

MENABE
The Big Red
(Madagascar)

Madagaskar, the red island, who's SOIL bleeds into the Indian Ocean, was separated from Africa 120 million years ago. It is home to many kinds of animals and plants, which only exist here. Originally populated from the *Vazimba*, whose origin remain legendary, the land was then populated from Africa and Asia, before the turning point in history. The descendants of Asia's rice farmers, who inhabit the highland and the cattleman and fisherman of Africa, who populate the coastline meet each other in the 18 tribes of Madagaskar - all communicating in one common language.

... in search of the culture and roots of these people, I will visit the highland of the Merina and travel through the land of the Sakalava, *the children of the gold* and *the children of the silver* at the West coast of Madagascar. On my way I will collect SOIL from the historically and mythologically significant places of different families.

The route led from Alasora, the tomb of the first queen of the Merina people near the capital Antananarivo, to the Tsingy de Bemaraha on the West coast near Belo sur Tsiribihina, the old capital of the Sakalava-Menabe. The SOIL was collected from sites allocated by the native people to the *Vazimba*, from places which stand for the history of the different royal dynasties, as well as from the feet of the mighty Baobabs. Additionally SOIL was collected from red "earth wounds" along the way, where soil erosion had made the vulnerability of the EARTH visible.