

To the end of the world

A TRAVELOGUE

Aug 9 - Sept 6 2016
Hokkaido Japan

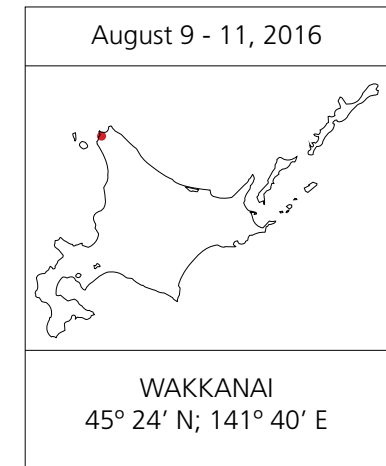
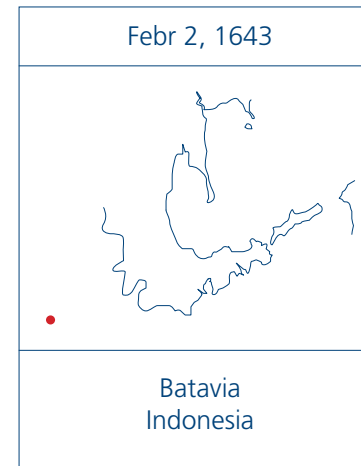
Jan van den Berg
Hannie van den Bergh

To the end of the world

A current Edo Sampu

Over the past twelve years we regularly visited Japan and stayed in artist in residencies in Tokyo and Kyoto in order to research upon the unique relationship between Japan and the Netherlands in past and present times. It inspired us to start thinking about creating an art & science project entitled *Edo Sampu 2020* — a multidisciplinary project which aims to revitalize the artistic and intellectual dialogue between the two cultures. An alternative modern-day Journey to the Court, to take place in both countries and to be executed by artists and scientists from both countries. With the means of art and science and a dialogue between the participants the project aims to establish a modern-day *rangaku* (Dutch Studies) and *nihonjinron* (Japan Studies).

During our research on the *Dutch – Japanese* relationship between 1609 – 1868 we came across a travelogue of Cornelis Jansz. Coen, first mate on the VOC-vessel *Castricum*. A report about a unique voyage of discovery to the islands currently known as Hokkaido, Sakhalin and Kuril. An expedition that was led by the Dutch cartographer and explorer captain Maarten Gerritsz. Vries, also referred to as De Vries (1589 - 1647). Intrigued and inspired by the beautiful and conscientious travelogue of Coen and Vries, we wanted to go to Hokkaido ourselves. We made new contacts and we gained new insights in the Japanese identity, in the indigenous Ainu culture of Hokkaido, in the layered relationship between oral traditions, written history and mapping, and in the current meaning of the old Ainu expression “the end of the world”. We expect that all this will enrich both the preparations and the actual realisation of our Edo Sampu 2020 project.

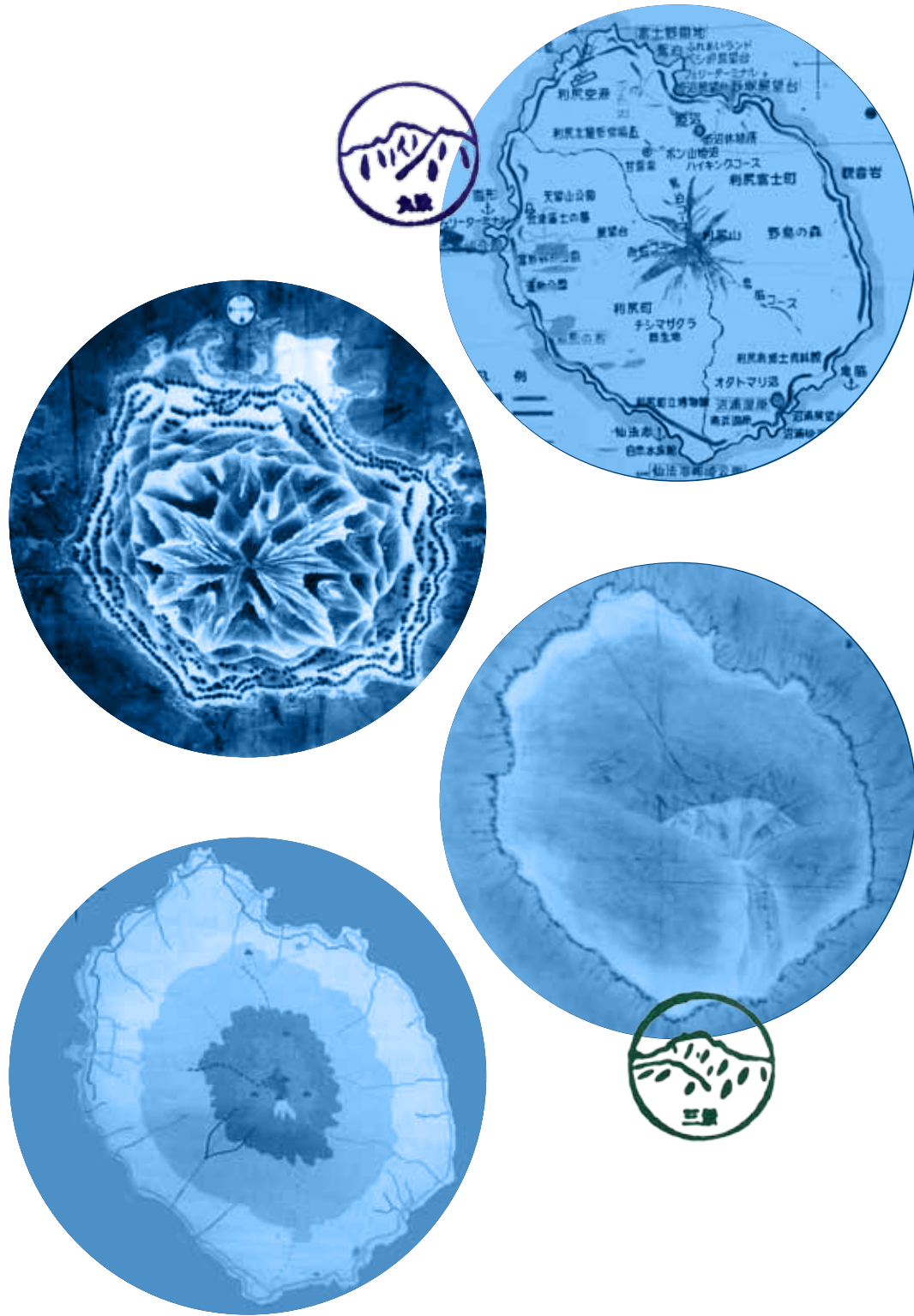


Instruction for the captain-commander Maarten Gerritsz. Vries and the Council of the *fluytschip Castricum*, commissioned to discover the unknown east coast of Tartariën, the kingdom of Cathaija and the west coast of America, as well as the gold- and silver islands east of Japan:

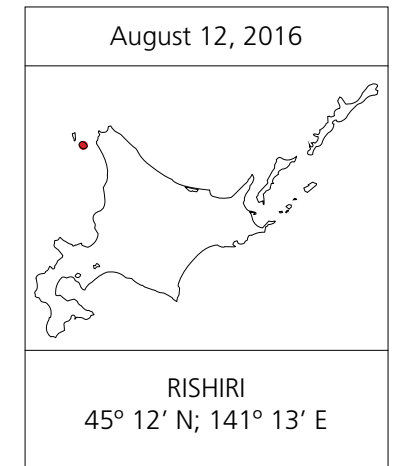
“Try to do the utmost to get in contact with its inhabitants, in order to find out as soon and as well as possible whether they’re in the position, and willing to trade with us. And especially whether there’s something useful to us in their country.

