



The Flower Ornament Scripture

A Translation of the *Avatamsaka Sutra*

Thomas Cleary



SHAMBHALA • BOSTON & LONDON • 1993

SHAMBHALA PUBLICATIONS, INC.
Horticultural Hall
300 Massachusetts Avenue
Boston, Massachusetts 02115
www.shambhala.com

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14 13 12 11 10 9 8 7

Printed in the United States of America

⊗ This edition is printed on acid-free paper that meets the American National Standards Institute Z39.48 Standard.

Distributed in the United States by Random House, Inc., and in Canada by Random House of Canada Ltd

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Tripitaka, Sūtripitaka. Buddhāvataṃsakamahāvaiṇyaśūtra. English.

The Flower ornament scripture/translated by Thomas Cleary.

p. cm.

ISBN-13 978-0-87773-940-1 (alk. paper)

ISBN-10 0-87773-940-4

I. Cleary, Thomas F., 1949- . II. Title.

BQ1622.E5T7413 1993

294.3'85—dc20

93-21833

CIP

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The Flower
Ornament Scripture

Introduction

THE FLOWER ORNAMENT SCRIPTURE, called *Avatamsaka* in Sanskrit and *Huayan* in Chinese, is one of the major texts of Buddhism. Also referred to as the major Scripture of Inconceivable Liberation, it is perhaps the richest and most grandiose of all Buddhist scriptures, held in high esteem by all schools of Buddhism that are concerned with universal liberation. Its incredible wealth of sensual imagery staggers the imagination and exercises an almost mesmeric effect on the mind as it conveys a wide range of teachings through its complex structure, its colorful symbolism, and its mnemonic concentration formulae.

It is not known when or by whom this scripture was composed. It is thought to have issued from different hands in the Indian cultural sphere during the first and second centuries AD, but it is written so as to embrace a broad spectrum of materials and resists rigid systematization. While standard figures and images from Indian mythology are certainly in evidence here, as in other Buddhist scriptures, it might be more appropriate to speak of its provenance in terms of Buddhist culture rather than Indian culture per se. *The Flower Ornament Scripture* presents a compendium of Buddhist teachings; it could variously be said with a measure of truth in each case that these teachings are set forth in a system, in a plurality of systems, and without a system. The integrity of Buddhism as a whole, the specificity of application of its particular elements, and the interpenetration of those elements are fundamental points of orientation of the unfolding of the scripture.

Historicity as such is certainly of little account in *The Flower Ornament Scripture*. This is generally true of the Mahayana Buddhist scriptures, although they usually present their teachings as having been revealed or occasioned by the meditations of the historical Buddha Shakyamuni. In the case of *The Flower Ornament Scripture*, most of the discourse is done by transhistorical, symbolic beings who represent aspects of universal enlightenment. The Buddha shifts from an individual to a cosmic principle and manifestations of that cosmic principle; the “Buddha” in one line might be “the Buddhas” in the next, representing enlightenment itself, the scope of enlightenment, or those who have realized enlightenment.

Certainly one of the most colorful and dramatic rehearsals of Buddhist teachings, *The Flower Ornament Scripture* became one of the pillars of

East Asian Buddhism. It was a source of some of the very first Buddhist literature to be introduced to China, where there eventually developed a major school of philosophy based on its teachings. This school spread to other parts of Asia, interacted with other major Buddhist schools, and continues to the present. The appreciation of *The Flower Ornament Scripture* was not, however, by any means confined to the special Flower Ornament school, and its influence is particularly noticeable in the literature of the powerful Chan (Zen) schools.

The work of translating from *The Flower Ornament Scripture* into Chinese apparently began in the second century AD, and continued for the better part of a thousand years. During this time more than thirty translations and retranslations of various books and selections from the scripture were produced. Numerous related scriptures were also translated. Many of these texts still exist in Chinese. Comprehensive renditions of the scripture were finally made in the early fifth and late seventh centuries. The original texts for both of these monumental translations were brought to China from Khotan in Central Asia, which was located on the Silk Route and was a major center for the early spread of Buddhism into China. Khotan, where an Indo-Iranian language was spoken, is now a part of the Xinjiang (Sinkiang) Uighur autonomous region in China, near Kashmir, another traditional center of Buddhist activity. The first comprehensive translation of *The Flower Ornament Scripture* was done under the direction of an Indian monk named Buddhahadra (359–429); the second, under the direction of a Khotanese monk named Shikshananda (652–710). The latter version, from which the present English translation is made, was based on a more complete text imported from Khotan at the request of the empress of China; it is somewhat more than ten percent longer than Buddhahadra's translation.

The Flower Ornament Scripture, in Shikshananda's version, contains thirty-nine books. By way of introduction to this long and complex text, we will focus on a comparison of *The Flower Ornament Scripture* with other major scriptures; as well as a brief glance at the main thrust of each book.

A Comparison with Other Major Buddhist Scriptures

Due to the great variety in Buddhist scriptures, analysis of their interrelation was an integral part of Buddhist studies in East Asia, where scriptures were introduced in great quantities irrespective of their time or place of origin. In order to convey some idea of the Buddhism of *The Flower Ornament Scripture* in respect to other major scriptures, as well as to summarize some of the principal features of *The Flower Ornament*, we will begin this Introduction with a comparison of *The Flower Ornament* with other important scriptures. This discussion will be based on the

“Discourse on the Flower Ornament,” a famous commentary by an eighth century Chinese lay Buddhist, Li Tongxuan. What follows is a free rendering of Li’s comparisons of *The Flower Ornament Scripture* to the scriptures of the lesser vehicle (the Pali Canon),¹ the *Brahmajala Scripture*, the *Prajnaparamita Scriptures*,² the *Sandhinirmocana Scripture*, the *Lankavatara Scripture*,³ the *Vimalakirtinirdesa Scripture*,⁴ the *Saddharmapun-darika Scripture*,⁵ and the *Mahaparinirvana Scripture*.⁶

The scriptures containing the precepts of the lesser vehicle are based on conceptual existence. The Buddha first told people what to do and what not to do. In these teachings, relinquishment is considered good and nonrelinquishment is considered not good. Doctrine set up this way is not yet to be considered indicative of true existence. This teaching based on existence is temporary, dealing with the delusions of ordinary feelings and the arbitrary invention of ills; this teaching is designed to stop these and enable people to live in truly human or celestial states. That is why the preface of the precepts says that if one wants to live in heavenly or human conditions one should always keep the precepts.

People’s fabricated doings are unreal, and not true attainment, therefore their life in human and celestial states is impermanent, not truly real. They have not yet attained the body of reality and the body of knowledge. This teaching is not based on true existence; it is temporarily based on conceptual existence. This is the model of the lesser vehicle. As for keeping precepts in *The Flower Ornament Scripture*, it is not this way: as it says in the scripture, “Is the body religious practice? Are walking, standing, sitting, or reclining religious practice?” and so on, examining closely in search of “religious practice,” ultimately finding it cannot be apprehended—this ungraspability is why it is called pure religious practice. As the scripture says, those engaged in such pure practice are said to uphold the discipline of the buddha-nature, and attain the Buddha’s reality body. Therefore they attain enlightenment at the first inspiration. Because they keep the discipline of buddha-nature, they are equal to the essence of Buddha, equal in terms of noumenon and phenomenon, merging with the cosmos of reality. When they keep discipline this way, they do not see themselves keeping precepts, they do not see others breaking precepts. Their action is neither that of ordinary people nor that of saints. They do not see themselves arousing the determination for enlightenment, they do not see the Buddhas attaining enlightenment. If there is anything at all that can be grasped or apprehended—whether good or bad—this is not called enlightenment, not called pure practice. One should see in this way. Such discipline based on the essence is itself the body of reality; the body of reality is the knowledge of Buddhas; the knowledge of Buddhas is true enlightenment. Therefore this discipline of *The Flower Ornament Scripture* is not the same as the teaching of the lesser vehicle, which has choosing and rejection.

Next, the precepts for enlightening beings in the *Brahmajala Scripture* are based on presentation of both conceptual existence and real existence.

For people who have big hearts and like to practice kindness and compassion and those who seek Buddhahood, the Buddha says Vairocana is the fundamental body, with ten billion emanation bodies. To suddenly cause us to recognize the branches and return to the root, the scripture says these ten billion bodies bring innumerable beings to the Buddha. It also says if people accept the precepts of Buddha, they then enter the ranks of Buddhas: their rank is already the same as great enlightenment and they are true offspring of Buddha. This is therefore discipline based on the essence, and is thus based on reality. This scripture abruptly shows great-hearted people the discipline of the essence of the body of reality, while lesser people get it gradually. Therefore one teaching responds to two kinds of faculties, greater and lesser. The statement that the ten billion emanation bodies each bring countless beings to the Buddha illustrates giving up the provisional for the true. This is the teaching of true existence. Because in this teaching the provisional and true are shown at once, it is not the same as the lesser vehicle, which begins with impermanence and has results that are also impermanent, because the precepts of the lesser vehicle only lead to humanity and heavenly life. However, the establishment of a school of true existence in the *Brahmajala Scripture* is not the same as that expounded by Vairocana in *The Flower Ornament Scripture*. In the *Brahmajala Scripture*, by following the teaching of the emanation bodies of Buddha we arrive at the original body: in the school of the complete teaching of the *Flower Ornament*, the original body is shown all at once; the fundamental realm of reality, the body of rewards of great knowledge, cause and effect, and noumenon and phenomena are equally revealed. Also the description of the extent of the cosmos of *The Flower Ornament Scripture* is not the same as the description in the *Brahmajala Scripture*.

As for the *Prajnaparamita Scriptures*, they are based on explaining emptiness in order to show the truth. When the Buddha first expounded the teachings of the lesser vehicle to people, they stuck to principles and phenomena as both real, and therefore could not get rid of obstruction. Therefore Buddha explained emptiness to them, to break down their attachments. That is why it explains eighteen kinds of emptiness in the *Prajnaparamita Scriptures*—the world, the three treasures (the Buddha, the Teaching, and the Community), the four truths (suffering, origin, extinction, the path), the three times (past, present, and future), and so on, are all empty, and emptiness itself is empty too. This is extensively explained in these scriptures, to nullify ignorance and obstructing actions. When ignorance is totally exhausted, obstructing actions have no essence—nirvana naturally appears. This is true existence; it is not called a school of emptiness. However, though it is real true existence, many of the teachings expounded have becoming and disintegration, therefore it cannot yet be considered complete. As for *The Flower Ornament Scripture*, in it are the arrays of characteristics and embellishments that are rewards or consequences of enlightening practice—they can be empty and they

can be actual. In this scripture the teachings of emptiness and existence are not applied singly—noumenon and phenomena, emptiness and existence, interpenetrate, reflecting each other. All the books of the whole *Flower Ornament Scripture* interpenetrate, all the statements intertwine. All the sayings in the scripture point to the same thing—when one becomes all become, when one disintegrates all disintegrate. In the totality, because the essence is equal, the time is equal, and the practice is equal, every part of the scripture is equal, and so the explanations of the Teaching are equal. Therefore attainment of buddhahood in the present means equality with all Buddhas of past, present, and future: consequently there is no past, present, or future—no time. In this it differs from the *Prajnaparamita Scriptures*, in which formation and disintegration take place at separate times and thus cause and effect are successive.

Now as for the *Sandhinirmocana Scripture*, this is based on nonvoidness and nonexistence. Buddha explained this teaching after having expounded teachings of existence and of emptiness, to harmonize the two views of being and nothingness, making it neither emptiness nor existence. To this end he spoke of an unalloyed pure consciousness without any defilement. According to this teaching, just as a rapid flow of water produces many waves, all of which are equally based on the water, similarly the sense consciousnesses, the conceptual consciousness, the judgmental consciousness, and the cumulative repository consciousness are all based on the pure consciousness. As the *Sandhinirmocana Scripture* says, it is like the face of a good mirror: if one thing which casts a reflection comes before it, just one image appears; if two or more things come before it, two or more images appear—it is not that the surface of the mirror changes into reflections, and there is no manipulation or annihilation that can be grasped either. This illustrates the pure consciousness on which all aspects of consciousness are based.

The *Sandhinirmocana Scripture* also says that though the enlightening being lives by the teaching, knowledge is the basis, because the teaching is a construction. The intent of this scripture is to foster clear understanding of the essence of consciousness in the medium of consciousness. Because fundamentally it is only real knowledge, it is like the stream of water, which produces waves without leaving the body of the water. It is also like a clear mirror, which due to its pure body contains many images without discrimination, never actually having anything in it, yet not impeding the existence of images. Likewise, the forms of consciousness manifested by one's own mind are not apart from essential uncontrived pure knowledge, in which there are no attachments such as self or other, inside or outside, in regard to the images manifested. Letting consciousness function freely, going along with knowledge, this breaks up bondage to emptiness or existence, considering everything neither empty nor existent. Therefore a verse of the *Sandhinirmocana Scripture* says, "The pure consciousness is very deep and subtle; all impressions

are like a torrent. I do not tell the ignorant about this, for fear they will cling to the notion as 'self.' ” The statement that the pure consciousness is very deep and subtle is to draw ordinary people into realization of knowledge in consciousness: it is not the same as the breaking down of forms into emptiness, which is practiced by the two lesser vehicles and the beginning enlightening beings learning the gradual method of enlightenment. It is also not the same as ordinary people who cling to things as really existent. Because it is not the same as them, it is not emptiness, not existence. What is not empty? It means that knowledge can, in all circumstances, illumine the situation and help people. What is not existent? It means that when knowledge accords with circumstances, there is no distinction of essence and characteristics, and thus there is no birth, subsistence, or extinction. Based on these meanings it is called “not empty, not existent.”

While the *Sandhinirmocana Scripture* in this way lets us know, in terms of consciousness, that emptiness and existence are nondual, *The Flower Ornament Scripture* is not like this: *The Flower Ornament* just reveals the Buddha's essence and function of fundamental knowledge of the one reality, the fundamental body, the fundamental cosmos. Therefore it merges true essence and characteristics, the oceans of the reality body and the body of consequences of deeds, the reward body. It directly points out at once to people of the highest faculties the basic knowledge of the unique cosmos of reality, the qualities of Buddhahood. This is its way of teaching and enlightenment; it does not discuss such phenomena as producing consciousness according to illusion.

According to the *Saddharmapundarika Scripture*, Buddha appears in the world to enlighten people with Buddha-knowledge and purify them, not for any other religious vehicle, no second or third vehicle. Also it says that Buddha does not acknowledge the understanding of the essence and characteristics of Buddha by people of the three vehicles. Therefore the *Saddharmapundarika Scripture* says, “As for the various meanings of essence and characteristics, only I and the other Buddhas of the ten directions know them—my disciples, individual illuminates, and even nonregressing enlightening beings cannot know them.” Because the *Saddharmapundarika Scripture* joins the temporary studies of the three vehicles and brings them ultimately to the true realm of reality of the Buddha-vehicle, its doctrine to some extent matches that of *The Flower Ornament Scripture*.

The Flower Ornament Scripture directly reveals the door of consummate buddhahood, the realm of reality, the fundamental essence and function of the cosmos, communicating this to people of superior faculties so that they may awaken to it: it does not set up the provisional didactic device of five, six, seven, eight, and nine consciousnesses like the *Sandhinirmocana Scripture* does. As for the *Sandhinirmocana Scripture*'s establishment of a ninth, pure consciousness, there are two meanings. For one thing, it is for the sake of those of the two lesser vehicles who have long sickened

of birth and death and cultivate emptiness to annihilate consciousness, aiming directly for empty quiescence. Also, in the next phase, the *Prajnaparamita Scriptures* talk a lot about emptiness and refute the notion of existence, to turn around the minds of the two vehicles as well as enlightening beings engaged in gradual study. They also make the six ways of transcendence the vehicle of practice. Although some of those in the two vehicles are converted, they and the gradual-practice enlightening beings are predominantly inclined toward emptiness. This is because the elementary curative teachings for the gradual-study enlightening beings are similar to some extent to those for the lesser vehicles; they do have, however, a bit more compassion than the latter. They have not yet realized principles such as that of the body of reality, the buddha-nature, and fundamental knowledge. They only take the avenue of emptiness as their vehicle of salvation and the six ways of transcendence as their form of practice. Their elementary curative means are after all the same as the two vehicles—only by contemplation of impermanence, impurity, bleached bones, atoms, and so on, do they enter contemplation of emptiness. But while the two vehicles head for extinction, enlightening beings stay in life. They subdue notions of self and phenomena by means of contemplations of voidness, selflessness, and so on. Basically this is not yet fundamental knowledge of the body of reality and the buddha-nature; because their vision is not yet true, inclination toward emptiness is dominant. For this reason the *Sandhinirmocana Scripture* expediently sets up a pure consciousness distinct from the conceptual, judgemental, and cumulative consciousnesses, saying that these consciousnesses rest on the pure consciousness.

