



# **Aging and Loss: Mourning and Maturity in Contemporary Japan (Global Perspectives on Aging)**

*Jason Danely*

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By 2030, over 30% of the Japanese population will be 65 or older, foreshadowing the demographic changes occurring elsewhere in Asia and around the world. What can we learn from a study of the aging population of Japan and how can these findings inform a path forward for the elderly, their families, and for policy makers?

Based on nearly a decade of research, *Aging and Loss* examines how the landscape of aging is felt, understood, and embodied by older adults themselves. In detailed portraits, anthropologist Jason Danely delves into the everyday lives of older Japanese adults as they construct narratives through acts of reminiscence, social engagement and ritual practice, and reveals the pervasive cultural aesthetic of loss and of being a burden.

Through first-hand accounts of rituals in homes, cemeteries, and religious centers, Danely argues that what he calls the self-in-suspense can lead to the emergence of creative participation in an economy of care. In everyday rituals for the spirits, older adults exercise agency and reinterpret concerns of social abandonment within a meaningful cultural narrative and, by reimagining themselves and their place in the family through these rituals, older adults in Japan challenge popular attitudes about eldercare. Danely's discussion of health and long-term care policy, and community welfare organizations, reveal a complex picture of Japan's aging society.

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