In de Zuidzee (Sea of the South) at 37,5 degrees norther latitude, which is about 400 Spanish miles and 343 Dutch miles from East Japan, there is said to be a very high and big island, with a population of white, clean, friendly and civilized people and an excessive richness of silver and gold.”

We travel from Amsterdam, the Netherlands, to Rishiri-to and Rebun-to, the islands off the northernmost coast of Hokkaido, Japan. Once this was said to be *the end of the world*, according to some. People like the Dutch explorer and cartographer Maarten Gerritsz. De Vries (1589 – 1647) for example, commander of a *Dutch United East Indian Company*-vessel called *Castricum*. In 1643 he drew an open-ended emptiness on his map of this part of the world. His first mate and log-keeper Cornelis Jansz. Coen characterized Eso (Jezo, Yeso), currently named Hokkaido, as being “high and big and inhabited by so-called Ainu people who are white and clean and friendly and civilised”.

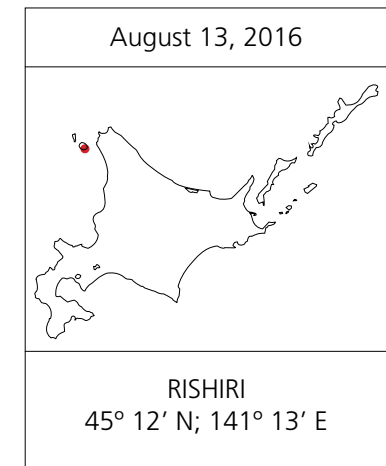
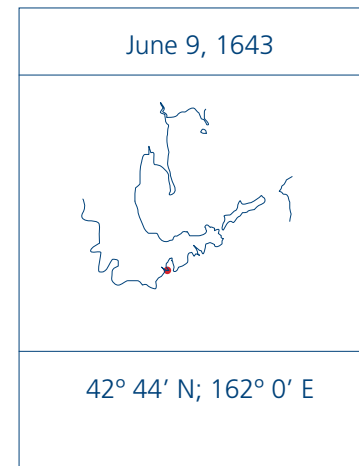


Around ten 'o clock in the morning we see a high land and suppose that it is the land of Eso.



We feel tempted to compare Rishiri-yama, also known als Rishiri-fuji to a woman's breast. Her nipple alternately standing out against a deep blue sky, folded in the clouds or covered with snow. On the map however, seen from above, it looks more like a human cell; including its nucle-us. Or as Uni-don — a sea urchin on top of rice and Pickled Beetroot— which is the culinary specialty of the island. Unfortunately it's not on the menu of the most remarkable living-room-restaurant where we end up at the end of the day. Which means it's Octopus Curry for us, tonight.



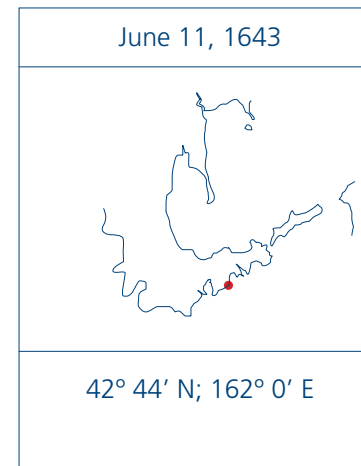
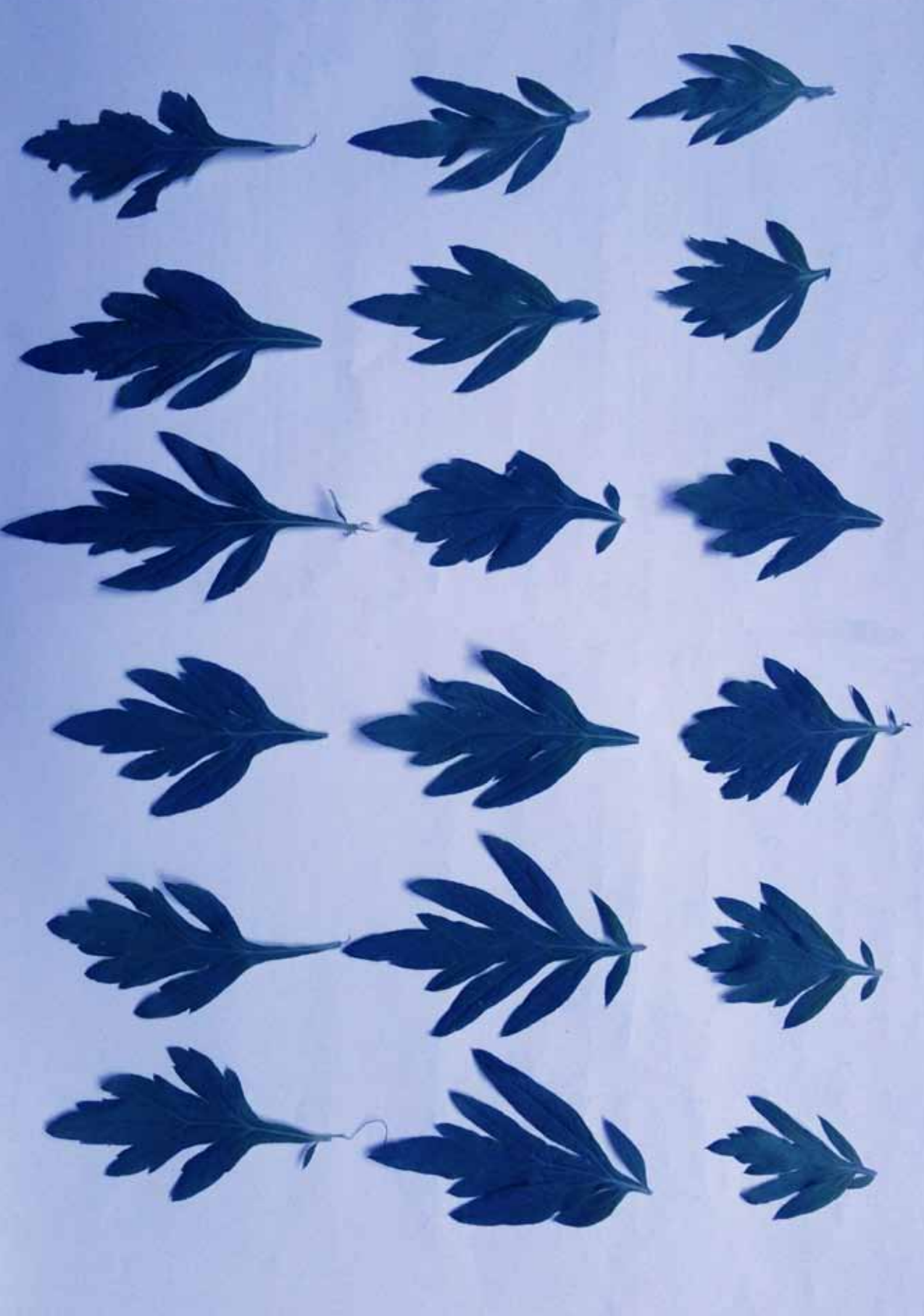


