

# Hana's Story

The Hana's story, set in the Meiji period (1868-1912), which is inspired by lyrics and original music of the Japanese people, represents the story of a woman in search of happiness that will summarize in the deepest sense of gratitude when bravely, will decide to follow own instinct. The escape from the conventionally marriage, the meeting with the Sword Master, the unexpected love encounter that will make her a wife and mother and the appointment with the people of the Ainu, these are the stages that mark the adventurous journey of Hana that begins in a small village of simple and industrious fishermen, located in the archipelago of the Ryukiu islands (south of Japan), to finish on the Sakhalin island, the birthplace of the oldest ethnic Japanese population located beyond the Hokkaido island. A journey that represents a metaphor on the deeper meaning of our life, seen with the eyes of a woman which, crossing the full extent of her country and the seasons of own life, will make a journey of self-knowledge. Hana (flower) blooms and grows and, as does the plant of Tinsagu once it is fully ripe, flings faraway the seeds of his knowledge through his travel diary and, with gratefully heart, she retreat from the world.

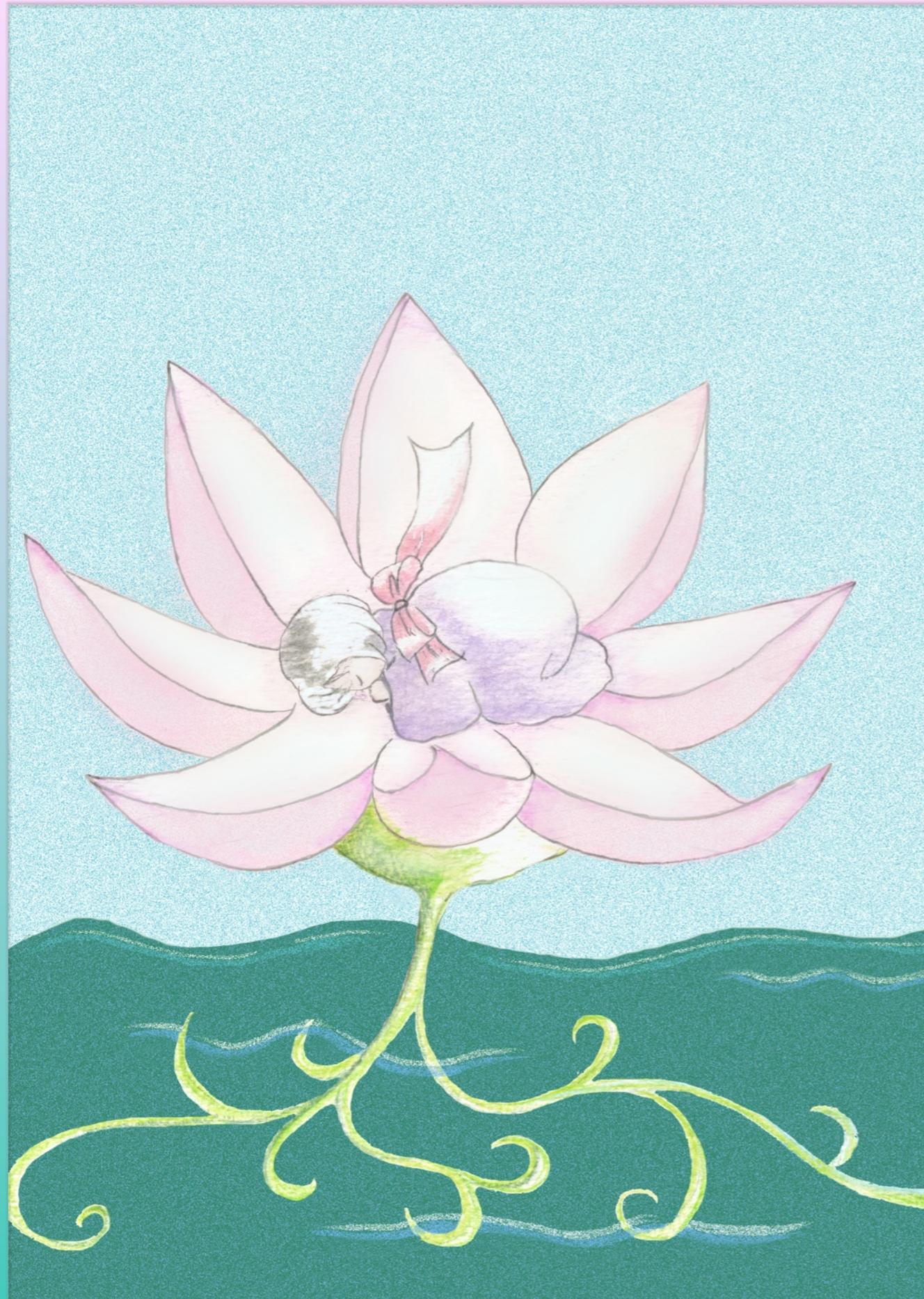




## 1. **Hiraita Hiraita**

*Bloomed, bloomed! What flower bloomed? The lotus flower bloomed. It bloomed just now but has already closed...*

In 1869, in the beginning of the Meiji period, in one of the islands of the Ryukyu Kingdom (known as Okinawa now), there lived a community of fishermen. While men went fishing in the sea, women were engaged in housework. The eldest woman in the village who was particularly familiar with herbs used to gather herbs to make medicine or ointment. People in the village all respected her since any fever or swelling was immediately cured by her magical medicine. She had one daughter who was loved and admired by everyone in the village. The girl married in her youth and gave birth to a baby so lovely as a flower in early spring. She was named 'Hana' after her grandmother and became a little flower for the people in the village.





## 2. Tanchame

*Young men go fishing to the sea and young women go to the market to sell fish. After staying there for a while, women come back with the nice fragrance of the town.*

Hana grew up rapidly to be a fine, wise and courageous child. At the age of five, she was taken to the field by her grandmother to gather and recognize various medical herbs and flowers. From time to time, she followed her parents to the beach and spent a day watching village people working there. When the men came back to the shore, the women cleaned the fish, put salt on them, and carried them in the basket to the market of the island. There were sometimes visitors to the island from other places, who bought food and took a rest in the village. They would often get attracted by the scent and the beauty of the women in the village. Hana was a special flower in those flowers. She was a splendid honor of her modest family.





