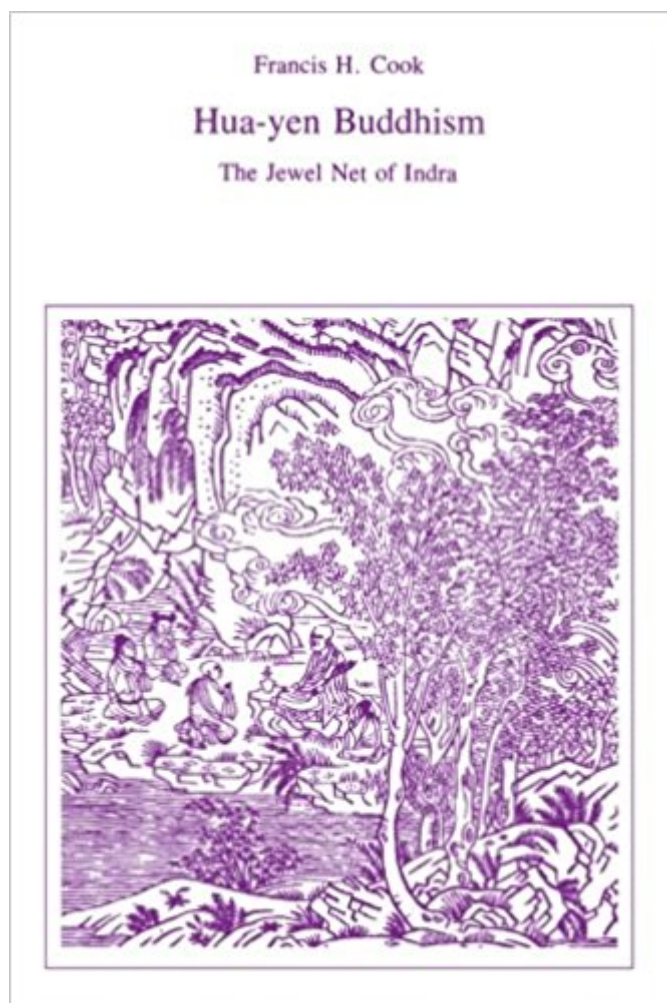


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Hua-Yen Buddhism: The Jewel Net Of Indra (Iaswr Series)



Synopsis

Hua-yen is regarded as the highest form of Buddhism by most modern Japanese and Chinese scholars. This book is a description and analysis of the Chinese form of Buddhism called Hua-yen (or Hwa-yea), Flower Ornament, based largely on one of the more systematic treatises of its third patriarch. Hua-yen Buddhism strongly resembles Whitehead's process philosophy, and has strong implications for modern philosophy and religion. Hua-yen Buddhism explores the philosophical system of Hua-yen in greater detail than does Garma C.C. Chang's *The Buddhist Teaching of Totality* (Penn State, 1971). An additional value is the development of the questions of ethics and history. Thus, Professor Cook presents a valuable sequel to Professor Chang's pioneering work. The Flower Ornament School was developed in China in the late 7th and early 8th centuries as an innovative interpretation of Indian Buddhist doctrines in the light of indigenous Chinese presuppositions, chiefly Taoist. Hua-yen is a cosmic ecology, which views all existence as an organic unity, so it has an obvious appeal to the modern individual, both students and layman.

Book Information

Series: laswr Series

Paperback: 164 pages

Publisher: Penn State University Press; 1 edition (January 1, 2001)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 027102190X

ISBN-13: 978-0271021904

Product Dimensions: 6 x 0.5 x 9 inches

Shipping Weight: 10.7 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.3 out of 5 stars 14 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #496,555 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #88 in [Books > Textbooks > Humanities > Religious Studies > Buddhism](#) #188 in [Books > Politics & Social Sciences > Philosophy > Eastern > Buddhism > Sacred Writings](#) #450 in [Books > Religion & Spirituality > Religious Studies > Ethics](#)

Customer Reviews

I have read three commentaries on the Avatamsaka Sutra, "Entrance into the realm of reality" (the others were by Cleary and Chang) and this is by far the best. The late Francis Dojun Cook was both an academic and a practitioner of Zen. If you haven't read Cook's books you are in for a treat. This book was written for those who practice zen (and those who just want to understand Hua-Yen) who

want to know more about Hua-Yen philosophy which was very important to many of the zen ancestors who passed the Dharma down to our own time. Dogen Zenji's writings draw heavily on Hua-Yen thought and reading this book will give you many insights into his thought. I can't recommend this book too much.

