wishes to lead into the right path. To the friendless he wishes to show true spiritual friends. Those clinging to the realm of the infantile unenlightened condition he wishes to initiate into the teachings of sages. Those clinging to the city of the mundane whirl he wishes to lead away into the city of omniscience.

"Thus, for the salvation of sentient beings, this worthy, ceaselessly pursuing the complete purification of the aspiration for enlightenment, is tireless in mastering the Great Vehicle, never complacent in seeking all means of conveying truth, constantly

engaged in fulfilling all the provisions for enlightenment, always bearing the responsibility of clarifying all avenues of truth, carrying out all practices of enlightening beings with vigor, not stopping anywhere, carrying out all vows with unbending effort, meeting all spiritual benefactors without complacency, tireless in attendance on all spiritual benefactors, properly following the advice and instruction of all spiritual benefactors.

"In all the world it is hard to find people who aspire to supreme true enlightenment; it is even harder to find those who set out for supreme true enlightenment, who master the teachings of buddhas with such diligent application, seek the path of enlightening beings with such ardor, purify the practice of enlightening beings with such purposefulness, attend spiritual benefactors with such diligence, follow the knowledge of spiritual benefactors with such urgency, carry out the instructions of spiritual benefactors with such unbending determination, assemble the elements of enlightenment with such correct understanding, be so indifferent to gain, honor, and praise as not to ruin the will appropriate to an enlightening being, seek the Great Vehicle of enlightening beings with such detachment from home and family, comforts, enjoyments, and material goods, and seek omniscience with such indifference to joy and life. Other enlightenment beings will not, in millions of eons, attain the fulfillment of the practice and vows of enlightening beings, abide in enlightenment, purify a buddha-land, guide sentient beings, know the reality realm, attain the transcendent ways, extend the network of practices, fulfill the undertakings of vows, transcend the works of demons, develop rapport with spiritual friends, perfect all the practices of enlightening beings, or accomplish the power to carry out the practice of the universally good enlightening being, to the extent that this Sudhana will achieve these things in one lifetime."

Then Maitreya, having eulogized the true virtues of Sudhana, and thereby strengthened the determination for enlightenment in hundreds of thousands of people, said to Sudhana, "It is good that you have set your mind on supreme perfect enlightenment for the welfare and happiness of all worlds, for the salvation of all beings, for the attainment of all enlightened qualities. You have made a great gain, and your existence amid humanity is indeed welcome. You live the good life among the living and have satisfied the purpose of the

emergence of Buddha in the world. You have met the benefactor Manjushri and have made yourself a worthy vessel of truth. You have been nourished with virtues and stabilized on good qualities. You have purified high resolve and good intention. You are minded by all buddhas, and you are in the care of all spiritual friends. By this intent of yours you have developed the determination for supreme perfect enlightenment.

"What is the reason? The determination for enlightenment is the seed of all elements of buddhahood; it is like a field, growing good qualities in all beings; it is like the earth, being a support for all beings; it is like water, washing away all afflictions; it is like wind, unattached to all worlds; it is like fire, burning up the deadwood of clinging to views, it is like the sun, illumining the abodes of all beings, it is like the moon, fulfilling the sphere of all good qualities; it is like a lamp, producing spiritual light; it is like an eye, seeing the even and the uneven; it is like a road, leading to the city of omniscience; it is like a passageway, leading away from all wrong paths; it is like a vehicle, carrying all enlightening beings; it is like a door, leading into all the practices of enlightening beings; it is like a mansion, because of determination to abide in concentration; it is like a park, because of experience of spiritual pleasures; it is like a home, protecting all beings; it is like a basis, being the practice of all enlightening beings, it is like a father, protecting all enlightening beings; it is like a mother to all beings; it is like a nurse, protecting in every way; it is like a king, overwhelming the mentality of all individually liberated ones; it is like all overlord, because of the excellence of all vows; it is like the ocean, containing all jewels of virtue; it is like the polar mountain, being impartial toward all beings; it is like the surrounding mountains, being a refuge for all beings; it is like the Himalaya, growing the herb of knowledge; it is like intoxicating fragrance, being the seat of all scents of virtue; it is like the sky, because of the great extent of its virtue; it is like a lotus, unstained by any things of the world; it is like an elephant, patient and noble; it is like a horse of good breed, free from all unruliness; it is like a charioteer, being the driver of the Great Vehicle; it is like medicine, curing the ills of afflictions; it is like a pit, because in it all bad qualities disappear; it is like a thunderbolt, penetrating all things; it is like a chest of incense, producing the aroma of all virtues; it is like a great flower, pleasant to the sight of all beings; it is like cooling sandalwood, cooling off the burning of passion; it is like the moon,

