

## Japan on the Way to an Equal and Diverse Participation Society

Prof. MAE Michiko (University of Düsseldorf)

Over the past few years we have become increasingly aware that democracy, human rights, freedom of expression, equality, protection against discrimination, etc. cannot be taken for granted in Western countries such as Germany, Japan and the USA. Rather, they are continuously defended, fought for, and further developed. Historically, these liberal values, principles, rights and institutions have needed to be enforced and asserted against strong resistance and threats from opposing authoritarian positions and powers. This historical development process is far from over and may never end. As a consequence, we must always critically ask ourselves what has been achieved so far, what still needs to be done and what might be lost.

Today exactly 100 years ago, in 1918, the right to vote for women was introduced in Austria and in Germany and then, after the Second World War, in Japan. Equality between men and women is guaranteed in Germany's constitution as well as post-war Japan's, and this equality is one of the indispensable foundations of democracy. In both countries there is institutional and constitutional democracy. However, does this mean that gender equality is realized? Despite women's struggle for legal, political, social and economic equality, which has been ongoing for more than 100 years, we have not yet really made progress in some areas. It is not only about formal and legal equality, but also about how society as a whole should be designed

and the ways of life we want to live as individuals. Similarly, it is not just about equality, but about the recognition of differences and diversity as well.

Along the road to greater equality and recognition, a major breakthrough was achieved in Japan in 1999 – a very symbolic time on the cusp of transitioning to the 21<sup>st</sup> century: the adoption of the Basic Act for a Gender-Equal Society (Japanese Equality Act), the so-called Participation Act. This “framework legislation for men and women equally participating in society” was introduced as the 14th Basic Law. Framework legislation means that all other laws and measures must be aligned according to the spirit of the law. The aim of this law is – as the



The Japanese Diet MP MAKIYAMA Hiroe (DPJ) and the member of the German Bundestag Eva HÖGL (SPD) at the conference “Gender Policies in Japan, Germany and South Korea” on 30 November 2017 at the JDZB.

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preamble says – the “realization of a society where women and men participate equally” in which they “can fully develop their individuality and abilities, regardless of their gender difference”. The realization of such a participatory society is explained in the preamble as “the most important task facing our society in the 21<sup>st</sup> century”. Framework laws formulate the basic ideas and basic principles of politics. And, in my opinion, the idea formulated here of equal participation of all citizens goes far beyond the equality of men and women.

The participation law must therefore be understood as a “dynamic concept” because equal participation and active participation of women and men in all sectors of society, both public and private, is seen as the basis and prerequisite for the realization of women’s equality. This also applies to the development of the individual abilities of women and men as well as the mutual respect of their human rights and the division of their entire social and political responsibilities. This concept of “participation society” refers less to the traditional gender order than to greater individualization and diversity, which is characteristic of the new development of modernity. The new gender concept, which is oriented towards a higher degree of individuality and diversity, i.e., differences and diversity, at the same time finds a stronger connection to the internationalization and trans-culturalization of society. This objective corresponds to the process in which, since the 1980s, greater internationalization, transnational and transcultural discourses and strategies, networks and organizations have been implemented at the national and local level. Finally, this process led not only to the adoption of the Participation Act in 1999, but also to the concept of

“multicultural coexistence” (*tabunka kyōsei*), which was formulated in 2006 as the “Multicultural Coexistence Development Plan in the Regions”.

This concept also aims for equal participation, equality and recognition of differences and diversity. It was developed after the number of foreigners living in Japan exceeded 2 million in the year 2005. Today, there are cities in Japan with approximately 18% of foreigners, such as Ōizumi-shi in the prefecture of Gunma, and 94% of all prefectures have already created their own promotional schemes for integration. Thus, we can say that Japan has an urgent need for a migration policy that reaches beyond the 1990 “Immigration Control and Refugee Recognition Act”. The aim of this migration policy should be to involve migrants and foreigners themselves as advocates and mediators with dual cultural competencies in integration work – in line with the Participation Act, according to which all men and women, and also migrants and others minorities, participate in all areas of society and should be able to help shape it. Co-existence is understood here living alongside each other, but as a coexistence in a future “participation society”.



