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THE GREAT NORTHERN HORIZON

On the Road - 03

December 2016 - January 2017

AN ETERNAL FALL IN JAPAN



The ephemeral scenery of fall has been a symphony that took us from one end of Japan to the other, from islands to islands. It is as if, in each region, we reached the height of its splendour. The warm colours of the leaves illuminated our path and warmed our bodies as the nights continued to lengthen. This sight made us enter the heart of a world of harmony and finesse, symbol of Japanese culture.

Along the Biwa Lake, we choose the small roads, those which cross the countryside and pass in front of the Buddhist temples and Shinto shrines. The bright orange persimmons and the yellow yuzu brightened the small alleys with beautiful traditional houses.

From one island to the others, In the heart of the forest

We are amazed by the forests that extend all over the country, in one of the most wooded countries in the world. They are the link between all the islands that compose Japan. It is an intense green, an impenetrable world that unfolds beyond the gaze on mountains and valleys.



At dusk,
the traditional lanterns light up,
like guides on the way.



The night brings its magic. Some temples make it vibrate. A majestic beauty emerges from these places in a timeless world. Under the shine of the stars, we feel the vibration of Buddhist temples and Sinto shrines. One explain the link between life an death, the other celebrates life in the sacredness of nature.







Kyoto

In Kyoto, trees showed their finest fall colours. The tint are fantastic, especially the maples leaves and their bright red. The zen gardens of the temples are illuminated with flamboyant colours, in unique and fabulous creations. Next to the sacred monuments, an alchemy appears. It gives us an energy of fire and light. A dance to life and its beauty, a radiating joy.





Carried by a breeze

Yet the crowd suffocates us. The sacredness of the sanctuaries fades with the hundreds of people who came to visit them. Their vibrations are annihilated. We feel overwhelmed by the all energies that shake us. We can perceive the weight of human density. Then carried by a breeze, we continue our way, accompanied by the twirling leaves with autumn hue.



THE ESSENCE OF JAPAN



The essence of Japan, its rites, its rules, its forms are intimately linked to every gesture, to every word, to all aspects of life. In this codified universe, whose scope we can not imagine. Here the silences say more than the word. Feeling the situation to take its right place. For us, it will remain enigma. This is the beauty of the journey, the discovery of another way of living in society, in the richness of human diversity.

FLAVOURS

Along the way, Japan opened to us, like a blossoming flower. There we enter its heart, carried by all the encounters. We discover the delicacy of its food, with dishes whose flavour we could never have imagined. The sashimi, or raw fish take tastes and textures whose fineness inspire us.



SHIKOKU ISLAND



We are on Shikoku island. The road meanders between the mounts, in green and dense forests, made up of bamboos, cypresses and cedars. Occasionally, it follows the coast and the ocean. It turns over secret creeks where the turquoise blue water reveals its transparency. Then in this humid and cold world, a monkey and a few palm trees emerge as if to recall the heat of summers. We follow the path of the 88 sacred temples of the island. it has been more than a millennium that pilgrims walk around the island on a journey of over 1400 km. We are in connection with this island like the pilgrims. Our nomadism, beyond moving is an inner journey.



The wind whips our faces, yet the ocean is sumptuous. Here, there is a special energy, very powerful. The coast plunges into a trench of the Pacific Ocean. It is indigo blue and foams on the rock formations and the black sandy beaches. All day long, we cycle along the coast, crossing small fishing villages and turquoise blue water creeks. The water is particularly beautiful, so clear, with incredible hues. There is a magic that emerges from this winding road with sublime panorama.

When we reach the Shimanto river, we are astonished. The water is so limpid that we see the bottom of the river bed. The energy is wild, it reminds us of the wide-open spaces. The scenic beauty and its wild whisper gives us the energy to pursue, grateful for so much beauty, despite the temperatures that keep coming down.



COMPLICITY

Tatsuno San, the man who climbed the north face of the Eiger, welcomed us as adventurous friends. A special bond has been created based on respect for each other's lives, in a complicity. And as we continue to discover the islands of Japan, the echo of our arrival precedes us. Tatsuno San's friends open their door to welcome us.



We are amazed at the fraternity that surrounds us, the sunny personalities who welcome us, the connections that are created. These men and women open the door of a Japan in which we suddenly feel part. The laughter punctuate the exchanges and it seems that every encounter enhances this feeling of belonging to this splendid humanity.

We witness a rite of passage for children: Schichi-go-san which means 7-5-3. Three year old boys and girls, five year old boys and seven year old girls visit a Shinto sanctuary with their families to celebrate their well-being and growth. They are beautifully dressed in traditional clothes, the kimono. We also attend a Taiko concert, the Japanese drum, performed with traditional dances and Japanese theatre. Then we enter the silence of a dojo to see how teenagers practice the kyūdō, the art of archery. Finally, we were introduced to the making of paper according to the Japanese tradition.



TRADITIONS



The cold intensifies



It is now the turn of the mandarins to illuminate our way by their bright orange hue and their sweet acidity, on the Sadamisaki peninsula. Then we took a ferry to reach Kyushu island. There, the generosity is such that every day we receive a present, often food to help us keep cycling. The cold intensifies, the volcanic island of Kyushu offers us its best gift. The hot water of the onsens, the traditional thermal baths, welcomes our tired bodies for an amazing relaxation, after a day of cycling in the chilly wind.

Meeting Children by bicycle



Nayla has already cycle her first 100 kilometres alone. She meets the children along the way. She ties bond spontaneously with them. We see them running and laughing together. Each encounter is sparkling with life.

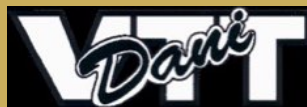


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Thanks to all our partners