The *Sandhinirmocana Scripture* does not yet directly explain that the impressions in the cumulative or repository consciousness are the matrix of enlightenment. This is because the students are engaged in learning out of fear of suffering; if they were told that the seeds of action are eternally real, they would become afraid and wouldn't believe it, so the scripture temporarily sets up a "pure consciousness" so that they won't annihilate the conscious nature and will grow in enlightenment. For this reason the *Vimalakirtinirdesa Scripture* says, "They have not yet fulfilled buddhahood, but they don't annihilate sensation to get realization." Since sensation is not annihilated, neither are conception and consciousness. As for the *Lankavatara Scripture*, it does directly tell those whose faculties are mature that the seeds of action in the cumulative "store-house" consciousness are the matrix of enlightenment. The *Vimalakirtinirdesa Scripture* says, "The passions which accompany us are the seeds of buddhahood."

People who practice the Way are different, on different paths, with myriad different understandings and ways of acting. Beyond the two vehicles that are called the lesser vehicles, the vehicle of enlightening beings has four types that are not the same: one is that of enlightening beings who cultivate emptiness and selflessness; second is that of enlight-

ening beings who gradually see the buddha-nature; third is that of enlightening beings who see buddha-nature all of a sudden; fourth is those enlightening beings who, by means of the inherently pure knowledge of the enlightened, and by means of various levels of intensive practice, develop differentiating knowledge, fulfill the practice of Universal Good and develop great benevolence and compassion.

As for the *Lankavatara Scripture*, its teaching is based on five elements, three natures, eight consciousnesses, and twofold selflessness. The five elements are forms, names, arbitrary conceptions, correct knowledge, and thusness. The three natures are the nature of mere imagination, the nature of relative existence, and the nature of absolute emptiness: the imaginary nature means the characteristics of things as we conceive of them are mere descriptions, projections of the imagination; the relative nature means that things exist in terms of the relation of sense faculties, sense data, and sense consciousness; the absolute nature means that the imaginary and relative natures are not in themselves ultimately real. The eight consciousnesses are the five sense-consciousness, the conceptual consciousness, the discriminating judgemental consciousness, and the cumulative or repository “storehouse” consciousness. The twofold selflessness is the selflessness of persons and of things.

According to this scripture, there is a mountain in the south seas called Lanka, where the Buddha expounded this teaching. This mountain is high and steep and looks out over the ocean; there is no way of access to it, so only those with spiritual powers can go up there. This represents the teaching of the mind-ground, to which only those beyond cultivation and realization can ascend. “Looking out over the ocean” represents the ocean of mind being inherently clear, while waves of consciousness are drummed up by the wind of objects. The scripture wants to make it clear that if you realize objects are inherently empty the mind-ocean will be naturally peaceful; when mind and objects are both stilled, everything is revealed, just as when there is no wind the sun and moon are clearly reflected in the ocean.

The *Lankavatara Scripture* is intended for enlightening beings of mature faculties, all at once telling them the active consciousness bearing seed like impressions is the matrix of enlightenment. Because these enlightening beings are different from the practitioners of the two lesser vehicles who annihilate consciousness and seek quiescence, and because they are different from the enlightening beings of the *Prajnaparamita Scriptures* who cultivate emptiness and in whom the inclination toward emptiness is dominant, this scripture directly explains the total reality of the fundamental nature of the substance of consciousness, which then becomes the function of knowledge. So just as when there is no wind on the ocean the images of objects become clearer, likewise in this teaching of the mind ocean if you comprehend that reality is consciousness it becomes knowledge. This scripture is different from the idea of the *Sandhinirmocana Scripture*, which specially sets up a ninth “pure” con-

consciousness to guide beginners and gradually induce them to remain in the realm of illusion to increase enlightenment, not letting their minds plant seeds in voidness, and not letting their minds become like spoiled fruitless seeds by onesidedly rejecting the world. So the *Sandhinirmocana Scripture* is an elementary gateway to entry into illusion, while the *Lankavatara* and *Vimalakirtinirdesa Scriptures* directly point to the fundamental reality of illusion. The *Lankavatara* explains the storehouse consciousness as the matrix of enlightenment, while the *Vimalakirtinirdesa* examines the true character of the body, seeing it to be the same as Buddha.

The *Lankavatara* and *Vimalakirtinirdesa Scriptures* are roughly similar, while the *Sandhinirmocana* is a bit different. *The Flower Ornament* is not like this: the body and sphere of the Buddha, the doors of teaching, and the forms of practice are far different. It is an emanation body which expounds the *Lankavatara*, and the realm explained is a defiled land; the location is a mountain peak, and the teaching explains the realm of consciousness as real; the interlocutor is an enlightening being called Great Intellect, the teaching of the emanation Buddha is temporary, and the discourse of Great Intellect is selective. As for the teaching of *The Flower Ornament Scripture*, the body of Buddha is the fundamental reality, the realm of the teaching and its results is the Flower Treasury; the teaching it rests on is the fruit of buddhahood, which is entered through the realm of reality; the interlocutors are Manjushri and Universally Good. The marvelous function of knowledge of noumenon and phenomena, the aspects of practice of five sets of ten stages, and their causes and effects, merge with each other; the substances of ten fields and ten bodies of buddhahood interpenetrate. It would be impossible to tell fully of all the generalities and specifics of *The Flower Ornament*.

Next, to deal with the *Vimalakirtinirdesa Scripture*, this is based on inconceivability. The *Vimalakirtinirdesa Scripture* and *The Flower Ornament Scripture* have ten kinds of difference and one kind of similarity. The spheres of difference are: the arrays of the pure lands; the features of the body of Buddha as rewards of religious practice or emanated phantom manifestations; the inconceivable spiritual powers; the avenues of teaching set up to deal with particular faculties; the congregations who come to hear the teachings; the doctrines set up; the activity manifested by the enlightening being Vimalakirti; the location of the teaching; the company of the Buddha; and the bequest of the teaching. The one similarity is that the teachings of methods of entry into the Way are generally alike.

First, regarding the difference in the arrays of the pure lands, in the case of the pure land spoken of in the *Vimalakirtinirdesa Scripture* Buddha presses the ground with his toe, whereupon the billion-world universe is adorned with myriad jewels, like the land of Jewel Array Buddha, adorned with the jewels of innumerable virtues. All in the assembly rejoice at this wonder and see themselves sitting on jewel lotus blossoms. But this scripture still does not speak of endless arrays of buddha-lands

being in one atom. *The Flower Ornament Scripture* fully tells of ten realms of Vairocana Buddha, ten Flower Treasury oceans of worlds—each ocean of worlds containing endless oceans of worlds, interpenetrating each other again and again, there being endless oceans of worlds within a single atom. The complete sphere of the ten Buddha-bodies and the sphere of sentient beings interpenetrate without mutual obstruction; the arrays of myriad jewels are like lights and reflections. This is extensively recounted in *The Flower Ornament Scripture*; it does not speak of the purification and adornment of only one billion-world universe.

Second, regarding the difference in the features of the Buddhas' bodies, being rewards or emanations, the *Vimalakirti Scripture* is expounded by an emanation Buddha with the thirty-two marks of greatness, whereas *The Flower Ornament* is expounded by the Buddha of true reward, with ninety-seven marks of greatness and also as many marks as atoms in ten Flower Treasury oceans of worlds.

Third, the difference in inconceivable spiritual powers: according to the *Vimalakirti Scripture*'s explanation of the spiritual powers of enlightening beings, they can fit a huge mountain into a mustard seed and put the waters of four oceans into one pore; also Vimalakirti's little room is able to admit thirty-two thousand lion thrones, each one eighty-four thousand leagues high. Vimalakirti takes a group of eight thousand enlightening beings, five hundred disciples, and a hundred thousand gods and humans in his hand and carries them to a garden; also he takes the eastern buddha-land of Wonderful Joy in his hand and brings it here to earth to show the congregation, then returns it to its place. These miraculous powers are just shown for the benefit of disciples and enlightening beings who are temporarily studying the three vehicles. Why? Because disciples and enlightening beings studying the temporary teachings do not yet see the Way truly, and have not yet forgotten the distinction of self and other. The miracles shown are based on the perception of the sense faculties, and all have coming and going, boundaries and limits. Also they are a temporary device of a sage, intended to arouse those of small faculties by producing miracles through spiritual powers, to induce them to progress further. Therefore they are not spontaneous powers. *The Flower Ornament Scripture* says it is by the power of fundamental reality, because it is the natural order, the way things are in truth, that it is possible to contain all lands of Buddhas and sentient beings in one atom, without shrinking the worlds or expanding the atom. Every atom in all worlds, like this, also contains all worlds.

As *The Flower Ornament Scripture* says, enlightening beings attain enlightenment in the body of a small sentient being and extensively liberate beings, while the small sentient being does not know it, is not aware of it. You should know that it is because Buddha draws in those of lesser faculties by temporary teachings that they see Buddha outside themselves manifesting spiritual powers that come and go—in the true teaching, by means of inherent fundamental awareness one becomes

aware of the fundamental mind, and realizes that one's body and mind, essence and form, are no different from Buddha, and so one has no views of inside or outside, coming or going. Therefore Vairocana Buddha's body sits at all sites of enlightenment without moving from his original place; the congregations from the ten directions go there following the teaching without moving from their original places. There is no coming and going at all, nothing produced by miraculous powers. This is why the scripture says it is this way in principle, in accord with natural law. When the scripture says time and again that is by the spiritual power of Buddha and also thus in principle or by natural law, it says "by the spiritual power of Buddha" to put forward Buddha as what is honorable, and says "it is thus in principle" or "by natural law" to put forward the fundamental qualities of reality. There is no change at all, because every single land, body, mind, essence, and form remain as they originally are and do not follow delusion—all objects and realms, great and small, are like lights, like images, mutually reflecting and interpenetrating, pervading the ten directions, without any coming or going, without any bounds. Thus within the pores of each being is all of space—it is not the same as the temporary teaching of miraculous powers with divisions, coming and going, which cause illusory views differing from the fundamental body of reality, blocking the knowledge of the essence of fundamental awareness of true enlightenment. This is why the enlightening being Vimalakirti set forth the true teaching after showing miracles. The *Vimalakirti Scripture* says, "Seeing the Buddha is like seeing the true character of one's own body; I see the Buddha doesn't come from the past, doesn't go to the future, and doesn't remain in the present."

Because those of small views studying the temporary teaching crave wonders, the enlightening being uses crude means according to their faculties to induce them to learn, and only then gives them the true teaching. One should not cling to phantoms as real and thus perpetually delude the eye of knowledge. Recognizing the temporary and taking to the true, one moves into the gate of the realm of reality.

That which is contrived can hardly accomplish adaptation to conditions, whereas the uncontrived has nothing to do. Those who strive labor without accomplishment, while nonstriving, according with conditions, naturally succeeds. In effortless accomplishment, effort is not wasted; in accomplishment by effort, all effort is impermanent, and many eons of accumulated cultivation eventually decays. It is better to instantly realize the birthlessness of interdependent origination, transcending the views of the temporary studies of the three vehicles.

Fourth is the difference in the teachings set up in relation to people of particular faculties. The *Vimalakirti Scripture* is directed toward those of faculties corresponding to the two lesser vehicles, to induce them to aim for enlightenment and enter the great vehicle. It is also directed at enlightening beings who linger in purity, whose compassion and knowl-

edge is not yet fully developed, to cause them to progress further. Therefore, in the scripture when a group of enlightening beings from a pure land who have come here are about to return to their own land and so ask Buddha for a little teaching, the Buddha, seeing that those enlightening beings are lingering in a pure land and their compassion and knowledge are not yet fully developed, preaches to them to get them to study finite and infinite gates of liberation, telling them not to abandon benevolence and compassion and to set the mind on omniscience without ever forgetting it, to teach sentient beings tirelessly, to always remember and practice giving, kind speech, beneficial action, and cooperation, to think of being in meditative concentration as like being in hell, to think of being in birth and death as like being in a garden pavilion, and to think of seekers who come to them as like good teachers. This is expounded at length in the *Vimalakirti Scripture*.

This *Vimalakirti Scripture* addresses those of the two and three vehicles whose compassion and knowledge are not fully developed, to cause them to gradually cultivate and increase compassion and knowledge—it doesn't immediately point out the door of buddhahood, and doesn't yet say that beginners in the ten abodes realize true enlightenment, and doesn't show great wonders, because its wonders all have bounds.

Fifth is the difference in the assemblies who gather to hear the teaching. In the *Vimalakirti Scripture*, except for the great enlightening beings such as Manjushri and Maitreya and the representative disciples such as Shariputra, all the rest of the audience are students of the temporary teachings of the three vehicles. Even if there are enlightening beings therein who are born in various states of existence and bring those of their kind along, they all want to develop the temporary studies of the three vehicles, and gradually foster progress; the scripture does not yet explain the complete fundamental vehicle of the Buddhas. In the case of *The Flower Ornament Scripture*, all those who come are riding the vehicle of the Buddhas—enlightened knowledge, the virtues of realization, the inherent body of reality. They are imbued with Universally Good practice, appear reflected in all scenes of enlightenment in all oceans of lands, and attain the fundamental truth, which conveys enlightenment. There is not a single one with the faculties and temperament of the three vehicles; even if there are any with the faculties and potential of the three vehicles, they are as though blind and death, unknowing, unaware, like blind people facing the sun, like death people listening to celestial music.

Vessels of the three vehicles who have not yet consummated the power of the Way and haven't turned their minds to the vehicle of complete buddhahood are always in the sphere of Buddhas in the ocean of the realm of reality, with the same qualities and same body as Buddha, but they never are able to believe it, are unaware of it, do not know it, so they seek vision of Buddha elsewhere. As *The Flower Ornament Scripture* says, "Even if there are enlightening beings who practice the six ways of transcendence and cultivate the various elements of enlightenment for

countless billions of eons, if they have not heard this teaching of the inconceivable quality of Buddha, or if they have heard it and don't believe or understand it, don't follow it or penetrate it, they cannot be called real enlightening beings, because they cannot be born in the house of the Buddhas." You should know the audiences are totally different—in the *Vimalakirti Scripture* the earthlings are not yet rid of discrimination, while the group from a pure land retain a notion of defilement and purity. Such people's views and understanding are not yet true—sticking to a pure land in one realm, though they be called enlightening beings, they are not well rounded in the path of truth and they don't completely understand the Buddha's meaning. Though they aspire to enlightenment, they want to remain in a pure land, and because they set their minds on that, they are alienated from the body of reality and the body of knowledge. For this reason the *Saddharmapundarika Scripture* says, "Even countless nonregressing enlightening beings cannot know." As for the audience of *The Flower Ornament*, their own bodies are the same as the Buddha's body, their own knowledge is the same as the Buddha's knowledge; there is no difference. Their essence and characteristics contain unity and multiplicity, and sameness and distinction. Dwelling in the water of knowledge of the realm of reality, they appear as dragons; living in the mansion of nirvana, they manifest negativity and positivity, to develop people. Principal and companions freely interreflect and integrate, teacher and student merge with one another, cause and effect interpenetrate. All of *The Flower Ornament* audience are such people.

