



EST. ON ABANDONED FARMLAND, NOW A FOREST

Shanti Earth

A perma-retreat in the hills of the Western Ghats

NELLIVARAI · KODAIKANAL · TAMIL NADU · STAYS OF WEEKS AND MONTHS

The background of the entire image is a high-contrast landscape. The upper half is dominated by a sky filled with dark, heavy, and textured clouds, with some lighter patches where light breaks through. Below the sky, a range of mountains is visible, with the foreground showing dark, rugged peaks and slopes. The middle ground features a valley with patches of green and brown, and distant, hazy mountain ranges under a lighter sky.

*Walk in, slow down,
and feel the earth.*

THE WHOLE OF IT, IN SIX WORDS

Contents

A short book about a small place. What it is, where it is, the shape of a day, the people who hold it, and how you might come to stay.

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A NOTE BEFORE YOU COME

Dear friend,

When I first came to this hillside, the land was slowly healing but overgrown with invasive species, trees dying out, and years of chemical farming had left the soil depleted, leading to frequent landslides. I was tired too, in my own way, after a life spent first as an engineer and then behind a camera. I came looking for a different way to live, and the land gave me one.

Nearly ten years on, the trees we planted give shade. Mushrooms grow from fallen wood. The soil holds water again, and birds we had not seen in years have returned. Shanti Earth is not finished, and it never will be. That is rather the point. At shanti earth, it is a space to cultivate human beings through experiencing the natural abundance.

We open our gates to people who want to live close to all of this for a while, to unlearn a little and to fall back into step with the pace of nature. Not as tourists, but as fellow travellers. You will wake early, practise, eat well, put your hands in the earth, and sleep deeply. You will not be entertained. You may, instead, feel something settle.

If that calls to you, read on. And then write to us.

With warmth, Vinay



VINAY PARADE, FOUNDER AND
STEWARD OF SHANTI EARTH



CHAPTER ONE

I

The Place

Not a retreat, a resort, or a co-working space in disguise. A living experiment in a quieter, more grounded way of being.

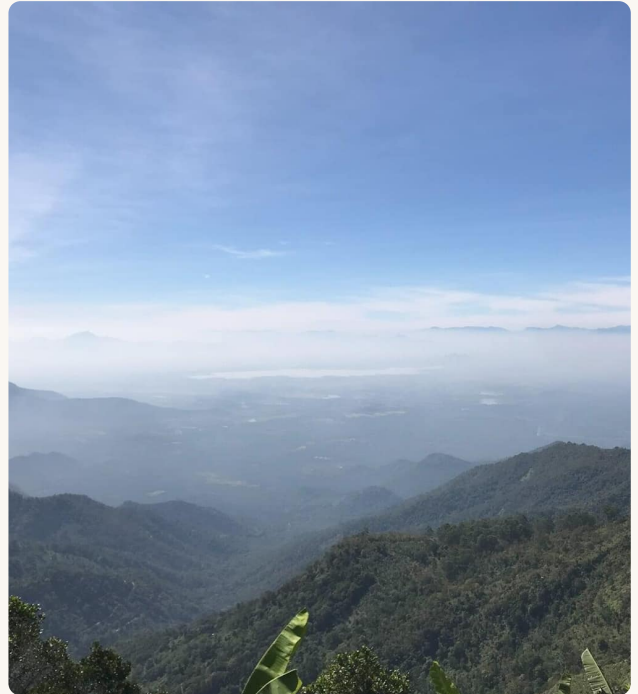
WHAT THIS IS

Not a retreat. *A rhythm.*

Shanti Earth is not a yoga retreat. It is not a wellness resort. It is not a co-working space hidden in the hills. It is a living experiment in a different way of being.

Tucked into the mountains outside Prakashpuram in Nellivara, it is part farm, part forest, part community, part practice space. Daily life turns on simple things: movement, meditation, meaningful work, food from the land, the slow business of restoring an ecosystem, good conversation, rest, and the changing moods of the weather.

People come for many reasons. Some arrive exhausted. Some are looking for direction. Some want to go deeper into their practice. Others just want to spend time somewhere real. What they find is not a programme but a rhythm.



*Come long enough to remember
what life feels like when it is not
organised around urgency.*

THE STORY OF THE LAND

From abandoned farms to *a young food forest.*



For most of a decade, Vinay and the community around him have been turning abandoned, chemically damaged land into a developing food forest. The method is myco-permaculture: working with fungi, which are the quiet engine of healthy soil, and planting in layers the way a forest does, so the system can begin to feed and water itself.

Terraces were shaped by hand. Trees went in where there was little shade. Compost was built, water was slowed and held, and slowly the ground came back to life. There are perhaps five more years of patient work before the ecosystem can largely sustain itself.

We farm with almost no outside inputs. The aim is not a tidy plantation but a forest that feeds people and itself. When you stay, you arrive in the middle of that story, and for a while you become part of it.

10

ACRES REVIVED

~10

YEARS OF WORK

5

COTTAGES &
CABINS

15

GUESTS AT
MOST

3

MEALS A DAY

365

DAYS IN
ABUNDANCE



CHAPTER TWO

II

The Land

The Western Ghats are among the oldest mountains on Earth.
Shanti Earth does not sit beside this landscape. It sits within it.

THE WESTERN GHATS

Older even than the Himalayas.

These hills are one of the planet's great living libraries, one of the top ten biodiversity hotspots in the world, fed by the monsoon and wrapped in cloud for much of the year. Forests cling to the slopes. Rain arrives without warning. The seasons are marked less by the calendar than by flowering trees, migrating birds, and mushrooms pushing up from fallen wood.

Shanti Earth sits inside this older world. Step off the veranda and you are within it: the mist, the birdsong, the steep green going down to the plains. It is the kind of place that asks you to pay attention.

THE FOREST WAS HERE FIRST

We are guests here.



