



ABBOT DAININ KATAGIRI-ROSHI, *more usually addressed as HOJO-SAN. A complete issue of the Wind Bell was devoted to him in the Summer of 1971 (Volume X, No. 1).*

ZEN CENTER NEWS

On December 20, 1983, Richard Baker-roshi resigned as Abbot of San Francisco Zen Center. The events which led up to this decision were outlined in the Winter 1983 *Wind Bell*. In his letter to Zen Center students and friends, Baker-roshi said:

I have waited all these months trying to decide what to do because I did not know what to do to fulfill the vow I made to Suzuki-roshi to continue and to develop a place for his teaching which would endure. Now I see that my role as Abbot and leader is more damaging to the Sangha and to individuals than any help I may add by staying. And I see even more that the present situation and any effort I make in it is damaging to the teaching and this is completely unacceptable to me. I want to do what is best for Zen Center and the lineage and the teaching. And I want to do whatever I can to lessen, to end the deep suffering and pain many persons feel. So it is with deep regret and shame before Suzuki-roshi and you that I resign as Abbot and Chief Priest of the San Francisco Zen Center. I resign with trust and hope in your wisdom, in the strength of your future, and in the compassion and intelligence of each of you and of all of you working together. Please heal and help me to heal the wounds I have opened and please end and help me to end the suffering I have caused. I know you can work together to make Zen Center the wonderful place to practice and place to share your lives that I know it can be. Thank you for being patient with me all these months while I absorbed the truth and teaching of this situation. And thank you for being patient with me all these years.

Baker-roshi's resignation was accepted by the Board, and on December 24, Edward Espe Brown, Board Chairman, replied to Baker-roshi's letter:

We are grateful for your fundamental and abiding commitment to the teaching and your courage and confidence in taking this step. We deeply appreciate your invaluable contributions to the founding of Zen Center and the many efforts, often unrecognized, you have made that we can live and practice together. We respect your wish and share your intention to heal the wounds and end the suffering we have all been experiencing, and I hope we can find ways to mutually assist one another in our common effort to practice Suzuki-roshi's way. I offer incense and bow.

On February 28, 1984, the Board voted to give Baker-roshi a year of transitional financial support beginning on March 1, 1984. The Board also invited Dainin Katagiri-roshi of the Minneapolis Zen Meditation Center to be interim Abbot of San Francisco Zen Center for the coming year.

Katagiri-roshi first met Suzuki-roshi at the old Sokoji temple on Bush Street in San Francisco, and Suzuki-roshi invited him to stay in San Francisco and help him with both the Japanese congregation and with Zen Center. Katagiri-roshi was

officially appointed priest for both groups in 1965; after Suzuki-roshi's death in December 1971, Katagiri-roshi left Zen Center and eventually formed his own group in Minneapolis. He has visited us frequently in the last twelve years, often staying for about a week in the Fall and giving lectures on chapters from Dōgen's *Shobogenzo*. So, for older students who knew him in Zen Center's formative years, and for many newer students who have heard his lectures, Katagiri-roshi is an old friend and respected teacher. We are very grateful that he has been able to take time out from his many activities in Minneapolis and throughout the mid-western States, to support and guide us through the coming year of changes and transition. On March 14, Katagiri-roshi was formally installed as Abbot in a ceremony at 300 Page Street in San Francisco.