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The Aesthetics of the Japanese Lunchbox (Paperback)

By Kenji Ekuan

MIT Press Ltd, United States, 2000. Paperback. Condition: New. Reprint. Language: English . Brand New Book. Lunchbox philosophy, or the world according to the Japanese lunchbox: how an object of sublime beauty offers a key to understanding Japanese aesthetics, design, and culture. The Makunouchi Bento, or traditional Japanese lunchbox, is a highly lacquered wooden box divided into quadrants, each of which contains different delicacies. It is also one of the most familiar images of Japan's domestic environment. When presented to the diner, the Japanese lunchbox seems straightforward enough; each of four food portions resides in its own compartment, apparently obeying a strict lunchbox geometry. So far, just food. But Kenji Ekuan reveals that a much deeper reading is possible, one that sees the lunchbox as nothing less than a key to an understanding of Japanese civilization, the spirit of form, and the aesthetic ideal in which the many are reduced to one. Ekuan reads the Japanese lunchbox as both object and metaphor. It is one of this book's many charms that he is able to see it as both simultaneously. He compares the visual pleasures of the Zen lunchbox to an aerial view of the Japanese archipelago; he...



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