### 3. **Tinsagu nu Hana**

*I can count the number of stars in the sky, but I cannot count all the advice given by my parents...*

At the age of seven, Hana started to recognize most of the herbs and flowers thanks to her grandmother. Her most favorite in the island was balsams. While her grandmother gathered them to make medicine, Hana gathered them to color her nails pink or red with their pretty petals to enjoy with her friends. Sometimes, they played a love story imitating adults at sunset before their parents came back home. Before going to bed, her grandmother would wash Hana's body and nails whispering, "Hana, one day you will go to the places such as festivals coloring your nails like this. Then, color your heart with your parents' words as you color your nails with balsams."



#### 4. Asadoya Yunta

*You are pure like a white lily. You are just like a flower in the bries and brambles.*

One day, a merchant from Kumamoto, one of the richest towns in south Japan, came to visit Hana's grandmother to buy in shell ginger, known as medical herbs for longevity. There, he saw Hana, who grew up to be an attractive and respectful girl, and could not help wishing her to be the bride of his second son who did nothing but just played around. Hana's parents, who wished for her wealthy life accepted the offer. They fixed the wedding date without telling Hana anything. In those days, it was customary that parents decided their children's weddings. However, for Hana who was so curious, the idea of the life in the faraway country was so exciting that her heart pulsed with joy. She also dreamed of getting dressed in lovely kimono and going to a festival.





## 5. Otemoyan

*I got married, but my bridegroom was so ugly that I tore up my marriage!*

Hana arrived in Kumamoto a few hours before the wedding ceremony in the morning. Her heart thrilled at the meeting with her bridegroom. The first view in her sight was fine buildings and nice kimono of people in the street. They were totally different from those of the little village where Hana had grown up. The rumor of their wedding had seemed already spread over the town and there were many groups of rubbernecks everywhere on the street. Especially, young girls seemed repressing their derision with their hands covering the mouths. As soon as Hana arrived at the merchant's house and saw the face of her bridegroom, she understood the mystery of their derision. In fact, he was far from what she had been dreaming of. After he gave a cold glance at Hana just once, he would neither talk to her nor see her. While Hana felt a strong sense of discomposure, the ceremony had already started. Just before she put her lips on the rim of lacquer cup of sake to vow their matrimony, she got urged by her impulse to run away from there immediately. She recklessly ran away from her wedding and escaped in the crowd of pilgrims to the north. Thus, she bade Kumamoto an eternal farewell.





