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Ametora: How Japan Saved American Style



Synopsis

Look closely at any typically “American” article of clothing these days, and you may be surprised to see a Japanese label inside. From high-end denim to oxford button-downs, Japanese designers have taken the classic American look—known as ametora, or “American traditional”—and turned it into a huge business for companies like Uniqlo, Kamakura Shirts, Evisu, and Kapital. This phenomenon is part of a long dialogue between Japanese and American fashion; in fact, many of the basic items and traditions of the modern American wardrobe are alive and well today thanks to the stewardship of Japanese consumers and fashion cognoscenti, who ritualized and preserved these American styles during periods when they were out of vogue in their native land. In *Ametora*, cultural historian W. David Marx traces the Japanese assimilation of American fashion over the past hundred and fifty years, showing how Japanese trendsetters and entrepreneurs mimicked, adapted, imported, and ultimately perfected American style, dramatically reshaping not only Japan’s culture but also our own in the process.

Customer Reviews

B.J. Novak, Wall Street Journal, One of the best books of the year; *Ametora* by W. David Marx traces the craze for American fashion after World War II in Japan, but it quickly becomes larger than that. It’s a fascinating window into how fashion, culture and history intersect; you end up learning about several things at once. —Wall Street Journal; Mr. Marx writes with the understanding of how rich his material is. The scenes and the style trends in his book are not only interesting but often absurd. —New York Times, Men’s Style section; In a step-by-step account, Mr. Marx traces the history of this cross-cultural sartorial phenomenon, from the Brooks Brothers-influenced “Ivy League” look introduced by the fashion magnate Kensuke Ishizu in 1959 all the way up to Tokyo’s neo-traditionalist designers of recent years. —

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