



As We Saw Them: The First Japanese Embassy to the United States

Masao Miyoshi

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"Masao Miyoshi's masterful account is, by turns, alarming and hilarious as two cultures meet at the court of President James Buchanan. Their mutual incomprehension is, alas, still relevant as inscrutable East fails to make sense of mysterious West, and vice versa."—Gore Vidal

"Miyoshi has given a marvelous and revealing account of a dramatic case of confrontation of cultures and civilizations. It yields much insight into our own society, as seen from a sharply different perspective, and into the culture of the viewers as well—insights well worth pondering today."—Noam Chomsky

"*As We Saw Them* is a pioneering work in the relationship between cultures. With extraordinary tact and brilliance Miyoshi in effect reconstructs the mind of Japan at that time, a pregnant moment of self-examination and emergence. For contemporary readers *As We Saw Them* is an invaluable work of insight and interpretation."—Edward Said

In 1860 the empire of Japan sent 170 officials—samurai and bureaucrats, inspectors and spies, half a dozen teenagers and one Confucian physician—to tour the United States, the first such visit to America and the first trip anywhere abroad in two hundred years. Politics and curiosity, on both sides, mixed to create an amazing journey. Using the travelers' own journals of the trip and American accounts of the group's progress, historian and critic Masao Miyoshi relates the fascinating tale of entrenched assumptions, startling impressions, and bewildering conclusions.

Miyoshi finds in this unique encounter an entertaining adventure story of discovery and a paradigm of the attitudes and judgments that have ever since shaped American and Japanese perceptions of one another. This revealing account of "otherness" is still relevant today as we strive to understand peoples whom we think of as foreign—and therefore strangely other than we.

Masao Miyoshi was Hajime Mori Professor of Japanese, English, and Comparative Literature at the University of California, San Diego. He is the author of *Off Center: Power and Culture Relations between Japan and the United States*.

Carol Gluck, George Sansom Professor of History at Columbia University, specializes in modern Japan, from the late nineteenth century to the present.

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