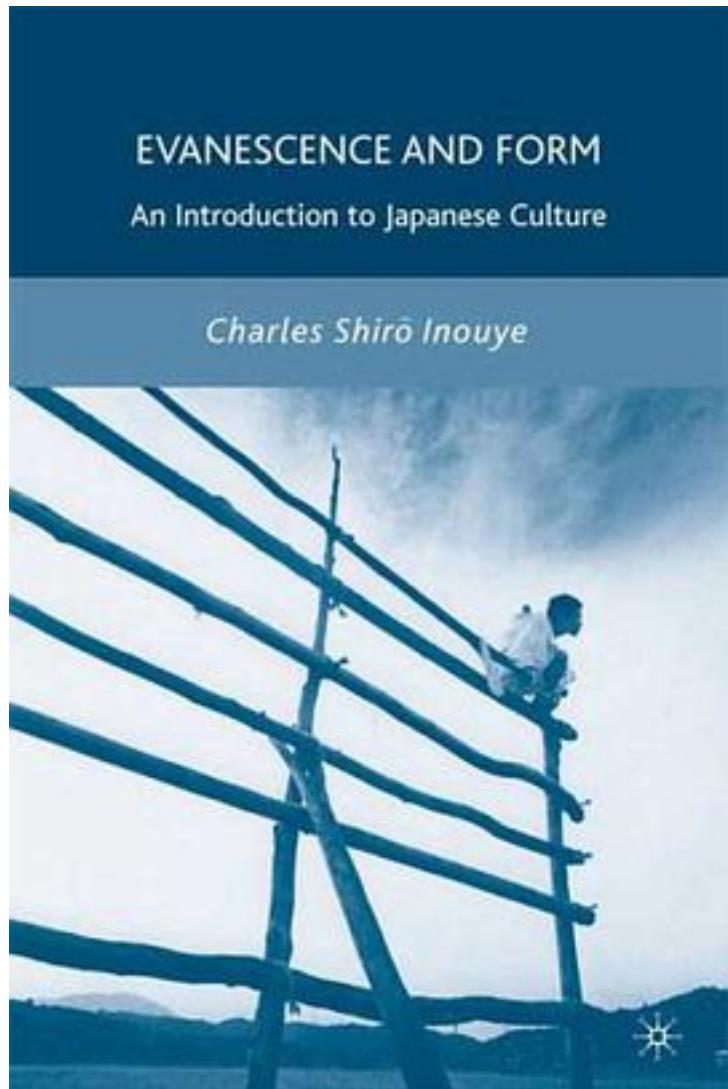


Evanescence and Form



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If we thought that reality were changeable, fragile, and fleeting, would we take life more seriously or less seriously? This book contemplates the notion of "hakanasa," the evanescence of all things, as understood by the Japanese. Their lived responses to this idea of impermanence have been various and even contradictory. Asceticism, fatalism, conformism. Hedonism, materialism, careerism. What this array of responses have in common are, first, a grounding in "hakanasa," and, second, an emphasis on formality. "Evanescence and Etiquette" attempts to illuminate for the first time the ties between an epistemology of constant change and Japan's formal emphasis on etiquette and visuality.

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