THE INDIAN GAUR, THE GREAT WILD OX OF THESE HILLS

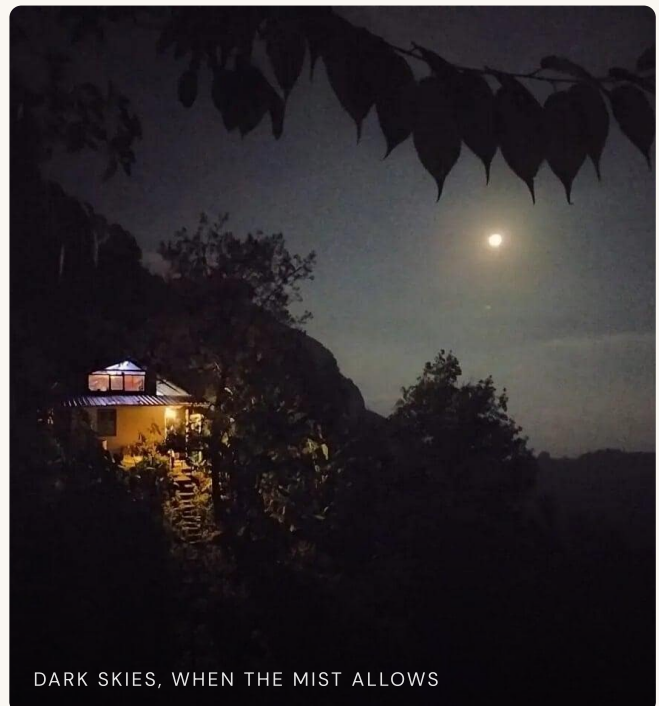
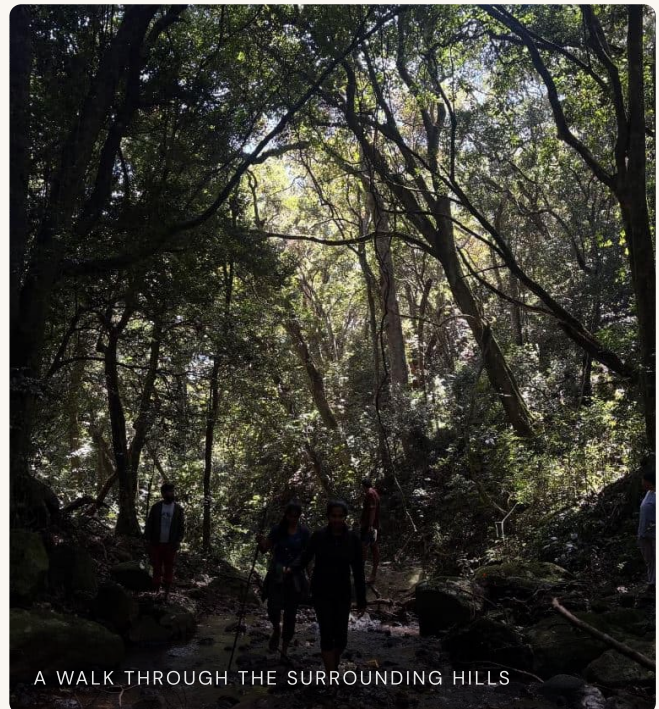
Now and then a gaur moves through the trees at the edge of the land: the great wild ox of these mountains, and among the largest wild cattle anywhere on Earth. Dark, unhurried, and entirely unbothered by us, it has a way of rearranging your sense of who the hillside really belongs to.

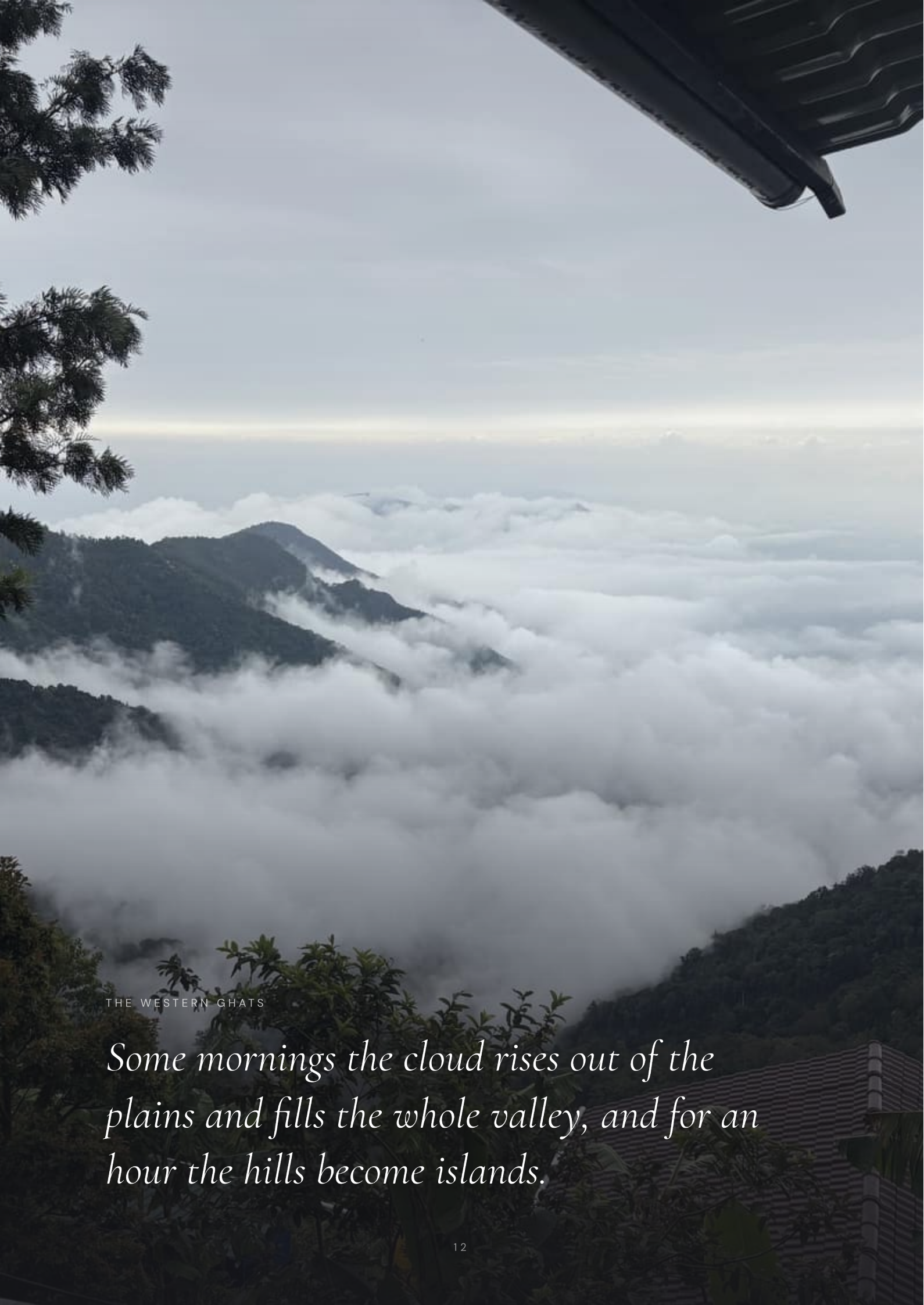
These animals matter here, not least to the Adivasi peoples who have lived in these forests far longer than any of us and revere the bison as a deity. We keep our distance, keep the nights quiet, and count it a good day when one passes through. This is their forest. We are the visitors.

THE NEIGHBOURS

The forest carries on *its own ancient life*.

Birds call from the canopy. Giant squirrels move through the trees. Deer, wild boar, and gaur still roam these hills. You are one creature among many, and that is a fine thing to remember.





