



America Through the Spectacles of an Oriental Diplomat
Wu Tingfang, with an Introduction by Jonathan Spence

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Description

A frank, revealing and humorous insight from the perspective of a curious outsider into the idiosyncrasies of American life during the early twentieth century.

A beguiling account of twentieth-century America through the eyes of an outsider, a remarkable inversion of the standard 'Westerner observing the exotic' travel writing formula. Wu Tingfang wrote this book at an intriguing juncture in history – aeroplanes and motion pictures had recently been invented (and his musings on both of these have proven correct) and while he did not know it, a tremendous cultural shift was about to take place in the West due to the First World War. The unassuming and inquisitive diplomat delves into topics such as: immigration; the Arms Race and changes in technology; religion and ethics in the classroom; women's equality; fashion; violence in the theatre; vegetarianism; and cruelty to animals. His observations are enlightening and remain as relevant today as the era in which they were written. In particular, the exploration of the 'American character' and the nation's attitude toward commerce and international relations have a powerful resonance.

Readership: A fascinating book for fans of travel writing, political commentary and social journalism.

Contents

List of Illustrations; Introduction by Jonathan Spence; Preface by Wu Tingfang; The Importance of Names; American Prosperity; American Government; America and China; American Education; American Business Methods; American Freedom and Equality; American Manners; American Women; American Costumes; American versus Chinese Civilization; American versus Chinese Civilization (continued); Dinners, Banquets, Etc; Theaters; Opera and Musical Entertainments; Conjuring and Circuses; Sports

About the Author

Wu Tingfang (1842-1922) was a Chinese diplomat and politician who served as Minister of Foreign Affairs and briefly as Acting Premier during the early years of the Republic of China.

Jonathan Spence teaches in the field of Chinese history from around 1600 to the present and on Western images of China since the middle ages at Yale University.

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