Around three or four in the afternoon we notice a little boat coming our way. Two men and a boy: thick-set people with a brown skin and rough black beards. They have very rough black hair on their skin and their head is shaven on the top but it has long hair hanging down from half-way. When they drink, they lift their moustache with their finger.

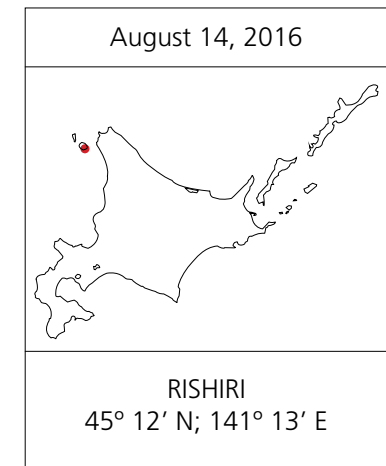
They've brought the skin of two elks with them and some dried salmon. They're wearing robes of hemp linen with animal skin on top. They also have holes in their ears with little ropes in it, and a ring in their ear, and silver-tessellated knives on their belly.

We read about the two mayors of Shimonoseki who welcome Von Siebold and others on their *Hofreis to the Shogun* — Edo Sampu — in 1826. The former Dutch Deshima-Chief Hendrick Doeff had given them the Dutch names Van den Berg & Van Dalen, because they were such Oranda-maniacs. Especially Van den Berg — by chance the same familyname as ours — used to dress up like a westerner and had turned his entire house into a Cabinet of Dutch curiosities. He therefore was given the nickname *De Malle* (The Fool) which he was even more proud of than his "original" Dutch name.

We cycle Rishiri's East Area and are given some pieces of *Kombu* along the way; the export product of the island. Constantly we notice signs pointing out a *Temporary Tsunami Evacuation Route*. In Onikawa we visit the Rishiri Island Folk Museum which exhibits a stuffed bear and a seal, and displays all sorts of information on the island's history.



North or North-East of Japan, we imagine that we see high land but it turns out that we're being deceived by mist. Sometimes one holds mist for land.

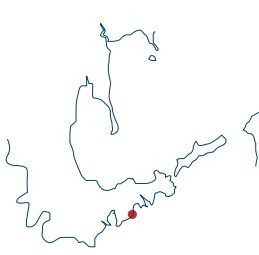


We climb the Pon-yama, Rishiri-yama's little brother (or sister?) and see *Yomogi* (mugwort) growing abundantly on its slopes. Exactly as in Marasaki Shikibu's *The Tale of Genji*; the book that we brought along.

On top of the little mountain we feel rewarded by the splendid view of Rishiri-yama.

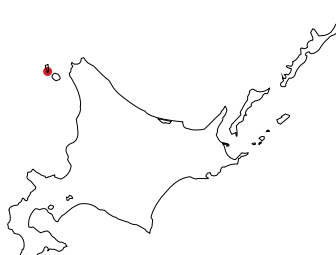
On returning to the city we have lunch at a restaurant close to the point where Ranald MacDonald once set foot ashore; becoming the first native English-speaker to teach therewith English language in Japan. The last words of this most peculiar japanophile (1824 – 1894) are said to have been "sayonara, my dear, sayonara".



June 13, 1643

PIEK TAMARY 43° 28' N; 164° 25' E

Many small islands and cliffs. On the mainland we see a mountain that is covered with snow. Three little boats are coming our way. Five, six, eight men embark. They ask us for tobacco and tell us they want to exchange it for otter skins, which turn out to be that expensive. We exchange seal-skins and bear-skins for tobacco and we drink sake together. They're friendly and cheerful people.

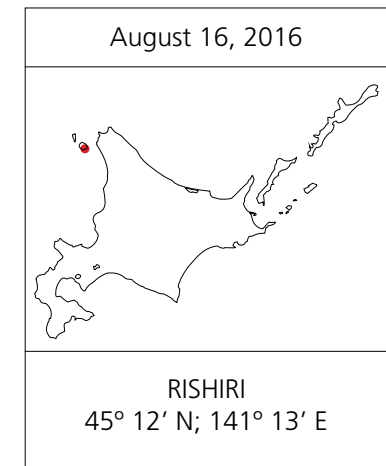
They invite us to come to the islands; to a place that they call *Tamary* or *Pierke Tamary*. Some of them wear big rings in their ears. They tell us that they've heard about gold and silver and that they despise copper. They make also fire by rubbing the little sticks between their hands in a little hole which is filled with melted sulpher.

August 15, 2016

REBUN 45° 18' N; 141° 2' E

We take the ferry to Rebun-to, which together with Rishiri-to is part of the *Rishiri-Rebun-Sarobetsu National Park*. It's shaped like a crab's claw and famous for its alpine flowers found at sea level due to the harsh climate. We walk the Momowai Trail, enjoying the flowers, steep gorges, breathtaking views and an outlook at the part of Russia that was formerly named Tartaria. The walk ends with a breathtaking neighbors perspective on Rishiri-yama. From the opposite side of the sea that is. Before we *sail back home* to our Rishiri-based tent we enjoy a delicious lunch at a grill-restaurant in the harbor.



When the mist clears up we find ourselves in the *Tartarysche zee* (Sea of Tartaria). We thank God Almighty for saving us in such a remarkable way.



We cycle the other half — West Area — of Rishiri-to and visit the *Graves of the Aizu Clan* just outside Kutsugata. In the early 1800s, when Japan was still hermetically closed to most outside contacts, a Russian ship entered Japan asking to open trade relations for Russia. The Russians attacked settlements in Hokkaido when their request was denied. The Aizu clan was then sent to the island to guard its border. Eventually they weren't involved in any violent conflicts, but some of them lost their lives because of the poor living conditions in Rishiri. The graves were built in honour of their their souls.

