

Frederick Douglass in Japan: Reception and Research from the 1930s to the Present

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Introduction: Overview of Black Studies in Japan

In Japan, the Meiji Restoration of 1868 is regarded as the beginning of the nation's modernization. From that time, Japan closely observed Western countries such as the United States, Great Britain, Germany and France. Japan sometimes saw them as models of civilization and at other times cautiously viewed them as belligerent White nations. In the case of relations between Japan and the U.S., racial tension became particularly high in the 1920s because of the League of Nations' rejection of the Racial Equality Proposal of 1919 put forward by the Japanese government, and the Exclusion Act of 1924 against Japanese immigrants with the rise of anti-Japanese feeling in the U.S., exemplified particularly in the "Yellow Peril" hysteria. In this historical context, some Japanese scholars and journalists came to pay close attention to the "race problem" in the U.S., and they started to introduce "black issues" to Japan from just prior to the early 1900s.¹ The predecessor for reporting on racial issues to the Japanese people was the introduction of *Uncle Tom's Cabin* in *Kokumin Shinbun* (People's newspaper) in 1896.² During the 1920s and 1930s, some distinguished Black intellectuals and authors even visited Japan, including James Weldon Johnson in 1929, Langston Hughes in 1933 and W. E. B. Du Bois in 1936.³

After Japan's defeat in World War II in 1945, with the wave of "democratization" that swept through Japan primarily led by American occupation forces, liberal Japanese intellectuals once again came to have an interest in racial issues in the U.S. and questioned the nature of American democracy. In the 1950s, serious academic attention began to be paid to African American history and literature in Japan. Certainly, the civil rights movement in the U.S. as well as the decolonization movement of Africa influenced Japanese scholars, and in 1954 there was established *Kokujin Kenkyū no Kai*, or the Association of Negro Studies, currently *Kokujin Kenkyū Gakkai*, or the Japan Black Studies Association. Since then, the association has been collectively devoted to the global study of Black history and culture. This article takes as its context Black studies in Japan, and reviews the reception and research of Frederick Douglass, focusing on the period from the 1930s to the present.⁴

¹ Furukawa Hiromi, *Afuro Amerika Bungaku no Kenkyū: Rūtsu to Souru o Motomete* [A Study of Afro-American Literature: In Search of Its Roots and Soul] (Kyoto: Kyoto Women's University, 1989); Tsunehiko Kato, "The History of Black Studies in Japan: Origin and Development," *Journal of Black Studies* 44, no. 8 (November 2013): 829–845; Yuichiro Onishi and Fumiko Sakashita, eds., *Transpacific Correspondence: Dispatches from Japan's Black Studies* (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2019). In East Asia, traditionally the family name precedes the given name. This article follows this cultural convention.

² Furukawa, *Afuro Amerika Bungaku no Kenkyū*, 219.

³ Furukawa, 223–224.

⁴ This article is primarily based on my presentation "Frederick Douglass in Japan: Reception and Research from the 1930s to the Present," given at the international conference Frederick Douglass Across and Against Times, Places, and Disciplines, held in Paris on 11–13 October 2018, commemorating the bicentennial of Douglass's birth. For bibliographical information in Japanese, see my "Nihon ni okeru Furederikku Dagurasu Kenkyū Gaikan" [An Overview of Frederick Douglass Studies in Japan], *Treatises and Studies by the Faculty of Kinjo Gakuin University: Studies in Humanities* 13, no. 2 (March 2017): 28–40.

Douglass Studies in Japan from the 1930s to 1960s

W. E. B. Du Bois, who had a favorable opinion of the country partly due to its victory against Russia in 1905, visited Japan for two weeks in early December of 1936. Although Du Bois came to Japan as a private citizen, he met a number of influential political leaders and intellectuals during his stay. He also visited universities, newspaper companies, and cultural institutions, delivering several speeches on racial issues in the global context.⁵ On 4 December at Kobe College, a women's university founded by Christian missionaries from America, Du Bois delivered a lecture on Frederick Douglass, which is probably the first time Frederick Douglass was formally and academically introduced in Japan.⁶ He also gave a speech entitled "The Life of Mr. Douglass, a Great Black Leader" ("Kokujin Daishidōsha Dagurasu Shi no Shōgai") at Ryukoku University, a famous Buddhist university in Kyoto.⁷

As early as 1915 to 1925, several academic books on racial issues were published in Japan, however, there was only one mention of Douglass in Mitsukawa Kametarō's *Jinshu Mondai* (Racial issues) in the brief portion overviewing the history of Black abolitionists and their contributions.⁸ While there was rather less interest in Douglass before and during World War II, Japanese scholars were quite interested in Booker T. Washington, publishing translations of his autobiography, *Up from Slavery*, as well as a biography and a scholarly volume devoted to him.⁹ Even though the two Black leaders had in common the experience of being enslaved, Japanese intellectuals did not pay particular attention to Douglass, partly because he was not a contemporary to that time. They focused only on the aspect of Washington's contribution that related to education and industrial training, from a pragmatic perspective. In short, they neglected the racial issues or the racial struggle that Washington had been through but spotlighted the practical aspect because the element of basic education and industrial training might be serviceable to Imperial Japan and its push for modernization.

After Japan's defeat in World War II, the occupation of Japan was initiated by the Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers, technically led by U.S. forces from 1945 to 1952. In 1948, a magazine titled *Amerika Kyōiku* (American education), first published in December of 1946, carried an abridged translation of selected chapters from Douglass's *My Bondage and My Freedom*,

⁵ Furukawa Hiromi and Furukawa Tetsushi, *Nihonjin to Afurikakei Amerikajin: Nichibei Kankeishi ni okeru Sono Shosō* [Japanese and African Americans: Historical Aspects of Their Relations] (Tokyo: Akashi Shoten, 2004), 125–128.