Sixth, regarding the difference in doctrines set up, the *Vimalakirti Scripture* uses the layman Vimalakirti manifesting a few inconceivable occult displays to cause those of the two lesser vehicles to change their minds. Also Vimalakirti, in the midst of birth and death, appears to be physically ill to have people know defilement and purity are nondual. Also the scripture represents the great compassion of the enlightening being, the "enlightening being with sickness" accepting the pains of the world, and extensively sets forth aspects of nonduality. It sets up concentration and wisdom, contemplation and knowledge, which it uses to illustrate that the principle of nonseeking is most essential. Thus it says, "Those who seek truth should not seek anything." Nevertheless, it is not yet comparable to *The Flower Ornament's* full exposition of the teachings of sameness and distinction and cause and effect of the forms of practice of five and six levels—ten abodes, ten practices, ten concentrations, ten dedications, ten stages, and equalling enlightenment.

Seventh, regarding the difference of the activity manifested by the enlightening being Vimalakirti, in order to represent great compassion Vimalakirti appears to enter birth and death and shows the actions of its ailments. In *The Flower Ornament Scripture* Vairocana, by great compassion, appears to enter birth and death and accomplish the practice of true enlightenment, illustrating great knowledge able to appear in the world.

Eighth, regarding the difference in the locations of the teachings, the

expounding of the *Vimalakirti Scripture* takes place in a garden in the Indian city of Vaishali and in Vimalakirti's room; the expounding of *The Flower Ornament Scripture* takes place at the site of enlightenment in the Indian nation of Magadha, and in all worlds, and in all atoms.

Ninth, regarding the difference in the company of the Buddha, at the time of the preaching of the *Vimalakirti Scripture*, the Buddha's constant company consisted of only five hundred disciples; at the time of the preaching of *The Flower Ornament*, all the Buddha's company were great enlightening beings of the one vehicle, and there were as many of them as atoms in ten buddha-fields, all imbued with the essence and action of Universally Good and Manjushri.

Tenth, regarding the difference in the bequest of the teaching, in the *Vimalakirti Scripture's* book on handing over the bequest it says that Buddha said to the enlightenment being Maitreya, "Maitreya, I now entrust to you this teaching of unexcelled complete perfect enlightenment, which I accumulated over countless billions of ages." Thus the teaching of this scripture is bequeathed to those who have already become enlightening beings and have been born in the family of Buddhas. In *The Flower Ornament Scripture's* book on manifestation of Buddha, the bequest of the teaching of the scripture is made to ordinary people who as beginners can see the Way and be born in the family of Buddhas. Why? This scripture is difficult to penetrate—it can only be explained to those who can realize it by their own experience. This represents the three vehicles as temporary, because the sage exhorts cultivation and realization in the three vehicles, and anything attained is not yet real, and because the doctrines preached are not yet real either. Therefore *The Flower Ornament Scripture* says, "The treasure of this scripture does not come into the hands of anybody except true offspring of Buddha, who are born in the family of Buddhas and plant the roots of goodness, which are seeds of enlightenment. If there are no such true offspring of Buddha, this teaching will scatter and perish before long." It may be asked, "True offspring of Buddha are numberless—why worry that this scripture will perish in the absence of such people?" The answer to this is that the intent of the scripture is to bequeath it to ordinary people to awaken them and lead them into this avenue to truth, and therefore cause them to be born in the family of Buddhas and have them prevent the seed of buddhahood from dying out. Thus ordinary people are caused to gain entry into reality. If it were bequeathed to great enlightening beings, the ordinary people would have no part in it. The sages made it clear that if there were no ordinary people who study and practice, the seed of buddhahood would die out among ordinary people, and this scripture would scatter and perish. This is why the scripture is bequeathed to ordinary people, to get them to practice it; it is not bequeathed to already established great enlightening beings who have long seen the Way.

As for the similarity of means of entering the Way, the *Vimalakirti*

Scripture says, “Those who seek the truth shouldn’t seek anything,” and “Seeing Buddha is like seeing the true character of one’s own body; I see the Buddha does not come from the past, go to the future, or remain in the present,” and so on. These doors of knowledge of elementary contemplations are about the same as *The Flower Ornament Scripture*, but the forms of practice, means of access, order, and guidelines are different.

Next, to compare the *Saddharmapundarika Scripture* to *The Flower Ornament Scripture*, the *Saddharmapundarika* is based on merging the temporary in the true, because it leads people of lesser, middling, and greater faculties into the true teaching of the one vehicle, draws myriad streams back into the ocean, returns the ramifications of the three vehicles to the source. Scholars of the past have called this the common teaching one vehicle, because those of the three vehicles all hear it, whereas they called *The Flower Ornament* the separate teaching one vehicle, because it is not also heard by those of the three vehicles. The *Saddharmapundarika* induces vessels of the temporary teaching to return to the real; *The Flower Ornament* teaches those of great faculties all at once so they may directly receive it. Though the name “one vehicle” is the same, and the task of the teaching is generally the same, there are many differences in the patterns. It would be impractical to try to deal with them exhaustively, but in brief there are ten points of difference: the teachers; the emanation of lights; the lands; the interlocutors who request the teaching; the arrays of the assemblies, reality, and emanations; the congregations in the introduction; the physical transformation and attainment of buddhahood by a girl; the land where the girl who attains buddhahood lives; the inspirations of the audiences; and the predictions of enlightenment of the hearers.

First, regarding the difference in the teachers, the exposition of the *Saddharmapundarika* is done by an emanation or phantom-body Buddha; a Buddha who passed away long ago comes to bear witness to the scripture, and the Buddhas of past, present, and future alike expound it. *The Flower Ornament* is otherwise; the main teacher is Vairocana, who is the real body of principle and knowledge, truth and its reward, arrayed with embodiments of virtues of infinite characteristics. The Buddhas of past, present, and future are all in one and the same time; the characteristics realized in one time, one cosmos, reflect each other ad infinitum without hindrance. Because past and present are one time, not past, present, or future, therefore the Buddhas of old are not in the past and the Buddhas of now have not newly emerged. This is because in fundamental knowledge essence and characteristics are equal, noumenon and phenomena are not different. Thus the fundamental Buddha expounds the fundamental truth. Because it is given to those of great faculties all at once, and because it is not an emanation body, it is not like the *Saddharmapundarika*, in which there is an ancient Buddha who

has passed away and a present Buddha who comes into the world and expounds the *Saddharmapundarika*.

Second, regarding the difference in emanation of lights, when expounding the *Saddharmapundarika* the Buddha emanates light of realization from between his eyebrows; the range of illumination is only said to be eighteen thousand lands, which all turn golden—there is still limitation, and it doesn't talk of boundless infinity. Therefore it only illustrates the state of result, and not that of cause. *The Flower Ornament* has in all ten kinds of emanation of light symbolizing the teaching, with doctrine and practice, cause and effect; this is made clear in the scripture.

Third, regarding the difference in the lands, when he preached the *Saddharmapundarika*, Buddha transformed the world three times, causing it to become a pure land; he moved the gods and humans to other lands, and then placed beings from other hands here, transforming this defiled realm into a pure field. When *The Flower Ornament* was expounded, this world itself was the Flower Treasury ocean of worlds, with each world containing one another. The scripture says that each world fills the ten directions, and the ten directions enter each world, while the worlds neither expand nor shrink. It also says the Buddhas attain the Way in the body of one small sentient being and edify countless beings, without this small sentient being knowing or being aware of it. This is just because the ordinary and the sage are the same substance—there is no shift. Within a fine particle self and other are the same substance. This is not the same as the *Saddharmapundarika Scripture's* moving gods and humans before bringing the pure land to light, which is set up for those of the faculties of the temporary teaching, who distinguish self and other and linger in views.

Fourth, regarding the difference in the main interlocutors who request the teaching, in the case of the *Saddharmapundarika*, the disciple Shariputra is the main petitioner. In *The Flower Ornament*, the Buddha has Manjushri, Universally Good, and enlightening beings of every rank each expound the teachings of their own status—these are the speakers. The Buddha represents the state of result: bringing up the result as the cause, initiating compassionate action, consummating fundamental knowledge, the being of the result forms naturally, so nothing is said, because the action of great compassion arises from uncreated fundamental knowledge. Manjushri and Universally Good represent the causal state, which can be explained; Buddha is the state of result, enlightening sentient beings. The vast numbers described in the book on the incalculable can only be plumbed by a Buddha—they are not within the scope of the causes and effects of the five ranks of stages; hence this is a teaching within the Buddha's own state, and so Buddhist himself expounds it. The book on the qualities of Buddha's embellishments and lights is Buddha's own explanation of the principles of Buddhahood after having himself fulfilled cause and effect. The teachings in this book of the perpetual power of natural suchness and the lights of virtue and knowl-

edge also do not fall within the causes and effects of the forms of practice in the five ranks of ten stages, and so the Buddha himself explains it, making it clear that buddhahood does not have ignorance of the subtle and most extremely subtle knowledge. The rest of the books besides these two are all teachings of the forms of practice of the five sets or ranks of stages, so the Buddha does not explain them himself, but has the enlightening beings in the ranks of the ten developments of faith, ten abodes, ten practices, ten dedications, and ten stages explain them: the Buddha just emanates lights to represent them. In the exposition of *The Flower Ornament Scripture* there is not a single disciple or lesser enlightening being who acts as an interlocutor—all are great enlightening beings within the ranks of fruition of buddhahood, carrying out dialogues with each other, setting up the forms of practice of the teaching of the realization of buddhahood to enlighten those of great faculties. Thus it takes the fruit of buddhahood all at once, directly taking it as the causal basis; the cause has the result as its cause, while the result has the cause as its result. It is like planting seeds: the seeds produce fruit, the fruit produce seeds. If you ponder this by means of the power of concentration and wisdom, you can see it.

Fifth, regarding the differences in the arrays of the assemblies, reality and emanations, in the assembly of the *Saddharmapundarika Scripture*, the billion-world universe is purified and adorned, with emanation beings filling it, and the Buddhas therein also are said to be emanations. In the assemblies of *The Flower Ornament Scripture*, however, the congregations all fill the ten directions without moving from their original location, filling the cosmos with each physical characteristic and land reflecting each other. The enlightening beings and Buddhas interpenetrate, and also freely pervade the various kinds of sentient beings. The bodies and lands interpenetrate like reflections containing each other. Those who come to the assemblies accord with the body of embellishment without dissolving the body of reality—the body of reality and the body of embellishment are one, without distinction; thus the forms are identical to reality, none are emanations or phantoms. This is not the same as other doctrines which speak of emanations and reality and have them mix in congregations.

Sixth, regarding the difference of the congregations in the introductions, in the assembly of the *Saddharmapundarika*, first it mentions the disciples of Buddha, who are twelve thousand in all, then the nun Mahaprajapati and her company of six thousand—she was the aunt of Buddha; then it mentions Yashodhara, who was one of the wives of Buddha, then eighty thousand enlightening beings, and then the gods and spirits and so on. *The Flower Ornament Scripture* is not like this: first it mentions the leaders of the enlightening beings, who are as numerous as atoms in ten buddha-worlds, and doesn't talk about their followers; then it mentions the thunderbolt-bearing spirits, and after that the various spirits and gods, fifty-five groups in all. Each group is different,

and each has as many individuals as atoms in a buddha-world, or in some cases it simply says they are innumerable. The overall meaning of this is the boundless cosmos of the ocean of embodiments of Buddha—each body includes all, ad infinitum, without bounds. One body thus has the cosmos for its measure; the borders of self and other are entirely gone. The cosmos, which is one's own body, is all-pervasive; mental views of subject and object are obliterated.

Seventh, regarding the difference of physical transformation and attainment of buddhahood by a girl, in the *Saddharmapundarika Scripture* a girl instantly transforms her female body, fulfills the conduct of enlightening beings, and attains buddhahood in the South. *The Flower Ornament Scripture* is not like this; it just causes one to have no emotional views, so great knowledge is clarified and myriad things are in essence real, without any sign of transformation. According to the *Vimalakirti Scripture*, Shariputra says to a goddess, “Why don't you change your female body?” The goddess says to Shariputra, “I have been looking for the specific marks of ‘woman’ for twelve years but after all can't find any—what should I change?” As another woman said to Shariputra, “Your maleness makes my femaleness.” You should know myriad things are fundamentally “thus”—what can be changed? In *The Flower Ornament Scripture's* book on entry into the realm of reality, the teachers of the youth Sudhana—Manjushri and Samantabhadra (Universally Good), monks, nuns, householders, boys, laywomen, girls, wizards, and Hindus—fifty-three people, each are imbued with the conduct of enlightening beings, each are replete with the qualities of buddhahood; while they are seen to be physically dissimilar according to the people who perceive them, it is not said that there is transformation. If you see with the eye of truth, there is nothing mundane that is not true; if you look with the mundane eye, there is no truth that is not mundane. Because the *Saddharmapundarika* addresses those with lesser, middling, and greater faculties for the temporary teaching, whose views are not yet ended, to cause them to develop the seed of faith, it temporarily uses the image of a girl swiftly being transformed and becoming a Buddha, to cause them to conceive wonder, at which only will they be inspired to aim for true knowledge and vision. They are not ready for the fundamental truth, yet they develop roots of goodness. This illustrates inducing those in the three temporary vehicles back to the one true vehicle. Also it cuts through the fixed idea of time, the notion that enlightenment takes three eons, provoking instantaneous realization that past, present, and future are in essence fundamentally one time, without beginning or end, in accord with the equality of things. It rends the net of views of the three vehicles, demolishes the straw hut of the enlightening being, and causes them to wind up at the door of the realm of reality and enter the true abode of Buddhas. This is why it has that girl become Buddha, showing it is not a matter of long cultivation in the past; the fact that she is only eight years old also illustrates the present is not past study—the time of

her transformation is no more than an instant, and she fully carries out the fruition of buddhahood without the slightest lack. Truth is fundamentally *thus*—there is no time in essence.

Those involved in temporary studies block themselves with views and miss the truth by themselves—they call it a miracle that the girl attained buddhahood, and do not know they themselves are originally thus; completely in the world, how can they point to eons of practice outside? If they don't get rid of this view, they will surely miss enlightenment forever; if they change their minds and their views vanish, only then will they realize their original abode. It would be best for them to stop the compulsion of views right now. They uselessly suffer through eons of pain and fatigue before they return.

As for *The Flower Ornament Scripture's* doctrine of the interdependent origination of the cosmos, it makes it clear that the ordinary person and the sage are one reality; if one still retains views, one is blocked from this one reality. If one retains views one is an ordinary person; if one forgets sentiments one is a Buddha. Looking downward and looking upward, advancing and withdrawing, contracting and expanding, humility and respect, are all naturally interdependent, and are all practices of enlightening beings—there is nothing at all with transformable characteristics having birth, subsistence, and extinction. Therefore this *Flower Ornament* teaching is not the same as the *Saddharmapundarika's* girl being physically transformed and attaining buddhahood.

Eighth, regarding the difference of the land in which the girl who becomes a Buddha dwells, in the *Saddharmapundarika Scripture* it says this is the world of nondefilement in the South, not this earth. This is interpreted to mean that nondefilement refers to the mind attaining harmony with reality, and “the South” is associated with clarity, emptiness, and detachment. However, if one abides in “the South” as a separate place, then self and other, “here” and “there” are still separate—this is still following the three vehicles to induce those with facility for the temporary teachings to develop resolution and finally come to the Buddha-vehicle. This is because the residual force of attachment to the three vehicles is hard to break. Yet there is some change of mind, and though the sense of self and other is not yet obliterated, the mind is suddenly impressed by the body of the cosmos. This is not the same as *The Flower Ornament*, in which self and other interpenetrate in each atom, standing in a universal relationship of mutual interdependence and interpenetration.

