



The Satsuma Students in Britain: Japan's Early Search for the essence of the West' (Meiji Japan S)

Andrew Cobbing

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In the spring of 1865, when Japan was in the grip of a major civil war, eighteen samurai and an interpreter risked their lives to embark secretly on a voyage to the unknown lands of the barbarian west. Their destination was Britain - at the hub of a vast empire. These were the Satsuma students, some of them still in their teens, all carrying orders from their domains to travel abroad. It was an extraordinary and daring expedition. Their experience of life in the west not only transformed their perception of the outside world, but through their diverse activities in later life, had a profound impact on commerce, education and culture in Meiji Japan. First published in 1974, Inuzuka Takaaki's study is still the classic work on the Satsuma students' revealing tale of discovery. In this translation by Andrew Cobbing, further details that have since emerged are also included to give a fresh portrayal, the first in English, of this singular episode in the opening of Japan.

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