Prof. MAE Michiko was holder of the Chair of Modern Japan I (Cultural Studies) at the Heinrich Heine University in Düsseldorf and is a member of the JDZB Foundation Council.

Dear Readers!

This spring edition of the *jdzb echo* is a women’s edition: editorial, interview, conference and exchange report – women writers are at work everywhere. And at each respective event, women were or are the driving force behind the partners of the JDZB, whether it is about the legitimacy of democracy, a dialogue between architects or the social engagement of young people.

However, the fact remains that there is still much to do to achieve real gender equality – both in Japan and in Germany – and this was the main outcome of the conference organized by MAE Michiko and opened by the politicians MAKIYAMA and HÖGL.

We will therefore take the word of our governments that they’ll continue to work for this and continue to discuss how to move the process forward – through international exchanges as well.

Unfortunately, the drawn-out government coalition negotiations in Germany is currently slowing down meeting at the political level and it is also making itself felt in the preparation of the JDZB’s conferences. Thus, it was all the more welcome that President STEINMEIER travelled to Japan at the beginning of February, underlining the close relations shared between the two countries. The exchange continues, and we hope – as always – to count on your support.

Dr. Friederike Bosse

Secretary General of the JDZB

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Editor: Michael NIEMANN

Tel.: +49-30-839 07 186, E-Mail: niemann@jdzb.de

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Address of the JDZB:

Saargemünder Str. 2, 14195 Berlin, Germany

Tel.: +49-30-839 07 0 Fax: +49-30-839 07 220

E-Mail: [jdzb@jdzb.de](mailto:jdzb@jdzb.de) URL: <http://www.jdzb.de>

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**The Association of German Architects (BDA) Berlin, in cooperation with the JDZB and the TU Berlin, is planning the launch of a new series of talks and talks entitled “Radical Modern\_Berlin Avantgarde and its International Interactions”. Below is an interview about the project with Prof. Heike HANADA from BDA Berlin.**

*What’s the idea behind this lecture and discussion series?*

The series is mainly due to the fact that 100 years of Bauhaus will be celebrated next year. In Germany, three new museums are currently being built in each of the locations where Bauhaus exists as an institution, namely at its place of origin in Weimar, in Dessau and in Berlin next to the Bauhaus Archive. As the architect of the new Bauhaus Museum in Weimar, I am interested in pondering anew how the protagonists of classical modernism blazed across the world spreading beyond Berlin. Through the expulsion of Bauhaus from Germany, the idea or concepts spread at the same time and in astonishingly fast ways into the most diverse countries and cultural circles by German architects who emigrated there – it is worth mentioning Bruno TAUT in Japan.

*Why does the series focus at the beginning of the relationship between Berlin and Japan?*

This has primarily personal reasons. Through my own close connection to Japan, it was very natural to take the development of modernism in Japan and contemporary Japanese architects into consideration as well. The developing exchange and the connection between Berlin/Germany and Tōkyō/Japan since the Meiji Restoration is well known, but how this intensifies with the upheavals in Europe and the dawn of modernism and despite the failure of modernism in the post-war period unfolded until now, is worth reflecting on for a moment.

*Which questions are raised? For example, what influence does contemporary Japanese architecture have on the young architectural scene in Berlin?*

The influence does indeed exist. It is probably a continuous process. More and more young German architects – also university graduates and even students – are looking toward Japan and local architecture firms. I think this is due to certain similarities between the cultures of both countries. For example, the strictness of form, the search for simple design or the purity of materials. We can then see this influence when the architects return – reflected in the way in which they design spaces, or how they are drawn or how they create graphics. Ultimately, it is also about the question of what significance classical modernity has for both countries today.

*Do you already have some Japanese architects in mind to open the series with?*

First of all, we want to focus on Japanese architects exhibiting at the Architecture Biennale in Venice - for pragmatic reasons of course, but also because the Japanese contributions have always been very interesting in recent years and based on excellent concepts that have impressed me over the long term. We asked KAIJIMA Momoyo from the studio Bow-Wow and ISHIGAMI Jun’ya from the office Junya, Ishigami + Associates, two younger representatives of the Japanese architectural scene.