⁶ *Megumi* [Grace] (Journal of the Kobe College Alumnae Association) no. 30 (July 1937): 8; David Levering Lewis, *W. E. B. Du Bois: The Fight for Equality and the American Century 1919–1963* (New York: A John Macrae Book, 2000), 415. The text of this lecture has not yet been discovered in Japan.

⁷ *Ryūkoku Daigaku 350 Nenshi* [350 Years of Ryukoku University History] (Complete History Version) 1 (March 2000): 750.

⁸ Inada Shūnosuke, *Jinshu Mondai* [Racial Issues] (Tokyo: Yūhikaku, 1915); Kobayashi Seisuke, *Beikoku to Jinshu teki Sabetsu no Kenkyū* [A Study of the United States and Racial Discrimination] (Tokyo: Bunsendō, 1919); Ayakawa Takeji, *Jinshu Mondai Kenkyū* [A Study of Racial Issues] (Tokyo: Kurahashi Shoten, 1925); Mitsukawa Kametarō, *Jinshu Mondai* [Racial Issues] (Tokyo: Nikei Meicho Kankō Kai, 1925), 302.

⁹ Sasaki Hideichi, abridged translation of *Up from Slavery* (Tokyo: Meguro Shoten, 1919); Takiura Bun'ya, *Būka Washinton: Dorei agarino Ijin, Shin Bunmei no Kensetsusha* [Booker T. Washington: A Great Figure Up from Slavery, Builder of a New Civilization] (Kyoto: Tanjun Seikatsu Sha, 1927); Sasaki Hideichi, complete translation of *Up From Slavery, Kokujin Būka Washinton Jiden* [Great Black Man: Autobiography of Booker T. Washington] (Tokyo: Koyama Shoten, 1939). In 1934 Nasu Shōhei published the annotated version of *Up from Slavery* as an English textbook for higher education in Kobe. See Furukawa, *Afuro Amerika Bungaku no Kenkyū*, 222–223. Also, Okimoto Itaru translated and published *Dorei yori Mi o Okoshite: Būkā Tī Washinton Jijoden* [Up from Slavery: Autobiography of Booker T. Washington] (Tokyo: Shūyōdan, 1931).

“Chapter X: Life in Baltimore” and “Chapter XI: A Change Came O’er the Spirit of My Dream” (see fig. 1). The translator, Katō Ken’ichi, was an English educator and academic who introduced numerous works of British and American literature to the English education arena in postwar Japan. The magazine had been censored by General Headquarters (GHQ) and its editorial policy was assessed as “center” and “liberal” by the examiner.¹⁰ The magazine exemplified America’s democratic educational practice and carried a series of translations of American literary works. It showcased the “American spirit” with works by Walt Whitman, Timothy Flint, Richard Henry Dana, and others. One of the series of translations included Douglass’s *Bondage and Freedom*. It was only a nine-page summarized translation,¹¹ however, it is worthy to note that the translation was published no more than three years after Japan’s defeat in World War II. The issue that carried the translation passed the censor without any correction.¹² Regardless, it was not until the 1950s that serious and rigorous research on or translation of Douglass began in Japan.

In response to the publication of Philip S. Foner’s *The Life and Writings of Frederick Douglass* in 1950, Honda Sōzō, one of the most notable scholars of American slavery and Black history, published an essay on Foner’s work in 1953;¹³ this marked the beginning of serious Frederick Douglass studies in Japan. Honda also published another essay on Douglass in 1955.¹⁴ He compared Abraham Lincoln and Douglass and positioned the latter as a forerunner of the progress of American history from the perspective of Marxist historical materialism.¹⁵

There were a certain number of experts on American history and literature in Japan who maintained an academic interest in Black studies at this time. However, American literature specialists, in comparison to their American history counterparts, sometimes lacked a sincere and fair perspective on African American literature, even though literary studies had been dominant in Black studies in Japan during the pre-war era.¹⁶ Consequently, there were fewer works on Douglass from the field of American literature during the 1950s; only two essays were written by scholars of literature, both of which briefly mentioned Douglass.¹⁷ However, since the civil rights movement in the U.S. began influencing Japanese experts on American literature, during the 1960s and 1970s the number of academic articles on Douglass’s literary works and translations of his autobiographies gradually increased. In 1962, Tobita Shigeo, a scholar of American literature, translated an abridged version of Douglass’s speech on lynching, based on an article carried in the

¹⁰ Censorship Documents regarding *Amerika Kyōiku* [American Education], Gordon W. Prange Collection and Archives at the University of Maryland College Park Libraries.

¹¹ Frederick Douglass, “Furederikku Dagurasu ‘Watashi no Dorei Seikatsu to Watashi no Jiyū Seikatsu’ [Frederick Douglass, “My Bondage and My Freedom”], trans. Katō Ken’ichi, *Amerika Kyōiku* 3, no. 6–7 combined edition (October 1948): 52–60.

¹² Censorship Documents regarding *Amerika Kyōiku*, Gordon W. Prange Collection and Archives at the University of Maryland College Park Libraries.

¹³ Honda Sōzō, “Fōnā hen ‘Furederikku Dagurasu no Shōgai to Chosakushū ni yosete: Amerika Kokujin Mondai no Shiten kara’ [On “The Life and Writings of Frederick Douglass” ed. Philip S. Foner], *Keizai Kenkyū* [Studies in Economics] 4, no. 4 (October 1953): 310–315.

¹⁴ Honda Sōzō, “Furederikku Dagurasu to Namboku Sensō” [Frederick Douglass and the Civil War], *Rekishi Hyōron* [History Review] no. 67 (June 1955): 31–58.

¹⁵ For more on the relation between Japanese historians and Marxism, see Ayumu Kaneko, “From Localized Marxism to Americanized Sophistication and Beyond: Studies of Black History in Postwar Japan,” in *Transpacific Correspondence*, eds. Onishi and Sakashita, 111–140.

¹⁶ Kaneko, “From Localized Marxism to Americanized Sophistication and Beyond,” 111.

