

# ONE SUN

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"Le soleil ni la mort ne se peuvent regarder fixement."  
("Neither the sun nor death can be looked at with a steady eye.") ——— *A proverb by La Rochefoucauld*

I suppose many of us were told as a child not to look at the sun.

We were also told that we must hide our thumbs when encountering a hearse, otherwise our parents will be cursed and die, or that we must purify ourselves with salt before going into our houses on the way back from a funeral, etc., and so on.

We hate death so much.

Rather than the proverb "Neither the sun nor death can be looked at with a steady eye.", these traditions handed down from the old time are telling us not to go near death.

I have been working on a photographic project for a long time to visualize a model's ideal death by giving them interviews asking how, where and in what clothes they want to die. By projecting the viewpoint of the deceased onto the picture, looking down at the beautiful scenery which could be a tragic scene of death in reality, I tried to express my thought : no matter how we die, we will travel up to the world beyond the sky without regretting how we lived.

However, this project would not take away the fear of death from me. I am very much afraid of dying.

It is only natural for a human being to be afraid of dying, but then how does everyone overcome this fear? The answer to the question was religion. Religion will ease my fear of death or will teach me how to confront death. When I realized this, I started to wish I had a religion to believe in. However, there was nothing convincing enough for me to believe in.

At this time, I remembered a small country town I visited a long time ago in Weimar, Germany. I went to see my friend, a ballet dancer, perform. The next morning, I went out for a walk in the big park in front of the hotel I stayed at in the outskirts of town. It was like a paradise. The park was big, with green leaves that sparkled with the sunshine and birds singing beautiful tunes. It was after quite a while when I realized that where I stood was a part of former East Germany. In that moment, the preconception I had toward the eastern bloc countries with "dark clouds covering the sky", collapsed. I felt once again the greatness of the sun. It shines onto every country equally, whether one is split or is at war. Only one sun.

When I felt in this way, I spontaneously chose the sun as an object to fold my hands toward in prayer.

Since then, I fold my hands in the direction of the sun before pressing the shutter of my camera to shoot it. Taking photographs of the sun in this style, an idea of recording the path of the sun flashed into my mind.

I decided to use the fish-eye lens, together with a long exposure, to completely capture the path of the sun from sunrise to sunset. At different places, the sun's path draws different arcs depending on the time of year. Although they are the paths made by the one, same sun, and each path looks alike at first sight, it changes by the place and the season.

In the end, we are all like one family living under one sun.

The images I create of the sun are my prayer for peace and a world without any conflicts. I don't know if my message has any influence, but I say, let us fold our hands together because we all share one and the same sun.

I doubt if I can ever think about death as something beautiful. I doubt if our spirits remain after we die. Neither the sun or death are within my control and I am completely powerless over both of them. But still I look at them through the dark shades and keep thinking about what it is to live or what it is to die, about peace or about war.