Ninth, regarding the difference in inspirations, the *Saddharmapundarika Scripture* says that when the girl attained buddhahood, all the enlightening beings and disciples on earth, seeing her from afar becoming a Buddha and preaching to the congregation of the time, were delighted and paid respects to her from afar. Subsequently it says three thousand people on earth dwelt in the stage of nonregression, and three thousand people aroused the determination for enlightenment and received predic-

tions of their future buddhahood. When these six thousand people paid honor to the girl from afar and were inspired, their discrimination between “there” and “here” was not gone—they just pursued the created enlightenment of the temporary studies of the three vehicles, and had not attained the enlightenment of fundamental awareness of the cosmos in its universal aspect, in which self and other are one being.

The Flower Ornament is not like this: in terms of the cosmos of universality, the teaching of universal vision, the realm of absorption in the body of the matrix of enlightenment, and the teaching of the array of the cosmic net of Indra, the subtle knowledge of the interpenetration of the whirls of the oceans of worlds is all attained at once—because realization of one is realization of all, detachment from one is detachment from all. Therefore within one’s own body are the arrays of oceans of lands of the ten bodies of Buddha, and within the Buddha’s bodies is the realm of one’s own body. They mutually conceal and reveal each other, back and forth, over and over—all worlds everywhere are naturally this way. It is like myriad streams returning to the ocean: even when they have yet entered the ocean, the nature of moisture is no different; and once they enter the ocean, they all are of the same salty flavor. The same is true of all sentient beings—though delusion and enlightenment differ, the ocean of original buddhahood is basically not different.

Tenth, regarding the difference of giving the prediction of enlightenment to the hearers, in the *Saddharmapundarika Scripture*, though the girl who becomes a Buddha reflects all at once the timelessness of the cosmos, completely revealing buddhahood, those in the temporary studies of the three vehicles, although they have faith, have not yet gotten rid of their residual tendencies and are not yet able to attain immediate realizations; because they can only ascend to enlightenment over a long period of time, they are given prediction of enlightenment in the distant future. This is not the same as *The Flower Ornament Scripture*, which teaches that when one is deluded one is in the realm of the ordinary, and when one is enlightened one is then a Buddha—even if there are residual habits, one uses the knowledge and insight of buddhahood to cure them. Without the knowledge and insight of buddhahood, one can only manage to analyze and subdue habits and cannot enter the rapids of buddhahood, but can only enter buddhahood after a long time.

Because the faculty of faith of beginners in the three vehicles is inferior, they are not able to get rid of their bondage; they are fully wrapped up in their many ties and are obsessed with the vicissitudes of mundane life. Though they seek to transcend the world, their capacities are inferior and they get stuck and regress. This is why the Buddha has them contemplate such points as birth, aging, sickness, death, impermanence, impurity, instantaneous decay, and continual instability to cause them to become disillusioned. When they develop rejection of the world, their minds dwell on the distinction between purity and defilement; for the benefit of this type of people, who, though they cultivate compassion

and knowledge in quest of buddhahood, still think of a pure land as elsewhere, and because they have not obliterated their partial views characteristic of the three vehicles and so always see this world as impure, the Buddha explains cause and effect and settles their doubts, and temporarily makes the world pure, and then withdraws his mystic power so they will again see defilement.

Due to the habit of those in the three vehicles of viewing everything in terms of impermanence, selflessness, and emptiness, their minds are hard to change; though the girl in the *Saddharmapundarika* shows the Buddha-vehicle all at once, and though they believe in it, yet they cannot yet realize it immediately themselves. For this reason the predictions of full enlightenment in the *Saddharmapundarika* assembly all refer to long periods of time. The *Saddharmapundarika* gradually leads to *The Flower Ornament*, whereupon they are directly taught that the determination for enlightenment is itself buddhahood.

There are two aspects of similarity between the *Saddharmapundarika* and *The Flower Ornament Scriptures*. One is that of riding the vehicle of buddhahood directly to the site of enlightenment. The vehicle of buddhahood is the one vehicle. As *The Flower Ornament Scripture* says, among all people there are few who seek the vehicle of hearers, Buddhism disciples, even fewer who seek the vehicle of individual illumination, while those who seek the great vehicle are very few; yet it is easy to seek the great vehicle compared to the great difficulty of believing in *The Flower Ornament* teaching. The scripture also says that if there are any people who are fed up and depressed or obsessed, they are taught the path of disciples to enable them to escape from suffering; to those who are somewhat clear and sharp in mind the principle of conditioning is explained, to enable them to attain individual illumination; to those who willingly practice benevolence and compassion for the benefit of many, the path of enlightening beings is explained; if there are any who are intent on the matter of greatest importance, putting the teachings of infinite enlightenment into operation, they are taught the path of the one vehicle. This is the distinction of four vehicles in *The Flower Ornament Scripture*; as for the *Saddharmapundarika*, it sets out three temporary vehicles and finally reveals the true teaching, which is the Buddha-vehicle—there is no real second or third vehicle. The four vehicles of these two scriptures coincide in their definitions, but the manner of teaching is different.

Then again in the *Saddharmapundarika* it says that “Only this one thing is true—the other two are not real.” Going by this passage, it seems to be setting up three vehicles, but actually it is four teachings: the one thing which is true is the Buddha-vehicle, while the other two refers to the great vehicle of enlightening beings and the lesser vehicles of individual illuminates and hearers, the latter being considered together because they are alike in respect to their revulsion to suffering.

Also, the girl in the *Saddharmapundarika* reflecting the nature of past,

present, and future in one instant, and the statement that there is not the slightest shift from ordinary person to sage, are about the same as the teaching of the understanding and practice and entry into the Way by the youth Sudhana in the last book of *The Flower Ornament Scripture*. As for Sudhana's attainment of buddhahood in one life, within an instant he realized the nature of past, present, and future is wholly equal. This and the girl's instant transformation to buddhahood are both in accord with fundamental truth, because this is the way things are.

As for the *Nirvana Scripture*, it is based on the buddha-nature. It has ten points of difference with *The Flower Ornament Scripture*, and one similarity. The differences are as follows: the location; the arrays of the realms; the audiences; the interlocutors of the teachings; the audiences' hearing of the teaching; the purity or defilement of the lands of reward; the temporariness and reality of the Buddha-body; the patterns of birth and extinction; the forms of practice of the teachings; and the models of companionship. The one point of similarity is illustrated by the *Nirvana Scripture's* image of an herb in the snowy mountains of such a nature that cows who eat it produce pure ghee with no tinge of blue, yellow, red, white, or black.

Regarding the first difference, that of location, the *Nirvana Scripture* is preached between the twin trees on the bank of the Hiranayavati River in Kushinagara, whereas *The Flower Ornament* is preached under a jewel enlightenment tree at the sight of enlightenment in Magadha.

Second, regarding the difference in array of the realm, when the *Nirvana Scripture* was expounded, the hallowed ground between the trees was thirty-two leagues in length and breadth, completely filled by a great congregation. At that time the places where the boundless hosts of enlightening beings and their companies sat were infinitesimal, like points: all the great enlightening beings from all buddha-lands came and assembled. Also it says that at that time, by the Buddha's power, in all the worlds in that billion-world universe the ground was soft, level, uncluttered, free from brambles, and arrayed with myriad jewels like the western paradise of the Buddha of Infinite Life. Everyone in this great assembly saw all the buddha-lands, numerous as atoms, as clearly as seeing themselves in a mirror. Also it says that the trees suddenly turned white. This is all extensively described in the scripture.

Now when *The Flower Ornament Scripture* was expounded, there were ten flower-treasure oceans of worlds, each with twenty layers above and below. On the bottom layer there are as many vast lands as atoms in one buddha-field, each with as many satellite lands as atoms in ten buddha-fields; this increases with each successive layer. All of the worlds in these oceans of worlds have adamantine soil, with trees, pavilions, palaces, mansions, lakes, seas, all adorned with precious substances. As the scripture says, "One time the Buddha was in the land of Magadha, at the site of enlightenment in a forest, having just realized true enlightenment: the ground was made of adamantine diamond, adorned with discs of

exquisite jewels, flowers of myriad jewels, and clear crystals,” and so on, going on to say how all the adornments of inconceivable cons of all buddha-lands were included and revealed there. This is eulogizing the adornments of the sphere of Buddha. This is also extensively described in the book on the Flower Treasury universe: these are the adornments of the Buddha’s own body of true reward, not like in the *Nirvana Scripture* where Buddha uses mystic power to temporarily purify the world for the assembly. The reason for this is that in the *Nirvana Scripture* the audience is a mixture of those with the faculties of the three vehicles, so there would be no way for them to see this purity by themselves without the support of the Buddha’s spiritual power. In the case of *The Flower Ornament* the audience is pure and unmixed, being only those with the faculty for the one vehicle; the disciples of the lesser vehicle who are in the crowd do not perceive these adornments of Buddha’s realm, because their faculties are different. Although the scripture says “by the spiritual power of Buddha,” afterwards it says, after all, that it is by the power of natural law being so, or it is so in principle. Here, “spiritual” or “mystic” means accord with reality; it doesn’t mean that someone who is actually an ordinary person is given a temporary vision. *The Flower Ornament* basically shows the true reward, while the spiritual power of the *Nirvana Scripture* is a temporary measure. Also, the *Nirvana Scripture* has Buddha’s pure land in the west, beyond as many buddha-lands as particles of sand in thirty-two Ganges Rivers—it is not here. This obviously is a projection, and not real.

Third, regarding the difference in the audiences, all in the audience of the *Nirvana Scripture* are human or celestial in nature, with those of the three vehicles coming together: except for the great enlightening beings, when they remember the Buddha they weep; bringing fragrant firewood for the cremation, they grieve and lament, missing the days when they attended the Buddha. All such people are suited to hearing that the Buddha passes away; except for the enlightening beings of the one vehicle who have penetrated Buddha-knowledge, all the others are like this. The audience of *The Flower Ornament Scripture* consists of enlightening beings in the ranks of fruition of buddhahood, in the ocean of knowledge of essence, all of whom are on the one vehicle. The humans, celestials, spirits, etc. are all of the same faculties and enter the stream of Buddha-knowledge. In the first assembly it says that the enlightening beings, as many of them as atoms in ten buddha-worlds, are all born from the ocean of the roots of goodness of Buddha. The ocean of roots of goodness is the ocean of knowledge of the reality body of Buddha, born of great knowledge. All Buddhas have as their basis the fundamental knowledge of the body of reality—if enlightening beings were not born from this, all their practices would be fabricated. This congregation, from the first inspiration to the entry into the ocean of Buddha-knowledge, go through six levels, cultivating ten developments of faith, ten abodes, ten practices, ten dedications, ten stages, and equaling enlight-

enment, from shallow to deep, the forms of practice diverse. This is not like the *Nirvana Scripture*, in which the three vehicles are alike included, and the good types of humans and celestials come to the same assembly; in *The Flower Ornament Scripture*, those of the three vehicles are not in the congregation, or even if they are, they are as though deaf, not hearing. So you should know the assembly of those of the three vehicles in the *Nirvana Scripture*—enlightening beings, Buddha’s disciples, humans, celestials, etc.—is not the same as that of *The Flower Ornament Scripture*, which consists only of enlightening beings in the one vehicle, whose rank when they first set their minds on enlightenment is the same as the rank of Buddha, who enter the stream of knowledge of Buddha, share the same insight and vision as Buddha, and are true offspring of Buddha.

Fourth, regarding the difference in the interlocutors, in the *Nirvana Scripture* the main petitioners for the teaching are the enlightening being Kashyapa, the enlightening beings Manjushri and Sinhanada, and Shariputra, and so on, who are models of the teachings. The Devil, who is also a principal petitioner, urges the Buddha to pass away. As for *The Flower Ornament Scripture*, the leaders who set up the teachings are Universally Good, Manjushri, Chief in Awareness, Truth Wisdom, Forest of Virtues, Diamond Banner, Diamond Matrix, and so on. In this way there are ten “chiefs,” ten “wisdoms,” ten “forests,” and ten “matrices,” great enlightening beings within the ranks of fruition of buddhahood, who set up the teachings of forms of practice of fruition of buddhahood in several ranks. Thus because these ranks are identical to buddhahood and buddhahood is identical to these ranks, it shows that in each rank there is fruition of buddhahood.

The enlightening beings who carry on dialogues setting up the teachings in *The Flower Ornament* are all enlightening beings from the ten directions and from this world; all spiritually penetrate the source of reality, their knowledge is equal to the cosmos: appearing as reflections or responses in the ten directions, they arrive without coming or going. Their devices, in accord with the nature of things, are not accomplished by coming and going. Even in the minutest atomic particle there are infinite clusters of bodies; in a fine hair an inconceivable ocean of forms is manifest. All things in the cosmos are like this. In all places, the enlightening beings are suddenly there, without having come from anywhere; suddenly they are absent, without having gone anywhere. In all places and times, in the physical forms of living beings, the mountains, rivers, seas, and space of the environment, they appear in physical forms, freely being and not being, infinitely interpenetrating and inter-reflecting. These are all great enlightening beings, and therefore are not like the enlightening being Kashyapa or the disciple Shariputra in the *Nirvana Scripture*, who were born in human homes and appeared in the same state as ordinary people to lead the people in the three vehicles, who felt sad and wept on the passing of the Buddha.

Fifth, regarding the difference in the audiences' hearing of the teaching, the *Nirvana Scripture* is for those of the lesser vehicles and enlightening beings involved in the temporary teaching, who carry out various contemplative practices without having yet gotten rid of the obstruction of clinging, and so are obsessed with the practice and cling fast to the forms of practice, thus missing, in these forms of practice, the fundamental essence of the uncreated body of reality, which has no proof or practice; by means of practice, cultivation develops and becomes manifest, constructing realizations of the subject and object, enlightenment and nirvana: for these people the Buddha explains in this *Nirvana Scripture* that all practices are impermanent, being things that are born and perish, and that when birth and destruction die out, extinction is bliss. This is because the good conduct practiced and the realizing enlightenment are born phenomena, and the realized nirvana is the phenomenon of extinction: since the mind retains subject and object, birth and extinction do not cease, and while birth and extinction do not cease one fails to penetrate the truth. Now this *Nirvana Scripture* therefore explains that when the practices, the realizing enlightenment, and the realized nirvana all become extinct, only then does one accord with truth: so it says, "All practices are impermanent—they are born and perish. When birth and decay have passed away, silent extinction is bliss." This is why the Buddha disappeared. When the sense of subject and object is ended, that is called great nirvana.

The nirvana of the two lesser vehicles can have subject and object, and has cultivation and realization—therefore it is called created noncontamination. The nirvana of the Buddha has no subject or object: for this reason, in the *Nirvana Scripture* Cunda says to the enlightening being Manjushri, "Don't say the Buddha is the same as practices. . . . If you say the Buddha is the same as practices, then you cannot say Buddha is free." Therefore great ultimate nirvana informs those of the three vehicles that all practices, the enlightenment which realizes, and the nirvana which is realized, are all impermanent. Since that which is born is originally nonexistent, extinction is not experienced. No practice, no cultivation, is called great nirvana, and it is called complete tranquility. Therefore the *Nirvana Scripture* has those in the three vehicles who are attached to practices detach from practice and cultivation, and has those with an object of realization carry out no-realization and no-cultivation.

As for *The Flower Ornament Scripture*, the congregations from other regions and the people of this world, in the ranks of the assembly, from their very first determination for enlightenment immediately arrive at noumenal and phenomenal freedom, the merging of principle and action. Principle and action are reflected at once, without before, after, or in between. All of this is naturally so, based on the fundamental truth. If you keep thinking of beginning and end, cause and effect, before and after, this is all mundane feelings, all birth and death, having becoming

and disintegration, all a matter of breaking bonds according to faculties, not a matter of the true source of fulfillment of buddhahood.