## 6. Tanko Bushi

*Rather than sleeping with a prayer book, I want to sleep in your arms in my humble shanty illuminated by moonlight.*

The destination of the pilgrims was Hakata, a big port town in Fukuoka. However, since Hana did not feel like going to such a big town, she parted with the pilgrims and rambled about for a long time. When she stopped walking on the hill with exhaustion, she found a certain group of people. They kept carrying stones dug out of the rock holes over and over. Some were single, some were married, and some were families, but they were all united in the hard work, singing songs to encourage each other. Hana wanted to take part in those miners, then, she decided to ask them for permission to work together and they willingly accepted it. Working together, Hana learned their songs and cured their injuries and sickness with her knowledge of medical herbs. Even though she slept in a poor shanty, she often had a nostalgic dream of her childhood. She was still dreaming of tender love as she had been in her faraway village.





## 7. Takeda no Komoriuta

*How much I miss my hometown... I can see my parent's house far beyond the horizon.*

One day, she heard a story of one magnificent city which was full of beautiful temples and noble swordsmen. Hana's curiosity drove her to travel to the north to fulfill her story of love. After packing her things and saying farewell to the miners, she started for a very long journey by herself. She crossed four big regions and it was the dusk of one spring day when Hana arrived in Kyoto. To get a living in the big city, she decided to become a babysitter of one sickly baby who cried a lot. When summer was around the corner, various festivals were held and the streets became full of dancing people. However, Hana, who had neither suitable kimono nor friends, did nothing but gaze at the busy streets. In such hours, she remembered her faraway family or childhood over the horizon. Dreams or hopes were gradually disappearing. Instead, depression or nostalgia started to occupy her heart. She began to regret having escaped from the wedding without saying goodbye to her family. That must have surely hurt them. She felt bitter sadness and strong guilt over what she had done. In the summer of 1891, Hana felt fear for the first time in her life. She felt alone: alone in the briars.





## 8. Kokiriko Bushi

*A monk sings 'Kokiriko' under the moonlight. His voice fills the silence of the bamboo forest.*

There was an elderly man who often visited the house where Hana was working. He was a descendant of the samurai pedigree of Toyama and now working as a swordplay instructor at the outskirts of the town. One day, he noticed the sad expression on Hana's face and decided to hire her nominally as a domestic helper in his training hall. Hana, who unconsciously started to entrust him with her heart, had gradually been led to the world of *iaido*. *Iaido* is a kind of swordplay whose extreme aim is to open the closed door of the player's heart to find out the truth. In fact, *iaido* had been used for such a long time as a method to make one's spirit clean and strong. The man eagerly taught Hana *iaido* and she followed it, and one day, she finally felt the strength springing up inside her just like waking up after winter's long sleep. She was ready to face the future. She wrote a cordial letter of apology and gratitude toward her parents and sent it to them. The man realized it was the moment for Hana to restart her journey, and to encourage her. He told her about the tribe in the north who kept the secret of 'real happiness'. He said, "Now, focus on every little thing you should face. Believe in your own strength. Then, everything you deserve will come to you." After bidding him a profound farewell, Hana set out on a journey at the age of 24.



## 9. Hanagasa Ondo

*Come to my country to see flowers of Yamagata, the red autumn leaves of Tendou and the snowscape of Obanazawa.*

After a long, long journey, Hana arrived in Yamagata. Its scenery was strikingly vivid as if it had been welcoming her arrival. Winter in Yamagata was extremely harsh and every mountain was covered with snow, instead, spring and fall were incomparably beautiful. Brilliant colors of cherry blossoms or autumn leaves gently told people the changing of the seasons. Making a living by growing vegetables, collecting medical herbs or baby-sitting, Hana kept burning her strong desire to go to the north. In this region, people had a custom to celebrate the flower bloom or crops in every season. Hana's favorite was 'hanagasa matsuri' in which people got dressed in their newly-sewn pretty kimono and danced with a straw hat decorated with flowers. For Hana, who was almost 33 years old, either a romantic love or her home-islands in the far south was already something absolutely distant. However, as her mentor told her, she tried finding every little pleasure in her daily life and kept sending a long letter to her family. Nevertheless, she could not help thinking about the northern tribe keeping a secret of 'real happiness'.