¹⁷ Akamatsu Mitsuo, “Dorei Taikenki (Slave Narratives) ni tsuite” [On Slave Narratives], *Kokujin Kenkyū* [Black Studies] no. 5 (October 1958): 3–10; Ōta Yoshisaburō, “Kokujin Mondai to sono Beibungaku eno Tōei” [Black Issues and Their Reflection in American Literature], *Eigo Seinen* [The Rising Generation] 104, no. 1 (January 1958): 34–73.

Christian Recorder and issued on 11 August 1892. Hwang Insoo,¹⁸ an ethnic Korean scholar of American literature born under Japan's colonial rule of the Korean peninsula, undertook a combined translation of Douglass's two speeches on slavery: "Slavery and Slave Power," a speech delivered in Rochester, New York, on 1 December 1850, and "An Antislavery Tocsin," a speech delivered in Rochester, New York, on 8 December 1850.¹⁹

In 1963, the first complete Japanese translation of *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave, Written by Himself* was published by Karita Motoshi, a scholar of British and American literature, who had translated many literary works of acclaimed authors such as Geoffrey Chaucer, Charles Dickens, William Thackeray, Henry Adams, Emily Dickinson, Nathaniel Hawthorne, Edgar Allan Poe, Saul Bellow, Mark Twain, and J. D. Salinger. This first Japanese translation of *Narrative* was included in an anthology of world-famous non-fiction writings (see fig. 2).²⁰ In the afterword to his translation, Karita pointed out that the very essence of what Douglass had illustrated in his narrative was human dignity and the passion fueling his struggle to attain freedom and fulfill his aspirations, which appealed to people of the modern age.²¹

Douglass Studies in Japan from the 1970s to 1990s

In 1970, a translation of selected chapters from *Life and Times of Frederick Douglass* was published by Inazawa Hideo (see fig. 3), a scholar of American literature who had conducted specialized research on John Steinbeck and Truman Capote, and also translated Booker T. Washington's *Up from Slavery* in 1969.²² In his afterword to the book, Inazawa elaborated on how *Life and Times* served as an excellent textbook of American history.²³ However, Inazawa's translation of *Life and Times* only included the portion from "Chapter I: Author's Birth" to "Chapter XV: Covey, the Negro Breaker," thus, regrettably, significant parts of the memoir, from the Civil War through the end of the nineteenth century, were omitted.

In the 1980s Honda Sōzō had published a few works on Douglass, including the biography *Watashi wa Kokujin Dorei Datta: Furederikku Dagurasu no Monogatari* (I was a Black slave: A story of Frederick Douglass) (see fig. 4 and 5).²⁴ This book was aimed at a young readership, such as high schoolers or college students, and received a juvenile literature award.²⁵ It is the only work that illustrated Douglass's importance in the larger context of American history and literature.

¹⁸ Hwang is one of the three translators of the 1965 Japanese edition of Du Bois's *The Souls of Black Folk*.

¹⁹ Frederick Douglass, "Shikei ni tsuite" [On Lynching], trans. Tobita Shigeo, in *Niguro Essei Shū* [Collection of Negro Essays], eds. Hashimoto Fukuo and Hamamoto Takeo (Tokyo: Hayakawa Shobō, 1962) 23–26; Frederick Douglass, "Dorei Seido o Ronzu" [On Slavery], trans. Hwang Insoo, *ibid.*, 9–22.

²⁰ Frederick Douglass, "Aru Kokujin Dorei no Hansei" [Narrative of a Slave Life], trans. Karita Motoshi, in *Aru Kokujin Dorei no Hansei / Shitsūki / Kuroi Hi / Urakami Kirishitan / Tabi no Hanashi*, eds. Nakano Yoshio, Yoshikawa Kōjirō and Kuwahara Takeo (Tokyo: Chikuma Shobō, 1963): 3–114.

²¹ Karita Motoshi, afterword to "Aru Kokujin Dorei no Hansei," by Frederick Douglass, trans. Karita Motoshi, 110–114.

²² Frederick Douglass, *Waga Shōgai to Jidai* [Life and Times of Frederick Douglass], trans. Inazawa Hideo (Tokyo: Masago Shobō, 1970); Booker T. Washington, *Dorei yori Tachiagarite* [Up from Slavery], trans. Inazawa Hideo (Tokyo: Masago Shobō, 1969).

²³ Inazawa Hideo, afterword to *Waga Shōgai to Jidai*, by Frederick Douglass, trans. Inazawa Hideo, 202–203.

²⁴ Honda Sōzō, "Furederikku Dagurasu no Haka" [The Grave of Frederick Douglass], *Rekishi Hyōron* no. 373 (May 1981): 55–57; Honda Sōzō, "Furederikku Dagurasu Kenkyū no Ichi Danshō: Dagurasu no Shusseinen no Kakutei o Megutte" [A Historical Essay on the Birth of Frederick Douglass], *Hitotsubashi Ronsō* [The Hitotsubashi Review] 88, no. 1 (July 1982): 1–19; Honda Sōzō, *Watashi wa Kokujin Dorei Datta: Furederikku Dagurasu no Monogatari* [I was a Black Slave: A Story of Frederick Douglass] (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1987).

²⁵ It won the thirty-fifth *Sankei Jidō Shuppan Bunka Shō*, or the Sankei Juvenile Literature Award, in 1988.

