

DANCHI DREAMS

Artist Statement

Photographic Series by Cody Ellingham

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www.danchi-dreams.com

The afternoon sky is waning.

The hour strikes 5PM and a short melody rings out over the loudspeaker with an eerie echo.

I am standing alone before a complex of DANCHI, Japanese public housing apartments.

Row upon row of identical numbered buildings reach into the distance, their fluorescent lights flicker to life and illuminate the stark concrete.

DANCHI emerged across Japan in the 1960s to cope with rapidly growing urban populations. From 3 and 4 story buildings on the edges of cities, to massive clusters of 15-story blocks complete with schools, shops, and playgrounds, the concrete communities of DANCHI replaced the wood and dirt of Old Japan.

DANCHI were not just housing projects but were a dream for many, something to aspire to. They were a vision of a harmonious life and Japan's new found prosperity.

Half a century later DANCHI are in decay. The concrete symbol of Japan's economic miracle and post-war identity are slowly being forgotten and some are already gone.

I photographed DANCHI at night, the time of dreams. I visited over 40 complexes and observed both the signature of decline, and also the promise of that original dream however slight.

– Cody Ellingham