

1. Record Nr.	UNINA9910824429103321
Autore	Clancey Gregory K
Titolo	Earthquake nation : the cultural politics of Japanese seismicity, 1868-1930 // Gregory Clancey
Pubbl/distr/stampa	Berkeley, Calif. ; ; London, : University of California Press, 2006
ISBN	1-282-35887-1 1-4237-6664-4 9786612358876 0-520-93229-3 1-59875-945-0
Edizione	[1st ed.]
Descrizione fisica	1 online resource (346 p.)
Disciplina	624.1762095209034
Soggetti	Earthquakes - Japan - Psychological aspects Earthquakes - Social aspects - Japan Japan Civilization 1868-1945
Lingua di pubblicazione	Inglese
Formato	Materiale a stampa
Livello bibliografico	Monografia
Note generali	Description based upon print version of record.
Nota di bibliografia	Includes bibliographical references and index.
Nota di contenuto	Front matter -- CONTENTS -- ILLUSTRATIONS -- ACKNOWLEDGMENTS -- Introduction -- 1. Strong Nation, Stone Nation -- 2. Earthquakes -- 3. The Seismologists -- 4. The National Essence -- 5. A Great Earthquake -- 6. Japan as Earthquake Nation -- 7. Japanese Architecture after Nbi -- 8. The Great Kant Earthquake and the Submergence of the Earthquake Nation -- NOTES -- BIBLIOGRAPHY -- INDEX
Sommario/riassunto	Accelerating seismic activity in late Meiji Japan climaxed in the legendary Great Nobi Earthquake of 1891, which rocked the main island from Tokyo to Osaka, killing thousands. Ironically, the earthquake brought down many "modern" structures built on the advice of foreign architects and engineers, while leaving certain traditional, wooden ones standing. This book, the first English-language history of modern Japanese earthquakes and earthquake science, considers the cultural and political ramifications of this and other catastrophic events on Japan's relationship with the West, with modern science, and with itself. Gregory Clancey argues that seismicity was both the Achilles'

heel of Japan's nation-building project-revealing the state's western-style infrastructure to be surprisingly fragile-and a new focus for nativizing discourses which credited traditional Japanese architecture with unique abilities to ride out seismic waves. Tracing his subject from the Meiji Restoration to the Great Kant Earthquake of 1923 (which destroyed Tokyo), Clancey shows earthquakes to have been a continual though mercurial agent in Japan's self-fashioning; a catastrophic undercurrent to Japanese modernity. This innovative and absorbing study not only moves earthquakes nearer the center of modern Japan change-both materially and symbolically-but shows how fundamentally Japan shaped the global art, science, and culture of natural disaster.

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