

On the Flowering of the Unbounded

(*Kūge*)

Translator’s Introduction: *Kūge*, the title of this discourse, has various meanings. The term is used in the *Shurangama Scripture* to refer to a physical disease in which one sees non-existent ‘flowers’ in the sky, and it is employed in the same Scripture as a metaphor for the effects of delusion, caused by one’s being spiritually ‘bleary-eyed’. Dōgen extends the meaning of *kūge* to refer to things as they really are: the flowerings of Buddha Nature (That Which Is as Unbounded as Space), as seen by one whose spiritual vision has become ‘unfocused’, due to his having left off hard-edged, dualistic thinking, which assumes that its mental constructs are real. The flowering that Dōgen speaks of refers to the whole universe as it is, which blossoms forth from within Buddha Nature, as well as to the blossoming of a kenshō, (that is, the seeing of one’s True Nature) and the manifestation of Buddhas.

Our highest Founding Ancestor Bodhidharma once said in verse:

*And when the Single Blossom opened Its five petals,
The fruit thereof naturally came about of itself.*

You need to explore through your training the occasion for this opening of the One Blossom, along with exploring Its radiance and the form It takes. The One Blossom is comprised of five petals, one atop the other. The opening up of the five petals forms the One Blossom. When you have penetrated the principle of the one blossom, it will be in accord with Bodhidharma’s statement:

*From the first, I came to this land to Transmit the
Dharma
That I might rescue deluded beings.¹*

Seeking the radiance and form of this blossoming is what your investigation through your training should be all about. What Bodhidharma calls ‘the resulting fruit’ is something that one leaves to the fruit: he describes this as ‘what naturally comes about of itself’. ‘What naturally comes about of itself’ is his term for

1. These two lines are the opening lines of a quatrain by Bodhidharma, whose closing lines Dōgen quoted at the start of this text.

mastering causes and being conscious of effects. There are the causes of the whole universe and there are the effects of the whole universe; there is our mastering the causes and effects of this whole universe and there is our being conscious of the causes and effects of this whole universe. One's natural self is oneself. This self, to be sure, is 'you', that is to say, it is the four elements* and the five skandhas* of which you are comprised. Because Bodhidharma is allowing for 'a true person devoid of any rank', he is not referring to a specific 'I' or to some 'other'. Therefore, that which is indefinable is what he is calling 'a self'. This natural state of 'being as it is' is what he is acknowledging.² The natural state of 'being as one is' is the time when the Single Blossom opens and Its fruit results: it is the occasion when the Dharma is Transmitted and one is rescued from one's delusions.

For instance, the moment when the blue lotus bursts into bloom is like being in the midst of a fire at the time of fire.³ The fire's sparks and flames all converge at the point where the blue lotus bursts into bloom at the very moment when it bursts into bloom. If it were not the time and place of the blue lotus's blossoming, not even a single spark of fire would emerge, not even a single spark of fire would come to life. You need to know that there are hundreds of thousands of blue lotuses in a single spark of fire: they blossom forth throughout boundless space and throughout the earth. They blossomed forth in the past and they blossom forth in the present. When you witness the time and place of the fire emerging, you are witnessing the blossoming of the blue lotus. Do not let the time and place of the blue lotus pass you by, but be a witness to its blossoming.



An enlightened one of long ago once said in a poem, "The blue lotus blooms amidst the fire." Thus it is that the blue lotus invariably blossoms forth in the midst of the fire. If you wish to know where 'being in the midst of the fire' is, it is the very place where the blue lotus blossoms forth. Do not neglect investigating 'being in the midst of the fire' through adopting the views of either ordinary people or those in lofty positions. Should you harbor any doubts, you might also doubt that

* See *Glossary*.

2. What the translation does not make clear is that Dōgen is analyzing the word *jinen* in Bodhidharma's poem (rendered as 'naturally') as being comprised of two words: *ji* meaning 'self' and *nen* meaning 'being as it is'.
3. The blue lotus refers to the blossoming of the spiritual flower of one's training and enlightenment, not to an actual plant.

the lotus arises within the water, and you might doubt that branches and twigs have any blossoms as well. Further, should you harbor such doubts, you might well doubt the existence of the outer, objective world. But this you do not doubt. If someone is not an Ancestor of the Buddha, such a person does not know that with the opening of the blossom, the whole world arises. ‘The opening of the blossom’ means ‘three and three before that, as well as three and three after that’. In order to make the number of these more extensive, they have accumulated a luxurious growth, soaring ever higher.⁴

