

Ceaseless Effort

The Life of Dainin Katagiri

Andrea Martin



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by Andrea Martin

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AUTHOR'S PREFACE

Dainin Katagiri was one of the prominent teachers who brought Soto Zen Buddhism from Japan to America in the twentieth century. He was known as Katagiri Roshi—the honorific term *roshi* denoting maturity in a Zen teacher. Katagiri Roshi assisted Shunryu Suzuki Roshi at the newly forming San Francisco Zen Center. After Suzuki's death, he founded the Minnesota Zen Meditation Center in Minneapolis and Hokyoji Zen Practice Community in rural Eitzen, Minnesota.

Katagiri Roshi was a beloved, even idolized figure during his lifetime. The profound yet human way in which he represented Buddhism touched people's hearts and inspired many to study, practice, and teach Zen as a lifelong path. He supported equality for women in all aspects of Zen practice, including equal opportunity to practice in Japan. After he died, however, stories of his sexual behavior, including affairs with women in the sangha, started emerging. So now he is regarded in a more nuanced way.

This is not an official biography of Katagiri Roshi; it is simply the result of my personal quest to learn about my teacher's life and record his story. I first wrote it to honor the twentieth anniversary of his death and now occasionally revise it as new information appears. His story is told here to the extent that I know it, but even now, so many years after his death, the story feels unfinished. I hope my essay contributes to your understanding of the human being behind his books and audio recordings, the teaching lineage before and after him, and the history of Zen in the West.

EARLY YEARS AND ORDINATION

Dainin is not the name that Katagiri Roshi was born with, nor one that he initially embraced. It is his dharma name, given to him by his Zen master at ordination. In the beginning, he wanted to keep his childhood name—Yoshiyuki—because it meant Good Luck. He liked it very much so he kept using it. But one day, when his master reminded him that he should use his new name, which means Great Patience, he finally accepted it and became Dainin Katagiri. Still, as a young Buddhist priest he didn't like his name because he understood patience in the usual way and that kind of patience was not something he valued. Later, as his life unfolded, he grew to understand the deeper meaning of the name and came to appreciate it.

Childhood

Dainin Katagiri was born in Osaka, Japan, on January 19, 1928, the youngest child in a large family. His grandparents on both sides were farmers, but his parents did not carry on that tradition. His father, Kahichi, and mother, Tane, had ten children: seven boys and three girls. Unfortunately two of their sons and one daughter died. Baby Yoshiyuki was born after she drowned when she was eighteen while doing laundry in the river in Osaka. His parents believed that this lost daughter had been reborn in their new baby.

When Katagiri was five years old, his father moved the family to Tsuruga and went into the restaurant business. Tsuruga is a coastal city on the Sea of Japan in Fukui Prefecture. It is the city nearest to the Pacific Ocean on that coast northeast of Kyoto, and is well known for fresh, high quality seafood. His father had previously failed in other lines of work: operating public baths, producing rice cakes, selling medicine and cosmetics, but his restaurant by the train station was successful. “So finally he was very happy, and I grew up there,” said Katagiri. The whole family helped in the restaurant, and as a little boy Katagiri worked as a waiter after school.

His father may have been happy, but Katagiri didn’t remember having a warm relationship with his parents. As he told it: “When I was growing up, my family ran a restaurant. My parents were very busy taking care of business every day. I was the youngest, and there were lots of other kids to take care of me, so my parents didn’t pay attention to me. There wasn’t a comfortable feeling between my parents and me. My brothers and sisters took care of me pretty well, but I always felt pressured by them, so I didn’t feel comfortable. Even though I was living with my family, it was nothing but the analytical world of business.”

Katagiri’s parents were devoted followers of the Shin (Pure Land) school of Buddhism. He said, “My parents were very serious Buddhists. They chanted every day. Every morning before school and work we sat before the shrine and performed morning prayers together.” He also recalled, “One priest came to my home to perform the family service every month. I didn’t know who he was because I was very small, but I had a certain dream, a sense that he was a wonderful guy, and I wished I could be such a person.” The little Katagiri was so filled with admiration for this priest that he began collecting and eating the stubs of burned incense sticks.

Remembering his childhood, Katagiri said “My parents didn’t force me to memorize scriptures—we just practiced together. Finally, when I was ten, I could perform a morning service and evening service in my father’s place. They didn’t teach me anything according to a catechism, but my parents put me right in the middle of a religious mood, so I accepted my vocation with my whole body—through my pores. I didn’t understand it then but now I really appreciate it. That was a big help.” Unfortunately, when he was ten years old his mother began suffering with complications of arthritis and tuberculosis and was often bedridden. Then on February 28, 1942, when he was fourteen years old, she died.

War Years

Katagiri entered the army air force when he was fifteen years old. World War II was raging, and the government ordered all boys age thirteen and older to leave school. They could either serve in the army or navy, or work in a weapons factory. There was no way to escape. Schools had already been preparing boys to become pilots by teaching them to fly gliders. Many years later, stories about crashing one of those gliders would work their way into his teachings.

Katagiri had once expected to become a pilot, but failed the qualifying exam due to dizziness. Instead, for eighteen months he served as an aircraft engine mechanic. It could be that he was stationed at Kanoya Air Base in southern Japan, because he later spoke of crying as he bid farewell to kamikaze pilots who took off on their final mission in planes he had checked.

Returning home after the war ended in 1945, Katagiri found his house and the family restaurant completely burned out, so he went looking for his father. As he remembered, “I found him and then I had to take care of my father, who was almost blind, and my brother [Kyoshi]’s wife and boys. So I went to work as an

engineer to produce a diesel engine. It was the very first kind—not magnetic, not using gasoline—using heavy oil. Every day I had to go to the company and try to support my family, but I didn't have enough food so I was hungry.”

“The situation in Japan was very confused—not much food and lots of problems over housing. And transportation was not good. Jumping on trains, people screamed and pushed into windows, sometimes fighting and killing each other. So I felt how transient and fragile human life was. I started to have some doubt about always working in the company, carrying a pencil and a lunchbox and building diesel engines. Should I spend my whole life like this?”

“One day I went to my high school friend's Shin Buddhist temple. I felt very peaceful there, as I had when visiting a Zen monastery before and after the war. I was very impressed by monastic life because it was not changed by the war. Everyday routines, zazen, chanting sutras, morning services, afternoon services—everything was exactly the same and the atmosphere was tranquil, peaceful. I was very impressed, so I decided I should become a monk.”

Ordination

Katagiri first requested ordination from his high school friend's mother and teacher, who was a Pure Land (Shin Buddhist) priest. She did not have the resources to accept another novice at that time, however she knew of a nearby Soto Zen priest who needed a trainee. So she took Katagiri to meet Daicho Hayashi Roshi at his small temple in the fishing and rice farming village of Kitada outside the city of Tsuruga.

Daicho Hayashi was a famous teacher, and at one time many people had wanted to study with him. But he was very unlucky with disciples. Of his ten original students, some ran away, some died or committed suicide, and some became mentally ill or landed in jail. When Katagiri arrived in 1946, all of them were gone and he was alone. Daicho accepted Katagiri and would become very attached to him as his only remaining disciple.

Katagiri was eighteen years old when he entered Taizoin temple on September 4, 1946. He was ordained on October 10, 1946, receiving the way name Jikai (Compassionate Ocean) and the dharma name Dainin (Great Patience). He did not have his family's support. Katagiri later said, “At that time I had responsibility for my family, so my father was really mad at me. But my father had a friend who was a priest, and he helped to reconcile my father and me. After a year I went back to see my father and he was very happy to see me.” Katagiri's father died less than two years later, on April 7, 1949.

FIRST TEACHER

Katagiri Roshi's *honshi* (root teacher), Kaigai Daicho (Beyond the Ocean, Great Tide) Hayashi Roshi (January 2, 1887–May 30, 1966), was the 26th abbot of Taizoin and had a colorful personal history. His father was wealthy and served as both a prefecture governor and as the first education minister of Japan during the Meiji reformation. But when Daicho was very young, his father chose a "second wife," a geisha, and told his first wife to leave. There was no divorce, she just disappeared. Daicho thought the second wife was his mother until one day, when he was six years old, he did something wrong. The second wife tied him to a persimmon tree and left him there. His nanny found him sobbing and said, "She wouldn't have done this if she was your real mother."

The next morning Daicho said he was going to school, but went instead to the Zen temple and asked to become a monk. Yozan Genki Hayashi Roshi, the master and a famous teacher in his time, said the boy must have permission from his father. So his father met the master. With a hard heart he said, "This boy lied and went to the temple when he said he was going to school. Therefore, he is not my son and not my business." Daicho never saw his father again. He became a monk at the age of ten, and took the family name of Hayashi when he was adopted by his master.

Growing up at the temple, Daicho Hayashi practiced and studied hard under the guidance of his master and he developed broad and deep learning. He also assisted a doctor who treated people at the temple once a week. From him, Hayashi developed a life-long interest in medicine and healing. After practicing at Eihei-ji for many years, Hayashi became a famous preacher, traveling all over Japan. He was also abbot of a large temple in Nara City, near Kyoto. But devotion to his master was to change the direction of his life.

Daicho Hayashi's master, Yozan Hayashi, was abbot of Taizoin when it was a large temple in Fukui City north of Kyoto. That temple was built by Sanemori Saito, a famous samurai general in the feudal age, who placed an important tomb there for soldiers who died in battle. Unfortunately, while Yozan was abbot Taizoin burned down. Many donations were made for rebuilding the temple, but after Yozan spent all the money drinking, the congregation asked him to leave. Daicho was very concerned about his disgraced master, so he searched for another temple where he could live.

He found Toko-ji, a small, unregistered temple nestled between the mountains and sea in the rural fishing and farming village of Kitada. To honor his master, Daicho arranged for the name Taizoin to be transferred to this temple, and then invited his master live there. Daicho also hoped to transfer the samurai tomb marker, which was still standing outside the old, burned out temple in Fukui City. It was difficult to get government permission for this move, but eventually the tomb marker arrived by train at the new Taizoin.

Around the same time, Daicho found his mother working in Tsuruga. They had been separated since his early childhood. She was very old now and he wanted to take care of her. So he settled her at Taizoin, where his master was also living. Daicho himself lived at his large temple in Nara City and traveled widely as a preacher. But then his master died and his mother was left alone at the small temple, so he had to make a decision. Should he move his mother to his temple in Nara City, or should he move to Taizoin? Finally he decided to live at Taizoin. That was fortunate—soon after he left the temple at Nara City, it burned down.

TEMPLE LIFE

In the beginning, young Katagiri was not confident in his decision to ordain in Zen instead of the Shin (Pure Land) school, or to become a monk at all. He later said, "I didn't have any idea of Buddhism before going to Taizoin. Until I became a monk, I didn't know anything about the practical aspects of Buddhism, or about life at the temple, or about life as a Buddhist. After becoming a monk I memorized scripture—the sutras. Even sleeping I was chanting the sutras. In eight months I think I memorized ten scriptures. I can't do it now."

"When I began practicing Buddhism, I was really happy because the world was blooming every day. It was wonderful! I didn't have time to make up questions. Then, the more deeply I entered practice, the more questions I had, because trying to understand Buddhism is just like grasping at clouds. Finally I had one big question: What is Buddhism? I thought, 'Why did I become a monk? That was a big mistake. Should I go back to what I was? Is there any other occupation for me?' There were lots of things that I was interested in, but actually there was no other occupation that fit me. There was no other way to go. So I stayed with the old priest who was my teacher, but lots of unanswered questions always came up."

