

Rev. Shojo Honda papers

Ms. Coll. 1268

Finding aid prepared by Michael Patrick Williams.

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University of Pennsylvania, Kislak Center for Special Collections, Rare Books and Manuscripts

2017 February 6

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Summary Information

Repository	University of Pennsylvania: Kislak Center for Special Collections, Rare Books and Manuscripts
Creator	Honda, Sh#j#, 1929-
Title	Rev. Shojo Honda papers
Call number	Ms. Coll. 1268
Date [inclusive]	1947-2015
Extent	0.1 linear foot (1 volume)
Language	English
Language Note	English and Japanese. Some poetry in Chinese with Japanese readings marks. Some items in Sanskrit.
Abstract	Reverend Shojo Honda ##### (1929-2015) was a priest of the Shin (J#do Shinsh#) sect of Buddhism, and a former reference librarian at the Library of Congress in the Asian Division's Japanese Section. After his death in 2015, Honda's library was donated to the University of Pennsylvania Libraries by Tamon Honda. Rev. Honda's collection reflects both his interests and his life's work, with many books on Buddhist (particularly Shin Buddhist) philosophy and ritual, Indian philosophy and world religions, world history and Japanese local history, Japanese literature, and Sanskrit and English language study. Within many of these books were handwritten notes, correspondence, photocopies, and clippings, mostly serving as bookmarks. In addition to these inserts, the Rev. Honda Shojo Collection includes several folders and boxes of archival and ephemeral material. These disparate materials have been collected and organized as

Biography/History

Reverend Shojo Honda was born in 1929 and dedicated his life to study, service, and education. Honda's obituary in the *Washington Post*, May 10, 2015, provides a detailed summary of his life's work:

"Rev. Shojo Honda passed away on April 13, 2015 after a lengthy bout with respiratory problems. He was 85. Shojo was born on June 25, 1929 in Koloa, Kauai, Hawaii. He was raised mostly in Noda (Takatsuki City, Osaka Prefecture), Japan. The son of a Jodo Shinshu Buddhist priest, he earned Tokudo ordination in 1946 from Nishi Honganji. In 1952 he graduated from Ryukoku University (Kyoto) with degrees in Indian and Buddhist Philosophy. He would subsequently earn Kyoshi, Fukuyoshi, and Hokubei Kaikyoshi ordinations. After working several years at a reform school in Osaka, he emigrated to the United States in 1957, working as a Buddhist minister and Japanese language instructor in Los Angeles while studying English at Santa Monica City College. In 1958 he moved to New York, working and living at the New York Buddhist Church and assisting at the Seabrook (NJ) Buddhist Temple as he continued his English studies at Columbia University and New York University. He married Yone June Ito on August 25, 1959, and together they moved to Washington D.C. later that year. In 1959 he founded the Washington D.C. Sangha, the first Shin Buddhist congregation the area, which he led for more than 40 years. Meanwhile he continued his English studies at American University. The Library of Congress hired him in 1961, where he worked for 30 years, eventually rising to Senior Reference Librarian of the Japanese Section, Asian Division. There, in addition to his daily duties, he created an exhibition on Japanese calligraphy and authored bibliographies of the Library of Congress' Japanese Pre-Meiji collections in three areas: Mathematics; Art; and Literature and Performing Arts. In retirement, he served as Volunteer Minister at Ekoji Buddhist Temple from 2000 through 2010. His wife of 54 years passed away in 2014 from cancer. His hobbies included painting, drawing, photography, carpentry, and writing. His final book, *Stories for Wisdom*, a children's book, was published in 2013."

Stories for Wisdom, Honda's adaptations of folk tales, was published by the Bukkyo Dendokyo America, the Society for the Promotion of Buddhism, an organization of which Honda was a member and whose organizational prospectuses are found in the Rev. Shojo Honda Papers. A March 2014 book review from *Wheel of Dharma*, the official publication of the Buddhist Churches of America quotes Honda as saying "These stories are stories of wisdom, and not just for school children, but for people of all ages and from all backgrounds. [...] There is something for everyone, at all stages of life." Honda's interest in adaptations is shown from two mimeographed adaptations of Japanese short stories: Ogawa Mimei's "Akai Rensoku to Ningyo" ("The Red Candle and the Mermaid") and Akutagawa Ryunosuke's "To Shishun" ("The Story of Du Zichun") both printed at the Japanese Institute of Sawtelle in Los Angeles. (Curiously, the date of *Akai Rensoku to Ningyo* is listed as "1956," a year before Honda's immigration). Both of these mimeographed editions were included in Honda's donated library.