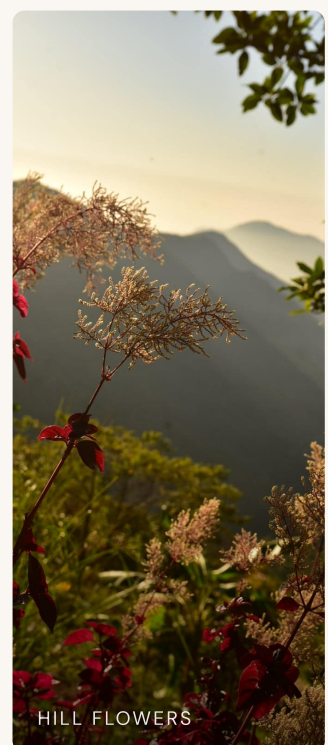
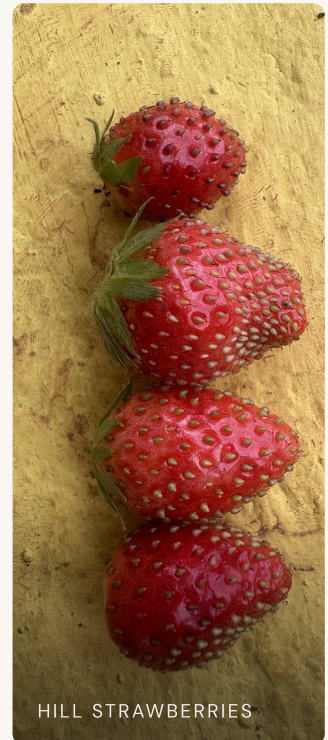
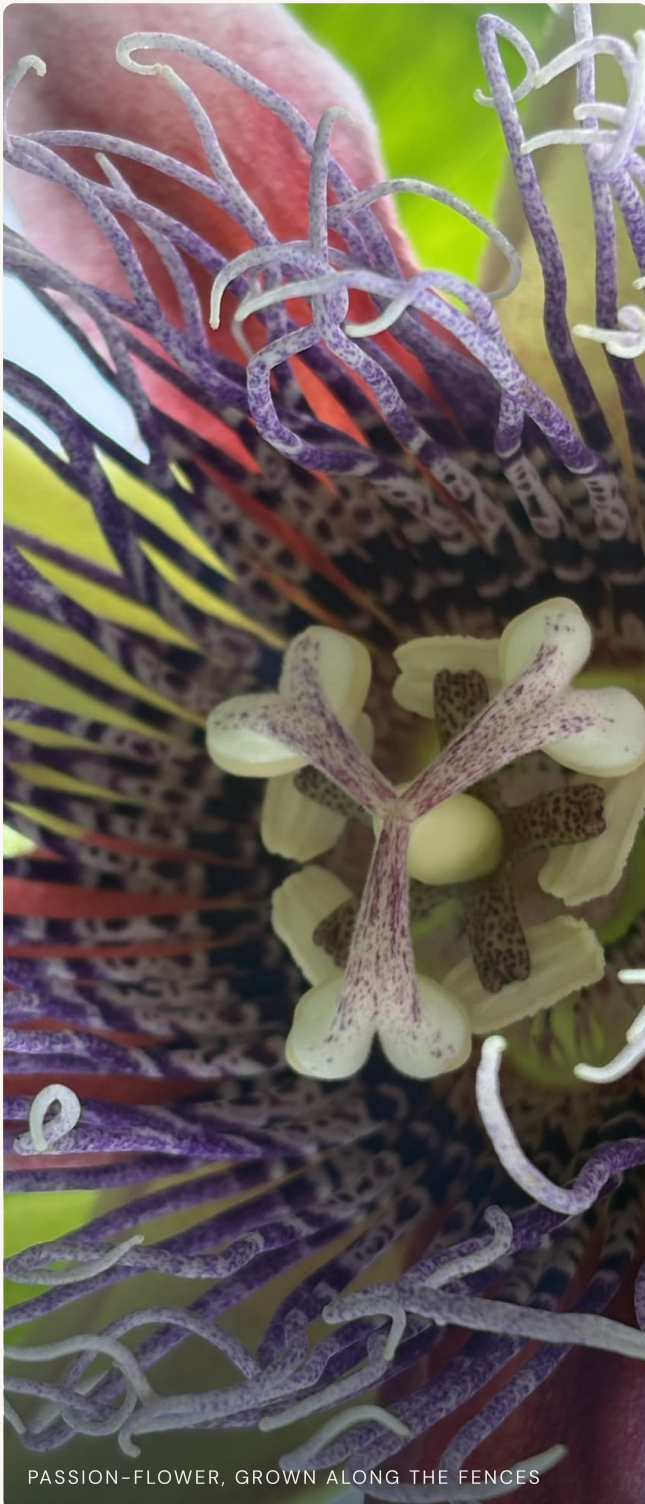
THE WESTERN GHATS

*Some mornings the cloud rises out of the
plains and fills the whole valley, and for an
hour the hills become islands.*

COLOUR, EVERYWHERE YOU LOOK

A green hillside is *never only* green.

Look closer and the place keeps showing its hand: passion-flowers and wild blossom, turmeric and ginger pulled orange from the soil, strawberries in their short season, chillies and greens for the pot. This is a corner of the world that has never been shy about colour.





THE MICROCLIMATE

Four seasons *in an afternoon.*

Shanti Earth sits in its own gentle weather. It is cooler than the plains below, and rain falls in some form through much of the year, which is what keeps it so green.

A single day can move through sunshine, cloud, mist, and a passing shower, then clear again by evening. There is no harsh season and no truly bad time to come. Bring a warm layer and something for the rain, and let the sky do as it pleases.

We are open all year round.



CHAPTER THREE

III

The Days

A shape, not a timetable. Practice at either end, good food, and
a long, unhurried middle that is yours.

THE RHYTHM

A day here.



FIRST LIGHT TO DARK,
HELD BY TWO QUIET HOURS

BEFORE LIGHT	Mist in the valley, the forest waking. A terrace, a shawl, and the sound of the hills beginning the day.
7:30 – 9:00	Yoga, pranayama, and meditation with Michael. No need to be good at anything.
9:00 – 9:30	A short community check-in: a little about the day ahead, and a quiet moment for reflection or to share.
10:00	Breakfast is served. South Indian, warm, simple, and seasonal, with tea and coffee on the house.
THE LONG MIDDLE	Your own hours. Work, write, rest, walk, or simply be quiet. WiFi is available.
1:30 – 2:30	Lunch, together at the table. Warm, simple, and seasonal, drawn from the farm.
AFTERNOON	The land. Planting, foraging, mushrooms, cooking, building, learning, as the day calls for it.
5:30	Evening practice. Meditation, breathwork, the day turning inward.
DINNER	Light, warm, and shared, before the dark comes down over the hills.
AFTER DARK	Cottage lights, the forest close, stars when the mist allows. The conversations that matter.