"I had a big hope as a monk. I wanted to study Buddhism. But my teacher didn't teach me anything—he was just present. We walked together and did some of the same things together. He told me, 'You have to absorb it.' But I felt bored. I wanted to have excitement. So I asked, 'Why don't you give me something? Why don't you teach me?' And he said, 'Why haven't you asked me?' That was a shock!"

"Still, day-by-day I suffered and finally I told my teacher that I would like to give up being a Zen monk. I wanted to convert to the Pure Land School. I was very familiar with Pure Land because of my parents. I would not have to get up early in the morning and do zazen. My teacher said, 'Oh, yes, if you want, but wherever you may go, everything is the same.' Big shock! I was trying to do something with my excitement, my hope, but all this hope was snuffed out like pouring water over a fire."

Years later, Katagiri often mentioned Hayashi Roshi in his talks, looking back on their relationship and his own youth from a more mature perspective. He recalled, "My teacher didn't have an exciting, dramatic life.

The main characteristic of his life was very quiet. He lived in celibacy and didn't say much. His life was always going along, just like a stream of water. Whatever happened, he never changed his attitude. No matter what I did, whatever mistake I made, even when I grumbled and was mad at him, his way was just to go along as always. That is a very nice, but I hated it because I was always looking for something exciting. I was always greedy. But my teacher didn't care. He just lived. He just let me be alive every day."

"Once I made a big mistake and got into a fight with the boys in the village. The village people criticized me, but my teacher didn't try to protect me. What he did was simply let me be present there, in the usual way. That's it! When my room was messy and dirty, he would say, 'Clean your room. A messy room is your messy mind.' Very simple! Once, after a trip to the village, I was having a very difficult time; I was really nervous and had lost my appetite. He told me, 'If you are sick, stay in bed; if you aren't sick, get up!' But the most important thing I appreciate now is that he always let me be present first. Just like a mother holding a baby. I didn't notice it at the time, but when I went back to the temple I always felt some relief. When I went to the village, people looked at me in a certain way, but when I went back to the temple, I could just be there and be myself. That was really helpful."

Katagiri and his teacher didn't see eye to eye on where the young monk should go for his formal training. "Hayashi Roshi told me I should go to a Rinzai Zen monastery after becoming a monk. He recommended that I go to Hosshinji. In those days Sogaku Harada Roshi was head of that temple. But I said no. Well, because I didn't know what Rinzai was. I didn't have any idea of Buddhism, but my feeling was I really wanted to go to Eiheiiji. That's it! No discriminations. I just really wanted to go Eiheiiji. Finally my teacher accepted it." So when he was nineteen, after practicing with Hayashi Roshi at Taizoin for eight months, Katagiri left for formal training at Eiheiiji monastery.

MONASTIC AND ACADEMIC TRAINING

Katagiri Roshi's life changed on April 1, 1947 when he arrived at Eiheiiji, the Soto Zen training monastery. As he recalled it, "Everything was completely different—chanting sutras, morning service and standing, walking, eating. I was really impressed and every day I saw myself changing and fitting into everything. I had never experienced such a very calm, very scheduled, rhythmical existence. Before I was always thinking of myself, but at Eiheiiji I didn't have any way to think of me. I had to follow the schedule, think about what to do next, and pay attention to other people's behavior. So very naturally, my life was really changing every day. That was pretty good for me."

During eight weeks of intensive study of the writings of Dogen, Katagiri met Rendo Eko Hashimoto Roshi (1890–1965). He highly regarded Hashimoto as his second teacher or *onshi* (practice teacher) and as a key person in his life, "from whom I learned how great zazen was, and from whom I understood what the practice of Dogen's Buddhism was."

Hashimoto was a famous Zen master and a student of Oka Sotan Roshi. Both were known for their deep study of Eihei Dogen's *Shobogenzo* and strong zazen practice. When Katagiri was at Eiheiiji, Hashimoto was the *godo* (monk in charge of training). He put an emphasis on discipline and monastic rules. Hashimoto "saw deeply into Dogen's practice and wanted to follow Dogen's principle of life," Katagiri said. "He was a great teacher. He really embodied the spirit of the monk's life every day, through the actions of everyday life."

Katagiri had the honor of serving Hashimoto as *anja* (housekeeper or daily life attendant) for a year. "I was the attendant. I helped in cleaning his clothes, making tea for him, and when guests came I served tea, so I was very close to him every day—just like a mother and her child. I was very lucky." Hayashi Roshi may have influenced the appointment of his young disciple to the position. Hayashi had previously spent many years at Eiheiiji, and served as the *jisha* (ceremonial attendant) for Kumazawa Roshi when he held an important position there. Now Kumazawa was abbot of Eiheiiji, and the old connection may have been a positive factor in Katagiri's selection for this honor.

Known at Eiheiiji as a very serious young monk, Katagiri did his utmost to exactly follow the practice ways of Dogen as taught by Hashimoto. This even extended to following Dogen's prescribed toilet rituals, such

as snapping his fingers three times upon entering the toilet, and using earthen balls as a form of toilet paper. The other monks thought those practices were quite peculiar.

At Eihei-ji, Katagiri became confident and glad of his decision to become a monk. But one way that monastery life may have disappointed him was the scarcity of food. He once thought that monks always had something to eat. But at Eihei-ji, there were times when there was no food. Later he recalled about how kitchen crews would go into the countryside to pick grass and weeds and use them to make soup. It was all they had to feed the monks.

In 1948 Katagiri completed the duties of *shuso* (leader of the monks-in-training) at Eihei-ji with the *hossen shiki* (dharma inquiry) ceremony, an important stage in Soto Zen priest certification. Then, on November 24, 1949, at the age of twenty-one, he received dharma transmission from Hayashi Roshi in the *denpo* ceremony. He performed *zuisse* (ceremony of respect for one of the two founders of Soto Zen) at Eihei-ji on March 13, 1950, and on May 5 he completed his three years of formal monastic training.

After training at Eihei-ji, Katagiri wanted to continue training with Hashimoto Roshi at his temple, Hokyo-ji, a branch of Eihei-ji. Hayashi Roshi said, "You can go, but a teacher will not change you. You must change you." Katagiri was deeply impressed by this, so he decided to return to Taizoin. But he was not happy with the life of taking care of his master, maintaining the temple, and serving the villagers.

As he recalled it, "Then a new suffering started in my life: I left the monastery to help at my teacher's temple. It was quite different—a new life. In the monastery every day is completely set up. But when I went back to my temple, there were only two guys, my teacher and me, and I had to do many things—cleaning, washing the clothes, making the meals, performing the service, helping the village people. I had to do everything, and I really hated it." He said, "I didn't want to always carry this kind of suffering, so I decided to go to college and study Buddhism. My teacher didn't advise me to go. He was not happy. My teacher once had ten disciples, but all ten left him. So he wanted me to stay with him."

There were no records of his previous schooling because his high school had been destroyed in the war. So, to qualify for college admission, Katagiri had to pass an exam. He passed and then, despite Hayashi's objections, he left for college two years after returning to Taizoin. Shortly before departing Taizoin, Katagiri performed the *zuisse* ceremony at Sojiji temple on January 12, 1952, thus completing the final requirement for full priest ordination.

University Years

Katagiri was twenty-four years old when he became a student at Komazawa University in Tokyo, a Soto Zen institution. Both the Sotoshu organization and the Japanese government provided scholarship funds to cover his tuition. His brother Kiyoshi, with some assistance from his other brothers, also supported him with money to cover his living expenses.

Katagiri entered Komazawa on April 1, 1952. He majored in Buddhist Studies and wrote his thesis on *manas* (ego consciousness). After graduation on March 1, 1956, he stayed on at Komazawa for graduate work at Sotoshu Kyoka Kenshujo, the Soto Propagation and Research Institute. There, from April 1, 1956 until graduation on March 1, 1959, he studied how to teach English-speaking people. He said, "I learned how to teach Buddhism to many kinds of people: children, young and middle-aged people, and old-aged people."

While attending Komazawa University, he lived in the home of Bokusho Kakudo Yokoi, an associate professor of Buddhist Studies. Katagiri once said that when Yokoi Roshi came into a room, everyone suddenly became happy. Yokoi was a disciple of Ian Kishizawa (1865-1955), an important Zen master who taught that Zen is best understood through the practice of *zuishin*, master and disciple sharing daily life together.

Yokoi Roshi was Katagiri's third teacher; one who scolded him frequently, but who also became his closest friend. Sadly he died from cancer in 1975. Later Katagiri said of him, "For five years I lived with my friend

Yokoi Roshi while I attended Komazawa University. Yokoi Roshi was a wonderful person, a beautiful person. He was not always kindly. Sometimes he was bitter and used rough words, but the basis of his life was compassion. There was continuous compassion there, so he always had many visitors. Every day he was discussing some aspect of Buddhism, talking about human life, and counseling human problems.” It seems that Yokoi’s style made a deep impression on Katagiri, who later adopted a similar listening and counseling role with his own students.

After finishing his graduate studies, Katagiri worked in the International Division at Sotoshu Shumicho (Soto Zen administrative headquarters) in Tokyo. He was there for three years beginning April 1, 1959, and staying one year beyond the two years of service required in exchange for his graduate school tuition. At the International Division, Katagiri had the job of taking care of all Soto temples in the United States. So, on May 21, 1959, as an official duty, he went to the airport to see off Shunryu Suzuki Roshi when he left for Sokoji temple in San Francisco. Katagiri remembered, “That is when I first met Suzuki Roshi. I met him just to say good-bye.” A few years later they would meet again in San Francisco.

MARRIAGE AND FAMILY

Dainin Katagiri met Tomoe Kanazawa in 1960. They met through Tomoe’s former English teacher and then friend, Miss Tanaka. Tomoe was born on February 16, 1932, in Tokyo and was raised there. Near the end of World War II, she missed a year of school because she was ill with tuberculosis. When she returned she attended a different school and, unlike her old school, this new one taught English. Tomoe found herself far behind the other students. So, to catch up, she had private English lessons at a small *juku* (after-school school) taught by Miss Tanaka. Later, after she graduated university, Tomoe became a teacher herself and had a *juku* in her parents’ home. She remained friends with Miss Tanaka, and visited her home often. It was there that she was introduced to Dainin Katagiri and soon they agreed to marry.

Tomoe recalls, “Before we married, I went to a one-week sesshin with Kojun Noiri Roshi at Daitoin temple near Fukuroi. Hojo-san (as Katagiri Roshi was later known as abbot in Minnesota) and his friend Yokoi Roshi suggested that I go. My English teacher was a lay disciple of Noiri Roshi, and Noiri Roshi and Yokoi Roshi were dharma brothers through Ian Kishizawa Roshi. Hojo-san respected Noiri Roshi and Kishizawa Roshi very much. And so I went. There were many people at the sesshin: all were monks who came from outside or lay people. Kosen Nishiyama, who later translated the *Shobogenzo* with John Stevens, was there. He was very young, a freshman at the university. Hoitsu Suzuki, who was a sophomore at Komazawa University, was also there. That was the first time I met Suzuki Roshi’s oldest son and dharma heir.”

Dainin and Tomoe were married in October 1960 by Shosai Hatori, one of Katagiri’s graduate school teachers. She was twenty-eight and he was four years older. During their almost thirty-year marriage, they were blessed with two sons, Yasuhiko, born in Japan, and Ejyo, born in California, and now there are also three grandsons.

LEAVING JAPAN

Bishop Reirin Yamada, formerly abbot of Eiheiji, was now abbot of Zenshuji Soto Mission in Los Angeles (1960–1965) and also the head of Soto Zen in America. Yamada wanted to research how to promote and teach Zen Buddhism in the United States. So Soto Zen headquarters selected Katagiri to assist him. Katagiri recalled, “I was invited by him to be the first member of the Institute for Propagating Zen Buddhism in North America. I was appointed to go to Los Angeles for two years—just to be there and study Buddhism in the United States.”