The Buddhist concept of Emptiness or "Shunyata" in Sanskrit is a pretty advanced concept in Buddhism, and can be really daunting for new Buddhists, or scholars. This book details the philosophy of a Chinese Buddhist school (long extinct) called the Hua-Yen or "Flower Garland" school after the sutra of the same name. The Hua-Yen was a school that explored Buddhism through high philosophy and explored Emptiness like no other school of Buddhism ever has. This book really takes the reader deep, deep into the philosophy behind Emptiness and can be a challenging read. From my own experience though, having been a Buddhist for years, I finally understood Emptiness after reading this book about halfway. Having understood Emptiness, much else in Buddhism became much more clear. That right there gives this book 5 stars. To reiterate, this book is not for new Buddhists but rather for philosophers or Buddhists who already have a strong familiarity with Mahayana Buddhism. If you are one of these folks, don't pass up the great work done here.

I've read it once and now starting a second read. Beautiful and clear. A layperson can understand this. Some experience of meditation will make it a whole lot better. It will inspire one to meditate. The "Chinese mind" has given humanity a remarkable gift. Francis Cook has given it to us.

Wow, Just reading the first 50 pages has been worth the price. The author writes clear and in simple language. I know this text is considered to be for advanced Buddhist students but I found it quite clear and easy. One must sit down and be still as the print is only a light black and small font but I am excited to get farther into it. Thanks,

I teach Neo-Confucianism and Chinese Buddhism at Vassar College, and I use selections from this book in my course reader every year. This book is an excellent introduction to Hua-yen Buddhism (known as Kegon in Japan), a very important kind of Mahayana Buddhism, which has strongly influenced Ch'an (i.e., Zen) Buddhism. The basic teaching of Hua-yen is that "all is one and one is all." Cook explains what this means and how this form of Buddhism evolved. It is a shame that this book is out of print. I hope some smart publisher reprints it in paperback soon.

Arrived at the earliest date and the book was as advertised.

Hua-yen, or Flowering Ornament, is a fascinating yet overlooked system of Buddhist thought in which Francis H. Cook addresses with a special admiration and thoroughness. Hua-yen teaches the four Dharmahatu, or four ways of viewing reality: All Dharmas are seen as separate events, all events express the absolute, events and essence interpenetrate, all events interpenetrate. Cook fastidiously addresses this subject through the image of the jeweled net of Indra because it is what Hua-yen has been founded on and it symbolizes a cosmos in which there is an infinitely repeated interrelationship among all the members. (One thing contains all other existing things, and all existing things contain that one thing.) Cook writes, "Far away in the heavenly abode of the great god Indra, there is a wonderful net...it stretches out infinitely. A single jewel hangs at each eye of the net, the jewels are as infinite as the net itself. If we now arbitrarily select one of these jewels for inspection...we discover that in its polished surface there are reflected all the other jewels in the net. Not only that, but each of the jewels reflected in this one jewel is also a reflection of all the other jewels. To further explain this image, Cook uses the analogy of a rafter in a building: The building would not exist as a building if it weren't for the rafter thus the rafter, as one piece has the full power of causing the building. Yet, the rafter would not have the functionality of a rafter if it weren't for its function as part of the building, thus the building also has full power of causing the part. As an absolute truth neither building nor rafter have a function separate from one another; Both the whole and the part are dependent on one another for their very identity. In that knowledge, both the rafter and the building are identical because they are dependent. If we look deeply into the net, we can see the value of every part or piece of the cosmos and the value of the cosmos as a whole. I suspect that Cook's writing itself was strongly influenced by the image of Indra's jeweled net (He strings wise philosophical jewels among strands of interconnected thought provoking words.) ...after all words are dependent on sentences and sentences are dependent on words. So, in considering the analogy of the rafter and the building, if one part truly does have the value of the whole and if I could pick one part of Cook's book to exemplify the whole book, the rafter, so to speak, I would choose the very last two sentences in the very last paragraph which reads: "It is not just that we are all in it together. We all are it, rising and falling as one living body."

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