Photo © HANADA

*Which countries or partners will the series be continued with?*

I would very much like to continue the series with India, where there was an early exchange with Bauhaus. As early as 1922, an unusual exhibition took place in Kolkata, bringing together the Indian avant-garde and the European Bauhaus movement. The Swiss painter, designer and Bauhaus teacher Johannes ITTEN had a strong interest in Mazdaznan, a mixed religion of Zarathustrian, Christian and Hindu with tantric elements – here we have another connection.

I also find Turkey very exciting, which is currently – in architectural terms – experiencing an awakening. There are very interesting Turkish architects, and we are also interested in such things as, for example, how the work of Bruno TAUT is regarded in Ankara, we know very little about that. We would like to continue the series by not focussing so much on things we already know – e.g., the effects of Bauhaus in the USA – but rather look at countries that haven’t been the focus of attention so far.

## Symposium “Democratic Legitimacy in Times of Globalization – Perspectives on Japan and Germany”, 11 December 2017 at the JDZB.

Elena KORSHENKO, PhD Candidate, Graduate School of East Asian Studies.

Over a long period of time political theorists maintained that democracy would prevail in the competition of political systems as the strongest and most legitimate one. This view was also facilitated by the collapse of the Soviet Union. However, social inequality and insecurity propelled by globalization, intensifying political disaffection and distrust in the key democratic institutions, decreasing turnout rates and emergence of populist and extremist challengers have raised serious concerns over the sustainability and legitimacy of democratic systems in the contemporary world. The symposium organised by the Japanese-German Center Berlin (JDZB) in cooperation with the Freie Universität Berlin (FU Berlin) and the Graduate School of East Asian Studies (GEAS) at the JDZB on December 11 comparatively examined how these trends manifest themselves in Germany and Japan.

### *Participation.*

The first panel discussed the patterns of political participation in both countries. Verena BLECHINGER-TALCOTT (FU, GEAS) demonstrated that voter dealignment and disengagement have become prominent characteristics of Japanese politics. Yet, they primarily reflect discontent with the ruling party and the lack of other reliable party vehicles, as support for democracy itself is still unwavering. Similarly, inaptitude of people's parties in Germany to act as efficient representation tools was highlighted by Uwe JUN (Trier University). He argued that the main reason behind the erosion of traditional German parties was their failure to adjust to the socio-economic changes and innovations in political communication, which created a representation gap and discouraged the voters from supporting them.

### *Representation.*

The second panel assessed the way representative mechanisms function amidst growing social and economic disparities. MIURA Mari (Sophia University) stressed that female representation is not adequate in Japan. While the policies for empowering women have become more salient, politicians are disconnected from the civil society and much of the change they promote is symbolic. KIBE Takashi's (International Christian University) analysis also expressed concerns about the system's responsiveness. Although all the Japanese parties address socio-economic inequality in their electoral platforms, the government shows no commitment to promoting democracy neither in its pledges, nor in practice. Dorothee DE NÈVE from Gießen University showed that Germany also faces problems with ensuring sufficient representation of women and lacks substantive representation in terms of the policy outcomes for the so-called “invisible majority” composed of citizens with low income, low education, no religious denomination, and singles.

### *Rise of new right parties and populism.*

The next panel shed light on the new political challengers and dissemination of their messages in Japan specifically. Andreas EDER (FU Berlin) analysed new parties' anti-elitist and nationalist discourses in the national and local elections. He showed that populism and nationalism represent distinct political projects and warned against their conflation, as they may threaten individuals and affect democracy in different ways. Examination of social bot activity before the 2014 election by Fabian SCHÄFER (University of Erlangen-Nürnberg), on the other hand, uncovered the increasing use of social media for computational propaganda. By spreading populist, nation-

alist or anti-pluralist jargon and weakening discursive boundaries, it might endanger democratic legitimacy at the time when participation through conventional means declines.