## 10. Hokkai Bon Uta

*My handsome man in kimono... I found you among the people dancing in the festival of August. When are you going to ask me to dance together?*

In the early summer of 1905, Hana finally reached Sapporo, in the south of Hokkaido that elderly people still called Ezo, the land of uncivilized people. Since the Meiji Government had been encouraging people to reside in Hokkaido, pioneers had been spreading to the north. Finding a modest house and a job, Hana started saving money for the last stage of the journey. After a while, she started taking part of local customs of this region. There, people held the festival called 'hokkai Bon Odori' dedicated for their ancestors every summer. At night, people danced in a circle around the wood tower on which people gave a powerful performance of singing or 'taiko', Japanese traditional drums. One summer night, Hana met the eye of a young man. His kimono was very simple but elegant. Hana was attracted by him and they had a long conversation in which they got to know lots of things about each other; he was younger than Hana, he was a fisherman and she was a daughter of the fisherman, etc. Hana was aware that probably she would interrupt her journey for a while for this meeting. After having a humble wedding, they decided to set out together on a journey to the north.





## 11. Soran Bushi

*Let's sleep until tonight with my damask pillow. Tomorrow  
I'm going to start my journey again and the ocean waves  
will be my pillow...*

At the end of the year, Hana and her husband decided to stay in the north occidental coast with other pioneers to make up a fishermen village which was like the one she had left 35 years ago. In the autumn of the successive year, they got a daughter, and in the winter of several years later, they got another daughter. Bringing up two daughters, Hana started to get down to collecting medical herbs. People in the village all received benefit of her since any fever or swelling was immediately cured by her medicine. She came to be respected by the village people and her family could survive with dignity even in a harsh environment. Years had passed so quickly and her daughters became wives and mothers while her husband often stayed out of the house for fishing in the northern sea as a captain of the ship. One evening, when Hana was sitting on the beach as usual seeing the sunset gradually disappear under the horizon, the story of the elderly man about the north tribe with a secret of 'real happiness' suddenly occurred to her and captured her heart. Hana had no regret over having her own family and was proud of having devoted all her love to it. However, she was once again driven to make a decision for herself.



## 12. **Tonkorihechiri**

*Here comes God from the east. He stopped next to the six oceans. Smell the scent coming from the shore...*

Promising that she would return soon once she understood what had been awaiting her, she bade a farewell to the village. On her leaving, she swore devotion to her beloved husband, left the last messages to her daughters and said a short and cordial prayer for gratitude toward God. After a long and arduous journey, she finally arrived in Sakhalin island in 1935. It was just the hour of sunrise of one autumn day. The name of the village was derived from 'human beings' in Ainu language. Despite their simple outlook, Hana soon understood Ainus are people with the noblest morality because of their awe of the severe nature. They seemed to have learned the sense of altruism, sincerity, generosity and the respect for every little daily necessity without being taught by anybody. They were dressed in clothes with nice patterns on blue, red or white cloths dyed by themselves. While women colored their lips to the both sides of cheeks, men kept their hair and beard long and their bodies were all hairy. They accepted Hana as a member of their own tribe. Instead of learning the living skills from them, she offered them knowledge of medical herbs. Since she had left Kumamoto, she had kept a diary about the places and people she had encountered. And this time, finally, she started to write about these people who kept the secret of 'true happiness'.



### 13. **Yaikatekara**

*A splendid man who arrived in my heart.  
I'll catch up with you, then, I will find peace...*

The more days passed, the stronger Hana felt being a member of their tribe. Despite her affection for her husband and village people, she still could not feel like going back to Hokkaido: the secret of 'true happiness' still seemed enigmatic to her. One evening, when she was writing how Ainu lived in harmony with nature in her humble hut made of mud and wood, the words of her dearest grandmother suddenly occurred to her : "Look, Hana, my little flower. In nature, everything has different shapes and colors, however, they are all born from one root." In that moment, Hana understood that the secret of the true happiness lies in possibility of every human being and understood why that old man suggested she should go north. After writing some more in her diary, she lay her very few belongings on the table: a present from her husband, a red pressed flower between pages of her prayer book, a comb, and a little bottle of ointment which contained the scent of her childhood. Hana was aware that her trip was very close to the final stage, all by herself, to go through the door of her own heart. Now was the time. When she arrived on the boundary of the village, she joined her palms to give gratitude, then, left the tribe. It was the far spring day of 1942 when Hana disappeared from everyone.