pervading the cosmos; it is like the medicine 'good to see,' obliterating all ills due to afflictions; it is like an extracting drug, as it extracts the arrows of evil propensities; it is like a chief of gods, because of mastery of all the faculties; it is like the god of wealth, because it puts an end to all poverty; it is like the goddess of beauty, being adorned with all virtues; it is like jewelry, gracing all enlightening beings; it is like the conflagration that ends an eon, burning up all evildoing; it is like medicine for underdevelopment, because it increases the growth of all enlightened qualities; it is like a dragon pearl, repelling the poison of all afflictions; it is like a water-clearing jewel, because it removes all turbidity and pollution; it is like a wish-fulfilling jewel, granting success in all aims; it is like the horn of plenty, fulfilling all wishes; it is like the desire-granting tree, as it showers the ornaments of all virtues; it is like a goose-feather robe, as it does not absorb any of the ills of the mundane whirl; it is like cotton fiber, being soft in nature; it is like a plow, clearing the mind-field of sentient beings; it is like a warrior, striking down the self; it is like an arrow, piercing its target of suffering; it is like power, overcoming its enemy, afflictions; it is like armor, protecting logical thought; it is like a scimitar, cutting off the head of affliction; it is like a sword blade, slashing through the armor of pride, conceit, and arrogance; it is like a razor, slicing off compulsive propensities; it is like the banner of a hero, bringing down the banner of pride; it is like a machete, felling the tree of ignorance; it is like an ax, cutting through the tree of suffering; it is like combat, being a savior from all attacks; it is like hands, protecting the body of the transcendent ways; it is like feet, being the base of all virtue and knowledge; it is like a surgical probe, cleaning away the coveting of the sheath of ignorance; it is like an extracting instrument, extracting the thorn of the notion of self; it is like a hoe, dragging away the thorns of propensities; it is like a benefactor, freeing you from the bonds of the mundane whirl; it is like wealth, rejecting all that is useless; it is like a teacher, knowing the way to carry out all enlightening practices; it is like a mine, having inexhaustible blessings; it is like a fountain, having inexhaustible knowledge; it is like a mirror, showing the reflection of all ways into truth; it is like a white lotus, free from defilement; it is like a great river, carrying forth the streams of the ways of transcendence and the ways of integration; it is like the chief water spirit, causing the clouds of the Teaching to shower; it is like the root of

life, sustaining the universal compassion of all enlightening beings; it is like the elixir of immortality, bringing you to the deathless realm; it is like an all-encompassing net, taking in all beings who can be guided; it is like health, producing endless health; it is like an antidote to poison, vitiating the poison of desire; it is like a spell, destroying the poison of all folly; it is like wind, removing all barriers and obstacles; it is like an island of jewels, being a mine of the spiritual jewels of all the limbs of enlightenment; it is like a family, producing all good qualities; it is like a home, being the abode of all virtuous qualities; it is like a market, attended by all enlightening 'merchants'; it is like liquid metal, clearing all obstructions caused by actions and afflictions; it is like a honeybee, filling the stores of provisions for omniscience; it is like a road, whereby all enlightening beings approach the city of omniscience; it is like a vessel, holding all pure qualities; it is like rain, settling the dust of afflictions; it is like a basis, defining the respective stations of all enlightening beings; it is like a magnet, unaffected by individual liberation; it is like a jewel, inherently pure; it is like an emerald, being totally beyond the knowledge of all individual illuminates and worldlings; it is like the drum that sounds the hour, because it wakes up beings sleeping in affliction; it is like still, clear water, being pure; it is like an ornament of the finest gold, obscuring all collections of virtue in the conditioned realm; it is like an enormous mountain, being invulnerable to anything in the triple world; it is like a savior, not abandoning any who take refuge in it; it is like motivation, because it draws you toward your aim; it is like intelligence, because it creates contentment of the heart; it is like sacrifice, because it satisfies all beings; it is like understanding, because it is what is best in the minds of all beings; it is like a treasury, preserving all enlightened qualities; it is like a summary, containing all the practices and vows of enlightening beings; it is like a protector, protecting all beings; it is like a guardian, repelling all evils; it is like the net of Indra, rounding up the titans of afflictions; it is like the snare of the sky god, rounding up the teachable; it is like the fire of Indra, burning up all habitual propensities and afflictions; it is like a monument for the world. In sum, the virtues of the determination for enlightenment are equal to all the qualities and virtues of buddhas. Why? Because it is the source of all the practices of enlightening beings, and from it come all buddhas of past, future, and present. Therefore, whoever has

aroused the determination for supreme perfect enlightenment becomes imbued with measureless virtues because of being absorbed by the will for omniscience. . . ."