### *Democratic legitimacy in perspective.*

The last panel focused more concretely on the media and its relationship with Prime Minister ABE's government in Japan. Kweku AMPIAH (Leeds University) addressed the puzzle of the ABE government's longevity. He emphasised that, in addition to effete opposition and stronger institutional role of the Prime Minister, ABE's apt communication style depoliticising divisive issues and focusing attention on the leader was crucial for bolstering his positions. In contrast, NAKANO Koichi from the Sophia University sounded an alarm that it is the weakening accountability mechanisms, rather than skilful communication, that characterise ABE's rule. He noted that democratic controls over the government have been undermined by the destruction of partisan checks after the return to the LDP dominance in 2012, vulnerability of oppositional media, strengthened right-wing discourse and recent forthright encroachments on the press freedoms.

The roundtable discussion and Q&A after each panel provided for a more comprehensive comparative overview of these trends and perspectives. Participation patterns skewed towards the elderly, erosion of traditional parties with a more pronounced demise of the left and development of obfuscating or illiberal discourses and practices were highlighted as disturbing trends shared by Germany and Japan. Yet, the potential of new parties, social activism and new media to serve as alternative channels for citizens' mobilization and voice also left some room for hopeful views that democracy is not deteriorating, but transforming and that some of this change should be seen positively.



## Social Engagement: Why We All Benefit from the Engagement of Young People

Or: Why you should absolutely get involved in the German-Japanese Exchange Program for Young Volunteers!

Norina OELSCHLÄGER, participant 2017

The reason is obvious: it's really a great experience! You'll meet new people and then explore together a country that you don't know much about. You'll get to know other people and learn about their culture, their customs and traditions, and experience them together directly on location. Is there anything more beautiful? A chance to get to know yourself better. Sounds pathetic, but this is exactly what happens.

In the summer of 2017, I had the opportunity to travel to Japan with 16 other like-minded people through the German-Japanese Exchange Program for Young Volunteers. The trip was held under the theme "Social Engagement of Young People". We had many opportunities to exchange with peers and learn that voluntary roles are mainly held by university students and retirees, and less by school students and professionals. Through presentations, also given by the German side, we learned that falling birth rates and child poverty are challenges for both societies. In addition, we drove to the region which was hit by the devastating natural disaster on 11 March 2011 and where effects of the devastation are still felt today. We were pleased to be allowed to help clean a stretch of beach on the Pacific coast to make at least a small social contribution – that's what makes us volunteers and connects us all over the world!

I have become more open through the journey and I've learned to approach people even faster, because often there was no time to be shy with the rigorously planned program we had in Japan. I was also able to widen my horizons to reflect on my opinions and in some cases even change them through exciting presentations, talks and discussions held at the preparatory seminar in the JDZB, then in Japan, and then again during the weekend seminar held in Ravensbrück with the Japanese delegation. Admittedly, I seldom dealt with social engagement before this exchange. That's all different now!

The fact that I talked about it with people my age, both Germans and Japanese, sparked my interest and made me want to close my knowledge gaps. Since Japan is

still considered to be very far away, there are relatively few opportunities for exchange and if there are they are often not on the topic of "social engagement of young



people" and if at all, then not with people of the same age, unfortunately it is usually with people a lot older who want to tell us younger people something...

This exchange program is especially important because young people who want to change things come into contact with others, because none of us can change anything on our own, that I am sure of after this exchange. One person alone in a world that will soon be home to eight billion people is just too small to make a difference. But when several people, spread out across the world, join forces and bring what they have learned back to their countries and pass it on, then that can make a difference.

Extra special highlights of the past year include:

The active and energetic beach cleaning in the former disaster area of Kesennuma,



the visit to a primary school (author) and the cooking together outdoors with young volunteers from Iwate.



It is wonderful and fun because nobody "teaches" you from above, rather this exchange makes every experience personal and gives you the freedom to learn and reflect throughout the great program.

If this brief overview has awakened your thirst for knowledge, the desire for change and the courage to change, then all I have to say is one thing: complete your application as soon as possible and send it to the JDZB. I wish you much success!



Fourth meeting of the German-Japanese Expert Council on the Energy Transition on 14 and 15 February 2018 at the JDZB. Launched in spring 2016, the council is supported by various ministries and foundations, meets twice a year and discusses energy and climate policy issues.



Concert on 7 February 2018 at the JDZB: The piavcello trio with Denis LOZNYKOW (violin), TOYODA Rio (cello) and Oksana ANDRIYENKO (piano) played contemporary Japanese compositions and works of Romanticists of Russia and France.



