

BORDER

Shigeru Yoshida / photographer

Short Statement		Praying brings our minds tranquility and peace. It also gives us hope to live. Through my visits to the disaster-stricken areas following the Great East Japan Earthquake, I witnessed many people praying towards the sea. And that inspired me to start this project devoted to prayer. Originally, the ocean was my subject of photography in those areas. But prayer became my subject having learned that many Japanese were praying for the victims in devastated areas. I started to visit sacred spots and places where man communicates with nature in Japan, trying to capture its essence existing in many unpretentious moments. I have been traveling since that time eager to find hope - hope of life, in people who pray.				
		dimensions	edition	shooting	printing	
1		16.5×23.4inch	1 / 10	2011	2013	The break-water crushed by the tsunami in 2011 has been ground down even more by waves. This presents the process of a man-made structure being reclaimed by nature. And in which, I felt the existence of people's prayers along with God's will.
2		16.5×23.4inch	1 / 10	2011	2013	From the ancient times, Shinto shrines would erect "tori gate". A torii is in a way "a gateway" which divides God's terrain from that of human's making us aware that the other side belongs to God. People offer prayers towards God's domain.
3		16.5×23.4inch	1 / 10	2012	2013	Prolonged exposure revealed the series of white waves between the break waters-the line naked eyes couldn't capture. The white line was there as if it were the border between the terrestrial and celestial worlds.
4		16.5×23.4inch	1 / 10	2011	2013	I created the lines of the white waves which I could not watch by the naked eye by the wave which was not blocked by break water of both sides exposing it for a long time. The white line came out to me like the border line of the terrestrial world and precincts.
5		16.5×23.4inch	1 / 10	2011	2013	Waves lap onto the shore and return. The sea simply repeats this, unchanged even with tsunamis. And people, who survived the terrible disaster caused by the tsunami, continue facing the sea unchanged.
6		16.5×23.4inch	1 / 10	2011	2013	After the disaster, people have been putting their efforts in restoration work. This new break-water is one of the outcomes made possible through such hard work. This represents peoples' determination to live with the sea. The sea gives them hardship, yet their love for the sea remains unchanged. One day, a path leading to the God's domain could be shown before them through their hard work.
7		16.5×23.4inch	1 / 10	2011	2013	It is rare to find a lighthouse on the shoreline. This lighthouse must have been guiding local fish boats saving them from danger for many decades in reality, but for me, it looked celestial like a lighthouse in heaven. Man can't get there easily, and only with wings we could be there like birds.
8		16.5×23.4inch	1 / 10	2011	2013	Break-waters away from the shoreline get hit by stronger waves more often. The harder the wave, the more protective work they take on for us. They safeguard us as if they were our ancestors' spirits sacrificing themselves for our happiness.
9		16.5×23.4inch	1 / 10	2011	2013	For thousands of years, people in Japan believe that Gods dwell in big rocks. Especially, this rock to which a Buddha statue is enshrined is worshipped by many people even today. Prayers gather more prayers, and this place continues to stay as a sacred place.
10		16.5×23.4inch	1 / 10	2012	2013	The small fishing port surrounded by the break water was calm this day. Fishermen advance towards the sea which may become stormy at any time. May their brave way of living be treated kindly by nature.

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1		16.5×23.4inch	1 / 10	2012	2013	Amami Oshima is located in almost the south end of Japan. Natives here believe that there is a "place of abundant harvest" over the sea, and they pray for the God once a year. Elderly women in white kimonos welcome the God, wishing for the next year's good harvest and people's happiness.
2		16.5×23.4inch	1 / 10	2013	2013	A small island in a far away south. Here, there is an ancient custom to cross the sea on a cow carriage. The water is shallow, yet getting to the island a little distance away on foot is hard, so people use the cow carriage. The carriage travels on the back of a gentle cow, as if an ark heading to the ethereal world.
3		16.5×23.4inch	1 / 10	2013	2013	One of Okinawa's festivals dedicated to the God of the sea. In this ritual, people welcome the God, pray for the productiveness and the peace of the sea during the festival. A 40-seat Dragon boat crosses the sea in a heavy rain to meet the God.
4		16.5×23.4inch	1 / 10	2013	2013	Break-waters may not be in need when the sea is calm, since they are made to work against strong waves. But the serene view of the sea shows me something more sacred. One can easily imagine the world beyond the sea.
5		16.5×23.4inch	1 / 10	2013	2013	The light glistens in the darkness. Even small, light shows us the way to move forward. By following the path in which the waves are broken, we might find the sacred place one day.
6		16.5×23.4inch	1 / 10	2012	2013	This big rock is also considered as God's domain since the ancient times. Nature arranged small rocks leading to the big rock where the God calls home. The thick forests covering those rocks humbled me, for I could feel the existence of creatures beyond human there. Fishermen offer prayers when passing by those rocks from their boats.
7		16.5×23.4inch	1 / 10	2014	2014	A training wall hides under the white vertical line in the center where a column like a utility pole stands. The wall was placed in order to help the river flow fast, by preventing the accumulation of the earth and sand carried from the upper stream. High tide covered the wall showing only a white line created by crushing waves- a line as if leading me toward the divine land.
8		16.5×23.4inch	1 / 10	2014	2014	These sticks were piled to grow seaweed. They were placed there for our food. They are mere sticks standing looking down the wakes but surely made me believe that some things in human's ordinary lives are worthy as divine.
9		16.5×23.4inch	1 / 10	2014	2014	A small fishing port in Hokuriku region. There is a station and the shore protected by the torii is also known for swimming. There is a small nuclear power plant nearby the beach. The many torii placed on the rock embody people's prayers for the protection of their humble living.
10		16.5×23.4inch	1 / 10	2014	2014	I came across the mouth of a small river one day. The scenery was unremarkable- until I saw a person praying toward the sea. Ordinary scenery suddenly became a sacred place with the act of prayer.