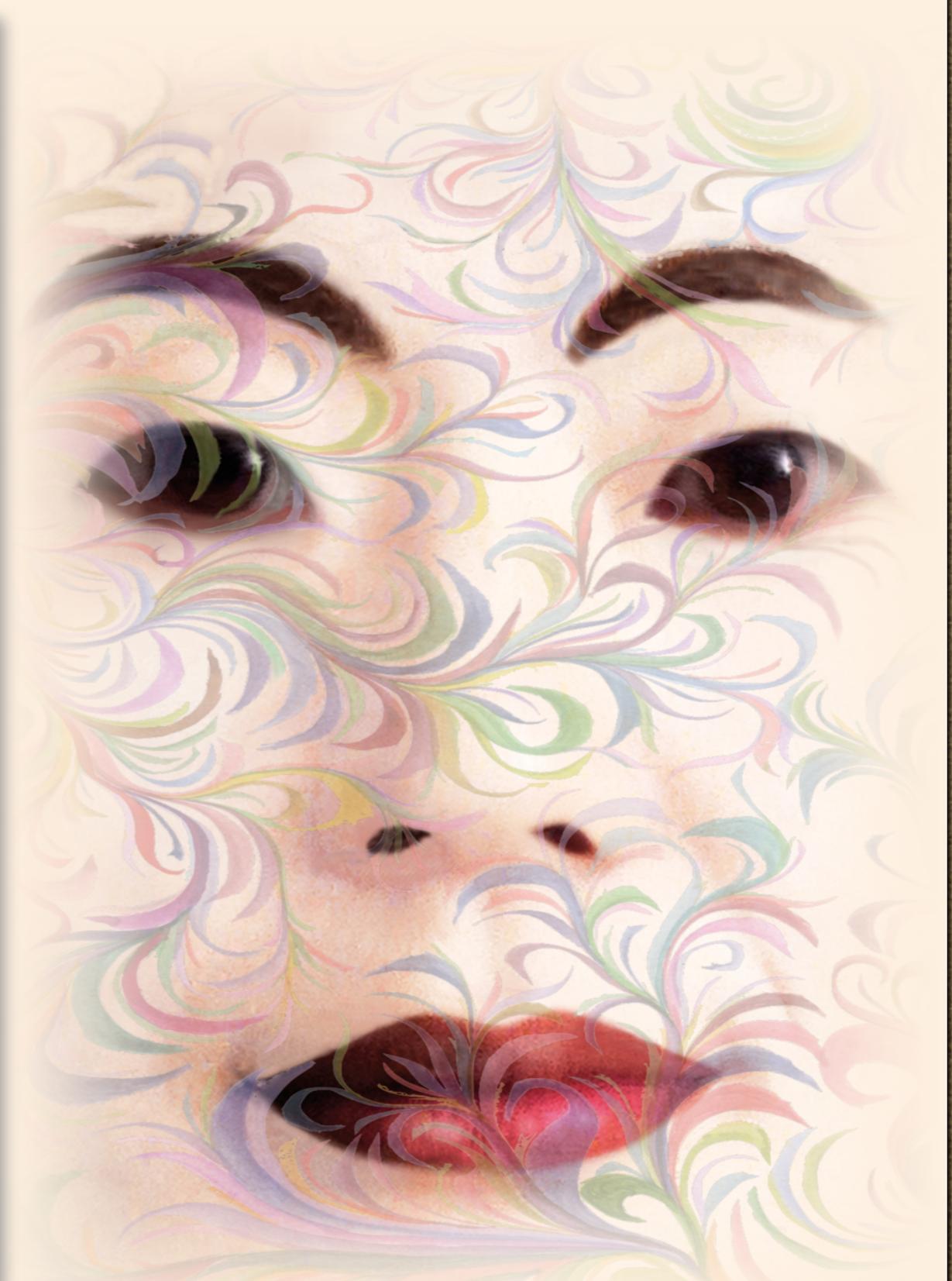
## 14. **Tinsagu nu Hana** (*Reprise*)

*Where there is a will, there is a way. However, if you don't try hard, you cannot reach any dreams...*

In a village of Hokkaido, you can still find Hana's family. The baby girl of Hana's second daughter was named 'Hanako' and she grew up to be a wise, honest and brave child. Her mother and aunt would often told her the story about her grandmother who had left for north on one autumn day and had never come back. When she became fifteen, she was suddenly driven to visit the place where Ainu lived. There, she met one elderly woman who seemed to have known her for a long time. She gave Hanako a box which contained few belongings of Hana when she had left the village. There, she found a diary. Days had passed and Hanako got married and had two daughters. One spring day, she was reading the diary to her daughters under a tree of splendid cherry blossoms. When she closed the diary, she found some ivory letters vaguely remained on the cover of it. It was written "gratitude". The diary written about the people surviving in nature was succeeded to Hanako and then, Hanako's granddaughter, Hana. Now, young Hana is trying to look for herself by traveling all around the world. Her soul is growing up to be stronger and more intelligent, feeling thankful for everybody she comes across in her trip, and these very experiences are sending Hana, step by step, to the door of her heart, the intimate truth of herself.



