Teaching at Howard University: Part II (Concluded)

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Teaching at Howard University:
Part II

(Concluded)

by John Lovell, Jr
—Professor of English, College of Liberal Arts, Howard University
—Fulbright Lecturer, Osaka University of Foreign Studies, 1960-1961

But it is not my intention to dwell upon such sad prospects. My stay in Japan and that of my wife who accompanied me here have been very delightful indeed. First, our welcome by the officers and members of the Fulbright Commission in Tokyo, by the authorities and teachers of the Osaka University of Foreign Studies, and by the people belonging to the American Embassy and the various branches of the United States Information Service, has been little short of royal. Second, we found a home in Kobe and a most amazing personality for a housekeeper. Before very long, we began to meet, in larger and larger numbers, the Japanese university student, who is full of rare surprises, inspirations, and curious insights. Along with him, we are touching the general Japanese citizenry, of every rank and class, and we find them uniformly fascinating. We have fallen in love with the Japanese countryside, and with both ultramodern buildings on the one hand and shrines, castles, temples, stone lanterns, and ancient gardens on the other, particularly at Nara. We adore the national passions for precision, ingenuity, making the most of every minute, stand-up reading in bookstores and at magazine counters, using every tiny inch of space (especially in traffic), resiliency, courtesy, charm, color, art, and beauty. We admire especially the union of beauty and utility in everyday life. We have written our friends back home that Japan, indoors and outdoors, is the greatest art gallery in the world. And we glory in the fact that as soon as the people we meet discover our interests and our reasons for being here, they begin, as one man, to bend every oar—like the Kyōgen character in the Nōh play, Funa Benkei—toward the mutual accomplishment of our interests in them and their interests in us.

Permit me to cite two examples. My wife, a public school counselor in Washington, had to take educational leave to get the chance to come to Japan; this means that she must do, among other studies, a

日本的一般市民にも接したが、彼らは一様に魅力的だった。私たちは日本のはなかが好きになり、一方では超現代的な建物、また一方では神社、寺、寺院、石灯籠、古代の庭園、特に奈良のものが好きになった。私たちは日本人の緻密さに対する熱意、寸秒の時間も最大限に活用する器用さを大いに尊敬する。どんなわずかな空間をも（特に乗物の中ではそうだ）利用する、本屋や雑誌売台での読み向き、読み方、いんぎん、魅力、色彩、技巧、美、を大いに尊敬する。特に日常生活に現われた美と労用の結びつきを賞賛する。「私たちは故郷の友人たちに、日本は屋内屋外を問わず、世界一の美術館をなしと書き送った位だ。そして私たちは、会う人ぴなみその私たちは興味の対象と同時に当分に保たれる理由を知るか否や、いっせいに——能の船弁慶の狂言役者らしく——私たちの彼らに対する興味と、彼らの私たちに対する興味を互いに妥協なものとする方向へと満ぎだすことそのものである。例をつとあげてみよう。この内は、ワシントン市立大学の嘆願だが、来日の機会を得るために、教育上の要望をとる必要があった。つまり、様々な研究の中でも、日本における教育上に助言を申し上げなければならないのである。家内が神戸、大阪、京都、東京および岩戸安の小都市の教育家から得た協力は全く驚くべきものといえ。どんな忙しい人も助力をくれずに、できる限りの時間と、指示と、信頼でできる資料を提供してくれた。

第二の例は私に関するものだ、私のフルブライト計画の一部は日本の演劇とその国民生活への関連を研究することだった。これは1961年5月ニューヨーク市で出版されたアメリカ演劇のアメリカ人の生活への関連という同書に同列のものである。だから、私の目的の一つは、できる限りの日本の演劇を探し

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project on educational counseling in Japan. The co-operation she has received from educators in Kobe, Osaka, Kyoto, Tokyo, and several smaller communities has been nothing short of phenomenal. Even the busiest people have come to her aid and given her all the time, direction, and authoritative documents they possibly could.

The second example relates to me. A part of my Fulbright project is to study the Japanese drama and its relationship to the life of the people. This is in line with a book I have done on the American drama in relationship to the life of the people, which will be published in New York in May of 1961. One of my aims, therefore, is to see the maximum of Japanese plays, to visit the maximum of dramatic and theatrical monuments, to talk with all available experts in the native drama, and generally to pursue my subject in as many as possible of its infinite ramifications. The response of qualified and important people, on my side, has been just as phenomenal as that accorded my wife. I have seen more than 60 plays—Bunraku, Kabuki, Nôh, Kyôgen, Shingeki—many of them recommended by people who discovered my interest; I have most profitably interviewed outstanding actors, drama critics, directors, playwrights, professors of drama, and other strategic people, and I have seen dramatic monuments by the score. I have been given or been referred to texts, books, and articles written in English and have had some authoritative works that were written in Japanese translated for me. On the basis of my experience so far, I can truthfully say that going to Japan to do dramatic research is a form of going to heaven.