Finissage on the exhibition “words from a foreign language” on 31 January 2018: Readings by Angela WINKLER and Corinna KIRCHHOFF with texts by John BERGER and an artist talk with Liane BIRNBERG.



Symposium “Digitalization and the Future of Democracy and Participation in the Information Society” on 6 February 2018 that was organised in collaboration with the Japan Foundation at the JDZB.



Lecture for the delegation “The Nippon Foundation & the Zen-A-Net Inspection Group” on the subject “Employment Participation of People with Disabilities in Europe” on 17 January 2018 at the JDZB.

A speaker from the Federal Employment Agency informed the members of the group, including six Japanese MPs, about the “placement and employment of severely disabled and its implementation in Germany”.



The violinist TAKI Chiharu and the pianist KURASAWA Anna at the New Year’s Concert on 19 January 2018 at the JDZB.



Christmas concert with young musicians of the Youth Chamber Music Berlin Brandenburg (JukaBB) on 14 December 2017 at the JDZB.

## CONFERENCES BY FOCAL AREAS

### GLOBAL RESPONSIBILITY

#### Symposium: Global Health II

C: Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies, Geneva; Waseda Institute of Asia-Pacific Studies, Tōkyō

Date: To be confirmed in 2018, in Tōkyō

#### Security Policy Workshop, Track 1.5

C: German Federal Foreign Office; Berlin; Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Tōkyō; The Japan Institute of International Affairs (JIIA), Tōkyō

Date: To be confirmed in 2018

### SUSTAINABILITY AND THE ENVIRONMENT

#### Symposium: Tōkyō 2020 – and then? Olympic Cities and Olympic Sites as a Contribution to a Sustainable Map

C: Senate Chancellery of Berlin; Tōkyō Metropolitan Government (TMG)

Date: Autumn 2018

### DEMOGRAPHIC CHANGE

#### Symposium: Demographic Change in Germany and Japan

C: Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth (BMFSFJ), Berlin; Ministry of Health, Labor, and Welfare (MHLW), Tōkyō

Date: 2<sup>nd</sup> half year 2018

#### Symposium: Demography and Health

C: Federal Ministry of Health, Berlin; MHLW, Tōkyō

Date: To be confirmed in 2018

### DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION

#### Symposium: New International Economic Agreements and Data Protection

C: Japan Institute of Social and Economic Affairs (KKC), Tōkyō; Stiftung New Responsibility, Berlin

24. April 2018, in Tōkyō

#### Conference: Digitization of Work, Productivity Effects and Demographic Change

C: Institute of the German Economy (IW), Cologne; Fujitsu Research Institute (FRI), Tōkyō

25 June 2018, in Tōkyō

### STATE, ECONOMY, GOVERNANCE

#### Symposium: Education, Research and Innovation – The Universities' Way Forward...

C: University Rectors' Conference, Bonn; Japan Association of National Universities, Tōkyō; Japan Committee of Universities for International Exchange, Tōkyō

26–27 April 2018, in Tōkyō

#### Conference: Internationalization of Japanese Companies Put to the Test

C: Free University Berlin; EHESS, Paris; Said Business School, University of Oxford

20–22 September 2018

#### Symposium: Law and Politics

C: German-Japanese Association of Jurists, Hamburg; Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, Tōkyō office

3 November 2018, in Tōkyō

#### Conference: Science and Society: Institutions, Practice and Perspectives

C: Free University Berlin; German Association for Social Science Research in Japan (VSJF)

23–25 November 2018

#### Democratization of Society through Equal Participation and Diversity in Japan, Korea and Germany II

C: Tōkyō University; Düsseldorf University; Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung Tōkyō Office