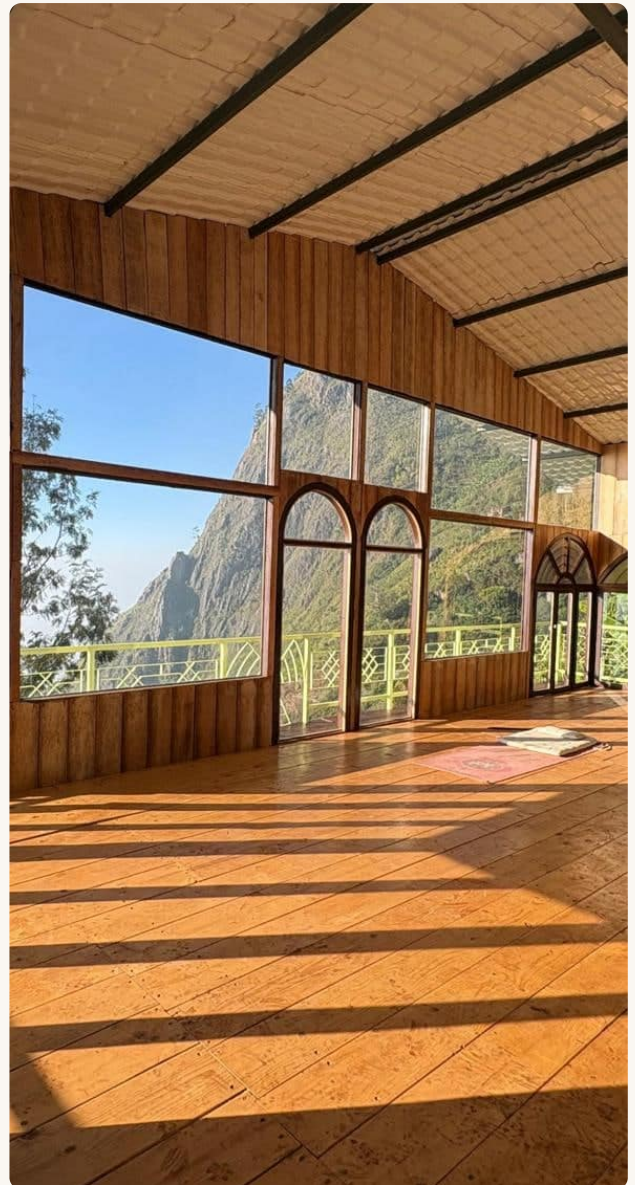
PRACTICE

Something to *return to.*

The day opens with practice and closes with it. Mornings are guided by Michael and draw on yoga, pranayama, and meditation in a light-filled hall that looks straight out over the hills. The approach is simple and inward, less about how the body looks and more about how it feels to inhabit one with steadiness and breath.

You do not need to arrive flexible, advanced, or spiritual. You only need to arrive honestly.

Evenings are quieter: meditation, breathwork, contemplative movement, or simply sitting while the day settles. For those moving through a tender stretch of life, Michael also offers individual sessions, gently held and charged separately.





CHAPTER FOUR

IV

The Work

Karma yoga, as it is understood here: taking part in the care of something larger than yourself. Fungi, soil, forest, and food.

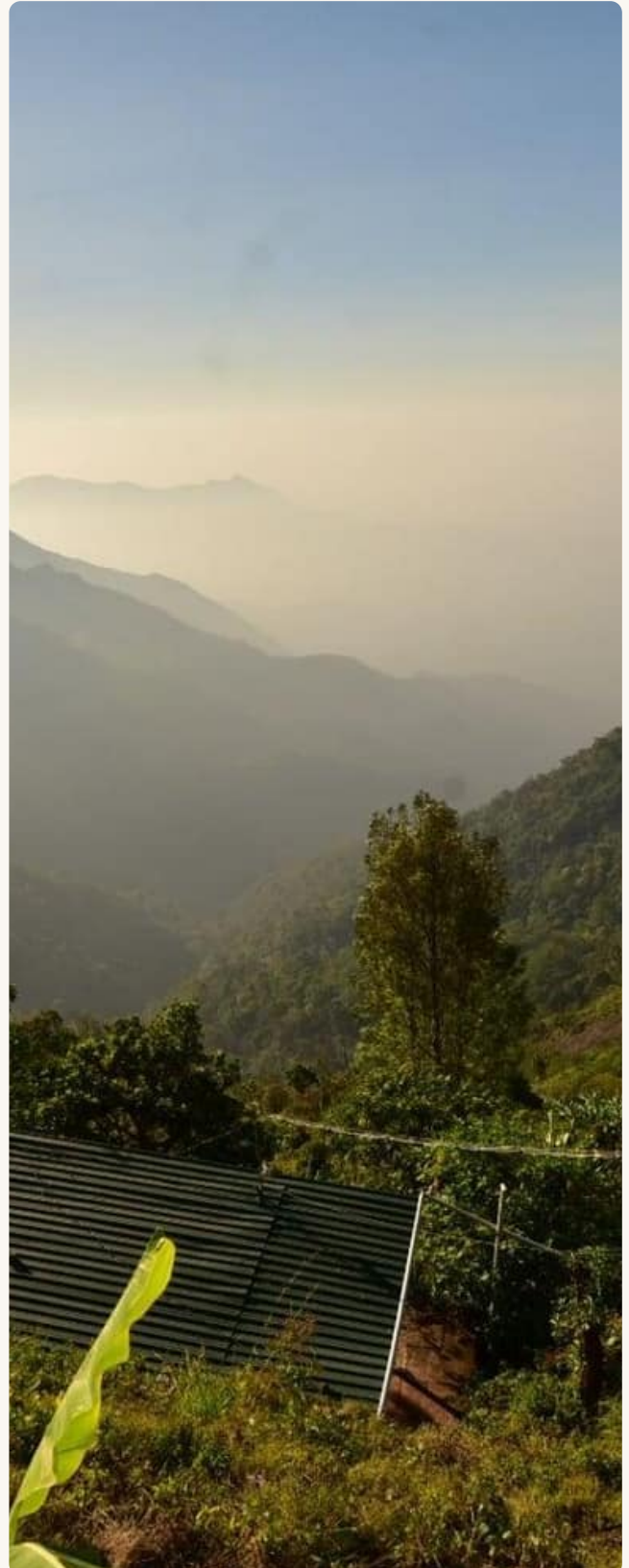
LEARN BY LIVING

Not a workshop. *A way of taking part.*

You do not come here to attend a course. You come to take part in a living system, at whatever depth suits you. Some days that means an hour of mulching. Some days it means a long afternoon learning to read the soil with Vinay.

Nothing is compulsory and nothing is performed for show. This is karma yoga as it is understood here: caring for something larger than yourself, and being changed a little by the caring.

Over the pages that follow are the threads you might pick up: fungi, soil and the food forest, foraging, and the life of the kitchen.

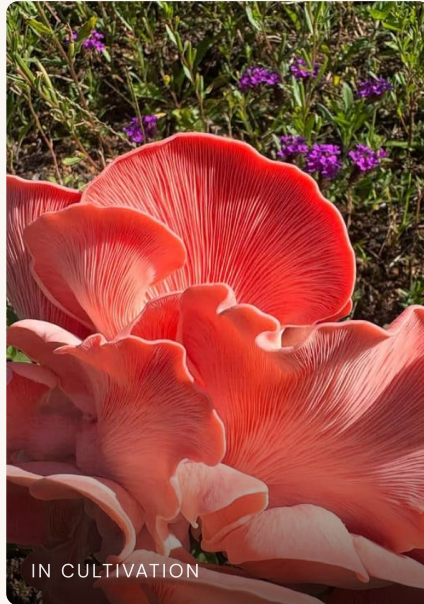


FUNGI AND RESTORATION

The quiet engine of *a living soil*.



WILD, ON FALLEN WOOD



IN CULTIVATION



KING OYSTER, FOR THE POT

The kindness of mother earth sits at the heart of Vinay's approach to restoration, along with patience, hard work, and surrender. Their fine threads, the mycelium, knit the soil together, break down dead wood, and feed the trees through roots you cannot see. Learn the craft of it: preparing spawn and substrate, tending growbags, and reading the flush of a healthy bed.