In addition to adapting stories for new audiences, Honda also created bibliographies for the Japanese collections of the Library of Congress. His three-volume *Pre-Meiji Works in the Library of Congress* were published by the Library from 1982-2002 as installments of the series *Asian Division Bibliographic Series*. The second of these volumes, *Japanese Literature, Performing Arts, and Reference Books: a Bibliography*, was annotated by Jinichi Konishi (1915-2007), a former professor emeritus at

Tsukuba University who specialized in comparative literature and the history of Japanese literature. Honda and Konishi's friendship is documented in part by a file of correspondence, a collection of clippings about Konishi's publications, and a photograph of the two men together.

References

Kondo, Gail Kitahara. Remembering Reverend Shojo Honda. In *Kalavinka: the Newsletter of the Ekoji Buddhist Temple*, vol. XXXIIV, No. 5, May 2015. Retrieved from

<http://www.ekoji.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/05/May-Kalavinka.pdf>

Obituary: Shojo Honda. *Washington Post*. March 10, 2015. Retrieved from:

<http://www.legacy.com/obituaries/washingtonpost/obituary.aspx?pid=174824380>

Stories for Wisdom [book review]. *Wheel of Dharma: Official Publication of the Buddhist Churches of America*, vol. 40, issue 3, March 2014. Retrieved from

http://buddhistchurchesofamerica.org/wp/wp-content/uploads/2014/03/wod_2014_03.pdf

Scope and Contents

The Rev. Shojo Honda Papers collect and organize handwritten notes, correspondence, photocopies, clippings, study materials, papers, and ephemeral material donated as part of the Rev. Honda Shojo Collection. Many of these items functioned as ad hoc bookmarks in Honda's extensive collection of books. Others were donated as discrete items in their own folders or boxes.

Box 1 roughly includes material resulting from Rev. Honda's interpersonal and public activity. Box 2 focuses largely on Honda's newspaper clippings and study materials as well as book-related ephemera. Individual folders are outlined below.

"Correspondence, Organizational" contains letters and gift notices from professional associations like Buddhist Churches of American and Bukky# Dend# Ky#kai (BDK, a.k.a. Society for the Promotion of Buddhism, a.k.a) from 1966-2013. Some items are undated.

"Correspondence, Personal" contains letters, postcards, greeting cards, aerogrammes and other items addressed to Rev. Honda and his wife Yone, dating from 1961-2009. Some items are undated.

"Jin'ichi Konishi" contains largely correspondence from Jinichi Konishi including new year's cards, and clippings and ephemera about his literary exploits, dating between 1983-2002. One photograph from 1986 picturing Konishi and Honda is included. Some items are undated.

"Photographs" contains one photograph of a man Inagaki Zuiken (1885-1981) dated late September 1978, and one group photograph including Honda from June 10, 2013.

"Lifestyle Ephemera" contains purchase receipts, ticket receipts, business cards, and other ephemera from 1952-2012. Some items are undated.

"Memorials and Observances" includes pamphlets from memorial services and ceremonies as well as a 1996 "ema" wooden devotional plaque. Date material ranges from 1954-2004.

"Yokohama Foreigners Cemetery" is a collection of materials dating 1984-2003 related to a project to place flowers at the grave of the Ito family interned at Yokohama Yamate Gaijin Bochi. Includes photographs dated September 13, 1987 of the flower placement, handwritten maps of the graveyard, picture postcards featuring views of and from the graveyard, and a florist's booklet. Also in this folder is a copy of the 20 page booklet *Yokohama Gaijin Bochi Jinmeiroku #####*. 3rd edition. (Yokohama: Gaijin Bochi o Aisuru Kai, 1984), which is cataloged separately with BibID 7068614.

"Ekoji Temple Decoration and Redesign" documents a 2009 plan to redecorate the Ekoji Buddhist Temple of Fairfax, VA, with plans, photographs, estimates, and product information flyers and pamphlets.

“Buddhist Temple Booklets” contains larger format guide and souvenir booklets from H#ry#-ji Temple###, T#dai-ji Temple ### (includes paper slip “o-mikuji” with fortune drawn at the temple), By#d#-in Temple###, and Yakushi-ji Temple ###.

“Buddhist Temple Leaflets & Pamphlets” contains many smaller format leaflets, pamphlets, guide maps, and admission tickets from Buddhist temples throughout the Kansai region. One admission ticket is dated [Heisei] 15, i.e. 2003.