Date: To be confirmed in 2018, in Tōkyō

### CULTURE AND CHANGE

#### German-Japanese Architects' Dialogue

C: Association of German Architects, Berlin

Date: from May 2018 onwards

#### Symposium: 150 Years Meiji – The Function of the West for Social Change Processes

C: University of Halle-Wittenberg; Japan Foundation, Tōkyō

Date: Beginning of September 2018, in Halle

### SPECIAL PROJECT

#### Symposium: Germany – India – Japan and a Free and Open Indo-Pacific

C: Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Tōkyō

12 March 2018

#### 27<sup>th</sup> Japanese-German Forum

C: Japan Center for International Exchange, Tōkyō

Date: Autumn 2018

### CULTURAL EVENTS

#### EXHIBITION

#### “7 Years On ... Searching for Clues and Looking Ahead” Dual exhibition commemorating the Tōhoku earthquake of 11 March 2011

C: Gallery Springer, Berlin; TU Munich

On display: 1 March until 30 April 2018

#### “O-Bento & Built Space” by Debra SAMUELS and the Boston Architectural College

Opening: 9 May, on display 11 May until 29 June 2018

### CONCERT

#### Reflections. German-Japanese encounters. Concert with members of the Young German Philharmonic Orchestra

C: Young German Philharmonic, Frankfurt; Werner Reimer's Foundation, Bad Homburg

6 June 2018, 7.30 pm

#### Jazz Concert: Kyōto Mon Amour

9 June 2018, 7 pm (Open House)

### READING

#### Reading and Artists Talk: AOYAMA Nanae (Akutagawa Award Winner 2007)

C: Cass Verlag

8 March 2018, 7 pm

### FILM

#### „The People Living in Hadenya“ Documentary 2014 by AGATSUMA Kazuki (OWEs)

14 March 2018, 7 pm

#### „Tremorings of Hope“ Documentary 2017 by AGATSUMA Kazuki (OWEs), followed by a public discussion with the director

16 March 2018, 6 pm

### OTHERS

JDZB Open House: 9 June 2018, from 2 pm

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### EXCHANGE PROGRAMS

- Junior Experts Exchange Program
- German-Japanese Young Leaders Forum
- Youth Group Leaders Exchange Program
- Study Program for Youth Work Specialists
- Exchange Program for Young Employees
- JDZB SCIENCEYOUTH PROGRAM

For details of the programs, please refer to: <http://www.jdzb.de> --> Exchange Programs

#### Opening hours of exhibitions

Monday to Thursday 10 am to 5 pm, Friday 10 am to 3.30 pm

Registration for the concerts opens close to the date

#### C: = in cooperation with

Venue: JDZB, if not stated otherwise

For more information please refer to: <http://www.jdzb.de> --> Activities

For information on JDZB language courses please refer to: <http://www.jdzb.de> --> Japanese Courses



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**“7 Years On ... Searching for Clues and Looking Ahead” Dual exhibition commemorating the earthquake in Tōhoku on March 11, 2011**

Jens LIEBCHEN presents his photo series “Tsukuba-Narita 2011/03/13” as documentary photographs, which he took two days after the earthquake happened on his way to the airport. Ingrid MACKENSEN depicts in her photo series “After the End – Architecture between Disaster and Reconstruction” the architectural aid projects which were created after the destruction.

Opening on 28 February, 7 pm

Finissage on 26 April, 6.30 pm

Duration: 1 March to 30 April 2018



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© Joanne Rathe Strohmeier



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© W. Skowron

**Above: “Obento & Built Space” by Debra SAMUELS and the Boston Architectural College**  
Can room layout in Japanese lunch boxes be transferred to the composition of living space? The exhibits of an extensive collection of Bentō boxes are contrasted with sketches and photographs of concepts and ideas for living by architects.

Opening on 9 May, 7 pm

Duration: 11 May to 29 June 2018

**Left: “Distant Affinities” by Wojtek SKOWRON, YAMAMOTO Akihito, CHIBA Yūdai**

The artists live in Berlin and work with photography and installations that juxtapose images of everyday materials or objects that can be found in Japan and in Germany. They are interested in unnoticed motives, in abandoned locations and things, as well as the search for identity.

Opening on 5 September, 7 pm

Duration: 6 September to 2 November 2018

**Left: “Japan’s Masterpieces of Wooden Architecture” Photographs by FUJITSUKA Mitsumasa**

The works of photographer FUJITSUKA Mitsumasa focus on traditional cultural monuments made of wood and are also considered a tribute to Japanese wooden architecture.

Duration: mid-November 2018 until end of January 2019



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