Previously, headquarters had wanted to send Katagiri to Brazil or Peru, to serve large expatriate Japanese communities living there. But when an eager Katagiri asked his teacher for permission, Hayashi Roshi would not give it. Hayashi felt that he had been very unlucky when it came to disciples. He really wanted his one last disciple to stay with him. But now, with headquarters wanting to send Katagiri to Los Angeles, Hayashi capitulated and allowed him to go.

When Dainin departed for California in 1963, Tomoe and their two-year-old son Yasuhiko had to stay behind. Tomoe did not receive immediate government clearance to leave Japan because of the tuberculosis she suffered in junior high school. It would take two years to get things sorted out. For most of that time, Tomoe and little Yasuhiko lived in their own place in Tokyo. But for the first four months they lived at Taizoin. Hayashi Roshi had rebuilt the *hondo* (ceremonial hall) but had not yet rebuilt the *keisando* (living area). The ceiling was almost nonexistent when Tomoe stayed there. She said that snow fell in all over and you could lie on your futon and look at the stars.

Tomoe remembers that Hayashi lived very straightly: he didn't drink, always wore robes, ate all his meals with *oryoki*, and kept the practice schedule, even when no one was there. He was allergic to many things and was often sick. He didn't go into the village to spend time with people or talk much at all. Mostly he quietly followed the schedule and then sat by the *hibachi*, where he loved to smoke a pipe with a long bamboo stem and metal bowl. He was very interested in the I Ching and kept a set of throwing sticks in a special box in the altar. Sometimes he listened to the radio, although the reception was poor because of the mountains. Tomoe had a small TV and they put the antenna on the *hondo* roof. Even though the reception was awful, Hayashi loved to watch sumo wrestling.

Hayashi Roshi died in 1966 and even though he was living in the United States, Katagiri became the official abbot of Taizoin. In the end Hayashi Roshi was alone at Taizoin, as he had long feared. Katagiri heard that Hayashi called for him before he died. Katagiri once remarked, "My teacher was really attached to me because I was his only disciple; he took care of me very much. I really appreciate it, but unfortunately I left. Personally, in my mind, I really apologize to my teacher, but I cannot stay feeling guilty. The more I feel guilty, the more I have to devote myself, offering my life to Buddha dharma. That is the best way of apologizing. Nobody has that temple now. I am the abbot, but Taizoin is empty."

CALIFORNIA YEARS

When he arrived in Los Angeles on October 10, 1963, Dainin Katagiri was thirty-five years old. He was there for a two-year course at Bishop Yamada's new Institute for Propagating Zen Buddhism in North America. He was also to help with the Japanese monk's training program and with Zenshuji's English-speaking members and guests. But the work of the institute didn't go well and Katagiri was dissatisfied with his life at the temple. So after five months he left for San Francisco.

San Francisco

Arriving in San Francisco, Katagiri stayed at Iru Price's independent Buddhist center and made arrangements to study English, intending to get a job and soon be living on his own. But things didn't go as planned.

Katagiri wasn't aware of it, but Shunryu Suzuki Roshi, founder of the fledgling San Francisco Zen Center, was already interested in him. Suzuki heard about Katagiri from Jean Ross. She had met him in Japan in March 1962. At that time, Katagiri worked at Sotoshu headquarters in Tokyo. He was responsible for foreigners coming to Japan for Zen practice, so he met her at the airport and escorted her to Eihei-ji. She later visited him and Tomoe at Taizoin.

As Katagiri recalls, "I wanted to go to college in San Francisco—making money by myself and studying English. I already had a schoolboy's place. But I was caught by Jean Ross, one of Suzuki Roshi's American students. I had helped her when she visited Japan. Now she recommended me to help Zen Center. She said: 'Please don't live separately from Zen Center; please help us.' I was not agreed, but she constantly recommended to me: just see Suzuki Roshi."

"So I went to Sokoji Temple to see him, and he immediately said, 'That's a good opportunity—please help us.' Even though I had decided I wanted to go one way, here was a completely different way. So I was completely caught by Suzuki Roshi. Then I met the students of Zen Center and they said: 'Please come, please help us.' I was completely caught by everybody and finally I couldn't say no, so I decided to come to Sokoji anyway."

Sokoji was an established Soto Zen temple, founded in 1934 to serve the San Francisco Japanese-American community. Suzuki arrived there in 1959, and Americans had been drawn to him from the very beginning. Suzuki arranged with Bishop Yamada to have Katagiri officially transferred to Sokoji, where he would finish out his two-year assignment as a trainee of Yamada's Institute while serving as an assistant to Suzuki. Katagiri later said: "Contacting Americans, I felt a home for my heart in the peaceful, harmonious, and open world beyond races and cultures."

When Katagiri arrived in San Francisco, Suzuki Roshi had about fifteen American students. Zen Center had recently been incorporated as a separate organization, but was still using part of the Sokoji temple building for its activities. Around the corner was a Shin (Pure Land) Buddhist temple, where Katagiri studied *shodo* (calligraphy) with Mrs. Hanayama, wife of their bishop. Also at that temple was Koshin Ogui, a Shin priest who became a lifelong friend. Katagiri studied English at a little school in Pacific Heights and began to give talks. In the beginning no one could understand his English, but people came anyway.

As the end of Katagiri's two year assignment to Bishop Yamada approached, Zen Center had a decision to make: could they make a long-term commitment to support Katagiri and his family? Suzuki was in favor and the decision was made—Katagiri would stay. On October 10, 1965, Katagiri was officially appointed priest for both Sokoji and Zen Center. Around the same time, Tomoe was finally cleared to leave Japan. With four-year-old Yasuhiko she traveled by cargo ship, arriving in San Francisco on November 13.

Near San Francisco in Palo Alto, where he was a student at Stanford University, Tim Burkett had founded a small Zen sitting group. From its beginning in 1964, Suzuki Roshi attended their weekly meetings and gave dharma talks, talks that were later edited to become *Zen Mind, Beginners Mind*. Suzuki soon asked Katagiri to visit the group on alternate weeks. Katagiri was just beginning to drive a car so, unlike Suzuki, he drove himself to the meetings. He left San Francisco very early in the morning and returned after giving a dharma talk and having breakfast with the group. By 1966 Katagiri had total responsibility for the growing group, which had moved to a permanent location in Los Altos, and warmly welcomed him. Eventually, with Suzuki and Katagiri's support, this group became the independent Haiku Zendo led by Kobun Chino Roshi.

Katagiri became a beloved teacher in San Francisco, but he did not find the job easy. Pema Chodron, in her 2001 book, *The Wisdom of No Escape and the Path of Lovingkindness*, told of hearing him recount the challenges he faced in the beginning: "He had been a monk in Japan—where everything was so precise, so clean and so neat—for a long time. In the U.S., his students were hippies with long, unwashed hair and ragged clothes and no shoes. He didn't like them. He couldn't help it—he just couldn't stand those hippies. Their style offended everything in him. He said, 'So all day I would give talks about compassion, and at night I would go home and weep and cry because I realized I had no compassion at all. Because I didn't like my students, therefore I had to work much harder to develop my heart.'"

Katagiri served Suzuki Roshi as an assistant teacher for seven years. He helped with the Japanese congregation at Sokoji, with Zen Center students, and also with the 1967 establishment of Tassajara Zen Mountain Center in Carmel Valley. In 1969 the Sokoji congregation forced Suzuki to choose between serving them and Zen Center students, so he decided to resign from Sokoji. After that, Katagiri was given the same choice and on June 1, 1969, he also resigned. That fall, the San Francisco Zen Center opened the doors to its own building at 300 Page Street. Suzuki then qualified Katagiri as *sanzen dojo shike* (supervisory training master). The honorific title "roshi" became attached to his name after the summer 1971 training period at Tassajara, when Suzuki agreed with the Zen students' desire to address him as Katagiri Roshi and requested that they do so.

By 1970, Katagiri knew that he wanted to leave the San Francisco Zen Center. Since the fall of 1969, Suzuki had been talking about giving dharma transmission to Richard Baker. Then, in August 1970, he left for Japan where he performed that ceremony on December 8, 1970. Suzuki hinted that he might retire as abbot in order to work closely with a few people. He intended that Baker would then become abbot and Katagiri the senior dharma teacher. But Katagiri wanted to go a different way. So, in April 1971, he wrote to Suzuki expressing his intention to resign soon.

At the time, Suzuki Roshi was recovering from emergency gallbladder surgery. Suzuki and his wife Mitsu knew that a biopsy had revealed cancer, but they had decided to keep it secret. After receiving Katagiri's letter, a deeply disappointed Suzuki asked him to please stay, but Katagiri didn't agree until Suzuki made a formal request. Then he agreed to stay a while longer, and to lead the fall practice period at Tassajara. Months later, when he learned that Suzuki had cancer, Katagiri wondered if knowing that he wanted to leave may have made Suzuki weaker.

Katagiri officially resigned from the San Francisco Zen Center on September 30, 1971, but he did lead the fall practice period at Tassajara as he had promised. He had not decided where he would go after leaving San Francisco, but was very interested in Minnesota. He and Tomoe had recently been to Minneapolis for a visit and *sesshin* (meditation retreat). There was also a group in Portland, Oregon, that hoped Katagiri would move there.

Unfortunately, Suzuki Roshi's health began to fail that fall. On October 10, everyone finally learned that he had cancer. Then he was dying and making final plans for the installation of his successor. Many in San Francisco hoped he would choose Katagiri to be the new head of Zen Center. But Katagiri was in a different dharma lineage and Suzuki felt that his successor must be one of his own disciples. His choice was Richard Baker, the only student to whom he had given dharma transmission. Baker Roshi was installed on November 21.

After Suzuki's death on December 4, 1971, there were some difficulties in the sangha, so Zen Center asked Katagiri to stay and help during the transition from Suzuki's to Baker's leadership. Katagiri agreed to postpone making a decision about where he would teach in the future. He promised to stay in California for one year to help Zen Center students, but he and his family would move away from Zen Center itself.

Monterey and Departure

Jean Ross was living in Carmel, on the coast south of San Francisco, where she had opened her own zendo in 1968. She urged Katagiri to move to nearby Monterey and teach from there. In that location he could help the sanghas in San Francisco, Carmel, and at Tassajara in the Carmel Valley. Her group found a house in the Monterey/Pacific Grove area that could serve as both a zendo and home for the Katagiri family. At the end of Tassajara's fall practice period, the family moved in and on December 27, 1971, Katagiri became the founder of Sona Zendo.

While living and teaching in Monterey, Katagiri continued to develop relationships with Zen students in Minnesota. At the same time, the practice in Monterey was not developing as well as Katagiri had hoped. It seemed to be a way station between Tassajara and San Francisco: people dropped in all the time, but there weren't very many committed students. That was not exactly what Katagiri wanted. So during a late-summer 1972 visit to Minneapolis, Katagiri made a big decision: when he completed his promised year in California, he would move to Minnesota and take up teaching there.

The Katagiri family left for Minnesota in December 1972. Some San Francisco students loaded the Katagiris' belongings into a U-Haul and drove it to Minneapolis, where Katagiri became the founding abbot of the Minnesota Zen Meditation Center.

The move to Minnesota did not end Katagiri's warm relationship with the San Francisco sangha. He frequently returned to lead practice events at City Center, Tassajara Zen Monastery, and Green Gulch Farm. From 1984 to 1985 he served as interim abbot for a year to help settle turmoil that arose following the ouster of Abbot Richard Baker. Some wondered if he would be asked to stay permanently. But it was Reb Anderson, a dharma heir of Baker Roshi, who was named abbot.

