



# THE GREAT NORTHERN HORIZON



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On the Road - 04

Février 2017

Hokkaido

# IN WINTER IN HOKKAIDO



A powerful silence embraces the land. It is the silence of the snowy days. When the crystals fall gently and float in the frigid air, it is as if the time was suspended. This breathing invites a return to ourselves, as the sap retreats to the heart of its intimacy. There is no longer any projection of ourselves in space or time. The visibility is blurred, it whispers to look at the magic that surrounds us, here, now. Admiring snow crystals, we discover in it all the magnificence of the Earth. Each flake is beautifully sculpted and unique. It is like a jewel that reflects the grandeur of what surrounds us every moment.

# The cold of the North

The wind rises, a squall transforms the the beauty of the landscape. It is icy and howling. Given the temperatures falling to  $-24^{\circ}\text{C}$  at dawn, it carries the cold air of the Far North, a land of unknown and ice. It gives a wild, fierce and impetuous hue to the landscapes. It brings a touch of unexpected that we can not control. It represents this movement of life, which drives changes. Beyond any defined plans, beyond our comfort zone, to jostle us. To push us to seek that spark of wisdom, sweetness and love deep within us.



# THE LIGHT MAKES THE SNOW

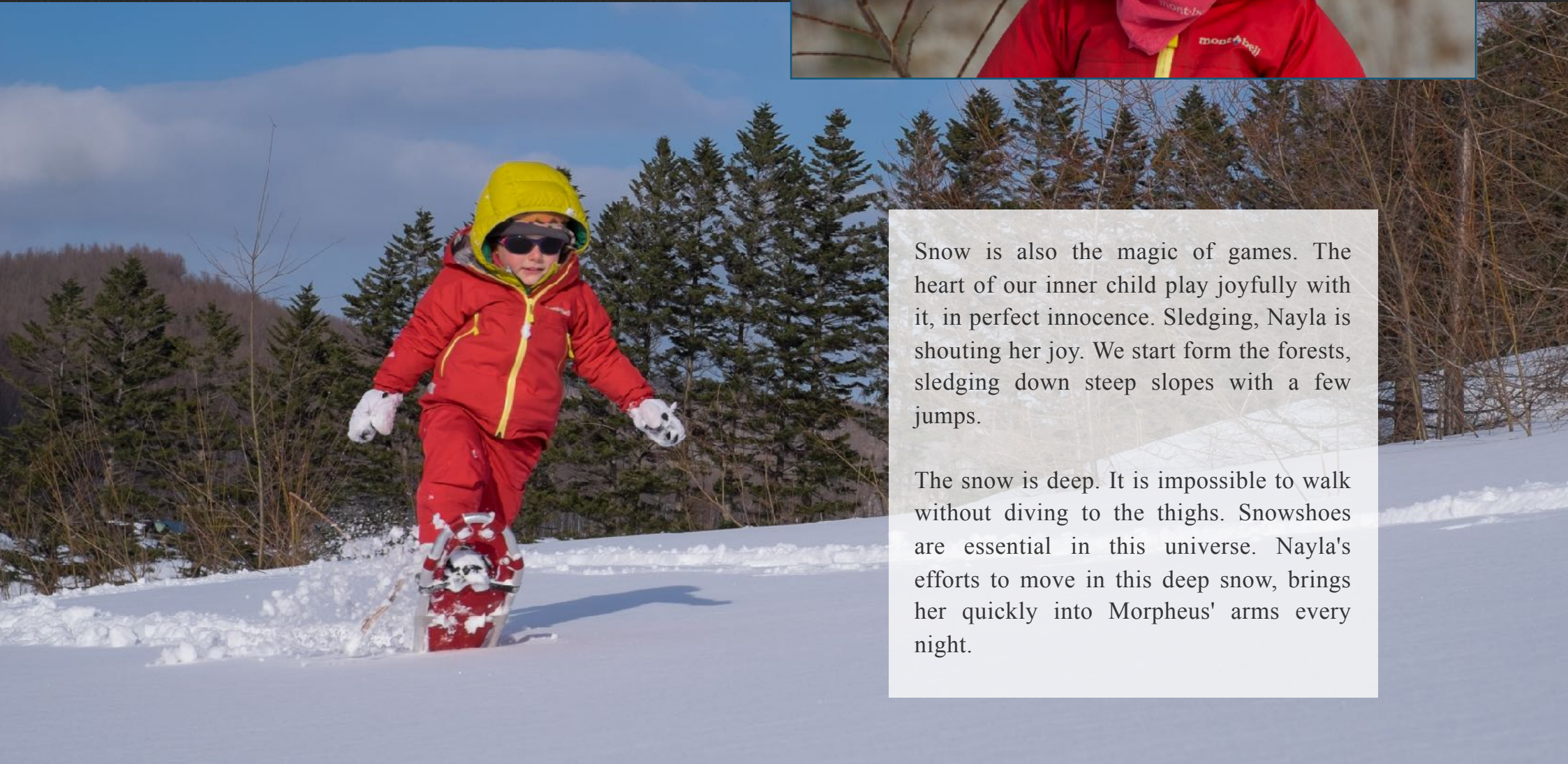


The Sun Star appears. The white mantle that covers the earth sparkles with a thousand diamonds under a royal blue sky. The light makes each snow crystal flicker and dance. It reveals the radiance of the panorama. There is a lightness in the air, an angelic and immaculate purity. All the sensations are amplified. There is an amplitude, a grandeur, as if the landscape is united to us in a wave of harmony. This crystalline beauty opens our hearts, the thoughts are pure.