In the kitchen, the same mushrooms become supper: oyster, king oyster, the pink ones that look like coral, and lion's mane. Humble work, extraordinary biology, and a direct line from the log to the plate.



SOIL, WATER AND THE FOOD FOREST

Planting the way *a forest does.*

A food forest grows in layers: tall trees, smaller ones beneath, shrubs, herbs, roots, and climbers, each doing a job. Together they hold the slope, shade the ground, and feed the soil so it needs less and less from us.

Much of the work is patient and unglamorous: compost turned, mulch laid down, water slowed and held on the contour, young trees tended through their first dry months. You will learn how a hillside is coaxed back to abundance, and lend a hand in it.

Banana, avocado, blueberry, citrus, and more, all finding their place.

THE KITCHEN AND THE TABLE

Food is how most people *meet the land*.

Most days, everyone eats together. Three simple, village-style South Indian vegetarian meals, cooked over wood and flame by Rani Akka and Nikhita and carried to the communal table at Sakshi, the house at the heart of the day's gathering. Dosai and idli at their best, podis ground fresh, pickles and ferments put up in season, and whatever the farm is giving that week.

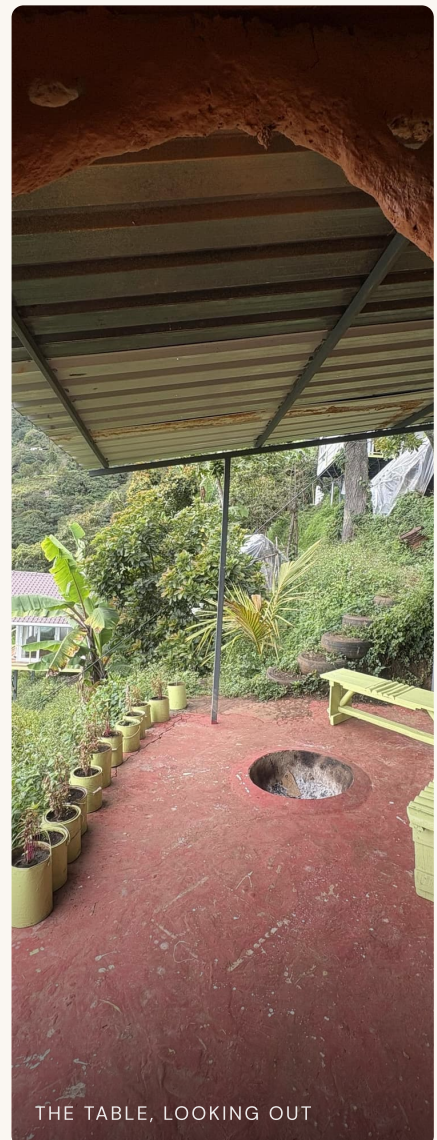
Sit near the kitchen a while and you pick up things no recipe holds: how to judge a tempering by its sound, which leaf to add and when, why the simplest plate can be the most nourishing. Tea and coffee are on the house at breakfast, and the kettle is rarely cold.



COOKED OVER WOOD AND FLAME



IDLI, FRESH FROM THE STEAMER



THE TABLE, LOOKING OUT

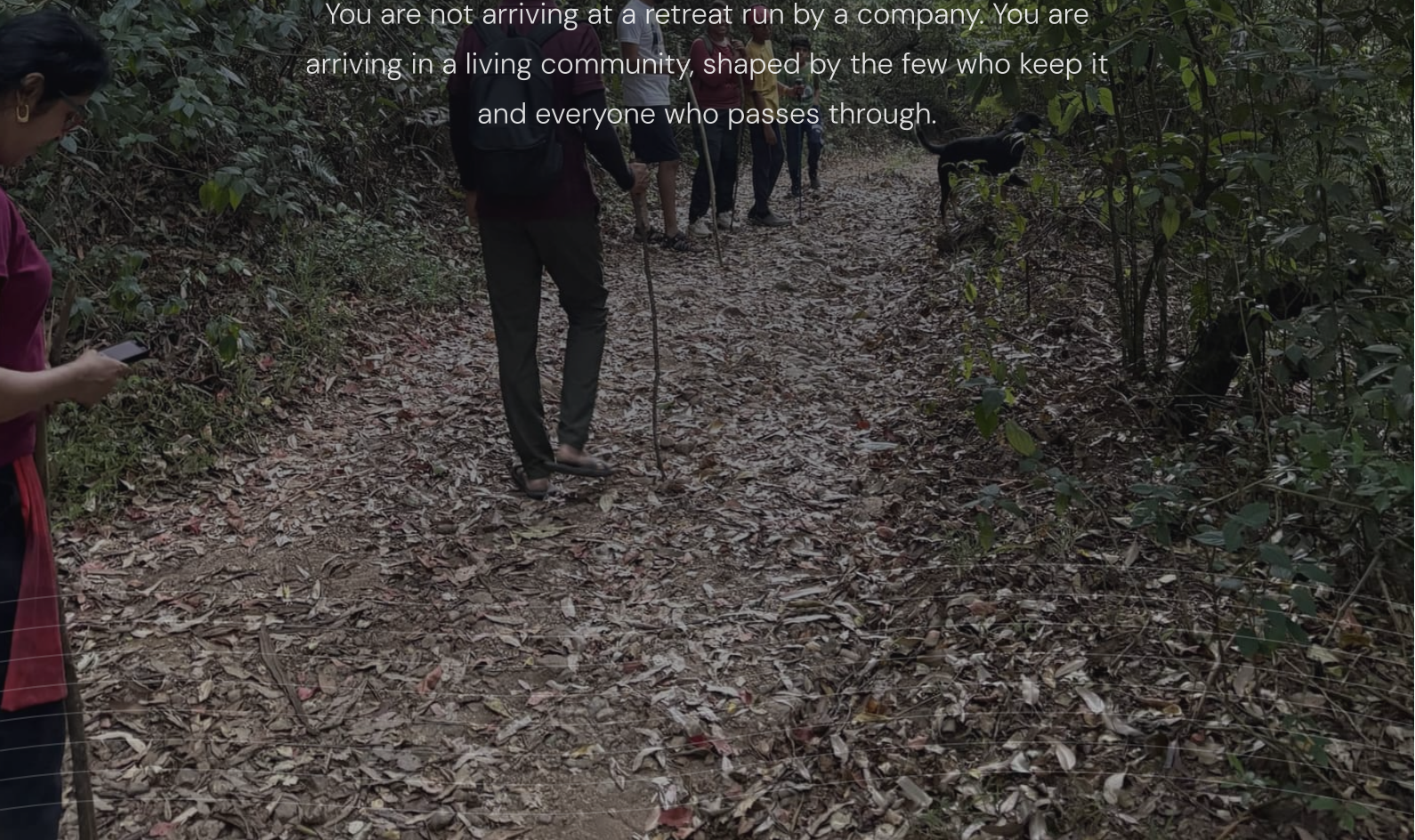


CHAPTER FIVE

V

The People

You are not arriving at a retreat run by a company. You are arriving in a living community, shaped by the few who keep it and everyone who passes through.