When the San Francisco Zen Center celebrated its twenty-fifth anniversary in 1986, Katagiri offered this poem, written in September and published in the Fall 1986 issue of *Wind Bell*:

I Have Taught Nothing to You

You are nearly as old as the number of years it has been
since I came to America.

I have taught nothing to you at all.
I have done nothing for you at all.

But,
You have done a lot for me.

I can tell you one thing you have taught me;
“Peel off your cultural skins,
One by one,
One after another,
Again and again,
And go on with your story.”

How thick are the layers of cultural clothes I have already put on?
How would it possible to tell a story without them?
How would it be possible to peel off the thick wallpaper
in my old house?
How would it be possible to ease my pain
whenever the paper is torn off?

If I were not to agree with your teaching,
Believe it or not,
My life would be drifting in space,
Like an astronaut separate from his ship
without any connections.

Now I'm aware that I alone am in the vast openness
of the sea
And cause the sea to be the sea.

Just swim.
Just swim.
Go on with your story.

Today, a portion of Katagiri Roshi's ashes are interred at Tassajara, next to those of Suzuki Roshi. And a stained glass window depicting Katagiri's hands in *gassho*, made by renowned glass artist Narcissus (Robert) Quagliata, is installed in the doorway to the dining room at the San Francisco Zen Center.

MINNESOTA'S ZEN PIONEERS

Before Katagiri Roshi arrived in Minnesota, people interested in practicing *zazen* (seated meditation) had been finding each other since the late sixties. Several small sitting groups had already formed. The first was initially made up primarily of Macalester College students. In 1967 they began meeting weekly at the Saint Paul home of Beverly and David White. Beverly White, a Quaker who taught yoga and lectured on comparative religion at Macalester, had practiced Zen in Japan in the Fifties and more recently in San Francisco. She gladly shared what she had learned, and soon the group grew to include local people such as Erik Storlie and Sally Brown, who also practiced in San Francisco. The group began studying koans and holding weekend *sesshins* (meditation retreats) without a teacher.

Karen and Jeffrey Thorkelson began sitting *zazen* at their Minneapolis home in 1968, following the instructions they found in Phillip Kapleau's book, *The Three Pillars of Zen*. The book had been

recommended to them by Karen's graduate school friend Reb Anderson. After practicing by themselves for a while, they began to feel the need for a teacher. So they went to Rochester, New York, to meet Kapleau Roshi. They went on to meet Suzuki Roshi in San Francisco and it was there that they felt they had "come home." Coincidentally, Beverly White happened to be at the San Francisco Zen Center at the same time, and they met her there. Returning to Minnesota, they joined the weekly meeting of White's group in Saint Paul.

Ken Barklind started a small zazen meditation group around 1969. It originally met once a week at a Unitarian church in Minneapolis, then later moved to the Barklind home in Edina. Robert Pirsig, who had almost finished writing his now famous book, *Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance*, joined the group in 1970 at the invitation of member Sylvia Sutherland, and a year later his wife Nancy James joined. Like Pirsig, Sutherland was a friend of Beverly White and also occasionally sat zazen with her group in Saint Paul.

Individuals in these informal Zen groups hoped to someday bring a teacher to Minnesota. At the same time, and unbeknownst to them, Katagiri Roshi was developing an interest in the Midwest. As he later recounted to Karen Thorkelson, one time he was flying home to California from New York with Suzuki Roshi. As they were passing over the Midwest, Suzuki pointed and said, "That's where the real America is." A seed was planted in Katagiri's mind. He began to consider that in the Midwest students might be more average Americans, not the drug-using hippies that gravitated to San Francisco.

Reb Anderson, Karen Thorkelson's graduate school friend who grew up in Minnesota, had moved to California and become a close student of Suzuki. He also knew Katagiri very well. When he realized that Katagiri wanted to leave San Francisco, he encouraged him to consider moving to Minnesota. He told him that dharma teachers always go to New York or California—they forget the Midwest. Acting as a kind of matchmaker, Anderson told Katagiri that there are people in Minnesota who want to practice, but don't have a teacher, so they have to come to California. And, even though it is beautiful in Minnesota, teachers are not interested because of the cold climate. Tomoe Katagiri remembers her husband saying: "If I can go, I want to go the place where nobody wants to go. That is why I want to go to Minnesota."

Alice and Richard Haspray were Macalester students who sat with Beverly White's group. In 1971 they moved to the San Francisco Zen Center, where they lived in the same apartment building as the Katagiri family. From San Francisco, Alice wrote with the news that Katagiri was interested in relocating to Minnesota. So Karen Thorkelson, after attending a one-week sesshin in San Francisco, visited the Katagiris at their home to find out if he was serious about Minnesota and to open a conversation about the future.

To learn more about Minnesota, Katagiri and Tomoe traveled to Minneapolis for a visit in late August, 1971. They stayed first at the home of Sally Brown and then with the Thorkelsons. After going to the State Fair and enjoying other local sightseeing, Katagiri led a one-day sesshin at Beverly White's house on a very hot and humid day. Lynne Warkov, Karen Thorkelson, Robert Pirsig, and several others participated, as did Tomoe. Back in California, with Suzuki now gravely ill, Katagiri reported that he didn't feel he could make a move to Minnesota under such circumstances.

It was during Katagiri Roshi's August 1971 visit that Karen and Jeff Thorkelson got to know Lynne and Saul Warkov. The Warkovs had recently arrived in Minneapolis after studying with Suzuki Roshi in San Francisco for many years. They knew the Katagiri family well and their children had played together. The Warkovs sat with Beverly White's group, and then began a daily practice at their own home. Soon the Thorkelsons, Warkovs, and Sally Brown, who all lived near each other in southeast Minneapolis, formed a meditation group. They met for zazen every morning at the Warkov home and on Saturdays they went out for breakfast. Soon the three families rented a large house and began to live communally. They turned their living room into a zendo and their home became a Zen center. This, they hoped, would be a further enticement for Katagiri Roshi to move to Minnesota.

After Suzuki's death in December 1971, Lynne Warkov arranged for Katagiri to visit the Twin Cities again. He arrived in January, this time at the invitation of Reverend William Hunt, director of the Newman Center at the University of Minnesota, to participate in a program on Buddhism and Christianity. The visit

gave the Minnesotans and Katagiri another chance to get to know each other. But Katagiri brought the news that he was moving to Monterey and opening a Zen center there. He explained that things were unsettled at the San Francisco Zen Center during the transition to Baker Roshi's leadership. He told them that he had agreed to help by staying in California for one year, and couldn't make any promises to Minnesota. The Minnesotans agreed to wait a year for his decision.

Minnesotan Erik Storlie practiced at Katagiri Roshi's zendo in Monterey in the spring of 1972. In the past he had often encouraged Katagiri to move to Minnesota, and now he made the case again. That summer, Lynne Warkov, Karen Thorkelson, and Sally Brown also visited Katagiri, practicing with him in San Francisco, Santa Barbara, and Monterey. They asked if he would be coming to Minnesota at the end of the year, but Katagiri was still undecided about the future. So they invited him to come for another visit and to lead a five-day sesshin over Labor Day.

This time the whole Katagiri family traveled to Minneapolis to see if they would like to live there. Yasuhiko was ten and Ejyo was five. The kids had a good time: Sally Brown had two children and her daughter was the same age as Yasuhiko; Lynn Warkov had two children and her son was just a year younger than Yasuhiko. Jeff Thorkelson took the three families camping at Taylor's Falls. Finally, while the group was painting the zendo at the shared house, Katagiri made his decision: Yes! The night before the sesshin, at a potluck dinner, Lynne Warkov made the announcement. Everyone gasped. Katagiri smiled and said he expected that he would be here life after life.

Now members of the various Zen groups coalesced around Katagiri Roshi. They had to quickly begin planning for the arrival of the Katagiri family. On October 10, 1972, they held the Zen Center incorporation meeting. There were about a dozen people in the core group. All were asked to be on the founding board of directors. Most accepted, and the process of creating an organizational structure and developing solid finances got under way.

Karen Thorkelson arranged accommodations for the Katagiri family. An acquaintance of hers owned the four-plex apartment building next to the shared house in southeast Minneapolis, and she was able to reserve the next available unit. Later, the new organization also rented the unit above the Katagiri apartment, which became the zendo. The other two units were taken by the Randolph and the Van Cleave families. So the entire apartment building was occupied by Zen practitioners, and gradually a Zen community grew up around the two buildings.

ZEN CENTER IN MINNEAPOLIS

Dainin Katagiri Roshi and his family arrived in Minneapolis on December 15, 1972. At the age of forty-four, Katagiri became the first Zen master to take up residence in the region between New York and California. The family moved into their apartment at 425 Fifth Street Southeast in Minneapolis near the University of Minnesota campus. Next door, three of the founding families shared the large house at 421 Fifth Street, which had become a kind of headquarters for the whole group. Its living room also served as the official zendo until July, when the group began to use its new zendo in the unit above the Katagiri apartment.

Katagiri established the traditional practice schedule of morning and evening zazen, lectures on Saturday mornings and Wednesday evenings, and regular sesshins. Meanwhile the founding board of directors worked on the organizational structure. All rejoiced when, on January 27, 1973, the Minnesota Zen Meditation Center, its name chosen by Katagiri, was legally incorporated as a nonprofit religious organization. Lynne Warkov was named president, Robert Pirsig vice-president, Jeffrey Thorkelson treasurer, Karen Thorkelson corresponding secretary, and Erik Storlie recording secretary.

As Katagiri drew more students, the group outgrew its apartment zendo. Meanwhile, Bob Pirsig's *Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance* had become a best seller. Pirsig and his wife Nancy James generously offered Zen Center \$20,000 from the book's royalties, to go toward purchase of a new building. Another sangha family graciously arranged a low-interest loan, and the group began their search for a new location.

What they found was “Vista del Lago,” a colonial Spanish-style mansion at 3343 East Calhoun Parkway in south Minneapolis by the shore of Lake Calhoun.

The house was built in 1905 by Dr. M. Russell Wilcox, after his wife fell in love with the Spanish style on a trip to Spain. The next residents were the Saul and Louise Rusoff and their family. The Rusoffs were a wonderful, civic-minded family and owners of the American Bindery in Minneapolis. Daughter Marly later explained that after Saul died from cancer in July 1968, the family had to sell the home. Their realtor, however, never listed it because he hoped to buy it himself at a low price. It was the only house on the parkway with a curb cut for a driveway and he intended to build a high rise on the property. But the neighbors protested, and in the end the property was sold to the House of Icarus, a center for people in recovery from substance use challenges. When MZMC began searching for a new location, this property was again for sale.

On May 30, 1975, after additional fundraising and securing a mortgage for the rest of the \$60,000 purchase price, Zen Center bought the building. Eight months of renovations later, on February 1, 1976, Katagiri happily performed an opening ceremony for the new zendo. Zen practice got underway on the main floor and the Katagiri family moved into living quarters on the upper two floors.

Over the years, many illustrious guests visited Minneapolis to meet with Katagiri Roshi and offer teachings and fund-raising events for the Zen Center. There were poets and writers such as Gary Snyder, Robert Bly, Philip Whalen, Alan Ginsberg, and Fritjof Capra. Shakuhachi flute master Masayuki Koga was in residence for a time. Teachers, scholars, and translators of various Buddhist traditions offered lectures and workshops, among them Thich Nhat Hanh, Eido Shimano Roshi, Lama Tara Tulku, Lama Kunga Rinpoche, Robert Thurman, Francis Dojun Cook, Huston Smith, and John Stevens. These visitors contributed much to the Zen Center, as did talented sangha members such as writers Robert Pirsig and Natalie Goldberg, whose popular talks and workshops raised money and goodwill.

