

# Biography of Zen Master Dae Jin

Zen Master Dae Jin was born in 1958 in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, in the United States. In 1979, while studying at Boston University he met Zen Master Seung Sahn for the first time and began practicing Zen.

He ordained as a monk in 1984, receiving the name Mu Shim. Following Zen Master Seung Sahn, he traveled to South Korea and helped found the Seoul International Zen Center at Hwa Gye Sa Temple.

In 1986, he was ordained as a bhikku in the Chogye Order of Korean Buddhism. From 1985 through 1988, he participated in the 90-day International Winter Kyol Che retreats at Su Doek Sa Temple.

For more than 20 years he was Zen Master Seung Sahn's personal secretary, traveling with him widely and spreading the Dharma in Asia, Europe, Australia, North

America, South Africa and the Middle East. In addition, for many years he was the International Director of the Kwan Um School of Zen in Asia and of the Seoul International Zen Center.

In 1997 he received inka from Zen Master Seung Sahn. He served as guiding teacher (Soen Won Jang) of the Seoul International Zen Center at Hwa Gye Sa Temple from 1997 to 2000. After that, in 2000 he founded Nam San Soen Won (Nam San Zen Center) in Busan, Korea, and spent two years teaching there.

In 2001 he translated into Korean *The Whole World Is a Single Flower: 365 Kong-ans for Everyday Life*, a compilation of Zen Master Seung Sahn's kong-an teachings.

In 2008 he received dharma transmission with the name Dae Jin at the Whole World Is a Single Flower conference in Warsaw, Poland.

From 2002 to 2013 he was abbot of Seung Sahn International Zen Center at Mu Sang Sa Temple on Gyeryong San Mountain, and completed the construction of the main Buddha hall and the administrative building there. Zen Master Dae Jin served as the Hwa Ju Sunim (Community Leader) of Mu Sang Sa from 2013 until he entered nirvana on December 26, 2015 in Korea. ♦



Photo: Mu Sang Sa / KUSZ Photo Archives

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## Funeral Ceremony and Cremation Rites for Zen Master Dae Jin Mu Shim (1958–2015)

Zen Master Dae Jin Mu Shim was diagnosed with leukemia in August 2013. He underwent various treatments for the next two years to reverse his condition but entered nirvana on December 26, 2015 from complications resulting in pneumonia.

On December 26, 2015 at 2 p.m., Zen Master Dae Jin's funeral ceremony and cremation rites were held at Mu Sang Sa Temple on Gyeryongsan Mountain in South Korea, his home temple for the last 13 years. More than 400 people attended the funeral from all over the country, including many venerable Korean monks and nuns. Many students, supporters and friends also attended. It was the first traditional Buddhist funeral ceremony and cremation held in Korea for a Western monk and Zen master. Zen Master Dae Jin was widely known in Korean Buddhist society from his many years as Zen Master Seung Sahn's close student and secretary, his fluency in the Korean language and his nonstop work to establish, maintain and spread Zen Master Seung Sahn's great teachings.

His efforts made it possible for thousands of Koreans and non-Koreans to practice in Korea.

The funeral ceremony was held in the main buddha hall and the formal dharma speech was given by Seol Jong Sunim from Sudeoksa Temple, who is the Bang Jang Sunim of the Dok Sung Mountain Dharma family. Zen Master Dae Jin's casket was covered with his monk's kasa and carried by eight brother sunims, followed by his dharma family and supporters in a formal funerary procession to the cremation site on Mu Sang Sa temple grounds. A traditional funeral pyre made of fresh pine-wood was lit while everyone surrounded the site chanting *Namu Amitabul*. The chanting continued while the fire burned for several hours into the night and early the next morning. The following day, Zen Master Dae Jin's ashes were collected and returned to his memorial altar in the main buddha hall where a *jesa* (offering ceremony) was held every seven days until the final 49th-day ceremony on February 13, 2016. ♦