Today, being the day after Obon, the flowers on the grave yard tell us that the people of Rishiri still commemorate and express their respect for the hardships that their former guardian angels endured.

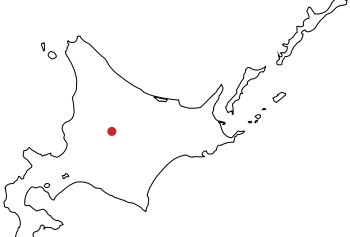
We take a break to rest at the *Kita-no-isukushima Benten Shrine*. *Benten*, the goddess of the sea, is the only female goddess out of the *Seven Lucky Gods* of Japan. Legend says Benten saved a wreck out of the stormy sea and the shrine was built out of thankfulness.



June 20, 1643

KAAP DE VRIES 46° 6' N; 168° 7' E

We all go ashore but do not find a trace of any human beings. Then we see two red foxes walking. It seems to be spring because the alders look very charming, the flowers start to open up and the lark sings most charmingly.

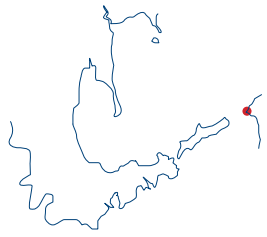
August 17, 2016

ASAHIKAWA 43° 46' N; 142° 21' E

Everyday we fall asleep and wake up again with the shrill sound of cicada's and squabbling crows. It makes us think of a scene in chapter 26, Book I, of our Dutch translation of Murasaki Shikibu's *The Tale of Genji* in which a nice cool breeze is blowing ... "but by the time that the sun descended from the cloudless sky the screaming sound of cicada's was almost unbearable".

Standing on the aft deck of the ferry we say goodbye to "the end of the world" and watch how the two islands — Rishiri and Rebun — slowly disappear from side. Hannie makes a farewell drawing.

On arrival at Asahikawa we're welcomed by a typhoon.

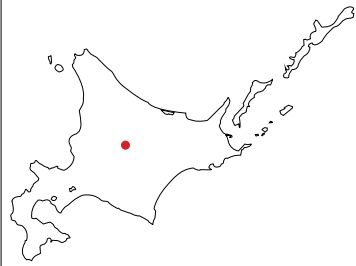
June 23, 1643



COMPANYSLANT
46° 6' N; 168° 7' E

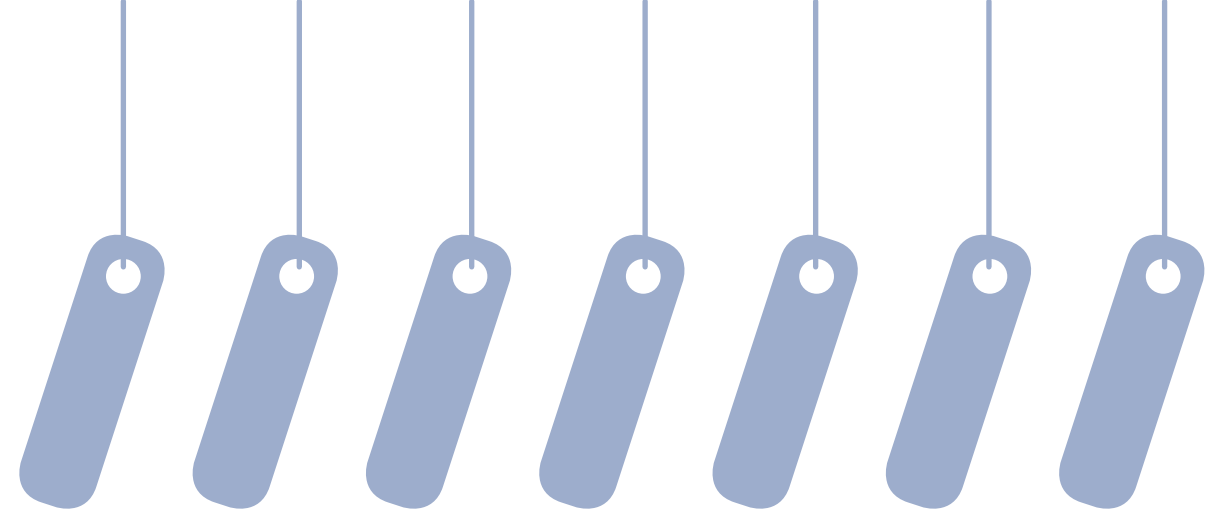
We discover a mine on land and take possession of the land. We name it *Companyslant*. Then we climb the mountain and place a wooden cross on top of it; *anno 1643*. We eat and drink, and we fire three salvo's.

August 18, 2016



DAISETSUZAN
43° 40' N; 142° 54' E

We climb, by cable lift, to the upper floor of the *Daisetsuzan National Park*, in order to enter the former "playground of the gods". Long time ago when this wonderful landscape still was maintained by Ainu people, the indigenous inhabitants of Hokkaido, snowflakes were regarded as "messages from heaven". The Ainu have long ago been driven out here and they're on the verge of extinction, but the bears that they worshipped are still around; at least a few. We witness the birth of sulphur smelling clouds, emerging from the volcano's venting channels. Someone who isn't a shintoist yet, will definitely become one here. I buy myself a bear bell. A *suzu kuma*.





July 4, 1643
LAKOY 44° 31' N; 164° 31' E

August 19, 2016
SOUNKYO 43° 43' N; 142° 57' E

We shake hands and embrace each other, in order to express as much friendship as possible. One of their men brings a *riet mat* (a bulrush rug) and lays it on the beach. Then he invites me to sit on it. Other people join us: four men, 2 women and two maids with little girls. We follow them, up hill, to a green field where we dance together.

We eat and drink and they give me halibut and seal-skin. One of them says: *LAKOY*. Their houses are small and covered with grass. The walls are made of big tree-trunks, tied together with strings made of animal skin. There's a blue stone placed in the middle of the house with two shutters above it, for the smoke to go out. There are wooden spits with halibut and salmon hanging above the fire.

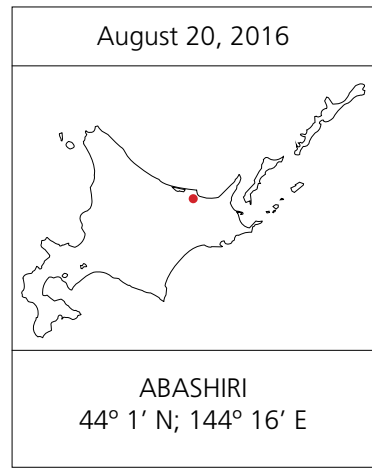
I don't see any other food except for some big fat stems of leaves and other crop, that they offer me. Delicious! The only animals I see are dogs; a group of fat and shabby dogs. The people here look like the ones we saw at *Tamary*, *Tacaptie* and *Goutsiaer*; places that they say they know about.

