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PRESS RELEASE

Yoshitaka TANIGUCHI

Dead End: Jukkenzaka (Temiya/Otaru-city)



About 150 years ago, the Temiya district in Otaru on Japan's northern-most island of Hokkaido thrived economically and culturally after becoming a vital shipping port for coal and cargo. There is one particular, steep road in the Temiya district known as "Jukken-zaka." As its name suggests, the road is ten ken (an old Japanese unit) wide. It ends abruptly, as a dead end, at the top of a rocky area overseeing the city of Otaru. This steep road and its views is filled with traces of the life and culture of Temiya's deep history.

For more than 100 years, Jukken-zaka has been the object of many plans to connect Temiya with central Otaru. They were all abandoned due to opposition from residents and merchants who feared negative consequences for Otaru's and Temiya's charm and vitality. As a result, the Temiya area at the bottom of Jukken-zaka retained the communal charm of Otaru's developing period, with Mochi shops, public bathhouses and shops building a unique townscape. Recent years, however, have introduced new change into the Temiya district, with an aging population, youth migration into bigger cities and foreign capital causing many shops to close and buildings to be abandoned.

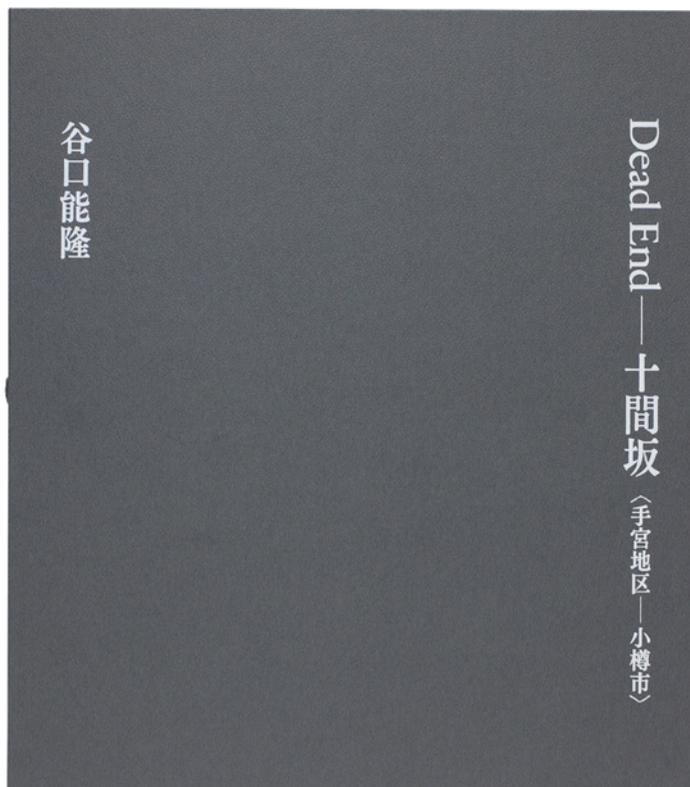
I went in search of Jukken-zaka's past and present realities, and I will stay to find out its future.

— Yoshitaka Taniguchi



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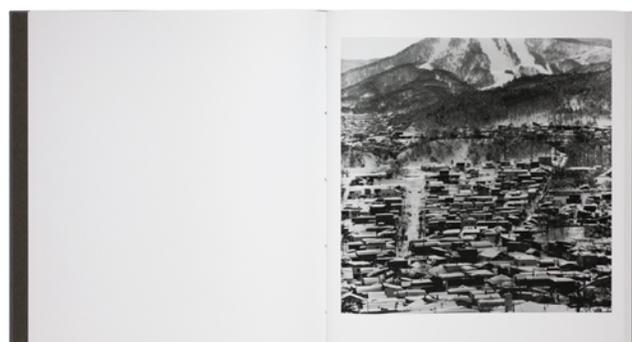
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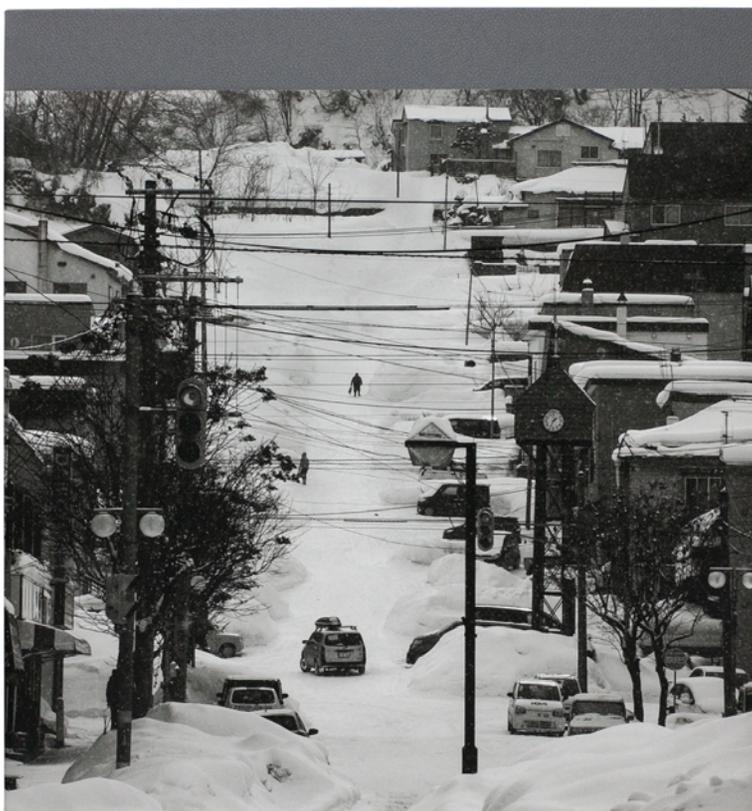
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