Letting this principle of blossoming come of its own accord, we need to consider whether it is spring or autumn. Blossoms and fruit do not only appear in spring and in autumn. There will invariably be other times when blossoms and fruit emerge. Every flowering and fruiting has endured while they have waited for their opportunity, and every opportunity has endured while it has waited for a flowering and a fruiting. Thus, all the hundreds of things that sprout up have their time of flowering and their fruiting, just as all manner of trees have their time of flowering and their fruiting. All manner of trees—such as those of gold, silver, copper, iron, coral, or crystal—have their flowering and their fruiting. Trees of earth, water, fire, wind, and boundless space have their flowering and fruiting. Human trees have their blossoming, human flowers have their blossoming, and withered trees have their blossoming.

It is within this context that the World-honored One spoke of the flowerings within Unbounded Space. On the other hand, those folks who pay attention to very little and see even less are unaware that petals and blossoms with their varied hues and brilliance are to be found within everything. These are ‘the flowers of Unbounded Space’, and such folk are only barely aware of a flowering of Unbounded Space. You need to be aware that the flowers of Unbounded Space are discussed within the words and ways of the Buddha, whereas non-Buddhists have no knowledge of such discussions about the flowers of Unbounded Space, much less do they have any understanding of them! Only the Buddhas and Ancestors have known about the blossoming and falling of the flowers of Unbounded Space as well as that of earthly flowers. Only They have known of such things as the blossoming and falling of the flowers within the human world. Only They have known that such things as the flowers in Unbounded Space, earthly flowers, and the flowers within the human world are all Scriptures; this is the standard by which

4. To paraphrase, while the number of persons realizing the Truth is indefinite (‘three and three before that, as well as three and three after that’) it is decidedly more than just a few people. In fact, the number is staggering and ever increasing.

we investigate what Buddha is. Because what has been taught by the Buddhas and Ancestors is this flowering of Unbounded Space, the realm of Buddha and the Teachings of Buddhas are therefore synonymous with the flowerings of Unbounded Space.

At the same time, when those who are commonplace and foolish hear about what the Tathagata said—namely, that what is seen by those with bleary-eyed vision are the flowerings in Unbounded Space—they assume that ‘bleary-eyed vision’ refers to topsy-turvy vision in human beings. Because their own diseased vision is already topsy-turvy, they believe that one experiences flowers in Unbounded Space as something floating in an absolute void. Being attached to this understanding, they have concluded that the three worlds of desire, form, and beyond form, the six worlds* of existence, the existence of Buddhahood, and the state of going beyond Buddhahood, are all really non-existent but are mistakenly seen as having existence. They go about making their living by asserting that, if we were to bring to a halt this bleary-eyed vision brought about by our delusions, we would no longer see these flowers in the void since, from the beginning, the void is devoid of flowers. How sad that folks like these do not know, from start to finish, the times of which the Tathagata spoke when flowers bloom in Unbounded Space. The principle of seeing flowers in Unbounded Space with ‘bleary-eyed’ vision—of which the Buddhas have spoken—is not understood by ordinary, everyday people and those who are non-Buddhists. The Buddhas and Tathagatas have trained with these flowers in Unbounded Space and They have put them into Their practice. By doing so, They have obtained Their robe, Their sitting place, and Their access to the Master’s quarters, all of which is Their realizing the Way and attaining Its fruits. Holding aloft the blossom, with eyes twinkling,⁵ is the raising of the spiritual question, which manifests our seeing flowers in Unbounded Space with bleary-eyed vision. That the Treasure House of the Eye of the True Teaching, which is the Wondrous Heart of Nirvana, has now been correctly Transmitted without a break is what we call seeing flowers in Unbounded space with bleary-eyed vision. Enlightenment, nirvana, giving rise to the intention to realize the Truth, one’s own True Nature, and so forth, are two or three petals among the five which the blossoming of Unbounded Space opens up.

5. This is a reference to the Transmission of the Dharma from Shakyamuni Buddha to his disciple Makakashō. This occurred when the Buddha held aloft an udumbara blossom and Makakashō smiled in response.