We contemplate the dialectic of the finite and the infinite in the presence of the Ginga and Ryusei waterfalls, the Sounkyo gorge, the rocks and mosses of Daisetsuzan *and* the drifting clouds and their shadows, that are casted on the mountain slopes ... over and over and over again, and again. And once more, after a strenuous climb, when we find ourselves standing face to face with the Nomijidaki waterfall.



We give him a little flag of the Prince which he immediately places on top of his roof, where it starts to blow in the wind.

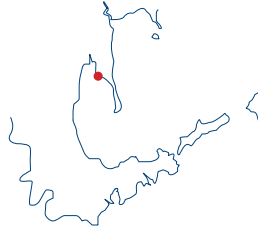
We show them a wooden cross, which they immediately throw in the water. The ones who touched it wash their hands and seem to be relieved that they've thrown it away.



We travel to Abashiri, reading *The tale of Genji* on the way. On behaviours & tempers, inner- & out-er appearances, relations & rituals and the poetry of it. On fans & robes, wet sleeves & perfumes, codes of conduct before and behind the sliding doors and curtains; both at the court and in mountain shelters. On monks & nuns, guards & couriers, and the sons & daughters of. On the seven- & thirteen-stringed koto and the biwa; and the "incessantly singing of crickets" (Book I, page 409 in our Dutch translation). In the very next sentence a lay-monk "after having executed his diligences, firmly blows his nose". And last but not least we read Genji's statement that "in art there's no place for shyness".

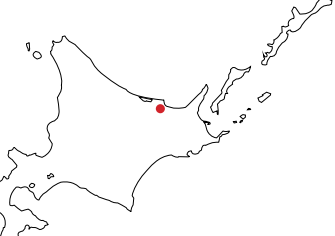




July 18, 1643

TAMARY 46° 40' N; 160° 0' E

Our trumpet player plays the *Wilhelmus from Nassouwe* (the Dutch national anthem). They seem to like it very much. Then they start to look into the instrument's horn, because they haven't the slightest idea where the sound is coming from. The river of Tamaru leads to the sea. Its estuary (the river's mouth) is dry and has a low water level. There's only a small ditch through which some water flows to the river.

They bring a small living bear on board and a small piece of mineral which they say is silver, coming from the mountain.

August 21, 2016

ABASHIRI 44° 1' N; 144° 16' E

We visit the *Hokkaido Museum of Northern Peoples*. If one leaves aside the question *why* the very first emigrants left for such barren and inhospitable northern places like Rishiri, Sakhalin and the Kuril Islands and even further on — was it out of unlimited curiosity, social-political insecurity or sheer fortune-hunting? — just think for a while to the *how* of their pioneering, marvelous creativity, wisdom and fighting spirit. *"As human made their way to the north, they needed to invent new methods and techniques for their foods, clothing, shelter and many other fields. It can be said that the remarkable creativity of the present human has developed from their venture into the unknown world of the north, which took place in the later stage of the human history."*

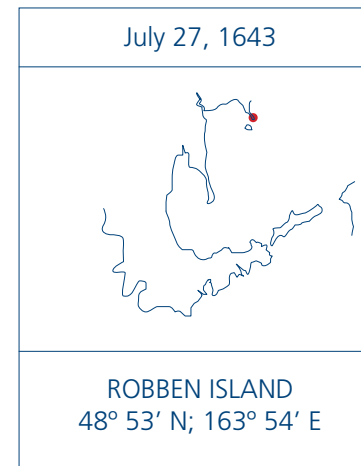
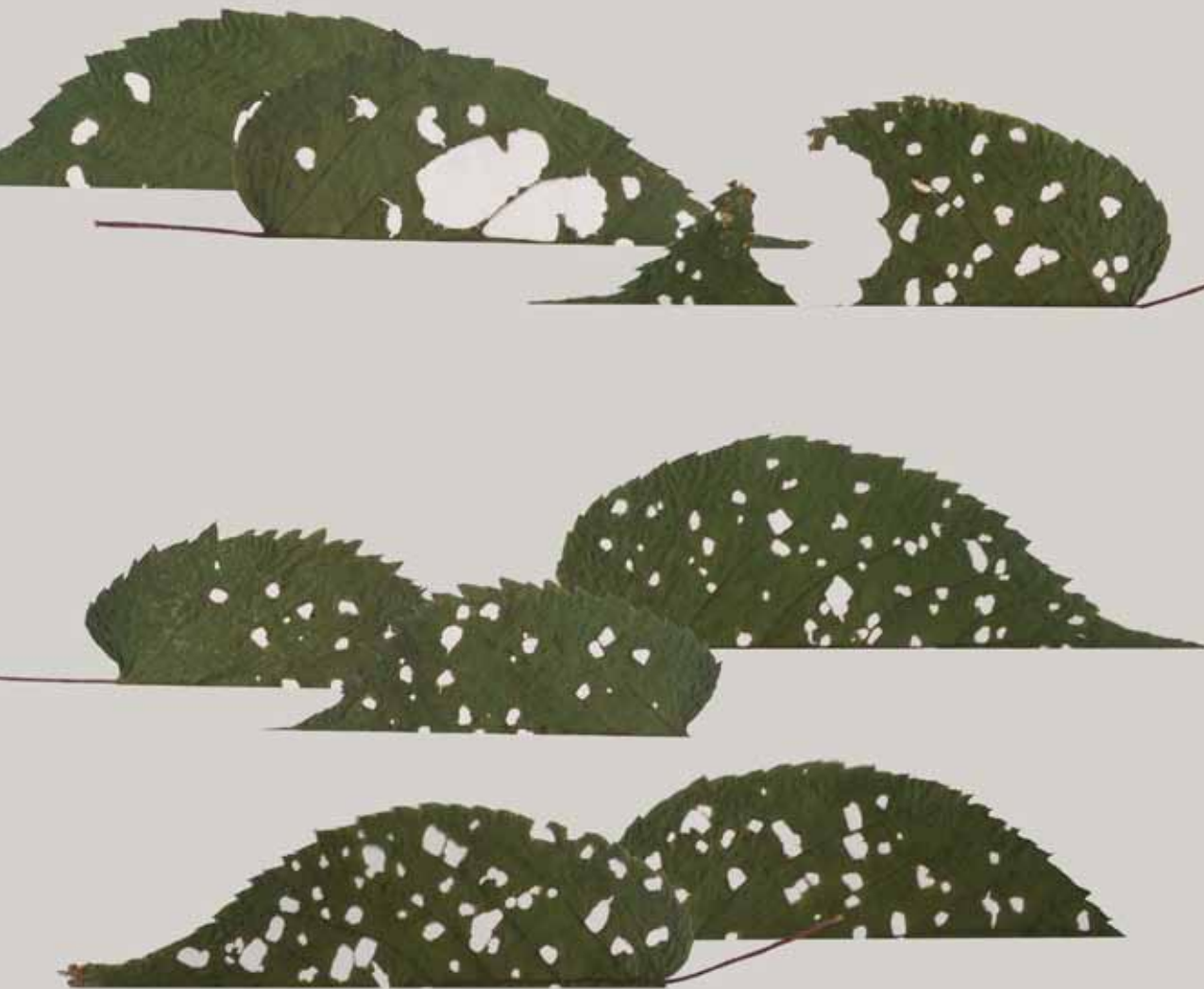