Although his version of the narrative only covers the period from Douglass's birth until the enactment of the Thirteenth Amendment, which proclaimed the abolition of slavery in 1865, even now there is no work which outshines Honda's biography of Douglass in Japan.²⁶

Although there had been some exceptions, as mentioned above, the prevailing attitude toward African American literature in the mainstream English literary associations in Japan was indifference or cynicism, continuing through the 1970s. It was not until the 1980s that the atmosphere began to change. The change was brought about by the rise of feminism and subsequently the emergence of African American women writers such as Alice Walker and Toni Morrison. Then, a drastic change took place in 1993, when Morrison won the Nobel Prize in literature. Soon after that, *Nihon Amerika Bungakkai*, or the American Literature Society of Japan (established in 1956, with the predecessor of the society formed in 1946) held a panel on Morrison's works for the first time. According to Katō Tsunehiko, former president of the Japan Black Studies Association, the room for the panel was packed. This was probably the symbolic moment when the study of African American literature was recognized as a "legitimate" field of study in American literature in Japan.²⁷

From the 1980s to the present, there has been a gradual increase of academic publishing on Douglass, especially in the field of American literature. The topics of these works vary: analysis from the tradition of slave narratives; close study of each of his autobiographies and his solo novella, "The Heroic Slave," or his famous speeches; comparative studies with his contemporaries such as Martin R. Delany, Sojourner Truth, Harriet Jacobs, Harriet Beecher Stowe, and Herman Melville; as well as the relationship of Douglass with Christianity, women's rights, and other issues.

In 1993, Okada Seiichi, a scholar of American literature who was known primarily for editing numerous English textbooks, published his version of the Japanese translation of *Narrative* (see fig. 6).²⁸ This was the second translation of *Narrative*, but the significant difference is that the first had been included in an anthology of world-famous non-fiction writings, while Okada's version was published as a single-volume book. In his afterword to the book, Okada clearly and concisely overviewed the history of abolitionism and explained the activities of Black and White abolitionists for Japanese readers.²⁹

²⁶ My first encounter with Frederick Douglass was occasioned by this biography of Douglass written by Honda Sōzō, *Watashi wa Kokujin Dorei Datta: Furederikku Dagurasu no Monogatari* (I was a Black Slave: A Story of Frederick Douglass), when I was sixteen, in 1993. Being a high school student without any knowledge of Douglass or slave narratives, I was deeply moved and intrigued by Douglass, as well as African American history and culture. For me, they shone with the very essence of human dignity, beauty and resilience, and they still do. Since then, I have been studying and researching about Frederick Douglass primarily in the field of American literature. At that time during my teenage years, being one of the historical byproducts of Japanese colonialism, *Zainichi*, I was struggling to establish my identity in the sometimes hostile society of Japan. Postwar Japan lost its colonial territories, but it could not rid itself of the legacy of racialized colonialism. Korean people in the Japanese mainland before World War II had been forced to become second-class nationals of the Japanese Empire, but after the war they were legally excluded from the new Japanese nationality and given the marginalized status of special permanent residency, which made ethnic Koreans in Japan *Zainichi* in Japanese. I was born as a *Zainichi*, though I was raised, educated, and have lived all my life within Japanese culture. Despite Japan's rapidly diversifying society, cultural sensitivity hasn't quite kept pace and I still find myself sometimes being displaced, or worse, discriminated against. Through Frederick Douglass and African American history and culture, I have acquired my own motive force to live and survive in this global arena.

²⁷ Kato, "The History of Black Studies in Japan," 841.

²⁸ Frederick Douglass, *Sūki naru Dorei no Hansei: Furederikku Dagurasu Jiden* [Extraordinary Life of a Slave: Autobiography of Frederick Douglass], trans. Okada Seiichi (Tokyo: Hōsei Daigaku Shuppan Kyoku, 1993).

²⁹ Okada Seiichi, afterword to *Sūki naru Dorei no Hansei*, by Frederick Douglass, trans. Okada Seiichi, 169–195.

In 1995, the Japan Black Studies Association held its forty-first annual conference in Kyoto, which included a symposium commemorating the one hundredth anniversary of Douglass's death. The chair was Honda Sōzō and three presenters gave papers on Douglass: Akamatsu Mitsuo, "Frederick Douglass in Plays"; Miyai Setsuko, "Right Is of No Sex... Truth Is of No Color—Frederick Douglass and the Women's Rights Movement"; and Takenaka Kōji, "Frederick Douglass and Religion in Slavery."³⁰ According to Kitajima Gishin, former president of the Japan Black Studies Association and then editor in chief of the association's journal, *Kokujin Kenkyū* (Black studies), there was active discussion and it marked a very significant moment for commemorating Douglass.³¹

In 1998, *Eibungaku Kenkyū* (Studies in English Literature), one of Japan's most prestigious peer-reviewed academic journals (issued by *Nihon Eibungakkai*, or the English Literary Society of Japan, established in 1928, with the predecessor of the society formed in 1917), published the first essay in the journal's history that included the name "Frederick Douglass" in its title: Tsuneyama Nahoko's "Amerikan Osero: Furederikku Dagurasu to Kokujin Taishū Engeki no Dentō" (American Othello: Frederick Douglass' narrative and the 19th century African-American entertainment culture).³² Tsuneyama, highlighting Douglass's link to Othello in *Life and Times* and mainly focusing on his descriptions in *Narrative*, demonstrated that the play *Othello* was naturalized through a uniquely American literary institution, the autobiography. She analyzed Douglass in light of his contemporary Black minstrel players and Eugene O'Neill's modernist play *All God's Chillun Got Wings*. Tsuneyama clarified the Black figure of an "Anglophilic trickster," outwitting White people under the mask of submission.

Douglass Studies in Japan from the 2000s to Bicentennial

After the 2000s, there was a sharp rise in the number of academic works on Douglass in the field of American literature. Also, there was a noteworthy increase of mentions and entries of Douglass in English educational materials or dictionaries and encyclopedias targeting English learners or ordinary readers. For example, Furomoto Atsuko, former vice president of the Japan Black Studies Association and noted scholar of African American and Caribbean literature as well as a translator, wrote an article on Frederick Douglass and the history of slave narratives in the magazine-style encyclopedia, *Sekai no Bungaku* (World literature), aimed at a general readership.³³ Saitō Yoshifumi, one of the most outstanding English educators and experts on British and American literature, and Kamioka Nobuo, a prolific translator of modern American literature and a famous Americanist, coauthored *English Masters' Reader* in 2004. The book featured an excerpt from chapter six of *Narrative*, the part in which Douglass came to realize that learning to read and write could lead him to freedom, as an outstanding model of the composition of English prose written by literary figures. In addition, the book included an audio CD. Later in

³⁰ Abstracts of the symposium are carried in *Kokujin Kenkyū* no. 65 (December 1995): 25–30.