Shakyamuni Buddha once said in verse:

*Further, it is like one with bleary-eyed vision
Seeing blossoms in Boundless Space;
When that bleary-eyed sickness is eradicated,
The blossoms disappear into the Unbounded Space.*

There have never been any mundane academics or scholars who have understood this saying. Because they do not know what Unbounded Space is, they do not know what blossoms in Unbounded Space refers to, and because they do not know what blossoms in Unbounded Space refers to, they do not recognize ‘one of bleary-eyed vision’, nor are they themselves ‘one of bleary-eyed vision’, nor do they ever become ‘one of bleary-eyed vision’. When those of unfocused vision mutually recognize each other, they will know what flowers in Unbounded Space are and they will see the flowering of Unbounded Space. After they have seen the flowers in Unbounded Space, they will also see the flowers disappearing into Unbounded Space.⁶ To think that once the flowers have disappeared into Unbounded Space they cannot return again is the view of those of the Lesser Course.*⁷ When the flowers within Unbounded Space cannot be seen by such people, what can exist for them? By merely thinking that flowers within Unbounded Space are something to be dropped off, they do not recognize the Great Matter* that lies within the blossoming of Unbounded Space, nor do they know of the seeding, ripening, and falling away of That which blossoms within Unbounded Space.

Among the mundane academics and scholars of today, there are those who think that the yang-energy must govern empty space, and there are those who think that the sun, moon, and stars must be suspended in empty space. Accordingly, they consider what they expediently call ‘flowers in empty space’ to be something that takes on an appearance and form not unlike that of drifting clouds in the clear sky, or they think it must be like blossoms sent flying in the wind, hither and yon, up and down. They do not know that the four elements—which can create other things and which are, themselves, created—along with the various things of the outer world, as well as such things as one’s innate enlightenment and Original Nature, are all called flowers in Unbounded Space. Further, they do not know that the four elements exist to do their creating in accordance with thoughts and things, nor do they know that, in accordance with thoughts and things, the outer world abides in

6. That is, they will see what ‘going beyond Buddhahood’ refers to.

7. That is, they believe that one cannot have multiple experiences of realizing Truth, and that once one has realized Truth, the need to train is at an end.

its place. They simply recognize that there are thoughts and things that are in accord with the outer world. They only comprehend that there are flowers in empty space because of one's bleary-eyed vision, and do not comprehend the principle that there is an unfocusing of one's vision due to a blossoming in Unbounded Space.

You need to realize that what the Buddha called 'one with bleary-eyed vision' is one who is fundamentally enlightened, one who is wondrously enlightened, one who is at one with the Buddhas, one who is of the three worlds of existence, one who has gone on beyond Buddhahood. So, do not, out of befuddlement, explore the foolish notion that being 'bleary-eyed' means being deluded and therefore go looking for some other way of progressing. Were you to do so, yours would be a meager view of the Matter. If the blossoming of bleary-eyed vision were a delusion, then that which attaches to the erroneous view that this is an erroneous view, as well as the attachment itself, would both be delusions. If both were delusions, then establishing what the underlying principle is would be impossible. If there were no underlying principle that could be established, then it would be impossible to establish that the blossoming seen by those of bleary-eyed vision is a delusion.

When enlightenment is seen as 'being bleary-eyed', then everything is within enlightenment and all things are bedecked with the quality of being out of focus. When delusion is seen as 'being bleary-eyed', then everything is within delusion and all things are bedecked with the quality of being out of focus. For the present, we can say that when one's bleary vision is impartial, the flowerings within Unbounded Space are impartial, that when bleary-eyed vision has not arisen, a flowering within Unbounded space has not arisen, and that when all thoughts and things have their True Form, bleary-eyed vision has its True Form. You should not get into discussions about past, present, and future, and do not hang onto 'beginning, middle, and end'. By not being hindered by 'arising and disappearing', you can make arisings and disappearings arise and disappear. They arise within Unbounded Space and they disappear within Unbounded Space; they arise within that which is out of focus and they disappear within that which is out of focus; they arise within flowering and they disappear within flowering, and so on, doing the same for all other times and places.

Learning about flowers within Unbounded Space may well take many forms. There is what is seen with bleary-eyed vision, and what is seen with wondrous eyes, and what is seen with the Eye of a Buddha, and what is seen with the eyes of an Ancestor, and what is seen with the vision of the Way, and what is seen with blind eyes, and what has been seen for three thousand years, and what has been

seen for eight hundred years, and what has been seen for hundreds of kalpas,* and what has been seen for immeasurable kalpas.⁸ Though it is said that all of these see a flowering in Unbounded Space, Unbounded Space is already of various kinds, and flowering, as well, is of all sorts.

