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Kimono Liza Dalby
This beautifully written and sumptuously illustrated book uses the history of kimono, from its beginning two thousand years ago, to explore Japanese culture. It shows how clothing fashions can illuminate our understanding of a culture, by considering why things change and what can be learned from a formal analysis of the elements of a system that is more or less fixed. The author uses kimono as a way to probe aspects of Japan that the Japanese themselves think of as close to the heart of their culture. She includes discussion of the social meaning of wearing kimono today; how kimono as we know it came to hold its pre-eminent place as the national garment of Japan; a historical overview of the genesis of kimono; and an exploration of the intersections of sexual identity and clothing in the early 17th century. The resulting book is an engaging mix of detailed fashion history and social history, enhanced by more than two hundred illustrations.

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