³¹ Kitajima Gishin, editor's postscript to *Kokujin Kenkyū* no. 65: 61.

³² Tsuneyama Nahoko, "Amerikan Osero: Furederikku Dagurasu to Kokujin Taishū Engeki no Dentō" [American Othello: Frederick Douglass' Narrative and the 19th Century African-American Entertainment Culture], *Eibungaku Kenkyū* [Studies in English Literature] 75, no. 2 (December 1998): 237–251.

³³ Furomoto Atsuko, "Furederikku Dagurasu hoka 'Dorei Taikenki' no Keifu" [Lineage of "Slave Narratives": Frederick Douglass and Others] in *Sekai no Bungaku* [World Literature] (Shūkan Asahi Hyakka) no. 34 (Tokyo: Asahi Shinbun Sha, 2000): 108–111.

2006, Kamioka published a book on America's great speeches, which included Douglass's "What to the Slave Is the Fourth of July?" also including an audio CD.³⁴

In this era, one thing can be particularly noted: studying Douglass from the perspective of American literature is not as marginal as it used to be. Therefore, compared to the pioneers of African American literature in Japan, there have been many, including not only experts in American literature but also younger scholars, who have had the great fortune of being able to begin or continue their own concentrated research on Douglass. For instance, this essay's author, Park Soonyoung, a third generation ethnic Korean scholar of American literature, published a comparative study of the ideal Black heroic figure in Douglass's "The Heroic Slave" and Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin and Dred* in 2003. She is the first scholar in Japan to earn a PhD on Douglass, with a thesis entitled "Frederick Douglass and His Strategic Application of Masculinity to African American Liberation" in 2007.³⁵ Since then, Park has undertaken continuous research on Douglass.³⁶ Park's current topic is Frederick Douglass's "eternalization" of his self-image. She argues that by continuing to revise and retell his life story three times, Douglass intended to eternalize his ideal self-image as "a respectable black man" in his autobiographies. Unlike journalistic pieces such as newspaper articles or his self-published editorials, Douglass saw that

³⁴ Saitō Yoshifumi and Kamioka Nobuo, recording with Peter Barakan and Christina Laffin, *Eigo Tatsujin Dokuhon* [English Masters' Reader] (Tokyo: Chūōkōron Shinsha, 2004): annotation 17–18, excerpt and its translation 19–21; Kamioka Nobuo, recording with Roger Pulvers and Xanthe Smith, *Meienzetsu de Manabu Amerika no Rekishi* [Learning American History through Great Speeches] (Tokyo: Kenkyūsha, 2006): speech and its translation 36–39, annotation 40–43.

³⁵ Park Soonyoung, "Shōsetsu o Tōshiteno Taiwa: Douglass to Stowe no Shōsetsu ni Kyōtsū suru Kokujin Hīrō Zō to Doreisei Haishi Undō no Hōkōsei" [Conversation through Novels: Douglass's and Stowe's Ideal Black Heroic Figure in their Novels and the Course of Action of Abolitionism], *Amerika Bunka Kenkyū no Kanōsei* [Possibility of Studies in American Culture] no. 1 (April 2003): 11–20; Park, "Frederick Douglass and His Strategic Application of Masculinity to African American Liberation" (PhD diss., Osaka University, June 2007).

³⁶ Park Soonyoung, "Doreisei Haishi Undō ni okeru Frederikku Dagurasu no Retorikaru Sutorateji" [Frederick Douglass's Rhetorical Strategy in the Abolition Movement], in *Kokujin Kenkyū no Sekai* [The World of Black Studies], ed. Japan Black Studies Association (Chiba: Seiji Shobō, 2004): 3–11; Park, "Furederikku Dagurasu no 'Masukyuriniti' Senryaku: Narrative o Chūshin ni" [Frederick Douglass's Strategic Use of "Masculinity" in His Narrative], *Kokujin Kenkyū*, no. 74 (March 2005): 70–74; Park, "Songen o Kaketa Tatakai: Furederikku Dagurasu no 'Fight with Covey' o Megutte" [On Frederick Douglass's "Fight with Covey"], *Amerika Bunka Kenkyū no Kanōsei* no. 3 (May 2005): 11–18; Park, "Furederikku Dagurasu no Masukyuriniti Gensetsu: Anteberamu ki kara Namboku Sensō ki o Chūshin ni" [The Masculinity Discourse of Frederick Douglass: From the Antebellum to the Civil War Period], *Amerika Bunka Kenkyū no Kanōsei* no. 4 (May 2006): 11–20; Park, "Furederikku Dagurasu to Dorei no Uta" [Frederick Douglass and Slave Songs], in *Eigo Bungaku to Fōkuroa: Uta, Matsuri, Katari* [English Literature and Folklore: Songs, Festivities and Narratives], eds. Furomoto Atsuko and Matsumoto Noboru (Tokyo: Nan'undo Phoenix, 2008): 78–91; Park, "Transcription of Frederick Douglass's Unpublished Handwritten Manuscripts about Toussaint L'Ouverture with an Introduction," *Studies in Western Literature* (Otani University Western Literature Society) no. 30 (June 2010): 1–26; Park, "Silence and Eloquence in Frederick Douglass's 'The Heroic Slave' and Herman Melville's 'Benito Cereno': A Preliminary Study," *Journal of English Literature Association* (Otani University English Literature Society) no. 37 (2011): 1–22; Park, "Jinshu no Kabe o Koeru Kokoromi: Furederikku Dagurasu kara Baraku Obama e" [In Search of a Post-Racial Society: From Frederick Douglass to Barack Obama], in *Baraku Obama no Kotoba to Bungaku: Jiden ga Kataru Jinshu to Amerika* [Barack Obama and His Language and Literature: Autobiography on Race and America], ed. Satouchi Katsumi (Tokyo: Sairyūsha, 2011): 87–130; Park, "Frederick Douglass's Strident View on Black Masculinity in His Later Years," *Annual Memoirs of the Otani University Shin Buddhist Comprehensive Research Institute* no. 30 (March 2013): 141–155; Park, "Martin R. Delany and His Vision of Black Liberation in the Antebellum Period," *Treatises and Studies by the Faculty of Kinjo Gakuin University: Studies in Humanities* 11, no. 2 (March 2015): 112–122; Park, "Dorei Taikenki kara Jiden e: Furederikku Dagurasu ni okeru Katari no Jiyū" [From Slave Narrative to Autobiography: Frederick Douglass's Self-Emancipation in Authorship], *Kokujin Kenkyū* no. 85 (March 2016): 26–34.