July 27, 1643
ROBBEN ISLAND 48° 53' N; 163° 54' E

We name the island *Robben Island*. We notice a large pond of snow and start to throw snowballs at each other. We also run into a flat level field without trees, with ten most peculiar graves made of pinewood. They're placed on four struts, about one foot above the ground. They contain the bodies of dead people and plates and bowls and rice and other gadgets. The coffin is closed with a cover shaped as the roof of a house. On both ends they made sculptures of the head of a lion or a dragon. Next to the coffin are lying wooden sticks with wood shavings attached to the tips.

August 22, 2016
SHIRETOKO 44° 19' N; 145° 20' E

We realise all too well that one end of the world — for instance the one of De Vries and Coen and their crew — is certainly not the other. For the Ainu people at Yezo — nowadays Hokkaido — Shiretoko was theirs. In 2005 the peninsula that stretches from Shari into the Sea of Okhotsk — do islands also have peninsula's? — was declared by UNESCO a *World Natural Heritage*. Largely because of the efforts of some thousands inhabitants of the region who jointly, under the banner of the *100m2 movement*, restored and revitalized the area. Most striking are Shiretoko's ten volcano's — including *loyama* which was active the last time only 3700 years ago — and a group of five most beautiful lakes, called the Shiretoko Goko. We enjoy the greenness of the landscape, the blueness of the sky above and the calligraphy of the white clouds.



We're meeting people who are wearing silk coats made of flower-patterned silk, lined with Chinese cangangs containing silk wool in between. The two other men must either be guards or servants. The holder of their knives and swords are silver-tessellated and look very distinguished. I offer them arak to drink and a big blue bead which they accept with gratitude.

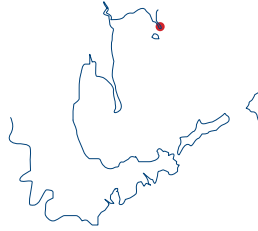
Then we go dancing hand in hand, nearby the prau. There is also a beautiful white woman with long black hair, who's wearing a ribbon around her head made of beaver skin. She has a girl and a boy with her. A little bit further away from the prau, sitting in the Japanese way, on a mat, there's an old white man with a long grey beard.

We don't get any further than the *Shiretoko Natural Center* today, because the road to the Ainu's "end of the world" is closed, due to the typhoons and the resulting floods. After watching a wild fox shitting in front of the center's entrance we walk a short trail to the Furepe waterfall. Upon our return at the center the little fox shows up again but obviously it isn't interested in our presence; not at all. Probably because it knows all too well about the ban on feeding wild animals here.

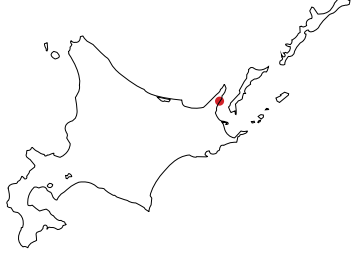
We walk down the mountain, passing Cape Puyuni — Ainu language for "a place with a hole" — and then we treat ourselves with a visit to the onsen of the Shiretoko Grand Hotel *Kita Kobushi* which has a rooftop *rotemburo* (outdoor bath) providing a view on the harbor and the *Sea of Okhotsk*.

At *Don's Home*, our dormitory in Oturo, we meet at the common room table with Eva, an exchange student from Germany and a Japanese retiree. We talk about bears, climbing the one-hundred most outstanding mountains of Japan and the changing relationship with its neighbouring countries; China, Russia and North Korea.



July 27, 1643

ROBBEN ISLAND 48° 53' N; 163° 54' E

On our way back to the sea, we see some little houses. Maybe that's where the poor people live. There's a big square stall holding a big black bear. In every corner stands a long spar-wooden stick with a lot of wood shavings attached to its tip. I suppose as a sign of triumph for the capture of the bear or as an act of idolatry.

August 24, 2016

LAKE RAUSU 44° 19' N; 145° 15' E

We enjoy ultra-fresh salmon for breakfast, which has only been caught less than an hour ago. Then we dredge our way to Lake Rausu, wondering which one of the two of us is the most regrettable. Hannie on her made-in-China-bought-in-New-York-crocs or Jan on his leather Meindle boots with loose soles. A local tour guide who we bump into along the road, gives us some unmistakable reproachful looks but doesn't say a word about our neglecting of the rules. *(1) The obligation off wearing rubber boots and (2) only walking the middle of the path, also when the water is high!*

The various views and vistas along the trail and the overwhelming encounter of Lake Rausu itself *and* its untouched surrounding fields and mountains make all our deprivations and self-reproaches melt like frost under the morning sun; or should we say: mud under the water tap?

We thank the friendly Landlord of Don's Home and his just as sympathetic as intriguing lady, for their kind hospitality and delicious home made food. Hannie gets a compliment for the way she handles the chopsticks and the rice bowl. Then, last of all, Lady Don acknowledges the fact that we're the very first *Oranda-jin* (Dutch persons) that she's ever met in her entire life.



August 7, 1643
TEPELBERG 44° 43' N; 165° 0' E

What Coen, in his journal, calls the *Tepelberg*, is named Maria berg on the map of De Vries.

August 25, 2016
TOMAKOMAI 42° 38' N; 141° 36' E

We're sitting a whole day in the bus, traveling from Shari to Tomakomai, due to the fact that unfortunately the southern railway line — via Kushiro — is temporarily shut down because of the typhoons and floods of last week.

In *The Tale of Genji* we read about "loosing one's unfathomability", about "insight into the instability of our earthly existence" and *once again* about "the singing of crickets". The *Bell-Ring Cricket* and the *Spine-Tree Cricket* alike; and that the last one, "despite what its name suggests, leads a short-lasting life". Maybe that's why it's also known as the *Pain Cricket*.

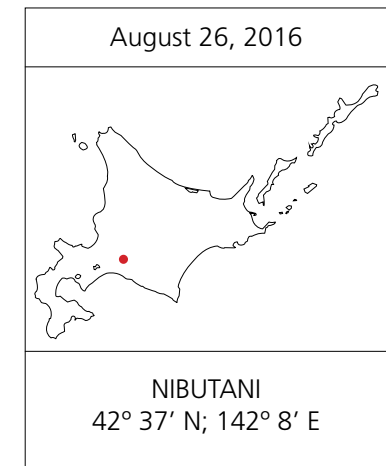
*I already knew for a long time
how annoying the grisly fall
usually is
but I cannot live without
the song of the Bell-Ring Cricket*

(Book II, page 185)

At night we check in at the Grand Hotel *New Oji* in Tomakomai. Gorgeous luxury at last! We "weave dreams" in room 1208.



