

All the ceremonies and events to celebrate the 20th anniversary of the temple Zenkoji were successfully completed without troubles before, during and after them. I am deeply grateful to every one of the supporters of this temple for the successful celebration. In gratitude, I look back over the 20 years.

Every one of you, while quite young, might have listened with exciting heart in your mother's lap to her old tales, beginning with 'Once upon a time,···', or "Long, long ago,···". Ten years are said to make an epoch. "Long ago" sounds like an epoch ago, and "Long, long ago" like two epochs or 20 years ago. During two decades, worldly phases change beyond the scope of human imagination, and "Long, long ago" old stories attract children as if they were stories in a different world.

Twenty years ago, when I returned home penniless from the United States, I obtained by transfer a small hermitage which had been in the possession of someone, and founded Zenkoji temple in the form of a religious organization, as I wrote about this before. If you do not know this temple personally in those days, you will hardly be able to imagine how it was.

Now it has grown up to be told in old tales.

Throughout these 20 years, the temple has been able to make steady progress not only to strengthen its standing but also to extend some contribution to the world. With sheer happiness and gratitude, I have always been aware that the steady growth of the temple has been dependent on the encouraging support of you all.

In this 20th anniversary year, I had the honors of personally seeing Archpriest Yamada of the Tendai sect, Enryakuji, Mt. Hiei, and of talking with President Nikkyo Niwano of Rissho Kosei-Kai, in the growing reputation of the name of Zenkoji.

Zenkoji is now 20 years old, and I am aged fifty, the age when one may become aware of one's ordainment by the Heaven. To become aware of one's ordainment by the Heaven means to know what one is destined to achieve, or to attain the state of mind of doing one's best and leaving the rest to the Heaven. Now that I am in that age, I am determined deep in my mind to do my best in full awareness of the profundity of the Heavenly ordainment. Please encourage me with your ever strengthening support.