

Dear friend:

I hope you are well.

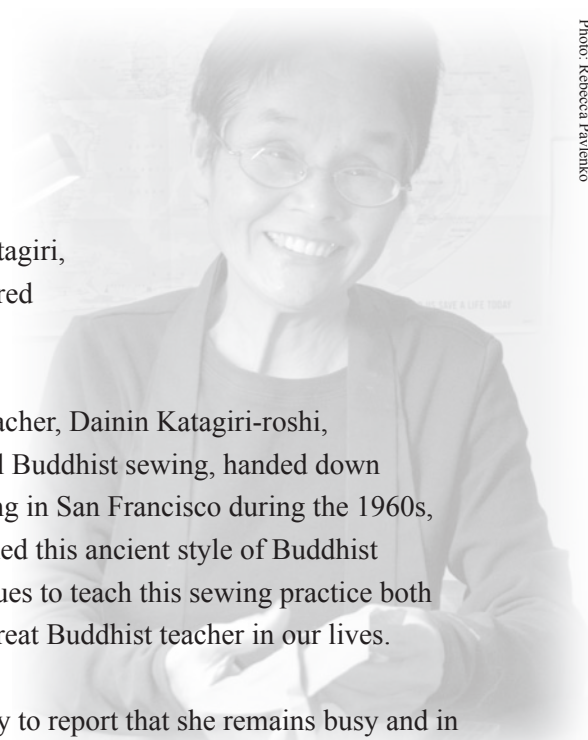
I am writing to ask for your help in giving support to Tomoe Katagiri, our beloved teacher and good friend, by contributing to the Retired Leaders Fund.

Many people know Tomoe-san as the widow of our founding teacher, Dainin Katagiri-roshi, but fewer know that she is an accomplished master of traditional Buddhist sewing, handed down from before the time of Dogen-zenji in the 1200s. While residing in San Francisco during the 1960s, with Katagiri-roshi watching over their small children, she learned this ancient style of Buddhist sewing from her teacher, Eshun Yoshida-roshi. Now she continues to teach this sewing practice both in the Twin Cities area and beyond. We are lucky to have this great Buddhist teacher in our lives.

Tomoe-san celebrated her 75th birthday this year and I am happy to report that she remains busy and in excellent health, still diligently attending her weekly aerobics class and continuing with her piano lessons. Recently, her piano teacher wanted to move her up to a “beginning advanced” level after she become quite competent with twelve sonatinas composed by the likes of Beethoven, Mozart and Clementi, but Tomoe-san objected, “No! I need to do over again!” Her teacher’s response was a smile, a nod of approval, and an exclamation of “Good!” (This may remind quite a number of us who have sewed with her, of that moment when, with a few swift movements of her fingers, she undid our chos, ens and joros, on which we had seriously labored for hours, looked firmly in our eyes, and said, “You need more practice with the backstitch.”)

These days she doesn’t add any more perennials to her already full garden, but tenderly divides the thriving mums, irises and bluebells, and gives them away to friends. Her favorite activity, however, is baby-sitting a three-year-old boy, whose parents are wheelchair-bound. She says with beaming eyes, “Every time I see him I can see change.”

As was reported last year, the Minnesota Zen Meditation Center spent much time and effort giving careful thought to how best to provide strong and secure support for Tomoe-san. After input from many long-time friends and supporters, including the Retired Leaders Advisory Committee members listed below, the MZMC Board of Directors decided to donate Hokyōji, the retreat center in southeastern Minnesota, to a new entity, called the Hokyōji Zen Practice Community. This nonprofit organization, which will receive title to Hokyōji, will now take responsibility for ensuring continued support for Tomoe-san. The members of the Retired Leaders Committee have pledged their ongoing support to this effort.



Tomoe-san's support is provided through the Retired Leaders Fund, a fund established to provide retirement support for teachers or their spouses employed by Minnesota Zen Meditation Center during its developmental period under its founding abbot, Dainin Katagiri. All money donated to the Retired Leaders Fund is kept in a separate bank account and is not used for any other purpose.

I am very happy to report that, because of the generous contributions of many people in 2006, we were able to reach our goal of raising \$20,000 (actual receipts were \$19,832). Based on this level of contributions, Hokyōji's board has decided to increase the monthly stipend to Tomoe-san to a level that covers most of the cost-of-living increases in recent years. We feel we are able to do this because we are confident that we can continue to count on the generosity of supporters like you to be able to raise at least \$20,000 a year.

Please make your gift today by filling out and returning the enclosed pledge card, indicating which payment option works best for you. We welcome your contribution by check, cash or automatic bank transfer.

Katagiri-roshi would often say that all we have to do is continue to walk together hand in hand. It was one of his last requests that we care for and support Tomoe-san after his death. We invite you to join in this particular walk that honors his request and demonstrates recognition of the unique and special place that Tomoe Katagiri has in our hearts: transmitting Buddha's life to us through her humble, gentle, kind, firm and tireless effort.

With gratitude,



Dōkai Georgesen
Chair, Retired Leaders Advisory Committee
(507) 542-4968

Retired Leaders Advisory Committee

Tim Burkett	Minnesota Zen Meditation Center
Ken Ford	Clouds in Water Zen Center
Dōkai Georgesen	Hokyōji Zen Practice Community
Steve Hagen	Dharma Field Zen Center
Myo-on Susan Hagler	Minnesota Zen Meditation Center
Joen Snyder O'Neal	Compassionate Ocean Dharma Center
Michael O'Neal	Compassionate Ocean Dharma Center
Henry Panowitsch	Minnesota Zen Meditation Center
Norm Randolph	Dharma Field Zen Center
Byakuren Judith Ragir	Clouds in Water Zen Center
Shoken Winecuff	Ryumonji Zen Monastery
Rosan Daido Yoshida	Missouri Zen Center