

DAININ
KATAGIRI ROSHI
(1928-1990)



Our great friend and teacher, Dainin (Great Patience) Katagiri Roshi, passed away on March 1. A teacher at Zen Center starting in 1965, and Abbot in 1984-85, he was one of Zen Center's most important teachers. I remember his joyous heart—when he smiled, his whole face and body lit up. I remember his generosity and patience—he practiced the Way for itself, not for his own benefit alone, so when there was hardship in his life, he was never bitter, he just “threw himself into the house of Buddha.” I remember his dedication to practice under any circumstance, sick or healthy, “settling the self on the self.” What I still feel is his presence, practicing *with* “all sentient beings in peace and harmony.” We bow with deep gratitude for his life and teaching. What follows is a short factual history of Katagiri Roshi's life, Yvonne Rand's article on his funeral ceremony in Minnesota, and Abbot Tenshin Anderson's eulogy at his cremation.

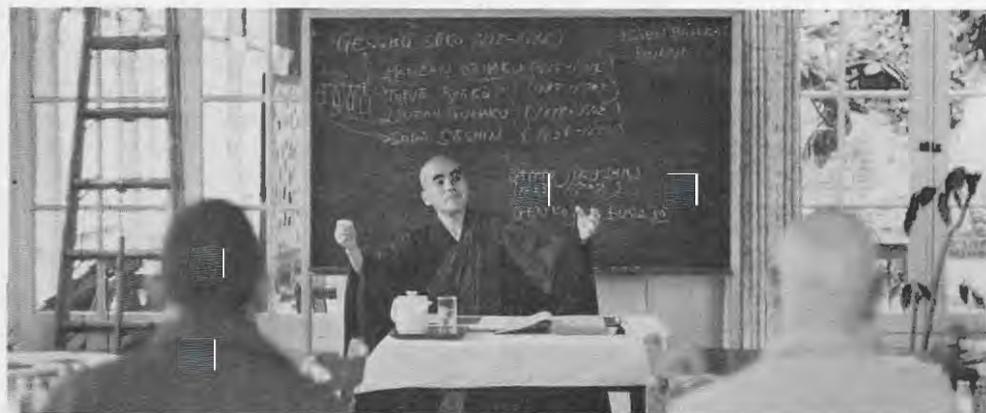
— Michael Wenger

Personal History

On January 19, 1928, Katagiri Roshi was born in Osaka, Japan. In 1946, he was ordained by the 26th Abbot of Taizo-in Temple, Daicho Hayashi Roshi, in Fukui Prefecture. He entered Eiheiiji Monastery, one of the main monasteries of Soto Zen Buddhism in Japan in 1947. There, he performed the duties of the Shuso, the leader of the training priests. There, he also met and was greatly influenced by Reverend Eko Hashimoto who was the Godo at that time. After finishing three years of training, he left Eiheiiji and entered Komazawa University. Upon graduating, he became a member of the Sotoshu Kyoka Kenshu-jo or Soto Propagation and Research Institute from 1957 to 1959. He then worked for three years at the Sotoshu Shumucho / Headquarters Office in Tokyo.

In 1963, he was appointed to be a minister abroad and studied at the Zenshuji Soto Mission in Los Angeles, California. Two years later, in 1965, he moved to San Francisco as the minister of the Soto Zen Mission, Sokoji, and also assisted the late Shunryu Suzuki Roshi at the San Francisco Zen Center and Tassajara Mountain Center. In 1969, he was qualified as the Sanzen Dojo Shike or Teacher of the Zen Dojo.

In December, 1972, he moved to Minnesota to establish the Minnesota Zen Meditation Center, Ganshoji. He visited many small groups in various areas such as Milwaukee, Wisconsin, Manhattan, Kansas, Omaha and Alaska. He also founded Hokyoji as a mountain training center in 1977. From 1984 to 1985, he became the Jushoku or Abbot of the San Francisco Zen Center. In 1988, he published his book, *Returning to Silence*, which was translated into German in the following year. In October, 1988, for one month, he was appointed the Chief Lecturer at the 2nd Sotoshu Sesshin at Daijoji Monastery in Japan and led the participating representatives from various Zen centers abroad. In December, 1990, assisted by three priests from Japan, he officiated in the traditional transmission ceremony for twelve zen priests. On March 1, 1990, he passed away peacefully, at his residence, surrounded by many devoted friends and students.



