

Ven. Yasuda Joshu Dainen daiosho



Yasuda Joshu Dainen roshi (1895-1979) was of a generation of pioneers of Japanese Zen Buddhism. He trained arduously as a young novice at Tenku-in, a small mountain temple, under Hanamatsu Daiji Tenku roshi. He received shiho when he was only twenty years old and inka, his Master's final seal, only a few years later. He spent some time at Soji-ji and Eihei-ji, the two main centres of the Soto Zen Buddhist Church, training in the ceremonial forms there but like his own Master avoided being drawn into the position of a parish priest and funeral director. Instead he continued to follow rigorous zazen practice in various locations, accepting only a few students.

Disturbed by the militarization of Japan he left the country in 1934 and travelled through China, Korea, Burma, Thailand, and India studying how the Dharma was understood or misunderstood, was practised or not practised. He returned to Japan in 1952 and then left again in 1964. He travelled in Europe and in England in the late 1960s he met a small group of young people who began to study with him. One owned some farmland in southern Ontario in Canada and offered the land to Joshu roshi to use to establish a monastery. Soon after this, the Roshi and a band of hippie-generation students arrived near Hamilton, Ontario and converted a small farmhouse into the abbot's quarters and bathing facilities and an old barn into a zendo. This was named Hakukaze-ji.

The community once swelled as large as twenty-five monks but the population varied widely season after season. Practice was rigorous with six to ten hours of zazen daily and monthly week long O-sesshin of eighteen hours of zazen. During this time he translated much of Eihei Dogen zenji's Shobogenzo and other essays, Keizan Jokin zenji's Denkoroku and other works, and various collections of koan and liturgical works with the assistance of Anzan Hoshin who eventually received shiho and inka in Joshu Dainen's Dharma. In

1978 his own Teacher Daiji Tenku was brought to Hakukaze-ji for a few months and the three Teachers collaborated on annotating the Hekiganroku.

Joshu roshi died December 12th, 1979, of stomach and bone cancer.

Teisho, Dharma Talks, and translations by Ven. Yasuda Joshu Dainen daiosho are found [here](#).