autobiography, as a form of literature, could survive over time. Also, focusing on the relation between Douglass and photography, Park has elucidated Douglass's strategic use of three voices: oration as physical, autobiography as readable, and photography as visual voice; all three voices are moreover in a reciprocal and complementary relationship. She concludes that Douglass continues to exercise his authorship, power and influence over his self-image at the present time, which she terms the "eternalization" of the self-image of Frederick Douglass.³⁷

Another important academic figure within the younger generation who researches Douglass is Hori Tomohiro, who earned a PhD on Douglass from Louisiana State University, with a thesis entitled "Contingent Constellations: Frederick Douglass and the Fact Freedom" in 2011. Reading *Narrative and Bondage and Freedom* alongside theories of freedom including, among others, those of Immanuel Kant and G. W. F. Hegel, Hori examines the process through which the young American slave Douglass discovers the idea of freedom and turns it into the primary object of his pursuit, to the point that he stakes his life on it in his famed battle with the overseer Edward Covey. Hori concludes that Douglass diverges from the Hegelian theory of freedom on important points such as the primacy of the state over individual liberty, among others. Hori has also written scholarly articles on Douglass.³⁸ Currently he is working on a complete translation of *Bondage and Freedom*, which has never been done in Japan.³⁹

Among other experts on American literature with a long career, Ara Konomi contributed to Douglass studies in Japan in both literary and historical fields, publishing a book on African American literature that included her analysis of Douglass's works and introduced his speeches as historical material with annotation. In 2008, *Amerika no Kokujin Enzetsu Shū* (Anthology of African American speeches) included a translation of "What to the Slave Is the Fourth of July?" (see fig. 8).⁴⁰

³⁷ Park Soonyoung, "Frederikku Dagurasu no Jiden ni okeru Kakikae: Jikozō no Kōchiku/ Saikōchiku to 'Eienka' e no Kokoromi" [Changes in Description in Frederick Douglass's Autobiographies: Construction/Reconstruction and Eternalization of Self-Image], *Eibungaku Kenkyū* no. 95 (December 2018): 35–51; Park, "Frederick Douglass and His Strategic Use of Photography as Visual Voice," *Treatises and Studies by the Faculty of Kinjo Gakuin University: Studies in Humanities* 16, no. 1 (September 2019): 95–109.

³⁸ Hori Tomohiro, "Furederikku Dagurasu to Josai Henson: 19 Seiki Chūyō no 'Hankō tekina Dorei' Zō ni kansuru Ichi Kōsatsu" [Frederick Douglass and Josiah Henson: A Study of the Representation of Defiant Slaves in Mid-Nineteenth Century American Culture], *Jinbun Shakai Ronsō* [Studies in the Humanities Cultural Sciences] no. 30 (August 2013): 15–27; Hori, "19 Seiki Chūyō ni okeru 'Teikō suru Dorei' no Hyōshō: Furederikku Dagurasu to Harrietto Bīchā Sutou no Kantekisuto teki Taiwa" [Representation of "Resisting Slaves" in Mid-Nineteenth Century: An Intertextual Conversation between Frederick Douglass and Harriet Beecher Stowe], in *Amerikan Baiorensu: Mieru Bōryoku, Mienai Bōryoku* [American Violence: Violence Seen and Unseen], eds. Gonda Kenji and Shimokōbe Michiko (Tokyo: Sairyūsha, 2013): 175–200; Hori, "Amerikano Dorei mo Sūkō o Utau: Furederikku Dagurasu ni okeru Romantishizumu no Bigaku to Jiyū no Rinri" [The American Slave, Too, Sings the Sublime: Romantic Aesthetics and the Ethics of Freedom in Frederick Douglass], *Jinbun Shakai Ronsō* no. 35 (February 2016): 21–35.

³⁹ Hori has already published first four chapters of his translation of *Bondage and Freedom*. Frederick Douglass, "Hon'yaku: Furederikku Dagurasu Cho 'Watashi no Reizoku to Watashi no Jiyū' (1855) Dai 1 shō-Dai 2 shō" [Frederick Douglass, *My Bondage and My Freedom* (1855), chaps. 1–2], trans. Hori Tomohiro, *Jinbun Shakai Kagaku Ronsō* [Studies in the Humanities and Social Sciences] no. 6 (February 2019): 47–56; Frederick Douglass, "Hon'yaku: Furederikku Dagurasu Cho 'Watashi no Reizoku to Watashi no Jiyū' (1855) Dai 3 shō-Dai 4 shō" [Frederick Douglass *My Bondage and My Freedom* (1855), chaps. 3–4], trans. Hori Tomohiro, *Jinbun Shakai Kagaku Ronsō* no. 7 (August 2019): 19–34.