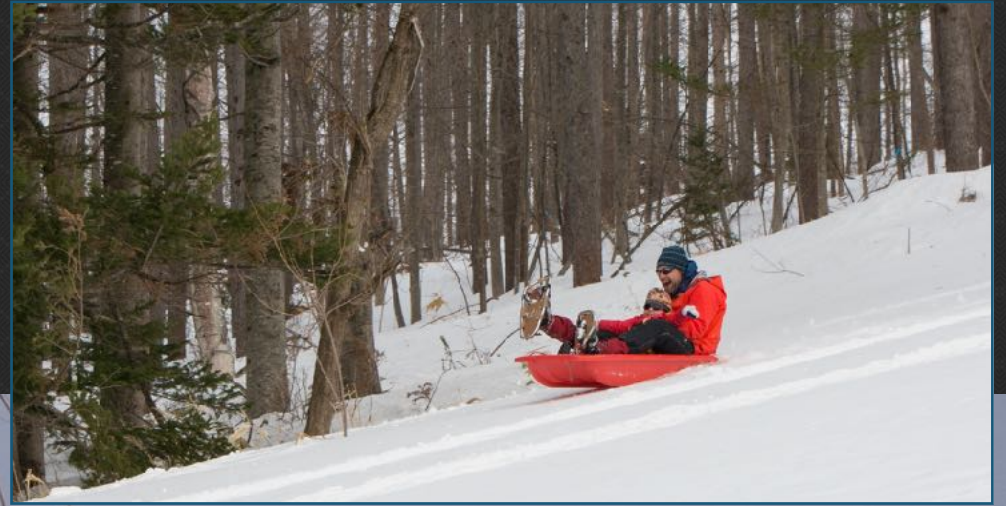
We are nourished by every change of light on the land of Hokkaido. At night, the black sky is adorned with thousands of stars, it seems to extend to the confines of the universe. It connects us to our sacred and eternal dimension, to our child of light. At the same time, we feel this heartbeat vibrating in us. The energy of this soul who has chosen to join us and grows with us. The baby feeds on all of our sensations within my body. She or he connects with the purity of these landscapes, like a blossoming flower.

Snow is also the  
magic of games



Snow is also the magic of games. The heart of our inner child play joyfully with it, in perfect innocence. Sledging, Nayla is shouting her joy. We start from the forests, sledging down steep slopes with a few jumps.

The snow is deep. It is impossible to walk without diving to the thighs. Snowshoes are essential in this universe. Nayla's efforts to move in this deep snow, brings her quickly into Morpheus' arms every night.





## Minamifurano

Staying in the small town of Minamifurano, we enjoy its ski resort, which will prove to be virtually private. We are the only ones going down the slopes. Finally, Nayla can ski again. Since the first snowfall in October, she has not stopped insisting, remembering the joys of skiing. Thus, she slalom between the pegs, dance on her skis, and is thrilled by the sensation of speed.





## Kanayama Lake

Kanayama Lake is covered with a thick layer of ice that deers and fawns cross during their migration. The decor is amazing. Unfortunately, ice fishing is impossible this year. The typhoon that transformed the landscape also unbalanced the wildlife. This is why our friend Tohru is on an expedition to try to define its impact on the fish.





## Shikaribetsu Lake

In the heart of Daisetsu National Park, on the Lake of the Sky, the lake Shikaribetsu, we enter an Ice Village. Here, on the highest mountain lake in Hokkaido appears igloos. They are built on the frozen lake in front of an indigo blue sky dotted with white clouds. Even a chapel was created in ice.

Then snow flakes begin to fall and by  $-10^{\circ}\text{C}$  we enter the hot water of an onsen in the open air, in the heart of the ice. The alchemy is perfect between the severe cold of Hokkaido and the Japanese traditions.



# Time for celebration

With the cold, hot chocolates are a delight. Of course, they are accompanied by rice and miso soup. We are warmly welcomed at Shigeo's, Nayla's Grandpa in Japan. Every day, he prepares Japanese cuisine for us to discover the flavours of his country, sometimes with friends. The *sukiyaki nave*, where meat, vegetables and tofu are cooked in a broth of *sake* and then dipped in raw egg before being eaten. The fresh fish fried in *tempura*, incredibly tender. And the *mochis* party, this paste of rice, traditionally prepared for the new year. In the playful atmosphere that this sticky paste reveals, we taste it with red bean paste, *nato*, algae and daikon radish.

It is also the Girls' Day, *Hina matsuri*. It protects girls from evil spirits. We celebrate it with our Japanese friends. Shigeo San takes out the dolls' house of her daughter Haruka as the tradition requires. The dolls are precious figures often passed down from generation to generation, representing the Imperial court. According to the custom, we taste *chirashi* sushi with pink sugar, and *mochi*, some with *macha* and others with a sakura leaf.





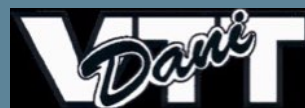
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Thanks to all  
our partners



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