Scelti per voi: Brani originali, Scenari geografici, Cenni storici e Curiosità  
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*Hana travels the world moving her steps towards her inner truth of herself*

# Extra Content

original tracks,  
geography  
historical notes  
trivia

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by Anton Chekhov  
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We dedicate this record to all the ethnic communities that existed and still exist. From the roots of their "lullabies" and "litanies", endless ramifications of musical styles that incessantly continue to give their fruits through poets and musicians have been generated .



*"The secret of singing lies between the vibration of the voice of the singer and the heartbeat of the listener"*  
Kahlil Gibran

To call arrangement the work that Walter Lupi has erected on the melodies of a traditional Japanese repertoire is not only restrictive and trivial but also not true; Lupi does not arrange, he rebuilds, he does not elaborate, but he edifies, and extracts from the precious melodies of the Japanese songs that are used, all the shades that are necessary for the refined ability of his instrument, transforming the dirges, nursery rhymes and vocal sweetnesses in the most varied array of “musical visions”.

Warm and rounded, soft and reckless, pungent and persuasive are the adjectives that come to mind when I listen to Kozato’s vocal instrument; known and appreciated by me as a mezzo-soprano involved with contemporary vocal technicalities (from Berio to Solbiato), Akiko literally enveloped, with the sound curves of her singing, the fifty people present, inserting phrasings and freeing expressive technicalities that exploit the whole of the vocal system, chasing after marked but playful rhythms, and coaxing the bystanders with movements, mimics and gestures.

Maurizio Pancotti - (Art Critic)



### WALTER LUPI

Highly skilled guitarist, coming from the world of the classical guitar. One of the finest players with this musical instrument, Walter Lupi boasts more than thirty years of musical activity. He has recorded eleven his albums and published two didactic methods about his personal technique called by him self “Flatfinger”. He has participated in the main guitar festivals in Italy and Europe, sharing music programs and stage with many famous names as Dominic Miller, Stanley Jordan, Sarah Jane Morris, Bireli Lagrene, Roland Dyence, Tommy Emmanuel and many other.

### AKIKO KOZATO

After graduating from Tokyo National University of Fine Arts and Music, she received a diploma at Lucio Campiani College of Music in Mantova. She then devoted herself in studies as a research student at the Choir of Teatro alla Scala of Milan. Following those musical inquiries, she committed herself to contemporary music and had been dedicated songs by renowned composers in classic and contemporary music fields such as Carlo Boccadoro, Giorgio Colombo Taccani, Gabriele Manca, Francesco Fillidei, and so on. She also co-starred with a pianist, Adele D’Aronzo, a guitarist, Norio Sato, an accordionist, Davide Vendramin in numerous festivals and concerts in Japan and Italy.

Thanks to:

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Alessandro Ceva  
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Mahmoud Saleh Mohammandi  
Pierluigi Ferrari  
Paolo Polli  
Luca Zamponi

Renzo Fava  
Roberto De Roberto  
Chiara Tricomi

Dora  
Lucia and Ciano  
Bucciarelli and hi's girls  
Tiziana and Franco  
Euge and Ale  
Giorgio, Yuki and Shusei

Roberto Upazzoli

Mauro Pagani

Melodies taken from folk songs of the Japanese tradition arranged by Walter Lupi

The "Hana's Story" is conceived and written by Walter Lupi with the participation of Daria Bottura

Credits:

Guitar - Walter Lupi (Carlo Raspagni 1977 model)

Voice - Akiko Kozato

Chorus - Akiko Kozato and "Kanariya" choir

Koto (track 8 and 11), Ukulele (track 3 and 14) and percussion - Walter Lupi

Tsugaru Shamisen (track 7) - Sylvan Dyon

Flute (track 13) - Elisabetta Daolio, (tracks 7 and 14) - Akiko Kozato

Production, recording and mixing by Walter Lupi

Graphic project - Walter Lupi and Akiko Kozato