“Newsletter and Bulletins” contains specimens of newsletters in English and Japanese from 1964-2012. Titles include: *Graduate Bulletin Harvard*, *Kinry#ji-h#####*, *Kodama###*, “*Kokoro*” *New York: Honganji Bukky# Kaih# #####: #####*, *Zenbutsu ##*, *Japanese Dharma Message for Kokoro*, *BCA Update*, and *The Dharma Breeze*. See “Oversize Newsletters” folder for more.

“Pas#nadi to Marrik#” contains correspondence and ephemera related to Rev. Honda’s subscription of the Buddhist little magazine *Pas#nadi to Marrik#* (shelf number BQ4120 .P373, BibID 7076336).

“BDK Ayumi” contains one English and one Japanese edition of *Ayumi ###*, prospectus of *Bukky# Dend# Ky#kai* (Society for the Promotion of Buddhism), undated. Final item in historical chronology dated 2013.

“Religious and Moral Pamphlets” contains six smaller format pamphlets on a variety of religious and moral topics:

-- *Buddhism and Worship* (Bodhi Leaves ; no. 8) / Prof. G.P. Malalasekera (Kandy, Ceylon [Sri Lanka]: Buddhist Publication Society : Sita Printing Works)

-- *Aesop's Fables* / Jerry Pinkney (New York: AIG, [2000 or later])

-- *Brief Introduction to Jodo Shinshu* / Takashi Tsuji (San Francisco: Buddhist Churches of America)

-- *Is Shin Buddhism the Same as Christianity?* / Rev. Philipp Karl Eidmann

-- *7 Gods of Good Fortune*

-- *Confucius and Confucianism for America* ([Washington, D.C.]: Center for Dao-Confucianism U.S.A)

“Sightseeing and Exhibitions” contains pamphlets and postcards from art and museum exhibitions and collections, and travel maps and promotions for sightseeing locations throughout Japan. Dated items span 1963-2006.

“Music” contains two pieces of music. One is a manuscript copy of a Ryukoku University song,

“Ry#koku Daigaku K#ka #####. The other is a photoduplication of “Aogeiba T#toshi” #####.

“Overview of Pre-Meiji Works” contains annotated, unannotated, and manuscript draft versions of a paper presented at the Fourteenth Annual Meeting of the Mid-Atlantic of the Association for Asian Studies, held at George Washington University, October 25-27, 1985. Includes 13 photographic slides in mounts. Also includes meeting program book. Folder label has date “1985-11-26.”

“Finding Aid References” contains materials printed by the Penn Libraries in 2016 to provide hard copies of the three items referenced in the *Biography/History* section of this finding aid.

The six “Clippings” folder contain newspaper clippings, detached pages from magazines, and photocopies of articles on a variety of topics including Japanese Buddhism and culture and Chinese poetry. One folder focuses on the appointment of the first Buddhist chaplain in the U.S. Armed Forces, Jeanette Shin, a member of Rev. Honda’s sect. Another folder features just one clipping about the “history of zero” that Honda had kept in its own informal tuckbox labeled *Zero no Rekishi #####*.

“Clip Art and Decoration” contains clipped images from newspapers and other images that appear to have been used as clip art for Honda’s projects.

The three “Study Material” contain handwritten and printed items used for Honda’s study of Buddhism, language, history, and health. Of note is extensive Sanskrit study notes originally located in *Jissh# Bongogaku #####* (shelf number PK585.J3 O35 1916, BibID 7068866). Some of these Sanskrit notes are written on blank forms used to collect youth crime statistics.

“Manuscript Poetry” contains handwritten poems in both modern Japanese and classical Japanese (Kanbun), chiefly written on discarded used Library of Congress Orientalia Division catalog cards.

“Buddhist Sculpture” contains a folder of ordered handwritten notes on a series of slide images of

Buddhist sculpture (slides not present). Also includes various supporting documents and notes. Folder has title *Butsuz# Shir#zu #####* (“Buddhist Sculpture Series”) and date 1983.

“History of Buddhist Sculpture” contains a binder of ordered notes on a series of slide images of Buddhist sculpture (slide not present). Also includes various supporting documents and notes. Folder has title *Butsuz# no Rekishi#####* (“History of Buddhist Sculpture”).

“Life of Buddha” contains a folder of ordered handwritten notes on a series of slide images of Buddhist historical sites (slides not present). Also includes various supporting documents, maps, and notes. Folder has title *Budda no Sh#gai Busseki Suraido Kaisetsu #####* (“Explanations of Slides on the Life of Buddha and Buddhist Sites”). Folder is dated 1986.

