Known in Chinese as Hua-yen and in Japanese as Kegon-kyo, the Avatamsaka Sutra, or Flower Ornament Scripture, is held in the highest regard and studied by Buddhists of all traditions. Through its structure and symbolism, as well as through its concisely stated principles, it conveys a vast range of Buddhist teachings.

This one-volume edition contains Thomas Cleary's definitive translation of all thirty-nine books of the sutra, along with an introduction, a glossary, and Cleary's translation of Li Tongxuans seventh-century guide to the final book, the Gandavyuha, Entry into the Realm of Reality.

As a hit-and-miss Buddhist practitioner and amateur world-religions scholar of some thirty or forty years, alas with only a B.A. in Philosophy to show for it all, I must say that having gotten about a hundred-or-two pages into this 1600-page divine monster, that it is one of the greatest projects of religious literature of all times. As a man with OCD and a hungry interest for every detail, I start out every book by reading every word in the glossary and index, every appendix, every introduction, etc. Usually, by the time I finish all the ancillary materials in a major religious text, I see the range of the work and am usually disappointed. However, being the product of the workaholic, puritanical, guilt-ridden, self-loathing, production-oriented society that I am, I will finish a work, however lugubrious the task may appear, often, in a hypochondriac way, stating to myself, "How will I ever live long enough to finish this?"

But in spite of all these considerations, I have great news on a kid of "so-far" basis. Even the hundreds of pages of ancillary materials are great, and, far from making the prospect of actually finishing this leviathan seem daunting, I actually hunger for it more as I learn more about this. I have read Copleston's entire 4,000-page History of Western Philosophy and several thousand pages of the University of Chicago's ongoing Mahabharata, (that is, I've finished reading all they have been able to produce up to this point), and of course the 3,000 pages of Proust. Incidentally, I've read the Koran Twice, the Torah a dozen times, the New
Testament a hundred times, and the entire Bible three times, etc., etc., and yet never has any scripture of this massive size felt so energetic. I've read the entire Rig Veda and countless other sutras, commentaries, and so on; and many of the smaller ones, like the Diamond Sutra, and the Gita, sizzle with life and quickly and easily raise one's consciousness. However, the long sutras tend to be even more self-indulgent than my own poetry, [...], and other long scriptures are so self-referential and self-praising that they become anti-climatic, (not that I could blame anyone for these qualities, since my own work is based entirely on my ego). That is, they say over and over again, "I shall present something great to you for 900 pages," but then, after all, fail to. I don't believe this will be the case with this book, which becomes more like a divine psychedelic acid trip with every page I turn. I was put off by the length of this, (since I'm always in so many huge, thousand-plus-page projects), that I kept evading this one. And also the sheer expense of a book which, when not on sale, lists for $100! put me off as I am understandably very poor due to the fact that my utter self-absorption makes it difficult for me to succeed in a real-world job.

This review is, to some extent, a speculative review, (since Amazon sent an email asking for a review two weeks after I got it, which may be about two years before I finish it.) And I've decided to give a "progress report" based on my vast experience and my high-percentage intuition. (Please excuse the immense arrogance of my whole approach here, but I am shockingly arrogant, so, for now, that will be the kind of writing I will do.) Stunningly, I am essentially claiming to know, by sampling a couple of hundred pages, that the following 1400 pages will be great. However, I think I know it will be great, having been down these roads so many times with similar projects, and based on what I always end up knowing this far into any game, to use a football analogy. My prediction is that I will continue to be very pleased with the remaining pages as I was from the first page.

If, for some reason I end up wrong, or my overview changes as I plunge deeper into this abyss of bliss and cosmosity, I shall write another review recanting it all. But for now, someone has to try to say something in something resembling real-world time. And so I give you this preemptive, know-it-all review and basically request your blind faith at this point, (as I must do, I suppose, in all my romances as well). Many blessings to you all. May you all end up more humble than me, if for no other reason than that will enable me to get more publicity than the rest of you.

For More 5 Star Customer Reviews and Lowest Price:
The Flower Ornament Scripture: A Translation of the Avatamsaka Sutra by Thomas Cleary - 5 Star Customer Reviews and Lowest Price!