By all means you need to realize that space is simply one form of sprouting. This space invariably produces its flowerings, just as the hundreds of sproutings of thoughts and things produce their flowerings. In asserting this principle, the Tathagata said that Unbounded Space originally had no flowering. Although It originally had no flowering, today It has Its flowerings, just as do the peach and damson trees and just as do the plum and willow trees.⁹ It is as if the Tathagata had said, “Although yesterday the plum had no flowers, come the spring, the plum will have flowers.” Well and good, for when its season arrives, it will produce flowers, since it will be the time for its flowering and the arriving of its flowering. The actual moment of its flowering is never arbitrary. The flowers of the plum and the willow invariably blossom on plum and willow trees. Upon seeing their flowers, we recognize them as those of the plum and the willow: upon seeing the plum and the willow, we discern what their flowers are. The flowers of the peach and the damson never bloom on plum or willow trees. The flowers of the plum and willow trees bloom on plum and willow trees, whereas the flowers of the peach and damson trees bloom on peach and damson trees. Likewise, the flowers of Unbounded Space bloom in Unbounded Space—they do not bloom on other things that sprout up or upon other trees. By looking at the various forms of the flowers of Unbounded Space, we can estimate that the flowers of Unbounded Space are boundless. By looking at the opening and falling of the flowers in Unbounded Space, you should investigate the spring and autumn of the flowers in Unbounded Space. The springtime for flowers in Unbounded Space and the springtime for other flowers will be alike. Just as the flowers of Unbounded Space are various, so will their springtimes be many. Thus there are the springs and autumns of past and present. Those who have been taught that the flowers of Unbounded Space are not real, though other flowers are real, are persons who have not encountered or heard what the Buddha taught. Upon hearing the Buddha’s Teaching that Unbounded Space originally had no flowers, if one were to study this as meaning that there are

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8. ‘What has been seen for three thousand years...for immeasurable kalpas’ refers to what has been experienced by Buddhas since before the time of Shakyamuni Buddha, by Bodhidharma, and by Ancestor after Ancestor at all times, past, present, and future.
 9. The peach and damson trees are a common Chinese metaphor for disciples, whereas the plum and the willow represent the most beautiful of flowering trees.

now flowers of Unbounded Space where originally there were none, this would be narrow-minded and short-sighted. We need to step forward and take a more broadminded view.



Our Ancestral Master Eka once said, “The flowers, moreover, have never appeared.” The main point of this is the principle, for example, that the flowers have never appeared, that they have never disappeared, that they have never been ‘flowers’, and that Unbounded Space has, moreover, never been ‘space’. Do not look with suspicion upon what preceded or followed the time of their blossoming, or engage in idle discussions concerning their existence or nonexistence. Flowers invariably seem to be dyed with some color or other, but these various colors are not necessarily limited to flowers. In the various seasons, there are colors such as blue, yellow, red, and white. The spring ushers in flowers, and the flowers usher in spring.



The highly accomplished Mandarin scholar Ch’ang Cho was a lay disciple of Sekisō Keisho. Upon awakening to the Way, he composed a poem:

*Its brilliant light serenely illumines everywhere amidst
worlds as numerous as the sands of the Ganges.¹⁰*

This brilliant light has clearly illuminated the Monks’ Hall, the Buddha Hall, the kitchen, and the mountain gate to the monastery. ‘Everywhere amidst worlds as numerous as the sands of the Ganges’ is where the brilliant light manifests and it is a manifestation of the brilliant light.

*Sentient beings, both the ordinary and the saintly, are
within my family.*

It is not that there are no ordinary, everyday people or that there are no wise and saintly ones, but in accord with this, be sure not to speak ill of either ordinary, everyday people or the wise and saintly.

*When not a single thought arose, Its whole Body
manifested Itself.*

10. This is the first line of an eight-line poem, which Dōgen quotes line by line. Each line is followed by his short commentary.

Thought after thought is just one after the other; this is certainly ‘non-arising’. This is Its whole body completely manifesting. This is why he said that not a single thought arose.

*When my six sense organs moved even slightly, my mind
was covered with clouds.*

Although the six sense organs are the eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body, and mind, they are not necessarily a matter of two times three; they can be some group of three, and then three before or after those three.¹¹ ‘Moving’ is like Mount Sumeru, like the great earth, like the six sense organs, like moving even slightly. Because moving is already like Mount Sumeru, not moving is also like Mount Sumeru.

