

The Whole World Is a Single Flower

Opening Ceremony

All Forms of Existence Are One Flower

Zen Master Dae Bong

I want to welcome you all to Korea and to our tenth Whole World Is a Single Flower conference. All of us know that at the end of World War II, Man Gong Sunim from Su Dok Sa Temple took a petal of the national flower, dipped it in ink, and wrote the calligraphy, “Sae Gye Il Hwa.” So his comment at the end of the war was that this whole world is a single flower, even those fighting each other, even the animals, and the birds, and all forms of existence are one flower.

that we carry from life to life. If you have anger toward someone and you’re holding that, and want to harm them in some way, this is what you will carry into the next life. If our vow is to understand our true nature and help all beings, then this is what we will carry into the next life. If we have that vow, then we will continue to meet together again, life after life, doing this great work. If we have this vow, there’s no unemployment.

This vow has two aspects. One is the vow to continue our practice, looking deeply within, realizing what is our true nature. The other aspect is how we use it in this world to help others. When many of us were young and had no direction, Seung Sahn Sunim appeared and showed us how to find the correct human direction of this life. Now, many young people in this world are suffering and also cannot find true direction. So, at this Whole World Is a Single Flower, let’s consider together what is the situation that young people are experiencing, and how can we use our practice and our lives to connect with and help them.

When Zen Master Seung Sahn was young, he only tried to work with society, exploring how to help or even fight with society to improve life for everyone. But soon he realized he had to learn to work with his own mind: “What am I?” Then, his success in doing that spread to all of us. How can we do the same for all beings? Now we begin this time together in Korea, and I hope that we will enjoy it and also share with each other how we can continue this Great Work. *Kamsa hamnida*. Thank you.

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Photo: James Stanford

Zen Master Seung Sahn spent his life traveling to all parts of the world, showing us that we are part of that flower. Now is the tenth year since Kun Sunim [“Great Monk,” another title for Zen Master Seung Sahn] has passed away, and we’re gathered here to enjoy that flower again together. We want to consider how we can continue sharing this flower with all beings. Our theme this year is “Great Vow, Life After Life.” Our vow is the one thing