

## Preface

In honor of Professor Michio Suzuki's 70th birthday, a conference was held in July 1997, at the International Christian University, Mitaka, Tokyo. In early 1998, we published an informal proceedings of the conference, and then began the preparation of a book which would have celebrated the 70th birthday of Professor Suzuki. However, in February 1998, we received an email from Kazuko Suzuki (Professor Suzuki's daughter) informing us that her father had decided to return to Japan immediately, since he was suffering from liver cancer, and that his condition was extremely grave. We were greatly shocked by this news, because Professor Suzuki looked very well during his 70th birthday conference.

Professor Suzuki stayed in hospital in Tokyo. Some of us visited him regularly to discuss mathematics, as well as what we could do for him. Professor Suzuki knew that he would have only a few more months. Together with Professor Suzuki we discussed frankly the possibility that we must change the volume for his 70th birthday to a volume in his memory, and made detailed plans of the volume. Before Professor Suzuki returned to Japan, he had nearly completed a manuscript of about 150 pages, and he tried to give the finishing touches to this manuscript in hospital while fighting his illness. The priority was to make secure the publication of this manuscript, and with his approval, it was decided that the 150 page manuscript would be included in this volume (Professor Michio Suzuki passed away on May 31, 1998).

In the autumn of 1998, we sent invitations for contributions to this memorial volume to the invited speakers of the conference, as well as to researchers who had close ties with Professor Suzuki. Many of them willingly submitted their manuscripts to this volume.

We thought the most important task in this project was to properly handle the paper left by Professor Suzuki. Professor Helmut Bender was asked to check the overall correctness of the manuscript, and confirmation was received within a year (Professor Bender's opinion was that only minimum unavoidable corrections should be made to honor the writing style and the original flow of Professor Suzuki's thoughts). Based on Professor Bender's suggestions, and with the help of Kazuko Suzuki, some necessary corrections were made. In addition, Dr. Naoki Chigira was asked to check the mathematical details of the paper, since his recent interests had been close to the contents of the manuscript. Dr. Chigira took this job very seriously, pointed out many minor irregularities, gave many valuable comments, and also confirmed the overall