The aim of this doctoral thesis is to point out that, in Edo era, Buddhist monk Hakuin’s view of practice has relevance to Chinese Zen Buddhism, and to prove that the characteristic of his thought is “Dembo 伝法” which means act of succeeding to Buddhism.

Chapter one treats Hakuin’s lecture book “Sokkoroku-Kaien-Fusetsu 息耕録開筵普説” and verifies that Hakuin’s “Kensho 見性” means to become Buddha, in other words, to awake one’s self consistent of “Engi 縁起” which is the principle of causation in traditional Buddhism. The word “Kensho” is appeared frequently in the important platform scripture of the sixth patriarch “Rokuso-Dankyo 六祖壇経” which is recorded in Tang 唐 Dynasty.

“Rokuso-Dankyo” and “Ryoga-Sutra 梵伽経” –the sacred book which also is made much of in Chinese Zen Buddhism –has influence on Hakuin’s thought. Chapter two indicates that there is a structural resemblance between the sutra and Hakuin’s ‘Shichi-no-Ben 四智弁’, which shows his thought about process of monks’ becoming Buddha by changing ‘eight consciousnesses 八識’ to ‘four wisdoms 四智’. The process which contains many traditional Zen methods, for example ‘Koan 公案’ and ‘Ten OX-Herding Pictures 十牛図’ is divided into four parts, each of which is based on the four wisdom. Therefore, the totality of the four parts is called ‘Shichi-no-Ben’, and its content is very similar to the way of practice on “Ryoga-Sutra”.

It follows from the above that Hakuin is sentient of the traditional Zen Buddhism and takes account of what he has succeeded from his ancestors.

Chapter three deals with ‘Ho-on 報恩’ which means to hand over Buddhism, an aspect of succeeding Buddhism to a following generation. Ho-on is an act in order to repay kindness received from another person. In general, an object of such act is limited to a benefactor for a repayment’s subject. But Hakuin advocates that the subject has to repay obligation to anyone and, according to the ‘Sokkoroku-Kaien-Fusetsu’, the most superior obligation is to hand over Buddhism. This view of repayment is transcendent because it is free from mundane life.

Chapter four deals with ‘Jukai 受戒’ which means to take over Buddhism, another aspect of succeeding it. Two kinds of Kai 戒—Buddhist rules of moral conduct—are shown on the basis of Hakuin’s “Kanzan-shi-Sendai-Kibun”. One of the Kai is ‘Gusoku-kai’ which is incident to surface actions, and another is Zen’s traditional ‘Muso-Shinchi-kai’ which is related to mental attitudes. Hakuin requests monks to be accompanied with them.

Chapter five clarifies the reason why Hakuin chooses Zen Buddhism over others through a comparative method. He regards Zen as superior to Jodo浄土 Buddhism. Zen values ‘Dembo’ act on human relationship, while Jodo stresses the importance of personal rebirth in Gokuraku極楽.

In conclusion, ‘Kensho’ is equivalent to ‘Dembo’ in Hakuin’s books. For him, practice to be a Buddha needs to be proved by ‘Dembo’.