Of course, I have seen practices and elements that are as strange to me as some of the things Miss Kimura saw in America were to her. But they do not frighten or revolt me. The previous writer, for instance, refers to Shakespearean plays done in Negro dialect or in a pronounced Negro accent as though they were a distortion. I do not think of my listening to parts of Julius Caesar, delivered by Japanese students in an English accent and style that I could not always comprehend, as a distortion. I think it is wonderful that Shakespeare so appeals to people in cultures thousands of miles from where he lived that they are willing to undergo the arduous of committing to memory his words in an excruciating foreign language. It is just as exciting to me as my personal curiosity about the innermost details of Bunraku, Kabuki, and Nôh. I want to know what motivates such appreciation. I do know that, if one will take the word of the famous French writer, Théophile Gautier, one of the very greatest performances of Shakespeare on record was delivered by an American Negro, Ira Aldridge, before audiences in major Russian cities in 1863, when Aldridge recited Othello in English and his Iago, Cassio, and Desdemona recited in German. Everywhere they went in Russia—and indeed throughout Europe—audiences were spellbound.

As a representative of Howard...
University in Japan, I can only beg that as many Japanese as possible go to Washington and see the University, or at least read its authentic literature. If you visit there, you will be welcomed by the new President, Dr. Nabrit, who during 24 years as a teacher in the Howard Law School, initiated and developed the branch now known as Civil Rights Law, and now taught in other institutions. You will see a plant worth $40 million, and still growing, including individual buildings for engineering, medicine, dentistry, pharmacy, chemistry, biology, and the fine arts. You will mingle with a faculty which now and in years past includes and has included such men as Ralph Bunche, E. Franklin Frazier, past president of the American Sociological Society and recent Doctor of Laws from the University of Edinburgh, George E. C. Hayes, chairman of the Public Utilities Commission of the District of Columbia, the late Ernest Just, pioneer in microbiology, the late Charles Drew, who founded the first blood bank in America, William H. Hastie, a judge on the Court of Appeals, a court second in rank only to the United States Supreme Court, and Howard Thurman, now Dean of the Chapel of Boston University. The present Dean of the College at Howard, Dr. Frank Snowden, was formerly United States cultural attaché in Rome, and presently spends a month each year in Paris, helping to develop the cultural programs of UNESCO. If you meet the alumni, you will meet, besides Dr. Frazier and Attorney Hayes already mentioned, Thurgood Marshall, the distinguished civil rights attorney, Ve Phillips, a city alderman in Milwau­kee, Wisconsin, and one of the few women members of the Democratic National Committee, and Ken­neth Clark, a New York psychologist, whose discoveries and language were used in the memorable Supreme Court decision of 1954, outlawing educational segregation—men and women who are engaged in the cru­cially demanding job of making de­mocracy fit for the tremendous threats and energies of the present day. If you had traveled with Mr. Kennedy while he was running for President of the United States, you would have met another Howard alumnus, Frank Reeves, one of Mr. Kennedy's close advisers. Mr. Reeves has recently taken office in the White House, as a special assistant to President Ken­
nedy. If you meet the trustees, active
and honorary, you will meet such
distinguished Americans as Eleanor
Roosevelt, Lloyd K. Garrison, Pearl
Buck, Guy B. Johnson, and Mordecai
W. Johnson, who has Just retired
after 34 fruitful years as President of
the University, during which time he
was also one of America's most re­
spected and popular ministers and
orators.

Throughout America and many
other countries, in countless cities,
towns, villages, and countrysides, you
would meet—if you visited—thou­
sands of physicians, teachers, lawyers,
business men, scientists, community
workers, heads of households, and
elected and appointed leaders in
government and industry—all trained
by Howard University. It would be
a most inspiring experience. It would
be a most invigorating sight.

This University, unique in its ed­
ucational and democratic role, is fully
aware of the terrible problems it
faces. It is perpetually analyzing
itself and constantly raising its
standards. Since it has always stood
upon an interracial and an inter­
national platform, it invites the full
coopération of the peoples of the
world in the hard fulfillment
of the most glamorous, the most
inspiringly difficult, and the most
worthy of all dreams—the dream of
a living and working true democracy.

THE STUDY OF CURRENT ENGLISH