[Here the Avataṃsaka Sūtra comes to a close with the vows of the bodhisattva Samantabhadra (the Universally Good)]

Then the great enlightening being (*bodhisattva*) Universally Good, thus explaining courses of eons, as many eons as atoms in the untold buddha-lands in the succession of worlds, went on to make a vow:

As many buddhas as there may be in any world
Throughout the ten directions, throughout past,
present, and future,
I honor them all, without exception,
Pure in body, speech, and mind.

With as many bodies as atoms in all lands
I bow to all buddhas,
With a mind directed to all buddhas,
By the power of the vow of the practice of good.

In a single atom, buddhas as many as atoms
Sit in the midst of enlightening beings;
So it is of all things in the cosmos
I realize all are filled with buddhas.

I laud all the buddhas therein,
Expounding in all languages
The qualities of all buddhas,
With endless oceans of manifestations.

With the finest flowers, garlands,
Musical instruments, perfumes and parasols,
The finest lamps and incenses,
I make offerings to those buddhas.

With the finest clothes, fragrances,
And mountainous baskets of aromatic powders,
With the finest of all kinds of adornments
I make offerings to those buddhas.

Whatever be the best of offerings,
I produce them for all buddhas;
By the power of devotion to the practice of good,
I honor and serve all buddhas.

Whatever evil I may commit
Under the sway of passion, hatred, or folly,
Bodily, verbally, or mentally,
I confess it all.

And whatever the virtue of beings everywhere,
Hearers, saints, self-conquerors,
Enlightening beings and buddhas,
In all that I do rejoice.

And all the Lamps of the Worlds in the ten directions
Who have realized enlightenment and attain
nonobstruction
I seek as guides, that they may turn
The supreme wheel of teaching.

And those who wish to manifest extinction
I petition respectfully to remain
For eons as many as atoms in the land
For the welfare and happiness of all beings.

By honor, service, and direction,
By appreciating, seeking, and requesting teachings,
Whatever good I have accumulated,
I dedicate it all to enlightenment.

May the buddhas of the past be honored,
As well as those now in the worlds of the ten directions,
And may those of the future be at ease,
Filled with joy, having realized enlightenment.

May all the lands of the ten directions
Be purified, supreme, and filled
With buddhas and enlightening beings
At the tree of enlightenment.

May all beings in the ten directions
Be happy and well;
May all beings' righteous aim be successful,
May their hope be realized.

As I am carrying out enlightenment practice,
May I recall my lives in all states;
In every lifetime, as I die and am reborn,
May I always transcend the mundane.

Learning from all buddhas,
Fulfilling the practice of good,
I will practice pure conduct,

Always free from defect.

I will expound the Teaching
In the languages of gods and dragons,
In the languages of demons and humans,
And of all living beings.

May those engaged in the ways of transcendence
Not stray from enlightenment;
And may all evils to be inhibited
Be thoroughly extinguished.

I will traverse the paths of the world
Free from compulsion, affliction, and delusion,
Like a lotus unstained by water,
Like the sun and moon unattached in the sky.

Extinguishing all the miseries of bad states
And bringing all beings to happiness,
I will act for the welfare of all beings
In all lands everywhere.

According with the conduct of sentient beings
While fulfilling the practice of enlightenment,
And cultivating the practice of good,
Thus will I act throughout future eons.

May I always be in communion
With those who share my practice;
Physically, verbally, and mentally,
I will carry out vows as one practice.

And may I always be with my benefactors,
Who teach me the practice of good;
May I never displease them.

May I always see the buddhas face to face,
Surrounded by enlightening beings;
I will make fine offerings to them
Forever, unwearied.

Preserving the true teaching of buddhas,
Illuminating the practice of enlightenment,
And purifying the practice of good,
I will practice for all future eons.

Migrating through all states of being,
Having acquired inexhaustible virtue and knowledge,

May I become an inexhaustible treasury of wisdom and means,
Concentration, liberation, and all virtues.

As I carry on the practice of enlightenment,
May I see the inconceivable buddhas sitting among enlightening beings
In the lands as numerous as atoms
That are in each atom.

Thus may I perceive the oceans
Of buddhas and lands of all times
In each point in the ten directions
As I practice for myriad eons.

May I ever penetrate the eloquence of buddhas,
The voices of all buddhas which adapt to mentalities,
The purity of articulation of all buddhas,
By the sounds of the ocean of tones in a single utterance.

