



# The Vanished: The "Evaporated People" of Japan in Stories and Photographs

*Léna Mauger*

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Every year, nearly one hundred thousand Japanese vanish without a trace. Known as the *johatsu*, or the “evaporated,” they are often driven by shame and hopelessness, leaving behind lost jobs, disappointed families, and mounting debts. In *The Vanished*, journalist Léna Mauger and photographer Stéphane Remail uncover the human faces behind the phenomenon through reportage, photographs, and interviews with those who left, those who stayed behind, and those who help orchestrate the disappearances. Their quest to learn the stories of the *johatsu* weaves its way through:

A Tokyo neighborhood so notorious for its petty criminal activities that it was literally erased from the maps  
Reprogramming camps for subpar bureaucrats and businessmen to become “better” employees  
The charmless citadel of Toyota City, with its iron grip on its employees  
The “suicide” cliffs of Tojinbo, patrolled by a man fighting to save the desperate  
The desolation of Fukushima in the aftermath of the tsunami

And yet, as exotic and foreign as their stories might appear to an outsider’s eyes, the human experience shared by the interviewees remains powerfully universal.

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