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Kansai Cool: A Journey into the Cultural Heartland of Japan

Christal Whelan

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In *Kansai Cool*, anthropologist, writer and filmmaker Christal Whelan offers deep insights into the clash of old and new, traditional and modern that plays out on a daily basis in Japan's ancient heartland.

The western region of Japan is known as Kansai—centering around the ancient capitals of Kyoto and Nara, and the sprawling, modern port cities of Osaka and Kobe. Kansai is Japan's "second region" after Tokyo—and is at once home to Japan's most traditional cultural centers and its most modern culture.

From the ancient beliefs of Kyoto to the contemporary otaku or "geek" culture of manga, anime, costume play, robots and video games, readers will see how cultures collide in:

- The needs of the spirit: Shinto shrines and Buddhist temples
- The arts: dance, painting, anime and martial combat
- The relationship between hi-tech and old-tech: bikes and robots
- Fashion trends: from exquisite kimonos to hip haute couture
- The meaning of landscape: man-made islands and the mystical power of water

In this unique collection of 25 essays, Whelan dives beneath the surface of Japan to let readers experience how art, science, faith and history mesh in the Kansai region to produce a singular wellspring of traditional and modern Japanese culture.

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