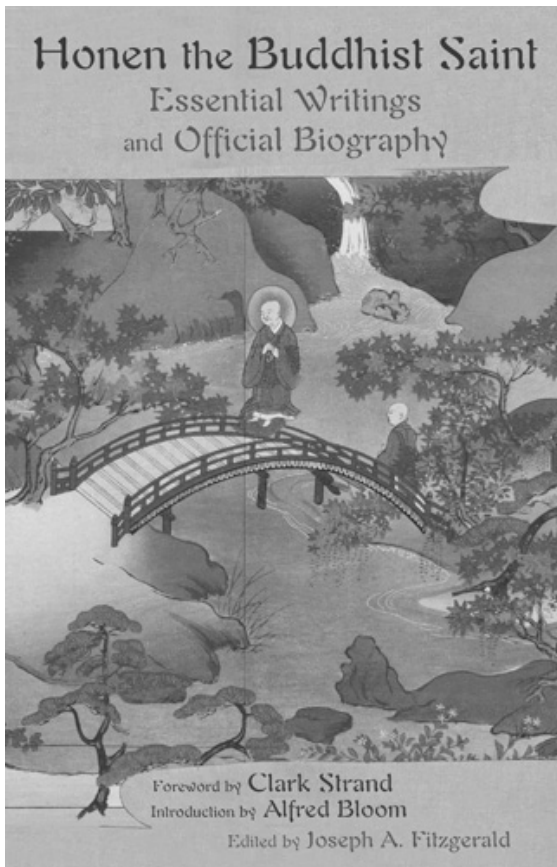


Honen the Buddhist Saint: Essential Writings and Official Biography



At a time when women and the poor were largely ignored by religious elites, Honen Shonin (1133-1212 A.D.) stood apart by speaking to men and women of all social classes. In Honen's worldview, a fisherman may be greater than an Emperor, if the fisherman has faith and the Emperor does not. Honen founded Jodo (Pure Land) Buddhism.

This book is an edited translation of Honen's official biography, compiled by Imperial order in the 14th century. It is the only major biography of Honen available in English. Readers will find that Honen's life story is engagingly told, and his spiritual outlook beautifully described, as often as possible using Honen's own words.



Honen Shonin

Additional Publication Information

Honen the Buddhist Saint contains:

- ❖ A Preface by Joseph A. Fitzgerald; a Foreword by Clark Strand; and an Introduction by Alfred Bloom
- ❖ A Comprehensive Glossary
- ❖ An Index of Significant Foreign Terms and Biographical Notes,
- ❖ Excerpts of Honen's prose and poetry
- ❖ 50 black-and-white illustrations.

The publication date is October 30, 2006, the book is priced at \$19.95, and has approximately 176 pages.

World Wisdom



About the Editor Joseph A. Fitzgerald



Joseph A. Fitzgerald studied Comparative Religion at Indiana University, where he also earned a Doctor of Jurisprudence degree. For more than twenty years he has traveled extensively to traditional cultures throughout the world, including three trips to Japan. Joseph is currently editing several forthcoming books on traditional spirituality.

About the Author of the Foreword Clark Strand

Clark Strand is a former Zen Buddhist monk and the author of *Seeds From a Birch Tree: Writing Haiku and the Spiritual Journey* and *The Wooden Bowl: Simple Meditation for Everyday Life*. In 1996 he left his position as senior editor of *Tricycle: The Buddhist Review* to write and teach full time. He now lives in Woodstock, NY, where he leads the Koans of the Bible Study Group.



An Excerpt from the Foreword

“Despite his mild manner as a person and the fact that his teachings are, finally, so simple that they can be grasped in their entirety even by an illiterate person, Honen stands as a giant among religious reformers. Before him no Buddhist teacher in Japan or elsewhere had ever dared to advance the teaching that all are saved by the miraculous power of the Tathagata, regardless of whether they are young or old, rich or poor, male or female, foolish or wise. . . . Honen was the first Buddhist teacher to include such people in his vision of spiritual salvation. For this alone he deserves the title appended to his name by the translators of this volume. He was, indeed, a saint.”

About the Author of the Introduction Alfred Bloom



Alfred Bloom is one of the world’s foremost authorities on the study of Shin Buddhism. He is Professor Emeritus at the University of Hawaii. He received his Ph.D. from Harvard University, and has taught World Religions and Buddhism at the University of Oregon and the University of Hawaii. He was Dean at the Institute of Buddhist Studies, sponsored by the Buddhist Churches of America. Prof. Bloom is an ordained Shin priest and is the editor of *Living in Amida’s Universal Vow: Essays in Shin Buddhism*.

An Excerpt from the Introduction

“Honen’s teaching struck a chord in people’s hearts because the turmoil of the age made them more aware of their own defilements, the brevity of life, and anxiety for their welfare after death. His teaching, based on his own experience, was decidedly otherworldly. He persistently taught the power of *Nembutsu*—based on Amida’s Vow to overcome all obstacles to Enlightenment—for everyone, whether a highly competent monk, scholar, aristocrat, warrior, a lowly peasant, fisherman, robber, or even a prostitute. In Honen we see a man of great warmth and humane feeling, which he communicated to every individual he met, no matter what status the person held.”

What others have said about this book

“Without an understanding of Honen it is not possible to get to the essence of the Pure Land Way, much less to walk it. World Wisdom has provided a priceless service to contemporary Pure Land Buddhists in making him and his teaching accessible to a wider readership. The Buddhist world will ever be grateful to them.”

—**Jim Pym**, Pure Land Buddhist Fellowship, U.K.

“A handsome and welcome contribution. . . . Amply illustrated, and with a new Introduction by Alfred Bloom, this publication of *Honen the Buddhist Saint* provides for a new generation both a readable abridgement of the classic text first translated by Coates and Ishizuka, and a current update on this important Japanese Buddhist figure.”

—**Paul Swanson**, Director, Nanzan Institute for Religion and Culture

“Japanese Pure Land Buddhism owes a huge debt to Honen Shonin. What is especially exciting about this volume is the presentation of Honen’s life and teaching as seen through the eyes of medieval Japanese Pure Land Buddhists, but brought to life in modern English by the original translators. The editors have done a remarkable feat of reducing the original multi-volume and scholarly production of 1925 to a single tome that is a joy to the eye and a pleasure to read. This will undoubtedly raise the level of appreciation of Japanese Pure Land Buddhism in the West as well as fill a major historical gap in the modern understanding of this great spiritual path.”

—**Richard St. Clair**, founder of the Boston Shinsu Sangha

“The first significant English publication on Honen and his teachings.”

—**Hirokawa Takatoshi**, Taisho University, Tokyo, and translator of Honen’s *Senchakushu*

“From the fifteen hundred years of the intellectual history of Japanese Buddhism, if I were to choose one thinker, it would have to be Honen.”

—**Kato Shuichi**, Ritsumeikan University, Kyoto, and author of *Japan: Spirit & Form*