Arrival of Statues and Practice Objects

It is a Soto Zen tradition for a sculpted image of Manjusri Bodhisattva to be enshrined in a zendo. So Eshun Yoshida Roshi, abbot of Kaizenji, dharma heir Katagiri’s second teacher, Eko Hashimoto Roshi, and Tomoe’s sewing teacher, stepped in to provide the statue. She generously arranged for the gift of an eleven-inch tall Shoso Manjusri Bodhisattva for the new zendo.

Hashimoto Roshi said this about the statue: “These days it is common to see Manjusri sitting on a lion and holding a sword, but this is not traditionally accurate. The traditional way, or *nyoho*, is for Manjusri to appear as a priest sitting on a chair. According to the authentic Buddha way, the chair is the lion or diamond seat. Holding a sword symbolizes Buddha’s wisdom, but in Shoso Manjusri’s image, the *kekka-fuza* (full lotus) position is Buddha’s wisdom. This diamond seat, which emanates Buddha’s wisdom, is not for Manjusri alone, but for all of the *jos* (seats) of the practitioners. We regard all of the practitioners who come to the *sodo* (meditation hall) as bodhisattvas. As a representative of these bodhisattvas, Shoso Manjusri Bodhisattva is enshrined in the center of the *sodo*.”

The sculpture that Yoshida Roshi gave was the small, sculptor’s model that was made before creating the much larger version enshrined at her temple in Tsushima, Japan. Hashimoto had designed that temple, which Yoshida then built. He also guided the making of this Manjusri. When the sculptor was a soldier, he had vowed not to harm anyone, so he always shot into the air. Eventually he was wounded by a bullet in his thigh. Yoshida originally intended to commission a larger figure for Minnesota, which she would finance in the traditional way by performing *takuhatsu* (begging practice). But sadly she became seriously ill before she was able to raise the necessary funds.

Before arriving in Minnesota, the statue went to several temples in Japan to help “settle” their zendos. Then, in December 1975, Katagiri went to Japan to receive the statue and carry it back to Minneapolis. “The Buddha is coming here so I should get him,” he said. Sadly, this precious statue, along with a beautiful Avalokitesvara Bodhisattva statue given in 1978 by Doitsu Harada Roshi’s temple, Shosoji, was stolen during a 1998 break-in and never recovered. Their images, however, endure in photographs.

Jean Ross also sent a gift for the new zendo—a Japanese *mokugyo*, the wooden fish-shaped percussion instrument used to set the pace of chanting. She had received it as a gift in Japan, and used it in Monterey. When she disbanded her Carmel group soon after Katagiri left California, she took it with her to Michigan. Now she felt that it should be with Katagiri in Minneapolis.

A huge bowl bell was the next important practice instrument to arrive. Japanese engravings on the bell say that it was made in 917 A.D. (Engi 17) for the Genpukuji temple. It may, however, be a reproduction. Katagiri Roshi first saw the bell in 1975 at the Mann Ranch conference center in Ukiah, California. The ranch owner explained that it had belonged to his grandfather, who brought it from Japan seventy years before. Katagiri recognized its importance and asked: If that bell is ever for sale, please let me know. Eleven years later, when the huge bell did become available, a fund-raising campaign raised \$500 to realize Katagiri's dream of bringing its majestic voice to Minnesota. Tomoe flew to California, where David Chadwick arranged packing so she could bring it home on the plane.

At the big bell's eye opening ceremony at Hokyoji on September 20, 1986, Katagiri proclaimed, "The dragon roars in the mature quality of the bell, 'pervasive joy.' Its harmonious melody matches well with the moon of Hokyoji." Then he spoke directly to the bell: "I wonder how you have gone through the vicissitudes of life with silence? The Buddha's roaring knows inexhaustibly." After dedicating the ceremony to the Buddha spirit of the bell, he continued: "We met each other at Mann Ranch in California several years ago. I was told you came to America seventy years ago with the Thomas family. You served them sometimes as a container of firewood, sometimes as a plant pot, sometimes as a rain water container under the eave. I wonder how much you missed your own home! I struck gently."

COUNTRY MONASTERY

With things established in Minneapolis, the sangha looked to the future with a new goal: to realize their teacher's dream of building a monastery. Katagiri Roshi had said, "This is my dream, to establish a Zen monastery in the United States. A monastery is not only the building, not only the people, but also the molding of an environment. You have to think carefully how to use space: how to put the *tatami* (woven rush grass) mats, where Manjusri should be placed, where the toilet is, lots of things.

And then when you are there your life is completely inside a bamboo stick. Usually your life is just like a snake, always going zigzag. But when you are right in the middle of a monastery, even though your life is like a snake, that snake is in the bamboo stick and very naturally you straighten out. Your life is straight and that straight is really wonderful. Then, when you leave this bamboo stick, your life is really alive. This is what I have learned in a monastery. I like it very much. That's why I want to have a Zen monastery. That is my dream.

My dream is beautiful, a huge job in my life, but even if my dream doesn't come true in my lifetime, it is going on life after life. I can still have a chance in my next life. If I believe in that way it's not necessary to rush into it, it's not necessary to go slowly. When we have to hurry, we have to hurry; when we have to be slow, we have to be slow. But if I really want to build a monastery in my lifetime, I have to really rush."

The search for a location led to a lovely parcel of undeveloped pasture, creek, and woodland near the small town of Eitzen in the rolling hills of southeastern Minnesota. Katagiri loved the site, choosing it over other less challenging options. Still, it was a manageable drive from Minneapolis and well located to serve students in neighboring states. Zen Center refinanced the original mortgage on the Lake Calhoun house, taking on more debt, which it used to improve that house and also make a down payment on the land. On July 7, 1978, the sangha purchased the property for \$109,000 in a signing event held at Nancy James' Blue Heron Cafe.

Katagiri's vision was to recreate Dogen's thirteenth-century monastic training practices in a quiet, natural setting. He believed in the importance of time spent in more primitive conditions, leaving behind the distractions of modern life for a while. He wanted two large buildings: a Buddha hall for chanting and services and a zendo for zazen. Cupboards for personal belongings would be at each sitting place in the

zendo so students could sleep there. With future construction needs in mind, 2000 Norway and white pines were planted in April and May 1979. Thirty years later some of these pines were harvested and used to frame the sodo building at Ryumonji, the monastery founded by Katagiri's disciple Shoken Winecoff.

The first sesshin on the land was held in October 1980 under a large Army surplus tent. Over the next two summers, a zendo, teacher's cabin, and kitchen/bath house were built. A workshop/dormitory was built in 1989, and other development continued over the years. In 2007, the Minnesota Zen Meditation Center and Hokyoji amicably separated into two independent organizations. The monastery is now incorporated as Hokyoji Zen Practice Community, and is guided by Katagiri's disciple Dokai Georges.

TEMPLE NAMES

The Minnesota Zen Meditation Center's city and country practice centers received their official temple names in 1983. Katagiri Roshi followed the time-honored traditions of naming Buddhist temples by giving each facility a two-fold name: a mountain name and a temple name. In ancient times, practice centers were situated far apart from worldly affairs, usually in the mountains. Thus a temple would come to be identified not only by its proper name, but also by its location. Katagiri explained that the mountain is an important symbol. It reminds us that our practice must be centered in this world, strong and firm as a mountain, yet reaching out to penetrate the heavens above. The mountain represents a place where we can create harmonious lives and show a good example for living in peace to our world and our friends.

The city center received the name Kounzan Ganshoji (Cultivating Clouds Mountain, Living in Vow Temple). For the country center, Katagiri chose the name Chogetsuzan Hokyoji (Catching the Moon Mountain, Jewel Mirror Temple). The inspiration for these names came from this poem by Dogen Zenji:

Yearning for the Ancient Ways

The Way of the Patriarchs coming from the West
I transmit to the East
Yearning for the ancient ways,
Catching the moon, cultivating the clouds
Untouched by worldly dust fluttering about
A thatched hut, snowy evening, deep mountain

About the name he chose for city center name, Katagiri said, "The name Kounzan Ganshoji (Cultivating Clouds Mountain, Living in Vow Temple) is a good teacher for us. When a monk goes out to train, traditionally he is called *unsui* (clouds and water). He must be like clouds and water with no attachment to any place or thing, flowing with the current of the Buddha Dharma and blown by the winds of Buddha's practice.

When we think of cultivating a cloud, we think it is impossible because a cloud is not something you can grab hold of. How could you cultivate it? Likewise, can we grab hold of the Buddha Dharma? No, if there is something to grab hold of, then it is not the true Buddha Dharma but only our idea about it. Yet we have to cultivate the real Buddha Dharma moment to moment in our lives. We have to consider how we can cultivate that which we cannot grasp. What does this mean?

To do this we have to make a vow. And making a vow means living a vow. How can we cultivate the clouds of the Buddha Dharma? We can vow to live the teaching each day, to make our lives a full expression of that teaching, to become a cloud itself. This is what we mean by cultivating clouds. You think it is impossible, but still you can vow to do it and make that vow penetrate each moment of your life. Expressing the sincere desire to manifest our Buddha Nature right here and now, we cultivate clouds; we become a cloud flowing in the wind of the Buddha Way."

About the country center name, Katagiri said, "In the name Chogetsuzan Hokyoji (Catching the Moon Mountain, Jewel Mirror Temple) we have the image of the moon, symbol of our highest aspirations for life and the perfect ideal illuminating life. We can strive to touch or catch it, yet practically speaking there is no

way to truly catch the moon. However, this does not mean that we don't try or that we don't care about the perfect ideal in our lives. On the contrary, we have to be a constant reflection of that perfection. We have to be a jewel mirror, reflecting the moon so exquisitely that it is possible to think that the moon that is reflected is exactly the moon. Of course it is not, but still our lives must become this clear reflection of highest reality, a Jewel Mirror untouched by worldly dust. This is our practice for each moment."

DHARMA TEACHING

When Katagiri Roshi began teaching in San Francisco in the sixties, he was challenged to find a way to present Buddhist thought to young Americans. He was nervous about public speaking and frustrated by his limited English language ability. None of that deterred students from coming to hear his talks, but Tomoe remembers he worried that he could not succeed in America because of his poor English. He sometimes talked of the family returning to Japan. Fortunately, Tomoe wanted the family to stay.

In Minnesota, Katagiri was a serious student of the English language. He worked hard to increase his vocabulary and improve his grammar so that he could express his meaning ever more clearly. He firmly believed that studying Buddhism in a thoughtful way would reinforce his students' commitment to a difficult practice and encourage them in a way of life based on wisdom and compassion. He was a prolific lecturer, tailoring his talks to a somewhat general audience on Saturday mornings, and giving more in-depth commentary on Wednesday evenings and during sesshins and other practice events. He also planned a comprehensive Buddhist Studies Program with a five-year curriculum covering Buddhist history and philosophy, which was taught by his senior students beginning in 1988.

From the beginning, Katagiri's dharma talks reflected his deep interest in studying classic Buddhist texts. He was particularly drawn to the writings of Eihei Dogen, the historically and religiously important monk who brought Soto Zen from China to Japan in the thirteenth century. Katagiri spent many hours researching and translating texts that he wanted to offer commentary on, sometimes inviting students to help him fine-tune his translations. Visitors to his study would often find him engrossed in poring over some text. His study was also his refuge: "Sometimes I am alone in my study, just thinking, contemplating Buddha's teaching, without doing anything, just sitting there. That is the thing that makes me relax and feel joyful."