FOUNDER · LAND STEWARD · HOST

Vinay Parade



Long before Shanti Earth was a place others could visit, a version of Vinay arrived who was struggling with the inconsistencies of modern life, looking for something real and meaningful to dedicate his life towards. It was the raw and untamed forest that inspired him to look within for a way to live that nourishes the self, the community, and the broader ecosystem of life on the planet.

His path ran through engineering, then photography, and finally to this hillside and the slow craft of bringing land back to life. Nearly everything a guest meets here, the shade, the paths, the soil itself, exists because of that question and the years of work that followed it.

He remains both steward and student of the land, as ready to talk fungi at dawn as to sit quietly at dusk. People who spend time with him tend to leave thinking a little differently about how a life might be lived.

Come live and get inspired to create an oasis out of yourself wherever you decide to grow roots. Let this be a reminder that the determination of even a single person can make a positive impact in their lifetime.

YOGA · PRANAYAMA · MEDITATION · COUNSELLING

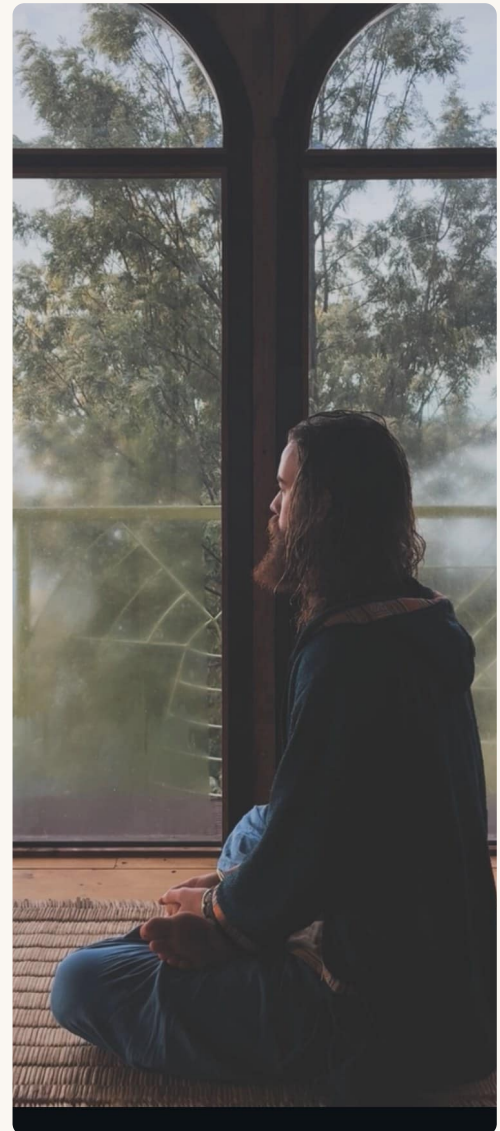
Michael

Swami Ramarishi

Michael came to this work from South Africa, by way of psychology, long practice, and a good deal of time spent in silence. He has held space for others for more than twelve years, much of it trained in India, in retreat and in study.

Here he leads the morning yoga and pranayama, the evening meditation, and quiet one-to-one conversations for those who want them. He is steady company for anyone in a tender stretch of life, and clear that his job is not to hand over answers, only to help you ask better questions.

His one-to-one work is offered as wellness counselling. It is not a replacement for therapy or medical care, and it is charged separately from a stay.



THE KITCHEN

The hands that *feed the place*.



Nikhita Leela

KITCHEN · NOURISHMENT · HOSPITALITY

Nikhita Leela is the heart of the Shanti Earth kitchen and our unofficial Chief Officer of Good Vibes. She lovingly nourishes the community with wholesome, seasonal meals while creating a warm, welcoming atmosphere that makes every guest feel at home. Whether she's preparing food, sharing a smile, or making sure everyone is cared for, Nikhita brings the quiet magic of hospitality to daily life at Shanti Earth.



Rani Akka

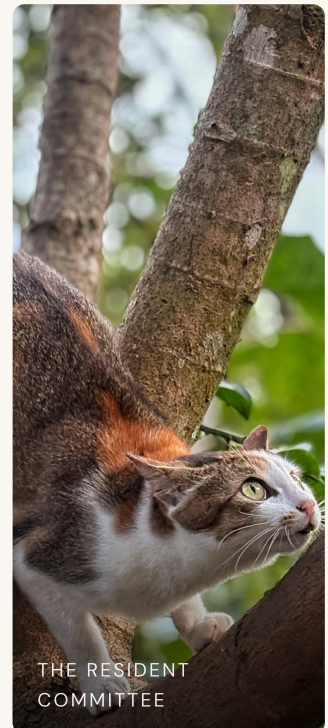
TRADITIONAL SOUTH INDIAN COOKING

Akka means elder sister, and for many who pass through Shanti Earth, that is exactly who Rani Akka becomes. She has been part of this place almost since its beginning, carrying the rhythms, recipes, and the wisdom of a lifetime spent cooking with local ingredients and traditional methods. Her dosai and idli have become favourites, but what people remember most is the care with which everything is prepared. Spend an afternoon beside her in the kitchen, and you will come away with more than a recipe.

AND EVERYONE ELSE

A household, *not a staff.*

Beyond the few who hold the place are the people who pass through and stay a while: long-term guests, friends, the occasional volunteer. Evenings tend to gather of their own accord, around shared food and unhurried talk. And the animals, it must be said, consider the whole hillside theirs.





CHAPTER SIX

VI

Staying

Two earth-built houses, three garden cottages, and a scatter of tents, each opening onto the forest and the valley. Simple, characterful, and quiet.

WHERE YOU'LL STAY

Two houses, *three cottages*.



THE COTTAGES AND HOUSES, SCATTERED DOWN THE HILLSIDE

Five places are open to guests, set apart across the slope so each keeps its own quiet and its own view. Two are earth-built houses, Shanti and Sujata, each with a kitchen of its own for those who like to cook. Three are smaller garden cottages, each with an ensuite bathroom. And for sleeping closest to the forest, a few thatched tents are tucked into the hillside.

2

earth-built houses, each with its own kitchen

3

garden cottages, each ensuite

A few

thatched tents, open all year

THE TWO HOUSES · EACH WITH A KITCHEN

A house of your own.



Shanti Home

Earth-walled, with warm wood interiors, a veranda for morning chai, and a kitchen of its own. Room for friends or a small group, and quiet enough to hear the hills.

Sujata Home

A larger cob house, hand-shaped, its walls set with coloured glass that throws light across the room. An upstairs catches the valley, and it too has its own kitchen.

You are welcome to cook for yourselves in either house. Let us know a little ahead and we will help arrange whatever you need from the farm and the village.

THE GARDEN COTTAGES

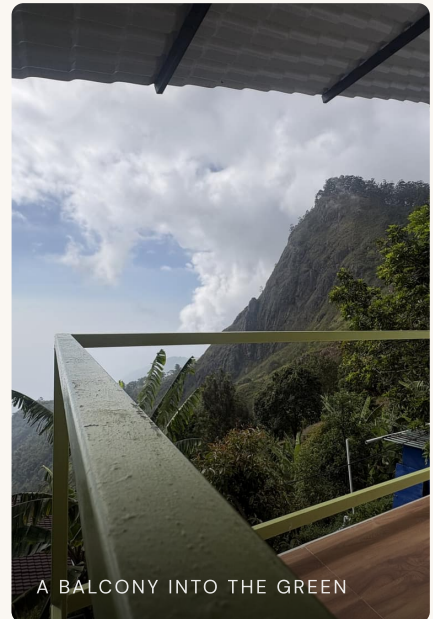
Three rooms that *open to the valley*.



