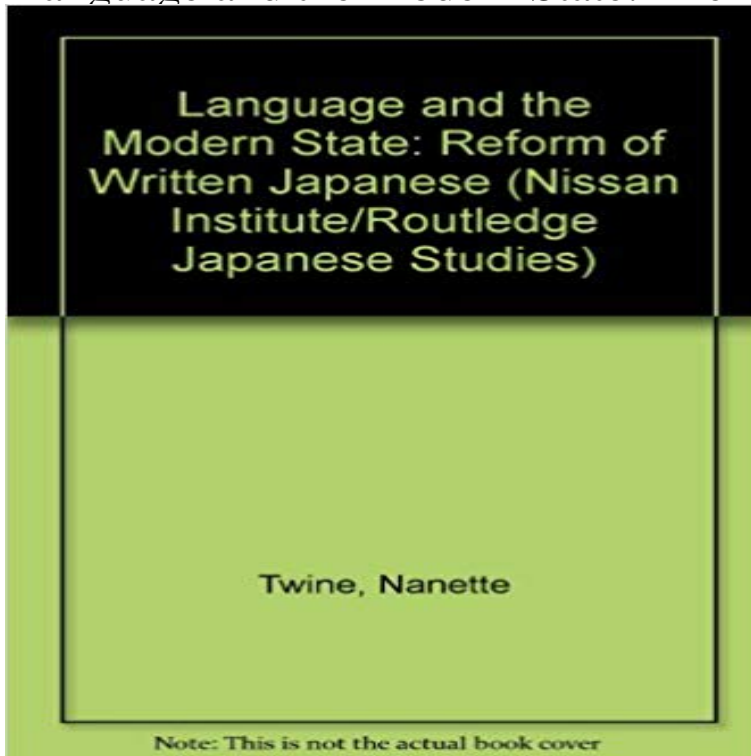


## Language and the Modern State: The Reform of Written Japanese



The history of the Japanese language from the late 19th century to the present time is dominated by the dramatic change which took place in its written form. In little over 100 years, the diverse classical traditions found in the written language of public life were replaced by a unified modern grammar and vocabulary based on a standard spoken form. This ended the upper class monopoly on access to information, allowing the ordinary literate Japanese to participate in the public discourse surrounding the modernization, and the consequent economic dominance, of 20th-century Japan. Dr Nanette Twine has explored the relationship between language, change and modernization in Japan. She focuses on the small band of progressive intellectuals who overcame the cultural resistance of their peers to the hitherto despised vernacular. By convincing those in a position to bring about the change that the revered literary canons should be abandoned in favour of a simpler colloquial style to aid Japanese development, these intellectuals initiated a process of change in education and communication later pursued in all areas of society. This book is intended to be of interest to advanced students and teachers of linguistics and Japanese studies.

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