Late in life he said that he had never had a comfortable feeling from giving a talk. Yet his ease with public speaking increased with practice, so that by the eighties he could shine in any situation. In his talks he delighted in referring to television shows that he liked to watch, such as "Bewitched" and "Casper the Friendly Ghost." And he often told memorable stories from his own life to illustrate a point or show that the Buddhist path is not always a smooth one. Although many continued to feel that it was difficult to follow and understand the content of his talks, he was beloved for his spontaneity, humor, and wise verbal expression. His warm heart, quiet dignity, and depth of understanding drew seekers who intuited the truth not only in his words, but also in his way of life and manner of just being present with them.

Katagiri's talks in Minnesota were tape recorded. Some were then edited and published in Zen Center's newsletter and in *Udumbara*, its literary magazine. Yuko Conniff and Willa Hathaway edited a selection of talks for Katagiri's first book, *Returning to Silence*, which was published in 1988. Since his death, three more books have been published: *You Have to Say Something*, edited by Steve Hagen and published in 1997; *Each Moment Is the Universe*, edited by Andrea Martin and published in 2007; and *The Light That Shines through Infinity*, also edited by Andrea Martin and published in 2017. In an ongoing project, Katagiri's talks are being digitized and made available on the Internet.

As his teacher Hayashi Roshi had once been, Katagiri Roshi was a prominent Buddhist circuit rider. He was much in demand and traveled often. Although he did not relish frequent travel and was a nervous flyer, he readily agreed to teach when asked. He regularly visited and nurtured fledgling Zen groups in Anchorage, Alaska; Chapel Hill, North Carolina; Omaha and Kearney, Nebraska; St. Louis, Missouri; Manhattan, Kansas; Milwaukee, Wisconsin; Iowa City, Iowa; and Thunder Bay, Ontario. Many of these groups have since developed into established Zen Centers with resident teachers.

Katagiri accepted invitations to participate in workshops and lead retreats across the country from Vermont to California, and once in Mexico. He served as guest teacher at events at Zenshuji, Soto Zen's North American headquarters in Los Angeles, and at San Francisco Zen Center locations. He took part in two major Buddhist-Christian conferences at the Naropa Institute in Boulder, Colorado. He also spoke to college classes, including those of Dr. Bardwell Smith at Carleton College, and to religious, arts, and culture groups. Through his travels, Katagiri became widely known and served as something of an ambassador for Buddhism at a time when American interest was beginning to take root.

SEWING PRACTICE

The now established practice of Zen students wearing religious robes that they have sewn themselves was introduced to American Zen at Katagiri Roshi's suggestion. The sewing and wearing of robes as a spiritual practice is an ancient tradition going back to Buddha's instructions to his followers. In Japanese Zen it is known as *nyoho-e*, meaning "the Buddha's teaching represented as it really is by means of one's clothes or robe." *Nyoho-e* was first taught at the San Francisco Zen Center in 1970 by visiting Zen master Eshun Yoshida and came to Minnesota with Tomoe Katagiri in 1972.

Eshun Yoshida Roshi (1907-December 26, 1982) was abbess of Kaizenji Temple in Tsushima, near Nagoya, Japan. She was an heir of Katagiri's second teacher, Eko Hashimoto Roshi. Hashimoto was in the lineage of Oka Sotan (1860-1921), an important teacher and Dogen scholar. Shunryu Suzuki's master, So-on Gyokujun, was also in the Sotan lineage, as was Ian Kishizawa, another of Suzuki's teachers. Shohaku Okumura, who would later serve as temporary abbot of the Minnesota Zen Meditation Center after Katagiri's death, is also in the Sotan lineage through his teacher Kosho Uchiyama and grandmaster Kodo Sawaki.

Unlike the usual contemporary Japanese practice of wearing purchased robes, Hashimoto and others in the Sotan Roshi lineage favored the practice of hand sewing one's own *okesa*, the rectangular ceremonial cloth that is worn across the shoulder and wrapped around the body. In fostering sewing as a spiritual practice, Hashimoto honored the teachings of Dogen, who wrote about *okesa* practice in his masterwork the *Shobogenzo* after encountering it in China. Hashimoto had encouraged the practice at Eihei-ji, so it was usual for monks to sew when they had time. Katagiri made an *okesa* while training at Eihei-ji and had worn hand-sewn robes since then.

When Yoshida visited San Francisco in 1970 she was puzzled—she wondered why no one wore a *rakusu*. A *rakusu* is a small version of the *okesa* that is worn around the neck, somewhat like a bib. Few students had them because Suzuki had not offered *jukai* (the ceremony of receiving the Buddhist precepts as a lay student, known as Buddhist initiation or lay ordination) for several years. However he was planning to resume the practice soon. Since the *jukai* ceremony includes the bestowal of a *rakusu*, Yoshida and Suzuki discussed the possibility of the nuns at Kaizenji making them. However there were many students who wished to receive lay ordination and they realized that it would take too much time.

Katagiri then suggested that the students could sew their own *rakusu*. He argued that the skill should be learned in America so that it could continue to be practiced into the future. Suzuki agreed. He asked Yoshida: please teach us. Yoshida agreed to lead a sewing sesshin and lecture on the practice of sewing and wearing Buddha's robe. Once the decision that students were to sew their own *rakusu* was made, there was only one week before Yoshida would return to Japan. So Katagiri asked his wife Tomoe to begin studying with her immediately. He said, "Go to Yoshida Roshi with some fabric. You don't need to worry about our babies. I will stay here. Go!"

In the end, Tomoe Katagiri became a master of *nyoho-e*, transmitting well-honed skills and deep reverence for Buddha's robes to many students across the country. But in the beginning, she was not eager to take up sewing practice. As a child, she watched her mother sew but felt no interest in doing it herself. Then, early in their marriage, Katagiri encouraged Tomoe to learn *okesa* sewing. He made arrangements for her to study with an old school friend of his, which would require her to live away from home for awhile. Tomoe was secretly relieved when her first pregnancy intervened and she could not go.

In San Francisco, Katagiri had already asked Tomoe to learn how to make *zafus* (round meditation cushions) and *zabutons* (rectangular mats placed under a *zafu* on the floor). The Zen Center had been using cushions from Japan, but for Americans they needed to be bigger and stronger. Learning to make *zabutons* was not a big problem—they were similar to the futons she had watched her mother make, and had helped to stuff, as a girl. The *zafus* were more of a challenge. Tomoe learned how to make them from instructions written by Kosho Uchiyama for an early version of his book that is now titled *Opening the Hand of Thought*. After she had it figured out, she taught another person, who taught others, and ultimately the San Francisco Zen Center started a stitchery business.

But now, at the moment when her husband sent her to Yoshida Roshi, Tomoe's heart sank. She knew that this time she would not escape from sewing Buddha's robe. Then she quickly grabbed some cloth and headed off to learn how. Tomoe remembers thinking, "I have bad karma because I have to sew." But as soon as she started studying, Yoshida's words penetrated her heart and Tomoe realized, "I have good karma because I met this teacher."

Thirty-six students took the precepts and received the *rakusu*, which they had sewn themselves, in a ceremony at San Francisco Zen Center in August 1970. The next year, Yoshida Roshi returned to San Francisco and taught *okesa* sewing in preparation for the ordination of four monks. As Tomoe studied with Yoshida, she kept careful notes. From these notes and her own experience she wrote *Study of the Okesa, Nyoho-e: Buddha's Robe*. The book was published by Minnesota Zen Meditation Center in 1986 and quickly became a widely used guide to the history, meaning, and technique of Buddhist sewing practice.

Also published by Minnesota Zen Meditation Center in 1986 was Tomoe's translation of *Sodo No Gyoji*, a book by Tsugen Narasaki Roshi that describes traditional monastic practice in great detail, and which includes a chapter on Buddhist robes. A revised edition of the book was published in 2011 by Narasaki's Zuioji monastery as *Practices at a Zen Monastery*. This book helps English-speaking practitioners to understand the often complex rituals and religious forms they encounter in Japan.

Ten years after meeting Yoshida Roshi, Tomoe Katagiri received her own seven-row *okesa* and *zagu* (bowing cloth), which she had sewn for herself as a lay practice. Tomoe and her son Ejyo traveled to Yoshida Roshi's temple in Japan, where Tomoe received the *okesa*, *zagu*, and a set of *oryoki* (ceremonial eating bowls) from her teacher in a 1980 ceremony. Tomoe recalls that she was able to accomplish the sewing in the extraordinarily short time of one week because her husband took over domestic duties in support of her efforts.

Tomoe-san retired from teaching in 2013, naming three successors: Rosemary Taylor, a priest at Minnesota Zen Meditation Center, Tracey Walen, a priest at Clouds in Water Zen Center, and Kaaren Wiken, a traveling teacher who leads sewing retreats at various Zen centers.

ORDINATIONS AND TRANSMISSION

An important aspect of Katagiri Roshi's life was the ordination and training of priests who would carry Buddha's teaching into the future. Fourteen men and women were ordained to the priesthood by Katagiri. Zentetsu Tim Burkett and Daitetsu Norm Randolph were the first, ordained on April 15, 1978. They were followed by Tokan Steve Hagen on October 7, 1979, Joen Janet Snyder and Sekinjun Karen Thorkelson on December 20, 1980, Teijo Roberta Munnich on June 27, 1981, Yuko Pamela Conniff and Rosan Osamu Yoshida on October 2, 1982, Emyo Jennifer Dielman on June 4, 1983, Myo-on Yvonne Rand on April 8, 1984, Nonin Donald Chowaney, Dosho Mike Port, and Dokai Ronald Georgesen on August 18, 1984, and finally Shoken Floyd Winecoff on May 4, 1985.

Living as a Zen priest in America was quite different from a priest's life in Japan. In America, priests had to work at jobs in order to support themselves and take care of their families. Some priests experienced problems in their personal lives, and there were divorces. Concerned about such troubles, Katagiri decided to pause before agreeing to more ordinations. Although he later felt that they could continue, poor health prevented him from initiating any more priests.

But fortunately, despite failing health, he was able to complete the traditional process of dharma transmission with twelve disciples: Daitetsu Randolph, Dokai Georgesen, Dosho Port, Emyo Dielman (Nakayama), Joen Snyder (O'Neal), Myo-on Rand, Nonin Chowaney, Rosan Yoshida, Sekijun Thorkelson (Sunna), Shoken Winecoff, Teijo Munnich, and Tokan Hagen. Katagiri Roshi was happy and relieved to fulfill a duty received from his own teacher—the responsibility to qualify the next generation of teachers.

On October 5, 1989, after months of severe illness, Katagiri put on his *okesa*, sat cross-legged, and completed the *menju* ceremony twelve times, meeting each disciple face-to-face as the first step in *shihō* (dharma transmission). After each disciple did three full bows, Katagiri said, “The dharma gate of buddhas and ancestors is realized,” thus confirming that student and teacher had met. It was an auspicious date, for on that same day it was announced that the 1989 Nobel Peace Prize was awarded to Tenzin Gyatso, the Fourteenth Dalai Lama.

Two months later, despite severe weakness and pain from cancer, Katagiri officiated at the final dharma transmission ceremony on December 8, 1989, giving each of these disciples permission to teach independently. He transmitted the precepts to them with the help of his friend Tsugen Narasaki Roshi, who served as preceptor. Narasaki, assisted by Hokan Saito and Ekai Korematsu, also represented Katagiri as his proxy during some ceremonial elements of the lengthy ritual.