Into those infinite voices
Of all buddhas of all times
May I enter by buddha-power,
Turning the wheel of teaching.

May I enter all eons
Of the future instantly,
And may I act in all eons
Of all times within an instant.

May I see all buddhas of all times
In one instant
And always enter their sphere
By the magical power of liberation.

May I produce the arrays of all lands
Of all times in an atom,
May I thus perceive all the arrays
Of buddha-lands in all the ten directions.

Learning the teachings of
The Lamps of the Worlds to come,
I visit all the Guides
Who have passed away to eternal rest.

By occult powers, swift in all ways,
By the power of knowledge, all-sided,
By the power of practice, with all virtues,

By the power of universal love,
By the power of goodness, all pure,
By the power of knowledge, unobstructed,
Gathering the power of enlightenment,
Clearing away the power of acts,
Destroying the power of afflictions,
Vitiating the power of demons,
May I fulfill all powers
Of the practice of good.

Purifying oceans of lands,
Liberating oceans of beings,
Observing oceans of truths,
Plumbing oceans of knowledge,
Perfecting oceans of practices,
Fulfilling oceans of vows,
Serving oceans of buddhas,
May I practice, untiring, for oceans of eons.

The lofty vows of enlightenment practice
Of the buddhas of past, present, and future
May I fulfill completely,
Practice what is good, and realize enlightenment.

All who share in the practice
Of the sage of Universal Good,
The foremost offspring of all buddhas,
I name them good.

Pure in body, speech, and mind,
Pure in conduct, with a pure land,
As the sage is named Good,
May I become thus equally.

May I carry out the vow of Manjushri
To totally purify the practice of good;
Tireless through all future ages,
May I fulfill all those tasks.

May there be no limits to practice,
And no limit to virtues;
Persisting in infinite practices,
I know all their miraculous creations.

As long as the earth exists,
As long as all beings exist,
As long as acts and afflictions exist,
So long will my vow remain.

Let me give the buddhas all worlds
In the ten directions adorned with jewels,
Let me give celestials and humans supreme happiness
For eons as many as atoms.

Those who develop respect and devotion
On hearing this supreme dedication,
Seeking supreme enlightenment,
Will be most blessed.

They will have abandoned all evils
And all bad associates
And will quickly see Infinite Light,
If they have this vow of enlightening practice.

Great is their gain, worthwhile their life,
Auspicious their birth as humans;
They will soon be like
The universally good enlightening being.

Those who have committed hellish crimes
Under the sway of ignorance
Will quickly put an end to them all
When this practice of good is expounded.

Endowed with knowledge, distinction, and nobility,
Invulnerable to false teachers and demons,
They will be honored
By all in the triple world.

They will quickly go to the
Tree of enlightenment
And sit there for the benefit
Of all living beings;
They will realize enlightenment,
Turn the wheel of teaching,
And conquer the devil
And all its cohorts.

Buddha knows those who hold this vow to practice
good,
Who cause it to be told of and taught;
The fruit of this is supreme enlightenment
Do not entertain any doubt.

As the hero Manjushri knows, so too does Universal
Good;
As I learn from them I dedicate all this virtue.

By the supreme dedication praised by the buddhas of
all times
I dedicate all this virtue to the practice of highest good.

Acting in accord with the time, may I remove all
obstructions,
May I see Infinite Light face to face and go to the land
of bliss.
There, may all these vows be complete;
Having fulfilled them, I will work for the weal of all
beings in the world.

Let me abide in the circle of that buddha, born in a
beautiful lotus,
And receive the prophecy of buddhahood there in the
presence of the buddha of Infinite Light.

Having received the prophecy there, with millions of
emanations
I will work for the weal of beings everywhere, by the
power of Buddha.

By whatever virtue I accumulate, having invoked the
vow to practice good,
May the pure aspiration of the world be at once all
fulfilled.

By the endless surpassing blessing realized from
dedication
To the practice of good,
May worldlings submerged in the torrent of passion
Go to the higher realm of Infinite Light.

The Buddha said, "Sudhana, those enlightening beings
led by Manjushri, the monks developed by Manjushri,
Maitreya, and all the enlightening beings of the age of
virtue, the great enlightening beings gathered in
various worlds, as numerous as atoms, led by
Universally Good, appointed inheritors of spiritual
sovereignty, the great disciples led by Shariputra and
Maudgalyayana and their circle, as well as celestial and
human beings, were elated and they applauded what
the blessed enlightening being Universally Good had
said."

* * *

All selections taken from Thomas Cleary, *The Flower Ornament
Scripture: A Translation of the Avatamsaka Sutra* (Boston &
London: Shambhala Publications, 1984).