The various teachings' methods of guiding people all lead into *The Flower Ornament's* ocean of fruition of knowledge of truth—this is their true goal. The avenues of the teaching are clear, the guiding mirror is evident; you should read through the whole scripture, with contemplative knowledge illuminating it as you go along: the mind opening up to understanding, the clouds will disperse from the sun of knowledge. Suddenly you will ascend the peak of wonder, surveying the ocean of knowledge; the two views of ordinary and holy will be washed away by the water of concentration, and the two gates of compassion and wisdom will appear through the spiritual body. This *Flower Ornament Scripture* is expounded directly to those of supremely great hearts; it is like directly bestowing monarchy on a commoner. It is like dreaming of a thousand years, all to vanish upon awakening. This is like the saying of the *Nirvana Scripture* that there is a certain herb in the snowy mountains; the cows that eat this produce pure ghee, with no tinge of blue, yellow, red, white, or black. Like this, people with the broadest minds immediately see the buddha-nature and thereupon attain true enlightenment, not coming to it gradually from lesser states. This is why we say the hearing of the audiences is different—the *Nirvana Scripture* unifies the branches and proceeds from the essence, but does not yet talk about the simultaneous operation without interference of knowledge and compassion, the real and the conventional.

Sixth, regarding the difference in purity and defilement of the lands of reward, in the *Nirvana Scripture* the Buddha's land of reward is placed in the West, past as many buddha-lands as grains of sand in thirty-two Ganges Rivers—this is said to be the land of spiritual reward of Shakyamuni Buddha. This is because those involved in the temporary studies of the three vehicles have not transcended defilement and purity and see this world as polluted, evil, and impure; the Buddha therefore temporarily points out a land of reward in the West. In the doctrine of true teaching of *The Flower Ornament*, this very world itself is pure, without defilement, and the worlds of the ten directions are pure and flawless. This is because for enlightening beings of the true teaching defilement and purity are ended, so the world is thoroughly pure; enlightening beings of the temporary teaching see defilement by themselves where there is no defilement, and therefore Buddha points out a land of reward in the West.

Seventh, regarding the difference in the temporariness and reality of the embodiment of Buddha, the Buddha in the *Nirvana Scripture* with thirty-two marks of greatness is temporary, while the true principle of complete tranquility is real. Since the measureless arrays of all marks of spiritual reward exist dependent upon the real, therefore according to *The Flower Ornament Scripture* the thirty-two marks of Vairocana Buddha enter the Buddha of nirvana—both are realm noumenon and phenomena

are nondual; without destroying the body of reality, Buddha accords with the ocean of forms, measureless, endless. Forms, essence, reward, and principle interidentify; they are like lights and reflections, freely merging.

Eighth, regarding the difference in manifestations of birth and extinction, in the *Nirvana Scripture* there is set up, for the people of the vehicles of discipleship and individual awakening, Buddha's spiritual descent from Tushita heaven, birth on earth, and so on, till his entry into final nirvana. For enlightening beings of the great vehicle it says Buddha does not descend from heaven into the mother's womb; it says Buddha is eternal, blissful, self, and pure, beginningless and endless, unborn and unperishing, yet temporarily disappears. Then it posits a land of reward, which it calls Shakyamuni Buddha's land of reward, far away in the West. It makes this earth out to be a phantom land, a realm of defilement. The *Nirvana Scripture* contains these things that are different from *The Flower Ornament*, to lead those with facility for the temporary teaching. *The Flower Ornament* is otherwise: it directly points out the teaching of the fundamental body, the fundamental reality, going beyond emotional and intellectual views, without beginning or end, void of any sign of past, present, or future, one complete real reward, unborn, unperishing, not eternal, not finite, the ocean of realization in which essence and form interpenetrate freely. The emptiness of a single atom has no difference throughout the cosmos; different types of people create hindrance and bondage, their faculties and capacities are not equal, and the temporary and the true are not the same, so as a result there are myriad differences in ways of teaching. One should know the temporary and the true, one should recognize the provisional and practice the real, and not miss the true teaching by sticking to a temporary school.

Ninth, regarding the difference in the forms of practice of the teachings, according to the *Nirvana Scripture* even enlightening beings in the tenth stage do not clearly know or see the buddha-nature. So it proceeds from the ten outgrowths of faith of the ordinary person and later comes to the ten abodes, where the enlightening beings see the buddha-nature a little bit: the *Nirvana Scripture* sets up the process of ten abodes, ten practices, ten dedications, and ten stages, to be cultivated gradually—only in the stage of equally enlightenment does it clarify the fulfillment of practice producing fruition, and only the state of ineffable enlightenment is finally buddhahood. Then again, it also says there is an herb in the snowy mountains; the cows that eat this produce pure ghee with no tint of blue, yellow, red, white, or black—so it also expounds the teachings of immediate realization.

In the *Nirvana Scripture* there are after all types of teachings of five vehicles, six vehicles, seven, eight, nine, and ten vehicles. There are three kinds of vehicles of enlightening beings beyond the two vehicles of hearers and individual illuminates—altogether these make five vehicles. If we include the five precepts and ten virtues, that makes a sixth and

seventh vehicle. Also, those of the three vehicles, hearing the same thing, each apprehend their own principles therein—therefore they make three times three or nine vehicles. As for the practices of the three vehicles of enlightening beings, they are: cultivating selflessness; proceeding from the ten abodes to the ten stages, gradually seeing buddha-nature; and attaining sudden realization without going through various stages.

In the *Nirvana Scripture*'s book on the buddha-nature it says that once the great enlightening beings saw the buddha-nature they all said, "We revolved in measureless births and deaths, always confused by selflessness." This is like the saying in *The Flower Ornament Scripture* that there are enlightening beings who practice the six ways of transcendence for countless eons, attain the six spiritual powers, and read, write, and master the canon of eighty-four thousand teachings, yet still do not believe in this deep scripture. This is an example of such enlightening beings; the spiritual powers they attain are not based on natural origination, but are consequences of practicing virtues and contemplations such as selflessness. It is also like the case of people living in earthly paradise: they too are born there as a result of having practiced contemplations of the nonexistence of self or possession; their material livelihood is naturally abundant, but they have no teaching of enlightenment and do not realize liberation. The problem with all of these is that in the past their action and understanding were mistaken, so they could never forget what they had gained. The *Nirvana Scripture*, after having unified humans, celestials, heretics, and those of the three vehicles, returns them all to the buddha-nature, the complete tranquility of nirvana, the true principle of naturelessness: it does not yet point out that the characteristics of reward, the consequences of enlightenment, have no self or other, but include both noumenon and phenomena, with knowledge and function interpenetrating. So it still sets up distinctions such as self-other, purity-defilement, and so on, and therefore says the land of reward of Shakyamuni Buddha is far away in the West. This is because the faculties of the people it addresses cannot yet bear the whole truth; the teaching is set up according to the faculties, to lead those of the three vehicles who have obstructions in connection to reality. The complete quiescence of the buddha-nature, the noumenal aspect of thusness, cannot show the interplay of forms; blocking perception of existents, thus producing doubts, it screens the body of reality.

Thus the *Nirvana Scripture*'s teaching of the fruition of buddhahood after the ten stages is what is seen by beginners in the ten abodes in *The Flower Ornament Scripture*. The herb in the mountains from which cows produce pure ghee is like the beginners in the ten abodes in *The Flower Ornament* seeing the Way and immediately seeing that self and other, beginningless and endless, not old or new, are originally Buddha. Because body and mind, essence and forms, are originally Buddha, this door of buddhahood is considered liberation, riding the vehicle of buddhahood directly to the site of enlightenment. In the various stations

and stages of enlightening beings, in each rank there is fruition of buddhahood, just as the ocean is in each drop. They carry out their practices within the buddha-nature, so there is progressive practice because of their buddha-nature. In *The Flower Ornament*, enlightening beings at the outset, in the beginning of the ten abodes, suddenly see the Buddha's body of reality, the buddha-nature, the uncreated fruit of knowledge, and carry out all the myriad practices of Universal Good, according with conditions without lingering, all of them uncontrived.

The *Nirvana Scripture* says that the buddha-nature is not a created phenomenon; but because it is covered by passions for outside objects, starting from the first of the ten abodes one uses uncontrived concentration so that one's essence accords with reality, where passions and objects have no inherent nature—there is only the essence and function of reality, which has no greed, hatred, or delusion, and is spontaneously Buddha. Therefore if you unite with it for a moment, you become Buddha in a moment; if you unite with it in a day, you become Buddha in a day—what's the need for gradual step-by-step accumulation of practice over eons to arrive at the fruit? When the mind is hooked onto quantification of ages, the vision is blocked—what end would there be to this? The teaching of the Buddhas is basically not contained in time—counting time and setting up ages or eons is not the buddha-vehicle.

Tenth, regarding the difference in patterns of companionship, in the *Nirvana Scripture* it says a youth of the snowy mountains met a demigod and was inspired by a half verse spoken by the demigod; valuing the half verse, he forfeited his life to hear the rest—"All actions are impermanent—this is the phenomenon of birth and death. When birth and death are extinguished, tranquil extinction is bliss." This is saying that the nirvana of buddha-nature cannot be cultivated by practices, because practices are fabricated and impermanent, and it cannot be realized by mind, because mind has subject and object. Thus its essence cannot be cultivated, its principle cannot be witnessed by the mind. Mind itself is the essence—there is no further subject or object. This is why Cunda said, "Don't say the Buddha is the same as practices."

As for *The Flower Ornament Scripture*, the pattern set by the youth Sudhana, from his first inspiration for enlightenment with Manjushri, till his final meeting with the Universally Good enlightening being, to each of the fifty-three teachers he met, he said, "I have aroused the determination for unexcelled complete perfect enlightenment—how would you have me learn the path of enlightening beings and carry out the practices of enlightening beings?" It does not say all practices are impermanent. Why? Because *The Flower Ornament* elucidates the teaching of the cosmos of interdependent origination, in which noumenon and phenomena are nondual. No condition is not quiescent, no phenomenon is not real. All worlds are one ocean of the essence of reality; the complete pervasion of great knowledge is the realm. The totality of everything is the ocean of essence, the one real cosmos. It is not explained

according to action as sentient and insentient. Therefore, since the realm of unalloyed reality in the Flower Ornament is all knowledge, the land of the enlightening beings of the ten abodes is wisdom, the land of the enlightening beings of the ten practices is knowledge, the land of the enlightening beings of the ten dedications is wonder—it doesn't express two different views of animate and inanimate.

The *Nirvana Scripture* addresses those of the temperaments of the three vehicles; because their characters and behavior are inferior, the Buddha has then harmonized by practices, to overcome their gross ills—only then can they enter the Way. But then they conceive of the practices they are taught as absolute truths, and this screens the uncreated essence and they miss out on the truth. For this reason Buddha explains that all practices are impermanent, and the realizer and the realized are also phenomena that are born and perish. This is not the same as Sudhana's instant awakening in which there is no subject or object, intuitively becoming aware that one's own mind is fundamentally Buddha. Not attaining buddhahood, not experiencing enlightenment, the body and mind, essence and form, having no realization or cultivation, not becoming or decaying, are originally *thus*, active or still according to conditions, without destroying existence or nonexistence—the practices carried out are only products of knowledge. Therefore it doesn't say that all practices are impermanent in *The Flower Ornament Scripture*.

As for the similarity between the *Nirvana Scripture* and *The Flower Ornament Scripture*, an example of this is what is illustrated by the simile of the special herb in the snowy mountains; also the *Nirvana Scripture* says that all sentient beings have buddha-nature, and that the Buddhas have no final entry into extinction. *The Flower Ornament* says, "The Buddhas do not come forth into the world, and they have no extinction." Also, the *Nirvana Scripture* criticizes those of the two lesser vehicles for the discriminating view of Buddha as descending from heaven into the womb, living as a prince, leaving home, becoming enlightened, and passing away: this is like the notion of *The Flower Ornament* that knowledge enters past, present, and future without coming or going, and all Buddhas attain great enlightenment by the timeless essence. Instantly seeing the Way, views of past and present end, "new" and "old" do not exist at all—one attains the same enlightenment as countless Buddhas of the past, and also becomes Buddha at the same time as the Buddhas of countless ages of the future, by personally witnessing the timelessness of past, present, and future. Because there is no time, there is no coming or going.

Even if people don't see or know themselves that their own body and mind are fundamentally truly enlightened, the complete qualities of the true enlightenment of one's own body and mind fundamentally have no annihilation. And if they do themselves see and know the fundamental true enlightenment of their own body and mind, their own true enlightenment has no birth, because it is originally *thus*; and basically there is

no one who awakens and nothing awakened to. If any awake, they after all awaken to this nonexistence of an awakening subject or an object of awakening. Thus the realm of the Buddha of fundamental awareness has no ordinary person, no sage, no concentration, no distraction; it is not cultivated, not proved, not knowledge, not ignorance, not born, not destroyed.

This outline of the perspective of *The Flower Ornament Scripture* in comparison with other important Buddhist scriptures generally follows the work of the earlier specialists in *Flower Ornament* doctrine. Li Tongxuan's work, with its emphasis on totality and immediate realization of the essential unity of being, was highly appreciated especially by students of the Chan school of Buddhism. The emphasis on the one vehicle and its totalistic perspective presented in Li's introduction to *The Flower Ornament Scripture* is particularly useful in view of the great variety and complexity of the contents of the scripture, which make it easy to get lost in detail and miss the overall meaning. While in a sense the specific principles and practices presented in the scripture are all contained in the one vehicle, they are also at once introductions into the one vehicle as well as outgrowths of the one vehicle. Once the fundamental premises and basic vocabulary of *The Flower Ornament Scripture* have been established, no further generalization is adequate to convey its contents.

A Thematic Summary of Each Book

The first book of the scripture, entitled *The Wonderful Adornments of the Leaders of the Worlds*, describes a symbolic assembly of various groups of beings at the site of Buddha's enlightenment. The title of this book refers to the representatives of various realms of being who appear on the scene, but it can also be read *Wonderful Adornments of the Leader of the Worlds*, referring specifically to the Buddha, the various states of being seen as adornments of the Buddha, their realizations representing aspects of Buddha's total enlightenment. Buddhahadra's translation entitles this book *Pure Eyes of the World*, which likewise may also be read *Pure Eye of the Worlds*, representing the total universal awareness of the Buddha.

In this opening book a general picture of the nature of buddhahood and the general principles and scope of the teaching is built up through the various beings' eulogies and descriptions of the liberations they have realized. What is stressed is the universality and comprehensiveness of buddhahood, which is described as both physically and metaphysically coextensive with the cosmos itself. It emphasizes that Buddha expounds the truth by various means and teaches innumerable practices for the benefit of all beings: here "Buddha" refers to reality itself, and to people who are awake to reality. The various kinds of beings that appear in this book do not in this case represent their mundane aspects as such, but

rather depict various facets of the Buddha's enlightenment, while also representing the potential for enlightenment inherent in all conscious beings, a fundamental theme of universalist Buddhism.

The second book, entitled *Appearance of the Buddha*, tells about characteristics of buddhahood, stressing the infinity and eternity of Buddha in the cosmic sense of being reality itself. The epithet of Buddha used in the title is Tathagata, which is understood in Chinese Buddhism to mean "one who comes from thusness," the term "thusness" referring to being-as-it-is, unpredicated reality. The human Buddha is considered in one sense as someone who is aware of fundamental continuity and identity with reality. In this scripture the term "Buddha" is commonly used for thusness or reality itself; in this book it is pointed out that Buddha, as reality, appears everywhere to all beings, but it is seen in accord with their perceptive capacities. It conveys the parallel messages that all experience reality according to their faculties and predilections, and that correlative to this, enlightened guides present various teachings to people in accord with their needs, potentials, and conditions. This accounts for the wide variety of doctrines in Buddhism, some of which may on the surface seem so different as to be even mutually opposed; underlying this variety is the fact that diverse aspects of a situation or levels of truth may be discussed separately, and that different ways of seeing, thinking, and acting may be recommended to different people, depending on the time and circumstances. This principle of adaptation and specific prescription is known as "skill in means" and is so basic and pervasive that it is impossible to understand Buddhism without a thorough appreciation of its premises, its purpose and implications.

