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# American Heroines in Japan: American Domestic Novels and the Formation of Japanese Girls Culture

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## Abstract

The Japanese translation of Uncle Tom's Cabin first appeared on Kokumin Shimbun (The National Newspaper) in November 1896, shortly after Harriet Beecher Stowe ended her life. It was when Japan, having won the Shino-Japanese War, eagerly made progress of modernization and enforced imperialist policies toward Asian countries. Since the turn of the century, Japanese readers have been witnessing various forms of translation of Uncle Tom's Cabin. One of the earliest unabridged translations of Uncle Tom's Cabin was done by a female writer, Michiyo Nagayo, in 1923, the high time of Taisho democracy, during which the civil rights movements flourished. Louisa May Alcott has been one of the most beloved American novelists in Japan. The first translation of Little Women, Sho Fujin [Little Women], came out in 1906 by Shuho Kitada. In the earlier period, this novel was translated as "Little Women" or "Four Sisters," but nowadays it has been widely known as Wakakusa Monogatari [The Story of Fresh Grasses]. This Japanese title symbolizes the four girls as fresh green leaves of spring. It was given by Yoshiya Nobuko, one of the most famous girls novel writers at that time, when the Hollywood movie of Little Women was released in Japan in 1934. Other American novels translated into Japanese include Daddy-Long-Legs (first translated in 1919), and Wide Wide World (first translated in 1958). This presentation will first overview the history of translation of American domestic fiction and how it was accepted and adopted in Japanese shojo (girls) culture.

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