“Library of Congress Artifacts” includes a serials title slip from Library of Congress’s Newspaper and Current Periodical Room dated 1970, and a copy of *Outline of the Library of Congress Classification*, 2nd edition (1970).

“Book Prospectuses and Pamphlets” contains publisher advertisements for books published in Japan. Some contain distributor information for Japan Publications Trading.

“Book Ephemera” contains a variety of bookmarks found in Honda’s collection, as well as third-party book covers from the U.S. Naval Reserve and Arlington County Schools. This folder also includes a photocopy made by the Penn Libraries’ of Honda’s infrequently used bookplate.

“Oversize Newsletters” contains two items too large to fit in the “Newsletter and Bulletins” folder: *Bunka Jih# Shinsh#-ban #####* = The *Bunkajih* no.6030 (Kyoto: Bunka Jih#sha #####, February 13, 1937); and *H#rin #####no. 2* (Beikoku Bukky#dan#####, February 1979).

Administrative Information

University of Pennsylvania, Kislak Center for Special Collections, Rare Books and Manuscripts

2017 February 6

Finding aid prepared by Michael Patrick Williams.

Access Restrictions

This collection is open for research use.

Use Restrictions

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Source of Acquisition

Gift of Honda, Tamon.

Controlled Access Headings

FORM/GENRE(S)

- Clippings (information artifacts)
- Correspondence
- Memorabilia
- Pamphlets
- Photographs

PERSONAL NAME(S)

- Konishi, Jin'ichi, 1915-2007

SUBJECT(S)

- Buddhism--Study and teaching
- Buddhist temples--Japan
- Shin (Sect)--Study and teaching
- Shin priests
- Votive offerings--Japan

Collection Inventory

	Box	Folder
Correspondence, Organizational, 1966-2013.	1	1
Correspondence, Personal, 1961-2009.	1	2
Jin'ichi Konishi, 1983-2002.	1	3
Photographs, 1978-2013.	1	4
Lifestyle Ephemera, 1952-2012.	1	5
Memorials and Observances, 1954-2004.	1	6
Yokohama Foreigners Cemetery, 1984-2003.	1	7

Ekoji Temple Decoration and Redesign, 2009.	1	8
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Buddhist Temple Booklets, 1970s and 1980s?.	1	9
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Buddhist Temple Leaflets and Pamphlets, 2000s?.	1	10
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Newsletter and Bulletins, 1964-2012.	1	11
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Pasenadi to Marrika, 1993-2004.	1	12
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BDK Ayumi, 2013.	1	13
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Religious and Moral Pamphlets (six items below), 1960s through 2000s.	1	14
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Buddhism and Worship (Bodhi Leaves ; no. 8) / Prof. G.P. Malalasekera	1	14
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(Kandy, Ceylon [Sri Lanka]: Buddhist Publication Society : Sita Printing Works), undated.

Aesop's Fables / Jerry Pinkney (New York: AIG), 2000 or later. 1 14

Brief Introduction to Jodo Shinshu / Takashi Tsuji (San Francisco: Buddhist Churches of America), undated. 1 14

Is Shin Buddhism the Same as Christianity? / Rev. Philipp Karl Eidmann, undated. 1 14

7 Gods of Good Fortune, undated. 1 14

Confucius and Confucianism for America ([Washington, D.C.]: Center for Dao-Confucianism U.S.A), undated. 1 14

Sightseeing and Exhibitions, 1963-2006. 1 15

Music, undated.	1	16
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"Overview of Pre-Meiji Works", 1985.	1	17
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Finding Aid References, 2014-2015.	1	18
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Clippings, English Language, 1976-2010.	2	1
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Clippings, Japanese Buddhism, 1978-2014.	2	2
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Clippings, Chinese poetry, undated.	2	3
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Clippings, Japanese Culture, 1995-2001.	2	4
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Clippings, First Buddhist Chaplain, 2004.	2	5
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Clippings, "History of Zero", 2000.	2	6
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Clip Art and Decoration, undated.	2	7
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Study Materials, Sanskrit, undated.	2	8
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Study Materials, Handwritten, undated.	2	9
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Study Materials, Printouts and Photocopies, undated.	2	10
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Manuscript Poetry, undated.	2	11
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"Buddhist Sculpture Series", 1983.	2	12
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"History of Buddhist Sculpture", undated.	2	13
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"Life of Buddha", 1986.	2	14
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Library of Congress Artifacts, 1970.	2	15
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Book Prospectuses and Pamphlets, 1960s and 1970s?.	2	16
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Book Ephemera, 1982-2004.	2	17
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	Box	Folder
Oversize Newsletters, 1947-1979.	107	1