The third book, called *The Meditation of the Enlightening Being Universally Good*, exposes the metaphysic of the *bodhisattva* or "enlightening being," the worker for universal enlightenment. The practical aspect of the enlightening being is here and throughout the scripture typified by a symbolic being called Universally Good, or Universal Good (Samantabhadra). The interrelatedness of all beings and the awareness of that interrelatedness on the part of enlightening beings is graphically represented in this book. By being in direct contact without "thusness" or "suchness" without the distorting influence of preconceptions and partiality, enlightening beings are, according to this book, aware of each other through being equally focused on reality. The unity of their purpose—universal liberation and enlightenment—which underlies diversity of method is emphasized strongly here. Again, it is made clear that enlightening beings may appear in virtually any form and employ a wide variety of means, according to what is useful for the liberation of people in given conditions. Universally Good, representing the enlightening work as a whole, extending throughout all places and times, therefore symbolizes a central concept of this scripture.

The fourth book, *The Formation of the Worlds*, presents visionary descriptions of worlds as representing the consequences of aspirations

and actions. Emphasized here is the relativity of world and mind, how the features of the world depend on the states of mind and corresponding deeds of the inhabitants. A considerable portion of the contents of this and the following book consists of a series of litanies of concentration formulae, intended to convey certain impressions to the mind and to encapsulate certain aspects of the teaching to focus attention on them. It is through transformation of the vision of the world as well as the attitudes and actions connected with that vision that the world itself is transformed. This point also is an important part of the message of the scripture.

The fifth book is entitled *The Flower Bank World*. The so-called Flower Bank World is also referred to as the Flower Bank Array ocean of worlds, and may be translated as the world adorned by treasuries of flowers. This “world” is in the scripture represented as an “ocean of worlds,” and is said to be our universe. In this scripture “flowers” generally represent practices or deeds, which produce fruits and seeds of consequent states. This book presents a visionary cosmology describing this world system or universe as purified by the vows and deeds of Vairocana Buddha, the glorified or cosmic aspect of the historical Buddha. It represents the world system as resting on an ocean of fragrant water, which symbolizes what is called the “repository consciousness,” which is the mental repository or “storehouse” in which all experiential impressions are stored. It is from these impressions that images of the world develop. These images of the world are represented in the scripture as features of the world system. The land masses in the world system also contain seas of fragrant water, which symbolize virtuous qualities or wholesome factors in the mind. Many varieties of adornment are described, symbolizing not only virtues but also purely aesthetic views of the world without the contamination of emotional judgements. As a further dimension, the description of unthinkably many worlds over immensely vast reaches is calculated to foster a perspective in which any world is, as it were, reduced in size, like a pebble taken from the eye and returned to a mountain, no longer commanding the obsessive sense of unique significance that a narrow focus of attention invests in it. These elaborate descriptions allude also to the complexity of any realm, and try thereby to draw the consciousness into a broader awareness and detach it from restrictive preoccupations.

Book six, *Vairocana*, recounts illustrative tales of the development of the Buddha Vairocana in remote antiquity. The name “Vairocana” is interpreted in two senses, universal illuminator and specific illuminator, embodying both holistic and differentiating awareness. As noted, Vairocana is understood as another name for Shakyamuni in the cosmic, metaphysical sense, and also in the sense of the qualities or verities of buddhahood that are common to all Buddhas. This book describes a variety of realizations and attainments of Vairocana in the causal state, using mnemonic meditation formulae representing basic principles and

praxes of Buddhist teachings. These are suggested in terms of various spells, trances, psychic powers, knowledges, lights, activities, perspectives, and so on.

The seventh book, called *Names of the Buddha*, again emphasizes that Buddhas, enlightened people, develop profound insight into mentalities and potentials, and teach people in accord with their capacities and needs. Thus it is that all see Buddhas differently, according to their faculties and to the teachings which have been adapted to their situations. This book recites names and epithets of Buddhas to represent different perceptions or different facets of the qualities of enlightenment. Sometimes these are given from the point of view of cause, sometimes from the point of view of effect; sometimes they are explicit, sometimes they are veiled in metaphor.

The eighth book, *The Four Holy Truths*, is based on the same principle as the foregoing book, presenting Buddhist teaching in myriad different ways to accommodate various mentalities and understandings. Following the lead of the seventh book, *The Four Holy Truths* gives various names and capsule descriptions of four points that are believed to have been one of the original teaching frames of the historical Buddha. Basically, these four truths refer to the fact of suffering, the origin of suffering, the extinction of suffering, and ways to the extinction of suffering. Here again the representations of these points may be put in terms of cause or of effect. Sometimes the mundane truths—suffering and its origin—are put in terms not of conventional reality but of ultimate reality—inherent emptiness—to show a path of transition to the world-transcending truths within the mundane itself.

Book nine, entitled *Awakening by Light*, is an expanding vision unfolding within light issuing from Buddha's feet: the light progressively illumines greater and greater numbers of worlds as it travels further and further into space, radiating in all directions, revealing similar structures and parallel events in each world. In every world are immense numbers of Buddhas who each attract ten great enlightening beings, one from each of the ten directions, who in turn are each accompanied by countless enlightening beings. When the assemblies have all been arrayed, one of each group of ten great enlightening beings chants descriptive eulogies of the Buddha, alluding to the acts and realities of buddhahood. Here again is emphasized the identity of Buddha with truth and ultimate reality, the transcendental nature of the essence of Buddha.

The tenth book, called *An Enlightening Being Asks for Clarification*, follows up on the ninth, with the same interlocutors. This book goes explicitly into metaphysics, explaining the principle of the naturelessness or essenceless of all phenomena. This means that things have no individual nature, no inherent identity or essence of their own, because they are interdependent and only exist due to causes and conditions. For this reason it is repeatedly stated that the nature of things is natureless, that they have no being of their own. It points out that the seeming existence

of things as discrete independent entities is in fact conceptual, a description projected by the mind on the flux of sense data; the real nature of things, it maintains, is insubstantial, and they die out instant to instant. In this book it is restated that realms or conditions of being are consequences of action, but it goes on to say that action is fundamentally baseless, or lacking in ultimate reality—it is the mind's attachment to its own constructs that provides the sense of continuity.

Also stressed in this book is the point that the teachings of Buddhas may be manifold and different according to specific circumstances, but the essential truth is one and the various teachings and practices are all part of a total effort. To clarify this point further, the different mental conditions for which particular aspects of the teaching are recommended are noted, to give some idea of the purposes of the diverse doctrines and approaches of Buddhism. This book also emphasizes the critical importance of actual application of the teachings, without which the mere description of techniques is useless. A number of classic metaphors used in Chan Buddhism to stress the need for application are taken from this particular book of *The Flower Ornament Scripture*.

Book eleven, called Purifying Practice, was translated several times, as early as the third century. It is a litany of prayers concentrating on the development of outlook and mentality of the enlightening being. It particularly focuses on the interconnectedness of all beings and the training of this awareness. It details an elaborate scheme of thought-cultivation in which consciousness of daily activities is directed to specific wishes for universal well-being and liberation. In terms of format, much of it is based on entry into monastic life, and some of the specific actions and events on which the contemplations are based are of monastic life, but many others make no necessary distinction between lay and monastic life.

The twelfth book is called Chief in Goodness, being named after the enlightening being who expounds it. This book eulogizes the aspiration or will for enlightenment, the monumental spiritual conversion by which an ordinary person becomes an enlightening being whose life and action is based on and guided by the determination for the enlightenment and liberation of all beings. The inspiration of the genuine will for enlightenment is in a sense itself transcendence of the world, as universal enlightenment becomes the reason for being, and life itself is transformed into a vehicle of enlightenment. Following this, faith is praised for its instrumental value as a means of directing the mind and focusing endeavor. Then the book goes on to describe practices and their results, in terms of both self-cultivation and assistance to others. Again versatility is emphasized, and enlightening beings are symbolically described as presenting all sorts of displays and teachings to exert edifying and liberating influences on people.

Book thirteen is entitled Ascent to the Peak of Mount Sumeru. Mount Sumeru, the polar mountain of a world, is pictured as the abode of Indra

(or Shakra), the mythical king of the gods of the thirty-threefold heaven, pictured as thirty-three celestial mansions on the peaks surrounding the summit of Sumeru. This book is a brief visionary welcome of the Buddha into the palace of Indra.

Book fourteen, *Eulogies on Mount Sumeru*, emphasizes the metaphysical aspect of Buddha, as being absolute truth. The thrust of this approach is to counter preoccupation with forms. Buddha is said to be the very absence of inherent existence or intrinsic nature of all conditioned things. Conventional reality is called a description consisting of habitual conceptions and views. Defining the world through verbal and conceptual representations is by its very nature limiting, restricting awareness, so this chapter stresses the need to see through, see beyond conventional reality in order to become enlightened. When the nature of perceptual and conceptual organization of experience as a mere tool is forgotten or unknown, and a particular organization hardens into an exclusive view, the mind has lost its freedom. The dependence of views on social, cultural, and psychological factors attests to their nonabsoluteness; the concern of Buddhist philosophy and meditation is to see through such conditioning and restore the mind to openness and flexibility. This book states that the basis of delusion and falsehood is reality, meaning that delusion and falsehood, being themselves conditioned, do not have any inherent reality or inevitability—this very emptiness of inherent reality is what is called absolute reality or truth. What is intended by this insight is not nihilistic extinction, but seeing delusion for what it is: the term “extinction” used in this connection essentially means the extinction of conditioned views. Here the scripture says that having no views is true seeing, which sees everything because it is seeing without the restriction of predispositions of ingrained mental habits. This philosophy of the relativity of mind and world is provided as a rational basis for dissolving clinging to views and freeing the mind from the enclosure of inflexible, set ways of seeing and thinking about things.

The fifteenth book, called *Ten Abodes*, is a brief description of ten stations of enlightening beings. The first abode is that of initial determination, setting the mind on omniscience, to broaden its horizons. Second is preparing the ground, or cultivation; here the development of universal compassion is emphasized. Also involved is learning, from people and situations as well as from formal study. Third is the abode of practice, to clarify knowledge; here various aspects of emptiness (indefiniteness, nonabsoluteness) are emphasized. Fourth is the abode of “noble birth,” which means rebirth from the enlightening teachings; here knowledge—of beings, phenomena, causality, and so on—is emphasized, as well as the knowledge, practice, and realization of the teachings of Buddhas of all times, with awareness of the essence of buddhahood, which is equal in all times. Fifth, the abode of skill in means, involves further development of knowledge and means of conveying knowledge, and working for universal salvation without attachments. Sixth, the abode of the

correct state of mind, involves developing a mind that does not waver in face of apparently contradictory aspects of things; here again the inherent emptiness of things is emphasized. Seventh, the abode of nonregression, means not regressing regardless of what one may hear in regard to different aspects of things, and learning the principles of reconciliation of oppositions through relativity. Eighth, the abode of youthful nature, involves development of impeccability, of psychic freedom, and vast extension of the range of study and application of the teachings. Ninth, the abode of prince of the teaching, is a stage of development of discursive knowledge and the particular sciences of teacherhood. Tenth is the stage of coronation or anointment, referring to the accomplishment of knowledge of all sciences and means of liberation and the development of a sphere of buddhahood.

Book sixteen, entitled *Religious Practice*, describes detailed analytic investigations which eventually arrive at ungraspability, systematically removing the mind from fixations, dismantling the structure of a formal religious world in order to embrace formless truth. After this the book goes on to bring up the special powers of knowledge of Buddhas as realms of deep study, and concludes with exhortations to integrate compassion with the understanding of illusoriness.

The seventeenth book is called *The Merit of the Initial Determination for Enlightenment*. This book describes in grandiose terms the virtues of the aspiration for enlightenment. It stresses the sense of this determination transcending all limited aspirations, being directed toward omniscience and universal liberation and enlightenment. Many points or fields of knowledge are specifically mentioned in this connection, including the "mutual containment" or mutual immanence of different quanta of being and time, alluding to the interdependence of definitions, and the interrelation of elements and structural sets. Other prominent spheres of knowledge are those involved in the study of mentalities and mental phenomena, this kind of knowledge being essential to the science of liberation. The tremendous emphasis on genuine and boundless determination for complete universal enlightenment reflects its importance as the essence of the whole enterprise of enlightening beings, who do not seek enlightenment for their own personal ends. The correct orientation at the outset is deemed essential to truly transcend the limitation of self; without this transcendent resolve, the power of spiritual exercises exaggerates and bolsters the afflictions of self-seeking and can lead to harmful aberrations.

Book eighteen, entitled *Clarifying Method*, presents a series of lists of elements of the path of enlightening beings. First it stresses the development of the determination for omniscience, which means knowledge of all things pertinent to liberation. Then it goes on to work on nonindulgence or heedfulness, in terms of ten items; these lead to ten kinds of purity. Following this it brings up twenty things which are congenial to enlightenment, ten things whereby enlightening beings can rapidly enter

the stages of enlightenment, ten things which purify their practices, ten results of purity of practice, ten vows, ten ways of fulfilling vows, and ten spiritual “treasuries” attained as a result of fulfilling vows. This book also talks about means of purifying the ten essential ways of transcendence, or perfections of enlightening beings, and about specific cures of spiritual ills.

Book nineteen, *Ascent to the Palace of the Suyama Heaven*, is much like book thirteen; here the Buddha is welcomed into the heaven called Suyama, without, however, leaving the foot of the enlightenment tree and the peak of the popular mountain Sumeru. This introduces the following book, in which the all-pervasiveness of Buddha is stressed.

The twentieth book is called *Eulogies in the Palace of the Suyama Heaven*. This book emphasizes the universality of Buddha in terms of metaphysical essence and in terms of practice. The spiritual body of Buddha is seen here as the cultivation of enlightenment potential inherent in all conscious beings in all times. The nature of Buddha, beings, and phenomena is spoken of in these terms: “Sentient and nonsentient beings both have no true reality. Such is the nature of all things—in reality they are not existent.” Also, “Analyzing matter and mind, their nature is fundamentally void; because they are void they cannot be destroyed—this is the meaning of ‘birthlessness.’ Since sentient beings are thus, so are Buddhas—Buddhas and Buddhas’ teachings in essence have no existence.” And “The body is not Buddha, Buddha is not the body—only reality is Buddha’s body, comprehending all things. Those who can see the Buddha-body pure as the essence of things will have no doubt about Buddha’s teaching. If you see that the fundamental nature of all things is like nirvana, this is seeing Buddha, ultimately without abode.” This book is also the source of the famous line often quoted in Chan Buddhism: “Mind is like an artist, depicting the worlds. . . . If one knows that the action of mind makes all worlds, one sees Buddha and realizes the true nature of Buddha.”

Book twenty-one is entitled *Ten Practices*. These ten practices, though under different names, correspond to the ten perfections, or ways of transcendence, upon which the path of enlightening beings is based: giving, ethical conduct, forbearance, energy, concentration, wisdom, expedient methodology, power, commitment, and knowledge. The accomplishment of these is based on the relativity = emptiness equation; the first six are especially based on emptiness within relative existence, while the last four are based on relative existence within emptiness.

The twenty-second book, *Ten Inexhaustible Treasuries*, deals with ten sources of the development and activity of enlightening beings: faith, ethics, shame, conscience, learning, giving, wisdom, recollection, preservation of enlightening teachings, and elocution. Various items from these “treasuries” are explained in detail. The section on faith deals with the object of faith, mostly expressed in terms of absolute truth, as well as states of mind engendered by faith. The section on ethics deals with

general ethical principles and orientation as well as specific articles of ethical conduct. Shame refers to being ashamed of past wrongs; conscience refers to resolve not to continue to act unwisely. The section on learning deals with specifics of interdependent origination of conditioned states, and with analytic knowledge. Giving involves “giving up” in the sense of intellectual and emotional relinquishment, such as nonattachment to past and future, as well as the act of giving itself and the frame of mind of generosity. Giving is often put in hyperbolic or symbolic terms, and has the general sense of contributing one’s resources—including one’s very being—to the common weal rather than to purely private aims. The section on wisdom deals with both phenomena and principles, with discursive knowledge being described as leading to insight into emptiness and independent understanding. The treasury of recollection involves recollection of every moment of awareness—represented as countless ages due to the density of experience—including changes undergone as well as contents of what has been learned. Preservation means preservation of Buddha-teachings and the sciences involved therein. Elocution refers to exposition and teaching.