SET INTO THE GARDEN



SIMPLE, CHARACTERFUL ROOMS



A BALCONY INTO THE GREEN

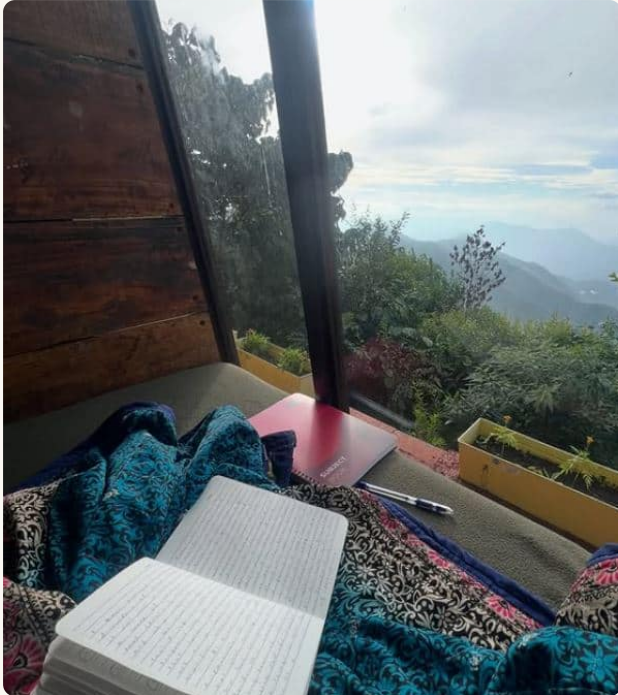
Three cottages set into the garden, each with an ensuite bathroom and a balcony looking straight into the green. They have no kitchen inside, by design: meals are shared together, and there is a simple camping kitchen nearby for anyone who wants to cook. Good for one, a couple, or two friends who do not mind the quiet.

UNDER CANVAS

And for sleeping closest to the forest, a few thatched tents are tucked into the hillside, open all year. There is no better way to wake with the birds.



WORK AND REST



Bring your work.
*Let the place change
it.*

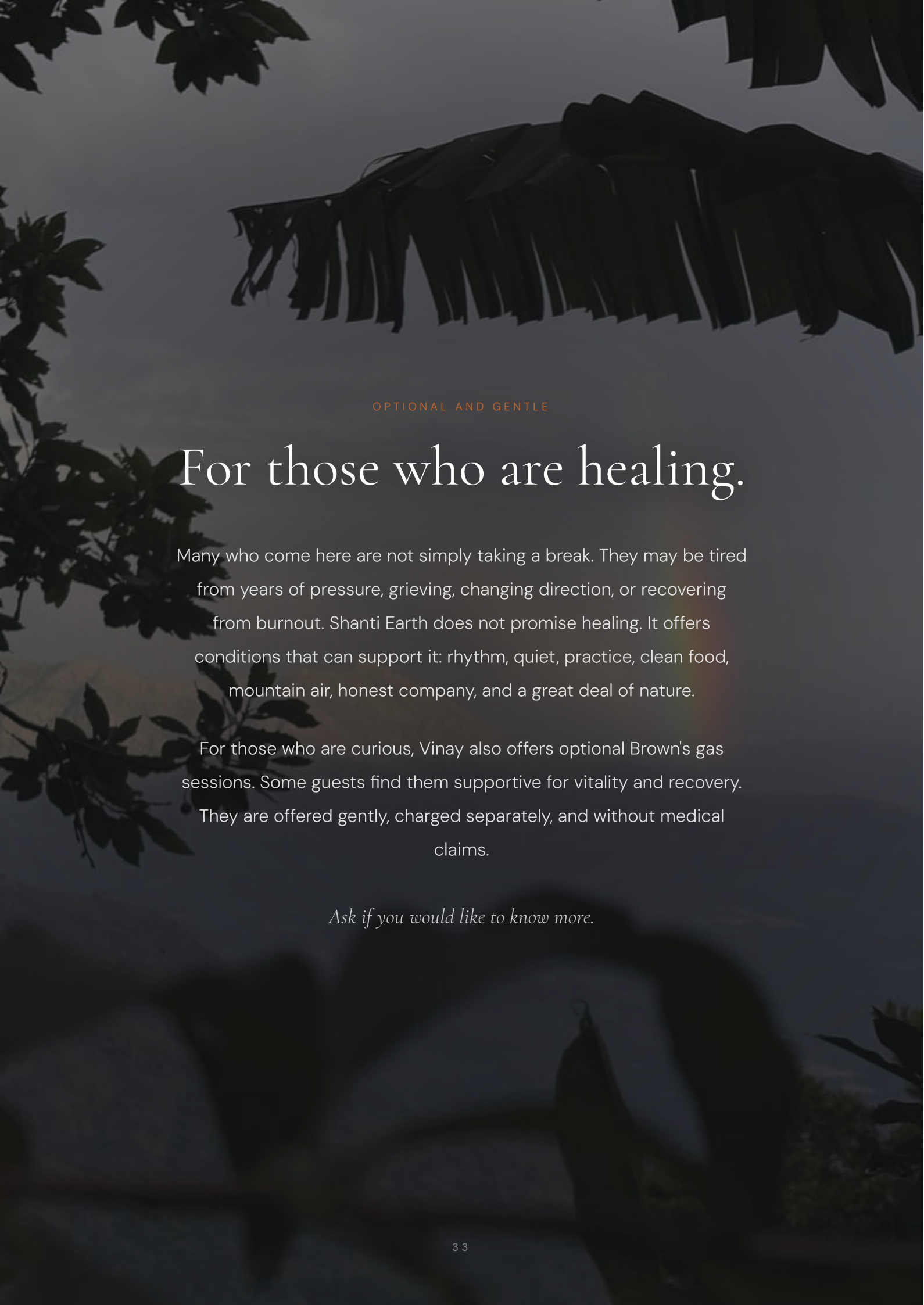
You need not disappear from the world. The long middle of the day is yours, and WiFi is available, though this is the mountains and not a city office. There is no glass-walled pod, only a terrace, a quiet corner, a bench under trees. Many find the work comes cleaner here, not because the internet is faster, but because the mind is less crowded.

AN OPTIONAL KITCHEN OF YOUR OWN

The camping kitchen.

A short walk from the cottages is a second, simpler kitchen: an open-air space where guests are free to brew tea late, cook something outside the usual hours, or just potter. It is there if you want it, supplementary to the shared meals, never instead of them.





OPTIONAL AND GENTLE

For those who are healing.

Many who come here are not simply taking a break. They may be tired from years of pressure, grieving, changing direction, or recovering from burnout. Shanti Earth does not promise healing. It offers conditions that can support it: rhythm, quiet, practice, clean food, mountain air, honest company, and a great deal of nature.

