



Dealing with Disaster in Japan: Responses to the Flight JL123 Crash (Routledge Contemporary Japan Series)

By Christopher Hood

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Just as the sinking of the *Titanic* is embedded in the public consciousness in the English-speaking world, so the crash of JAL flight JL123 is part of the Japanese collective memory. The 1985 crash involved the largest loss of life for any single air crash in the world. 520 people, many of whom had been returning to their ancestral home for the Obon religious festival, were killed; there were only four survivors.

This book tells the story of the crash, discusses the many controversial issues surrounding it, and considers why it has come to have such importance for many Japanese. It shows how the Japanese responded to the disaster: trying to comprehend how a faulty repair may have caused the crash, and the fact that rescue services took such a long time to reach the remote crash site; how the bereaved dealt with their loss; how the media in Japan and in the wider world reported the disaster; and how the disaster is remembered and commemorated. The book highlights the media coverage of anniversary events and the Japanese books and films about the crash; the very particular memorialization process in Japan, alongside Japanese attitudes to death and religion; it points out in what ways this crash both reflects typical Japanese behaviour and in what ways the crash is unique.

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Editorial Review

Review

"This is a haunting saga, brilliantly told, about the 1985 crash of a Japan Airlines flight in the mountains of remote Gunma that claimed 521 lives. It is a gripping tale that explores what happened and why while probing the human tragedies that have unfolded since that fateful day... While disaster buffs will find this a rewarding read, I think that anyone interested in Japan will learn a great deal about how people collectively and individually cope with death, from how it is reported, how it is mourned and commemorated, to efforts at healing the traumatic aftershocks that disrupt lives and families, and the cold calculus of compensation." - *Jeff Kingston, director of Asian Studies, Temple University Japan; The Japan Times: Sunday, Nov. 6, 2011*

About the Author

Christopher P. Hood is a Reader in Japanese Studies at Cardiff University, UK. His publications include *Shinkansen: From Bullet Train to Symbol of Modern Japan*, (2006), *Japanese Education Reform: Nakasone's Legacy* (2001) and (as editor) the four volume *Politics of Modern Japan* (all published by Routledge).

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