We see smoke rising from a village and row with our prau to take a look on the land. The residents call their village *Ackys*. We invite them on board of our ship. They bring lots of oysters and little apples with them, which we exchange for rice. Our captain tells us to start praying in order to thank God. The locals listen for a while but when it lasts a bit longer than they seem to be used to, they quietly get up and sail back home.



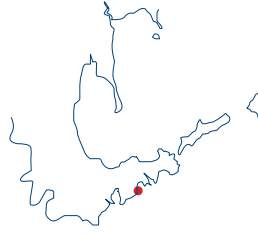
We experience a beautiful example of the Zen Buddhist inspired *ichigo ichi-e* attitude to life. *Ichigo* means “one” or “once” and consequently *ichigo ichi-e* as much as “acting with respect to the one-timeness or instantaneousness of things and experiences”.

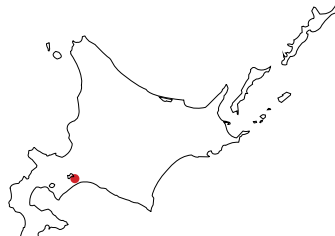
While waiting for a bus for Nibutani, a man approaches us and asks “where we come from?” ... “where we’re going to (and after that?)” ... and “for how long we intend to stay in Japan?” A few minutes later he creates a new instant by bringing us a time schedule of the bus (-ses) to Nibutani, in combination with the remark that we have “too much time” since our bus will not depart before 11.20 am; being two and a half hours from now.

His third momentum comes with the announcement that the Tourist Information Office is about to open *and* a compliment for the beauty of our country; especially it’s tulips and wind mills.

Eighty percent of the five-hundred-strong population of Nibutani are of Aino blood, making it the largest living Aino community of Hokkaido and hence of Japan. The town has various Aino museums, consequently workshops and initiatives. One of Nibutani’s elder statesmen was Kayano Shigeru, an MP from 1994 to 1998; his personal collection of Aino artifacts is on display in the *Kayano Shigeru Aino Memorial Museum*.



August 18, 1643

NOIASACK 43° 19' N; 163° 0' E

August 27, 2016

MONBETSU-YAMA 42° 45' N; 141° 19' E

The chieftain of the village is called *Noiasack*. He promises us to point out the place where the silver is buried, in exchange for a Japanese silk robe.

Also another old man with a rough beard shows up and says wants to lead us to the mine.

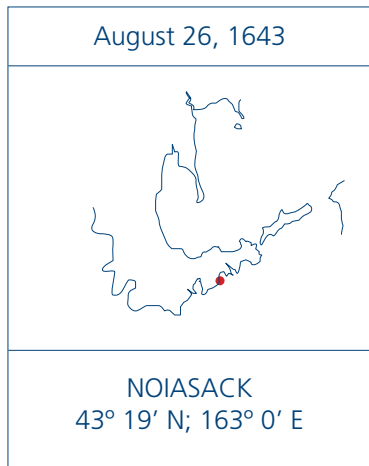
Nevertheless we return empty-handed because when it comes to actually going into the land the chieftain breaks his promise and the other man reports himself ill.

We didn't see any people in the land but all the more dogs.

The next day the chieftain says that he wants to give us the robe back but we let him keep it.

We go to Shikotsu in order to climb the Monbetsu-yama, one of the mountains flanking Lake Shikotsu. Even on this early Saturday morning we are by far not the first hikers on the mountain. On top of it we have a wonderful panorama, including lovely views of the volcano at the opposite side of the lake — which we unfortunately couldn't take this morning, because of a lack of time — of the lake itself and of the cities of Tomakomai and Sapporo.

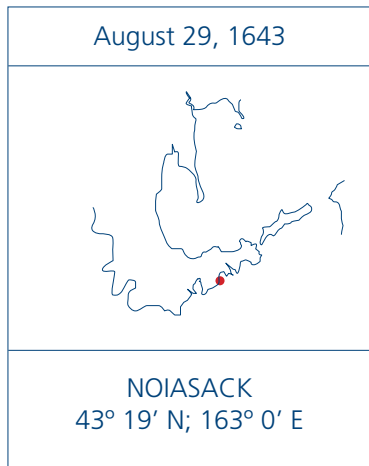
Once we're back down again we take a break, an ice-cream and a rest at the lake. Later that same day we explore Tomakomai's nightlife in the lively entertainment district which has a real saturday night vibe. We end up at an *izakaya*. Suddenly one of the female visitors gives me a seductive smile. Or is it my Genji-inspired phantasy which makes me think that? She asks us where we come from and when I tell her we're from Holland she raises her voice to make sure that everyone in the restaurant gets to know it. Using the language translator of her smart-phone she asks us *whether we managed to order food* and when we tell her we actually did she enthusiastically gives us a high five. And, somewhat later, a few more when she leaves the restaurant.



A man coming from a place called *Matsimay* — somewhere on Eso near *Kaap Eroen* — comes on board of our ship. He wants to trade cod-liver oil and blubber. He speaks both Eso language and Japanese. He tells us that there's a lot of gold to find in *Tacapy* and *Ciraroa* and gives our commander little pieces of mountain-gold from all the different locations. He also tells us that *Eso* is actually an island, and that the court of the *Maismadonnu* is located in *Matsimay*, which has a beautiful harbour called *Camenda*. He also mentions that every year the *Maismadonnu* travel to the emperor to honor him with gifts; such as animal skins. From *Nabe* — which is close to *Caap Goeree* — they travel over water to the south and then onwards over land to Edo. He confirms that *Coutsiaer* has minerals, that *Ciraroa* has silver and gold and that *Tacapsy* has gold. He also mentions two other places, called *Erbis* and *Pervobis*.

We take a train to Sapporo and settle ourselves in the Tenjinyama Art Studio, run by director Mami Odai and her most sympathetic staff. The AIR is beautifully located in a park close to the Sumikawa Metrostation, next to a graveyard and a shinto shrine with a phenomenal guardian tree next to it. "Autumn is coming" Akiko says when she shows us around in the art center. If we would't have noticed that already, by the changing colours of the leaves, we would have done so right now because she warns us there's a typhoon coming up. Again?!



