



Drifting Toward the Southeast: The Story of Five Japanese Castaways

Junya Nagakuni, Junji Kitadai

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The remarkable true story of John Manjiro, the 14-year-old boy who was shipwrecked off Japan's coast in 1841, rescued American whalers, and brought aboard the ship John Howland to Massachusetts to be raised as a Westerner by Captain William Whitfield. Manjiro's continuing adventures eventually brought him to the California Gold Rush, around the globe, and back to Japan—making him the first known person to leave his isolationist country and later return without harsh punishment. His riveting story caught the imagination of common people, who were eager to know about the outside world, and shaped their perceptions of America. It also influenced the pioneers of modernization in Japan such as Sakamoto Ryoma, Katsu Kaishu, and Fukuzawa Yukichi, and became treasured reading by many daimyos and samurai leaders. It is still a favorite among Japanese-Americans and gaining notoriety everywhere.

Drifting Toward the Southeast is actually the first complete English language edition of Hyoson Kiryaku—the autobiographical account of John Manjiro's historic voyage as told to Shogunate officials in 1852. It was originally hand-recorded in four brush-written volumes by samurai artist and scholar Kawada Shoryo following Manjiro's nine-month interrogation by Tokugawa officials.

This book showcases high-quality color reproductions of Shoryo's masterful watercolor paintings, the delicate illustrations by Manjiro himself, and the detailed maps that complete the original document. It is a unique and valuable source for study of Isolationist Japan and the history of United States-Japanese relations—and an absolutely essential component to any Asian Studies curriculum in America.

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