Book twenty-three, entitled *Ascent to the Palace of the Tushita Heaven*, describes in great detail the arrays of ornaments set out to welcome Buddha to this heaven. This is on a vaster scale than the other heavens which Buddha visits in this scripture, because the Tushita heaven, the heaven of happiness or satisfaction, represents the abode of a buddha-to-be just before manifesting complete enlightenment in the world. The assembly of enlightening beings there is also depicted in terms of the practices and qualities that developed them. After this is an elaborate description of the spiritual qualities of Buddha.

Book twenty-four, *Eulogies in the Tushita Palace*, resembles the other comparable books of the scripture, eulogizing the universality of the awareness and metaphysical reality of Buddha, reconciling multiplicity and unity, emphasizing the relativity of the manifestation of Buddha to the minds of the perceivers.

The twenty-fifth book, called *Ten Dedications*, is one of the longest books of the scripture, indicative of the great importance of dedication in the life of enlightening beings. Dedication particularly reflects two essential principles of enlightening beings’ practice: giving, or relinquishment; and vowing, or commitment. The basic orientation of dedication is the full development, liberation, and enlightenment of all beings. The scope of the ten dedications is beyond the capacity of an individual to fulfill personally; it is through dedication that the individual enlightening being merges with the total effort of all enlightening beings. Forms of giving which are not literally possible, for example, are presented at great length; these represent nonattachment, both material and spiritual, particularly in the sense of dedication to the service of all life. This book recites extensive correspondences between specific contributions and the results to which they are dedicated, representing the adaptation of

enlightening beings' activity to particular developmental needs. This is often presented in spiritual or psychological terms, but also it is presented in material or formal terms of glorified images of Buddha symbolizing the perfection of the human being. This book again emphasizes the integration of wisdom and compassion, acting purposefully even while knowing the ultimately unreal nature of conditional existence. This skill of acting without attachment, without compulsion, without grasping or rejecting existence or emptiness, is presented as the essence of dedication and fundamental to the path of enlightening beings.

Book twenty-six is the famous book on the ten stages of enlightenment. The teaching of the ten stages is presented as the foundation of all Buddhist teachings, just as an alphabet is the foundation of all writings in its language. This book is of such significance that it was translated into Chinese no fewer than five times, three times as an individual scripture, over a period of five hundred years; it also exists in Sanskrit as an individual scripture.

The Flower Ornament Scripture is said to contain, in one form or another, all phases of Buddhist teaching; true to the scripture's basic structural principle of the parts reflecting the whole, this comprehensiveness is also to be seen clearly within the book on the ten stages. Of the various modes of teaching—sudden and gradual, explicit and implicit—it is the gradual and explicit that overtly dominate in the ten stages, thus making it one of the clearest and most straightforward of the books of the scripture.

Pursuing a theme of developmental progression, the ten stages encompass the course of the enlightening being from the first ecstasies of disentanglement and spiritual attraction to the final rain of teaching pouring from enlightened knowledge, thus completing and restarting the cycle of self- and other- enlightenment. Within this overall cycle are parallel cycles of elevation of self and others; as the enlightening beings progress from stage to higher stage, there is ongoing expansion not only of extent, depth, and precision of awareness and perception, but also of corresponding versatility and power in communicative outreach.

Throughout this progress, the development of awakening is prevented from halting at each stage by the overriding aspiration for complete, perfect enlightenment, the thoughts of the enlightening beings set ultimately on the attributes of buddhahood. The practitioner aspires to be the best of beings, not by comparison with others, but in terms of potential fulfillment, not limiting horizons or coveting personal satisfaction by acceptance of lesser goals.

The ten stages include phases of practice such as are usually associated with the so-called lesser vehicles of individual salvation, but the enlightening being does not take the annihilation or liberation from worldly concerns made available by these methods as the final realization. In the high stage wherein effortlessness and cessation of mental and physical action take place, it is external inspiration that motivates the practitioner

to rise even beyond this stage of personal peace. In the highest stage the cosmic awareness whose perspective pervades the whole scripture ultimately opens up explicitly, showing the “all in one, one in all” vision of the realm of reality.

An important theme in the ten stages, one that appears here and there throughout the scripture in various guises, is the cultivation of both mundane and transmundane welfare. This is presented in concrete terms in this book, as the practitioner in a certain stage engages in the development and exercise of skills in worldly occupations. The choice of activities—whether in the arts and sciences, business, crafts, literary and cultural pursuits, entertainment, or other fields—is guided not by the personal desires of the practitioners but by the current needs of the society that they are serving, according to what will be beneficial.

The development of such occupational skills is undertaken in the same stage at which meditation is the main practice among the ten transcendent ways. The balancing of work in the world and world-transcending practices, characteristic of the ideal of comprehensive Buddhist activity, functions to promote the simultaneous benefit of self and others, preventing what is called “intoxication by the wine of meditation concentration,” an obstacle in the path and an indulgence forbidden by the precepts of enlightening beings. In a later stage, these worldly occupations become effortless and can be carried on spontaneously without obstruction.

A most important concept mentioned early on in the book on the ten stages is that of the “six characteristics,” as it was known in the Huayan school of Buddhism in East Asia. Not explicitly developed in the scripture but rather illustrated throughout, this idea was singled out by the founders of the Huayan school in China as a major element of their philosophy. The six characteristics are totality, distinction, sameness, difference, formation, and disintegration. In the context of stages of enlightenment, or practices, this means that all together form a single totality, while each are distinct elements of that totality; all are the same insofar as they complement each other and work together to produce the total effect, while individually they have different functions within the whole work; as elements in the same one totality, they form the whole and in it reach their individual consummation, while separately they not only do not form a whole but also are not individually perfected without the others.

The philosophy of the Huayan school, based on *The Flower Ornament Scripture*, also sees the six characteristics as aspects of all phenomena. According to this philosophy, the six characteristics are a comprehensive way of viewing things so as to overcome the tendency to lapse into partial or one-sided perceptions. Considering the phenomena and principles of Buddhism in this light, for example, produces an understanding quite different from that fostered by the notion of the multiplicity of Buddhist teachings as representing rival schools and conflicting ideol-

ogies. In this sense the six characteristics provide a useful diagnostic aid for assessing movements that have actually hardened into exclusive schools or ideologies: seen in the Flower Ornament context, such movements become inwardly sterile by stabilization around temporary and partial teachings, yet outwardly contain a portion of nutrient in that they demonstrate this process. It is in this sense that the *Scripture on the Ultimate Extinction* states that even in the time of the extinction of the Teaching, the Teaching is not extinct, for its very demise is its demonstration of the causes thereof, for the edification of the perceptive.

Using the six characteristics, it is quite easy to get an overall perspective on the message of *The Flower Ornament Scripture*, on the activity known as the practice of the vow of Samantabhadra, the embodiment of Universal Good. Here, all workers for enlightenment are one totality, the whole effort is one totality. Within this single overall effort, different workers fulfill different functions; these may be represented, for example, as different schools, different cycles of teaching, different modes of practice. In essence, all of these workers are the same, based on the vow of Universal Good and the aspiration for universal enlightenment. All ultimately have the same essence, which is referred to as the buddha-nature, but they are different in characteristics, in the formulations and methods that they employ. The work of all the workers forms the “body” of Samantabhadra, the multitude forms the one. No individual worker completes the entire task alone; the enlightening being “enlightens all sentient beings” and “purifies all worlds” as an operative in the whole work, the vows of the enlightening being representing attunement with this totality. If different formulae, practices, or phases of the Teaching are separately held on to as dogma, absolute and complete in themselves, the total dynamic of the Universally Good work disintegrates. The characteristics of “formation” and “disintegration” could also be seen in terms of the supersession of teachings and the spatial dispersal of schools such as illustrated by the classical Chan schools in China, with formation and dispersal part of an ongoing process. The relation to the whole work is not necessarily organizational in the conventional institutional sense, but rather is organic and functional.

The twenty-seventh book, *The Ten Concentrations*, speaks of the enlightening being breaking through the barriers of the familiar relative world—barriers of space, time, multiplicity, solidity—by mental concentration. One aspect of this practice is the entry and exit of concentration in different domains. “Entry” is interpreted as concentration, or absorption, and “exit” as insight, or knowledge; through concentration in one domain, insight into another is awakened. This is done through numerous different mediums of concentration and is connected with the development of the Flower Ornament vision of the interpretation of principles and phenomena and the interpenetration of phenomena.

Other exercises are also presented, embedded within the imagery and descriptive narrative of the book, structured to foster the fundamental

perspectives of the teaching and to guide the mental focus of development of the general and specific aspects of comprehensive knowledge for which the enlightening being strives. One characteristic of such exercises is their telescopic quality, visualizing simultaneous extension and immanence.

The Flower Ornament Scripture is like a hologram, the whole concentrated in all the parts, this very structure reflecting a fundamental doctrine of the scripture, that this is what the cosmos itself is like, everything interreflecting, the one and the many interpenetrating. In the book on the ten stages this is illustrated with the gradual mode of teaching predominant; in the book on the ten concentrations this is shown with the sudden or all-at-once mode coming strongly to the fore, paralleling the step-by-step format. Were its method unlocked, ancient research into the mental cosmos, such as reflected in *The Flower Ornament Scripture*, might have something to offer to modern investigations into the holographic nature of the brain and its linear and simultaneous modes.

An essential theme of the ten concentrations is the purpose of knowledge in the context of the life of enlightening beings; specifically, understanding the processes of development of civilizations and mentalities, and how the cycles of teaching operate in the context of these processes and their various elements.

Book twenty-eight, on the ten superknowledges, describes higher faculties, functions developed through the concentrations, said to be inconceivable to any minds except those of the fully awakened and the awakening who have attained them.

The twenty-ninth book, on the ten acceptances, deals with entry into nonconventional aspects of reality. The boundaries of conventional mental construction are penetrated but not destroyed because their ultimately illusory nature is realized. Transcendental and mundane levels of truth are both accepted: the immanence of the absolute in the relative is experienced as all-pervasive, spiritual phenomena and mundane phenomena being found to have the same phantasmagorical nature; thus the ultimate tolerance is attained whereby the mind is freed.

Book thirty, called "The Incalculable," develops the immense numbers used in the scripture. The higher numbers far exceed present estimations of the number of atoms in the universe; they are more closely approached by the numbers of potential brain operations. The Flower Ornament method of calculation includes the dimension of time as well as space, and follows the principles expounded in the scripture—for example, since everything is a series of moments, continually passing away and being renewed, each moment therefore is a new universe; also, the content of each passing moment of awareness is a universe. Furthermore, all existents are what they are in relation to all other existents; thus, in terms of the "Indra's Net" view of the Flower Ornament, the facets of existence are incalculable, interreflecting ad infinitum. This is

illustrated by the progression of squares by which the incalculable numbers are developed in this book. The book concludes with a verse declaring that the cosmos is unutterably infinite, and hence so is the total scope and detail of knowledge and activity of enlightenment.

“Life Span,” the thirty-first book, presents a similar progressive generation of time frames in different “worlds,” culminating in the frame of reference of the prototype of enlightening beings, in which “a day and a night” is an inconceivably immense span of time in ordinary terrestrial terms, yet is still within time. Here again is illustrated the interpenetration of cosmic and mundane planes in the perspective of the enlightening being.

Book thirty-two, called “Dwelling Places of Enlightening Beings,” names centers of spiritual activity, some of which can be located in India, Kashmir, Pakistan, Afghanistan, and Central and East Asian China. Whatever the historical facts behind this book may be, commentary takes it to represent the manifestations of the timeless and placeless “reality body” within time and place.

Whereas book thirty-two represents buddhas in the causal state as enlightening beings in specific domains, the thirty-third book, “Inconceivable Qualities of Buddhas,” deals with buddhas in the state of effect or realization, the universal attributes of buddhas. Here the “buddhas” represent attunement to the cosmic buddha, the “reality-body.” The former chapter alluded to the causal state, which is there to promote effect; the present book shows how the state of effect then extends forward into cause. Thus the Flower Ornament doctrine of interpenetration of cause and effect—cause producing effect, effect producing cause—is illustrated; this is one meaning of representing the Teaching as a wheel that continually moves forward.

Book thirty-four contains a long series of visualizations. Called “The Ocean of Physical Marks of the Ten Bodies of Buddha,” it also presents the state of effect or realization, in terms of comprehensive awareness, represented by multitudes of pervasive lights revealing the phenomena of the material and spiritual worlds. “The Qualities of the Buddha’s Embellishments and Lights,” the thirty-fifth book, presented as spoken by Shakyamuni-Vairocana Buddha in person, refers to the causal state, that is, to the Buddha as an enlightening being, illustrating the light of awakening penetrating, breaking through, the veils of the realm of ignorance.

These expositions of the qualities of buddhahood, generally showing the emanation of the universal principles of buddhahood from the state of effect into the state of cause, are followed by the thirty-sixth book called “The Practice of Universal Good,” again taking up the cycle of cause to effect. Narrated by Samantabhadra, the Universally Good enlightening being, the prototype and representation of the whole body of the practical acts of enlightening beings, this book is followed by “the appearance of Buddha,” in which Samantabhadra goes on at length

describing the myriad facets of the manifestation of Buddha and how it is to be perceived.

The final two books of *The Flower Ornament Scripture*, “Detachment from the World” and “Entry into the Realm of Reality,” deal with the development of the enlightening being. “Detachment from the World,” which commentary points out has the meaning of transcendence while in the very midst of the world, is a series of two thousand answers to two hundred questions about various aspects of the evolution of enlightening beings into buddhas.

“Entering the realm of reality,” the final book of *The Flower Ornament Scripture*, is perhaps the grandest drama of the Buddhist canon. Known in Sanskrit as an individual scripture called *Gandavyuha*, this book describes the development of enlightenment through tales of a pilgrimage. The central character, a seeker of truth named Sudhana, is sent on a journey by Manjushri, the personification of wisdom. Initially directed by Manjushri, Sudhana calls on a number of spiritual guides, each of whom sends him on to another for further enlightenment. Eventually Sudhana comes to the abode of Maitreya, the imminent Buddha, and finally integrates with the total being of Samantabhadra, the representation of Universal Good, the activity of enlightenment.

The guides Sudhana encounters, referred to as spiritual benefactors or friends, are young and old, female and male, Buddhist and nonBuddhist, renunciates and householders, members of various classes, and experts in various professions, arts, and sciences. They are not organized in a perceptible formal hierarchy or institution and are not always known to the public for what they are. The spiritual friends are known to each other according to their own attainments, and it is through the successive direction of the guides themselves that Sudhana finds out who and where they are. None of them claims to hold the whole truth, and none tries to bind Sudhana to a given system of dogma or keep him as a follower. Many of them teach in surroundings and formats that are not overtly associated with what is conventionally thought of as religion.

The book begins with a symbolic description of manifestations of enlightened awareness, explaining that those who are within a fixed system have not the slightest inkling of the scope of consciousness that lies beyond the bounds of their perceptions as conditioned by their training and development. It suggests that all views that are conditioned by cultural and personal history are by definition limiting, and there is a potential awareness that cuts through the boundaries imposed by conventional description based on accumulated mental habit. According to the scripture, it is the perennial task of certain people, by virtue of their own development, to assist others in overcoming arbitrary restrictions of consciousness so as to awaken to the full potential of mind.