Funeral Ceremony for Katagiri Roshi

by Yvonne Rand

On April 16, several hundred people gathered from across the world for the monk Jikai Dainin Katagiri Roshi's funeral. There were many priests from Japan and America and there were his old students and friends from all over the United States. For the first time I came to realize that Katagiri Roshi was a bridge for the priests of Soto Shu 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 Soto Shu 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.

A few weeks before his death Katagiri Roshi wrote a poem.

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

And Narazaki Tsugen Roshi, his friend and Dharma brother commented at the funeral:

“Having come to contact with auspicious Zen
of the Great Patriarch (Dogen),
He visited this remote land, America,
And opened the Dharma relations with simple plainness
for some thirty rounds of frost.
He intimately taught humans and deities
Through spring wind and autumn rain.

In respectfully remembering the new *parinirvana* entrant, Dainin Daiocho:

He was a master in the Ocean of the Teaching
a mainstay in the Soto School.
Given birth in Japan in the month of snow, 1928,
Showing cessation in America in the month of plum, 1990.
Dying his robe at Taizoin, he tasted the water of
Daicho, Great Tide.
Rising at the Dragon Palace,
he plunged into the depth of the Zen Ocean.
Observing impermanence, he practiced deep at Eiheiiji,
Perpetual Peace Temple.
Throwing the mind, he sat high on the shared-seat of Sumeru.
His way was naturally pure and such was his practice.
In pursuing scriptures at Komazawa University, his mind
parted from the secular dusts.
In learning Buddhism at Chandana Temple,
clouds were stirred up at times.
Birds picking flowers respected the formless Dharma-body
at both temples in the forests.
Deities protecting the Dharma in the four directions
supported the ceaseless *samadhi* transmitting the Dharma.

The eighty-first generation in the lineage of the Way
struck the bodi-mandala through nine year cultivation/verification.
The thirteen dharma-retinues among the pure friends
polish bamboo-hitting potsherds in one beautifying assembly.

He rightly attained the responsive spirit to this age
with fifty-two powerful ones in virtues.
He himself cultivated the essence of the practice in gratitude
with sixty-three year's merit-field.

Although turning his body there,
how could he follow the other shore?
Although collecting his trace in the heavens
he has never departed this spring.

Right at this moment, the great old Osho turns the life function,
indestructible for eternity, in the great serene *samadhi*.

Plum flowers smile in subtlety and profundity.
How can one expound the true virtue of Dainin?
Great masters respectively offer one hand each
and transmit the Ancestor's light eternally."

We bid Jikai Dainin Daiocho safe passing and good-bye with a bow and
smile and remembrance in all our days.

Funeral Ceremony for Katagiri Roshi at City Center



Eulogy for Jikai Dainin Daiosho

by Abbot Tenshin Anderson

O, Dainin Daiosho, compassionate teacher of Great Patience

Please accept our poor offerings of homage and praise!

We say, "in emptiness no increase or decrease."

Not even dwelling in such non-discrimination

You celebrated, as fully enjoyed, the subtle

Differences among similar things,

Bringing to life the way of snow in a silver bowl

Free of all extremes, high and low.

You could easily appear as jade or soapstone:

As the ancients found in jade,

We found in you a symbol of virtue.

Soft, smooth, and warm, you were an emblem of giving;

Fine, compact, and solid, you exuded intelligence;

Angular, but not sharp and cutting, you held up justice.

When suspended by a thread,

You appeared as though you would fall to the ground:

thus you showed humility.

When struck, you yielded a tone,

clear and extensive, yet ending neatly:

thus you were music.

Flaws did not cover your beauty, nor beauty cover flaws:

thus you demonstrated loyalty.

Your inner light radiating on all sides,

we recalled sincerity.

Bright as a brilliant rainbow, you are like the heavens.

Your mysterious essence, being formed in the hills and streams,

is akin to the earth.

Esteemed by all under the sky, you are like the Way itself.

Thus you appeared like jade.

And what about the poor green soapstone,

So common, so simple, just sitting with a beginner's mind,

Embodying Buddha by not seeking to make a Buddha,

Always, in the world of patience, fragile and easily scratched

by the life of others,

Joining hands with all beings

and walking together through birth and death?

Although, in the Way, there is no inferior or superior,

You truly hung the sun and moon

high in the shadowless forest

and subtly discerned autumn from spring

on the budless branches.

March forth, great Bodhisattva,

into your rightful place in the Buddha Way!

We will follow you.