*Attempting to cut myself free from my defiling passions
just added to my heap of spiritual diseases.*

It is not that he had never been sick before, for there was the disease of ‘Buddha’ and the disease of ‘Ancestor’.¹² But now, using his perceptiveness to cut off his passions, he piled up his illnesses and increased his sickness. The very moment of cutting oneself free is invariably synonymous with having a passion: they are simultaneous, and they are beyond being simultaneous. Passions are invariably bound up in the measures taken to cut oneself free from them.

To go after the Truth is also the wrong thing.

To turn one’s back on Truth is wrong. To confront Truth is wrong. The Truth is the very confronting and the turning of one’s back. Each and every instance of ‘confronting’ and ‘turning one’s back on’ is what Truth is. And who knows that this ‘wrong’ is also what Truth is?

*Submitting myself to worldly connections is not a
hindrance.*

He submitted himself to one worldly connection after another, for submission after submission is what worldly connections are. This is called ‘not being hindered’. As for being hindered or not being hindered, you should accustom yourself to letting your eyes be hindered.

11. That is, the sense organs are not necessarily just the standard six (two times three), but may manifest in countless ways.

12. That is, the spiritual greed to become a Buddha or an Ancestor.

*Nirvana and birth-and-death are simply flowers in
Unbounded Space.*

Nirvana is synonymous with supreme, fully perfected enlightenment. This is where the Buddhas and Ancestors reside, along with Their disciples. Birth-and-death is synonymous with one's True Body. Nirvana and birth-and-death exist in this manner and they are flowers in Unbounded Space. The roots and stems, the branches and leaves, the flowers and fruit, along with the brilliance and forms of the flowers of Unbounded Space, are all the blossoming forth of flowers in Unbounded Space. They are invariably connected with the fruits of Unbounded Space, which bestow the seeds of Unbounded Space. Because the three worlds of desire, form, and beyond form, which we are now experiencing, are the opening of the five petals, it is best to see these three worlds as the three worlds. You need to explore through your training that the three worlds are the true form of all thoughts and things, that they are the flowering of all thoughts and things. All thoughts and things beyond measure are the flowers of Unbounded Space and the fruits of Unbounded Space, and they are identical with the flowers of plum and willow, peach and damson.



When Meditation Master Fuyōzan Reikun in the Fuchou district of Great Sung China first came to train under Meditation Master Kisu Shishin, he asked his Master, “Just what is Buddha?”

Master Kisu replied, “If I tell you straight to your face, will you believe me?”

Reikun then said, “How would I dare not to believe your sincere words, O Venerable Monk?”

Master Kiso responded, “You yourself are precisely what It is.”

Reikun then asked, “How am I to preserve and maintain It?”

Master Kiso answered, “When there is a single moment of your eyes being bleary, the flowers of Unbounded Space will come fluttering down.”

The words that Master Kisu has just spoken, namely, “When there is a single moment of your eyes being bleary, the flowers of Unbounded Space will come fluttering down,” express how Buddha is preserved and maintained. So, you need to realize that the fluttering down of the flowers of bleary-eyed vision is what all Buddhas manifest. By seeing the flowering and fruiting of Unbounded Space which Their Eye, all Buddhas preserve and maintain these flowers and fruit. By means of Their bleary-eyed vision, They cause the Eye to manifest. They have

manifested the flowering of Unbounded Space within Their Eye and They have manifested Their Eye within the flowering of Unbounded Space. It is simply a matter of “When the flower of Unbounded Space is within Their Eye, a single moment of bleary-eyed vision flutters down, and when Their Eye is within Unbounded Space, all instances of bleary-eyed vision flutter down.” Thus, bleary-eyed vision is a manifestation of all functions, and the Eye is also a manifestation of all functions, and Unbounded Space is also a manifestation of all functions, and flowering is also a manifestation of all functions. ‘Fluttering down’ is synonymous with ‘thousands of Eyes’ and with ‘our whole body being covered with eyes’.¹³ In short, at the time and place when the single Eye occurs, there will invariably be a blossoming in Unbounded Space along with the blossoming of that Eye. We call the blossoming of one’s Eye ‘flowers in Unbounded Space’. The expression ‘the blossoming of one’s Eye’ is invariably synonymous with opening to the luminous, that is, to enlightenment.

