

## Foreword

The chief priest of Zenkōji—Temple  
Takeshi Kuroda

“Learning Buddhism means learning oneself”.

This is the quotation from “Shōbōgenzō” by Rev. Dōgen, who preaches us that when we learn Buddhism, we learn ourselves. Rev. Dōgen once said, “I learned flexibility there”, just after returning from China and wrote this flexibility was the most important must-do’s for human beings.

The human beings tend to think prepossessed with fixed and preconceived ideas or prejudices, and often make mistakes not noticing the facts they are making mistakes. I care about people will loose even their noble minds because of the recent diversity or the dilution of values. We are preached that learning the flexibility of Rev. Dōgen is equal to learn the prajna, supreme wisdom by which we can solve the fundamental problems of our lives.

My belief as a Buddhist is “going back to Buddha through the founder of the Sect” since the foundation of Zenkōji temple. I have devoted my heart and soul to “here and now” in this year. I paid a visit to the head temple Eiheiji before the big ceremonies, the commemoration of the 800<sup>th</sup> year since Rev. Dōgen’s birth and “Daionki”, the 750<sup>th</sup> memorial service since Rev. Dōgen’s death. I offered tea and sweets and I felt as though Rev. Dōgen had been beside me, I was very moved to be appointed as “Shōkōshi”, who burns incense for the memorial service. It was really more honor than I deserved and unforgettable all my life that I could carry out this memorial service with 100 supporters in peace.

I was awarded the Sōtō-sect Special Encouraging Prize, named for an assistant “Daikyōshi” and the great feast was held for me. I was invited to the seminar “DOGEN 2002, the memorial seminar of 750th anniversary since Rev. Dōgen’s death”, sponsored by Zen Center in Eisenbach Germany and I gave the lecture about “Shoshūgi” centering on the approach to the contemporary ideas from the thoughts of Rev. Dōgen. In the panel discussion, I felt all the more keenly in Germany, the great truth of Buddha’s teaching, “Shogyōmujō, all things are in flux and nothing is permanent” and his great view of the world beyond borders, races and religions. Then, having been visited to Buddhathon in Thailand by World Fellowship Buddhist Youth (WFYB) in October, I gave the lecture about the Buddhism in Japan and the Sōtō Zen founded by Rev. Dōgen to the supreme Buddhist leader and many young priests. I cannot forget their beautiful eyes. Having seen their big responses there, I could not help thinking the 21st century’s messages from “Shikantaza, Zen sitting meditation” by Rev. Dōgen began to go back in the propagating route of southern Buddhism.

In this year, I feel like everything begins and ends in Rev. Dōgen. The 35<sup>th</sup> anniversary since Zenkōji temple’s foundation will come in May 2003. “Ikueikai, scholarship foundation” also will become 20 years old, which is adulthood. This means the big turning point for our supporters and me. “Blossoming flowers are same year after year, though not human beings”. We would like to pray each other for our unlimited prosperity and happiness of our rest lives and posterity in the future, and also to see the new year with devoting to the pursuit of our faith more and more to perform our mission through great Buddhism.