

Theme for Winter Ango 2024

Shuso – Shinei (Sacred Flower)

Shinei Alison Brown



The Avatamsaka Sutra and the Hua Yen

*“All dharmas are birthless and cannot be extinguished,
one who understands this sees the Tathagata.”*

Avatamsaka

—Eulogies of the Suyama Heaven,
Eulogies of Mount Sumeru

The cosmos is perceived as a wondrous jewel, a nexus of interdependent causes and conditions. Colorful, imaginative, and challenging, the Avatamsaka is considered the crown of Buddhist sutras, one of the earliest Buddhist literatures to enter China. The Hua Yen School evolved in the seventh century, drawing insight from the Avatamsaka. The Hua Yen was highly influential in Zen practice forming the basis of two main sutras we chant in the mornings, Precious Mirror Samadhi and the Harmony of Difference and Sameness. It is key to deepening your understanding of compassion and interconnection in your meditation, and daily life practice. *When the knot has eyes and shows itself as wisdom, the karmic knot or the complexes disentangle, and it does disentangle, disengaging itself from outworn ways, metamorphosing, revealing, its undivided face.*