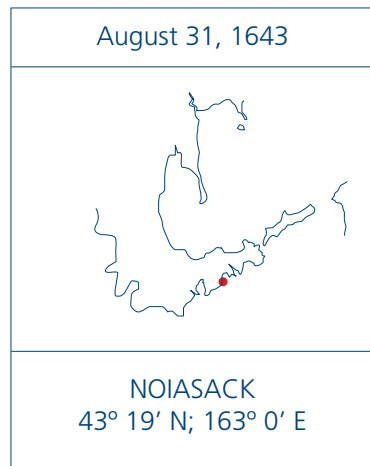


We visit *Noiasak* in his house, where we find him sitting in a bad temper. I grabbed him by his hand and gave him a reprimand. I tell him that we should be cheerful and that I've come ashore to see him happy; to see hem smiling and not being sour. Then he starts to smile at me and asks me to sit next to him. I notice his pick-axe and truncheon laying right behind him and I replace them to the opposite corner of the house. I tell hem that they're no good and that we need to smoke tobacco together and drink arak. Which is what we then start to do.



We start to create the report of our journey, based on the notes and photo's and materials that we gathered on the way. In between we explore Sapporo and we finish reading De Vries' and Coen's journal, and Murasaki Shiibu's *Genji Monogatari* (The Tale of Genji).





The women have their head shaven in the shape of a wreath. They seem to be highly honourable. They cover their breasts very tight when they suckle their babies. When a woman is in her confinement bed, she is laid on her own in a little house, separated from her husband for a long time, until the due time has passed.

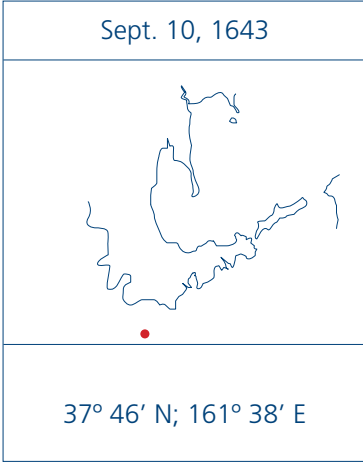
At Tenjinyama we meet the London based Japanese artist Eiko Soga who has just returned from a six weeks artistic research residency at the Ainu community of Nibutani. One of the reasons that she wanted to stay there is because it's considered to be one of the very last Ainu communities at Hokkaido. Its inhabitants are trying hard to live in accordance with the tradition and history of their culture; its language, skills, craftsmanship, culture of cookery etcetera. It's one of the reasons why Nibutani is almost constantly monitored by scientists, documentary-makers and alike.

Eiko wanted to learn how to create clothings of salmon skin.

At Tenjinyama she works on the report of her research, and while talking to her we discover a lot similarities between Seiko's experiences and those of De Vries in 1643; such as the hospitality of the Ainu and specific aspects of their mentality.

At the final day of her stay she gives a sensory and precious talk and shows a prototype of her salmon-made-shoes.





Due to the wind we head for the east in order to look for the Gold- and Silver-rich islands; for this purpose we kindly ask the good and merciful God to give us his blessing. Amen. In the afternoon and at night the sky is variable and deep silence reigns.



We visit the *Hokkaido University* and its *Center for Ainu & Indigenous Studies* where a kind and friendly lady at the offices gives us an email address to contact the researchers, none of whom happens to be *at the office* today. In a brochure of the university we read, surprisingly, that associate professor Hideki Minoshima believes it highly likely that the *sable coat* from chapter six of *The Tale of Genji* was produced by Ainu people in Sakhalin.

"In a scene from Murasaki Shikibu's epic novel *The Tale of Genji*, Prince Genji (Hiraku Genji) sees a presumably unattractive character called Suetsumahana wearing a sable coat, and finds her choice of clothing unappealing. He tells her that although the coat is wonderful, it might not suit such a young woman. Minoshima states that Ainu people in those days extended the scope of their activities to Sakhalin, and that Heian-period nobles would not have had such elegant lifestyles without materials from the northern region. He maintains that despite Ainu people's image of peace, simplicity and harmonious coexistence with nature, they in fact ventured to visit mainland Japan and continental Asia in order to trade commodities. Minoshima presents this as evidence that the northern world has been globalized since ancient times."

At night the hems of the typhoon are passing by; stormy winds and heavy showers coming down on us from above.

Hannie van den Bergh is an award-winning documentary maker and designer. She uses film, performance, graphic design, social design and community art as a tool for social transformation, future scenarios and interdisciplinary research.

She traveled to Japan in 2004, as a participant of AIR Rice+ Tokyo, to do research on mapping and to develop new maps.

In 2011 she was invited to take part in the Machiya AIR project, organized by the KCCC (Kyoto) to do research on the future of these wooden houses and its inhabitants/dwellers.

Since 2013 she is curator of the Deshima AIR program Amsterdam, hosting Japanese artists to maintain and strengthen the special cultural relationship between the Netherlands and Japan.

In 2000 she founded Studio HB, a multidisciplinary design studio for public, private and social sectors. They work with leading scientists, creatives, writers and engineers. Clients and Partners: European Commission, CERN, Dutch Embassy, City of Amsterdam, Unicef Uganda, Sanoma.

www.studio-hb.nl

Jan van den Berg is best described as an explorer extraordinaire. The expeditions he ventures upon do not so much take him to uncharted spots on the map of the world but to the limits of the naked eye and the naked intellect. He has a penchant for visiting people and (scientific) projects that demand the most of his imaginative capabilities. And provide him with well-informed stories which, when he tells them, soon have the spectator wondering whether this is still science or already fiction – or the other way round. The more so because he tells them with the conviction of someone who has already experienced the whole thing himself. Which, by the way, happens to be true – he says.

In plain terms: Jan van den Berg is a documentary theatre- and filmmaker in the borderland of performing arts and science. He created a large variety of theatre shows about scientific topics, in collaboration with prestigious institutes and scientists such as e.a. CERN and Nobel Laureate professor Peter Higgs. In 2004 Van den Berg visited the SuperKamiokande neutrino detector in Mozumiyama (Hida, Japan) and created a theatreshow about it. In 2011 he performed in Kyoto, during the final presentation of Hannie van den Bergh's Machiya AIR project.

www.janvandenber.org

About the journal

In 1643 the Dutch cartographer and explorer captain Maarten Gerritsz. Vries led the expedition on the VOC-vessel *Castricum*, to find out about the gold- and silver islands east of Japan. Cornelis Jansz. Coen, first mate on the VOC-vessel wrote a travelogue about their experiences during this trip to Hokkaido, Sakhalin and Kuril. In 1842 P.H. Von Siebold finally found these diaries and published the travelogue in 1858, with support of 'Het Koninklijk Insituut voor Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde van Nederlands Indië'.

CREDITS

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The quotes of Cornelis Jansz. Coen's journal are taken from *Reize van Maarten Gerritsz. Vries in 1643 naar Japan*, Amsterdam 1858.

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To the end of the world

A TRAVELOGUE

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Hokkaido Japan

Jan van den Berg
Hannie van den Bergh

Irankarapte

Irankarapte is the Ainu word for hello and it expresses the warm, sincere message 'Allow me to softly touch your heart'.