In order to carry out this task, it is necessary to operate partly within the field of these very restrictions. Those whose specific charge it was to write scriptures like this one, therefore, were working within the bounds

of language and thought to hint at realities beyond language and thought. As has been seen in earlier books of the scripture, included in the commitments of such specially dedicated people, known here as enlightening beings, is the task of purposely bridging boundaries of culture and religion. They are also committed to bridge the boundary of secular and sacred, and part of their work involves relieving mundane suffering and anxieties that would otherwise preoccupy mental energy and hinder further awakening.

Given that the specific characters of the scripture are “fictional,” the teaching indicates that in order to seek historical reflections of what the characters represent, it would be necessary to avoid being constrained by labels and definitions imposed by externalist observers. The secrecy or inaccessibility of certain aspects of spiritual teaching is due not merely to esotericism but also to the extent to which the realm and activity of the teaching is outside the system of assumptions and expectations of common convention.

Seen in this light, the scripture can foster remarkable perspectives on the history of civilization and human consciousness. Even in recorded history, there are numerous examples of people known as mystics who were also eminently practical, workers in the fields of public education, civil administration, medicine, engineering, environmental design, communications, agriculture, and so on. On the other hand, it is widely stated that many overtly religious people were in fact unregenerate worldlings; it is also on record, though less widely, that many overtly secular activities and enterprises are in fact vehicles of spiritual teaching. Given that a complete historical record is a physical impossibility, and that there is no such thing as a complete fact in itself available to the ordinary senses, it is interesting to observe how much apparently disconnected activity can be brought into coherent focus through the vision of the *Flower Ornament Scripture*.

Who were—who are—these specially dedicated and developed people whom the scripture calls enlightening beings? We have no reason to suppose that all enlightening beings are identified as such in historical records; there is more reason to suggest that their identities have in many cases been deliberately obscured. The scripture says of them:

Some appeared in the form of mendicants, some in the form of priests, some in bodies adorned head to foot with particular emblematic signs, some in the forms of scholars, scientists, doctors; some in the form of merchants, some in the form of ascetics, some in the form of entertainers, some in the form of pietists, some in the form of bearers of all kinds of arts and crafts—they were seen to have come, in their various forms, to all villages, cities, towns, communities, districts, and nations. With mastery of proper timing, proceeding according to the time, by modification of adapted forms and appearances, modifications of tone, language, deportment,

situation, carrying out the practices of enlightening beings, which are like the cosmic network of all worlds and illumine the spheres of all practical arts, are lamps shedding light on the knowledge of all beings, are arrays of projections of all realities, radiate the light of all truths, purify the establishment of vehicles of liberation in all places, and light up the spheres of all truths, they were seen to have come to all villages, towns, cities, districts, and nations, for the purpose of leading people to perfection.

This depicts the enlightening beings coming into the world, as it were, with a purpose, using the available tools of the world to accomplish their task. The versatility of enlightening beings in their modification of appearance and activity, adapting to the specific circumstances of the time—cultural, linguistic, technological, and so on—and the needs of the people they are working with, stems from a basic freedom enlightening beings cultivate, which is sometimes referred to as being beyond the world even while in the world:

Enlightening beings do not seek omniscience for their own sake, nor to produce mundane enjoyments and pleasures, nor in search of the various enjoyments of the realm of desire, not under the compulsion of errors of conception, thought, and view. They live and work in the world without being controlled by fetters, bonds, propensities, or obsessions, without being controlled by craving or opinions, without their minds being bound up in ideas of mundane enjoyments, without being taken with the taste of pleasure of meditation, without being blocked by mental barriers.

Of course, this does not mean to say that enlightening beings all exist in conformity with stereotyped ideals. According to the scripture, the wisdom and virtues of Buddha are in all people, but people are unaware of it because of their preoccupations. Just as the scripture points out that there are lands and beings who are a mixture of impurity and purity, there are untold incipient enlightening beings always becoming manifest in every thought, word, and deed of compassion. It is the task of the more fully developed enlightening beings in every community to contact and nurture what is best in others; whether they do it through religion or art or cooperation in ordinary activities is purely a matter of local expediency. Often it is the case that preoccupation with the external face of such activity obscures its inner purpose; over a period of time this leads to elaboration of forms without their original meaning, fragmentation of the work, and mutual misunderstanding and even intolerance and hostility among members of what have now become factions. One of the functions of *The Flower Ornament Scripture* is to present a vision of the whole underlying the parts, so as to help people offset the effects of

this scattering tendency and rise above sectarianism and other forms of bigotry.

It is no secret, of course, that there have been numbers of overtly religious figures, religious leaders, who fit descriptions of enlightening beings. The potential unleashed by their appearance, however, has often been mitigated by two persistent tendencies manifested by particular types of observers. One tendency has been to absolutize even the temporal aspects of the dispensations of such leaders; the other has been to regard such people solely as products of temporal conditions. To offset the extreme view that abstracts a personality out of context, *The Flower Ornament Scripture* sometimes represents such people as kings surrounded by their retinues, showing that the activity of the teaching, which may be overtly represented by an individual, is in reality sustained by many people, who may be anonymous, and that the position and work of the king takes place within a particular context, in cooperation with a community. To counter the other extreme view of such leaders as merely the products of historical forces, the scripture uses the theme of reincarnation, depicting them as being reborn again and again in different states and circumstances, carrying out their transcendental purpose, which remains with them throughout all changes, using the means afforded by the temporal order.

Thus, while the scripture lauds the extraordinary achievements of specially dedicated individuals, it does so primarily as an inspiration to the inner sense of the potential of consciousness, and does not degenerate into personality worship or cultism. Though it recognizes the ordinarily imperative force of actions and events that continually condition the stream of existence, it also emphasizes the power of will, often referred to in terms of vows, capable of extending the awareness to reach out for latent possibilities that are not being actualized within a given set of propensities but that can become available through the exercises known as the practices of enlightening beings.

Naturally, many perceptions of the “meaning” of the scripture are possible, according to the history and condition of the interpreter. This is noted in the scripture itself and is a basic understanding of the school of hermeneutics founded on this scripture in the Far East. Each of these perceptions will have some meaning (even if it is thought of as “meaninglessness”) to the perceiver, and probably to others as well, as in the case of people sharing their experience of anything, whether it is a verbalized, conceptualized, and reflective experience or an intuitive, tacitly communicative one. Whether or not particular perceptions are useful to an individual in a developmental sense is another matter; but even if they are not enlightening to the individual perceiver, they may be useful to others who observe the relation of the individual with the material. The scripture carries out its function of illustrating mentalities both directed by description and indirectly by provocation.

The provocative aspect of the scripture is not limited to bringing to

light frames of mind by provoking characteristic reactions; it includes, equally if not more importantly, the evocative function of eliciting new perspectives and perceptions from the repository of potential consciousness. It is often said that Buddhism claims the world is illusory; and indeed Buddhist writings do contain statements to that effect, although it is as common to say that the world is *in* illusion or the world is *like* illusion. What this means is that the world as we know it is a description, constructed through processes of selection and organization; the illusion, or delusion, is to imagine that the description is objective reality itself. The soft sciences of modern times have come around to the recognition of the arbitrariness, or nonabsoluteness, of world views, conditioned as they are by cultural and personal history; but it is only recently that some Western workers in these sciences have begun to consider it logical to take the next step and actually experience this fact by learning how to transform or suspend the deep structures of the description at will.

It is in this endeavor, to expand capabilities of perception and understanding, that another mode of using the scripture comes into play. The traditional practice of single-minded recitation of scripture, embodying as it does meditation's twin elements of concentration and contemplation, has long been used to effect escalation of consciousness and enhancement of mental powers.

In order to attempt rational understanding of how this can work, it is important to note that the word *illusion*, which is so commonly used in Buddhism to describe the known world, also means "magic." Knowledge and awareness are referred to as magical. Thus illusion-magic has two aspects, restrictive and expansive, conservative and creative. From the point of view of the absolute, the imagined nature of things is false, but the raw material is real; so it is said in Buddhist scripture that the sense data are the matrix of enlightenment. What is constructed from this raw material depends on biological, psychological, and social conditioning, which are variable and can be consciously modified, with the result of change in perception of the world. Alterations of diet, posture, movement, breathing, thought, attention, human contacts, and physical environment are among the techniques known to have been used since ancient times for affecting the sphere of consciousness. In Buddhism, change of state is not necessarily valued in itself so much as the experiential realization of emptiness, which means nonabsoluteness of states, on the one hand, and infinitude of possibilities, on the other. What realm of awareness is beneficial for whom at what stage of development is held to be one of the sciences of enlightenment, according to which random visions, ecstasies, or insights are not productive of true spiritual maturity, though their place as incidents along the path should eventually become apparent to the sufficiently advanced.

Insofar as it tends to keep individuals and communities within certain patterns, conditioning as an ongoing process is also in a sense self-perpetuating, in that habit reinforces itself through repetition, becoming

what is called “second nature.” Certain conditioning operations, such as those used to inculcate patterns of behavior required to maintain the fabric of society, may be generally quite overt, though they might be given different names, such as “education.” Often, however, the impacts and efforts involved in conditioning are almost entirely subliminal. Examples of this might be the practice, now prohibited in some places, of flashing pictures of refreshments on movie screens, so briefly as to be virtually unnoticed consciously, in order to induce viewers to crave these refreshments; or the familiar experience of having a tune keep running through one’s mind in spite of the feeling that one is making no effort to repeat it.

To get out of the circle of habit, a reflection of what the scripture calls the “mundane whirl,” Buddhist practice proposes a dual process of arresting involutory patterns and incorporating evolutionary patterns. In the practice of spiritual recital, the focus of concentration works to halt the wandering mind and take the attention off habitual trains of thought, while the structure and imagery of the scripture that then flow into the mind, bypassing the conditioned intellect, are able to set up new patterns of perception.

It is well known that incantation practices like this can produce ecstatic states after a time if done in a concentrated fashion. The dazzle of ecstasy induced in this way is somewhat like the torrent of noise that accompanies a rush of schoolchildren as they pour out of the classroom after six hours of confinement, and is in itself of no particular value. On the contrary, it can be harmful if it becomes an obsession, as if the ecstasy itself were the goal.

Various extraordinary powers have been associated with people who spent much time in incantational practices, but these are not thought of as mechanical techniques that automatically work for everyone at all times. In fact, the concentration that is thereby generated with relative ease can have a stagnating effect as well, in that it can give a false sense of security or freedom, and can mask—and therefore perpetuate—deep-seated propensities. Furthermore, without the inclusion of other appropriate factors, concentration can turn into obsession or rigidity, and it can also degenerate and fail to produce lasting results. As scripture points out, there is no particular method of practice that is universally valid; practices are part of a coherent whole that needs all its parts to function properly. This can be seen in the doctrine of the six characteristics as applied to the ten stages. Moreover, it is held that to approach any spiritual practices in an unsuitable state, such as a state of greed for personal gain, leads not to enlightenment but to magnification of unwholesome qualities. Hence the need for proper preparation of dedication is given tremendous emphasis in this scripture.

Another traditional use of the scripture is, like that of esoteric art, as a model for visualization practice, which is similarly designed to introduce the mind to certain patterns held to be developmental. An example of

this practice is made explicit in a short scripture of the Flower Ornament corpus, called “Section on Cultivation of Love from *The Flower Ornament Scripture*.” Part of the visualization involves imagining every particle of one’s own body as a buddha-land, replete with such adornments as are described at great length throughout the scripture; then one visualizes all the beings in the universe entering into those buddha-lands within oneself and consciously evokes thoughts of love and wishes of well-being for them all. Another visualization practice, as evidenced in Chinese records, focuses on the lights emanated by buddhas in various scenes of the scripture.

Yet another function of the scripture, often unsuspected or considered gratuitous hyperbole, is to affirm the infinity of the path and provide ongoing challenge and inspiration. This function is hinted at in the statement of the distinguished tenth-century Chan master Yan-shou, whose mission was to demonstrate the unity of Buddhist teachings, to the effect that nine out of ten people who only practice Chan meditation and do not study scripture become conceited and lose the way. Another indication of this is found in the book on the ten stages, according to which in the eighth stage, the stage of effortlessness, where perfect comfort and tranquillity are reached, the impulse to go on to further development in the higher stages comes from *outside* the individual. Certain parts of other important scriptures such as the *Saddharmapundarika* and *Vimalakirtinirdesha* also present prime examples of this function.

The question of uses of scripture brings into relief one of the supposedly peculiar principles of Flower Ornament Buddhism, that of the mutual causation of past, present, and future. On a microscale, the experience of the present moment is in fact an edited replay of an immediately past moment of sensation; therefore, that past moment becomes present to consciousness through a process that is in its future. On a larger scale, perceptions and interpretations of the past depend on the conditions of the perceivers in the present; the legacy of the past as it bears on the present and future depends on conditions in the present. Therefore, the past, as it exists relative to the present, is not a fixed actuality, but depends on what elements of past causes are accessible and how they are perceived and experienced, what elements are in fact being acted on in a given situation, and how they are being acted on. What the past *was* is not available to ordinary perception; what the past *is*, on the other hand, is being caused by its own future, as much as it has caused its future. Various factors in the present, including understanding, expectation, and will, enter into the manner in which past causes are selected, utilized, and become operative.

This would seem to present a closed circle of determinism—the conditions of the present that determine how the past is experienced are themselves products of that past. According to the Flower Ornament teaching, however, the mutual inherence of past, present, and future does not represent unmitigated determinism, because the past, present, and

future are all infinite. What is finite is the experience of being-time through the temporal capacity of a given range of consciousness; and insofar as that capacity may be altered, contracted, or expanded, it might be that many of the limitations regarded as real by any society or culture are in fact illusory, and the real potential of humanity is so much greater than imagined as to be virtually infinite, even if that infinity can never embrace the infinity of infinities.

This seems to be one of the pervasive themes of the scripture—that there are far vaster possibilities open to humankind than ordinarily suspected in the course of everyday life. However vital the impulses and activities involved in the search for survival, comfort, and stimulation may be, they have never been known to produce complete satisfaction or still the quest for something beyond, which is yet dimly sensed in the innermost recesses of the mind. The aim of the authors of the scripture in recording it and leaving it to posterity might be guessed from the contents of the scripture itself; its usefulness in the present and future, of course, depends on the use to which it is put.

On the premise that the scripture itself is a logical place to look for keys to its understanding and application, this translation is presented as a sort of raw material, with a minimum of external apparatus. A discussion of certain technical terms and concepts will be found in the introduction to Volume I, and a glossary is appended to each volume; the major explanatory material, however, is to be found in the context of the scripture itself.

There is really no way to explain all that is in the scripture, and it would seem a travesty to attempt to place it in some particular historical or intellectual context, when there is that in it which could be applied to any such context, and that which clearly transcends any such context. Immersing one's consciousness in an immense scripture like this by reading it repeatedly with judgment suspended may not recommend itself to the impatient; but supposing that the scripture, like a Zen koan, has in itself a quality that forces one to work through it on its own terms or lose the effect altogether, it might be better to leave its challenging open. As the Chan master Wu-men said, "Let another finish this poem. . . ."

Notes to Introduction

1. Translated and published by the Pali Text Society; some of the most important texts are included in the Sacred Books of the East Series, and some of these have been reprinted by Dover Publications. See *Buddhist Suttas* (New York: Dover, 1972) which contains several scriptures of the so-called "lesser vehicle."

2. See Edward Conze, *The Large Sutra on Perfect Wisdom* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1975), as well as numerous other works by Conze on this class of scriptures.
3. D.T. Suzuki, *The Lankavatara Sutra* (Boulder: Prajna Press, 1978).
4. Translated into English from Tibetan by Robert Thurman (University Park: Pennsylvania State Press, 1976); from Chinese by Charles Luk (Boulder: Shambhala, 1972).
5. The most recent translation is by Leon Hurvitz; *Scripture of the Lotus Blossom of the Fine Dharma* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1976).
6. Translated from Japanese to English by Yamamoto Kosho (Horinkan, 1976).