⁴⁰ Ara Konomi, *Kokujin no Amerika: Tanjō no Monogatari* [Black People's America: A Story of Their Birth] (Tokyo: Chikuma Shobō, 1997); Ara, "Sureibu Pawā kara Burakku Pawā e: Furederikku Dagurasu 'Dorei ni totte no Shichigatsu Yokka towa Nani ka?'" [From Slave Power to Black Power: Frederick Douglass "What to the Slave Is the Fourth of July?"], in *Shiryō de Yomu Amerika Bunka Shi 2: Dokuritsu Sensō kara Namboku Sensō made 1770s–1850s* [United States Cultural History: Reading Historical Sources], eds. Kamei Shunsuke, Suzuki Kenji and Ara Konomi

In 2009, the second translation of *Narrative* by Okada Seiichi from 1993, which had long been out of print, was reprinted (see fig. 6) because the 2008 election of President Barack Obama stimulated interest about African American history in Japan, not only among intellectuals but also non-academics. In fact, translations of Obama's writings sold well and quite a number of books on Obama were published in Japan after 2008.

The third translation of *Narrative* by the historian Higuchi Hayumi, in collaboration with seminar students at her university, came out in 2016 (see fig. 7).⁴¹ According to Higuchi, she first started reading *Narrative* in her seminar course to promote her students' understanding of slavery in the context of American history as well as the humanity that Douglass championed in his narrative. Their translation project took five years.⁴²

In June of 2018, the Japan Black Studies Association organized a symposium, the Frederick Douglass Bicentennial, at the sixty-fourth annual conference of the association held in Tokyo (see fig. 9). It included three American literature scholars: the chair and presenter Ara Konomi, Hori Tomohiro, and Park Soonyoung (the present author). In her presentation, "The Meaning of Haiti for Frederick Douglass," Ara—focusing on the Back-to-Africa movement, which promoted Black people in the United States going back to their "home" country and building their own independent nation—analyzed Douglass's political position of absolute opposition to the movement, and illustrated how his position and behavior politically affected the lives of African Americans in the twentieth century. In his presentation, "Rationalism and Self-Reliance: Frederick Douglass in the Nineteenth-Century American Deist Culture," Hori examined the formation and development of Douglass's rationalism in terms of the dissemination of deist culture since the Enlightenment and specifically elucidated the tenuous but striking interrelation between Douglass and the White intellectual Ralph Waldo Emerson. In her presentation, "Frederick Douglass's Genealogical Self-Fashioning and Reconstruction of Racial Relations in His Autobiographies," Park delineated Douglass's strategy of affirming the freedom and restoring the humanity of African Americans, focusing on his genealogical self-fashioning and his attempt to reconstruct racial power relations. In addition, she elucidated his strategic use of photography as a means of eternalization of his self-image.⁴³

Concluding Remarks

Although Black studies in Japan goes back to as early as the end of the nineteenth century, Frederick Douglass studies in Japan has had a more than half-century career, and a number of articles and translations have been published in both Japanese and English, as mentioned above. Among Douglass's three autobiographies, only *Narrative* has been translated three times as a complete translation. Apparently, *Bondage and Freedom* and *Life and Times* require more time and minute knowledge of American history. However, American history specialists are not likely

(Tokyo: Tokyo Daigaku Shuppan Kai, 2005): annotation 69–72, translation 73–81; Frederick Douglass, "Dorei ni totte no Shichigatsu Yokka towa Nani ka?" [What to the Slave Is the Fourth of July], trans. Ara Konomi in *Amerika no Kokujin Enzetsu Shū: Kingu, Marukomu X, Morisun hoka* [Anthology of African American Speeches: King, Malcom X, Morrison and others], trans. and ed. Ara Konomi (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 2008): 49–98.

⁴¹ Higuchi Hayumi trans. and ed., *Namboku America Shi Kenkyū Kai*, Department of History, School of Letters, Senshu University, trans. *Amerika no Dorei Sei o Ikiru: Furedrikku Dagurasu Jiden* [Living American Slavery: The Autobiography of Frederick Douglass] (Tokyo: Sairyū Sha, 2016).

⁴² Higuchi Hayumi, afterword to *Amerika no Dorei Sei o Ikiru: Furedrikku Dagurasu Jiden*, by Frederick Douglass, trans. and ed. Higuchi Hayumi, 171–185.

⁴³ Abstracts of the symposium are carried in *Kokujin Kenkyū* no. 88 (March 2019): 12–24.

to translate these autobiographies because they focus on fact-oriented documents and value primary sources, and partly because all three works of Douglass are classified as autobiography, not historical documents. In fact, almost all translations of Douglass's works in Japan were done by the historians' American literature counterparts, with one exception, Higuchi Hayumi's version of *Narrative* in 2016. Moreover, translators in the literary field have admitted their reluctance to translate those two works because they would require much time and very detailed knowledge of American history; consequently, there is no complete translation of *Bondage and Freedom* or *Life and Times*, despite the fact that scholars have been aware of the significance of these works. For instance, Inazawa Hideo wrote in the afterword to his shorter version of the translation of *Life and Times* in 1970 that he hoped someday the younger generation would undertake a full translation.⁴⁴ In that bibliographical and historical context, Hori Tomohiro's ongoing project to translate *Bondage and Freedom* marks quite a significant moment in Frederick Douglass studies in Japan.

From 11 to 13 October of 2018, the present author took part in the international conference Frederick Douglass Across and Against Times, Places, and Disciplines, held in Paris, commemorating the bicentennial of Douglass's birth.⁴⁵ The author, the only presenter from Asia, gave a presentation about an overview of Frederick Douglass studies in Japan on the session entitled "Displacing Douglass." The center of Frederick Douglass studies is the United States; however, the author believes that studies of the life and works of Douglass should and will continue to progress and be critically engaged with more global perspectives and contexts in the current age of globalization in the twenty-first century.