This is why Great Master Rōya Ekaku said in a poem,

*How wondrous the Buddhas in the ten quarters are!
From the first, They have been flowers in your Eye.
If you desire to make the acquaintance of the flowers in
your Eye,
They are, of course, the Buddhas in the ten quarters.*

*If you desire to make the acquaintance of the Buddhas in
the ten quarters, They will not be flowers in your
eyes.*

*If you desire to make the acquaintance of the flowers in
your eyes, they will not be the Buddhas in the ten
quarters.*

*When you understand this clearly,
The blame will lie with the Buddhas in the ten quarters.*

*When this is not yet clearly understood,
Shravakas are prone to dance
And pratyekabuddhas take to adorning themselves.¹⁴*

13. Dōgen explores these references to ‘thousands of Eyes’ and to ‘being covered with eyes’ in his Discourse 32: On Kannon, the Bodhisattva of Compassion (*Kannon*).

14. To paraphrase the end part, when you understand clearly the difference between ‘flowers in one’s eyes’ (delusion) and ‘flowers in one’s Eye’ (enlightenment), it will be due to the

Keep in mind that the Buddhas of the ten quarters are not unreal, but, from the first, They are flowers in our Eye. The place where the Buddhas of the ten quarters abide is within our Eye. If They were not within our Eye, then our Eye would not be the abiding place of Buddhas. The flowers in our Eye are neither non-existent nor existent, and they are beyond emptiness and reality: they are naturally what the Buddhas in the ten quarters are. If you earnestly desire to be acquainted with the Buddhas in the ten quarters, They are beyond being just ‘flowers in your eyes’, and if you earnestly desire to be acquainted with what the flowers in your eyes are, they will seem to be something other than the Buddhas in the ten quarters.

Because the Matter is like this, both your being clear and your not yet being clear are flowers in your Eye and they are also the Buddhas in the ten quarters. Your desire to be acquainted with what They are and what They are not is the Wondrous manifesting Itself, and It is a great wonder. The main point about the flowers of Unbounded Space and the flowers of the earth, of which Buddha after Buddha and Ancestor after Ancestor have spoken, is Their giving free rein to Their elegantly skillful means. Even though academic teachers of Scriptures and scholars who produce erudite commentaries thereon are able to hear the words ‘flowers in Unbounded Space’, there is no account of anyone, apart from an Ancestor of the Buddha, who has ever encountered, or even heard of, the Lifeblood of the flowers of the earth. And there are the sayings of the Buddha’s Ancestors who have understood what the Lifeblood of the flowers of the earth really is.



Meditation Master Etetsu of Mount Sekimon in Great Sung China was a venerable elder who had trained under Ryōzan Enkan. One day a certain monk asked him, “What is the Jewel in the Mountain?” The main point of asking this is the same as asking, “What is Buddha?” or like asking, “What is the Way?” The Master replied, “The flowers of Unbounded Space come forth from the earth, so, throughout the country, there is no way to buy them.”

Buddhas in the ten quarters (their ‘fault’). As used here, the term *shravakas* refers to those who enjoy hearing the Teaching but are not necessarily interested in Its practical application, believing that they are already enlightened because they have an intellectual understanding of the Teaching, and therefore they jump for joy. On the other hand, *pratyekabuddhas* are those who are seeking enlightenment, but just for their own sake. When they believe that they have fully fathomed enlightenment, they wear their understanding as a badge of their achievement.

In all earnestness, you must not compare this saying with other expressions. Ordinary, mundane teachers, in discussing the flowers of Unbounded Space as ‘flowers in the empty sky’, speak only of their arising in the empty sky and disappearing into the empty sky. Since they have still not understood what ‘reliance on Unbounded Space’ means, how could they possibly understand what ‘reliance on the earth’ means? Only Sekimon knew this. ‘Reliance on the earth’ is ultimately relying on the earth through and through—beginning, middle, and end. His phrase ‘coming forth’ is synonymous with ‘opening up’. That very moment is the flowers’ coming forth from the whole of the great earth; it is their opening up over the whole of the great earth.

‘Throughout the country there is no way to buy them’ does not mean that there is nothing to buy throughout the country, but that there is no way to buy the Truth. There are the flowers of Unbounded Space which are based on coming forth from the earth, and there is the whole earth which is based on the opening of flowers. So, keep in mind this main point: the flowers of Unbounded Space cause both the opening up of the earth and the unfolding of Unbounded Space.

Given to the assembly on the tenth day of the third lunar month in the first year of the Kangen era (March 31, 1243) at Kannondōri in Kōshōhōrin-ji Temple.

Copied by me on the first day of the first lunar month in the second year of the same era (February 10, 1244), while in the quarters of the Abbot’s assistant at Kippō-ji Temple in Echizen Province.

Ejō