In deciding to give dharma transmission to what might seem an unusually large group of disciples, Katagiri Roshi said he did not want to discriminate among them, or name someone as his primary successor. Therefore each one had the same opportunity. He hoped that he might have two more years with them so they would have time to develop a more mature dimension of practice. But if not, it could not be helped. Since Katagiri's death in 1990, this group of teachers has distinguished itself in service to the dharma.

In addition to ordaining priests, Katagiri gave lay ordination to six large groups of students in *jukai* ceremonies held at the Minnesota Zen Meditation Center on April 9, 1977, March 1, 1980, February 27, 1982, March 3, 1984, March 29, 1986, and December 10, 1988. He also performed lay ordination for groups in St. Louis and Milwaukee, and for individuals in various locations. After Katagiri's death, Tsugen Narasaki as preceptor gave lay ordination to a large group of Katagiri's students in Minneapolis on September 9, 1991.

Since his death, many of Katagiri's lay students have gone on to take priest vows and become dharma teachers. Among them, several are particularly notable. Jisho Cary Warner was ordained by and received transmission from Tozen Akiyama Roshi at Milwaukee Zen Center. She founded Stone Creek Zen Center in Sebastapol, California. Zuiko Julie Redding was ordained by and received transmission in Japan from Katagiri's friend Tsugen Narasaki Roshi. She is the resident teacher at Cedar Rapids Zen Center in Iowa. Byakuren Judith Ragir was ordained by Dosho Port, received dharma transmission from Joen Snyder O'Neal, and became the guiding teacher at Clouds in Water Zen Center in Saint Paul. Jodo Cliff Clusin was ordained and received dharma transmission from Shoken Winecoff. He founded Prairie Mountain Zen Center in Longmont, Colorado. Genpo Michael O'Neal was ordained by Shoken Winecoff and is co-guiding teacher at Compassionate Ocean Dharma Center in Minneapolis.

JAPAN CONNECTIONS

Katagiri Roshi wanted the priests he ordained to receive some formal monastic training, ideally in Japan. So, for six weeks from June to August 1983, Katagiri and Tomoe, Steve Hagen, Yuko Conniff, and Mike Port traveled in Japan, hoping to find a traditional monastery where American men and women could engage in long-term training. They visited eight monasteries and four temples with zazen groups. The group also visited Taizoin, Katagiri's temple in Kitada near Eihei-ji. But most importantly, the group practiced for two weeks at Zuiō-ji, a training monastery for men in Ehime Prefecture on Shikoku, a smaller island south of the main island of Japan. While at Zuiō-ji, Katagiri visited with Tsugen Narasaki (1926–), reestablishing their friendship and dharma connection.

Narasaki and Katagiri were dharma brothers, having met as novices at Eihei-ji when Eko Hashimoto, who had such a profound effect on young Katagiri's life, was *godo* (head training teacher). Narasaki had

subsequently studied with Hashimoto for many years. Now Narasaki was vice-abbot of Zuioji. To further strengthen their connection, Tsugen Narasaki visited the United States the following year. He led *rohatsu* sesshin at Minnesota Zen Meditation Center, and also visited Hokyoji Zen Mountain Center, San Francisco Zen Center, Tassajara Zen Mountain Center, and Green Gulch Farm Zen Center.

After that, in August 1985, Daigen Ikko Narasaki Roshi (1921–1996), Tsugen's elder brother and abbot of Zuioji, came to Minnesota to lead a *bendo-e* (special training period) at Hokyoji. He also led a seven-day practice period at Hokyoji, and lectured in Minneapolis. Ikko Narasaki was one of the most respected Zen masters of his time. In the aftermath of World War II, he played a huge role in restoration of the traditional system of monastic training in Japan when he rebuilt Zuioji according to Dogen's thirteenth century specifications and then convinced Eko Hashimoto Roshi to take up the training of monks there. Katagiri and Narasaki shared a deep respect for both Hashimoto and Dogen. Their warm relationship turned out to be of particular consequence for Zen students in America and elsewhere.

Ikko Narasaki was very impressed by the serious Zen practice that he saw in Minnesota, and he wanted to do something to help. What Katagiri wanted was a training center: a place where dedicated people could live and train according to Dogen's way of formal monastic practice. In thinking about how to realize Katagiri's intention for his American students to practice in Japan, Narasaki and Katagiri agreed that what was needed was a monastery specifically prepared to receive monks from Western countries.

In addition to being abbot of Zuioji, Ikko Narasaki was abbot of Shogoji, a small, unused temple near the village of Ryumon in the mountains of central Kyushu, the southernmost of the main Japanese islands. With his new insight and vision, Narasaki made the decision to repurpose Shogoji as an international training center. For this he would need to restore the rundown temple to good condition and develop it as a fully equipped monastery that could readily accommodate Western monks.

Then Narasaki made another breakthrough decision. Based on seeing men and women practice together in Minnesota, and honoring Katagiri's commitment to gender equality, he decided that Shogoji would accept both men and women for training. Today, thanks to the great effort of many people, Katagiri and Narasaki's vision has been fully realized. Shogoji is an international center for Soto Zen practice. Since Ikko Narasaki's death in 1996, it has been under the guidance and leadership of his brother Tsugen.

As Katagiri Roshi hoped, many of his priests did train in Japan for substantial periods of time, most notably Nonin Chowaney first and later Shoken Winecoff, at Zuioji and Shogoji, and Teijo Munnich and Yuko Conniff at Hosshinji, a training monastery and temple in Obama, north of Kyoto. Dokai Georgeson and many other priests have also spent significant amounts of time practicing at temples and monasteries in Japan. Life in Japanese monasteries is not easy for Americans. But despite language and culture issues and inevitable health challenges, Katagiri's students have persisted in training there.

Katagiri Roshi was unusual among the Japanese monks who brought the dharma to the United States in the degree to which he valued and maintained a relationship with Sotoshu, the Soto Zen organization in Japan, and its North American headquarters in Los Angeles. This surprised some, who had observed that his early tendency was to not think it particularly important. Katagiri knew that an American Zen would inevitably evolve, but he worried that Americans were impatient and would make changes too soon. He warned that there shouldn't be a rush to change centuries-old traditions until practice in America had matured enough to understand very deeply why those traditions had endured. Then the development of American Zen would be very natural.

When, near the end of his life, Katagiri was asked about the importance of registering American temples with Sotoshu, he indicated that it was all right to either do so or not. Likewise it was an open question whether or not American priests should be registered in Japan. Katagiri did register the priests he ordained, but for American priests in general, he did not feel strongly that it was necessary, or that Americans must follow all Sotoshu requirements such as performing rituals in Japan to attain certain credentials. He was satisfied that American Zen would develop its own standards and organization.

Over the years, while American monks were traveling to Japan, many Japanese monks were coming to Katagiri Roshi and practicing with the sangha in Minneapolis and at Hokyōji. Both Americans and Japanese realized that through this exchange they were learning how to carry Soto Zen into the future. Later, after attending his funeral, his disciple Yvonne Rand wrote, “For the first time I came to realize that Katagiri Roshi was a bridge for the priests of Sotoshu in Japan to the United States and to their understanding of those of us here who are striving to practice Zen in the Soto tradition, just as he was a bridge for us to Japan, and to Sotoshu and to Dogen Zenji, the great philosopher, practitioner and founder of Soto Zen in Japan. More than ever I understand what a light has gone out with his passing.”

SABBATICAL

Katagiri Roshi led an exhausting lifestyle. He was constantly in demand in his own sangha and traveled widely in response to the many requests for his teaching and practice leadership. Many people recall that in the last few years of his life, Katagiri sometimes seemed to carry a heaviness or sadness with him. There was much he hoped to do in his lifetime, but he was getting older and his health was not strong. Teaching in America had been harder than he ever imagined, and he seemed to feel the weight of understanding that he might not be able to accomplish all that he wanted to do.

In 1987 he was feeling very tired and had a persistent cough. In recognition of Katagiri and Tomoe’s many years of hard work, and aware that his health and energy needed to be better supported, the Minnesota Zen Meditation Center Board of Directors offered them a sabbatical. They happily accepted and left for Japan on December 26. Living in a small house in Shizuoka Prefecture on Honshu Island, the largest of the Japanese islands, they enjoyed relaxing, sightseeing, and taking long walks together in the countryside.

Katagiri visited Eihei-ji and then took up residence at Shōgo-ji, the international center, where he led the spring training period as guest teacher. Katagiri’s disciple Nonin Chowaney was also in residence, along with Ekai Korematsu, who had practiced in California, and several Japanese disciples of Ikko Narasaki. David Chadwick arrived from San Francisco to practice with Katagiri. The temple was quite rustic, with no electricity, central heating, or propane gas. To make a telephone call it was necessary to travel to the village an hour away, where there was a house with a phone. Yet Katagiri found the scenery around the temple to be quite beautiful and exquisite and he experienced a peaceful and calm mind there. He also enjoyed the opportunity to engage in *takuhatsu* (ritual begging practice).

While her husband was away, Tomoe enjoyed the chance to travel with friends and spend time with relatives. Back in Minnesota, some feared that the Katagiris would want to stay in Japan after their sabbatical. But Tomoe wrote: “Hearing everything in Japanese I wonder if it is my real life; do I have another world in the U.S.A? I feel more reality to my life in the U.S.A. I miss all of you.”

Interrupting the year in Japan, the Katagiris returned to Minnesota in July 1988, bringing with them a visitor: Kyoshi Katagiri, the older brother who had been so supportive of his education. Katagiri Roshi soon jumped into a typically demanding schedule. He officiated at the dedication of the Nebraska Zen Center, attended a Buddhist Christian Conference at Naropa Institute in Colorado, and led the fall practice period and sesshin at Hokyōji. In September, Tsugen Narasaki Roshi arrived to lead a second *Bendo-e* at Hokyōji. After that, Katagiri and Tomoe enjoyed sightseeing with Narasaki, including trips to Northern Minnesota and Niagara Falls.

Katagiri worked hard work for the rest of his sabbatical. After leading weekend sesshins in Minneapolis and North Carolina he returned to Japan as Chief Lecturer of the second Tokubetsu sesshin at Daijōji Monastery in Kanazawa City. Tokubetsu was a monthlong retreat that gave Soto teachers in Japan and the West a chance to get together, share common ground, and build harmony and understanding. It was part of Sotoshu’s efforts to improve its ability to deal with the realities of Zen practice in the West, and to support its growth there. The relationship between Japanese and American Zen was developing, and Katagiri was an important figure. He was universally admired for his solid practice, deep insight into Buddhist sutras, and his ability to present Dogen Zenji and Soto Zen to Western students, as well as for his kindness, warmth, and humility.

HEALTH TROUBLES AND FINAL ILLNESS

Katagiri Roshi's students had hoped that a sabbatical would allow their teacher to recover his health. But during his spring 1988 residence at Shogoji there were signs of continuing problems. Back in Minnesota that summer, Tomoe and others urged him to stay in the States and rest rather than return to Japan for the Tokubetsu sesshin. But he insisted on going and was ill throughout that month.

Ending his sabbatical and returning to Minnesota in December 1988, Katagiri Roshi led a seven-day sesshin, taught at a zazen gathering at Zenshuji temple in Los Angeles, and gave lay ordination to a group in Minneapolis. In January, he traveled to Massachusetts to give lay ordination to Yutaka Ishii, a long-time student who was dying of cancer. Delivered just before that trip, his January 7, 1989 talk, "Dying Together," offered guidance on being with someone who is dying. This talk, the last he ever gave, has been widely published and was cherished as a teaching his students could turn to in dealing with the health crisis Katagiri himself was about to face.