For those who are curious, Vinay also offers optional Brown's gas sessions. Some guests find them supportive for vitality and recovery. They are offered gently, charged separately, and without medical claims.

Ask if you would like to know more.

FROM THE FARM SHOP

Small batches, yours to take home.

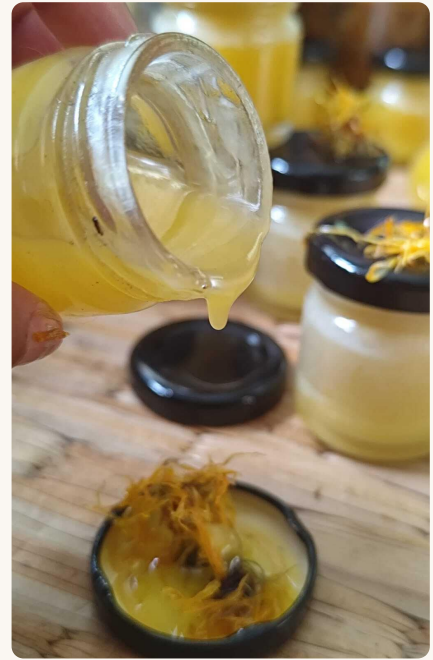
Made in the kitchen and the gardens, in the quantities the season allows. Priced separately, and a good way to carry a little of the place back with you. Ask the team what is ready that week.



Pink oyster & lion's mane
Fresh, dried, and in capsules



Groundnut-garlic podi
Ground fresh



Calendula salve
Steeped in farm-grown flowers



Blueberry jam
Put up in season



Turmeric & pepper
Pulled and dried on the farm



Pickles & preserves
Banana powder, neem capsules, more

A GENTLE, HONEST NOTE

For some, *not for all.*

You may feel at home if

- You want to stay for weeks or months, not a weekend
- You are drawn to practice, ecology, land, food, and community
- You can enjoy simple rooms without resort comfort
- You want WiFi and work time, not a city life in disguise
- You are curious about permaculture, mushrooms, and soil
- You like to lend a hand when the day calls for it
- You want to live closer to nature, not just look at it
- You are in a season of change and want a holding rhythm

It may not be the place if

- You need luxury, air conditioning, or hotel service
- You want a fixed schedule arranged for you
- You need fast internet for heavy calls or video
- You are uneasy with insects, mud, rain, animals, or steep paths
- You want the idea of nature without the reality of it
- You would rather not take part in community life
- You are in active substance dependency or addiction, such as alcoholism

We say this with warmth. Knowing what is not for you is also a kind of clarity.



CHAPTER SEVEN

VII

Practical Matters

The plain facts of coming and staying: how to find us, what is included, and the questions most people ask.

FINDING US

A short walk from *the nearest road*.

Where it is

In Nellivurai, outside Prakashpuram, near Kodaikanal, in the Tamil Nadu hills of the Western Ghats. The land sits inside a protected reserve forest, in country that is still genuinely wild.

Getting here

We help arrange transport by local means from any airport, railway station, or from Kodaikanal itself. The last stretch is a simple fifteen-minute walk in from where the road ends, so pack light.

Arrive before dark

Plan to reach us before five in the afternoon. This is a reserved-forest area, the light goes quickly, and arriving in daylight makes the walk in a pleasure rather than a puzzle.



THE HAND-PAINTED SIGNS AT THE PATH, POINTING THE WAY IN

THE DETAILS

Good to know.

Length of stay

Two weeks or more is preferred, long enough for the rhythm to do its quiet work. Longer is often better.

Meals

Three vegetarian South Indian meals a day, village-style and seasonal, shared at the communal table. Tea and coffee on the house at breakfast.

What is extra

Counselling with Michael, Brown's gas sessions, cooking your own in the houses, and farm products to take home.

Pricing

Set out in full on the rates page overleaf. In short: priced by the room and the length of stay, the weekly rate easing the longer you settle in.

Accommodation

Two earth-built houses with their own kitchens, three garden cottages, and a few tents. Capacity is around fifteen, usually kept smaller.

What is included

Morning and evening practice, three daily meals, WiFi, the run of the land, a share in its work, and a guided walk into the wilderness.

Water & power

Clean mountain stream water, good to drink, with filters in each house. Solar-leaning power, so we go gently with both.

A quiet home

No alcohol, drugs, or loud music. Children and pets may be possible with a conversation first, as this is a wilderness-edge place.

A FEW QUESTIONS

Answered plainly.

Do I need to be experienced?

No. Mornings are guided and suit complete beginners as much as long-time practitioners. You only need to arrive willing.

Can I cook for myself?

The two houses each have a kitchen, and there is a simple camping kitchen for everyone else. Most meals, though, are shared together at the table.

Is it physically demanding?

Yes. There are slopes, steps, and uneven paths, including the walk in, and most days ask something of the body.

Is it a silent retreat?

No. There is practice and there is quiet, but also conversation, shared meals, and the ordinary life of a farm.

Is the food only vegetarian?

Yes, South Indian and vegetarian. Tell us about allergies or needs in advance and we will be honest about what we can do.

Is there WiFi for work?

Yes, and the middle of the day is free for it. It is the mountains, though, so heavy video work can be unreliable.

What should I bring?

Warm layers, sturdy shoes, a rain layer, a torch, and an open mind. The weather changes by the hour.

How do I pay and book?

By writing to us. There is no booking funnel. We arrange the details personally, once we know your plans.

WHAT A STAY COSTS

Honest rates for *an unhurried stay*.

Priced by the room and the length of your stay, never by the day. The longer you settle in, the gentler the weekly rate becomes, because this is a place that rewards staying long enough to slow down.

	ONE WEEK	TWO WEEKS	THREE WEEKS	ONE MONTH
Garden cottage LOVE · HOPE · JOY — FOR ONE	₹35,000	₹60,000	₹80,000	₹1,00,000
Garden cottage LOVE · HOPE · JOY — SHARED BY TWO	₹50,000	₹90,000	₹1,20,000	₹1,50,000

Shared by two works out to about ₹25,000 each to begin, easing to ₹18,750 each by the month.

Forest tent

FOR ONE · UNDER THATCH

₹21,000

A WEEK · FLAT, ANY LENGTH

Shanti & Sujata

The two earth-built houses, each sleeping up to four with a kitchen of its own, are offered to small groups by enquiry, as and when they are free.

All rates in Indian rupees. Every stay includes morning and evening practice, three vegetarian meals a day, WiFi, the run of the land and a share in its work, and a guided walk into the surrounding wilderness. Counselling with Michael, Brown's gas sessions, and farm produce to carry home are charged separately.



HOW TO BEGIN

Write to us, *and* *we will reply.*

There is no automated booking. Tell us a little about yourself: who you are, when you are thinking of coming, how long you might stay, how many of you there are, and what draws you here. Mention anything we should know, dietary needs, mobility, children, and any questions.

Someone will reply personally, usually within a few days. From there we will help with the practical details and getting here.

WRITE TO

shantifarmsandcamping@gmail.com

OR MESSAGE US

WhatsApp · +91 89031 09993



Come, stay a while.

shantifarmsandcamping@gmail.com

WhatsApp · +91 89031 09993

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