



2014

Guide to the Shuji Isawa Collection, 1875 – 2010 (Bulk 1870s)

Orson Kingsley
Bridgewater State University

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**Shuji Isawa Collection,
1875 – 2010 (Bulk 1870s)
(MSS-011)**

*Finding Aid Compiled by
Orson Kingsley*

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Biographical Sketch

Shuji Isawa was sent to the United States by the Ministry of Education of Japan during the early portion of the Meiji Restoration. In 1875 Isawa enrolled at the Bridgewater State Normal School with the purpose of learning all he could about the United States educational system and normal school movement, and to bring this information back to Japan and implement it into their own pedagogy. He graduated from Bridgewater Normal in 1877 after finishing a two year program. He would go onto study at Harvard for a short time before returning to Japan.

Isawa quickly began reforming the Japanese educational system upon his return to Japan. Some of the new curriculum ideas he would bring back and implement included theories in teaching music, physical education, and special education. Isawa became a leader of the modern normal school movement in Japan as a result. He helped establish the Tokyo Normal School in 1879, the Tokyo School for the Deaf in 1880, the Tokyo School of Music in 1887 (now the Tokyo University of Arts), and the Taiwanese public school system in 1895.

Isawa died in 1917. He is still revered in Japan for his influence in shaping the modern educational system.

Scope and Content Note

This collection consists of two boxes of material. The first box contains mostly material created during Isawa's life, including letters, very early Japanese textbooks, photographs, and Bridgewater Normal student records. The second box largely contains material reflecting the legacy of Isawa in Japan in recent times, including programs and other writings from Japan based on his life, such as annual concerts dedicated to his memory.

Box and Folder List

Box 1

Folder

1. Letter from Shuji Isawa to Albert G. Boyden, June 17, 1878
2. Letter from Shuji Isawa to Albert G. Boyden, May 17, 1887
3. Letter from Shuji Isawa to Albert G. Boyden, January 28, 1888
4. Letter from Shuji Isawa to Albert G. Boyden, July 2, 1901
5. Letter from Shuji Isawa to Albert G. Boyden, August 18, 1903
6. Letter from Horace Packard (Class 83 in 1874) while in Japan to Albert G. Boyden; content is about Shuji Isawa, May 20, 1913
7. Isawa entries in fellow student autograph books, 3 separate entries (originals in BSU Archives), 1876-1877
8. Shuji Isawa's Bridgewater State Normal School pledge form (original in BSU Archives), September 7, 1875
9. Isawa entrance examination records (original in BSU Archives), 1875
10. Isawa's student record card (original) and program from his graduation (original in BSU Archives), c. 1875 and 1877
11. Photograph – carte-de-visite of Isawa (original in BSU Archives), c. 1876
12. Photograph – stereoscopic image of Isawa in a classroom (original in BSU Archives), c. 1876
13. Photograph – Isawa and six other Japanese men at the Philadelphia Centennial Exposition (original in BSU Archives), 1876
14. Photograph – Image of Isawa from unknown source, undated
15. Letter from Mrs. A.G. Boyden about presenting the Japanese books of Isawa to the Bridgewater Public Library, c. 1895

(Folders 16-21 are of books in Japanese that Shuji Isawa brought with him from Japan in 1875. All six books are believed to have been created by the Japanese Ministry of Education)

16. Vocabulary textbook, Vol. 2, 1872
-Basic vocabulary book used to teach children.
17. Vocabulary textbook, Vol. 3, 1872
-Includes names of each Japanese emperor
18. Introduction to Geography textbook, revised in August, 1874
-This is a teacher's book used for upper level classes
19. Book on moral education/philosophy/code of ethics/behavior, Vol. 1, 1874
20. Book on moral education/philosophy/code of ethics/behavior, Vol. 2, 1874
21. Calligraphy/penmanship book, July 1874
-This book was probably designed for use by children
22. Reproduced images from Isawa's school books, undated
23. 1 letter from Shozabro Nishimura to Albert G. Boyden, and 1 letter to Boyden sent from Tokyo on notifying Boyden of Nishimura's death, June 30, 1891 and 1894
24. Letter from Tanaka Fujimaro to A.G. Boyden, May 10, 1877
25. Copies of past BSU publications on Isawa, 1968-2008
26. "Bridgewater Normal School and Isawa Shuji's Reforms of Modern Teacher Education in Meiji Japan," by Wing-kai To, 2009

27. "Outline of Historical Materials Concerning Education Reform under the Allied Occupation of Japan," 1989
28. CD of recorded Isawa songs sung by others, from Japan, undated
29. Japanese television program on Isawa on DVD, 1975

Box 2

Folder

1. VHS recording, "TV-Mukku—Journey of the Wonderland: The Origin of the Children's Song 'Lightly Row,'" Nippon TV, April 28, 1989
2. Ephemera from Japan involving Isawa (recent material), undated
3. Series of Japanese pamphlets on Isawa, 1988-2010
 - These publications coincide with an annual concert held in Japan in memory of Isawa.
4. Set of books on music published by Tokyo University of the Arts, 1969-1972
 - Vol. 1 – 4, each based on a different era and contains a bibliography of music related books at the Tokyo University of Arts.
5. Geidai Music Festival program, undated
6. Tokyo University of the Arts publications, undated
7. Postcards involving Isawa, undated
8. Commemorative medal from a Japanese music event, undated

Oversized

- Photograph of the Normal School, Tokio, Japan, c. 1870s
 - Original is 7 ½" x 9 ¼"; photocopy can be found at back of box 1
 - VMC005-104