He had faced health problems before. In June 1982, while teaching in Vermont, he underwent corrective surgery for an intestinal blockage that developed soon after he carried some heavy dirt at Hokyoji. It was a recurrence of a difficulty that had required intestinal surgery when he was seventeen years old. Serving in the army at that time, he had hurt himself carrying a heavy pail of food. For a long time he had followed a low-fiber diet, and during retreats the *tenzos* (cooks) knew not to serve beans or corn, but intestinal conditions had continued to be troublesome.

Then, one evening in late January 1989, Katagiri was suddenly rushed to the hospital with high fever and extreme weakness. Doctors struggled to determine the cause, thinking for a while that it might be tuberculosis. But after a needle biopsy of his left kidney the diagnosis was certain: cancer. It was fast-growing nonendemic Burkitt's lymphoma. A large tumor, which had taken over his right adrenal gland, was removed at the end of February, followed by chemotherapy treatments. Tomoe lived in his room at St. Mary's Hospital. Sangha members brought food and helped in many ways. From the hospital in March, Katagiri wrote a poem of appreciation for the groundswell of support and appreciation he was receiving:

Dear All Dharma Friends,

I'm here/now.
I'm here/now.
This being complete effort;
I only achieve the continuity of this
 a day at a time with all beings.
Because you do the
 same thing every day
I have to respond to your achievement.
I'm here/now with your heart;
I hold your hands in here/now.

I don't know the appropriate words to express my appreciation to all my dharma friends. Thinking of you all keeps my heart warm and courageous. I'm having helping chemotherapy for 12 weeks.
In deep gassho, Hojo

For a long time Katagiri remained hopeful that he could fight the cancer. But eventually it spread to his spine and head. There were more rounds of chemotherapy, along with radiation, acupuncture, massage, and herbal medicine. Finally, after a year of aggressive treatment, Katagiri decided that it was time to stop. He said, "The body has suffered enough." Over the next few days, friends and students called and came to say goodbye. Then, on March 1, 1990, at 2:45 in the morning, Katagiri Roshi passed away peacefully, at home in Minneapolis, surrounded by devoted family members and students. He was sixty-two years old.

Disciple Yvonne Rand, who was skilled in natural forms of death care, directed the preparation of Katagiri's body. She, Tomoe, sons Yasuhiko and Ejoyo, and disciples who had received dharma

transmission washed his body. They wrapped him in his finest robes and laid his body out in a plain wooden coffin in the zendo. Dry ice could not be found quickly, so at first he was placed on a bed of frozen peas. After three days of a round-the-clock sitting vigil in the zendo, the invocation for the great night ceremony was held on the evening of March 3. Then family and students attended the burning of his body at the Cremation Society of Minnesota in Minneapolis. The ashes ceremony was held on March 4.

Hundreds of mourners gathered for the funeral on April 16, 1990 at the First Universalist Church of Minneapolis. Distinguished priests from Japan and America attended, with Tsugen Narasaki serving as officiant. Eulogies were given by: Kenko Yamashita, bishop of the North American Headquarters of Soto Zen Buddhism; Zendo Matsunaga, representative of Eihei-ji monastery; Tenshin Anderson, abbot of the San Francisco Zen Center; Michael O'Neal, president of the Minnesota Zen Meditation Center; Koshin Ogui, Shin Buddhist priest and friend; Bardwell Smith, Carleton College professor and friend; and Nancy Ann James, long-time student and one of the founders of Minnesota Zen Meditation Center. There was also a telegram sent by Hakudo Yamagami representing the Taizoin congregation in Japan.

Dainin Katagiri's ashes were divided into five urns for placement in four temples and with the Katagiri family. Tomoe and one or the other of her sons escorted the ashes to interment ceremonies at each of the temples. The first ceremony was on September 5, 1990, when they were placed in a memorial stupa in the cemetery at Taizoin, Katagiri's old temple in Kitada, Japan. Two days earlier, Ikko Narasaki had dedicated six tablets in memory of Jikai Dainin Daisho at Zuijōji monastery. This event marked the first time that an important ceremony was held in Japan for memorial tablets written in both English and Japanese, a tribute to Katagiri's importance in both countries. At Ganshoji, the Minnesota Zen Meditation Center in Minneapolis, a ceremony on March 1, 1991 marked the placement of an urn inside the top shelf of the altar in the Buddha hall. Ashes were interred near those of Shunryu Suzuki at Tassajara Zen Mountain Center in California on March 15. Finally, on July 7, an urn was placed under a memorial stupa on a hill overlooking Hokyōji, the monastery that Katagiri founded in rural southeastern Minnesota.

LEGACY AND POSTHUMOUS REVELATIONS

Katagiri Roshi had a remarkable way of being present to others with a warm heart and open mind. Many sensed in him something deep that they believed might also be in them, and eagerly followed the Zen practice he offered as a way by which they could realize it. As he was dying, his students deluged him with expressions of love and appreciation for his life and teaching. Many still speak with deep gratitude for the profound impact he had on their lives.

Katagiri often told stories about his own human foibles, sometimes describing himself as stinky, stubborn, or pigheaded. He cautioned that practicing Zen is not a way to escape the challenges presented by our human nature. The hidden story of such challenges in his own life began to emerge after his death.

About six years after Katagiri died, a student inadvertently mentioned an affair she'd had with him. Her revelation was a shock to the sangha and triggered a crisis. Professional mediators skilled in helping religious organizations respond to ethical violations were brought in. They led gatherings where members expressed their pain and struggled to reconcile their love and admiration for Katagiri with new feelings of loss and betrayal. Some members left the organization. A strong policy of ethical conduct for teachers was adopted and has been followed ever since.

But that was not the end of it, for more rumors and reports of inappropriate behavior have since emerged. There was a sexual relationship with another woman who was a student, and a third relationship seems likely. In social situations when he was drinking alcohol he made suggestive remarks to some women, and a more direct approach to one. Most reports of his behavior are second- and third-hand accounts so it's hard to pin down exactly what happened. But it does seem that nothing improper took place within the context of formal Zen practice.

Author Natalie Goldberg, in her 1993 book *Long Quiet Highway: Waking up in America*, had written warmly about Katagiri as her Zen teacher. As allegations about him emerged, she wanted to give her readers the rest of the story and tell how she had come to terms with it. One line of research for her

revealing 2004 book: *The Great Failure: A Bartender, a Monk, and My Unlikely Path to Truth*, led her to psychologist and Zen priest Diane Martin. As Martin tells it, Katagiri turned to her for help when problems arose in his sexual relationship with a troubled student. Martin shared her story with Goldberg, who included it in her book (with names changed), and with Caryl Gopfert, who used it in her 1999 PhD dissertation. Martin also posted a factual statement on a public Internet forum. (See Bibliography)

We may never know the whole story, but we can say that Katagiri's judgment regarding his sexuality was poor and his actions caused harm. How have people responded to knowing this? Some denounced him entirely, saying his actions prove that he was not qualified to teach Buddhism. Others recognize the wisdom of his teaching and continue to study his books and recordings with great interest. Some, seeing his flaws, are inspired to examine their own behavior as imperfect human beings and keep seeking to become more mature. Some look with compassion at the psychological life of a man who suffered maternal absence as a boy, endured the trauma of war as a teen, and carried the burden of leadership without a trusted peer or advisor to turn to for help and support. So there are various responses, but all agree that Katagiri Roshi made serious mistakes for which is no excuse.

Legacy

Dainin Katagiri left a legacy of teaching, lineage, and family. He had a lifelong interest in studying classic Buddhist texts, especially the writings of Eihei Dogen, seeking the essence within their words. Broadly learned in Buddhist history and philosophy, he taught about them in such a way that they became vividly alive. Audio recordings of his talks form a reservoir of remarkable insight into Buddhist thought and practice. Often bursting with humor, they reveal the sincerity and joy he brought to giving the dharma. Four books compiled from those talks have been published commercially. The dharma lineage that he founded is thriving, his family includes three grandsons, and his widow Tomoe is a treasure to the sangha.

A few weeks before his death, Katagiri wrote a poem known as *yui* or bequeathed verse:

Living in vow, silently sitting
Sixty-three years
Plum blossoms begin to bloom
The jeweled mirror reflects truth as it is.

Tsugen Narasaki Roshi made a commentary on this *yui*, saying, "Having been blessed with unsurpassed causes and conditions for the authentic transmission of the Buddha Dharma, Katagiri Roshi planted the seeds of the Buddha in Minnesota, the center of America. Yearning to follow the ancestral wind in the meditation hall of Ganshoji, there were sixty-three years in which he came to negotiate the Way through earnestly sitting in silence. He expanded the circles of Way-Friends of one and the same practice and, as the seeds of the Buddha prospered, and the plum blossoms began to bloom with increasing fragrance, he carefully transmitted the family wind of the True Dharma; acquiring the fruit of fifteen petals. The jeweled mirror of Buddhas and Ancestors shining all the more prosperously, he is thinking that in the nature of this place, Truth as-it-is will be protected and maintained."

On the first anniversary of Katagiri Roshi's death, a poem he wrote during practice period at Hokyoji in August 1988 was published in the Minnesota Zen Meditation Center's newsletter. This poem expresses the endlessly arising energy of his effort to practice zazen, and his lifelong vow to share the dharma. This energy, too, is his legacy.

Peaceful Life

Being told that it is impossible,
One believes, in despair, "Is that so?"
Being told that it is possible,
One believes, in excitement, "That's right."
But, whichever is chosen,

It does not fit one's heart neatly.
Being asked, "What is unfitting?"
I don't know what it is.
But my heart knows somehow.
I feel an irresistible desire to know.
What a mystery "human" is!
As to this mystery:
Clarifying,
Knowing how to live,
Knowing how to walk with people,
Demonstrating and teaching,
This is the Buddha.
From my human eyes,
I feel it's really impossible to become a Buddha.
But this "I", regarding what the Buddha does,
Vows to practice,
To aspire,
To be resolute,
And tells myself, "Yes, I will."
Just practice right here now,
And achieve continuity,
Endlessly,
Forever.
This is living in vow.
Herein is one's peaceful life found.

Finally, what about the name, Great Patience, which Katagiri was so reluctant to adopt when he was eighteen? Patience in the usual sense may imply waiting or simply enduring something. In Buddhism patience is better understood as forbearance, not succumbing to reactivity but remaining calm and clear in the face of change, adversity, or provocation. A person of great patience is one who knows the dynamic nature of reality, and fits their life into it in a positive way. This patience is one of the *paramitas*, spiritual practices that nurture and manifest enlightenment.

Here is what Katagiri Roshi said when he was nearing sixty: "Great patience means patience in peace, with no subject or object to grab onto. If you want to understand peaceful patience, you have to practice patience. Everyday life, [which is] the place where you practice patience and [spiritual life, which is] the place where patience is great or boundless, exist together. So any time you experience patience which you cannot bear, you can be free from that experience. You have to be free from it; otherwise you will not be ready for another experience. Every day is different. Having an experience and letting it go allows us to grow. We grow very naturally in the domain of great patience. All you have to do is accept the whole universe and throw yourself into the place where all beings coexist in peace and harmony. Just be present there. This is our practice. Then you can see real patience. At that time you become very peaceful—your life really blooms."

Katagiri Roshi was not always patient in either the usual or spiritual sense. He had big hopes and plans for Zen in America. But things weren't so easy and he made mistakes. Still, through the ups and downs of life he kept trust in Buddhist practice and made his best effort toward the future.

In an interview with *Desert Call* magazine, Katagiri Roshi was asked what Buddhist teaching meant the most to him. He said, "I think the most meaningful of Buddhist practices is to do small things every day with great hope—putting the seed in the desert, regardless of whether it will grow or not." From Katagiri Roshi's hope and effort, much has since grown and bloomed.



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