

●Shinagawa Historical Museum Explanatory Sheet

Tokai-ji Temple and Takuan

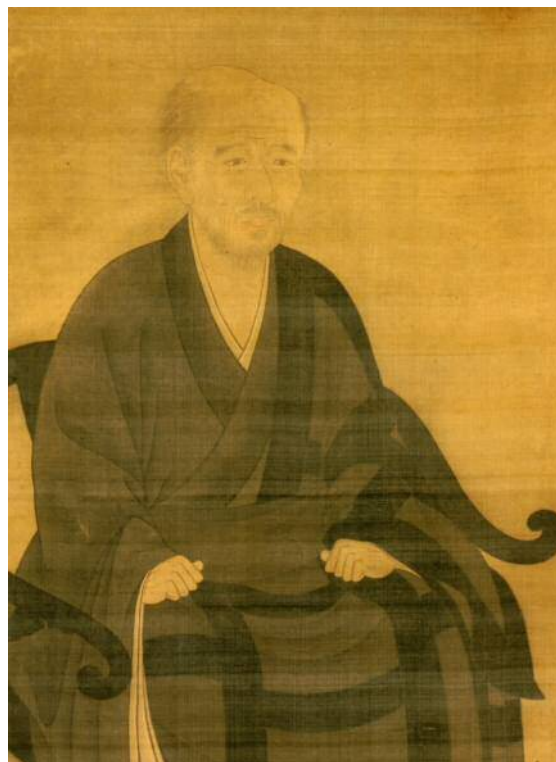
Takuan Soho

Takuan Soho was a prominent Buddhist priest of the Zen sect in the early 17th century, who served as the first chief priest of Banshozan Tokai-ji Temple, founded by the third Tokugawa shogun, Tokugawa Iemitsu.

Takuan was born in 1573 in Izushi, Tajima Province (present-day Toyooka City, Hyogo Prefecture), and spent his early years leading the meager life of an apprentice in the Zen sect in the region around Kyoto. In 1609, Takuan became the 153rd chief priest of Daitoku-ji Temple in Kyoto. In 1629, however, he was banished to the Dewa Province (present-day the region of Yamagata and Akita Prefecture) due to his criticism of the religious policies of the shogunate government.

After the death of the second Tokugawa shogun, Tokugawa Hidetada, Takuan was released from his banishment and allowed to return to Edo through the aid of prominent figures such as the high priest Tenkai. After returning to Edo, Takuan came to be highly trusted by the third shogun, Tokugawa Iemitsu. In 1638, Iemitsu unveiled his plan to build a new temple for Takuan. Tokai-ji Temple was thus built on the southern foot of Gotenyama in 1639, with Takuan appointed its first chief priest.

Takuan was not only a Buddhist priest but also highly knowledgeable in a diverse range of subjects such as literature, *waka* Japanese poems, the *sado* tea



▲Portrait of Takuan Soho, Tokai-ji Temple Collection

ceremony, kendo swordsmanship, the art of warfare, and medicine. Takuan formed deep friendships with the masters of these varied arts, such as *sado* tea master Senno Sotan and Kobori Enshu, and the father and son sword masters. Yagyu Munenori and Munefuyu.

In 1645, it is said Takuan left a word and its poem entitled *yume*, or dream, and passed away. In the grounds of Tokai-ji Temple, it is said that Kobori Enshu made the grave of Takuan with a large natural stone.



▲Final poem left by Takuan Soho, "Dream", Tokai-ji Temple Collection



▲The grave of Takuan Soho

The Grounds of Tokai-ji Temple

Tokai-ji Temple covered a massive expanse totaling approximately 157,000 square meters. In the temple, there were as many as 17 sub-temples at its prime. Some were founded by powerful *daimyo* clans, such as the Rinsen-in built by Hotta Masamori, the lord of Matsumoto Castle in Shinano (present-day Nagano Prefecture), the Chosho-in built by feudal lord Sakai Tadakatsu of the Obama Domain (currently, the area around Obama City, Fukui Prefecture), Myoge-in built by Hosokawa Mitsunao, the lord of the Kumamoto Domain (currently, the area around Kumamoto City, Kumamoto Prefecture), the Unryo-in built by Koide Yoshichika, the lord of the Sonobe Domain (currently, the area around Nantan City, Kyoto Prefecture), and

Shunu-an built by Toki Yoriyuki, the lord of the Dewa Domain (currently, Yamagata Prefecture and Akita Prefecture).

A bridge was also built from the temple ground crossing the Meguro River, and a town sprung up around on the other side of the bridge.

Tokai-ji Temple was entirely destroyed in a fire that spread from Shinagawa Post Station in March, 1694, but was soon rebuilt by the fifth shogun, Tokugawa Tsunayoshi and his mother Keisho-in.

Tokai-ji Temple today is the former sub-temple of Gensho-in, originally named Rinsen-in, which has taken on the Tokai-ji name.



▲ Map of Tokai-ji Temple (1660, Tokai-ji Temple Collection), the oldest map remaining in Tokai-ji Temple