⁴⁴ Inazawa Hideo, afterword to *Waga Shōgai to Jidai*, by Frederick Douglass, trans. Inazawa Hideo, 214.

⁴⁵ For more detailed information on the conference, see Park Soonyoung, "Furederikku Dagurasu Seitān 200 Shūnen Kinen Kokusaikaigi 'Frederick Douglass across and against Times, Places, and Disciplines' ni Sanka shite" [A Conference Report on "Frederick Douglass across and against Times, Places, and Disciplines" in Paris], *Kokujin Kenkyū* no. 88 (March 2019): 130–132.

Figures

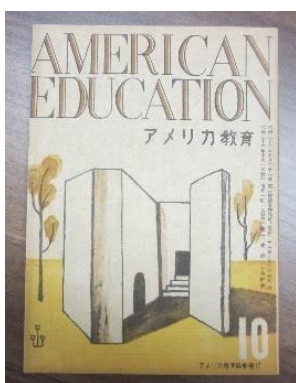


FIGURE 1. *Amerika Kyōiku* [American Education] 3, no. 6-7 combined edition (October 1948).

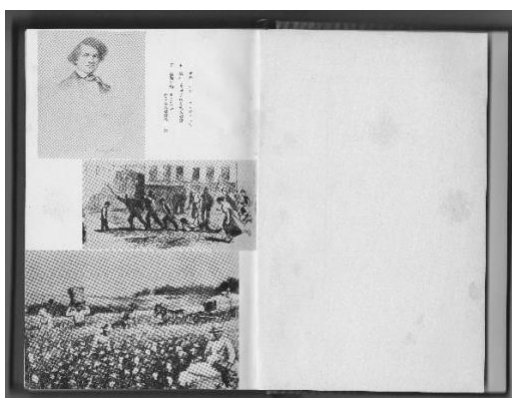


FIGURE 2. Frontispiece of first translation of *Narrative* translated by Karita Motoshi (1963).

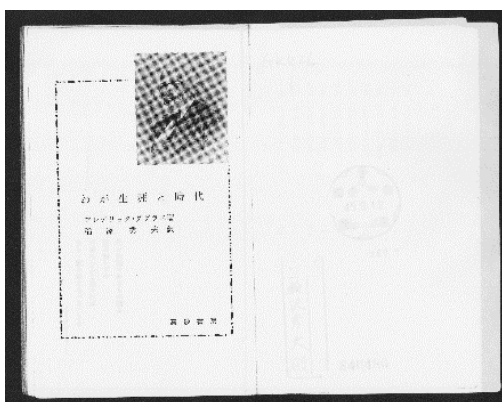


FIGURE 3. Frontispiece of abridged translation of *Life and Times* translated by Inazawa Hideo (1970).



FIGURE 4. Honda Sōzō, *Watashi wa Kokujin Dorei Datta: Furederikku Dagurasu no Monogatari* [I was a Black Slave: A Story of Frederick Douglass] (1987).

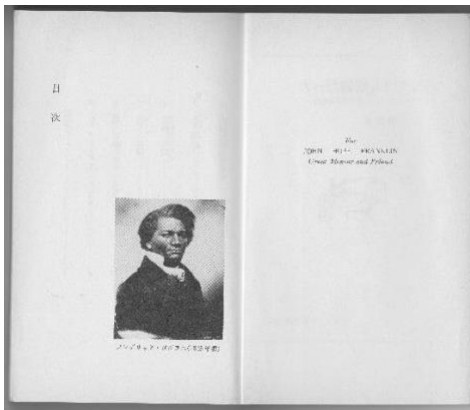


FIGURE 5. Frontispiece of *Watashi wa Kokujin Dorei Datta*.
On the right page it reads “For / JOHN HOPE FRANKLIN / *Great Mentor and Friend.*”

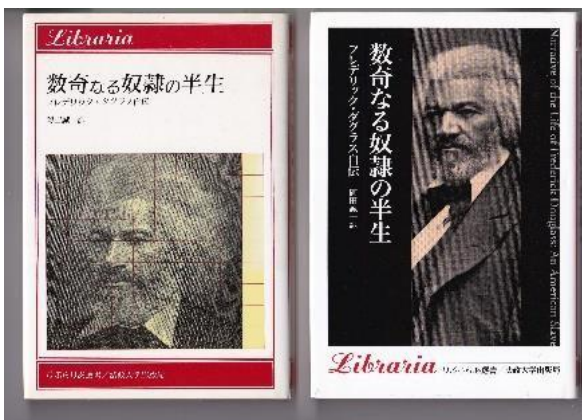


FIGURE 6. Second translation of *Narrative* of 1993 (left), reprinted version of 2009 (right) translated by Okada Seiichi.

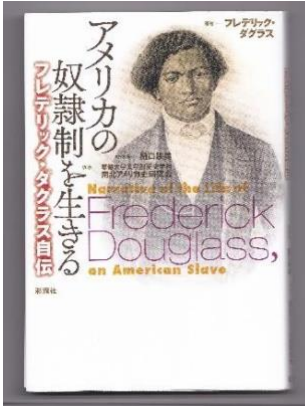


FIGURE 7. Third translation of *Narrative* translated by Higuchi Hayumi, et al. (2016).

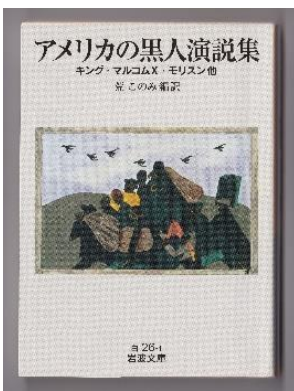


FIGURE 8. *Amerika Kokujin Enzetsu Shū* [Anthology of African American Speeches] edited and translated by Ara Konomi (2008).



FIGURE 9. “Frederick Douglass Bicentennial” held by Japan Black Studies Association in Tokyo (June 23, 2018). (Photo courtesy of Furukawa Tetsushi)